The Materiality of Mastery: Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Production of Plantation Culture in the Eighteenth-Century South

by

Kirsten Thomas Iden

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Approved by

Hilary E. Wyss, Chair, Professor of English
Kathryn Braund, Professor of History
Thomas Hallock, Professor of English
Erich Nunn, Associate Professor of English

Abstract

My dissertation project, "The Materiality of Mastery: Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Production of Plantation Culture in the Eighteenth-Century South", examines objects, including texts, made by South Carolinian Eliza Lucas Pinckney (ELP) to discuss the emergence of eighteenth-century plantation culture. Each chapter focuses on a different object owned/made by ELP and analyzes these objects in terms of their material and ideological production. These products serve as an access point to explore the ways in which all planters used material goods to construct idealized narratives of mastery. Tracing the production history of each object also reveals pieces of others' narratives—in particular slaves—whose voices were often co-opted or overwritten by their white masters.

Acknowledgments

I've often heard that writing is a collaborative process, but I did not understand what that meant until I wrote a dissertation. I am incredibly thankful, honored, and humbled to everyone who helped me through this process— many of whom took the time to answer questions from a person they had never met. John B. Nelson and Herrick Brown from the A.C Moore Herbarium at the University of South Carolina, and Leslie Goertzen from the Department of Biological Sciences at Auburn University generously shared their botanical expertise regarding the identification of plants on Eliza Lucas Pinckney's dress and shawl. Auburn Professor of Textile Science, Ann Beth Presley identified the paisley pattern on ELP's shawl, which in turn prompted my research into Indian textiles that became central to the argument in Chapter 3.

The South Carolina Historical Society kindly provided me access to ELP's original letterbook, which was thrilling just to hold. Andrea Feeser, Professor of Art and Architectural History at Clemson University, provided me with information about ELP's shawl, as did Tim Drake, the owner of the shawl. Anderson Wrangle, Professor of Art at Clemson University, provided me with his photograph of ELP's shawl that appears in Chapter 3, and the Smithsonian Institution supplied me with the photograph of ELP's silk damask dress.

This dissertation as it exists today would not be possible without the thoughtful and comprehensive feedback from my committee members: Kathryn Braund, Tom Hallock, and Erich Nunn. Thank you for reading my many drafts, and for providing me with such insightful advice. Your investment in this project propelled me forward to its completion.

To my advisor, Hilary Wyss: there is so much I want to thank you for, and I don't think I can properly convey to you how much I appreciate everything you've done for me. You made me into the scholar I am today, and I hope that this "ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain" makes you proud.

I am lucky to have such a supportive group of friends and family. An acknowledgements page does not have enough space to properly thank them all, but it's a start. Thank you to Symphony and Allison, who got me through the toughest two years of my life. Grad school may not be *Crossroads*, but it was still one crazy journey. To Stacey: thank you for your encouragement, and for sharing a love of early America. I know I can always count on you to get my weird/occasionally morbid jokes. Thank you to my writing group ladies—Heather, Amelia, Michelle—for not letting me give up when I wanted to so very much. To my officemate, Caitlin: thank you for always making me smile. And for the coffee. Thank you to my mom and dad who are the most supportive parents anyone could ever hope to have, and to my sister Dana who I know is always looking out for her big sister. Last, but not least, thank you to Brian for taking a leap of faith, and moving across the country with me eight years ago. I know you're as proud of me as I am of you.

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Introduction

On July 18, 2016, Congressman Steve King (R-Iowa) appeared on an MSNBC roundtable discussing key issues for the Republican Party at the opening of their national convention. The group was asked a question about the "identity crisis" of the Republican Party. When writer Charles Pierce commented that this would likely be the last election where "old white people" would dominate the party's agenda, King defensively replied: "This whole 'old white people' business does get a little tired, Charlie. I'd ask you to go back through history and figure out where are these contributions that have been made by these other categories of people that you are talking about? Where did any other subgroup of people contribute more to civilization?" When asked to clarify if he was referring to white people as the dominant contributors, King attempted to clarify by defining "civilization" in purely Anglo-centric terms: "…Western civilization itself that's rooted in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the United States of America, and every place where the footprint of Christianity settled the world. That's all of Western civilization." The panel discussion quickly collapsed following King's comments, as host Christopher Hayes attempted to contextualize the statements before cutting to a commercial break. Condemnation of King's remarks as explicitly racist, as well as historically inaccurate, was both swift and widespread. King's comments during the MSNBC roundtable were abhorrent and indefensible; unfortunately, the theory of white exceptionalism espoused King has been implicitly woven throughout the US national narrative, encouraging a subtle and enduring legacy of racism.

When such legacies are challenged, they are often met discomfort and defensiveness. One month prior to the MSNBC incident with King, Michelle Obama's commencement speech at CUNY exhumed some of those uncomfortable truths when she referenced the fact that the White

House was built by slaves.[1] Those comments were immediately critiqued by social media and traditional media alike; most notably by FoxNews pundit Bill O'Reilly who suggested that Obama's comments were a mischaracterization of the historical record because the "slaves that worked there were well-fed and had decent lodgings". Others challenged the comments on the grounds that slaves were not exclusively responsible for building the White House, but were one type of labor force used among many. What these reactions demonstrate is the reluctance Americans have in recognizing the pivotal role slavery has played in the building of our nation, despite the fact that the physical evidence is all around us.[2]

The life and works of eighteenth-century South Carolinian Eliza Lucas Pinckney seem worlds away from twenty-first century American politics, yet the comments of King and Obama demand that we interrogate how we understand our national origin stories by examining the relationships between objects, their makers, and the powerful mythologies that grow into narratives of historical progress. Confronting the material realities of the past means confronting uncomfortable truths. My dissertation project, "The Materiality of Mastery: Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Production of Plantation Culture in the Eighteenth-Century South", examines objects, including texts, made by South Carolinian Eliza Lucas Pinckney (ELP) to discuss the emergence of eighteenth-century plantation culture. Each chapter focuses on a different object owned/made by ELP and analyzes these objects in terms of their material and ideological production. These products serve as an access point to explore the ways in which all planters used material goods to construct idealized narratives of mastery. Tracing the production history

[1] Michelle Obama made a similar statement in her speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. President Barack Obama also referenced the slaves who helped to build the White House during his speech commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches in 2015.
[2] Joseph McGill, founder of The Slave Dwelling Project, documents these physical vestiges of slavery, such as the fingerprints of enslaved laborers left on the surfaces of bricks that were picked up before fully dried.

of each object also reveals pieces of others' narratives—in particular slaves—whose voices were often co-opted or overwritten by their white masters.

My focus in analyzing objects connected to early plantation spaces is not to recreate the plantation as it stood three hundred years ago, but rather to discuss the construction of an idealized plantation space. This approach is much indebted to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stores of an American Myth,* which at its core demonstrates the ways that "objects tell stories" (6). The stories that objects tell can be revealing, but they also simultaneously conceal— powerfully influencing how we experience the past. By reading texts as both material things and cultural artifacts, my approach emphasizes the tremendous power that objects have in creating, controlling, and circulating meaning.

Evolving from the foundation established by New Southern studies, my analysis also builds on the concept of a literary South by bringing early American texts to the conversation. By looking at the ways in which planters identified, maintained and manipulated actual plantation spaces, as well as how these spaces were upheld or challenged by others, we can see the origins of the plantation myth as constructed by the people who originally lived it. The texts of early planters like ELP are invaluable in this sense because they seamlessly weave plantation myth with reality, actualized space with idealized space—a blend of the historical and literary that validates diverse experiences on the southern plantation while challenging the rhetorical structure that the text builds.

Using ELP: Who and Why

Eliza Lucas Pinckney was born on December 28, 1722 in the British colony of Antigua. ELP's father, George Lucas, was a planter and soldier in the British Army.[3] Not much is known

[3] For detailed biographical information about the Lucas and Pinckney families, see Pinckney, *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney*; Ramagosa, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney's Family in Antigua, 1668-1747"; Williams, "Eliza Lucas

about ELP's mother, Ann Mildrum Lucas, but from letters it is clear she was often ill and largely bedridden. ELP was one of four Lucas children: she had a younger sister Mary (affectionately known as Polly), and two brothers, Thomas and George. Like many children of elite British colonists living throughout the Atlantic World, ELP was sent to England for her education. ELP spent several years in England under the care of the Boddicott family, who served as ELP's temporary guardian while she was away at school. ELP's letters do not provide much detail regarding specific curriculum, but she likely learned reading, French, music, and other subjects and skills deemed appropriate for a young woman of status. ELP's letters are clear in that they reveal a deep appreciation for the formal schooling that she received.

ELP returned from England in 1738. Shortly after, the Lucas family moved to South Carolina with the hope that a change of climate would improve the struggling health of Ann Lucas. Of the four Lucas siblings, only ELP and Polly made the trip to Carolina, as George and Thomas were still attending school in England. The Lucases settled at Wappoo Plantation, which was owned by John Lucas, ELP's grandfather. John Lucas purchased the plantation around 1714 to produce supplies for the West Indies market, and George Lucas inherited those lands upon his father's death in 1729 (Williams 271).

Shortly after their arrival in Carolina, George Lucas was called back to Antigua for military duty following the outbreak of the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739-1748). With his sons at school in England, and his wife too ill to perform the daily duties of plantation maintenance, Lucas had little choice but to leave his Carolina plantations in the hands of sixteen-year-old daughter, ELP. The situation was further complicated by Lucas's financial difficulties. Needing money to obtain a commission in the military, the "land rich, but cash poor" Lucas was forced to

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and Her Before the Letterbook; Frances Leigh Williams, *A Founding Family: The Pinckneys of South Carolina*; Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*.

mortgage his Carolina properties, which placed a burden on him—and by proxy ELP—to make those lands as profitable as possible, and pay back the debt.[4]

For the next four years, ELP served as her father's plantation manager. It was during this period that ELP performed the now-famous experiments in indigo cultivation, which became the second largest export crop (behind rice) in the decades preceding the Revolutionary War. Although her time was occupied with the business of the plantations, ELP also enmeshed herself in Carolina plantation society, interacting with Charleston's other elite families such as the Pinckneys. ELP was a frequent correspondent to Charles Pinckney, his wife Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney, and their niece Mary Bartlett. Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney died after an extended illness in January of 1744, and several months later ELP became Charles Pinckney's second wife.[5]

After their marriage, ELP continued to experiment with crop cultivation, though she took a less active role in the management of the Pinckney plantations. The Pinckneys had three children survive into adulthood: Harriot Pinckney (later Horry), Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and Thomas Pinckney. Charles Pinckney died of malaria in 1758, and ELP never remarried. After his death, ELP once again resumed responsibility for her family's plantations. With her sons devoted to the Patriot cause, ELP followed suit, donating £4000.00 to the government of South Carolina to fund the war effort. During the war, ELP sought refuge with her daughter at Hampton Plantation, and she lived there most the remainder of her life. ELP was diagnosed with breast cancer in the 1790s, and Harriott and ELP traveled to Philadelphia for treatment. ELP died in Philadelphia in 1793.

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[4] See Schultz's introduction to *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition*.

[5] Letters suggest that there may have been some gossip surrounding the marriage of forty-five-year-old Pinckney to twenty-two-year-old ELP, which occurred approximately four months after the death of his first wife. A nineteenth-century biographer of ELP circulated the story that just prior to her death, Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney told her husband that she wanted ELP to be her successor/replacement, as ELP could give Pinckney the children he had always wanted.

The earliest writings on Pinckney cast her as "plantation patriot"; a South Carolina folk hero who single-handedly saved the colony from financial ruin by experimenting with indigo and transforming the crop into South Carolina's second largest export in the pivotal decades before the American Revolution. This lore is often traced back to David Ramsay's 1809 *History of South Carolina*, in which he identifies ELP as both the primary agent and driving force behind the introduction of indigo cultivation to the South Carolina economy. Ramsay did not create this legacy single-handedly, however. Historian David Coon posits that the enduring popularity of ELP stems from the desire for a grand narrative of South Carolina—and I would argue United States— history. Indigo was a vital part of the South Carolina economy in the mid-18th century, and ELP's story of ingenuity and perseverance functions perfectly as the "face" for this historical event. Regardless of her actual role, "It was the romantic and personal qualities of her efforts…that long absorbed the attention of family biographers and of native South Carolina historians" (Coon 67). Coon's 1976 essay "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South Carolina" injects a healthy dose of reality into the Pinckney legend by emphasizing the communal effort of low country planters (including Pinckney), French Huguenot immigrants, and West Indies slaves that made indigo cultivation possible and profitable. ELP did have a role in the introduction of indigo to South Carolina, but it was as part of an ensemble, not a solo act.[6]

While the sentiment garnered from indigo story has contributed the persistence of ELP as a recognizable historical figure, her collection of texts is noteworthy regardless of any lore attached to it because it comprises one of the largest known archives of colonial women's objects known today. Yet compared to other large planters of the Eighteenth Century—William Byrd II,

[6] Unfortunately, Coon's illuminating essay on Pinckney has done little to dismantle popular lore. Kacy Dowd Tillman's 2011 essay "Eliza Lucas Pinckney as Cultural Broker: Reconsidering. a South Carolina Legacy" continues to lament the revisionist history of apparent in ELP scholarship.

Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Henry Laurens—whose prolific textual outputs have been carefully preserved for the good of future generations, ELP's corpus of writings is quite small. To call ELP a planter at all is a designation not attended without some level of debate, given that definitions of mastery rely almost exclusively on the projection of masculinity as a source of power.[7] While it could be argued that these, admittedly significant, differences preclude ELP from serving as a representative of the eighteenth-century planter, I argue that it is *because* of these differences that ELP's work is a particularly fruitful source for exploring the ways in which planters used text and objects to fashion narratives of mastery. The objective in putting ELP in this context is not necessarily to counter established scholarly definitions of mastery, but instead to exploit her unique position as an insider/outsider within a rigid social system to better understand the conventions of planter self-presentation.

ELP did not publish during her lifetime, and nearly every surviving letter written by her is contained within a single letterbook. Despite being over 275 years old, the letterbook itself is remarkably well-preserved; a testament to the efforts taken for its preservation, as well as the quality of the materials from which it was originally produced.[8] The letterbook is slightly larger than today's standard letter (8.5x11), and measures about 1" thick. The dark tan leather cover of

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[7] For an in-depth discussion on how ELP works within (and without) discourses of masculinity, see Chapter 1. In *The Transformation of Virginia,* Rhys Issac argues that patriarchy was the great organizing principle of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Virginia plantation landscape (42), while social interactions were characterized by "Self-assertive style, and values centering on manly prowess [that] pervaded the interaction of men as equals in this society" (95). By the Nineteenth Century, these physical displays of dominance were thoroughly woven within political and social fabric of everyday life. For more on gender and definitions of mastery in the plantation South, see Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (247-282); Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*; Lockridge, *On the Sources of Patriarchal Rage: The Commonplace Books of William Byrd and Thomas Jefferson and the Gendering of Power in the Eighteenth Century*. Berland, *The Commonplace Book of William Byrd II of Westover* (65-89).

[8] Special thanks to the archivists at the South Carolina Historical Society for allowing me to view the original book. Historian Constance Schultz has a more detailed description of the letterbook, accompanied by several pictures, in the editorial notes for her digital edition of the Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Horry Pinckney.

the book is worn, but the interior pages are in excellent condition.[9] The paper of the letterbook is thick but remains resilient to the brittleness that typically accompanies the passage of time. The binding of the book is weak, but still intact. The ink is still dark and easily legible. There are several variations in how the letters appear in letterbook,[10] but the general appearance of the pages remains the same. ELP's handwriting is not cramped, but she clearly took care to maximize the space of the book by filling the entire page with writing—there are no empty margins on the top, bottom, or sides. She also wrote on the backs of pages. The convoluted dating of her entries suggests that letters and notes were put in this book in batches rather than copied as they were written.

The manuscript of Eliza Lucas Pinckney's letterbook resides at the South Carolina Historical Society. The letterbook spans approximately 35 years, from 1739 to 1762, though ELP's most active writing period was the early to mid-1740s—before her marriage to Charles Pinckney in 1744. Most letters in the letterbook are transcribed in full, but some exist only as passing memoranda; a quick one to two sentence summary of who she wrote to and why. As acting manager of a plantation, Eliza undoubtedly wrote many letters, but it is unclear what proportion of these ultimately made their way into this particular letterbook, what proportion were copied down elsewhere, and how many were not copied at all.[11]

Aside from the letters collected in the letterbook, there are approximately 100 other letters written in Eliza's hand scattered throughout special collections libraries in the United

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[9] Some scholars speculate that a small collection of Pinckney's letters at Duke's library may also be part of the letterbook. See Schultz's introduction to *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition*.

[10] At one point ELP flips the book over and writes on the back of pages. She also experimented with putting just one letter per page.

[11] Several scholars have noted that Eliza did not always copy her letters as she wrote them because there are instances where she clearly skipped pages in the letterbook to come back to those pages later. See Shultz's introduction *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition*, and Elise Pinckney's introduction to *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney.*

States. An 1893 biography about Eliza Lucas Pinckney, written by another descendant, Harriott Horry Ravenel, reprinted several letters written by Eliza that are not known to exist in manuscript form. Overall, Eliza Lucas Pinckney's collection of writings is composed of 281 letters, plus one recipe book. In addition to the written texts, the South Carolina Historical Society owns some of Pinckney's personal effects: a dress, two silk sashes, a pair of shoes, a brooch, various pieces of silver and a teapot. Another dress, made of silk from the Pinckney plantation, is among the holdings at the Smithsonian Institute. The Nathaniel Russell House in Charleston, South Carolina keeps a lute owned by Pinckney on public display in its drawing room. These items collected comprise one of the largest personal archives of any colonial woman known today.

Defining the Early American South

An Antiguan-born British subject living in colonial South Carolina is a curious choice to use as a representative of Southern culture, particularly when she did not conceive of herself in this way. In fact, to talk about the existence of a "South" at all prior to the formation of the United States seems anachronistic. To some extent, this project does use contemporary cultural constructions of southern-ness to understand and interpret materials produced in the Eighteenth Century. While it is true that ELP never self-identified as a southerner, it is equally true that her life was inexorably shaped by the material realities of the place in which she lived. Members of the Carolina elite strove to import British style and sensibility to their colony, but Charleston was far—in every sense of the word— from London. A short verse titled "A Description of Charles Town in 1769" by "Capt. Martin, captain of a Man of War" highlights some of the city's inimitable features:

> Black and white all mix'd together,
> Inconstant, stranger unhealthful weather

Burning heat and chilling cold
Dangerous both to young and old
Boisterous winds and heavy rains
Fevers and rheumatic pains
Argues plenty without doubt
Sores, boils, the prickling heat and gout
Mosquitos on the skin make blotches
Centipedes and large cock-roaches
Frightful creatures in the waters
Porpoises, sharks and alligators
Houses built on barren land
No lamps or lights, but streets of sand
Pleasant walks, if you can find 'em
Scandalous tongues, if any mind 'em
The markets dear and little money
Large potatoes, sweet as honey
Water bad, past all drinking
Men and women without thinking
Every thing at a high price
But rum, hominy and rice
Many a widow not unwilling
Many a beau not worth a shilling
Many a bargain, if you strike it
This is Charles-town, how do you like it.[12]

Two dominant themes appear in Martin's verse on Charles-Town. First, it is a place of social, economic, and geographic extremes. In this way, "A Description of Charles-Town, 1769" is reminiscent of J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's description of Charles-Town in his *Letters From an American Farmer* (1782), in which he explicitly connects environmental extremes to a personal degeneracy: "the rays of their sun seem to urge them irresistibly to dissipation and pleasure…" Martin's "Description" also emphasizes the corruptive possibilities of Carolina by highlighting the grotesque effects that it has on the body—fever, pain, sores, boils, gout and blotches. Thus, even as ELP felt culturally connected to England, her bodily presence in Carolina was also considered to be a personal connection to that space.

[12] This poem appears in Merrens's *The Colonial South Carolina Scene* (230-231).

The unique circumstances surrounding South Carolina's development as a colony, coupled with its geography, make it an ideal space to explore ideas and anxieties about space that resonated throughout the plantation colonies of British North America and the Caribbean. Where South Carolina differs from other early British colonies is in the chronic instability its colonial inhabitants had to negotiate. Even present-day historians struggle to place colonial South Carolina within existing socio-spatial models of the early Atlantic world. As a member of the original thirteen colonies that eventually came to form the United States of America, South Carolina is a part of the "Southern Colonies," a grouping that typically includes Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and occasionally, Maryland. This traditional grouping separates the colonies (North or New England, Middle, and South) geographically, and often emphasizes each region's distinctive economy.[13] Studies focused on the southern colonies specifically bisect the region using the terms Upper (or Chesapeake) and Lower South; highlighting distinctive features of each, while keeping the "South" intact.[14]

More recently, scholars have challenged this conception of southern-ness by arguing that South Carolina should be associated with Caribbean colonies such as Jamaica or Antigua. This shift exempts South Carolina from mainland North America, and transforms it from the southern-most part of the "South" to the northern-most part of a region known as the "Greater

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[13] The Southern Colonies are usually noted for their "agrarian" economy. There has been much debate in recent years over definitions of "agrarian" and how it relates to capitalism. For recent perspectives see, Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slave and the Making of American Capitalism; Beckert and Rockman, eds*., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*.

[14] "Slave society" is a term from Ira Berlin's *Many Thousands Gone*. According to Berlin, a slave society is one in which "slavery stood at the center of economic production and the master-slave relationship provided a model for all social relations: husband/wife, parent/child, employer/employee, teacher/servant, etc." (8). This is opposed to a Society with Slaves where slavery exists, but is marginal to economic processes. These terms give a more nuanced view of colonial slavery, as opposed to simple designations of "slave" or "free" colonies.

Caribbean."[15] There are several compelling reasons for this shift in perception, the primary one being that the large, mono-cultural plantations of South Carolina resembled the size and structure of Caribbean plantations far more closely than those in the Chesapeake.[16] Like Caribbean sugar plantations, Carolina's economic wealth depended overwhelmingly on a single commodity (rice). The enormous population disparities in the Caribbean were also replicated in South Carolina. These similarities make sense when we consider that many of Carolina's early planters were Caribbean transplants who migrated north in hopes of obtaining readily available land. The Lucas family was one such example of this migration.

What such competing theories reveal is a colony consistently on the periphery. Eighteenth-century South Carolinians may not have discussed their position in the world in the same using the same vocabulary as modern scholars. However, discussions about the fluidity of the colony's identity circulated in print and manuscript of the time. In global terms, the American colonies were on geographical and cultural fringes of the British Empire, whose imperial center lay over 4000 miles across the ocean. In colonial terms, South Carolina occupied a marginal position within that margin: either as the southern-most North American colony, or the northern-most Caribbean colony.[17]

Several local factors further strengthen the argument for South Carolina's geographic exceptionalism. Within the borders of the colony itself, planters found themselves constantly facing internal threats, such as slave rebellions. While rebellions were not unique to South Carolina, the demographic disparity, coupled with a brutal work regime was a visible(?) physical

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[15] For an in-depth exploration of South Carolina's relationship to the Caribbean see Mulcany's *Hubs of Empire: the Southeastern Lowcounty and British Caribbean* and Iannini's *Fatal Revolutions: Natural History, West Indian Slavery, and the Routes of American Literature*.
[16] Philip Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint* provides an exhaustive comparison of colonial slavery between the Carolina Lowcounty and Chesapeake.
[17] Technically, Georgia would become the southern-most British colony on the North American mainland, but this does not occur until the 1730s. Georgia's designation as a "buffer colony" for South Carolina makes it difficult to discuss here.

reminder of the smallness of their population. By the time ELP began her letterbook, fears about slave insurrection had been realized. In the spring of 1739, a group of twenty-one slaves struck out for Spanish Florida, destroying property and gathering participants as they advanced. The Stono Rebellion, named after the river where the movement originated, was the largest slave rebellion in the colonies before the Revolutionary War. Concerns about subsequent insurrections manifested themselves in new laws, many which legally defined the spaces slaves could and could not inhabit, and limited where and how they moved. South Carolina's Slave Codes of 1740 stated that slaves could not leave the limits of the plantation or town that they worked in without carrying written consent. Any slave apprehended without written consent was subject to "whipping on the bare back, not to exceed twenty lashes." Of course, legal restrictions could not be exacted in totality. Slaves moved around, in fields in cabins, on roads, in the water. If nothing else, such movements were necessary to keep the plantation functional. But "unauthorized" movements persisted, as evidenced in a 1743 note by ELP where she mentions "some Negroes detected going to Augustine."

Questions of spatial and cultural boundaries have been particularly salient for Southern Studies, a field whose very existence emerged from debates over socio-spatial distinctions. While those larger debates over southern spaces inform this dissertation, my approach to discussing the eighteenth-century plantation is less concerned with unified definitions of region, than it is looking at the interplay between physical and theoretical space. More specifically, this dissertation explores how planters literally manipulated plantation productions to enforce the planter ideals that they articulated in writing.

A seminal text of New Southern Studies, Michael Kreyling's *Inventing Southern Literature* (1998) argues that the literary production of early twentieth-century Agrarians was "a

willed campaign on the part of one elite to establish and control 'the South' in a period of intense cultural maneuvering" (xii). In this view the plantation myth is a twentieth-century reimagining of a nineteenth-century space. Scott Romine takes this idea even further in his book *The Real South: Southern Narrative in the Age of Cultural Reproduction* by describing the South as "simulacra": a romanticized narrative reproduced ad infinitum. Romine's ultimate example of the southern simulacra is Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the* Wind; specifically, the O'Hara's plantation Tara, which he refers to as the "ground zero of southern cultural reproduction" (27). Romine sees Tara as a Lacanian objet a: a thing that memorializes something that never existed in the first place. With Tara, we have an object removed from its history—an empty receptacle for desire, longing and homesickness. Removed from its history, Tara becomes whatever the story-teller wants it to be, even though what the plantation represents in actuality is a brutal slave regime.

Conceiving of the "South" as a combination of white desire, loss, fantasy, nostalgia and guilt effectively highlights the ways in which its existence is predicated on cultural fabrication more so than historical fact. Yet this approach not without its issues. In denying the existence of a South, or even a southern experience, scholars run the risk of silencing the people and experiences they were trying to uncover. Insisting on the cultural constructedness of the South effectively dismantles everyone's stories—or at the very least—they are all lumped together under the banner of "simulacra." Margaret Mitchell's moonlight and magnolias South is worlds away from the violent, politically charged world of Richard Wright. Are we willing to dismiss both stories as simple cultural reproduction? Such actions would be not only problematic, but irresponsible. The danger in applying the concept of simulacra, then, is that it can erase real experience.

Privileging the fictional plantation has been an important part of revising long-seeded beliefs about the alleged "paternal" nature of American slavery, but situating this "origin story" of the South as a product of the twentieth-century imagination has also yielded a body of scholarship that tends to neglect colonial history and literature. What I would like to argue, however, is that this fiction of the plantation existed long before the Twentieth Century. In fact, the myth of the plantation was constructed concurrently to the place itself, and the two fed into each other. The dual nature of the plantation cannot and should not be separated. This dissertation seeks to demonstrate what happens when we look at the plantation as both real and imagined space, and how such analyses can provide scholars with a fuller, yet more nuanced, idea of how it was constructed. Though my dissertation is positioned as an early American project, it also makes a significant contribution to Southern Studies by bringing the oft-overlooked colonial period to the fore. This dissertation is not meant to be a definitive proclamation on the place of the plantation in the American psyche. On the contrary, I believe my project extends and enhances discussions about the early American South by placing it within a tradition of both plantation literature and early American textualities.

Brief Outline of Chapters

The dissertation is divided into four chapters, each focusing on a material object owned or produced by Eliza Lucas Pinckney. Chapter 1 begins with ELP's letterbook and uses it to discuss the importance of literacy (particularly writing) to a planter's conception of self. Demonstrating a mastery of writing conventions was fundamentally important to ELP because it enabled her to carve her own niche in the hyper-masculinized arena of planter discourse. ELP is then able to use this position to control the literacy practices of others.

Chapter 2 uses the Lucas's South Carolina plantations to examine the symbiotic relationship between physical plantation spaces and ideological constructions of mastery. Eliza Lucas Pinckney's letters serve as a point of access into the three plantations she managed in her father's absence, and I argue that each of these spaces is distinctive in its attributes and purpose. Recognizing the uniqueness of each plantation while simultaneously viewing them as a collective unit highlights those spaces/people/processes are privileged by the planter's narrative, and which are silenced or hidden.

Chapter 3 examines a silk shawl belonging to ELP to demonstrate how she utilized traditional forms of female expression to assert her own narrative of mastery. The shawl was woven from silk that was grown and manufactured on a Pinckney plantation, and then embroidered by ELP herself. The details ELP employed in her design and construction of the embroidered shawl reveal a complex display of wealth, fashion and agricultural knowledge. At the same time, the shawl also reflected the values of the culture in which she lived— making a strong nativist statement for the value of Carolina, while simultaneously engaging the tastes of the metropole. With each careful stitch, Pinckney fused the delicate, and at times disparate, threads of her identity into one cohesive garment which celebrated her success as a female planter.

The final chapter discusses the legacy of ELP as she appears in texts from the late Eighteenth Century to the present day. Beginning with ELP's memorialization of her own work, Chapter 4 examines how her writing encouraged a legacy of female expression that was preserved and disseminated through subsequent generations of Pinckney women. At the same time, the chapter takes a critical approach to the valorization of ELP by examining how the efficacy of her legacy depends upon the historical silencing of enslaved populations. By putting

key passages of ELP's letterbook into conversation with popular eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts, this chapter attempts to fill some of the gaps in ELP's narrative to reveal the often-overlooked complexity of her colonial experience.

In analyzing the life and works of ELP, the goal of this project is to demonstrate how plantations were a synthesis of physical and ideological production. More importantly, this dissertation argues that analyses of plantation production must engage with both the real and the imaginary to responsibly interrogate the stories of the past without invalidating experiences of those who lived it. ELP's extraordinary life is the center of this narrative, and it is her story that animates the people and places who orbit it. With that in mind, it is important to remember that her story is not *the* story of the plantation. Rather, in showing how ELP pieced together her identity through a series of objects, I hope to suggest how these very same objects were utilized by others to piece together entirely different identities.

Notes on the Text

The current standard edition of ELP's work is Elise Pinckney's *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney 1739-1762.* This dissertation, however, uses the *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition*, edited by Constance Schulz. There are several reasons for this decision. First, the number of documents included in the *Digital Edition* far surpasses that of *The Letterbook*. The *Digital Edition* holds all known writings attributed to ELP, including the original letterbook, her recipe book, recipients' copies of ELP letters, and letters written post-1762. *The Digital Edition* also includes documents related to ELP, but not written by her, such as: the wills of George Lucas, Ann Mildrum Lucas, and Charles Pinckney, marriage settlements, loan/mortgage agreements, and letters between other members of her

immediate family. This expanded archive of ELP-related documents supplements some of the gaps in her text, and provides invaluable insight into the original letterbook.

Of equal importance is the approach taken by the editors of the *Digital Edition* in terms of manuscript editing. Unlike the *Letterbook*, which is edited for clarity, the *Digital Edition* of ELP's letters are printed to approximate the original manuscript source: "Archaic and misspelled words are retained without correction, abbreviations are left as they appear, and original punctuation and style (indentation, underlining, superscripts, capitalization, dashes, carets, etc.) are followed as closely as possible…" [18] Admittedly, a digital translation of the letterbook is limited in that it cannot reproduce the interactions between ELP and her writing materials that invariably manifest when reading a manuscript—a blot of ink on the paper that indicates a pause in writing, for example. Given the limited availability of the original texts, however, the *Digital Edition* is the most complete and accurate representation of ELP's work that exists today.

Within the *Digital Edition* each document is assigned a four-digit number. The citation ID for each document appears as "ELP" followed by the number. For the sake of clarity, this dissertation replicates the numbering system as set out in the *Digital Edition*. Quotations taken from documents in the *Digital Edition* are cited in text using the citation ID: for example, (ELP 0115).

This dissertation uses the abbreviation "ELP" to refer to Eliza Lucas Pinckney. Though not an ideal designation, I have found "ELP" to be the clearest and most concise way to refer to her without rhetorically diminishing her position as an author. This decision was based on several factors. Prior to her marriage in 1745, ELP signed her letters "Eliza Lucas" and post-marriage letters are signed "Eliza Pinckney". Since the temporal scope of this project spans

[18] For more on the transcription process, see Shultz's introduction to the *Digital Edition* http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/intro.xqy?doc=introduction

ELP's entire life, and most chapters cover the periods before and after her marriage, transitioning from Lucas to Pinckney and back again seemed unnecessarily confusing. Further complicating the matter is that George Lucas and Charles Pinckney were frequent ELP correspondents. Using "Eliza" was the most obvious choice, but the juxtaposition of the first name "Eliza" to male correspondents such as Pinckney and Lucas seemed to undermine ELP's authority within my own text by suggesting an implicit inferiority.

Chapter 1

O'er Virgin- Paper when the Hand we trace,

How new, how free, how perfect in ev'ry Grace!

So smooth, so fine, the nimble strokes we view,

Like Trips of Faieies o'er the Morning-Dew.

From George Bickham's *The Universal Penman*

For scholars of literature, discussion of the written word is often an exercise in the abstract. Our training compels us to look past the actual page, past the literal, and into an imaginary space of signs and symbols; relational concepts that approximate, but never reach, a unified truth. Within this transient and ever-shifting space of meaning-making, the physical items, processes and conditions surrounding the production of text are often relegated to a second tier of importance. Severing a text from the physical conditions of its production is particularly problematic for scholars of early American culture, and more specifically manuscript analysis, because it is within those moments of production—the folding of a letter, the up-stroke of a pen, a blotch of ink—that writers often revealed the most about themselves. The appearance of a person's writing was dependent upon both the materials they used, and the skill with which they used them; even the slightest variations in pen, ink, or paper could drastically alter the appearance of one's handwriting. Even a cursory examination of the letterbook reveals several interesting facts about ELP the writer—most notably the quality of what she produced. While ELP's handwriting does vary throughout the letterbook, the physical appearance of the words on the page is remarkably consistent, which indicates that ELP had access to fine writing materials,

and that she was well-practiced in the preparation and care of them.[19] In the discussion of eighteenth-century writing, practice and content should not, and ultimately cannot, be separated.

In the Eighteenth Century, the ability to fashion oneself was wrought through paper and pen, and no text better exemplifies this notion than John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. In an attempt to refute the commonly-held belief that "men have ideas stamped upon their minds in their very first being" Locke presents an alternative theory of the mind as "*white paper* with nothing written on it." In the former model, the individual is a passive object, while latter is defined only through its potential. Instead of being *stamped upon* by an outside entity, the eighteenth-century man had the ability to control what went on the page— in essence, he could write himself into being. For planters, whose sense of self was so intimately tied to material production, the process of writing assumed an even greater significance. Writing was not only a means to convey or record ideas and emotions for the planter, it was also an exercise in controlled creation; a manufactured mastery. In this way, writing, much like the plantation itself, served as a nexus for production of valuable materials—literal and conceptual.

Locke's image of the white paper was a salient symbol for contemporary audiences negotiating their own cultural and technological shifts in literacy pedagogy. Unlike modern conceptions of literacy where reading, writing, print and script are learned concurrently, early American reading and writing practices were highly stratified. Whereas reading was deemed a necessary ability for most people, writing was a far more regulated skill; usually confined to elite

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[19] For example, the appearance of ragged or feathered letters is often an indication that the writer's quill pen had dried out, or that it needed mending. The absence of this anomaly in ELP's letterbook suggests that she had consistent access to quills, as well as someone who knew how to properly (re)sharpen them. For more on writing materials, see Nickell, *Pen, Ink, & Evidence: A Study of Writing and Writing Materials for the Penman, Collector, and Document Detective.* Thomas Schafer's introduction to volume 13 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, provides a detailed explanation of variations in the kind and quality of ink that Edwards's used, and how those inks affected the appearance of the words on the page. Appendix D includes microscopic images of Edwards's writing to demonstrate the difference in ink texture.

members of society.[20] An increasing number of domestic printers met the need of a growing readership in the colonial period, providing access to relatively low-cost materials. The proliferation of print affected ideas about writing as well, "providing script with a symbolic function even as it diminished its practical utility" (Thornton 4). Printing presses *stamped upon* paper, transforming it into the newspapers, books, and broadsides that were then consumed by the public. In contrast, the writer exercised a measure of control over what appeared on the page. Unlike the printed text, that was "defined by its dissociation from the hand, the body, and the corporeal individual that created it," the handwritten letter "necessarily referred back to the hand, the body, and the individual in new ways" (Thornton 29). The pen was quite literally an agent of the writer's person, and writing, in turn, was an experience that allowed the individual to mark upon the white paper of their identity.

The letters of ELP Lucas are a particularly fruitful source for unpacking this complicated relationship between mastery, literacy, gender and production. As a young female unexpectedly thrust into a management role, ELP occupied a tenuous position within the plantation hierarchy: the female planter.[21] Giving a daughter or wife temporary authority over plantation duties (when no acceptable male heir was available) was not uncommon practice in the colonial Low Country, where high mortality rates threatened to destabilize an already insecure social structure. Despite the emergence of the female planter however, the dominant patriarchal structure of plantation society endured. Scholars attribute this to the conservativism of female planters who "played the dominant role while remaining in their subordinate place, which allowed them to move smoothly

[20] For more on colonial literacy as it relates to printed materials, see Hall, *A History of the Book in America: Volume I, The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World;* Moneghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*.

[21] As several scholars have noted, the wives and daughters of South Carolina's elite planters were often called upon to maintain or sustain plantations when a man was unavailable due to travel, disease or death. See S. Max Edelson "Reproducing Plantation Society: Women and land in colonial South Carolina", Inge Dornan "Masterful Women: Colonial Women Slaveholders in the Urban Low Country" and Cara Anzilotti "Autonomy and the Female Planter in Colonial South Carolina."

into the ranks of the male planter elite; they posed no threat to the social order while performing a necessary office, which ensured them an extraordinary degree of freedom" (Anzilotti 241).

I would like to both elucidate and complicate the "smooth" transition women like ELP made from daughter/mother to female planter by examining her writing practices from 1739 to her marriage to Charles Pinckney in 1744. Familial circumstances necessitated that ELP take over plantation responsibilities quickly. The transition to "female planter," however, was far more involved and we can see this borne out in the writing. ELP's consciousness of this insider-outsider status made her particularly attuned to the conventions of planter presentation, and viewing her texts through this lens demonstrates the extraordinary power of the written word as a tool for the cultivation of a stable plantation enterprise. Despite the limitations placed on her by age and gender, ELP was not a passive receptacle for patriarchal ideals; rather, she utilized these values as a tool a for creating a wider definition of master/planter. In addition to the rhetorical functions of ELP's writing, this chapter also considers the significance of the letterbook as a material object, and how the physical practice of writing is as important to the creation of identity as the symbols those mechanics produce.

18TH CENTURY LETTERS AND LETTERBOOKS

According to historian Lindsay O'Neill, "The Eighteenth Century was awash in letters" (9).[22] Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to overstate the significance of epistolary culture for members of the burgeoning British Empire. Whether they travelled to a neighboring town or across the Atlantic, letters were powerful agents of communication in both content and form. Epistolary culture embodied more than letters, however. To have a fuller understanding of how

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[22] The vast body of scholarship devoted to epistolary culture in the Eighteenth Century necessitates a focused bibliography of representative texts. For more on epistolary culture and its influence on America's early national period see Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (9-52). On the significance of letter writing manuals to the letter writing process see Part I of Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Writing Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (9-104).

letters functioned one must also look at the texts that helped produce them. For example, in her groundbreaking book *Empire of Letters*, Eve Tavor Bannet demonstrates the importance of letter writing manuals for eighteenth-century writers as well as the scholars who study them. These manuals provided their users guidance by "disseminating a single standard language, method and culture of polite communication." In short, manuals set the standard for epistolary communication; how a writer internalized (or did not internalize) these standards in correspondence is an interpretive question that can only be answered though the knowledge of both.[23]

The functions and conventions of eighteenth-century letter writing, in all its forms, are likewise vital when examining the extant texts of ELP. For example, in the early spring of 1741, ELP jotted a quick note to herself in what is now her only extant letterbook: "Wrote an answer to my papas 2 last letters 24th of March and finishd my last Coppy book with a letter to him dated the 20th of April" (ELP0750). The innocuous sentence is one in a series of memoranda ELP penned in an effort to keep track of her many correspondents; in this case, her father who was recently called away on military duty. In a letterbook containing hundreds of fully-transcribed letters, it is unsurprising that readers overlook the minutia involved in the practice of record-keeping. And even when such records are unpacked, there are often more questions than answers. Because ELP did not record these particular responses her letterbook, there is no way to know what she said, nor can we tell what her father asked of her. Also inaccessible to us is the finished copybook, in which ELP wrote another letter to her father. What the sentence does make apparent, however, is the incredible volume of text both written and read. ELP's note references no fewer than six texts: two letters from her father (March), one response to her father's letters

[23] For more on ELP and conventions of 18th century letter writing manuals, see Bowles "'You Would Think Me Far Gone in Romance': Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Fictions of Female Identity in the Colonial South."

(March), one letter to her father in April, and at least two copybooks. The passage also references three mediums of correspondence, each with their own distinct purpose: the letter, the letterbook, and the copybook.

The art and act of penmanship was a highly codified form of expression, and its production was thought to reveal character of the producer. Writing manuals, referred to as copybooks, demonstrated a variety of scripts for personal and professional use. In the Seventeenth Century, copybooks provided a diverse selection of specialized scripts; by the Eighteenth Century however, English copybooks focused their instruction on two basic scripts: English roundhand and Italian (FIG. 1) (Sloboda 338).[24]

Figure 1. Example of Round Hand and Italian Hand from George Bickham's *The Universal Penman* (210-211).

[24] For more on the differences between copy books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Douglas, "Making their Mark: Eighteenth-Century Writing-Masters and their Copy-books"; Ogborn "Geographia's pen: writing, geography and the arts of commerce 1600-1760"; Christen, "Boundaries Between Liberal and Technical Learning: Images of Seventeenth-Century English Writing Masters."

The more modern of the two, English roundhand was developed as a commercial hand because its relatively unadorned script was useful to merchants and other men of business (such as planters), whose occupations demanded extraordinary amounts of writing. As derivative of the older Italian script, roundhand "further simplified the Italian script, banishing the weighted extremities and thick/thin contrasts in favor or a rounder, thicker, more uniform letter shape that created an unprecedented textual legibility and visual clarity" (Sloboda 338). Aileen Douglas sees an explicit connection between the rise of English roundhand and the emergence of the British Empire, arguing that "penmen were strikingly single-minded in their view of what writing was for, and the copybooks are united in their promotion of writing as an engine in the development of England as a commercial nation. Eighteenth-century penmen grasped, and made explicit in their work, intimate connections between writing, social change, and the distribution of social power" (Douglas 145-146).

Addressed specifically to "the Gentleman and Scholar, as well as the Man of Business," George Bickham's *The Universal Penman*, was one of the most popular copybooks of the early eighteenth century. A compilation of scripts from the great masters of penmanship, *The Universal Penman* displayed model scripts through short poems or aphorisms that focused on moral issues such as virtue, learning, and love. Though the scripts and sayings vary throughout, the parts are thematically held together in that they guide the reader to a nearly impracticable perfection of character; or at the very least, a convincing performance of it. Bickham's introduction lays out the process succinctly: "[…] if the Learner is us'd to copy the great Variety of Examples which are here produc'd, his Hand will grow confirm'd in an Aptitude and Readiness, which will insensibly arrive at Perfection and Dispatch; and give in Writing, what we admire in fine Gentlemen; an Easiness of Gesture, and disengag'd Air, which is imperceptibly

caught from frequently conversing with the Polite and Well-bred." Bickham clearly connects gentlemanly behavior with proper handwriting, but more importantly, his claim reveals the constructed nature of such social designations. For Bickham, proper handwriting technique is not an inherent trait of the gentleman, but the product of exposure and practice. This is not to say that everyone could become a gentleman—Bickham is careful to differentiate the gentleman's script or conversation from the Gentleman himself. Instead, what *The Universal Penman* offered to "Learners" was the ways and means to produce and control identity through the mastery of a material practice. The far-reaching implications of this mastery are borne out in the pages of the copybook that follow. The act of writing was an opportunity to create and inscribe the self. The object created by writing (letter, diary, etc.) served two purposes. First, it conveyed conceptual sense of mastery through the language on the page. Just as important, however, the written artifact served as physical evidence of this personal formation. For a planter, the rhetoric of the copybook suggests that a mastery of writing was a necessary component for the mastery of other things, places, and even people. Whereas a letterwriting manual was an instructional text separated from the compositional space of the letterbook, copybooks combined these two functions, creating a reflexive textual space that demanded the writer consider both what he wrote, and how he wrote it.

Copybooks were not solely the purview of the planter or merchant; eighteenth-century women were also taught writing, albeit to different ends. The functional distinction between men's writing and women's writing was reflected in its form. The rise in roundhand's popularity, with its emphasis on utility, resulted in a "gender[ing of] script" (Sloboda 338). Men adopted Roundhand for its ease in commercial use, while women were encouraged to perfect the more delicate and decorative Italian hand. For young women mastery of handwriting was presented as

"a female 'accomplishment' on par with dancing, music, or, most appropriate, needlework…Penmanship training for girls, then, was more commonly paired with embroidery than with bookkeeping." (Thornton 8). [25]

Bickham's *Universal Penman* illustrates the unspoken tension present in the letterbook in a page titled "The Penman's Advice." Unlike the majority of *UP*, which is clearly catered to men, this particular page addresses both gentlemen *and* ladies. Notably, the two groups are not addressed together. The physical layout of the page emphasizes the difference between the two the advice for each group is split into two distinct columns and a line separates the different advice. The advice for gentlemen reiterates the connection between writing and power; suggesting that the man who masters penmanship will not only have control over his own virtues and desires, but can position himself at the helm of the British imperial project:

> Ye British Youths, our Age's Hope & Care;
> You whom the next may polish or impair
> Learn by the Pen those Talents to insure,
> That fix ev'n Fortune & from Want secure;
> You with a dash in time may drain a Mine
> And deal the Fate of Empires in a Line
> For Ease and Wealth, for honor & Delight
> Your hands yor Warrant, if you well can Write.
> True ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance
> As those move easiest, who have learn'd to Dance

In contrast, the ladies verse describes a smaller sphere of influence for such skill:

[25] For more on the connection of handwriting to corporeality, see Thornton (29); Stablie, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (74-128).

Ye springing Fair, whom gentle Minds incline,

To all that's curious, innocent, and fine!

With Admiration in your Works are read,

The various Textures of the twining Thread,

Then let the Fingers, whose unrivall'd Skill,

Exhalts the Needle, grace the Noble Quill.

An artless Scrawl ye blushing Scribler shames,

All shou'd be fair that Beauteous Woman frames.

Strive to excell, with Ease the Pen will move;

And pretty Lines add Charms to infant Love (29).

Clearly, the *Universal Penman* encourages the development of female penmanship, albeit for reasons different than mens. The importance of aesthetics is at the forefront of the ladies' poem; both in the text produced and the writer herself. Much as proper penmanship reflects the penman's virtue, a penwoman's beauty is conveyed through the quality of her writing. Likewise, poor penmanship—the "artless Scrawl"—has a negative effect on the female writer's appearance, making her blush in shame. Arguably, the ladies verse is not so different from the mens in that both position the skill of writing well as a means to achieving success. For the man, however, writing is as much a product as it is a production: the dash of the pen is what "may drain a mine" and a line has the ability to "deal the Fate of Empires." In contrast, the woman's writing is a static object, passively admired. The conflation of the pen and needle further enforces this limited view of woman's writing by subordinating symbolic value in favor of tactile sensation. The speaker specifically says that woman's writing/stitching is admired for its *texture*,

rather than the picture/meaning behind the larger work. In fact, there is no indication that a woman's work is read at all: its value is sensual, ornamental.

Copybooks served as practice books or instruction manuals for writing, both in terms of mechanics and composition. The practice of writing, and writing well, was extremely important to 18th century planters because, as Tamara Plakins Thornton notes, "the workings of commerce entailed a tremendous amount of written material: daybooks, ledgers, waste books, invoiced, bills of lading, receipts, and all manner of business correspondence" (6). Writing was essential to managing the business of a plantation; but more importantly, writing style and appearance served as a way to vouch for the abilities of the correspondent. Even though there is no way to know exactly what kind of copybook ELP had, the fact that she had one at all is quite illuminating because it suggests that she was invested in the conventions and practice of writing, and ultimately in producing a corpus of work that legitimized her position. Observing the handwriting in ELP's only extant letterbook, it appears that her handwriting is a variation of the English Roundhand. The script of the letterbook is devoid of embellishment and the thickness of the pen line does not change, or varies only slightly (FIG. 2). Given that ELP used her letterbook as a drafting space for new letters, as well as a recording space for letters sent, the plain style of her handwriting reflects the utility of the documents she was (re)creating. ELP probably used a slightly different style of writing for the letters intended for others; unfortunately, those recipients' copies have not survived.[26] While it is possible that ELP learned a "fair hand" as a means of female accomplishment, the handwriting in the letterbook suggests that, for her, writing held value beyond aesthetic qualities.

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[26] Very few recipient's copies of ELP's letters have survived. Those that do reside in the archives date from the 1770s and 1780s: a decade after ELP stopped writing in her letterbook.

While Roundhand and Italic were the two most popular scripts in the Eighteenth Century other scripts were still used by smaller, specialized, populations. Two letters in ELP's letterbook mention her use of another script: shorthand. Using symbols to represent groupings of letters or complete words, shorthand scripts were complex and specialized enough to warrant their own instructional books, and did not appear in copybooks.[27] Shorthand had two distinct advantages over other types of writing. First and foremost, shorthand allowed writers to produce text faster; a useful skill for those who needed to record human speech, or for those with numerous documents to compose and copy. In the preface to his *Stenography Completed, or the Art of Short-Hand*, James Weston prescribes the shorthand method of writing for a variety of groups, but notes that its advantages are "especially [useful] to those in great Business, such as *Members of Parliament, Ministers of State, Gentlemen of the Clergy, Law* and other Professions" (Preface). Not coincidentally, those who would best utilize the advantages of shorthand also occupy the most influential and prestigious positions in society—once again emphasizing the link between power and the ability to produce the written word.

Thus, as writing masters like George Bickham praised the art of penmanship as an essential reflection of a man's character, Weston's shorthand book seemed to argue for its antithesis: writing as a necessary utility. Much of this perceived disjoint is dissolves when each script is put in rhetorical context: documents written in shorthand were generally copies or drafts, implying that each shorthand document had a more finely rendered counterpart. Aside from this, the practicality of shorthand should be conflated with ease or carelessness. If anything, those who took the time to master shorthand were invested in writing's social currency beyond the average gentleman. Shorthand supplemented more commonly used scripts, but its production

[27] "Shorthand" here refers to a specific type of writing, as opposed to a single, standardized script. Section II of James H. Lewis's *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of Short Hand* (1816) provides a thorough overview of seventeenth and eighteenth-century shorthand varieties.

was a unique language unto itself. And while a master of shorthand could produce text quickly, beginners found the process time-consuming and laborious. "I am a very Dunce," ELP admits in a February 1741 letter to Charles Pinckney, "for I have not acquired ye writing short hand yet with any degree of swiftness, but I am not always one for I give a very good proof of the bright of my Genius when I can distinguish well enough to Subscribe my self with great Esteem" (ELP 0747). ELP continued to practice and improve her shorthand, and it seems as though she gained some level of proficiency. The only other mention of shorthand occurs in a 1742 letter to Mary Bartlett, where she lists it, along with French, as a skill that requires maintenance, "least for want of practise it should be quite lost" (ELP0115). Shorthand demanded a large initial investment from its users, but for those who took the time to master the script, its utility was invaluable.

Ironically, it was shorthand's greatest disadvantage—the laborious acquisition process—that made it attractive to many users. Shorthand's unfamiliar characters, coupled with its relatively small pool of users, meant that those who could write shorthand were effectively writing in code. Though by no means insoluble, those who knew a shorthand script could easily deploy it for "*concealing* what they would not have lie open to every Eye" (Weston *Preface*). Planters, such as William Byrd, infamously exploited the clandestine nature of shorthand to record the most intimate moments of his daily life.[28] Thomas Pinckney, ELP's youngest son, also kept a shorthand diary as he served in the First South Carolina Continental Regiment during the Revolutionary War. While Thomas Pinckney's use of shorthand was borne out of necessity more so than a need to conceal (his letter specifically cites a shortage of paper as his impetus for

[28] William Byrd kept diaries in shorthand that chronicled his daily activities in pain-staking detail. Entries cover everything from the mundane events of the day (eating boiled milk for breakfast), to violent interactions with slaves, to salacious records of sexual activity. Byrd used shorthand from William Mason's *La Plume Volante. Or the art of short-hand inprov'd* (1707). The extant diaries were translated in the 1940s and then published in three volumes as *The Secret Diaries of William Byrd of Westover*. For more on the process of translating Byrd's diaries, see Marion Tinling's introduction to *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*.

using shorthand), a letter to his sister, Harriot, illustrates the considerable effort required to translate these texts: "I am keeping a very concise Journal of the most material Occurances, but as I am obliged for want of Paper to keep it in short hand. If I should not return myself, it will be of Little account to you unless you can procure somebody who can read Byrons short hand of which mine is an humble imitation" (ELP0533).[29] Thomas Pinckney clearly intended his journal be translated, but in order to do so, Harriot not only had to find someone with knowledge of Byrom's shorthand, but this translator then had to decipher the idiosyncrasies of the individual writer.

Without examples of ELP's shorthand, assertions as to how, and to what extent, she used this script are admittedly speculative. That being said, the investment ELP made in learning and maintaining her shorthand implies that this skill held significance for her both personally and professionally. ELP's letters repeatedly emphasize the importance of industry and practicality—shorthand must have satisfied one, if not both, of these values if she continued to use it. Furthermore, ELP's use of shorthand suggests that she was more involved in the business aspects of her father's plantations than previously thought. Identifying these lost texts recognizes the diversity of ELP's literate practices, and suggests that she well understood the connection between writing as performance and writing as power.

Though ELP's copybook and shorthand text(s) are presumably lost, acknowledging their presence opens up new avenues of interpretive possibilities for the text that we do have: her letterbook. At its most basic, a letterbook was a blank book in which a letter-writer kept copies

[29] The "Byron" Thomas Pinckney refers to in his letter is actually John Byrom, a British poet and creator of the popular *Universal English Shorthand*. For more on Byrom's shorthand see Underhill "John Byrom and Shorthand in Early Eighteenth-Century Cambridge."

or drafts of the letters that he or she sent.[30] A general assumption is that the text in a letterbook mirrors the text in its corresponding letter, much like a modern-day copy machine produces a facsimile of an original document. But intended usage rarely bears out in practice, and the material remnants of these books suggest that they served a function beyond mere record-keeping. The duration of a letterbook depends on the size of the book and how the writer used it, but could range from several months to decades. The longevity and repeated usage of such texts provides several unique analytical opportunities. Most significantly, letterbooks allow us to chart changes in letter writing over time; both in the relationships between the writer and a particular recipient, and the relationship of the writer to his or herself.

There are some unique challenges with letterbooks, however. Generally, a single letter bears physical signs of its journey from one person to another, such as creases in the paper from folding, a lettersheet, or residual wax from a seal. Perhaps the most reliable evidence that a letter was sent is its physical presence within the recipient's effects. But these traces of exchange do not exist for the letters contained in a letterbook. Contextual clues from subsequent entries often suggest that the previous letter was received and responded to, but even then, one cannot be sure that the text in a letterbook exactly matches the text that was ultimately sent. Furthermore, it is possible that a letter's appearance in a letterbook is the only copy; it may never have been sent at all. Occasionally writers marked these drafts explicitly, as was the case for John Custis, who crossed out entire pages of his letterbook to indicate that a letter was not sent (Zuppan). Conversely, a writer might not have copied every letter he or she wrote. The ambiguity of the transition from letterbook to letter or vice versa, reflects the individual preferences of the writer

[30] For some writers, the letterbook was a compositional space where the epistle was initially crafted and perhaps revised before the contents were transcribed onto a sheet of paper and sent to the recipient. Considering the high price of writing tools in the Eighteenth Century, keeping a separate book to work out initial drafts seems prudent, though such economic concerns probably weighed less heavily on the minds of planters than they did the average colonist.

and how they utilized a particular letterbook. In all likelihood, the breadth of one's correspondence was spread across several books concurrently, not contained in a single entity. Writers occasionally cross-reference other books in source material, thereby giving presence to those texts which are no longer extant in the archive.

Even within a single letterbook there are often inconsistencies. Letters could be written and entered as they were conceived, or copied in groups days or even weeks afterwards. If a letter was already sent, its corresponding letterbook entry might be a recreation from memory or a summary of the original's contents. Various entries in ELP Lucas Pinckney's letterbook reflect all of the above. Analyzing patterns in her handwriting, Constance Schultz makes a convincing argument that ELP often copied letters in "batches," meaning that she transcribed several letters into the book after they were written elsewhere. There are several letters where words are X-ed out or changed, which suggests that she could have used the book for drafting or editing letters. Several early letters to her father are summarized with short paragraphs, an indication that is significant because it suggests a certain amount of curation, whether intentional or not, on the part of the writer.

As a private text, the function of a letterbook reflected individual needs, but unlike other personal documents, the contents of a letterbook were produced, ultimately, for an audience. The literary conventions of epistolary writing were detailed in the aforementioned letter writing manuals, but this was not the only standard by which a letter was judged. That the beginning of the letterbook coincides with the departure of her father hardly seems coincidental, suggesting that the book was to serve in some sort of business capacity. Yet it is clear, even early on, that this is neither the only, nor the primary book ELP uses for business records. Weeks, sometimes months pass between entries. The early entries are especially uneven in their purpose: fully

transcribed letters are interspersed with summaries and one-line notes. Details of business seem to be purposefully left out of this book. From 1739 to 1744 ELP specifically mentions 26 letters sent to her father. Of those twenty-six letters, only seven are fully-transcribed in the letterbook. The other 19 exist only in summarized form. In two of the summaries, ELP notes the length of the letters she sent: five and seven pages, respectively. Aside from the letters to her father, ELP records seven other letters about plantation affairs; some addressed to overseers, others to merchants. None of these letters were transcribed in the letterbook. In contrast, of the seventeen letters ELP writes to her friend Miss. Bartlett, fifteen are fully transcribed.

These contextual clues suggest that this book was not intended to hold the letters which detailed plantation affairs, but rather record ones more personal in nature. In terms of the letterbook, it is possible, and even likely, that ELP chose to "minimiz[e] the role of business in her text," but that does not necessarily mean that she did so in all of her writing (Bowles 44). The loss of ELP's copybooks and their corresponding letters could be seen as problematic to an analysis of planter rhetoric in that it is within these documents that ELP would actually performing the female planter role. On the contrary, because the letterbook's letters tend to be more personal in nature, they give us a glimpse of the preparation, or rehearsal, before the performance. The letters within the letterbook show a woman constructing identity, but perhaps more importantly, they show that this identity had to be negotiated within masculinized spaces--theoretical and physical. ELP does not mention the exact type of copybook(s) she uses, nor are there records indicating what books and/or subscriptions the Lucases had. It is clear, however, that the gendered expectations of writing, as laid out in Bickham's *Universal Penman*, were embedded in eighteenth-century print culture. ELP demonstrates a clear knowledge of those

expectations in her early letters. Knowing that she is entering a textual no-(wo)man's-land, ELP's letters grapple with self-presentation and identity.

It was with these social expectations ingrained into her mind that a young ELP picked up a quill and wrote the first note in her new letterbook: a short note to one of her father's colleagues, Mr. Boddicott. Using a letterbook was practical necessity for a planter with "the business of three plantations to transact." But the letterbook performed a symbolic function beyond mere documentation; writing in the letterbook also became a self-legitimizing exercise for ELP. With each letter she recorded, ELP acted out the role of a planter while simultaneously creating a physical testament to her abilities. Producing the letterbook signified her legitimacy as a planter, and in turn, this archive sanctioned her repurposing of the letterbook to encompass a wider variety of epistolary correspondence. In this way, we can view also ELP's letterbook as the first iteration in a series of objects that demonstrate her commitment to production of a female planter identity.

For example, in a letter to a former teacher in London, ELP describes the activities of her typical day, which include both business and pleasure:

> I have a little Library well furnished (for my papa has left me most of his books) in wch. I spend part of my time. My Musick and the Garden wch. I am very fond of take up the rest of my time that is not imployd in business of wch. my father has left me a pretty good share and indeed 'twas inavoidable as my Mama's bad state of health prevents her going through any fatigue. I have the business of 3 plantations to transact wch. requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine but least you should imagine it too burthensom to a girl at my early time of life give me leave to answer you I assure

> you I think myself happy that I can be useful to so good a father and by rising very early I find I can go through much business (ELP0152).

In this letter, ELP clearly and explicitly identifies the two distinct roles she occupies. There are the activities of a wealthy young lady (reading, gardening, music), followed by the duties of a planter (business, writing). Much like Bickham's "Advice to Ladies and Gentlemen", the activities of the female and the activities of the planter are physically separated in the letter. ELP's transition in grammar further seems to separate the two worlds. The female pursuits are written as objects: she has a "Library," "Music" and "Garden" to keep her occupied (as opposed to reading, playing music, or gardening). In contrast, the planter activities require far more exertion, to the point of being "burthensom."

Although ELP ties the act of writing to business, and thus the world of the planter, there is no indication that this letter to Mrs. Boddicott has caused ELP any of the fatigue that accompanies the business writing. Unlike letters to her father, where she emphasizes her capabilities to perform business tasks, ELP's letters to female correspondents attempt to mitigate the tension between the two identities by couching planter activities around those of a genteel lady. In an astute rhetorical move, ELP anticipates and answers imagined questions or objections from her correspondents, thus allaying the recipient's fears before he/she has a chance to express them. In the above letter to Mrs. Boddicott, she anticipates Boddicott's concerns about the burden of business for a young woman and repackages it as an act of filial duty.

The letter continues with another query and answer: "But least you should think I shall be quite moaped[31] with this way of life I am to inform you there is two worthy Ladies in Charles

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[31] Probably an alternative spelling of moped, which the OED defines as: "To remain in a listless, apathetic condition, without making any effort to rouse oneself; to abandon oneself to ennui; to be dull, dejected, and spiritless."

Town, Mrs. Pinckney and Mrs. Cleland, who are partial enough to me to be always pleased to have me with them." To balance out this "moaped" (i.e. plantation) way of life, ELP notes that two *ladies* often solicit her presence Charles Town. Between these two women and Mrs. Boddicott, ELP constructs a network of traditional feminine role models whom she can look to at times when the business of the plantation threatens to overtake her identity. Mrs. Pinckney and Mrs. Cleland can physically take her away from the plantation, while the correspondence of Mrs. Boddicott removes her from the discourse of business. Yet despite these clever rhetorical maneuvers, the separation of identities that ELP attempts to construct is not feasible; her performance of dual identities is undermined by the physical realities of her existence. Despite Mrs. Pinkcney's and Mrs. Cleland's "insist[ance]" that she make "their houses my home when in town," ELP says that they "press me to relax a little much oftener than 'tis my honor to accept of their obliging treaties."

Regardless of whether Boddicott directly expressed and uneasiness with ELP's plantation activities, it seems that people with direct and consistent contact saw the situation as curious at best, disconcerting at worst. To Miss Bartlett, ELP expresses a hesitancy to share her day's activities, despite her correspondent's entreaties: "Why, my dear Miss B, will you so often repeat your desire to know how I triffle away my time in our retirement in my father's absence. Could it afford you advantage or pleasure I should not have hesitated, but as you can expect neither from it I would have been excused; however, to show you my readiness in obeying your commands, here it is" (ELP0115). ELP's characteristic self-deprecating humor is in full effect here, as the remainder of the letter reveals the meaning of "trifling" as an endless series of obligations: reading from five am to seven, surveying the plantation "to see that the Servants are at their respective business," music, French and/or shorthand practice, teaching, more music, needlework

until evening, and "from that time to bed time read or write." But the humor also diffuses judgment (either perceived or real) regarding her active role in plantation affairs. In other letters, ELP comes across as a mentor to Bartlett; offering (sometimes unsolicited) advice, but more importantly, cultivating an intellectual curiosity in her younger correspondent. Here, however, the information about her day is released as courtesy to the tenacious Bartlett, as ELP argues that it will offer neither "advantage or pleasure" to the young woman. As a young woman herself, ELP's letter implicitly acknowledges that her actions are at odds with traditional femininity.

Perhaps the most interesting passage in the letter comes at the end where she addresses Bartlett and Bartlett's uncle, Charles Pinckney (her future husband). After revealing an ambitious plan to plant a fig orchard, ELP characteristically demurs through commentary that anticipates her reader's disapproval:

> but was I to tell you how great an Estate I am to make this way, and how 'tis to be laid out you would think me far gone in romance, yr. good Uncle I know has long thought I have a fertile brain at schemeing, I only confirm him in his oppinion; but I own I love the vegitable world extreamly I think it an innocent and useful amusement & pray tell him if he laughs much at my projects I never intend to have my hand in a silver mine and he will understand as well as you what I mean (ELP0115).[32]

Within this passage we see how the traditional rhetoric of mastery is blocked off to women.[33] Despite ELP's knowledge of the land and plantation management, she must not overstate her abilities when conferring with a white male because this would threaten the very structure that she garners her power from—mastery depends on the obedience of inferiors.

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[32] For more on ELP's fig orchard, see chapter two.

[33] Though the letter is addressed to Miss Bartlett, the implication is that the letter will be read by the entire Bartlett family.

Kristen Wood explains the fine line that the slaveholding widow, or any plantation mistress, must traverse: “In theory, slaveholding widows acknowledged the principle of white men’s dominance. In practice, they rejected the notion that as women they must defer to any and all white men” (9). ELP upholds this theory by cleverly characterizing her mind as fertile, a move which feminizes her brain. This move diffuses anxieties ELP’s correspondents would have had about her role as a master; in tying the female brain to the land ELP implies that both are available for cultivation by the knowledgeable man.

Within the letter, ELP also positions her fertile brain in contrast with a silver mine. The image of the mine harkens back to Bickham’s advice poem for British (male) writers, which connects mastery of the pen to global power: “You with a dash in time may drain a Mine/And deal the Fate of Empires in a Line.” As her letter makes clear, however, ELP has no intention to “drain a Mine.” Placed within the context of Bickham’s poem, ELP’s comment seems to be a clear acknowledgment of patriarchal authority. Yet at the same time, ELP makes no pretentions to dropping her pen, or curtailing her plantation activities; if anything, the letter demonstrates her commitment to becoming a *better* planter. In true Enlightenment fashion, ELP identifies her errors in order to improve upon them. In this particular instance, ELP “has fallen prey to Romance not primarily through the heedless pursuit of fictitious profits…but rather from her enthusiasm for botany” (Iannini 123). While acknowledging that she needs to temper this enthusiasm, ELP simultaneously confirms her understanding of planter rhetoric by “drawing a firm distinction between commercial agriculture (redefined as disinterested learning) and more base forms of extracting value from the earth (particularly mining)” (Iannini 123). Far from a disavowal of enterprise, ELP’s letter assures her correspondents that she will continue on this path, though she will do so responsibly.

Convincing Mary Bartlett and Charles Pinckney of her abilities was one thing; assuaging her father's fears for his Carolina investments was another. Col. Lucas depended on his daughter's correspondence for updates on his plantations as well as news from the mainland colonies and England. Most letters from ELP detail the condition of the crops (particularly those seeds sent by Lucas from Antigua), make note of unusual plantation occurrences, and pass along local news. Yet ELP's correspondence was not limited by the confines of the plantation. She also kept her father apprised of larger developments such as Spanish hostilities in nearby Florida. ELP's reports occasionally came with additional commentary, including several scathing remarks on the ineptitude of Georgia's Governor Oglethorpe. In short, Col. Lucas was just as dependent on ELP for information as she was on him. This complex balance of personal and professional identities required a deft hand, and several letters between ELP and her father reveal the tension between the power of ELP the informant, and the deference of ELP the daughter.

At one point, Lucas writes to his daughter, in apparent frustration, about a lack of correspondence on her part. Lucas's original letter did not survive, but his daughter's reply supplies context for the original epistle, in which Lucas apparently chides his daughter for indulging in birthday preparations at the expense of her duties.

> You complain of my letter of the 21st of Octr. and account for its shortness by my prepareing for the then approaching birth Night give me leave Sir to asure you I had a much better excuse than going to a ball for not writing more fully to you and such a one as I am sure you would be glad I should be without as 'tis no other than haveing on at that time a blister to my Neck and one to each temple for a pain in my head and from wch I have found some benefit (ELP0802).

As a man with experience in plantation management, Col. Lucas obviously knew the slew of daily responsibilities he bestowed upon his daughter when he made her a proxy-planter. The shortness of her letter could result from any number of things. The fact that Lucas conjectures any reason, and this reason in particular, for the shortness letter is significant for several reasons. First, it shows a level of anxiety on the part of Lucas. Dependent on ELP for information about his Carolina plantations, it seems as though no news is bad news. More importantly, however, is how this anxiety manifests itself in the now-missing letter. Lucas assumes negligence on the part of his daughter, and he attributes this negligence to a quintessentially feminine "concern": preparing for a ball. Lucas clearly trusted his daughter's judgment—he would not have given her such responsibilities if he did not—yet his comments suggest an implicit dichotomy between female interests and planter interests. For Lucas, perhaps it was this question that weighed heavily on his mind as he composed the letter: was it possible to adequately fulfill the roles planter and woman simultaneously?

Without the original letter it is impossible know exactly how Col. Lucas worded his critique—was his tone playful, serious, or somewhere in between? Whatever the tone, and whether it was intended or perceived, ELP's uncharacteristically firm response reveals how much she valued this position within the household, however tenuous it was.[34] In the response to her father, ELP not only refutes his insinuations, but adds a layer of guilt by revealing that it was in fact, illness which kept her from writing on the day in question. ELP's response emphasizes the "dialogic quality of letters" (Pearsall 15).

Yet while this passage clearly establishes ELP's dedication to her father (and her identity as a planter), it does so seemingly at the expense of a feminine social identity. ELP can be a good

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[34] The nature of her response also defies letter-writing conventions of the time, which emphasized regret and reaffirmed duty on the part of the negligent writer. See Complete Letter Writer.

planter for her father *because* she is not interested in balls, or life in fashionable Charleston society. As she explains to her friend Mrs. Boddicott, “My Papa and Mama’s great indulgence to me leaves it to me to chuse our place of residence either in town or Country but I think it more prudent as well as most agreeable to my Mama and self to be in the Country during my Father’s absence” (ELP0152). Despite the allure it holds, ELP rejects the urbane identity of Charleston, opting instead to construct her own narrative in the lowcountry fields.

ELP’s defensiveness in the 1742 letter to her father is better contextualized through an earlier letter to Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney (first wife of Charles Pinckney) in 1741. Following a brief visit to Charleston, ELP returns to Wappoo and is dismayed that “that every thing appeard gloomy and lonesom [at Wappoo].”—a marked contrast to the “giddy gayety” she found in the urban environment (ELP0965). Similar to the effusive “romance” she feels toward the plant world, this unexpected alteration in her mood is problematic for ELP because it represents a potential fissure in the planter identity she so carefully constructed.

ELP uses this seemingly benign observation on a change in her mood to frame a larger philosophical discussion of Locke and identity. Feeling her rational mind betrayed by impetuous emotion, ELP explains that she “was forced to consult Mr. Lock over and over to see wherein personal Identity consisted and if I was the very same self” (ELP0965). Having previously expressed distaste for the excessive lifestyles of Carolina’s city-dwelling elite, ELP’s less than enthusiastic reunion with her country plantation is surprising to her. The invocation of Locke, however, suggests that what is at stake for ELP in this moment is far more significant.

The notion that an individual could use their experiences to (re)define themselves was a central idea in Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding*. A perennial favorite among the Enlightenment-influenced planters of the Eighteenth Century, Locke’s philosophy emphasized

the power of individual agency to develop knowledge and personal identity through lived experience.[35] Such development could only take place, however, if the subject was in completely in control of his or her emotions. This "radical disengagement", as Philip Cushman terms it, was "a stance that would objectify and instrumentalize the self…in order to remake the self" (Cushman 377). Planters often expressed this process of disengagement via the written word.[36] Within William Byrd's *Secret Diaries*, for example, nearly every event is presented through this lens of Lockean self-improvement. The direct, almost emotionless, way that Byrd writes corroborates the claim that one function of the diary was to take inventory of his day—what he accomplished and what he failed to do.[37]

The page and pen were obvious compliments to this theoretical process, supplying a literal blank page upon which to authenticate this new self. More than a method of self-(re)definition, Locke also argued that all things—physical beings to abstract ideas—should be subject to question. Engaging in the process of disengagement was an active calling, one that "demands that we stop simply living in the body or within our traditions or habits and, by making them objects, for us, subject them to radical scrutiny and remaking" (Taylor 175). ELP used this logic to challenge and remake the patriarchal definition of mastery, and the letterbooks and copybooks are the physical manifestation of this process. It is through the physical and intellectual processes of writing, an act that was also regulated by strict socio-economic boundaries, that ELP challenges gendered paradigms of planter identification by composing a new model within which she could participate unquestionably.

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[35]ELP likely read Locke's *Essay* in 1741 when Charles Pinckney loaned the text to her. Pinckney must have given ELP books with some frequency—she also mentions receiving Virgil's Georgics from him in the same year.
[36] Planters were not the only ones to do this. In Part II of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography,* his plan for achieving Moral Perfection revolves around carefully taking inventory or his various "errata."
[37] Notably, Byrd often positions himself in opposition to his wife, Lucy, whose presence in the diaries is almost entirely confined to her irrational and "feminine" outbursts, such as when she refuses to go to Williamsburg if she cannot pull her eyebrows (296).

ELP AND SLAVE LITERACIES

Overall, ELP's epistolary voice presents a master that exudes confidence and control despite the limitations that gender places on such power. She utilized both her letterbook and copybook as sites for exploration and reformation of her identity. ELP realized that literacy was a powerful tool, but the ability to control one's literate practices was a skill far more powerful. Learning to read and write provided access to the literate world; mastering these discourses opened up the possibility of *changing* them. ELP's letterbook reveals how she subtly carved out a space for herself within hyper-masculinized space of planter discourse. While ELP was certainly an outsider in this literacy community, her presence was not particularly threatening as her writing upheld their values. When put into the "wrong" hands however, reading and writing could just as well disrupt or even destroy these structures.

Planters had always been weary of educating their slaves for fear that such knowledge could threaten the overall stability of the plantation system, but these anxieties intensified in the years immediately following the Stono Rebellion.[38] As a result of the rebellion, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a series of statutes collectively referred to as the 1740 Negro Act. The fifty-eight statutes, presented by Speaker Charles Pinckney, constricted nearly every aspect of slave life, from the buying and selling of commodities (XXX) to travelling in groups larger than seven (XLIII). The statutes also addressed citizens' behavior towards slaves, with a particular emphasis on communal surveillance. Without this sustained, cooperative effort on the part of white colonists, the slave codes would have little, if any, practical impact in effectively controlling enslaved peoples. To this end, the statutes further codified difference between enslaved and free by identifying privileges available exclusively to the latter group—most

[38] For more on the Stono Rebellion, see Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*; Smith, *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt.*

notably writing. Planters knew that it was functionally impossible to monitor all their slaves at all times, but they mitigated this absence through the use of written passes.[39] Slaves were required to carry passes for a variety of reasons, most related to travel beyond the confines of the plantation. When such instances occurred, the statutes stipulate that the slave must be either "in the presence of some white person" *or* "have a ticket of license, in writing, from his master, mistress or overseer…" The written pass served as an embodiment of whiteness; a mark that any— and only— other white persons could read. The written word was thus imbued with a power that extended beyond the symbolic meaning of characters to the physical practice itself. Similar passages appear throughout the codes, and each instance reiterates the implicit connection between writing and whiteness. The codes are explicit in their condemnation of teaching slaves to write, however. Statute XLV states:

> And *whereas,* the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; *Be it therefore enacted* by the authority aforesaid, That all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereinafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, to write, or shall use or employ and scribe in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person and persons, shall, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds of current money.

To put this offense in perspective, one hundred Pounds was also the fine for any white man who "willfully cut out the tongue, put out the eye, castrate[d], or cruelly scald[ed], burn[ed], or deprive[d] any slave of any limb or member…"

The relationship between writing and power was clearly defined by the slave codes, but other literacy practices, such as reading, were not addressed with the same decisiveness. ELP

[39] Passes are often referred to as "letters" or "tickets" within the Codes.

mentions her desire to teach her slaves to read twice in the letterbook. The first, coincidently, is in a 1741 letter to Charles Pinckney where she announces that she has "…a Sister to instruct, and a parcel of little Negroes whom I have undertaken to teach to read…" (ELP0747). By 1742, ELP had expanded her plan to include what seems to be a sustainable educational design for the plantations' enslaved population.[40] She explains to Miss Bartlett: "I devote the rest of the time till I dress for dinner to our little polly and two black girls who I teach to read, and if I have my papa's approbation (my Mamas I have got) I intend for school mistress's for the rest of the Negroe children another scheme you see" (ELP0115). In conflating reading with writing, previous scholarship has used these passages as evidence of exceptional behavior on the part of ELP; suggesting that she was one of a handful of planters who defied law and custom to provide their slaves with—what they felt—were skills of fundamental importance.[41] In all likelihood, ELP's "scheme" to teach her slaves to read was not attended without some level of controversy, as is suggested by her comment that she first obtain permission from both parents. Yet the notion that ELP was trying to challenge or transform the institution of slavery is unlikely given that she first reveals her plan to Charles Pinckney: Speaker of the Carolina Assembly, and an instrumental player in the creation of the 1740 Codes.

ELP's education project demonstrates that she was part of a larger conversation regarding the ethics of Christian slavery in South Carolina during the 1730s and 1740s. It also shows how

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[40] It is difficult to estimate how many enslaved children would have attended this school. The most complete population figures available are for Garden Hill in 1745. Records list 79 enslaved persons in total: 35 men, 16 women, 17 boys and 11 girls. At GH, roughly 35% (28/79) of the enslaved population was children. If this percentage is applied to the other two plantations, there would be an estimated 14 children at the Combahee River plantation (35% of 40), and 11 children at Wappoo (assuming that the 20 named slaves in ELP's 1744 marriage settlement are adults)— a total of 53 children across the three plantations.

[41] In *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South*, Eugene D. Genovese claims: "Throughout the South, churches and individuals quietly defied the proscription [of literacy laws], and the bolder spirits campaigned against it…The Lucas family in the Carolina low country, including the celebrated Eliza Lucas Pinckney, spent much time in the education of their slave children…" (25). Likewise, Mary Beth Norton's *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* states: "In rare instances black children learned to read and write. Both Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Eliza Foote Washington instructed some of their slaves in the rudiments of literacy" (258).

eighteenth-century literacy practices were sharply delineated. In these decades flanking the Stono Rebellion, planters struggled with several ideological and practical issues regarding their stewardship over enslaved peoples. As the early Eighteenth Century progressed, southern planters found themselves the subject of religious critique, one which accelerated as the evangelical fervor of the First Great Awakening took hold in the colonies.[42] One of the most damning, and well-known, indictments of southern slave owners was George Whitefield's "To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina, concerning their Negroes," which was published by newspapers from Pennsylvania to South Carolina throughout the year 1740. Whitefield admonished planters for the brutal work regimen they imposed on their slaves, but even more significant, he argued, was the spiritual darkness they kept their slaves in. "Enslaving or misusing their bodies, comparatively speaking, would be an inconsiderable evil, was proper care taken of their souls" Whitefield admits, "but I have great reason to believe, that most of you on purpose keep your negroes ignorant of Christianity" (150). Whitefield rebutted claims that Christianity would make slaves "proud, and consequently unwilling to submit to slavery" by asserting that a *proper* Christian education would accomplish the exact opposite:

> Do you find any one command in the gospel, that has the least tendency to make people forget their relative duties? Do you not read, that servants, and as many as are under the yoke of bondage, are required to be subject in all lawful things to their masters, and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward?…But some will be so bold perhaps as to reply, "That a few of the negroes have been taught Christianity, and notwithstanding have been remarkably

[42] In general, the southern colonies were not as invested in the Great Awakening as their northern counterparts were. Committed to the Anglican Church, many South Carolinians viewed the enthusiasm of the Great Awakening with skepticism. For more on the tensions between Anglicanism and evangelicalism in colonial South Carolina, see Laing, "'Heathens and Infidels'?: African Christianization and Anglicanism in the South Carolina Low Country, 1700-1750"; Jackson "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in Colonial South Carolina."

> worse than others." But what Christianity were they taught? They were baptized, and taught to read and write: and this they may do, and much more, and yet be far from the kingdom of God; for there is a vast difference between civilizing and Christianizing a negroe.

Whitefield's differentiation of "civilizing" from "Christianizing" is significant here because it highlights a preexisting connection between religion and literacy that planters found threatening, or at the very least, disruptive, when made accessible to slaves.[43] Whitefield's missive urged planters to reconsider their resistance to religious instruction for slaves by suggesting that, when skillfully deployed, Christian instruction would produce contentedly obedient bondsmen.

Whitefield's letter made an impression on Charleston's planter elite, though the reactions were certainly varied. Some, such as Hugh Bryan, embraced the preacher's message, while others found his comments incendiary. Of particular concern were Whitefield's allusions to recent rebellions: "And indeed, considering what usage they are commonly met with, I have wondered, that we not have more instances of self murdering negroes, or that they have not more frequently risen up in arms against their owners. Virginia has been once, and Charlestown more than once, threatened this way" (149). Whitefield even went so far as to argue that the Stono Rebellion and yellow fever epidemic of 1739 should be read as punishments from god, visited on the planters for their inhumane treatment of slaves.

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[43] In Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, he consistently expresses a desire to learn how to read and write. He is provided with this opportunity while in London with his master Captain Pascal. Pascal sends Equiano to attend his sisters, the Miss Guerins, who allow Equiano to attend school. The Guerin sisters also insist that Equiano be baptized, to which Pascal reluctantly consents (78). This anxiety also plays a central role in Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*. Mr. Auld forbids his wife to teach Douglass to read, which in turn sparks a revelation in Douglass: "Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master…I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost or trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering" (64).

Misgivings of Whitefield aside, planters clearly saw some validity in his arguments. Whether motivated by genuine religious conviction, a desire for control, or a mixture of both, many planters incorporated some form of religious instruction into their slaves' lives.[44] Such acts of "calculated benevolence", as Peter Wood has termed them, provided slaves with a modicum of autonomy, and planters hoped that these limited liberties would diffuse tensions and prevent another large-scale rebellion from happening (324).[45] Though Whitefield's text suggests that literacy is not a necessary component of religious instruction, most colonists saw the ability to read as a requisite skill for practicing Christianity.[46] Unlike writing, which empowered its practitioners to explore the possibilities and limitations of identity, reading "was taught purely to inculcate Christianity [and] Christianity was believed to inculcate docility" (Monaghan 321).

Within this context, it seems likely that ELP's plan to educate her slaves was a direct response to the social and political conflicts that embroiled the low country in the 1730s and 1740s. Letters written by ELP confirm that she was familiar with Whitefield's work, and she knew about the ecumenical controversy surrounding his visit to Carolina in 1740[47] Within six months of these letters, ELP was introducing her "scheme" to Charles Pinckney. Whitefield was

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[44] Early efforts to convert Carolina's slaves to Christianity were spearheaded by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG); a missionary extension of the Anglican Church. The SPG founded the Charles-Town Negro School in 1743, though its tenure was short-lived (closed in 1764). For more on the Charles-Town Negro School and how slaves utilized literacy instruction, see Watson, "'Good Will Come of This Evil': Enslaved Teachers and the Transatlantic Politics of Early Black Literacy"; Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (75-110); Lambert, "'I Saw the Book Talk': Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening."

[45] Some codes evinced protections for slaves by legislating a basic standard of living that planters should provide. Code XXXVIII stipulated that a master could be reported for failing to provide his or her slaves with "sufficient cloathing, covering or food." Other codes limited slaves' labor: Code XXII prohibited masters from employing their slaves on Sundays, and Code XLIV stipulated that slaves could not be made to work more than fifteen hours a day. It is difficult to accurately gauge the efficacy of these statutes, as reporting and prosecution of such offenses depended solely on the testimony of other white people.

[46] For more on the connection between reading and Christianity in colonial America see: Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (46-80).

[47] In a 1741 letter to Charles Pinckney, ELP thanks her correspondent for giving her a volume of Whitefield's *Journal*. In a summary of her 25 July 1740 letter to her father, George Lucas, ELP mentions that she gave an "Acct. of Mr. Whitefield and the Ecclesiastical Court house".

not the only minister calling for the Christianization of slaves, however. Reverend Alexander Garden, a frequent correspondent of the Lucas and Pinckney families, had his own “blueprint for plantation pedagogy” that he introduced to London in 1740 (Watson 73). As the Anglican commissary of the Carolinas, Georgia, and the Bahamas, Garden was tasked with finding the most effective method for educating slaves. By and large, Garden’s conclusions are less focused on *how* to educate slaves than on *who* should be educated. Rather than teaching the “whole Body of slaves, of so many various Ages, Nations & Languages”, Garden argued that planters should concentrate on “Home-Born” slaves under the age of ten. Furthermore, Garden claimed that the most effective teacher was not the white master or mistress, but another enslaved person.

ELP’s 1742 “scheme” to teach her slaves clearly mirrors the plan advanced by Garden in 1740, which suggests that she was far more engaged in plantation politics than previous scholars have given her credit for. Ultimately, ELP’s education of her slaves must be put within the context of what Brian Street refers to as “colonial literacy”, wherein a “member of an outside culture introduced their particular form of literacy to a colonized people as part of a much wider process of domination” (qtd. in Watson 71). Unlike ELP’s entrance into planter discourse, which demanded careful negotiation of gendered expectations, her entrance into this rhetorical space was far less restrictive. If, as historical documents of the time period seem to suggest, planters saw literacy instruction as a way to better control an increasingly volatile labor force, then ELP’s identity as a woman mattered less than her status as a white slaveholder. It is at this moment that the connection between writing and power comes into sharpest relief. As she carried on the business of her father’s plantations, ELP carefully maneuvered through a rhetorical space which was not intended for her. Yet the very fact that she had such maneuverability puts her into contrast not with other (male) planters, but with enslaved peoples who were barred from

engaging in writing of any kind. In teaching her slaves to read, ELP upheld "the unstated but deeply held belief among colonists that writing acquisition was somehow the hallmark of the free. Quite apart from forging a pass, it marked a person's identity in a way that the skill of reading did not" (Moneghan 271).

When ELP's status as a slaveholder is challenged by an outsider, however, she relies heavily on male-centered discourse to bolster her authority. We see this most clearly in her letters to friends and family regarding the Hugh Bryan incident. Bryan, also a wealthy South Carolina planter, was a recent convert of George Whitefield, the famous preacher of the first Great Awakening. Bryan was so moved by his new-found evangelicalism that he donated money to help Whitefield open a school in Charleston to reach black children how to read. Additionally Bryan, along with his brother, gathered slaves together on his plantation in order to teach them Christianity. Such actions obviously made Bryan the subject of intense suspicion and anxiety, particularly in light of the Stono Rebellion just three years earlier.

It was his "prophesy" however, that alarmed citizens to the point that the South Carolina government became involved. ELP summarizes the incident in a letter to her father: "Mr. H.B. had been very much deluded by his own fancys and imagined he was assisted by the divine spirit to prophesy: Charles Town and the Country as farr as Ponpon Bridge should be destroyed by fire and sword, to be executed by the Negroes before the first day of next month. He came to town—60 mile—twice besides sending twice to acquaint the Governor with it" (ELP0800). As the Grand Jury prepared to bring charges against Bryan, he was guided by a divine spirit to seclude himself in the woods until his prophesy came to fruition. When it did not, Bryan came out of hiding and apologized for the incident.[48]

[48] Interestingly, historical accounts of Bryan frequently cite his abduction (and subsequent enslavement) by Native Americans during the Yamasee War as the reason behind his "eccentricity" (Jackson).

Despite the gravity of the situation, the tone of ELP's letter comes across as almost indifferent about the matter. Even Harriott Horry Ravenel, ELP's ever-compassionate nineteenth century biographer finds Lucas's nonchalance puzzling considering "Wappoo lies well within the district thus devoted to fire and sword, and the two ladies [ELP and her mother] and little Polly, ELP's sister, were there alone" (33). What Ravenel reads as nonchalance is not an unmoved attitude, however. To the contrary, ELP's verbal bravado is a tactical move, an attempt to regain the control that Bryan has obviously disturbed.

In addition to the letter to her father, ELP writes news of Bryan to at least two other women, and asks one of them to pass the information on to a third, another indication that this situation rattled the nerves of many slaveholders. Lucas's most extended commentary on Bryan comes in a letter to Miss Bartlett. Lucas's letter exudes confidence, chiding Bryan not for potentially starting a rebellion, but for letting his passions get the better of him,

> I am willing you should participate of the pleasure we enjoyed yesterday by hearing Mr. B is come to his sences and acknowledges with extream concern he was guided by a spirit of delution wch. carried him the lengths he has lately gone under a notion of inspiration: Poor man! With what anguish must he reflect on making the spirit of God the author of his weaknesses, and of disturbing the whole community, who tho' they knew him to be no prophet dreaded the consequence of his prophecys coming to the ears of the African Hosts, as he calls them. I hope he will be a warning to all pious minds not to reject reason and revelation and set up in their stead their own wild notions (ELP0123).

ELP's letter feminizes Bryan while simultaneously affirming her position as a leader of the community: he was a man out of his senses, weak, wild and unreasonable. She, by contrast, is

completely in control, not only of her emotions, but of the telling (and writing) of his story. Furthermore, by shifting her focus from the slaves to Bryan, ELP explains, and thereby contains, the actions that she is not able to understand. The threat of insurrection is perhaps too much a reality for ELP to confront. Unable to control or contain such actions by slaves, she displaces this "wildness" entirely onto the head of Bryan by concluding that "they highly dishonor ~~of~~ our religion ~~to~~ who affirm there is anything in it contrary to reason."

The Hugh Bryan incident was obviously significant to ELP in terms of the safety and stability of the plantation. On another level, the incident created a rhetorical opening for ELP to challenge the status of planter mastery. Immediately preceding the transcription of her letter to Bartlett, ELP wrote about Hugh Bryan to her father, which she then summarized in the letterbook. Her characterization of Bryan in this letter is similar to that of the Bartlett letter, though her tone is less moralizing:

> Mr. H. B. had been very much deluded by his own fancys…from thence he went on (as it was natural to expect when he gave him self up intirely to his own whims) from one step to another till he came to working mirracles and lived for several days in the woods barefooted & alone and with *his pen and Ink* to write down his prophecies till at length he went with a wand to divide the waters and predicted he should die that night but upon finding both fail, the water continued as it was, and himself a living Instance of the falicy of his own predictions was convinced he was not guided by the infalible spirrit but that of delusion and sent a letter to the speaker upon it wch I here inclose you [emphasis added] (ELP0800).

The second letter again deploys feminizing language in regards to Bryan, but there is also an emphasis on the power of the written word. Though planters were perpetually concerned by the

threat of slave rebellions, Hugh Bryan's radical outspokenness, coupled with the fresh memory of Stono, created an atmosphere of extraordinary anxiety among the colony's elite. Yet in the ELP letters, her anxiety is not directed towards slaves, but to Bryan himself. Or rather, what Bryan represents. As he ventured off into the woods (a space often associated with disorder and lawlessness), the Bryan brought weapons with him—pen and ink.[49] With pen and ink, Bryan *wrote* his prophesies; implying that his intended audience was literate. Based on ELP's description, Bryan's foray into the woods was not to galvanize slaves, but rather other planters.

The pen and ink comment creates a rhetorical opening for ELP to assert her abilities as a master by questioning the evaluative criteria that define the position. In so doing, ELP once again utilized Lockean philosophy to challenge standard definitions of mastery, without threatening the concept itself. Using her own knowledge and experience, ELP mounts a critical interrogation of what a planter should be. On the surface, Bryan fits the planter model: he is white, land-owning, and male. But as the letters, and his behavior, demonstrate, Bryan is an ineffective master at best. At worst, his behavior threatens to dismantle the lowcountry plantation system all together. By embedding the pen and ink image within her description of the volatile and delusional Bryan, ELP implicitly critiques the assumed relationship between men, writing, and power. In its place, ELP "[re]construct[s] a picture of things following the canons of rational thinking (Taylor 168). Using Byran's inability to properly assert his mastery as a case in point, ELP's writing serves as a powerful counter-example of what a master can be.

CONCLUSION: REDEFINITION AND LIMITATIONS

The writings of ELP reveal the complexity of early American literacy practices, and the far-reaching socio-economic effects that accompanied their acquisition and deployment. As an elite white woman, ELP enjoyed an education beyond what most colonists received at the time.

[49] The relationship between nature and identity formation is discussed directly in chapter two.

While the pool of women writers in the first half of the Eighteenth Century was relatively small, a (white) woman who acquired the ability to write was not unusual, nor was she thought of as subversive—provided that she complied with the conventions of the medium.[50] For ELP, writing had many functions: letters to Mary Bartlett culminated in a close friendship; letters to her father conveyed news, while copybooks held details of business transitions. All of these texts are, to varying degrees, accessible through the archive of the letterbook. One of the most interesting features of the letterbook, however, is the way in which ELP uses it to compose herself.

We see the culmination of this in her marriage to Charles Pinckney. Marriage may seem like an unusual end for someone so invested in creating a planter identity, but in many ways, ELP's capacity to choose a husband speaks directly to her power as a decision maker. Four years earlier, ELP transcribed her first letter in the letterbook. The letter was to her father, and in it, ELP responds unfavorably to two potential suitors. To "Mr. L", she requests that her father "let him know my thoughts on the affair in such civil terms as you know" before adding that "the riches of Peru and Chili if he had them put together could not purchase a sufficient Esteem for him to make him my husband." ELP ends the letter by declaring that "a single life is my only Choice and if it were not as I am yet but Eighteen hope you will aside the thoughts of my marrying yet these 2 or 3 years at least" (ELP0736). There is no record of George Lucas's response, but marriage is never discussed in the surviving correspondence again, suggesting that ELP's refusals were met with approbation.

When ELP and Charles Pinckney decided to marry in 1745, George Lucas approved of the match, but it is clear that he did not suggest the union; choosing to trust his daughter's

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[50] For more on women's literacy practices in early America see Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak*; Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South.* Both Kerrison and Kelley focus their studies on the second half of the Eighteenth Century, and first half of the Nineteenth Century, when widespread advocacy for women's education took hold in the colonies.

judgement instead. In terms of wealth and status, she chose well. For her father, George Lucas, ELP’s marriage to Charles Pinckney must have come as a source of relief, as there was now a man to manage his Carolina holdings. The marriage also came with a dose of humility, as he needed to provide a dowry for his daughter. In an unusually forthright letter, Lucas explains “the Incumberances of my estate” to his future son-in-law. The surviving document that details the marriage settlement is significantly damaged, but in it he appears to describe the events that led to him mortgaging all his Carolina property. Eventually, he reveals to Pinckney that “I can’t propose to give my Daughter more than Five hundred Pounds Sterling and not in ready money.” The cash-poor Lucas cannot offer Pinckney money, “but in lieu of it I am willing to Settle on you Sir or<...> marrys her my Plantation at Wappoe with twenty working Slaves” (ELP0211). Looking at a copy of the marriage settlement, we see that this is exactly what Charles Pinckney agreed to: the Wappoo Plantation and twenty named slaves.

What is noteworthy about this agreement is not what is named, but the implicit monetary promise of what the agreement represents. The Wappoo plantation was where ELP performed her indigo experiments, and industry that was finally beginning to gain some traction both on Lucas’s plantation and the colony at large. Included in the slaves given to Charles Pinckney was a man named Quash (later John Williams) who worked at the cultivation of indigo during ELP’s tenure as plantation manager. The marriage settlement specified land and slaves, but these things were most valuable when coupled with ELP’s knowledge of the plantation workings. In this way, the real value of the dowry lay in ELP’s knowledge and the enterprise she created.

Anticipating that the transition into marriage may be difficult for a daughter accustomed to making the decisions of a planter, George Lucas sent a letter to his daughter with advice about her position within the marriage. ELP’s response provides some context for this letter: “I am

greatly obliged to you for your good advice in my present happy relation…I am well assured the acting out of my proper province and invading his would be an inexcuseable breach of prudence as his superior understanding without any other consideration would point him to dictate; and leave me nothing but the easy task of obeying" (ELP0813). How ELP actually felt about "the easy task of obeying," after her tenure as a decision-maker is unclear, but her response shows that she was aware of the status quo and willing to follow it. Pinckney was planter and master now, and he easily assumed the role his wife had fought so hard to cultivate.

One of the duties of this role was to help disseminate the expertise his wife had compiled. As a dedicated civil servant, Pinckney published a series of essays about indigo in the *South Carolina Gazette* under the pseudonym "Agricola." The essays have two main objectives: one, to advocate for agricultural innovation by way of integrating indigo into crop rotations, and two: to provide practical instructions to other planters as how to best produce the dye. Agricola's essays were not singular in this regard, dozens of other tracts about indigo also appeared at this time, both in South Carolina and Great Britain. While Agricola's letters were written by Charles Pinckney, it was widely known that ELP was behind much of the information printed. Agricola's essays reflect ELP's attitude in her letters; but whereas ELP had to cloak her innovation under the guise of "schemes" for the benefit of posterity, Agricola can tout the virtues of experimentation as means to "the profit and advantage of the planter": "I would therefore presume to recommend it to the consideration of all of our Planters…to set aside but one third part, or even but a quarter part of their slaves from making rice, and employ them in making Experiments upon any of those numerous articles which bounteous nature had made the climate and soil of this capable of producing, more than sufficient to answer the labour of the most

industrious hands". As a man, Charles Pinckney could disseminate information in a way and through a medium that ELP could not— the newspaper.[51]

By drawing distinctions between herself and those who could not write (or those who could write, but did so in a socially unacceptable way), ELP exploited the intimate connection of body to script and embraced her position as a producer of texts. These texts, in turn, served as legitimizing artifacts as she attempted to create a space for herself within the male-dominated discourse of plantation mastery. The writing (or lack thereof) that she produced once she married Charles Pinckney is as much a testament to her successful negotiation of literacy conventions, as it is an example of their limitations.

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[51] This is not to say that women did not appear or write in newspapers. Inge Dornan's essay "Masterful Women: Colonial Women Slaveholders in the Urban Low Country" shows that urban female slaveholders often published advertisements or notices in the *South Carolina Gazette*. These advertisements and notices revolved around the management of slave labor: notices for runaways, advertisements for the rental of slave labor, etc. Such publications are much different than the extended essays published by Agricola.

Chapter 2

In a 1743 letter to Mary Bartlett, Eliza Lucas described a visit she made to Crowfield Plantation located approximately twenty miles to the north of her Wappoo Plantation. Crowfield was evidently one stop on a tour of plantation homes put together by Charles and Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney, who wanted ELP to see "those parts of the Country, in wch. are sevl. very hansome Gentns. Seats."[52] ELP was clearly taken with William Middlefield's country estate, as is evidenced by her unusually romantic, and detailed, description:

> The house stands a mile from, but in sight of the road, and makes a very hansome appearance; as you draw nearer new beauties discover themselves, first the fruitful Vine mantleing up the wall landing with delicious Clusters; next a spacious bason in the midst of a large green presents it self as you enter the ~~house~~ gate that leads to the house wch. is neatly finishd, the rooms well contrived, and Elegantly furnishd. from the back door is a spacious walk a thousand foot long; each side of wch. nearest the house is a grass plat ennamild in a Serpentine manner with flowers, next to that on the right hand is what imediately struck my rural taste, a thicket of young tall live oaks where a variey of Airry Chorristers pour forth their melody; and my darling the mocking bird joynd in the artless Consert and inchanted me with his harmony. opposite on the left hand is a large square boleing green sunk a little below the level of the rest of the garden with a

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[52] Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney was Charles Pinckney's first wife. Mary Bartlett was their niece. The Pinckneys were family friends of the Lucases and occasional correspondents of Eliza. Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney died in 1744; Charles Pinckney and Eliza Lucas married several months later.

William Middleton inherited Crowfield, a 1030 acre inland rice plantation, from his father. William built the plantation house in 1730, and he developed the gardens at Crowfield between 1730 and 1743. Crowfield is said to be one of the oldest ornamental gardens in colonies, and it allegedly served as an inspiration for Henry Middleton's Middleton Place gardens. William Middleton left Carolina for England in 1754, and the plantation was sold to a series of absentee landlords. Crowfield has long since been dismantled (the site of the gardens is now part of a golf course), but the gardens at Middleton Place exist as an historic landmark.

> walk quite round composed of a double row of fine large flowering Laurel and Catulpas wch. form both shade and beauty. My letter will be of an unreasonable length if I dont pass over the mounts, Wilderness &c and come to the bottom of this charming spott where is a large fish pond with a mount rising out of the middle the top of wch. is level with the [dweling] house and upon it is a roman temple, on each side of this are other large fish ponds properly disposed wch. form a fine prospect of water ~~of~~ from the house. beyond this are the smiling fields dressed in Vivid green; here Ceres and Pomona joyn hand in hand to crown the hospitable board. thus I have given you a very languid discription of a delightful place…(ELP0130).

ELP's description of Crowfield may be "languid", but the space itself is vibrant and alive with movement. The house does not appear, but rather makes an appearance. Vegetative beauties do not merely present their leaves and petals, but "discover themselves". Everything about Crowfield Plantation is active: the buildings, the landscape, even ELP herself. As she winds her way through the house and gardens, ELP's language encourages Miss Bartlett to experience the space alongside her correspondent. The temporal and spatial distance between writer and reader is suspended as Crowfield Plantation takes center stage, with the letter serving as a reproduction of the plantation's performance.

Absent from ELP's description are the other people who accompanied her. Once she enters into the twenty-three acre garden, there is no mention of her travel companions, the Pinckneys; the Middleton family; or the slaves who lived and worked on that plantation. Yet Crowfield Plantation was undoubtedly populated by dozens of people, free and enslaved. The construction of plantation societies at large, as well as individual plantations, depended on vast

networks of people and knowledge for their existence. Though these people may be invisible to, or perhaps ignored by, ELP, the plantation space required their labor. Details such as the serpentine shape of the flower beds announce the presence of human intervention. The labor involved in such ornamental pruning is considerable, yet this maintenance pales in comparison to the work required of slaves to create the gardens in the first place. After Middleton decided on the basic outline for his garden, the major construction commenced. Archeological reports provide some context for the amount of labor involved in such an undertaking. Digging the large fish ponds, for example, displaced approximately 1,300,000 cubic feet of soil (Adams and Trinkley 4) that then had to be managed.[53]

Within the garden space this labor was increasingly obscured as the plants matured. ELP is so enchanted by the gardens that, other than the fields ELP sees in the distance, there is little suggestion she is touring a plantation at all. ELP's depiction of Crowfield mirrors other works in the pastoral tradition: "Pastoral develops such 'intervals of bliss' into a permanent dissociation of aesthetic from practical modes of being in the environment…the landscape as object of beauty and space of leisure is screened off from the labor of creating and maintaining that landscape (Sweet 89). Behind Crowfield's pastoral screen was one of the largest inland rice plantations in the colony.[54] From ELP's privileged position, the "smiling" fields might have appeared bright and happy. For those laboring in the rice fields, Huckhole Swamp was not a pleasant place to be. Throughout the lengthy fourteen-month rice cycle, slaves often labored in "stagnant muck" fighting insects, animals, weather, disease and fatigue (Berlin 146). "The rice cycle was"

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[53] Adams and Trinkley go on to explain that this soil "went into not simply the earthworks, but also raising the elevation of the garden about a foot from the original ground surface. As the garden area was being filled, Middleton or his designer was careful to insure that a "trough" of fertile soul was placed at the interior tow of the earthen berms on the interior terrace. These would later serve as beds for the plantings on each side of the garden" (4).

[54] For more on inland rice plantations and how it differs from tidal rice see Smith, "Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Low Country."

according to Philip Morgan, "the most arduous, the most unhealthy, and the most prolonged of all mainland plantation staples" (149). Rice required major manipulation of the land as well: "Slave workers drained the swamplands and constructed an elaborate series of embankments, canals, and reservoirs to store water" (Mulcahy 97). Despite this extreme contrast in appearance, the plantation fields and gardens were not antithetical, but complementary. Nothing about the plantation was haphazardly placed; each building, field and garden was part of a highly politicized organizational system. The fish ponds at Crowfield were not just for show—they also served as emergency water reservoirs for the rice fields (Garrow and Elliott). What ELP experienced as natural and leisurely was the product of meticulous planning, extraordinary effort, and sustained violence.

Poetic liberties aside, ELP's picturesque unification of home, garden, and fields was not the product of an innocent imagination.[55] The idyllic scene—crowned by the image of Ceres and Pomona entwined— was something for which all planters strove. [56] As the goddess of gardens, fruit trees, and orchards, Pomona represented the plantation as a natural space, while Ceres, Roman goddess of agriculture, benevolently oversaw labor. By invoking Ceres, ELP seems to peek behind the pastoral screen; subtly acknowledging that her leisurely walk in the garden is supported by some form of labor. Yet the Ceres of ELP's creation seems more connected to the smiling fields of vivid green than she is the labor of Huckhole Swamp.

ELP's description of Crowfield follows patterns of what Timothy Sweet refers to as the plantation pastoral (95). "In this economy of nature," he argues, "there is some human

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[55] ELP's letter is the only known description of the Crowfield gardens. Three archeological digs have been performed on the gardens in the last thirty years, and all cite ELP's letter as the primary source for information about the garden's layout. See Garrow and Elliott, *Crowfield Archaeological Survey*; Adams and Trinkney, "Searching for the Elusive Plantation Landscape at Crowfield."

[56] Invocations of Ceres and Pomona appear throughout eighteenth-century agricultural and/or natural history works. The rich tradition of neoclassical gardening was popular both in Britain and the colonies. For more on eighteenth-century gardening and its relationship to neoclassicism, see Bushman, *The Refinement of America* (100-138).

intellectual input…but nobody actually seems to plant, cultivate, or harvest the ground thus prepared" (96). In other words, by elevating the significance of cultural and intellectual labor, the plantation pastoral reimagined other forms of labor, such as that performed by slaves, as a product of the planter's knowledge and skill. Reading ELP's letterbook through this socio-spatial lens, this chapter illuminates the symbiotic relationship between physical plantation spaces and the theoretical structures organizing them. Early planters saw themselves as the "Great Author" of the plantation. Assuming this role served as a symbolic acquisition of power that was supported by the practical action of establishing plantation organizational patterns and boundaries. Authoring the plantation space was important for planters because it gave them a physical presence, much as writing provided a literary one.

Becoming a planter went beyond simply acquiring the land. It was a process of constant cultivation and innovation: of the self, of others, and of the physical landscape. It was this need to continually (re)articulate the plantation space that drove planters to improve their lands—agronomic *and* ornamental. The plantation space came to serve as a physical measure of a planter's abilities writ large. In this way, ELP's activities-- from her tour of Crowfield to her cultivation of indigo-- were not exceptional, but representative of the planter ethos that her male counterparts were likewise diligently seeking. The careful production of actualized and idealized space was a conscious manipulation on the part of ELP, one that consolidated her authority through the exhibition of mastery.

SETTING THE STAGE: THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF CAROLINA

The narrative structures that girded developing plantation spaces were not necessarily unique to colonial South Carolina. Rather, the plantation served as an organizational model for various communities in the Americas-- from the Pilgrims' Plymouth Plantation to the tropical

sugar plantations of Jamaica. A plantation is, quite literally, the place where planted things take root and grow. Increasingly dissatisfied with social and economic prospects in their home countries, Europeans looked to the Americas as a place to settle, and hopefully flourish. Early writers produced detailed accounts of their experiences overseas, describing encounters with peoples, geographic elements, weather, and the natural world.[57] These descriptions were designed to mobilize potential colonists by emphasizing the untapped potential of overseas outposts, and their ability to fuel socio-economic progress. Despite the considerable risks that accompanied such settlement, promotional writing idealized the American landscape as "promising material ease without labor or hardship, as opposed to the grinding poverty of previous European existence" (Kolodny 6).

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, the colony of Carolina seemed on the brink of greatness. "This Province," begins a 1710 promotional tract, "is capable of containing above 60 times the number of its present Inhabitants; and there is no Place in the Continent of *America*, where People can transport themselves to greater advantage." Promotional literature of the early Eighteenth Century depicted Carolina as a "terrestrial paradise," either implicitly or explicitly raising comparisons to the Garden of Eden and Land of Canaan (Merrens 532).[58] Writing in 1731, Mark Catesby noted that Carolina was "a country inferior to none in fertility, and abounding in variety of the blessings of nature." In his *Description of South Carolina* (1707), colonial governor John Archdale put these claims into more tangible terms. According to his appraisal, once Europeans taste fruit from Carolina, they "will for the future despise the watry

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[57] For more on the ways early colonists processed and depicted their relationship to the natural world of the Americas, see Kolodny, The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters (10-25); Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (13-66); Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (3-18).

[58] Merrens notes that most promotional literature about Carolina specifically appeared during a sixty-year period from 1680 to 1740 (531). For more on South Carolina promotional literature, see Greene *Selling a New World: Two Colonial South Carolina Promotional Pamphlets* (1-32).

and washee Tast of them here in England." Carolina's fruit was not only superior in taste, but more abundant as well. Adding insult to injury, Archdale casually notes that "their Plenty make them the Food of the Swine" (10). Though each pamphlet had its unique take on promotion, all of them promoted South Carolina as a place of seemingly limitless abundance. For early Europeans contemplating the move to Carolina, promotional tracts implied that there was something for everyone in the colony: those with the means could achieve *greater* advantage, while those less fortunate had the opportunity to begin anew. Carolina would enrich the lives of its stewards on a small scale, and the British Empire at large.

The certainty of profitable enterprise in Carolina that promotional writers espoused was more than a matter of opinion; it reflected the climatological theory of the time period. Early modern scientists believed that latitude was synonymous with climate across the world. In theory this meant that places sharing a line of latitude would have matching climates.[59] Warmth intensified by degrees as one moved nearer to the Equator. These hotter climates were particularly appealing for British colonizers who thought that the heat from sun galvanized the earth to greater production.[60] By the early Eighteenth Century, these theories had evidentiary support in the form of Caribbean sugar colonies such as St. Kitts, Barbados and Antigua.

What was good for plant life was not necessarily good for people, however. All colonists were dogged by fears that the untamed environments in which they now resided could have a negative impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. These concerns were magnified for colonists in tropical or sub-tropical climates, as the excessive heat and humidity of these places

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[59] See Karen Kupperman's comparative latitude map in "The Puzzle of the American Climate in the Early Colonial Period" (1263). Kupperman notes that using this logic, Newfoundland would have a more moderate climate than London, England. Likewise for southern Spain and Virginia (1262).

[60] For more on early modern climate theory see Kupperman, "The Puzzle of the American Climate in the Early Colonial Period" and "Fear of Hot Climates in the Anglo-American Colonial Experience." For an in-depth discussion of Carolina's climate in particular, see Jankovic "Climates as commodities: Jean Pierre Purry and the modelling of the best climate on Earth"; Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (13-41).

was thought to be particularly harmful, and even deadly to English constitutions.[61] Climate had a profound effect on a person's constitution, and in the Caribbean, that effect was believed to be disorganization and degeneration.[62] Situated approximately 1500 miles to the northwest, South Carolina's temperatures were significantly cooler than those in the West Indies. The relatively temperate climate appealed planters in the wealthiest colonies who were "…motivated both by a seemingly inexhaustible appetite for new speculative ventures in the West Indies…and by a mounting conviction that the profitability of islands such as Barbados and Jamaica faced serious threats, owing in large part to environmental factors such as soil exhaustion, erosion, pest invasion, and epidemic disease" (Iannini 78). The hope was that a moderation in climate would moderate the effects of these other things as well.

More than any other British colony, South Carolina seemed to best represent the potential of commodity agriculture because it was located in what people believed was the "ideal or optimal climate[] for human ecology" (Migliazzo 15).[63] Writing in 1710, Thomas Narine identified Carolina's potential for his audience by situating the relatively unfamiliar colony among places well-known for their bounty: "Between the same Parallels with *South* Carolina, lie some of the most fertile Countries in the World, as some Parts of the Coast of Barbary, all the middle Part of China, from the middle to the South Parts of Japan, those Countries of *India* about Lahore, the best part of *Persia, Egypt* and *Syria*" (37). This similarity in climate extended to

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[61] For more on British anxieties about climate in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries see Kupperman, "Fear of Hot Climates and the Anglo-American Colonial Experience" and Kupperman, "The Puzzle of American Climate in the Early Colonial Period (1266-1268); Iannini, *Fatal Revolutions: Natural History, West Indian Slavery, and the Routes of American Literature* (75-127).

[62] For more on cultural anxieties about hot climates, see Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (201-209); Chaplin, "Mark Catesby, a Skeptical Newtonian in America" in *Empire's Nature: Mark Catesby's New World Vision* eds. Amy R.W. Meyers and Margaret Beck Pritchard (34-90); Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology* (2-6).

[63] This theory was not universally accepted. Mark Catesby, for example, found Carolina to be less healthy than the Bahamas: "Catesby's route through the plantation colonies of British America yields a malleable conception of tropical geography. Temperate conditions exist between the topics, just as tropical conditions exist outside them" (Iannini 87-88).

cultivation, meaning that a tree indigenous to India would find a welcome home in Carolina, and vice versa. Planters were practically ensured that their endeavors, whatever the crop, would be successful.

Unfortunately for colonists, theory did not necessarily translate in practice. Carolina, at least early on, fell short of its promise. As Jack Greene notes, the fact that writers were still producing promotional tracts forty years after Carolina's founding suggests that they were not particularly successful in what they had set out to accomplish (8). Carolina's climate was cooler than those in the West Indies, but it was also humid and more volatile. Carolina's settlers were still shouldered with assumptions of exoticism, excess and degeneracy. The tenacity of such assumptions continued into the early national period, vocalized most famously by Farmer James in J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*: "The climate [of Charles Town] renders excesses of all kinds very dangerous, particularly those of the table; and yet, insensible or fearless of danger, they live on, and enjoy a short and merry life: the rays of their sun seem to urge them irresistibly to dissipation and pleasure…" (120).

The debates surrounding the suitability Carolina's environment were part of a larger cultural conversation that expressed anxieties about the potential ill-effects of living outside the metropole. Such concerns undoubtedly plagued the minds of Carolina planters who were well-versed in modern scientific and philosophical texts. But promotional tracts had another function for those already removed to Carolina. The influence of promotional literature extended beyond simple descriptions by modelling a complex web of interactive possibilities. In his analysis of Jean Pierre Purry's 1724 pamphlet, *Memorial Presented to His Grace My Lord the Duke of Newcastle, Chamberlain of his Majesty King George and Secretary of State Upon the present condition of Carolina, and the means of its amelioration*, Vladimir Jankovic argues for a

dynamic conception of climate; one more in-line with Purry's original intent. For contemporary readers like ELP, climate was not a quantifiable rendering of meteorological environments, but a series of "connections between seasons and endemic disease, vegetation and diet, social and vernacular architecture, customs and political organization. Climate, in short, represented a horizon within which it was possible to organize past and present experience, plan the future action and anticipate the fruits of one's work" (Jankovic 202).

Purry's Carolina tracts share many similarities with those that came before his, but he differentiated himself from the rest by introducing climatological theory that he believed provided a scientifically sound model for identifying lands with exceptional fecundity. Purry believed lands located on or near the 33rd parallel possessed the "best climate."[64] For Purry, the best climate was not a matter of opinion, but an empirical calculation based on the land's production. Driven by his own desire to establish a community in the new world, Purry not only identified South Carolina as "properest to make ye Earth produce abundantly all that is necessary for Life," but argued that this production could be done "without much Labor or expense."[65] Similar discussions from Purry appear in English in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1732) which was popular among British on both sides of the Atlantic. Purry's focus on climate in terms of agricultural productivity could explain ELP's interest in the text, enough so that she translated

[64]Interestingly, the countries Purry identifies as having the "best climate" are the same ones that earlier writers identified. It was not the places he identified that made Purry's theory unique, but the way in which he identified those places. Vladimir Jankovik provides a succinct summary of Purry's method: "The derivation of this result [the best climate] is short and entirely based on the seasonal elevation of the sun and, in consequence, the length of the day…If one were to take into account, Purry argued, that the difference between the longest day on the equator and on the polar circle was 12h,then one would expect to find the ideal climate as one corresponding to the 'average day length' in between these two extremes, that is, between 0 and 66½ degrees, i.e.33¼. His model of climate was purely 'solar' in the sense it was only 'the sun which causes differences in countries and climates'" (206).
[65] Purry's theory was based both on his own observations as well as geographic knowledge. As Migliazzo explains: "According to his [Purry's] research, there were a total of twenty-four climate zones on earth from North to South Pole with twelve in each hemisphere. The prevailing conditions in the fifth of these zones in both hemispheres made it most conducive to sustained bounty" (15).

Purry's *Memorial* from French to English.[66] Much like her tour of Crowfield exemplified the plantation pastoral, promotional literature supported the logic by which such productions were possible. Purry's text presented Carolina as the world's greenhouse, and it is clear that ELP embraced this concept as she conducted agricultural experiments at Wappoo. The question for ELP was not if she could be a successful planter, but when.

Purry's experimental community in South Carolina had long dissolved by the late colonial period; it was already floundering before its leader's death in 1736. While Purry himself may not have achieved the status and wealth he hoped for in his lifetime, his theories of climate and production synced perfectly with eighteenth-century European ideals of colonization and commerce, in which "foreign climates were cogs of commerce, 'supplying' goods irreproducible in native climates, employing hands unemployable in mother countries. Claiming rights to florid climates was thus seen as central to economic self-sufficiency in a nation in which commerce was the blood of a body politic" (Jankovic 203). As Carolina's plantation society and economy continued to grow, Purry's theory also appears to have gained (retained?) traction. Jankovic cites a 1744 review in the *Daily Gazetteer* that encourages readers to reexamine Purry's "neglected" work, arguing that "the modelling of the best climate was always already a modelling for political power and economic gain" (207). For British readers of the *Daily Gazetteer*, the value of Purry's promotional tract did not come from his specific descriptions of Carolina, which by the mid-1700s was an established plantation society. Rather, it served as a more general guide for imperial expansion.

In addition to its economic potential, Carolina was touted as an ideal environment for personal success. Far removed from the strife and stagnation of European cities, Carolina offered

[66] The translation of the *Memorial* is separate from the letterbook and, according to Constance Schultz, appears to be part of another book that Eliza owned. Eliza's translation is not dated, but evidence seems to date it to 1759-1760.

new habitants “Country Solitude, Contemplation, Planting, Gardening, Orchards, Groves, Woods, Fishing, Fowling, Hunting Wild Beasts, and many other innocent Delights, which are frequently there” (qtd. in Greene 23). These “innocent delights” held value beyond leisure and amusement. They spoke to the tremendous amount of man-power necessary to transform raw materials to material wealth. Much like the Crowfield Plantation of ELP’s letter, the natural abundance of Carolina was remarked upon ultimately as the product of human intervention: fish, birds and animals come into textual existence through the human actions of fishing, fowling and hunting, while vegetation is largely described in terms of cultivation.[67] Not all labor was created equally, however. A single person could assume responsibility for the maintenance of a small kitchen garden, but a plantation of hundreds or thousands of acres required man-power far beyond that supplied by an individual or nuclear family. The ideal of development was the access point through which planters engaged with the natural world. Though seemingly inclusive in its scope, the pastoral life illustrated by promotional writers was, in actuality, available to only a select few.

For those who could access it, plantations grew quickly. Promotional tracts emphasized the potential of the land, and planters were invested in growing this potential into a burgeoning plantation system. This trajectory of rapid growth is supported by population estimates in the colony. In 1700, there were an estimated 3,300 white colonists in South Carolina, and 2,400 black slaves. By 1720, these numbers had climbed to 6,500 and 9,900, respectively. Shortly after ELP assumed control of her father’s plantations in 1740, the population of the colony had

[67] There is a subtle difference between orchards, groves, and woods. Orchards are generally man-made/designed spaces, whereas woods are completely natural. Usage of groves is less clear—it could refer to trees that were planted or that naturally grew. See OED.

reached nearly 55,000. Of those people, nearly 70% (39,200) were black slaves (Menard 660).[68] In addition to population growth, these numbers also demonstrate planters' increasing reliance on enslaved laborers to bring the land's promise to fruition.

ELP may not have translated Purry's text until the late 1750s, but earlier letters from the letterbook suggest that she was actively engaged in the socio-scientific conversations surrounding Carolina's colonial prospects. In a 1742 letter to her brother Thomas, ELP describes Carolina by emphasizing the land's proclivity for production:

> The Soil in general very fertile, and there is very few European or American fruits or grain but what grow here. The Country abounds with wild fowl, Venison and fish. Beef, veal and motton are here in much greater perfection than in the Islands, tho not equal to that in England but their pork exceeds any I ever tasted anywhere. The turkeys extteamy fine, especially the wild, and indeed all their poultry is exceeding good; and peaches, Nectrons and mellons of all sorts extremely fine and in profusion, and their Oranges exceed any I ever tasted in the West Indies or from Spain or Portugal (ELP0383).

While Purry's primary evidence for Carolina's bounty stemmed from climatological theory, ELP's letter relies on the empirical experience she gained as a traveler throughout the Atlantic World. Both sources reach the same conclusion, however: Carolina's exceptional location facilitated exceptional natural production. ELP's reference to Spain and Portugal are significant here, as these places were traditionally invoked as golden standard by which natural wealth in other places was measured. Claiming that Carolina's oranges were superior to those of Spain or Portugal was not simply a statement of preference, then, but an endorsement of her adopted

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[68] These population numbers are estimates. It is also important to note that they do not account for indigenous populations, nor escaped or manumitted slaves.

home. In terms of British colonies, ELP argues that the quality of Carolina's flora and fauna surpasses those of the West Indies. West Indies plantations may have produced the most monetarily valuable commodity (sugar), but the exceptional quality of Carolina's land gives it the potential to be profitable, diverse and-- if the taste of the oranges are any indication—perhaps even pleasurable. Notably, the three items she identifies as of higher quality in England (beef, veal and mutton) are products from domesticated animals; it is the "wild" game that flourishes in Carolina.

Carolina was so bountiful, in fact, that success was all but guaranteed to those who understand how to utilize such natural resources. As ELP's letter continues, she questions the character of those unable to capitalize: "The people [in Charles Town] in general hospitable and honest, and the better sort add to these a polite gentile behavior. The poorer sort are the most indolent people in the world or they could never be so wretched in so plentiful a country as this." ELP reiterates the planter-production logic. Viewing the land as a great social equalizer, ELP argues that the poor of Carolina are that way not for want of opportunities, but because they refuse to take them. ELP's use of the word "indolent" is important here because it refers to a person "averse to toil or exertion; slothful, lazy, idle."[69] The indolent poor are provided as a direct contrast to the "better sort" though interestingly, they are not described in terms of work ethic, but by their social graces (politeness, hospitality). The mixed comparison suggests that the "indolence" the poor suffer from is not only physical, but mental as well. A similar logic appears in another Purry's essay that argues for the colonization of Australia and South Africa: "savage and rustic people love above all things a lazy existence and…the more a people is simple and vulgar the less it is given to work, while a life of abundance and pleasure requires a great deal of care and trouble" (qtd. in Ginzburg 673). At first, this sudden shift to human intervention seems

[69] OED

to negate earlier emphasis on the significance of environment. For ELP, Purry, and other eighteenth-century colonists, nature and nurture worked in tandem. Favorable geographic and climatological conditions were key ingredients for producing a successful plantation space. Environment alone, however, was not enough. The key to a productive plantation was a labor of cultivated (i.e. white, European, genteel) thought above all else.

This is not to say that planters disregarded the knowledge and expertise of others when it was to their benefit. Aside from the information they circulated among themselves— publicly via printed texts and privately in letters—planters recognized the specialized knowledge that slaves had.[70] Hoping to finally export commercial-grade indigo from his Carolina plantation, George Lucas declared his intention to purchase "a Negro from Monsterat who understands the Culture & Manufacture of Indigo" (ELP0214). Frustrated by two months of searching, and "several fruitless attempts to gett a negro from Montserat skilled in making Indigo," Lucas finally gave up his search, and was "forced to send Cromwell at last" (ELP0219). The fact that Lucas was willing to wait for a slave from Montserrat—knowing that such a delay could ruin his entire crop— demonstrates how highly valued a slave's knowledge could be.

Planters were well aware that their wealth was driven by entities outside of themselves, but these people and things were merely pieces of the plantation puzzle. Ultimately such knowledge was not truly useful until put in the planter's hands. Planters asserted this mastery by situating themselves physically and symbolically within the plantation space. In a letter to Miss Bartlett, ELP describes the strict, self-imposed regiment of her day which begins with two hours of reading at five o'clock am and then "a walk in the garden or field, see that the Servants are at

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[70] The extent to which colonial planters relied on enslaved Africans' knowledge of rice, for example, is still a topic of scholarly debate. For more on the crucial roles slaves played in Carolina rice culture see Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (78-106). For a recent discussion of this debate see the February 2010 roundtable in *American Historical Review*, especially Eltis, Morgan and Richardson, "Black, Brown, or White? Color-Coding American Commercial Rice Cultivation with Slave Labor."

their respective business, then to breakfast" (ELP0115). ELP's mention of the fields seems innocuous, but her walk holds performative significance. As she walks, ELP transforms the plantation place into a working *space*. de Certeau posits the difference between place and space as one of movement; "space," according to de Certeau, "is practiced place" (117).[71] Performing surveillance on the slaves as they went about their "respective business" enforced social distance between the two groups, but it also suggested that ELP's presence was an absolute necessity in transforming the landscape. Performing surveillance on the slaves as the go about their "respective business" Lucas enforces the social distance between the two groups. Lucas's freedom to move within the plantation space simultaneously confines others to the socio-spatial boundaries she has defined. As a social product, space does more than represent the master's dominance; it reproduces it with each step (Yaeger 5). These sentiments are echoed in the writings of other planters, in South Carolina and other colonies. In examining Landon Carter's "Farming Observations" book, Rhys Issac notes that, "his [Carter's] own intense involvement with the work of the plantation sustained Landon's belief that only his presence could ensure dutiful performance. This showed most clearly in the diarist's use of the pronouns 'we' and 'our' for the great collective efforts that he was continually calling forth from his overseers and laborers" (74). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this recipe for the ideal planter reinforced the status quo.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said emphatically states that, "Everything about human history is rooted to the earth" (7). The profundity of such a claim is daunting to say the least, yet the intimate connection that human beings foster with the physical space they inhabit undoubtedly affects the way we think and behave. The sense of occupying a tangible space creates a psychological affiliation with it: the place we are familiar with is "ours, "while those

[71] In *The Practice of Everyday Life d*e Certeau describes a city street populated with pedestrians as an example of place being transformed into space. It is the movement of the pedestrians and their intersections with other "mobile elements" that makes space (117).

occupied by others becomes “theirs.” Said terms this arbitrary creation of geographical distinction “imaginative geography” (*Orientalism* 54). For Said, imaginative geography allows us to define ourselves, and perhaps more importantly, define others, in social, ethnic and cultural ways. And with this notion of definition comes feelings of power and control. As he explains, “It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries (57).

While Said’s work primarily focuses on depictions of the middle and far East, his ideas about using place and space as a way to look at power-relations work equally well in discussing American literature, particularly the literature of the early South. Just as Europeans created the fictional Orient, so too did American colonists like Eliza Lucas use both land and pen to create texts that attempted to identify, classify, and most importantly differentiate themselves from, the others that they experienced: Native Americans and African slaves. As Patricia Yaeger notes, “Margins have long been the conventional sites of plurality and vulnerability, while the middles have seemed solid, rooted, nonplural” (18). By placing themselves at the center of the colonial narrative and plantation space, colonists were able to make sense of a world that they otherwise had little control over. Looking at Lucas through this lens, we see her letters and the physical movements they describe as her attempt to negotiate the unstable space of the early South.

PRODUCING A PLANTER’S LANDSCAPE

As discussions over production, profitability, and performance played out in letters, they were enacted in a smaller scale on individual plantations. Turning attention to these microspaces provides a more complete picture of the relationship between a planter’s built environment, and the ideological structures they built around themselves. As with most large planters, the Lucases

owned multiple plantations (in addition to a home in Charleston).[72] ELP writes that she has "the business of three plantations to transact." These plantations were: fifteen-hundred acres on the Waccamaw River which supplied pitch, tar and salt pork, among other items; Garden Hill, which was three thousand acres of rice land on the Combahee River; and Wappoo, the six-hundred acre estate that was ELP's primary residence (*Letterbook* xvi).[73] At Wappoo ELP took responsibility for upkeep of the space, as well as the management of at least twenty slaves. Documentary evidence shows that Wappoo had fewer slaves than the other plantations, and the enslaved peoples who were there generally possessed specialized labor skills, such as Quash (later John Williams) who had carpentry, masonry, and indigo processing expertise. On the other plantations the day-to-day management was the purview of two overseers. Aside from contributing to the planter's overall status and wealth, owning multiple plantations was a spatial luxury because individual plantations could specialize in the productions best suited for that particular land. This specialization also meant that plantation conditions varied, sometimes significantly, among a single planter's properties.

The day-to-day experiences of slaves at Wappoo were quite different than a slave at Garden Hill, which lay approximately sixty miles to the north of Charleston, or the Combahee River Plantation, which lay forty miles south. It was these plantations, or rather the slaves on

[72] Though not the cosmopolitan place that a city such as London was, Charleston was the cultural capital of the lower south, and Charleston's inhabitants were invested in making the city as refined as possible. See Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (275-307).

[73] All three plantations were purchased by John Lucas, ELP's paternal grandfather, in the first two decades of the Eighteenth Century. The plantation on the Waccamaw River does not seem to have another name. All extant documents refer to it simply as "Waccamaw." Likewise, the main plantation on Wappoo Creek was usually called "Wappoo." Wappoo is occasionally referred to in some secondary sources as Bluff Plantation. This appears to be the name the land was given by its first owner, Robert Gibbes. Gibbes purchased the property in 1681. This Bluff Plantation is different than Bluff Plantation on the Combahee River, which served as the backdrop for several scenes in the movie *Forrest* Gump.

them, who produced most of the Lucas' wealth.[74] Ironically, there is significantly less information on these larger plantations than there is on Wappoo. ELP does not mention visiting Garden Hill or Cambahee River plantation in the years before her marriage, though letters and memoranda occasionally record updates and requests from those plantations, which were written by an overseer and carried to Wappoo by slaves. As someone invested in the success of her plantations, ELP's near silence about Garden Hill and the Cambahee River plantation is curious, but telling. The dearth of available information is frustrating, but such marginalized spaces cannot not be conflated with absence. As David Harvey explains, "The assignment of place within a socio-spatial structure indicated distinctive role, capacities for action and access to power. Locating things is fundamental to activities of valuing as well as identification. Place and the making of places are essential to social development, social control and empowerment in any social order" (265). Putting these "silenced" spaces into conversation with better documented ones such as Wappoo and Crowfield provides further insight into the complex negotiation of plantation aesthetics.

The few letters that do discuss the other two plantations suggest that they were isolated, unsettling places of heavy work and at times intense suffering.[75] The most detailed information about the other plantations comes from William Murray who served as overseer at Garden Hill. In late August of 1748, Murray wrote to Charles Pinckney with an update of the goings-on at Garden Hill. Murray requests salt and medicine, laments the lack of rain, and solicits an answer from Pinckney regarding the sale of fourteen steers. He then reports that "Five of the Women at

[74] Documents recording the exact number of slaves on the three Lucas plantations are scarce. The marriage agreement of George Lucas and Charles Pinckney (1744) names twenty slaves from Wappoo as part of Eliza's dowry. The document also mentions forty slaves at the Combahee River plantation who were previously mortgaged. A 1745 "List of Slaves" from the Garden Hill plantation provides the names of over seventy enslaved people.

[75] Two overseers appear in ELP's correspondence: a man known only as Starrat and William Murray. Starrat is mentioned by ELP in letters to her father, but there are no extant letters to or from him. The Lucas/Pinckney family's relationship with Murray is better documented. Murray was an overseer at the Garden Hill plantation when ELP took as plantation manager in 1739, and he was still an employee of the Lucas/Pinckney family as late as 1748.

Garden Hill have been brought to bead this summer Greace, Bess, Kett, Flora and Sarey; Greaces, and Ketts, are alive the other three died, they sucked very hearty till ye sixt day in the night, then left Sucking were took with fits and died" (ELP0347). Though infant mortality was a common feature of early American life, Murray's relatively dispassionate tone regarding the deaths of three babies suggests that such events were not uncommon at Garden Hill. Murray's letter attends to all plantation losses with a similar acquiescence, whether it is wild cats and foxes stealing their fowl or drought-stricken rice that will not grow. This fragment of plantation life at Garden Hill provides stark contrast to the garden experience at Crowfield, where natural abundance appeared limitless.

James Nicholas Cromwell, the indigo expert George Lucas sent to Carolina, gives an even darker account of slave life on Lucas-Pinckney plantations.[76] In a scathing letter to Charles Pinckney, Cromwell bemoans the poor condition of the slaves he has been tasked with teaching the indigo making process. Saddled with "ye Rubage of ye [the Lucas-Pinckney] negroes," Cromwell argues "that I Shall niver get any Credit by those hands which are p<...> out for me for they are all defictive and helpless." He continues:

> I Should be very willing to take ye wapoo gang one with another good and bad as they are: but as for those hands which you mention in your Letter there are some of them that is not able to make provisions for themselves for som are Lame some blind some half rotten which you will <...> to be true when you Come up— but I

[76] Cromwell allegedly sabotaged ELP's early indigo efforts, as she explains to her son Thomas Pinckney in a 1785 letter: "he [Cromwell] made some brick Vats on my Fathers plantation on Wappo Creek and there made the first . Indigo; It was very indifferent, and he made a great mistery of it, said he repented coming as he should ruin his own Country by it, for my Father had engaged him to let me see the whole process. I observed him as carefully as I could and informed Mr. Deveaux an old Gentn a neighbour of ours of the little knowledge I had gain'd and gave him notice when the Indigo was to be beat; he saw and afterwards improved upon it, not withstanding the churlishness of Cromwell, who wished to deceive him, and threw in so large a quantity of Lime water as to spoil the colour."

> Remember that Coll: Lucas told me with his own mouth that he kept the wapoo gang was settled on...(ELP1206).[77]

Unlike ELP's letters, Cromwell's account obscures individuation in favor of a collective slave body or "gang". This corporeal turn, also apparent (albeit to a less extent) in the letter from Murray, alludes to what must have been a drastically altered version of plantation life than the one on display at Wappoo. Cromwell's description of bodies quite literally falling apart is a chilling image of the degenerative nature of chattel slavery, one subjugated—even to this day—by the paternalistic romance of the plantation home. Marginalized geographically and textually, the labor performed at Garden Hill and the Combahee River Plantation served as the invisible engine that kept the Lucas-Pinckney family running.

Wappoo was significantly smaller than the other two plantations, and it was also where the family's country home was. Unlike small planters or farmers who labored alongside their servants or slaves, large planters like the Lucases could afford to distance themselves from much of that labor. At its most extreme there was the absentee planter who owned plantations (usually in the Caribbean), but resided in Great Britain. This hands-off approach was replicated on a much smaller scale in Carolina where planters and their families resided in the city of Charleston. Planters also resided on country estates, which combined the refinement of city living with the natural charm of rural life. Identifying the difference between these types of residences and plantations is significant because eighteenth-century planters valued the distinction. The country home was a curious mixture of industry and leisure, prudence and extravagance. The country home served as the stage on which planters performed their identity.

Wappoo Plantation was a space of diverse activities. During ELP's tenure at Wappoo, the plantation functioned as a working laboratory for her agricultural experiments. It is here that she

[77] Shultz notes that this manuscript is badly damaged and text is missing.

grew and processed indigo, and any other seeds her father sent her. Its proximity to Charles Town and two major rivers (Ashley and Stono) meant that Wappoo also served as the commercial epicenter of the Lucas plantations. Much like Crowfield, Wappoo was also a space for social encounters. Managing the day-to-day progress of Wappoo was likely a demanding task, but the space was consciously constructed to retain an air of ease and leisure. ELP kept consistent social appointments throughout the week: her music teacher on Mondays; Tuesdays and Fridays either hosting or visiting various neighbors.

The most detailed description of Wappoo that exists comes from a 1744 advertisement for its sale in the *South Carolina Gazette*. This advertisement is valuable in terms of this discussion because the property was being sold as a result of ELP's marriage to Charles Pinckney. Thus the condition of Wappoo at this time speaks directly to Lucas's abilities as a manager during the previous five years. The advertisement reveals a carefully maintained landscape: "To be sold, the plantation belonging to the Hon. Col. George Lucas, situate on Wappoo Creek near Charlestown, containing between 5 and 600 acres of good land, very good dwelling house, barn and out houses, a good garden, and many conveniences" (South Carolina Gazette, June 11, 1744). At five to six hundred acres, Wappoo was an average sized plantation.[78] The repetition of "good," in the advertisement suggests that this property and its amenities would be ready for the next planter's use with relatively little upfront labor. Wappoo was an example of what other eighteenth-century ads referred to as a complete plantation. Complete plantations were desirable not necessarily for what they had, but for what they could become. Lowcountry planters prided themselves on their constant push toward innovation, and thus valued a plantation that could adapt to sometimes unforeseen changes: "Diversified to take in stands of trees, indigo

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[78] This figure is based on S. Max Edelson's sampling of lowcountry plantation advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*.

lands, and provisions plots and close enough to being commodities easily to market, such plantations had 'every convenency and advantage of water, situation, soil, and timber, that can render a plantation either pleasant or profitable'" (Edelson 121-122). Wappoo's proximity to water was vital for planters who relied creeks and rivers to transport their crops to major port cities, in this case, Charleston. Because ELP attempted to grow a variety of crops there, it is likely that Wappoo also possessed the diversity of lands that so appealed to planters.[79]

Though ELP's Wappoo no longer exists today, one can get a visual approximation of this plantation style by looking at Drayton Hall, located on the Ashley River approximately eleven miles northwest of Wappoo, and across the river from Eliza and Charles Pinckney's Belmont Plantation home. Drayton Hall was built in 1740s by John Drayton, a wealthy rice planter. At the time, Drayton Hall was a marvel of Palladian architecture—a 1758 ad from the South Carolina Gazette refers to the home as a "palace."[80] Unlike Wappoo and Belmont, which were both destroyed during the Revolutionary War, Drayton Hall stands today, much as it did in the mid-eighteenth century when it was first built.[81] Despite the fact that the intervening two centuries have changed much about the landscape, Drayton Hall still retains the visual impact that it undoubtedly imparted to those early viewers. As Stephanie M. H. Camp explains, the plantation spaces of the eighteenth century elite modeled British style architecture in an effort to reflect the genteel status of the colonials that inhabited them. By placing the planter at the center of his own mini-universe, these designs functioned to create a social distance from inferiors (slaves, Indians, yeomen farmers) where physical distance was limited:

[79] Writing to her father in June 1741, ELP gives accounts of several crops (none of them successful): cotton, guiney corn, ginger and indigo.
[80] There is some discrepancy about when Drayton Hall was actually built and completed. Early estimates are 1742, later estimates put it in the 1750s.
[81] For more detailed information about Drayton Hall's history and architecture see Baldwin, *Plantations of the Low Country* (36-39).

> Order, symmetry, and harmony were characteristic of the Georgian style, as was the incorporation of classical details such as pediments and columns. Great houses, built not of rickety and impermanent wood but of brick, were carefully sited on their estates among formal gardens and parks that conspicuously displayed ornamental, nonfunctional use of land. Avenues approached them in a linear manner to highlight the centrality of the great house. Offices, outbuildings, and slaves' quarters were sometimes arranged on a grid and always in a predictable and balanced manner around a main residence that was occasionally elevated above other buildings. The built relationship of these great houses to their 'dependencies' was clearly one in which 'a strong sense of gradations of dominance and submission was expressed'" (4-5).[82]

A plantation proximity to a main waterway was highly desirable as it expedited the movement of people, materials, and most importantly, cash crops, from the plantation to port cities like Charleston. All the Lucas plantations were on major rivers or on tributaries. Wappoo Plantation, for example, was located on Wappoo Creek, which connects the Stono and Ashley rivers. Charleston was a short six miles via these waterways. Parcels of land near the water were the first to be settled, and most of Charleston's wealthiest planters had at least one plantation located on or near one of the four rivers (Stono, Ashley, Cooper, Wando) that flowed into Charleston Harbor.

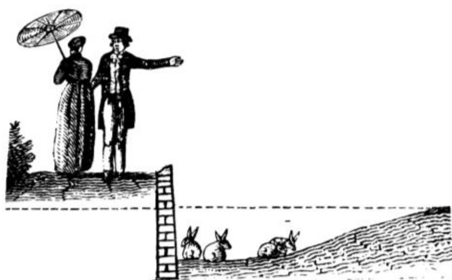
[82] Rhys Isaac's *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* deals even more explicitly with the ways in which early colonists transformed the landscape, especially pages 18-42. Stephanie McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds* discusses fences and their importance to South Carolina low country planter (5-36).

Within a single plantation's borders, waterfront land also served as a presentation space. Because water was the dominant mode of transportation, planters situated their family homes with this visibility in mind. The Lucas family home at Wappoo was thus situated, as was Drayton Hall. Figure 3 is a photograph of Drayton Hall taken from the banks of the Ashley River.

Figure 2. Drayton Hall as viewed from the Ashley River. Photo by author.

For most visitors to Drayton Hall, this visual would be the first one they saw as they arrived by river on their sloop. Before even stepping onto land, the eye is directed to the imposing main house situated straight ahead. As visitors disembarked, a single path lead them from the water's edge directly to the home. The trees on the periphery of the photograph were present at the time, and gardens of indigenous and imported plants flanked the path as well. This view of Drayton Hall recalls ELP's earlier impression of Crowfield's main house which ELP describes as being visible from nearly a mile away. Drayton Hall and Crowfield were not unique in this regard; these country estates mirrored a pattern of plantation organization used by planters in Virginia. The visual created by these houses and the surrounding landscape "were being fashioned as declarations of the owners' status, not only by sheer scale but also by means of elaborately contrived formal relationships. Calculated proportion and rigidly controlled symmetry became mandatory" (Isaac 35-36).

Maintaining the artifice of the "natural" landscape was vital for planters as it enabled them to affect control over with the land without sacrificing the idyllic garden conceit. Returning to the present-day photograph of Drayton Hall, two ditches on either side of the path that are remnants of what is known as a "ha-ha". The ha-ha is a landscaping construct that consists of a steep ditch with a recessed brick wall on one side (FIG 3).



The Ha-ha.

Figure 3. The "ha-ha" from Jenny Uglow's *A Little History of British Gardening* (128).

The purpose of the ha-ha is to keep grazing animals from breeching a boundary, but unlike a typical barrier, the recessed nature of the ha-ha imposes that division without obstructing the view of those on the other side. What resulted was a unified view of the landscape from any vantage point. Ha-has were popular in Europe, but their use in the plantation space serves as an apt metaphor for the planter's landscape manipulation as well. Aside from the practical function the ha-ha performed, when properly erected, it produced the illusion of an idyllic garden-space. If the plantation house and its surrounding elements introduced "a strong sense of gradation of dominance and submission," the ha-ha became one way to naturalize, and perhaps legitimate, these built environments. The plantation organization reflected a planter's position within that space, but this declaration of status should not be interpreted as a monument to security. If anything, this manufactured stability highlights the continual anxiety planters felt they combatted the uncertainty of growing seasons, commodity values, rebellious slaves, and hostile Natives.

By engaging in the georgic tradition, planters like ELP affirmed their connection to England and co-opted that cultural history into their own, freshly-tilled, plantations. Planters tried to downplay the newness of their venture by connecting their enterprise to Antiquity, and more specifically Georgic writing.[83] This classical engagement with nature was common in Europe, but it took on a role of even greater importance in the colonies where European cultural traditions seemed inaccessible. The Georgic tradition supplied planters with cultural connection

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[83] At this particular point I am conservatively defining the "Georgic tradition" as works which directly engage, or influenced by, Virgil's *Georgics*. I am also interested in exploring the interplay between georgic (nature as a site of labor) and pastoral (nature as a site of leisure) writing as it pertains to plantation spaces. For more on the varied meanings of georgic and pastoral, see Sweet's *American Georgics: Economy and Environment in Early American Literature* (2-7; 89-96).

The mid-Eighteenth Century also saw an interested in georgic poetry. Modeled on Virgil's *Georgics*, these poems usually focused on the best cultivation methods for a specific crop. The most famous of these is James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1764). Charles Woodmason solicited subscriptions for a similar poem about indigo. The book was never published, but 120 lines of "Indico" did appear in print. For more on eighteenth-century georgic poetry see Shields, *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and Commerce in British America, 1690-1750* (56-92).

to Europe, but just as important, its affirmation of the practical as equal to philosophical served as a model of the ideal plantation. The georgic tradition aided planters as they negotiated the line between nature and artifice, profusion and base profitability: "They were *de novo* creators, witnessing the imposition of design upon a seemingly chaotic natural profusion. They reveled in the heroism of industry, animated by that sense of discipline that comes of a pioneer's confrontation with necessity" (Shields 71). ELP certainly made this connection as she read Virgil's *Georgics*, which was loaned to her by Charles Pinckney. The *Georgics* was the central text in a cache of ancient writings that eighteenth-century Britons consulted as they planned and planted gardens. One thing that made Virgil's text distinctive, and certainly more appealing to colonists in South Carolina, was that the golden age as not confined to Italy, but could, in fact, recur (Chambers 23).[84] In a letter to Pinckney ELP discusses Virgil in a way that mimics the very themes of the book. ELP begins her commentary by connecting Virgil's work to her own in Carolina, though this quickly transitions to a poetic ode:

> I have got no further than the first volu. of Virgil but was most agreeably disapointed to find my self instructed in agriculture as well as entertaind by his charming penn for I am pursuaded tho' he wrote in and for Italy it will in many instances suit carolina […] but the calm and pleasing diction of pastoral and gardening agreeably presented themselves, not unsuitably to this charming season of the year with wch. I am so much delighted that had I but the fine soft language of our poet to paint it properly I should give you but little respite till you came into the country and attended to the beauties of pure nature unassisted by art, the majestick pine imperceptably puts on a fresher green the young mirtle joyning its

[84] For more on Virgil's *Georgics* and their influence on English gardening see Chambers's *The Planters of the English Landscape: Botany, Trees, and the Georgics* (12-32).

> fragrance to that of the Jesamin of golden hue perfumes all the woods and regales the rural wander with its sweets, the daiseys, the honysuckles, and a thousand nameless beauties of the woods invite you to partake the pleasures the country affords (ELP0116).

Though ELP claims that she does not possess the "fine soft language" of Virgil, the effortless transition she makes into poetics suggests that she has absorbed more of Virgil's style than she is willing to claim. Her description is not a facsimile of Virgil's, however, as ELP carefully, yet deliberately, shifts her gaze from his text to her own landscape. Her use of "Jessamin", a flowering vine indigenous to Carolina further suggests an intentionality on the part of ELP.[85] Through this letter, Wappoo is transformed into a *ferme ornée*: equal parts working farm and philosophical retreat.

Planters were invested in creating picturesque country estates, which not only showed off their taste, but kept the less appealing plantation spaces out of sight. This spatial distance from the plantation's center was not a sign of indifference, however. To the contrary, a mastery of one's crops demonstrated knowledge of the land and control of labor. ELP is best known for her work with indigo, but that product was one of many experimental endeavors she tried over the years. This drive to innovation was not unique to her. Planters, particularly those in the Carolina lowcountry, were constantly looking for improvements, and it was these changes in the landscape that solidified the planter's position. ELP often referred to her plans for plantation improvement as "schemes" in letters. Rhetorically, her word choice downplays the purposeful

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[85] Gelsemium sempervirens, or Carolina Jessamine as it is commonly known, is the state flower of South Carolina. It was sent to England around 1640 (Cothran 119).

design. Contemporary readers with plantation knowledge would recognize this inclination to scheming as entirely similar to their own agricultural undertakings.[86]

Planters' penchant for innovation was partially borne out of necessity. In the early Eighteenth Century, Carolina planters had a monoculture plantation system. With their fortunes entirely bound to rice, an under-performing season or fluctuation in the rice market was potentially disastrous. These issues were exacerbated by the maritime disruption that accompanied the start of the War of Jenkin's Ear in 1739. As ELP assumed responsibility for her father's plantations, lowcountry planters were more dedicated than ever before to finding a supplemental crop. Though indigo was ultimately the most successful of these experiments, several other examples from ELP's letters stand out as agricultural productions with personal and economic significance. In a letter to one of her most consistent correspondents, Miss. Bartlett, ELP explains, with an uncharacteristic tone of assurance, her designs for an oak orchard. Excusing herself for a dearth of recent correspondence, ELP reveals that much of her time has been occupied by this new endeavor:

> Wont you laugh at me if I tell you I am so busey in providing for Posterity I hardly allow my self time to Eat or sleep and can but just snatch a minnet to write to you and a friend or two more. I am making a large plantation of oaks wch. I look upon as my own property; whether my father gives me the land or not, and therefore I design many year hence when oaks are more valueable than they are now wch. you know they will be when we come to build fleets I intend I say 2 thirds of the produce of my oaks for a charity, (I'll let you know my scheme

[86] ELP talks about her schemes in letters to her friend Miss Bartlett. Contextual information indicates that the letters had a wider audience, Charles Pinckney in particular. The fact that most of the seeds ELP uses are supplied by her father, George Lucas, also suggests that he saw the commercial viability of her ideas.

another time) and the other 3d for those that shall have the trouble of puting my design in Execution (ELP0119).

ELP does not mention the exact species of oak she plants in her orchard, but given her experience with local botany and awareness of the colonial market, it seems likely that the orchard was composed of live oak trees (Quercus virginiana). Indigenous to Carolina and other coastal areas of the southeast, the live oak is visually distinctive for the wide spread of its branches as well as its ever-green leaves (Cothran 133-134). In their natural histories, early European naturalists noted the size of the live oak as well as the strength and durability of the wood they produced; qualities that made the live oak superior to its English counterparts.[87] Because this oak orchard was intended as a saleable export, it seems logical that ELP would choose to plant indigenous trees because she was all but assured that this "scheme" would be successful. The low-risk involved in the oak orchard is further evident when contrasted with the volatility of rice and indigo production. If ELP, and planters in general, were concerned about stabilizing the plantation economy through agricultural diversification, live oaks provided a modicum of relief, albeit long-term in nature.

Even before ELP's oaks reached maturity, however, their very growth provided tangible evidence that those other agricultural endeavors might eventually come to fruition. In the psyche of the American colonist, "Trees stood for the land the English came to inhabit. With their roots anchored in the soil, the girth of trunks and canopies testified to the land's underlying fertility…Trees demonstrated the land's remarkable powers of generation, but also held out the

[87] John Lawson says of the live oak: "This is an Ever-green, and the most durable Oak all America affords. The Shortness of this Wood's Bowl, or Trunk, makes it unfit for Plank to build Ships withal. There are some few Trees, that would allow a Stock of twelve Foot, but the Firmness and great Weight thereof, frightens our Sawyers from the Fatigue that attends the cutting of this Timber. A Nail once driven therein, 'tis next to an Impossibility to draw it out. The Limbs thereof are so cur'd, that they serve for excellent Timbers, Knees, & c. for Vessels of any sort" (99-100). In his *Natural History*, Catesby notes that at forty feet tall, the live oak's wood "is heavier and more durable than any other oak in America." Despite Lawson's misgivings, live oaks were a popular choice for ship building in the eighteenth century.

promise that some version of European farming—and some version of European life—could be practiced on it with success" (Edelson 382). Much like her claim that Virgil's descriptions of the Italian countryside "in many instances suit Carolina," the Carolina oaks suggested that the plantation ideal existed in the new world—it just needed the proper cultivation as provided by the European mind. Perhaps ELP was eager to show off her abilities to Miss Bartlett when she closed a letter: "If my Eyes dont deceive me you in yr. last talk of coming very soon by water, to see how my oaks grow; is it really so, or only one of your unripe schemes. while 'tis in yr. head put it speedily into execution and you will give great pleasure to Y m o s E. Lucas" (ELP0115)

ELP talks about the oak trees in terms of posterity, but the letter also seems to suggest that these trees have personal worth. By providing for the future, the oak grove also serves as a way to strengthen her own legacy as a planter. Such an interpretation is supported by the strong sense of ownership that ELP attaches to this orchard, taking possession of it whether she gets the land or not. Trees, argues S. Max Edelson, served as an indication of something being there for a long time (countering the reality of unstable space): "A great tree marked a spot on the land where moisture, sunlight, and nourishment combined to support robust vegetable life. It represented decades of undocumented ecological history, summarizing the living product of growing seasons—harsh and benign—and its 'incredible magnitude' testified to the land's fertility and the climate's temperateness" (389). ELP knows that, unlike most planters, her position as master is temporary. By planting the oaks, ELP inscribed a living testimonial to her knowledge and industry into the plantation landscape. Her ambitious idea would pay dividends: by mid 1760s Carolina was heavily deforested. With good wood mostly depleted, some plantations specialize in trees. One of his [Laurens's] plantations, Mepkin, made more money from selling firewood in town than from rice and indigo combined" (394).

The oak orchard would not be the only new growth to meet Miss Bartlett if she made a visit to Wappoo. ELP recounts another "scheme" in the form of a fig orchard:

> O! I had like to forgot the best thing I have done a great while, I have planted a large figg orchard with design to dry and export them, I have reckond my expence and the prophets to arise from these figgs, but was I to tell you how great an Estate I am to make this way, and how 'tis to be laid out you would think me far gone in romance, yr. good Uncle I know has long thought I have a fertile brain at schemeing, I only confirm him in his oppinion; but I own I love the vegitable world extreamly I think it an innocent and useful amusement (ELP0115).

ELP's characteristic self-deprecating voice stands out in this passage. Her fig orchard, "here described as romance and deflected through good-nature humility and friendly confabulation, becomes a harmless escapist fantasy" (Bowles 47). Yet this feminine modesty is little more than a thin veneer over what is otherwise a calculated plan to add to ELP's authority via plantation production. Whereas the oak orchard was a long-term effort, figs could bear fruit within a few years; a welcome prospect as lowcountry planters attempted to mitigate the effects of a volatile rice market. Figs grew in Carolina with relative ease and in abundance, which meant that bringing this crop to cultivation would not require much investment (mental or monetary) on the part of the planter.[88] Furthermore, large-scale fig cultivation created opportunities for a new kind structured labor. Unlike the intense physical demands of rice, planters saw fig cultivation as lighter labor suitable for women and children.[89] Utilizing these slave populations for fig

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[88] John Lawson's *A New Voyage to Carolina* (1709) notes that *"The [fig] Tree grows to a large Body and Shade, and generally brings a good Burden; especially, if in light Land. This Tree thrives no where better, than on the Sand-Banks by the Sea."*

[89] Writing in 1787, Thomas Jefferson says: "[Fig] culture, too, is by women and children, and therefore earnestly to be desired in countries where there are slaves."

cultivation further fueled the plantation's the economic engine, and it seemed to do so with minimal changes to the larger slave population.

ELP's utilization of "romance" in the above passage is usually contextualized as distinctly feminine rhetoric meant to assuage her transgressive interests in plantation enterprise. While profitability may have been the primary goal of the plantation, planters also placed significant value on a plantation's aesthetic experience. Planters strove to create a plantation that was both profitable and pleasurable, and the fig orchard, with its obvious connections to the Garden of Eden, seemed to embody that. ELP's insistence on her activities being "innocent and useful amusement" may not be a mitigation of planter ideals, but a confirmation of them.

Planters frequently used another Biblical image of figs to discuss their plantations: the vine and fig tree.[90] In a letter to his brother James, Henry Laurens wrote of his desire to "plant & Cultivate my vine and fig tree, from a well grounded assurance that I may sit quietly under them & enjoy the fruit of my labor, as my own property." Forty years after her letter to Miss Bartlett, a sixty-year-old ELP excitedly celebrated the end of the Revolutionary War by hoping that "every one may find Shelter under his own Vine, and his own Fig tree, and be happy" (ELP0233). Of course, the irony for all of these planters was that *their* vine and fig tree, *their* labor, *their* property were not, in fact, their own. Within the "fertile brain" of a planter, however, the fig and vine became a cultivated symbol of authority.

EMERGENCE OF INDIGO

Perhaps above all other crops cultivated in the southern colonies, indigo dye embodies the sharp contrast (or the distance) between the idealized plantation space and the harsh reality of the slave system on which this fantasy was built. At some level, ELP had to be successful for her father to leave her in charge until she chose to marry. What is clear from the extant texts is that

[90] There are three references to the vine and fig tree in the Bible: Micah 4:4, 1 Kings 4:25, and Zechariah 3:10.

ELP understood the exceptionality of the circumstances that brought her to such an authoritative position. Capitalizing on this opportunity, ELP a was shrewd businesswoman who utilized indigo production as the foundation on which she constructed an increasingly autonomous identity.

Unlike the plantation space itself, which bore the marks of cultivation, the delicate cakes of indigo dye told no such story. In the marketplace, indigo dye represented wealth, status and prestige—both for those who wore it and those able to sell it. The rich blue dye has been cultivated for thousands of years, serving as a symbol of wealth and prestige throughout the world. Indigo dye was also unique in that it could be used effectively with any natural fiber, a property which made it more diverse than other natural dyes (Balfour-Paul 5). Imported indigo was so popular among Europeans that it was forbidden by law in Great Britain until 1660 because it competed with domestically produced woad. As Jenny Balfour-Paul notes, however, "the superiority of indigo came increasingly to be recognized. European traders clearly bypassed the laws and dyers were keen to switch to indigo long before their governments gave them sufficient sanction to do so" (57).

Indigo's precipitous rise in colonial South Carolina was influenced by a combination of local and global factors.[91] The start of the War of Jenkin's Ear created a market demand for indigo in the British colonies. France, and French colonies in the West Indies, carried a reputation for having the best quality dye in the world. With the war, indigo prices skyrocketed. Demand for indigo was so great that the British government offered a bounty for planters willing to grow and process it. The Indigoferra plant, from which the dye is derived, is remarkably

[91] Carolina indigo was not exported on a large scale until the mid-Eighteenth Century, but it had long been a crop planters saw as having economic potential. For a detailed analysis of the economic forces that shaped indigo production in South Carolina see Nash "South Carolina indigo, European textiles, and the British Atlantic economy in the eighteenth century."

unremarkable.[92] The small shrub measures approximately three feet high. In the spring it produces cones of small pink or white flowers, surrounded by branches of green pinneate leaves. It is these leaves that produce the dye.

Any ease indigo allowed as it was growing, however, evaporated in the dye-marking process. Indigo dye was notoriously difficult to make and required both constant observation and skill.[93] As soon as the indigo plants were harvested, they were put into the first of three vats used to process of leaves into dye. An advice pamphlet for South Carolina indigo cultivation says that the indigo plants must be quickly harvested and put into the vat at the same time "so that some do not ferment before others (155-6).[94] The vats were quite large: a 1747 pamphlet recommends vats be twenty feet in length, twelve to fourteen feet wide, and four feet deep. Such a large size was necessary, the author argues, because "the strength of the fermentation is so great, that unless the masonry be very well done, and the mortar carefully chosen and wrought, they will crack, and a very moderate crack is sufficient to let out a vat of indigo."[95] The vat was filled with water, and the leaves allowed to ferment. This liquid was then drained into the second vat to be agitated; a process which separated the dye particles from the rest of the liquid. For slaves on indigo plantations, the agitation process was grueling and relentless: "Groups of near-naked men

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[92] There are two main types of indigo plants cultivated in South Carolina: French/true indigo (I. tinctoria), and Guatemala/wild/West Indies indigo (I. suffruticosa). It is not known which was cultivated in South Carolina first. For an overview of colonial indigo, see Rembert "The Indigo Commerce in Colonial North America" *Economic Botany* 33.3 (1979): 128-134.

[93] One of the chief concerns of South Carolina's indigo planters was the quality of their dye, which had a reputation overseas for being inferior, particularly to French varieties. South Carolina planters often enlisted the help of French Hugenots living in the area, as well as importing skilled slaves from French indigo-producing colonies, such as Martinique. For more on Carolina indigo in the transatlantic marketplace, see Coon "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South Carolina"; Nash, "South Carolina indigo, European textiles, and the British Atlantic economy in the eighteenth century.

[94] Qtd. in H. Roy Merrens *The Colonial South Carlina Scene: Contemporary Views, 1697-1774*. The pamphlet was originally published in London in 1747 under the title *Further Observations Intended for Improving the Culture and Curing of Indigo, etc. in South-Carolina*.

[95] The Otranto Plantation indigo vats are the only structures of their kind remaining today. Those vats measure approximately fourteen feet square. For more information and photographs of the vats see http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/berkeley/S10817708012/index.htm.

and women had to walk up and down waist deep in the slimy liquid for several hours, beating it with implements such as wooden paddles, or even with their bare hands to stimulate the oxidation of the indoxyl. The relevant plate in Diderot's Encyclopedie aptly labels one tank *le diablotin*, 'devil's tank', as the terrible fumes, according to the author, 'killed many workers" (Balfour-Paul 110-111).[96] The terrible smell Diderot mentions was a complaint reiterated throughout the literature on indigo, and most advice manuals suggested moving any indigo-works as far away from the planter's house as possible.

The beating process was further complicated by its timely nature: beating the liquid too long or not long enough would ruin the batch. If the dye particles successfully separated from the liquid the water was drained away, and the residue dye particles were made into cakes and dried. Even the drying process demanded vigilance on the part of the producer. As they were drying the cakes needed to be turned three to four times a day. Slaves also had to make sure that flies, attracted by the rotten smell, did not land on the drying cakes, because that too could affect the quality of the dye (Beeson 217-218). Something as minor as exposing the dye cakes to direct sunlight could ruin the dye by changing its color from a deep blue to grey (Beeson 218).

Indigo eventually emerged as the best candidate in the South Carolina lowcountry, but not without prolonged trial and failure. It is difficult to ascertain ELP's exact involvement in the cultivation process, or what contributions she made towards bringing indigo to commercial cultivation. Coon establishes that her efforts were clearly part of a larger system at work, but this fact does not necessarily discount her contributions. ELP directly mentions indigo in sixteen extant texts—eleven were written in the three year period before her marriage to Charles

[96] Balfour-Paul references Diderot's *Encyclopedie*, first published in French in 1751. A collaborative project, the 32 volume encyclopedia features more than 70,000 entries. For more information on the *Encyclopedie* see The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project at the University of Michigan: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/.

Pinckney, between 1741 and 1744. Ten of these are addressed to her father, which suggests that he was acutely interested in her progress as well. Generally, ELP did not transcribe business-focused correspondence in this particular letterbook; however, there is one fully transcribed letter from 1741 that addresses indigo in detail:

> I wrote you in former letter we had a fine Crop of Indigo Seed upon the ground and since informd you ye. frost took it before it was dry I pickd out the best of it and had it planted ~~and~~ but there is not more than a hundred bushes of it come up wch. proves the more unluckey as you have sent a man to make it I make no doubt Indigo will prove a very valuable Commodity in time if we could have the seed from the west Indias time enough to plant the latter end of march that the seed might be dry enough to gather before our frost. I am sorry we lost this season. We can do nothing towards it now but make the works ready for next year (ELP 0878).

The contents of this paragraph perhaps allude to one reason ELP did not transcribe such letters in her letterbook. Most of Eliza's letters reveal a charismatic young woman critically engaging with the literature, philosophy, scientific discoveries, and religious beliefs of the time. This letter, however, is not playful, and it gives us some indication of just how high the stakes were for both ELP and her father. What ELP coyly refers to as "schemes" in letters to Miss Bartlett, are in actuality of critical importance. When ELP writes about indigo experiments to her father, she assumes a discourse of authority. Indigo is of interest to her in so far as it has the ability to enrich— her family, her country (Carolina) and the British Empire at large. Undoubtedly, ELP's motivations for taking on this project were varied, but within this epistolary exchange, she must reflect the interests of her correspondent. ELP asserts that indigo can still

become “a very valuable Commodity,” even though the 100 bushes she was able to produce are too insignificant a number to produce any dye. An unfortunate occurrence, she further observes, because her father sent an expert dye-maker from Martinique to South Carolina to process the raw plant materials he relied on his daughter to cultivate.

From an historical perspective, Eliza’s report of an underperforming indigo was not uncommon; a poor season’s harvest was not necessarily evidence of her incompetence. From a rhetorical perspective, however, such a failure was extremely problematic for someone already existing on the periphery of a male-dominated power structure. The continued failures of ELP’s indigo crop stemmed from a variety of factors, both human and environmental. Ultimately, however, this lack of production suggested that perhaps ELP had not mastered that idealized combination of cultivation and innovation necessary for running a successful plantation. If, as Joyce E. Chaplin claims, “the key to controlling self and society lay in an ethos of directed and productive activity,” the continued poor performance of the indigo crop destabilizes ELP’s very identity (92). Within the letter, there is very little she can do. Eliza acknowledges the disappointment of her father, but then reasserts her abilities as a planter by (re)assuring him that indigo is the best prospect for export. Instead of dwelling on the failure, she repackages the event by implying that this season functions as a kind of teaching tool—she now knows to plant earlier, and will continue to prepare the indigo works (vats) for an improved crop next year.

Though ELP worked extensively with the plant, her success was certainly slow to germinate. In July 1740, ELP singles out indigo from a group of seeds that included of ginger, cotton, lucerne (an alfalfa) and “casada” as the crop that seems particularly promising for the next year (ELP0738). Unfortunately in June 1741, she delivers the disappointing news to her father that the frost has destroyed the indigo crop for that year as well. Though ELP does note

some success with the plant in her letterbook, as late as 1743 she writes to her father that "We made very little Indigo this year" (ELP0811). Ultimately her tenacity was returned with dividends; exports of indigo in South Carolina expanded tenfold in a generation from 100,000 pounds in 1747 to 1,000,000 pounds by 1775 (Morgan 159).

Profitability was the most significant criterion by which a supplemental crop was evaluated, but it was not the only thing planters looked for. Planters also looked for crops that could integrate into existing organizations of land and labor with relative ease. From this perspective, the merits of indigo were clear. While the cultivation of rice was a year-round process, there was a time in the growing season, between the hoeing and harvesting, that was (relatively) less labor intensive. Long before the indigo boom of the 1740s, planters realized the merits of introducing the crop went onto their plantations were manifold. In his *Description of South Carolina* (1706) the then-governor of the colony, James Glen, mused:

> But I cannot leave this subject [the planting of indigo] without observing how conveniently and profitably, as to the charge of labor, both indigo and rice may be manages by the same persons; for the labor attending indigo being over in the summer months, those who were employed in it afterwards, manufacture rice in the ensuing part of the year, when it becomes most laborious; and after doing all this, they will have some time to spare for sawing lumber, making hogshead, and other staves to supply the sugar colonies (18).

Because indigo had a faster growing cycle of seven months, planters could easily integrate it into their existing system as a supplementary crop. Slaves could cultivate indigo during the "dead time" of the rice cycle (Morgan 162). Though indigo cultivation was not as labor intensive of a process as rice, it did require more attention than its low country counterpart. Morgan describes

indigo as a delicate crop that had to be constantly tended in order to protect it from weeds and insects; it was work that was both repetitive as well as physically demanding (160-1). Even more sensitive was the dye making process which demanded an incredible amount of skill and precision. Thus, aside from the obvious benefit of making planters more money, indigo cultivation had the added advantage of employing more of the slaves' time in what the planter would consider useful activity. Skilled crop cultivation served as a mechanism of planter control by disciplining slaves' bodies without the use of violence—a tactic that must have appealed to a female master like ELP.

Also significant was the labor organization of rice and indigo cultivation. Both crops were cultivated using the task system of labor. This meant that slaves were given a specific amount of work to do in one day and once that quota was met, they were allowed to apportion the rest of their day (Morgan 185). To assign the work, fields were subdivided into plots which formed the basic units of measurement. This division of the land meant that slaves did not require close supervision; the land itself became the mechanism of control. Almost like a perfect Foucaultian panopticon, the task system could "induce and inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201).

More so than any other British North American colony, Carolina represented the promise of plantation enterprise. Heralded by early explorers and promotional writers as a land of unparalleled abundance, Carolina was a place where planters could be profitable without sacrificing the genteel status they held in such esteem. As ELP's letters demonstrate, creating and sustaining productive plantations required a proper balance between practical and performative concerns. Contrary to depictions in popular culture, plantations were judiciously curated and widely variant spaces. Some spaces, such as Crowfield's gardens, were constructed

to reflect neoclassical pastoral ideals; while others, such as Garden Hill, were designed to maximize production and control. As different as these spaces were, they all had two things in common. First, the success or failure of any plantation space was a reflection of the planter's ability to master the demands of the land as well as the people who lived and worked on it. Secondly, it was the physical and intellectual labor of enslaved workers that made all of these spaces—from the irrigated rice fields of Huckhole Swamp to the stylish architectural details of Drayton Hall—possible. Planters co-opted this slave labor into their own narratives of mastery and in so doing composed an idealized version of the plantation that privileged their role above all else.

Chapter 3

In January 1742 ELP began writing to a new correspondent, Mary Bartlett. Unlike her other correspondents who were older or living abroad, Bartlett was roughly the same age as ELP, and she had just arrived in Charleston for an extended visit with her aunt and uncle, the Pinckneys.[97] From the first letter to Bartlett, it is clear that ELP relished the opportunity to communicate with someone whose socio-cultural status mirrored her own, yet she was also aware of how her position as a plantation mistress distanced her from the normal life of a wealthy young woman. "'Tis with pleasure I commence a Corrispondance to wch. you promise to continue" ELP writes to Bartlett, "tho' I fear I shall often want matter to soport an Epistolary ~~correspondence~~ Intercourse in this solitary retirement however you shall see my inclination is not in fault $^{\text{and the plea}}$ ~~and~~ of wanting a subject is not an Idle excuse" (ELP0112). As her other letters demonstrate, the rigors of plantation management did, in fact, give ELP much to write about; so much so that she devoted an entire day of the week just to business correspondence. The use of false(?) modesty is a common trope within ELP's other letters, yet this demure introduction to Bartlett is different from those to her other correspondents in that ELP's anxiety seems to stem from an inability to meet epistolary expectations as opposed to overstepping them.

Despite these concerns, Bartlett became ELP's most frequent correspondent, aside from her father. Bartlett served as an epistolary foil to George Lucas, and the exchange between Bartlett and ELP provided a space for her to work out both what she wanted to do and how she wanted, or was able, to present herself. A letter from the spring of 1742 illustrates the safety of this particular space as ELP openly grappled with the balance between cultivating the skill-set of an elite lady and attending to plantation business-- a struggle she could not communicate to her

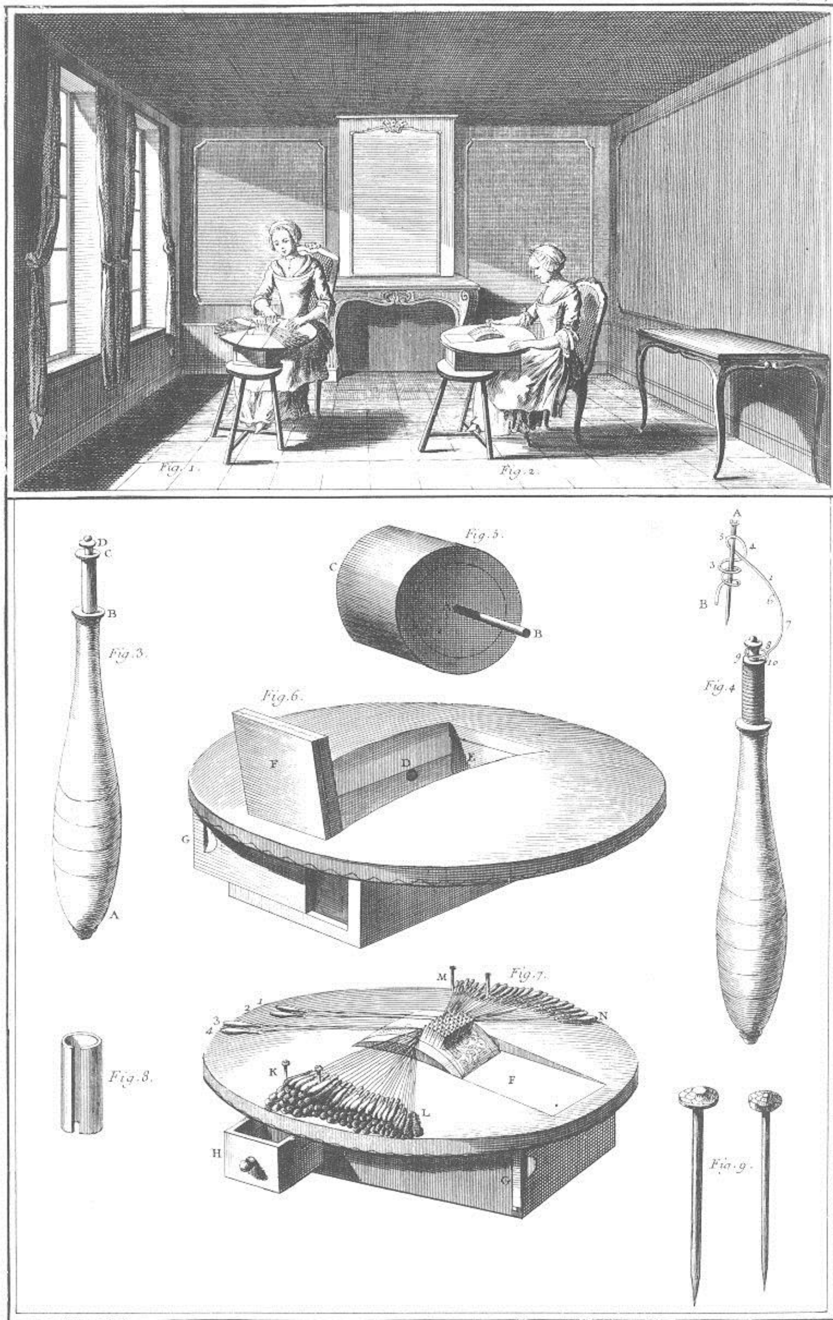
[97] Mary Bartlett was the niece of Charles Pinckney's first wife, Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney. Her exact age is not known, but information within the letters suggests that she was approximately four years younger than ELP.

father. As ELP reconstructs a typical day's events for Bartlett, she accounts for both business and leisure activities. While descriptions of the latter generate the most commentary from ELP, the pressing presence plantation duties are apparent throughout. This tension manifests itself within the letter through a discussion of lace lappets, a popular decorative head accessory for eighteenth-century women.[98] With the business of plantations demanding the majority of her time, ELP admitted that pursuits such as lace-making were not a priority:

> now you may form some judgment what time I can have to work my lappets, I own I never go to them with a quite easey conscience as I know my father has an avertion to my employing my time in that poreing work, but they are begun and must be finishd. I hate to undertake any thing and not go thro' with it, but by way of relaxation from the other I have begun a peice of work of a quicker sort wch. requires nither Eyes nor genius at least not very good ones, would you ever guess it to be a shrimp nett? for so it is (ELP 0115).

Making lace lappets was "a fashionable pastime for ladies" who created the complicated patterns by weaving together silk threads that were wound on bone bobbins (Michie 33). The silk thread bobbins were attached to a small loom-like structure that fit on the maker's lap. Figure 4, from Diderot's Encyclopédie shows two young women engaged in the lace-making process, and the bone bobbins of silk thread are shown in the detailed drawings of the equipment directly below. Lace-making was popular enough to capture the attention of Charleston merchant Robert Pringle, who ordered supplies for lace-making after noticing that "the women here come very much into wareing of Bone Lace" (Michie 33).

[98] Often made of lace, lappets were a decorative head accessory that hung on either side of the wearer's head almost like streamers.



Dentelle.

Figure 4. Lace making (Plate 1) from Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*. Image hosted by University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2016 Edition), Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe (eds), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

The candor with which ELP writes to Bartlett about her lappets is markedly different from letters to her father, but the underlying issue is much the same. After describing her demanding schedule, ELP anticipates a question from Bartlett regarding progress on her lappets. Perhaps the lappets were part of a previous discussion between the two (though they are not mentioned in any other letter), but her choice to focus on them here is telling. Lappets were a distinctively feminine accessory, and in order to make the lappets, ELP deployed a distinctively feminine skill: lace making. Lappets were made in a variety of mediums, and some were more utilitarian than others. ELP's description of the lace work as "poreing," or requiring a great level of concentration, suggests that she was attempting a lace pattern of considerable complexity. ELP's delicate lace lappets were intended as an ornamental accessory. Once completed, the decorative lappets would signal several things about its maker: she was wealthy, fashionable, and accomplished.

Usually, such attributes would be desirable in a young woman, but they also created a conflict of interests for ELP, whose social aspirations were temporarily disrupted by her other role as a plantation manager. ELP frames the conflict over her lappets with the introduction of her father. According to ELP, Col. Lucas sees her lappets as a frivolous endeavor —at the very least it he saw it as a mismanagement of both her abilities and time. Any time ELP spent "poreing" over lappets was time not spent managing his plantations. From his position in Antigua, it makes sense that Lucas would censure his plantation manager for spending time and effort on a piece of decorative female clothing. This is of course complicated by the fact that his manager is also his daughter. In his "A Memoir of the Pinckney Family of South Carolina" southern novelist William Gilmore Simms claims that ELP's father, George Lucas actively kept his daughter from needlework for fear that this "instruction" (typical for women in the West

Indies) would create a mind that was "vacant and uninformed." "He had a great aversion to the sight of a needle," Simms continues, "and used to say he never saw women at work but he imagined they were plotting mischief. So ungallant a supposition would not have been adverted to by one of his descendants but to show that it was partly owning to this circumstance that the fine mind of his daughter was so highly cultivated" (135).[99] Regardless of the veracity of Simms's claims, his anecdote illustrates the complicated set of concerns regarding the proper instruction of women, and the role that embroidery served as a mechanism of expression.

What this section of the letter suggests is that the interests of a planter and the interests of a woman are distinct and separate. Other letters from ELP to her father follow a similar refrain, with ELP assuring her father that the fancies of a young girl are subordinated by her filial duty.[100] In this letter to Bartlett, however, ELP begins to play with the idea that these two identities need not be mutually exclusive. Admitting that she cannot go about working on her lappets with an "easy conscience," ELP playfully declares that she is also making a shrimp net. While it is possible that ELP was being facetious in her declaration, the rhetorical juxtaposition of the lappets and shrimp net within the letter opens significant interpretative possibilities. On the surface, the lappets seem diametrically opposed to the shrimp net: the former being a delicate, elegant object for the adornment of a wealthy white woman, the latter a utilitarian tool used by the working class or slaves. Yet in terms of their material composition, the two objects are remarkably similar. The second and third plates from Diderot's Encyclopédie entry on lace making provide step-by-step illustrations of the hand-weaving process, as well as up-close illustrations of lace patterns, which illustrates the visual similarity between bobbin lace and a net

[99] Simms seems to recognize that George Lucas's opinions would not be popular with his contemporary audience in 1867. There are no known letters from George Lucas to corroborate Simms's story, but ELP's comments on her lappets suggest that this piece of lore may be true.
[100] For more on the epistolary exchange between ELP and her father, see chapter 1.

(FIG. 5). As ELP's letter explains, it was the mesh-like ground of the lappets that inspired her to assume the task of the similarly-constructed shrimp net. The connection yields several significant implications. By using her skill in lace-making to produce the shrimp net, ELP makes the claim that traditional feminine skills have transferrable value to commercial plantation enterprise. Furthermore, her statement that the shrimp net was "but by way of realization from the [lappet]" rhetorically elevates woman's knowledge and skill, as it is only through developing the lappets that ELP thinks of starting the shrimp net. The image of the shrimp net becomes a material manifestation of ELP's fusion of the feminine and the planter, a process that she replicates and refines throughout her life.

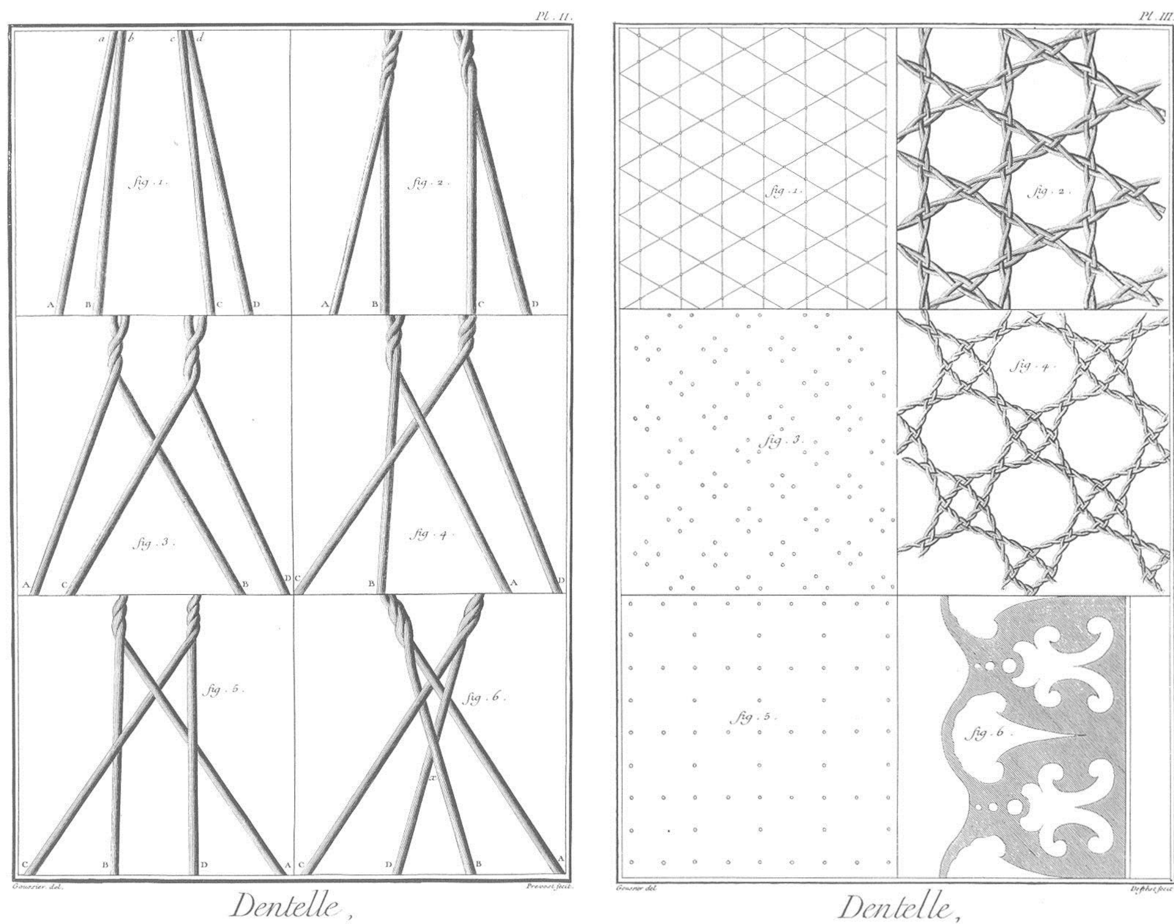


Figure 5. Lace making (Plates 2 and 3) from Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Image hosted by University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2016 Edition), Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe (eds), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

For most contemporary scholars, ELP's active negotiation of gendered expectations and ends with her marriage to Charles Pinckney in 1745. Not coincidentally, this date also corresponds to s significant drop off in the volume of letters recorded in the letterbook.[101] ELP's marriage to Charles Pinckney marks the moment where the independent girl of the Bartlett letters is eclipsed by the traditional married woman. In some ways, this assessment is accurate: subsequent letters often reveal a dutiful wife and mother, more directly concerned with the domestic duties of family life than the world of plantation management. Marriage and motherhood do change ELP's role within the household; however, they do not limit her power or authority to traditionally feminine roles. On the contrary, I believe that her post-marriage production solidifies and extends the knowledge and abilities she cultivated as a young woman. What did change is the production that signified this mastery. Instead of fighting the gendered restrictions placed on self-expression, ELP worked within traditional female modes of expression, a move that enabled her to claim ownership of planter knowledge in a way that also reinforced the status quo of the plantation.

This chapter analyzes a white silk shawl that ELP made some time after the Pinckney family returned to Carolina from England in 1758 (FIG 6).[102] Measuring six feet in length and nearly a foot-and-a-half wide, the body of ELP's shawl is composed from a gossamer white silk gauze, which was grown, harvested, and woven by slaves on the Pinckney plantations. The focal point of the shawl is the tonal silk embroidery completed by ELP herself. The shawl has a small border of an indiscriminate floral design. At each end of the shawl this border frames the focal point of the embroidery: a set of five stylized indigo plants. Each plant is framed by a tear-drop shaped outline, and a large, stylized flower makes the transition from the indigo plant to the base.

[101] Charles Pinckney's first wife, Elizabeth Lamb Pinckney died in 1744.

[102] The shawl is owned by Tim Drake, a professor at Clemson University, and a direct descendent of Eliza Lucas Pinckney. He came into possession of the shawl via his grandmother.

Figure 6. Eliza Lucas Pinckney's silk shawl. Photo by Anderson Wrangle. © Anderson Wrangle.

Much like the lappets she made as a young woman, the ELP's shawl and dress are objects of imbued with personal, social, cultural and monetary capital. ELP's decision to embroider a piece of clothing is significant because it channels her expression in a public, yet socially appropriate way. ELP complicates discourses on fashion (and by its extension, the capabilities of women) by challenging the perception that it promotes frivolous indulgence. Instead, ELP's shawl makes a complex argument for women's abilities to engage in plantation enterprise. But unlike the early letters from the letterbook, where ELP juggles the expectations of traditional

femininity with the business acumen of the planter, here she dismantles that dialectic by creating a text(ile) that displays both.[103]

Previously unknown to scholars, a picture of the shawl first appeared in 2013 in the book *Red, White & Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life* by Andrea Feeser. Feeser provides a unique look at ELP's story and the culture of South Carolina indigo in the mid-eighteenth century by exploring the intersections of race, nation and production in the lowcountry. Her emphasis on the diffuse nature of indigo's cultivation is encapsulated in the image of the shawl created by Eliza Lucas Pinckney. Feeser's analysis of the garment's color transforms what seems to be a curious, albeit fashion-focused, omission of color into an embodiment of the historical silencing of enslaved workers whose expertise and labor formed the foundation for plantation enterprise:

> Pinckney's wrap is not blue but white, the typical hue for such a garment of the period. However, just like the color white, the wrap in a sense contains many colors. The blue dye plants featured in the textile were produced via the work of several white people as well as the work of black and red slaves. The toil of extracting dye from indigo and the people who did that backbreaking work are present but invisible in Pinckney's finely wrought wrap (99).

The provenance of the shawl lends further credence to such an interpretation: while it was ELP who allegedly hand-embroidered the garment, the shawl itself was made of silk supposedly cultivated on the Pinckney plantation and woven by slaves there. ELP's shawl showcases two distinct agricultural commodities she was invested in. For silk, the shawl represents the

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[103] Emily Bowles essay "'You Would Think Me Far Gone in Romance': Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Fictions of Female Identity in the Colonial South" makes a similar argument about ELP's epistolary voice by reading her letters within the context of popular British domestic fictions.

possibility of a burgeoning South Carolina industry, while the careful indigo embroidery performed by ELP herself displays a mastery over that crop's cultivation.

Feeser's analysis of the garment is significant because it opens up discussions not only of indigo production, but of all colonial exports whose viability depended the exploitation of people, land, and natural resources, by forcing us to acknowledge the "present but invisible." The irony of Pinckney's shawl is that while displaying her accomplishments and abilities, it simultaneously shrouds the enslaved workforce whose exploited labor put her in this position to speak. At the material level, slave labor quite literally creates the foundation for Pinckney's text. The embroidery may be her own doing, but the shawl itself is the product of slaves. In a very literal way, slaves become the background on which she produces this narrative of her mastery.

Much like Pinckney's letterbook, the shawl becomes a richer text when its form and function are contextualized in terms of the eighteenth-century plantation society from which it came. As an example of eighteenth-century embroidery, ELP's needle preserves the personal tale of her ingenuity with regards to indigo cultivation in Carolina. As the accessory of an elite woman, the shawl is part of a social debate surrounding the role of fashion and the consumption of luxury goods. Finally, the shawl's pattern marks it as a garment influenced by the burgeoning global textile trade.

Through the creation of the shawl, ELP makes a two-pronged argument. The first is about the value of women's knowledge. ELP takes part in a long tradition of women who utilized the needle as a form of expression. ELP challenges the notion that such creations are subordinate to the written word by a creating garment that explicitly highlights her contribution to one of the largest global economies of the Eighteenth Century: the textile trade. Secondly, ELP's textile demonstrate that her participation in this discourse is a function of her success as a planter. Like

other male planters of the time, ELP was adept at culling the best resources from around the globe, and then exploiting those resources to craft her narrative. By speaking through textiles, ELP engaged in what was already an active public discourse regarding the function of sartorial expression as a form of social control. It is through the creation of this garment that she develops a narrative that is distinctly feminine *and* distinctly planter.

SEWING, EMBROIDERY & FEMALE EXPRESSION

For ELP, a woman whose adolescent years were marked by a disavowal of traditional femininity, embroidery was one potential access point to re-engage with a part of her identity that was often marginalized. Stitching and writing have long shared a close, and at times contentious, relationship. Embroidery provided women a medium of expression, and many utilized their needles to write the stories of their lives, and in this way can viewed as a tool of empowerment. Yet while embroidery "provided a source of pleasure and power for women" it was also "indissolubly linked to their powerlessness" (Parker 11). By the very fact that it was not writing, embroidered work emphasized the distance placed between women and the printed word. Though writing and embroidery are constructed from similar material practices, the discourses each produces are not evaluated in the same way.[104] The written word conveyed power, inspiration, and reason, while embroidery was cast as a second-rate discourse. In Anne Bradstreet's poem "The Prologue", she famously laid claim to the pen through a disavowal of embroidery by declaring: "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue/Who says my hand a needle better fits." One hundred years later, ELP seemed to challenge that binary by suggesting that her hand could comfortably fit both.

[104] Maureen Goggin argues that scholars need to "[shift] attention away from the artifact as interpreted text toward the material practices that construct it. All discursive practices may be understood as material practices. That is, material surfaces (paper, stone, canvas, digital space) are marked with some kind of tool that etches or releases a physical substance such as ink or lead, or translates key strokes into electronic impulses" (310).

It is impossible to know exactly what ELP felt as she embroidered this shawl. Perhaps she shared the sentiments of Bradstreet and lamented the presence of a needle in her hand. Or maybe the act of embroidery was a display of personal independence from the directives of her father. Of course, it is just as likely that such thoughts never crossed her mind; creating the indigo wrap might have been a leisure activity. Such sentiments are inaccessible to modern scholars. What we do know about ELP is that she had an astute sense of discursive practices and was comfortable pulling from these to further her own ends. Regardless of the medium, ELP knew the value of self-presentation.

The message that ELP put forth through the shawl was one of calculated femininity. Each facet of the piece seems to embrace this identity, from delicate the silk gauze body, to the decorative floral pattern stitched in silk thread. Florals were a popular subject in embroidery pieces, and natural examples like ELP's plants were thought to reflect the ideal of the natural world as feminine.[105] Embroidery was a logical choice for ELP because it was a skill taught to most women in the eighteenth century.[106] An embroidered garment was an ideal way to demonstrate such a shift because "embroidery was supposed to signify femininity—docility, obedience, love of home, and a life without work—it showed the embroiderer to be a deserving, worthy wife and mother. Thus the art played a crucial part in maintaining the class position of the household, displaying the value of a man's wife and the condition of his economic circumstances" (Parker 11). Of course, ELP's wrap was not just a display of Charles Pinckney's

[105] Parker notes that by 1740 the verb "to flower" was used interchangeably with "embroider" (119).
[106] For the purposes of this chapter, I am using "embroidery" as a general term for any kind of decorative needlework. People in the Eighteenth Century were far more nuanced in their understanding of needlework than we are today, and many of the names they used have shifted meaning over time, making it difficult to discuss specific techniques with accuracy. For example, garments labeled as "cotton" in early American inventories were not actually made of cotton, but instead were comprised of a combination of woolen fibers. For more the varieties of early American needlework, see Swan, *A Winterthur Guide to American Needlework*.

economic circumstances— the indigo plants were also a clear reference to her own contributions towards the family's wealth, as we saw in chapter two.

ELP's skilled embroidery is an example of her engaging in more traditional forms of female expression, but it also highlights the significance of class privilege that is often overlooked in critical discussions of women's needlework. This issue is effectively illustrated through Maureen Googin's deconstruction of the word "text":

> The term *text* literally means "that which is woven." "Woven" here may be taken in a double sense: first, as that which produces a material surface and, second, as that which creates marks on a surface to generate symbolic meanings. This twofold sense resonates with two major kinds of practices in the world of textiles. One kind—for example, weaving, tapestry, and lace –making—results in a textile. This collection of practices can be distinguished from embroidery…Whereas in the former the practice creates a surface, the latter generates patterns on a surface. In the world of textiles, the distinction is worth making because the knowledge and practices themselves are so different…Embroidery, then, as a practice may be best understood as a form of meaningful mark-making—a polysemous system of writing (314).

Goggin's differentiation between weaving and embroidery invokes Feeser's analysis of ELP's shawl as a text with multiple layers. As the embroiderer, ELP is able to engage in the process of "meaningful mark-making", much as she did when writing in the letterbook (chapter 1), and organizing the plantation landscape (chapter 2). What Goggin's description seems to take for granted, however, is the labor embedded within the "surface" textile. Though not as easily accessible as ELP's work, the silk background holds the stories of the other people whose

handiwork went into the creation of the garment, from the enslaved children who fed the silkworms, to the skilled hands of the female slave that wove the silk strands into that wearable art. Ultimately the impact of these other people must be flattened for ELP to make her mark.

ELP's position as an elite white woman provided her with a socially sanctioned option for expression that many other women— both enslaved and free—did not have easy access to. While nearly all eighteenth-century women knew how to sew, the pool of women who could embroider a shawl like ELP's was relatively small. Fine embroidery was a skill that required practice, and some families could afford neither the money nor the time to send their girls to a school such as the one Martha Daniell Logan advertised in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which promised instruction in "Embroidery with Silk, Cruels, or Silver and Gold Thread" (qtd. in Swan 89).[107] For many women, sewing was primarily a utilitarian activity, as opportunities for self-expression were far more rare for women burdened with the responsibility of constructing their own clothing as well as that of their family. ELP probably made intimate articles of clothing for herself, but the majority of her clothing, including larger projects like dresses, were made in Charleston by a tailor (Ribeiro 182). The luxuries afforded ELP do not negate the beauty of the shawl, nor the accomplishments of its maker, yet it is important to consider the material realities of this garment's production as an interpretable object.

TEXTILE COMMODITIES

Her garment of choice—the shawl—is also significant in that it is one of the most visible garments a woman could wear. Unlike petticoat borders or pockets, which were intimate garments that were either partially or completely covered by a dress, the shawl was worn over

[107] Logan advertised her instructional schools for girls throughout the 1740s and 1750s. This advertisement for silk embroidery appeared in August 1754. Logan is probably best known for her botany work and *Gardener's Calendar.*

the dress as an outer layer.[108] Furthermore, Pinckney's shawl represents the concept of the accessory in its purest form: the thin silk and delicate embroidery prevent the shawl from serving any utilitarian purpose. Pinckney's shawl, as it rested across her back and over her arms, was meant as a display with a significance beyond personal triumph. It also signified her ability to publicly engage with others through the arena of fashion. Both the dress and the shawl date near the end of the colonial period, a time marked by a steady increase in consumerism throughout the colonies. Objects— the things that people owned— had their utilitarian function, but colonists increasingly valued their things for the aesthetic qualities they possessed. Objects were "measured" through any number of criteria, such as the quality of the raw materials used, the craftsmanship of the piece. An object's cultural capital also depended on social factors—i.e. fashion. Karen Calvert illustrates this point through her analysis of eighteenth-century men's wigs. She talks about how certain hair styles were prized more than others, as well as the significance of "powdering" one's wig, which served as an identifier of wealth. Using the wigs, Calvert also demonstrates the mutability of fashion across time and space. It might be fashionable to wear a wig to the coffeehouse in Boston, but this was not automatically true in Philadelphia or New York (263-269). The ability to buy objects was an obvious statement of monetary wealth, but buying an object that was fashionable made a statement about the owner's cultural prowess; an ability to understand the embedded values and desires of a social group in a specific place and time.

[108] Two of the most popularly embroidered items were pockets and petticoat borders. A Pocket was small bag-like accessory worn by a woman around her waist to carry personal items. Pockets were tied around the waist similarly to an apron, but unlike the latter, were worn underneath clothing. Pockets were one of the most important accessories a colonial woman wore, and the detailed embroidery covering many of them alludes to this significance. Petticoat borders were more visible, as their embroidery peeked out from underneath a skirt as a woman moved, but the visual cast by the embroidery was fleeting.

Wigs, candlesticks, books, silverware—any of these objects could transmit cultural value. It is clothing, however, that best embodies the interwoven relationship between individual identity and social expectations. Clothing's literal connection to the body served as an intimate reminder of the relationship between human being and object. Simultaneously, the visibility of garments revealed as much about a person's status as it concealed of their body. Clothing, unlike other consumable objects, was something that every person needed regardless of race, class or gender. This necessity was utilized to regulate bodies socially, economically, and at times, legally.

For elite Carolinians, clothing's ability to organize society took on even greater import as they fought the destabilizing effects of Carolina's plantation culture and sub-tropical climate.[109] Buying and wearing the latest fashions from abroad did help assuage anxieties regarding the degeneration of British identity, and contemporary accounts confirm that "colonists who had discretionary income for textile luxuries purchased and displayed them with no more lag time than did citizens of the British Isles" (Greene 44). Fashionable garments were important for British colonists in America because they served as physical connection from the empire's periphery to its center. South Carolina's elite had a particularly acute sense of this distance from Great Britain, and having the latest fashion "presented opportunities for colonial men to feel less colonial and more metropolitan" (Haulman 49).[110] Even ELP, who generally dismissed the artifice of fashionable city life, recognized its importance enough to describe Charleston thusly: "Crs Town the Metropolis is a neat pretty place. The inhabitants polite and live in a very gentile manner. The streets and houses regularly built and the Ladies and gentlemen gay in their dress,

[109] For more on seventeenth and eighteenth century views of Carolina as a degenerative space, see chapter 1.
[110] Susan Greene, in her discussion of colonial clothing consumption notes that "the sophisticated plantation colonies were England's best customers" (44).

upon the whole you will find as many agreeable people of both sexes of the place as almost any where."

The veracity with which colonists clamored for luxury goods did not come without its issues, however. Governor James Glen touted Carolina's consumption of British imported goods as a major contribution to "the Prosperity of our Mother Country", yet in the same sentence confesses that "I cannot help expressing my Surprize and Concern to find that there are annually imported into this Province, considerable Quantities of fine Flanders Laces, the finest Dutch Linens, and French Cambricks, Chints, Hyson Tea, and other East India Goods, Silks, Gold and Silver Lace, &c." Fittingly, it is the trade in cloth that dominates the list of problematic luxury goods. Glen's seemingly contradictory opinions regarding trade are similar to other contemporary concerns about conspicuous consumption on both sides of the Atlantic. Carolina's consumption of imported goods may be an asset Great Britain in the short-term, argues Glen, "yet it retards our Increase both in People and Wealth, and consequently renders us less profitable to Great Britain." Luxury consumption was thus a fraught process for Carolinians: buying imported fabrics provided colonists with a tangible link to Great Britain, and was seen as an important monetary contribution to the sustenance of the empire. Yet these very same fabrics were viewed as frivolous and indulgent: threatening the planters' economic well-being as well as the ideological structures of measured control that girded the plantation system.

These matters were further complicated by fashion's association with women and femininity. For early eighteenth century planters such displays of wealth and taste cut across gender and geographical lines, but as the century progressed, "fashion" was increasingly thought of as a form of expression designed for women. The designation of fashion as an acceptable point of entry for women into public discourse was a double-edged sword, however. For women

before the Revolution, arenas for printed expression were certainly limited. Whereas a man like William Byrd, or Eliza's husband Charles Pinckney, had virtually unlimited access to any number of public forms of expression, colonial women had relatively few. Thus engaging in the transatlantic and, in some instances, global discourses surrounding clothing became one significant way that women could control, or at least shape, self-presentation. However, this form of presentation via fashion was increasingly decried for being sumptuous, hedonistic and superficial. The debate over the nature of fashion's influence was complicated by its status as a driving force in global economies. For men, fashion "signified the scope and masculine power of British commerce and trade with 'exotic' lands, and presented opportunities for colonial men to feel less colonial and more metropolitan" (Haulman 4). Thus fashion in dress was both an acknowledged form of feminine power and important to men and women alike as a site for expressing social status. (Haulman 4).

The coloring of the garment is also significant. As would be expected, white garments signified wealth because of the ease at which they became dirty or stained. Silk was not supposed to be washed either because washing affected the texture of the garment. White garments embroidered with white threads, like Pinckney's shawl, are known as "whitework."[111] Whitework, in a variety of forms, was popular throughout the eighteenth-century and often appeared in women's accessories: shawls, lappets, aprons, ruffled sleeves, etc. That so many of these accessories exist to this day is a testament to their value as luxury items.[112] The preservation of Pinckney's shawl, the only one of hers known to exist, is an example of this

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[111] For more on whitework see, Toomer, *Embroidered with White: The 18th Century Fashion for Dresden Lace and other Whiteworked Accessories*.

[112] When studying surviving eighteenth-century clothing, it becomes apparent that people preserve things of value. A disproportionate amount of elite and/or expensive clothing has survived to modern times, while examples of the everyday dress of poor and average Americans are few and far between.

notion.[113] Pinckney's decision to leave the indigo garment white was, as Andrea Feeser suggests, a fashionable choice; but it was also a way to project wealth—wealth she accumulated through the cultivation of the plant that was the subject of her shawl.

Colonists imported textiles of every kind and quality, from the finest Indian silks to coarsest British woolens, and it is clear that consumers had a clear and nuanced understanding of what these various textiles were.[114] In fact, textiles accounted for approximately half of all colonial imports in the Eighteenth Century (Breen 44). The significance of the textile trade in Carolina is highlighted by governor James Glen in his *Account of Carolina*. Section VII on maritime trade includes an extensive list of commodities and manufactures imported to Carolina from Great Britain, nearly half of which are textiles. Account records for George Lucas's Carolina expenses reflect Glen's description. Between 1743 and 1744, Lucas purchased a variety of cotton, linen, wool and silk fabrics: 6 ½ yards of India dimity, a piece of India chintz, 6 yards of tammey, 81 ½ yards of plains, 3 pieces of Gulix Holland, a piece of Chambrick, 5 yards of bag Holland, 7 yards of striped cotton, 4 yards of ribbon and several small amounts of silk.[115] At £15., the Indian chintz was the most expensive fabric, followed by the Gulix Holland (£11.) and

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[113] There is a healthy archive of ELP's personal affects that survive to this day, though most are imported items. The Charleston Museum holds most of these items, including a pink silk dress, blue satin shoes, and a jeweled brooch.
[114] A 1759 advertisement from Thomas Stone provides an example of the volume and diversity of textiles offered by Charleston merchants: "GERMAN, Irish, and Scotch oznabrugs, Brown roils, Ten nail, 3-4, 7-8, and yard wide cotton and linen checks and stripes, 3-4, 7-8, and yard wide Irish linens, 9-8 and ell wide sheeting linens and hollands, Tandems and platilloes, Pistol, long, plain, flower's spotted and minionet lawns, Fine cambrics and course kenings, Britannias, Tabling, napkining, toweling, and clouting caper and damks, Diaper and damask table cloths, Large and small 3 4 and 7-8 garlix, Princess linnes, Dowlas, Flanders bed ticks and bunts, Scotch flower'd printed linen, and silk handkerchiefs, Printed linnens and calicoes of various colours, and very near; English pink, lead, marble, hair, mosaick, blue, green, yellow, and dark pround chints, A few sack patterns of the most fashionable india chints, India and half yard wide dimity, Nankeens; Blue and green pavilion gauze, Russia lace, Fine double and single ginghams…Silk laces, terrets, and worsted quality bindings; Cocoa, best bone, and ivory stick'd fans, Belladine sewing silk, Silk kenn garters of most colours, Dutch pretties, White sarcenets, Black alamode, Hatband crapes and bombazines Double and single alapions, Crow colour'd and light raven grey poplins, Sagathies, duroys, durants, and tammies; Short, and long pil'd fearet hair flag, Broad cloths of the newest patterns, Trimming Dyed jeans, sustains, & thicksetts, Worsted pieces for breeches, of different colours and prices".
[115] This list of fabrics is compiled from two separate accounts. Although George Lucas was in Antigua at the time, these purchases were made through the Charleston firm of Lennox and Deas, which suggests that they would have been used for his Carolina holdings.

Indian dimity (£8.2.6 for 6 ½ yards).[116] The other fabrics listed were probably made into clothing or accessories for ELP, her sister Polly or her mother. In contrast, the 81 ½ yards of plains (probably a British-made woolen fabric) cost £40.15.0. This difference in fabric prices was quite large: the Indian dimity cost 2.5 times the price of the plains, while the Indian chintz was 30 times the price.[117] Its relatively inexpensive price per yard, coupled with the large quantity purchased suggests that this fabric was distributed to the Lucas slaves so they could make their own clothing.

In 1760, ELP wrote a letter of thanks to Wilhelmina-Catherine King, an acquaintance from the Pinckney family's stay in England, for the receipt of a package containing clothing for her daughter Harriott: "'Tis a most compleat suit ~~of Linnen~~ and universally admired the fann I think a curiosity and the pompon the prettiest we ever saw…" (ELP0763). But it was not aesthetic qualities alone that made these coveted objects, the novelty of such pieces held significant social value. ELP's letter continues: "the little girl is quite happy and the more so as they are the first of ye fashion that have reached this part of the world ~~both as to the materials the <…> in much of~~, so she has an opportunity of seting ~~the fash as well as <…>~~ the fashion I doubt whether she would part with them to purchase a peace with the Cherookees who are become extreamly troublsome to us…" Hyperbole aside, ELP's letter demonstrates the power that clothing and other fashionable goods could have. For twelve-year-old Harriott Pinckney, acquiring the clothing, fan and pompon demonstrated the family's elite transatlantic connections. Wearing the clothes was not a simple act of imperial mimicry, however. Placed within the context of

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[116]With the exception of the plains, the textiles listed in these two inventories were fabrics of exceptional quality. The most prized textile was probably the Indian chintz, a cotton textile easily identified by the colorful designs painted or printed upon it. Cambric and Gulix Holland are generally described as fine, white linens (Montgomery 187, 258-259). Tammy was a strong woven fabric that was used for household items as well as garments that required more heft, such as a petticoat. Montgomery cites an Eighteenth Century manuscript that explains how chintz dresses "were lined with Tammy stuff, to keep them stiff and never to be washed!" (360).

[117] In the absence of more complete information, the price-per-yard figures are calculated under the assumption that the fabrics are of similar widths.

Carolina, Harriott also became an author of sorts by *setting* the fashion that was presumably disseminated to Charleston's elite women.

While attributes such as cut and color were certainly part of the fashionable garment, "skill and taste lay in the choice of fabric and decoration, not the tailor" (Riberio 58). The specificity with which colonists described the fabrics they bought reflects the important role textiles held in society, and confirms consumers' knowledge of the products. Fabric was so significant to the process of "self-fashioning" argues T.H. Breen, that "for provincial Americans the central element in [eighteenth century portraiture] may have been the sitter's clothes, the character and the quality of the fabric, and not—as we have sometimes been led to believe—the posture of the body or the details of the face" (39).[118]

While ELP's epistolary persona generally shunned opulent displays of wealth and style, she was still a participant in the transatlantic economy of luxury goods. In a 1741 letter to her father ELP "Acknowledges the rect. of a ps. of rich Yellow Lutstring consisting of 19 yards for my self do. of blue for my Mama…also for a ps. of Holland and Cambrick received from London at the same time." Lustring (a fabric named for its shinny appearance) was a crisp and light silk, which made it an ideal choice for dress during the hot and humid Carolina summer (Baumgarten). Unfortunately, silk lustring's properties made it inaccessible for all but the wealthiest South Carolinians. A finely woven silk was one of the most expensive fabrics a colonist could buy. ELP does not specify if her yellow lustring was patterned or not, but a complicated pattern woven into the fabric (brocade) could increase the price of the fabric even more, as weavers could only weave a few inches of pattern a day (Riberio 57). In some colonies, luxury fabrics such as silk were reserved for the wealthiest members of society.

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[118] Letters indicate that ELP had at least one portrait painted during her lifetime, but no image of her has ever been found.

Given the expense of fabric, fine textiles were treasured possessions passed down through generations. As fashionable silhouettes changed throughout the eighteenth century, colonists—even very wealthy ones—responded to changing tastes by altering garments, as is the case with ELP's yellow silk gown which was probably altered in the 1780s (FIG 7).[119]

Figure 7. Eliza Lucas Pinckney's silk dress. Image courtesy of Division of Home and Community Life, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

[119] For more on the altering and refashioning of clothes, see Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal* (184-207).

Shortly after her marriage to Charles Pinckney, ELP sent a package of clothing to the sister of Pinckney's first wife, Sarah Lamb Bartlett. In the enclosed letter, ELP notes that while "Mr: P[inckney] thought he had sent home everything of value that belond to your sister…I find a very good suit of laced linning and a velvet scarf was forgot…also a brown taffety gown" (ELP0113). Whether intentional or not, Pinckney's oversight of the garments as something of "value", and ELP's subsequent identification of those things, demonstrates her understanding of clothing as objects of sentimental and monetary worth.

In all likelihood, ELP had her rich yellow lustring made into a formal sack-back gown, a style popular throughout the Eighteenth Century. The sack-back gown received its name from the definitive pleating at the back of the neck that allowed the fabric to flow freely to the ground. The design and construction of the sack back demonstrated an awareness of textiles as objects of cultural value by creating a figurative frame in which luxurious fabrics were displayed. The large quantities of uncut cloth required for the construction of the sack back also demonstrated the wealth of the wearer. A seamstress probably needed all nineteen yards of lustring to make a single gown for ELP.[120]

Wealthy planters purchased some of the most expensive fabrics in the world to clothe themselves, but these luxurious textiles were not generally the largest fabric expenditure in their ledgers. This distinction belonged to slave clothing, which planters also imported from overseas en masse. In the 1741 Lucas ledger, for example, the 81 ½ yards of plains, though inexpensive when compared to the other textiles, was by far the most expensive item listed in terms of total cost. Supplying a large plantation with enough fabric to clothe all its enslaved inhabitants was no

[120] Linda Baumgarten estimates that "as much as 20 yards might be required for a gentry woman's dressy gown made with a long full skirt" (*What Clothes Reveal* 112).

simple task. Properly outfitting slaves was a concern of ELP, who writes in a section of the letterbook titled "Resolutions" that the good Mistress should "treat them [her servants] with humanity and good nature; to give them sufficient and comfortable clothing and Provisions, and all things necessary for them."

In order to get the yardages necessary, planters had to order stock six months to a year in advance, and even then, fulfillment of the order was not guaranteed. In November 1790, Thomas Pinckney wrote his sister Harriott requesting that she place an order for two thousand yards of Negro cloth and one hundred fifty blankets to be delivered the following fall (ELP0587). Planters occasionally gave slaves their old clothes, but most enslaved peoples—particularly the ones who worked in the field— wore an inexpensive cloth made of a combination of wool, linen and/or cotton that became known as "Negro cloth."[121]

Given the burden of acquiring these textiles, planters did all they could to mitigate the expense. Several of George Washington's letters discuss the hefty expenditure that came with the clothing of slaves. Washington discussed cost-cutting measures such as giving slaves breeches as opposed to full-length pants. "As I am under the necessity of purchasing, every year, a quantity of coarse Linen, Blanketings &ca for the clothing of my negroes, and sundry other articles for various purposes, and Goods of every kind being sold in Alexandria at a high advance," Washington wrote to Clement Biddle, "I am desireous of knowing if I could not supply myself from Philadelphia, or some other place, upon lower terms." Although comparatively inexpensive to the fabrics that the planters themselves wore, the yardage required to clothe slaves was one of the biggest yearly expenses a plantation had. And unlike other goods such as tools, which were replaced every few years, clothing needed to be replaced every year. C.W., author of a 1755

[121] The actual fiber content of "Negro cloth" was variable. Montgomery defines it simply as "a coarse homespun fabric used for clothing slaves" (309).

letter published in *The Gentleman' Magazine* estimated that for a plantation of 32 slaves, a planter could expect to spend approximately £112 on textiles a year.[122]

The Lucas-Pinckney family attempted to cut suppliers out all together by importing the raw materials and people necessary to set up a cloth manufactory of their own. Writing to Charles Pinckney in 1746, George Lucas detailed a plan for the production of cloth on Wappoo. Pinckney was to purchase and plant hemp and flax seed, which would then be woven into cloth by newly acquired indentured servants:

> I Send by this sloop two Irish Servts. vizt. a Weaver & a Spinner Indented here at £10 <...> Sterling Each P annum & as I am inform'd Mr. Cattle has produced both hemp & Flax I pray You will purchase Some of the latter, & order a loom & Spinning wheel to be made & Sett them to worke, […] I pray you will also purchase wool & Sett them to making negroes Cloathing wch. may be Sufficient for my own People, & the overplus to be Sold (ELP0209).

Lucas's plan suggests that he was interested in producing multiple types of cloth at various price points. The flax was likely intended for linen. The designation of the servants as Irish is significant because it denotes expertise on the part of the weaver and spinner, as Irish linen was world-renowned for its quality. Not wanting the servants to be idle as they waited for flax, Lucas instructed Pinckney to have the Irish servants spin and weave cloth for his slaves' clothes. Selling the surplus fabric was a prudent idea on the part of George Lucas, and he surely found buyers among Carolina's planter elite.

[122] In all likelihood, C.W. was Charles Woodmason, who authored several pieces on Carolina indigo manufacture for the magazine. Woodmason estimates £80 for 160 yards of white plains, £5 for thread and buttons, and £27 for "one third of 32 blankets given every third year" (259). Woodmason is also the author of "Indico" a georgic poem. See Shields, *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics and Commerce in British America, 1690-1750* (69-72).

For Lucas, the servants' greatest value was not necessarily in the product they created, but the knowledge they held. Much like the process by which they manufactured indigo, the Lucas-Pinckney family utilized experts in cloth manufacture to broaden and enhance the skill-set of their slaves. Lucas concluded the business portion of his letter by asking Pinckney to "order a Sensible negro woman or two if necessary to learn to Spin & wheels to be made for them, the man Servant will direct a Carpenter in making the loom, & the woman will direct the whole."[123] The Irish servants were not long-term employees; their presence was necessary only until the "Sensible negro woman or two" could replicate their skills. With their new-found expertise, these slave women would be given the enormous task of clothing nearly one hundred people, in addition to any finer fabrics they were tasked with spinning and weaving.

The monetary value of these textiles was certainly an important part of establishing status of the wearer, but it was the symbolic power of choice that carried a greater value on the plantation. Clothing was a way assert mastery, and the agency ELP had in choosing what to wear highlighted the relative powerlessness of those enslaved laborers. The acts of dressing, undressing, and "redressing"—a term coined by Robert DuPlessis for the material changes "at the heart of the venerable human practice of corporeal adaptation to mark and to help effect transitions to new life stages, occupations, and statuses—had profound implications for both master and slave (84). Forcibly stripped of their native attire, "the redressing of the enslaved was a side effect of their transformation into labor units" (127). Since the Lucas and Pinckney families were spinning their own fabric as opposed to purchasing it, it is likely that the pants, shirts and skirts produced on the plantation were near identical in their appearance. Redressed in

[123] For more on planters implementing textile production on their plantations, see Morgan 246-249.

this Carolina homespun, their clothing became "a recognizable uniform of unfreedom" (Styles 534).[124]

In theory, the rigid legislation of clothing provided an assurance that what a person wore was an accurate reflection of their social identity. As the below law demonstrates, however, the legislation of garments was often a reactionary attempt to establish order. South Carolina's 1740 Slave Codes address clothing explicitly and in detail. The language used in Code XL illustrates the significance of clothing both as a marker of the free and a marker of the enslaved:

> And whereas , many of the slaves in this Province wear clothes much above the condition of slaves, for the procuring whereof they use sinister and evil methods: For the prevention, therefore, of such practices for the future, Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no owner or proprietor of any Negro slave, or other slave, (except livery men and boys,) shall permit or suffer such Negro or other slave, to have or wear any sort of apparel whatsoever, finer, other, or greater value than Negro cloth, duffels, kerseys, osnabrigs, blue linen[125], check linen or coarse garlix, or calicoes, checked cottons, or Scotch plaids […]

Code XL reveals how high the stakes were according to planters. A slave obtaining and/or wearing fabrics meant for whites was more than a breach of decorum—it threatened the integrity of the planters' entire social structure. The law instructed anyone who saw a slave in inappropriate clothing to immediately confiscate the articles, just as they would if they encountered a slave with an unauthorized gun. The code does not expand upon what the phrase

[124] Philip Morgan estimates that the average slave woman received just over five yards of fabric for her clothes a year—far less than the nineteen yards ELP was given for a single dress (126).

[125] Chances are that the blue linen that slaves were wearing was dyed with the same indigo cakes they produced. While a few large planters (including the Pinckneys) produced high quality indigo dye, the majority of indigo produced in South Carolina was vastly inferior to that of the French. Because of this, Carolina indigo was an inexpensive dye in Great Britain, and therefore was used to color inexpensive fabrics. For more on the reputation of Carolina indigo see Nash, "Carolina indigo, European textiles, and the British Atlantic economy in the eighteenth century."

"sinister and evil methods" actually means, but the implication is clear: put in the wrong hands, clothing became a weapon.

Planters understood the potential value they could gain by utilizing slaves to make clothing, but they were also concerned about the potential "misuse" of such textiles. It is this tension between the ability to produce and the freedom to consume that drove the strict legislation of textiles as seen in the Carolina Slave Codes. Yet as much as planters attempted to restrict and regulate the clothes that slaves wore, their attempts were largely unsuccessful. Studies of eighteenth-century slave dress reveal that enslaved peoples did express sartorial agency through a variety of channels, including: by making their own clothing from scratch, buying or trading for textiles or pre-made garments, and re-fashioning the clothing given to them by their masters.[126]

Though ELP is most commonly discussed in relation to indigo, her work with silk was extensive as well. ELP's letters are scant in their mention of silk, but its manufacture was something that ELP clearly saw as valuable. The story of silk in Carolina is often eclipsed by the colony's largest exported crop, rice. Despite the relatively minor economic impact silk made in the long run, its cultivation and production in Carolina serves as a case study for several important aspects of eighteenth-century commodity agriculture. Silk's emergence as a commodity crop in Carolina follows a similar trajectory to that of indigo. Early on, it was also seen as a potential compliment to rice. In a 1733 *South Carolina Gazette* article arguing for diversification in Carolina's commodities, "Agricola" (Charles Pinckney) mentions silk

[126] For more on sources for slave clothing, see Fifield "Had on When She Went Away…': Expanding the Unsefulness of Garment Data in American Runaway Advertisements 1750-1790 through Database Analysis (80-102); Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Labourers in America, 1750–1800" (124–59). For more on how slaves used clothing for self-expression, see Baumgarten, "Plains, Plaid and Cotton: Woolens for Slave Clothing" (203–222); DuPlessis *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650-1800* (125-163).

specifically as a promising candidate: "There have been several *Essays* from the Press on the *Culture of Hemp, Silk*, and other useful Manufactures, of which this Province is supported capable, in order to encourage such as have Genius, and Ability to cultivate them, and thereby lessen the Quantity of Rice, which will of course make that Commodity more valuable." Agricola was not alone in his optimism for silk. Planters imported silkworms and their food source, the white mulberry tree (indigenous to China) throughout the early Eighteenth Century. Silk commanded good prices on the international market, and with a little "genius" Carolina planters could tap into this market. Growing silk for export severed a dual function: it would further enrich planters, while protecting the capital they had already acquired.[127]

Silk production was unique from other commodities because it created a space where planter women could exert influence without compromising their femininity. It was this femininity, in fact, that proved advantageous for the enterprise as "silkworm rearing had to be accommodated within households, and it involved tasks to nurturing and reeling that were frequently described in maternalistic of feminine terms…" (843). A 1919 essay on ELP and "Silk Culture in the South" portrays silk production on Wappoo as a traditional female accomplishment: "She [ELP] had the little negro children gather the mulberry leaves and feed the worms, and she and her maids reeled the silk. Silk culture again became fashionable, and 'some of the ladies of high standing substituted the winding of silk from the cocoons for the tamer recreations of needlework and the playing of the harpsichord'" (Hyde 194).[128] Here the differentiation between enslaved and free is simultaneously blurred and brought into sharpest relief. On the one hand, silk culture is depicted as a cooperative act: ELP performs the same

[127] Unlike the heavy labor of rice or indigo, small-scale silk production was not as physically demanding, nor were the conditions as hazardous for workers. Marsh notes that several Carolina planters advocated silk production as a way to employ slaves that were too old, young, or too sick to work anywhere else.
[128] Unfortunately, Hyde does not give an attribution for that quotation.

action as the slaves, reeling the silk side by side. On the other, the reeling is clearly interpreted differently for the two groups of women. For ELP and other fashionable (white) women, reeling silk was a leisure activity that signifies their elite status through the creation of something aesthetically pleasing. For the slave women, however, reeling silk was forced labor, and the product did not belong to them. The same can be said of the trained weavers on the Garden Hill plantation who were producing hundreds of yards of coarse linens. If the Lucas-Pinckney family decided to increase their silk production, the "recreation" activity of ELP would transition into another task for slaves.

Ultimately, large-scale silk production did not succeed in Carolina. In addition a general unwillingness to experiment, many planters were concerned about the time it took to establish an orchard of mulberry trees. Growing food for the silkworms added another step to the silk making process, and became another thing that could go wrong. As with indigo, making silk was a labor intensive process that required close monitoring, and "posed daunting obstacles for an inexperienced workforce in an imperfect environment" (Marsh 813). A second issue with silk cultivation was that its most labor-intensive periods coincided with those of rice, rather than complimenting it. Most planters could not, and would not, transition their some of slaves to silk production if it came at the expense of rice.

The irony of silk production in South Carolina is that, while it failed to make a substantial economic impact in the colony, its quality was far superior to that of indigo. Carolina indigo did not have a good reputation in the international market, as explained in Chapter 1. The largest and most elite planters could manufacture high-quality dye cakes that were competitive with the French (whose indigo was the standard by which others were measured), the vast majority of Carolina indigo was inferior product. In contrast, Carolina silk compared favorably to silks from

other countries. For the British, whose supply of raw silk was predominantly dependent on expensive imports from other European countries (France and Italy) or the Far East (China), the prospect of a Carolina silk industry was tantalizing.

The Pinckneys seemed to be determined to fill that void in the market as they prepared to leave Carolina for England in 1753.[129] ELP's letterbook says very little about her work with silk in the years leading up to the departure, but cultivation had advanced enough that she was able to procure enough raw silk for three dresses.[130] In all likelihood, ELP commenced work on silk after her marriage to Charles Pinckney in 1744, as the silk-works were located at Belmont, one of Pinckney's plantations. By 1745, the Pinckney plantations produced their first successful batch of indigo, so ELP might have decided to refocus her efforts on a new crop at that time.

Though the shawl was designed, woven, and embroidered in Carolina, ELP's shawl is a garment that embodies the social and economic impact of eighteenth-century transatlantic trade and exchange. The defining characteristic of the shawl is, of course, the indigo plants, but these could have been embroidered any number of ways in countless arrangements. When the indigo embroidery is analyzed in terms of shape and form as opposed to its botanical likeness, a new perspective comes into focus; one which complicates a simple transatlantic model, and further emphasizes ELP's investment in plantation enterprise as a global activity.

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[129] Charles Pinckney was appointed as a foreign minister for the colonies, so he and the entire Pinckney family (Eliza and their three children) sailed for England in 1753. They remained there as a family until 1758, when Charles, Eliza and their daughter Harriott returned home. The Pinckneys sons, Thomas and Charles, remained in England for their education.

[130] Indigo was ELP's priority from 1740-1745, and during that time there is no mention of silk. The volume of letters in the letterbook diminishes significantly after 1744, which probably accounts for her silence on the matter. Much of the information about ELP's silk work comes from the letters of her daughter, Harriott, who continued to cultivate silk after her marriage to Daniel Horry in 1768.

Surrounding each gently sloped indigo plant is a decorative tear-drop border that creates the unmistakable form of paisley.[131] The name "paisley" comes from the town of Paisley in Scotland, the British town that mass produced the pattern in woven garments. Prior to the westernization of the name of the late 18th and 19th centuries, paisley was better known as buta or boteh (a Persian word that roughly translates to "flower"), a common motif used in Persian and Indian garments for centuries.[132] The exact styling of the buta depends on the place and time period in which the textile was made, but early imported examples from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries feature a flower or cluster of flowers with a delicate curve at the top. The flowers are stylized yet natural, and often included the entire plant, from root to bloom. As the eighteenth century progressed, the flowers became increasingly complex and abstract and the overall the design "began to harden into the rigid formal shape which later came to be known in the West as the cone or pine" (11-12). Shawls with the buta motif (often synonymous with woven Kashmir shawls), were introduced to Europeans in earnest following the establishment of trade via the British East India Company (BEIC) in the seventeenth century. It was not until the late-eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, however, that the Western European consumers clamored for these shawls en masse, prompting a dramatic upswing in the importation of these textiles as well as the creation of domestic industries that could copy the Kashmiri designs for an ever-growing middle-class.[133]

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[131] I am indebted to Auburn Professor of Textile Science, Ann Beth Presley, for filling in my knowledge of women's costume, and for identifying the paisley print in Pinckney's shawl.

[132] The rich history of this pattern is beyond the scope of this chapter, but for more information on the popularity of the buta in Europe, see John Irwin's *The Kashmir Shawl*. For a more contemporary, and less Euro-centric view of Kashmir shawl production and trade see Maskiell. The production of Kashmir shawls was not driven entirely by European tastes. Maskiell's "Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000" convincingly argues that this view of the Kashmir trade as driven by Europeans erases both the long-standing tradition of Kashmiri designs and downplays the significant role other countries played.

[133] Many credit Napoleon's wife Josephine Boneparte (1763-1814) for popularizing the Kashmir shawl in Europe. Several portraits of Josephine feature her wearing Kashmir shawls, and she allegedly amassed a collection of over 100 Kashmiri shawls.

ELP never mentions owning a Kashmir shawl in her writing, but it is clear that the embroidered design of her shawl consciously pulls from the tradition of these middle eastern textiles. In addition to the buta, Pinckney's shawl shares several other characteristics with Kashmiri shawls. Pinckney's embroidery is concentrated on the ends of her shawl, just as most eighteenth-century Kashmir shawls featured woven designs on the ends, while the body of the shawl remained without pattern (Irving). The narrow embroidered frame around the entire shawl as well as the paisley center is also characteristic of Kashmir shawls. Given the planning apparent in every other attribute of the garment, her selection of the buta pattern should be viewed as a calculated decision. In terms of cultural value, ELP's shawl was the on the cutting-edge of fashion. Similar to the suit of linen her daughter Harriott received from England, the exotic pattern displayed on her shawl also may have "set the fashion" for other elite women in the area. As one of the first, if not the first, woman to have such a garment, ELP used her knowledge of global markets to position herself as an arbiter of taste within the colony.

Indian fabrics were prized on both sides of the Atlantic for their interesting prints and bright colors, as well as their durability and ease of cleaning. British consumers were so enamored with the textiles, that the British government began restricting importation of Indian textiles—a measure designed to protect domestic producers— as early as 1690. By the time Parliament passed an addendum to the Calico Acts in 1721, Indian textiles were almost entirely prohibited for consumption in Great Britain. Instead, Londo.n served as a middle-man for the importation of fabrics from the East to Britain's colonies in North America.[134] As a result, the BEIC in London "made itself the knot in a sort of trading bowtie—the so-called triangle in the Atlantic would have unraveled without the other side of the bow tie in India" (Eacott 165). In

[134] For more on the Calico Acts, see Eacott, *Selling Empire: India in the Making of Britain and America, 1600-1830* (72-117).

essence, Carolina's greatest contribution to the motherland was not in what it produced, but what it consumed. ELP participated in this economy in 1741 when she received the Indian dimity and chintz. This desire to consume the exotic and unknown was also the foundation for critique: "Associating expensive India goods with foreignness, decadence, and a lack of spiritual fulfillment appealed to critics trying to uphold customary definitions of dangerous luxury and point out the danger of Indian corruption" (Eacott 287).

While Indian textiles were popular throughout the American colonies, the "trading bowtie" was not the only shared interest between the colonies of Carolina and India. As much as elite Carolinians felt a strong identification with the British metropole, they were also aware that their position—geographically and conceptually– within the empire was decidedly peripheral. Even in comparison to other American colonies Carolina was an outsider whose function and interests aligned more closely with the islands in the West Indies than those in Massachusetts. In relationship to Great Britain, both Carolina and India were colonies believed to possess bountiful natural resources. Peter Collinson drew a direct connection between the two colonies in a 1766 Gentleman's Magazine essay recounting the history of the rice and tar industries in Carolina. According to Collinson, it was Charles Dubois, treasurer of the East India Company, who "first put the Carolinians on the culture of rice" in 1696 after noting that "from the situation nature of the soil, and climate, that rice may be produced to great advantage in Carolina" (Greene 227). Within the next year "a money bag full of East India rice" arrived and by 1698 the colony had a successful crop.[135] Regardless of the accuracy in Collinson's claims, his assertion that rice industry in Carolina is, in fact, a product of East Indian rice provides another example of how each regions defined themselves through the use of the other, supporting Peter Coclains's claim

[135] Collinson's overly-simplistic account fails to mention vital role African knowledge and labor played in the culture of Carolina rice. For current perspectives see the *American Historical Review Exchange* "From 'Black Rice' to 'Brown': Rethinking the History of Risiculture in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Atlantic".

that “we cannot understand the rise of Western Europe, and withal, the Atlantic world by severing these developments from developments in the rest of Europe, the rest of Eurasia, and indeed, Afro-Euroasia. The Atlantic world was a world European, Africans, and Americans ‘made together’—together with peoples from without” (729).

Yet it was this connection to “peoples from without” that also supplied colonists with a significant amount of anxiety. Unlike their American counterparts to the north, Carolinians were plagued by lingering anxieties regarding the effects of living in a sub-tropical climate; an anxiety that was replicated in discussions of India. This critique also mirrored fears about fashion’s propensity to promote overindulgence, as well as concerns surrounding fashion as an outlet for female expression. The Indian shawl could be seen as a representation of the worst parts of British colonization, and it was now draped on the shoulders of society’s most vulnerable consumers—women. ELP’s shawl provides a rejoinder to these concerns by demonstrating how male anxieties regarding control—of women, of slaves, of space— could be allayed via white female authorship. On the surface, everything about ELP’s shawl seems indulgent: its lack of utility as a bodily covering, the expensive silk fabric, its reference to the exoticism of the East, etc. This indulgence is challenged, however, by ELP’s intervention into the production process. Harnessing the planter’s expertise for innovation, ELP transforms an emblem of conspicuous consumption into an admirable example of innovative production.

As clearly as ELP is referencing Indian textiles with her shawl, her embroidery also marks a difference with the deployment of an indigo plant. Aside from its obvious connection to the maker herself, choosing the indigo plant for the inside of each buta is significant because it shares some of the features of the traditional Indian textile while explicitly marking it as not-Indian. In Eighteenth Century Persian and Indian shawls the buta generally appeared as a

flowering plant anchored by a pot or vase.[136] Likewise, ELP's indigo plant, though not in bloom on the garment, are held by an ornately designed vessel at the base. These astute design choices indicate that she had extensive knowledge of what imported Indian shawls looked like. By replicating the buta motif in her shawl, ELP was taking part in an important aspect of eighteenth century trade. According to Maxine Berg, Britons invested themselves in the "aesthetic quality of 'imitation'" as a strategy to negotiate the rapidly growing international trade of luxury items (1-3). As Berg explains, "This [imitation] was not slavish copying in cheap materials as we think of it today. It was an evocation of objects in other forms, and indeed the new form might well surpass the original in inventiveness, value, and rarity" (3).

Put within the context of the plantation, Berg's concept of imitation is nearly identical to that of mastery. Here ELP transforms the Indian presence by inserting her own perspective literally into the center of the garment. The embroidered indigo plants signify her mastery over the crop's cultivation, but in a material sense, they also demonstrate mastery over an Indian aesthetic. Within the shawl the buta performed a desirable form of Indian-ness that could only be achieved via the intervention of Western sensibility. Like Feeser's analysis of the shawl as a representation of the invisibility of slave labor, Maskiell sees Western appropriations of Indian textiles as "a naturalization of the violence enabling colonial possession of shawl design as well as the earlier possession of Kashmiri shawls as trade goods, [which] continues today in Europe and America" (Maskiell 29).

ELP's use of the indigo plant is also significant because it invokes the well-known history of that crop in Carolina. For the planters who were able to successfully grow and produce it, indigo was a triumph of plantation enterprise, a product of the ingenious planter mind. Here, draped on the shoulders of a woman, was a representation of what all planters aspired to. As a

[136] The flowering plants became less natural and more abstract through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

luxury item with foreign influences, the shawl confirmed what S. Max Edelson calls "provincial white identity," a combination of "the head of the gentry household (a la Virginia), known for elaborate ways in which they displayed their authority through dress, architecture, ritualized culture" and "the persona of the striving man of trade who put the demands of commerce at the center of his social world." The fact that ELP used Carolina silk from her own plantations to make the shawl further transforms the garment's cultural capital from purely consumptive to something productive. By pairing her domestically produced silk with an image of the crop that saved the colony from financial ruin, ELP gestures toward the possibility that this new venture could be similarly worthwhile.

The Pinckneys made a similar claim years earlier when they presented dresses made of Carolina silk to royalty in Great Britain. Like the shawl, the silk from these dresses was produced on Pinckney's Belmont plantation. ELP brought the raw silk to England in 1758 when the family temporarily relocated there. Once in England, she commissioned weavers to weave the silk into brocaded damask fabric. The raw silk made a total of three dresses: one was given to Lord Chesterfield, one to Princess Dowager of Wales, and the final one is said to have been kept by ELP herself.[137] The dresses were evidently well received as is evidenced by the note Charles Pinckney sent to the South Carolina Gazette in 1755:

> London, Feb. 5. CHARLES PINCKNEY, Esq; one of his Majesty's Council of SOUTH-CAROLINA, has lately had the Honour to wait on her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales at Leicester House, with a Piece of Silk Damask of the Growth and Product of his own Plantation in that Province, and dyed a sine Blue with CAROLINA INDIGO, which her Royal Highness was pleased to receive

[137] This dress stayed in the Pinckney family until the early Twentieth Century when it was loaned to the Smithsonian Institution. The dress was formally gifted to the Smithsonian in 2008, and is currently on display.

> very favourably; and to declare her Satisfaction in seeing such Improvements made in the Produce of our Colonies; and so much approved of the same, that the will honour it with her own Wearing

That Pinckney chose this particular moment to write up suggests that planters in Carolina were concerned about how their products were valued in overseas markets. Carolina indigo suffered from a poor reputation in England, and was generally deemed far inferior to that produced in French colonies. Indeed, many planters were hesitant to branch out to these other commodities, instead choosing to take their chances in the volatile rice market. The Princess's approbation of these Carolina products was intended to bolster the confidence of other planters, and thereby encourage them to diversify their plantation holdings.

Diversification of the plantation economy gave economic stability to the colony domestically, but it also enabled Carolina to situate itself as uniquely valuable to Great Britain. As a potential source for raw silk, Carolina could become a "domestic" source for that commodity, thereby lessening British dependence on Chinese imports. And unlike the problematic nature of Indian cottons, Carolina silk would not compete with the British woolens industry. The dress was clearly intended to show the viability of Carolina's silk industry, but more than that, it demonstrated the ability of that colony's planters to produce wisely.

In presenting the dresses and other native Carolina goods to British elites, the Pinckneys "mitigated their own potential exoticism by showing how they could distill their distant semitropical environment, unstable in its significations, into a shimmering artifact, a curious specimen, or a factorable commodity (Parrish 202).[138] Yet unlike the other items the Pinckneys brought with them, the silk dresses embodied intersecting anxieties of exoticism, race, and gender. Charles Pinckney's proud declaration that Princess Augusta agreed to "honor it [the

[138] The Pinckneys also gave Princess Augusta three birds: an "Indigo bird, a Nonparreil, and a Yellow bird"

dress] with her own Wearing" is a vital detail because it is through the white, British, female body that those concerns about degeneration are ultimately refuted.

ELP was actively engaged in plantation activities throughout her entire life, and she participated in this highly stratified society by both asserting her identity, and showing a willingness to negotiate within a make-dominated system. Early in her life, this negotiation took the form of the written word—a medium of expression that often highlighted the differences between men and women. As she transitioned into adulthood—including the roles of wife and mother—the textual production that defined her earlier years waned. Some have interpreted this change as acquiescence to the domestic life of traditional femininity, and contemporary scholarship virtually ignores the last fifty years of her life. While it is clear that ELP experienced shifts in priorities as her life progressed, it would be remiss to assume that the ideas and values she articulated in text were abandoned entirely. Exploring ELP's textile production opens a significant archive of self-expression that forces readers to confront the uncomfortable source(s) of her power.

Chapter 4

On September 10th 1785, sixty-two-year-old ELP sat down to pen a letter to one of her adult children. It is not known which of her three children—Thomas, Harriott or Charles—her epistle was directed to, but its purpose was clear.[139] "You wish me to inform you of what I recollect of the introducing of Indigo in this Country," ELP reluctantly begins, but in the following lines she writes out a lengthy recollection that would form the basis for her historical legacy. Unlike later retellings, which posit ELP as "a child prodigy turned into a celebrity" (Roberts 1), her own telling of the story suggests equal parts tenacity, co-operation, and luck:

> you have heard me say I was very early fond of the vegetable world, my father was pleased with it and encouraged it, he told me the turn I had for those amusements might produce something of real and public utility, If I could bring to perfection the plants of other Countries which he would procure me…to the best of my recollection I first try'd it [indigo] in March 1741, or 1742, It was destroyed (I think by a frost) The next time in April, and it was cut down by a worm; I persevered to a third planting and succeeded, and when I informed my Father it bore seed and the seed ripened, he sent a Man from the Island of Monserat by the name of Cromweel who had been accustomed to making Indigo there…I observed him as carefully as I could and informed Mr. Deveaux an old Gentn a neighbour of ours of the little knowledge I had gain'd and gave him notice when the Indigo was to be beat; he saw and afterwards improved upon it, not withstanding the churlishness of Cromwell, who wished to deceive him, and threw in so large a quantity of Lime water as to spoil the colour. In the year 1744

[139] The manuscript copy of this letter resides in the Pinckney Family Papers at the National Archives. Records there suggest that the letter was written to ELP's son, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. See Schultz.

> I married, and my Father made Mr Pinckney a present of all the Indigo then upon the ground as the fruit of my Industry. The whole was saved for seed, and your Father gave part of it away in small quantities to a great number of people that year, the rest he planted the next year at Ashipo for seed, which he sold, as did some of the Gentlemen to whom he had given it the year before; by this means there soon became plenty in the Country.< >Your father gained all the information he could from the french prisoners brought in here, and used every other means of information which he published in the Gazette for the information of the people at large (ELP0671).

From her telling, ELP plays an integral part in the widespread cultivation of indigo that boomed in the late 1740s and 1750s. It was her natural interest in agricultural experimentation that drove the development of indigo, despite several years of failures. It was her collection of experiential knowledge that led to the viable production of a commercial crop.

The story takes a noticeable turn once ELP marries in 1744. In what seems to be a textbook example of coverture, ELP's intellectual and physical labor is refigured in that sentence as a transferrable object (in this case the crop of indigo), owned by her father George Lucas. It is Lucas who gifts this product to Charles Pinckney as a dowry for his daughter. Upon the marriage, Charles Pinckney becomes the public face of indigo's success. ELP explains that her husband's contribution to Carolina indigo culture comes in the form of dissemination: he provides area planters with ELP's successfully cultivated seed, and circulates her knowledge through the printed word. Pinckney's late introduction into ELP's account suggests he had a tangential role at best, but he was hardly ignorant when it came to plantation affairs. Since 1732

Pinckney had published essays in the *South Carolina Gazette* under the pseudonym "Agricola", who encouraged planters to experiment with new crops to diversify their holdings.[140]

While the intervention of George Lucas and Charles Pinckney shifts the focus of ELP's narrative, she definitively expresses that they do not have the power to alter what has come before. ELP takes ownership of her contributions by labeling it "the fruit of my Industry." ELP's claim over Carolina indigo as the fruit of her industry challenges the notion that the land "must inevitably fall helpless victim to masculine authority" by presenting the crop as the product of a singular female parent, thereby disrupting the often-used land-as-woman trope.[141] The men in ELP's story facilitate, but they neither create nor innovate— that distinction belongs to ELP alone. Her invocation of parentage should not be conflated with the image of Mother Nature, however. Though she does acknowledge a natural inclination toward the vegetable world, any innate proclivity on the part of ELP is of secondary importance to the effort she put forth. ELP's description of her experience shows that the cultivation of indigo was a sustained process of (self) improvement driven by an acquisition of knowledge as opposed to a nurturing maternal spirit. As a result, the "fruit" that she brings forth comes in the form of a commodity crop.

ELP's letter solidifies her position as a driving force behind the success of Carolina indigo, but it is equally clear that she understood her successes (or failures) as a planter depended on others: her father George Lucas sent the indigo seeds from Antigua; the churlish Cromwell sabotaged the dye; the neighbor Mr. Deveaux lent his knowledgeable expertise in dye making (as do the French prisoners); and her husband Charles Pinckney disseminated indigo seed and

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[140] ELP and Charles Pinckney shared an interest in agricultural innovation, though it is often overlooked in ELP scholarship. Ben Marsh's "Silk Hopes in Colonial South Carolina" discusses their intersecting interests in regards to silk cultivation (845-848).

[141] This is reminiscent of Anne Bradstreet's "The Author to Her Book". For more about the gendering of land in early American works, see Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*.

production advice to other planters. By integrating these others into the narrative—as opposed to focusing on her contributions alone—ELP places herself within a larger narrative of plantation enterprise. The rhetorical move is significant because it allowed ELP to highlight her gender as a unique asset, while simultaneously demonstrating the ease with which she could integrate herself within an already established network of planters. ELP understood herself as a significant actor in the drama of Carolina indigo, and while her gender set her apart from the traditional image of the male planter, her letter demonstrates that she still saw herself as very much a part of this group.

As difficult as it is to decipher ELP's intentions within the letter, it is apparent that she saw her legacy as inexorably bound to the story of indigo. ELP's successful agricultural endeavors provided her a platform from which she could define and control her own conception and presentation of self. At the same time, the successful cultivation of indigo made her a dutiful daughter, a valuable wife, and assured mother. This casts indigo not as a final product, but a vehicle through which ELP demonstrates familial traits of industry, perseverance, and generosity. Read as a piece of family lore, the story thus documents the Lucas-Pinckney legacy, and the epistolary exchange stands as a material representation of identity transmission from mother to children.

ELP's letters demonstrate an earnest desire to serve her family through the propagation of knowledge. In turn, generations ELP's female descendants have protected— even physically rescued— her narrative; adding their own stories and interpretations along the way.[142] In her own lifetime, ELP could not have been aware of how far her legacy would stretch: since her death,

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[142] Collections of ELP's letters have been published by family throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. *The Journal and Letters of Eliza Lucas* (edited by Harriott Pinckney Holbrook) was published in 1850, followed by *Eliza Pinckney* by Harriott Horry Ravenel in 1896, and *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney 1739-1762* by Elise Pinckney in 1972 (reprinted in 1997).

the figure of ELP has been packaged as a South Carolina folk hero, a Founding Mother, Plantation Patriot, entrepreneur, businesswoman, nature writer and more. Contemporary scholarship has performed the difficult task of stripping away some of the more hyperbolic interpretations of ELP's life by contextualizing her letters within the cultural and historical realities of the colonial South. While this work is tremendously important, such an approach to ELP's letters tends to obscure the collaborative creation of her legacy in an effort to uncover the "real" Eliza. Instead, this chapter views ELP's legacy as a gendered story of plantation cultivation that counters the traditional masculine narrative. It also follows this legacy as it has grown and transformed in the service of others' ends. My analysis of ELP's legacy is not intended to disparage her accomplishments, nor justify the human means she exploited to achieve them. Rather, it seeks to recognize the messy legacy of a woman who was extraordinary in some ways, and all too typical in others.

Maternal Legacies

The complicated nature of ELP's legacy is a product of two compounding factors. As a female planter, ELP was a part of a male-dominated network that garnered its power through the persistent threat of violence. ELP participated in this network willingly, and her skillful experimentation with indigo and silk brought her success beyond most of her contemporaries. Simultaneously ELP's gender marked her as distinctly *apart* from a community that relied so heavily on the expression of traditional masculinity. Scholarship tends to characterize this disjoint as a limitation for ELP, but what is less commonly recognized is how this insider/outsider status provided ELP with a maneuverability shape her narrative in a way that male planters could not. By deploying maternal rhetoric in the letter that establishes her indigo legacy, ELP claims a natural authority over the landscape that is perfectly suited to the planter's

objective, yet unavailable to her male counterparts. This, coupled with her relative silence on the presence of slavery, has set ELP up as a foil to the villainous slave masters popularized in nineteenth-century literature.

Responding to the overtures of ELP as a "transgressive, even proto-feminist, figure" put forth by scholars and the public alike, S. Max Edelson contends that the letter actually demonstrates ELP's "self-conception circumscribed by the 'huswife' ideal" (138).[143] For Edelson, ELP's enterprise is not the transgressive act of an independent woman, but an extension of traditional domestic pursuits, implemented by men as a mechanism for sustaining a young plantation system. Extrapolations of ELP's writing as "feminist" present several significant problems, yet the notion that ELP's thoughts and actions are simply the product of patriarchal intervention is an over-corrective that erases any trace of female agency. In her discussion of women's education in the early nineteenth century, historian Mary Kelley also acknowledges the social limitations placed on women's expression of knowledge, though she also recognizes the latent benefits women garnered for themselves even as they occupied traditional roles: "No matter how consistently they appeared to be in agreement with male educational reformers on a woman's place, however, women appropriated claims [that their abilities should be in service of the household exclusively] to suit their own purposes" (27). ELP undoubtedly used the power afforded to her as a planter to reinforce and perpetuate a burgeoning plantocracy. This did not, however, preclude her from using that system to advocate for the recognition, and more importantly, the propagation, of women's abilities.

[143] Edelson cites three articles as examples of this phenomenon: Bellows, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney: The Evolution of an Icon"; Bowles, "'You would think me far gone in romance': Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Fictions of Female Identity in the Colonial South"; Fryer, "The Mind of Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Eighteenth-Century Woman's Construction of Herself."

This complicated relationship between ELP and gendered expressions of power in the colonial South played out in the public and private realm. Just as images of the maternal crept into her description of indigo cultivation, the language of the plantation figured prominently in ELP's discussions of the maternal. Writing to a friend in England in 1759, ELP lamented the lack of polite entertainment in "the Wilds of America", but noted that her time in Carolina was occupied by a worthy pursuit: the education of her eleven-year-old daughter, Harriott. Referring to it as "one of the greatest Businesses of my life", ELP praised her daughter's natural aptitude by likening Harriott to a plant, while Eliza reprised her role of the planter: "a pleasure it certainly is to cultivate the tender mind to teach the young Idea how to shoot &c especially to a mind so tractable and a temper so sweet as hers, for I thank God I have an excellent soil to work upon and ~~hope~~ by the Divine Grace hope the fruit will be answerable to my indeavours in ye cultivation." This passage suggests that ELP conceived of herself as both a mother and a planter, and perhaps more significantly, she saw the intersectionality of these identities as mutually constitutive, rather than restrictive— much like the word "cultivation" itself. ELP invokes the classic sense of the cultivation as it pertains to agricultural endeavor.[144] ELP's "cultivation" of Harriott is, in one sense, an expression of her prowess as a planter. Her appraisal of the soil, and concern that the yield of "fruit" is consistent with *her* efforts, reads as though ELP were discussing a potential crop. In this situation, an educated Harriott (however defined) is objectified as the product of ELP's successful analysis, just as indigo was. ELP's efforts in the cultivation of Harriott also gesture to her earlier comment about the "Wilds of America" by intimating another way in which she is contributing to the civilizing process of the British colonies.

[144] The OED lists seven primary definitions for the verb "cultivate". These can be broken up into two categories: one pertaining directly to working with land and plants, and the other as a figurative term for developing or fostering.

At the same time, ELP's praise of her daughter's intellectual potential reflects the rhetoric of a nurturing mother. Read within the context of traditional gender roles, ELP's comments about Harriott invoke a conservative view of womanhood in that positioned women as actors within the domestic realm, and that realm alone.[145] Tucked away in her Carolina home (positioned in opposition to the public spaces of metropolitan London, where both her correspondent and sons reside), ELP's letter seems to acknowledge that her role as a woman is to serve her children by cultivating the next generation of mothers and preparing men for their entrance into public life. But a Carolina plantation was certainly not the typical domestic space. Instead, ELP's "business" of educating of Harriott is an example of how she worked within conservative structures of womanhood as she was disrupting them.

ELP's quote has much to say about her role as an active mother/planter, but this approach to education also profoundly affected her daughter. Historian Cara Anzilotti characterizes the relationship between ELP and Harriott as typical of a colonial Carolina mother and daughter. ELP acted as a planter when called upon to do so, Anzilotti argues, but "Eliza Pinckney, like all lowcountry parents, raised her daughter with a much different set of duties in mind. Harriott Pinckney was to be the wife and mother of planters, the able mistress of her husband's household…she [ELP] had nurtured in her only daughter the virtues and skills that would be required of a dutiful housewife" (250).[146] As the only daughter of the Pinckneys, Harriott did

[145] For a detailed overview of the term "separate spheres" and its scholarly usage, see Kerber "Separate Spheres, Female Words, Woman's Place" The Rhetoric of Women's History" in *No More Separate Spheres!: A Next Wave American Studies Reader* (29-65).
[146] Letters from ELP do not specify a particular curriculum for Harriott, though an earlier letter from ELP regarding her first son Charles describes an ambitious project to "teach him according to Mr. Locks method (wch. I have carefully studied) to play him self into learning. Mr. Pinckney himself has been contriving ~~to~~ a set of toys to teach him his letters by the time he can speak you perceive we begin by times for he is not yet 4 months old". The Lockean method employed by the Pinckneys might have been successful, but it was not attended without issues. Simms recalls that Charles Cotesworth Pinckney "used to dissuade all those over whom he had any influence from the premature instruction of their children saying that from an over-anxiety to make him a clever fellow, he had run the risk of being a very stupid one" (185-186).

receive a different kind of education than that of brothers Charles and Thomas who were both formally educated in England from early adolescence to adulthood. Harriott's instruction was far more informal as it came primarily from her mother, but given ELP's own exceptional education (provided by her father), it seems unlikely that ELP wanted to limit her daughter's intellectual pursuits.[147] Just as she balanced the duties of a woman and a master, it appears ELP advocated for a more complete education for women. In an amusing letter to Rebecca Evance, guardian of ELP's sons in England, ELP muses upon a recently received letter whose contents were tampered with. Instead of being upset, ELP takes a positive position on the breech, hoping that the contents of the letter provided the prying eyes with several lessons: "it may teach them the art of writing prettily and obligingly, and show how capable women are both of friendship and business and I am sure to find my acct. in what ever raises the reputation of my particular friends or my sex in genl. by the pleasure it gives me, thus I make my self amends for the impertinance of ye over curious." Though the letter does not address Harriott specifically, ELP's concern for the "reputation of…my sex in general" is directly connected to the recognition that women can be both friends and business partners.

ELP's Plantation Legacies

Using other literary texts, we can tease out some of the possible experiences that she obscures. We can also see how her story fits within the American literary tradition that desperately wants to recover her, even at the expense of re-covering the inconvenient realities of her history. In reading ELP's legacy as a literary production, this chapter borrows from the theoretical framework established in Cathy Davidson's *Revolution and the Word: the Rise of the Novel in America*, which examines the early American novel as a kind of alternative history for the early Republic. Davidson argues the culture of the novel (reading, writing, and circulation of

[147] Several letters from Harriott's brother, Thomas, indicate that he was helping her learn algebra.

texts) created a hybrid space "between private and public spheres in which some who were legally and politically excluded from US politics could express opinions on the shape of public culture…the novel became a major space for the articulation of public values within the alternative political community created by the circulation of books and sometimes away from the more visible public culture of oratory" (44). In the formal sense, ELP's letterbook is not a novel; at the same time her texts share many of the characteristics that Davidson describes, making it a fruitful avenue for further analysis. Much like the early American novelist, ELP occupies this murky space between a public and private figure, and this is clearly reflected in the above letter in which ELP provides her children with an unofficial history of indigo cultivation that supplements the "official" account put forth by Charles Pinckney in the *South Carolina Gazette*.

Davidson's "history of texts" approach is also significant because it advocates for the mutability of a text from writer to reader, as well as across time and space. ELP's writing is particularly well-suited to this type of analysis because, compared to other planters—William Byrd, Landon Carter, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington—whose archives contain thousands, if not tens of thousands of pages, the amount of writing that can be attributed to ELP is remarkably small and limited in terms of genre.[148] Aside from a smaller collection of loose letters, the story of ELP (as told in her own voice) is neatly contained within the leather-bound covers of a single extant letter book.[149] Of the approximately 225 entries in the letter book, over half (126) were written in the four year period before her marriage (1740-1744). It was these four formative years when ELP took over the management of her father's plantations and conducted

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[148] Even summarizing the textual output of these men would be a herculean task, but in addition to letters, they wrote: (secret) diaries, travel narratives, commonplace books, ledgers, account books, letter books, copy books, etc. These, of course, are in addition to the many published pieces that they also penned.

[149] ELP undoubtedly wrote much more than what survives to this day, but these things were not preserved—an indicator of the relative (un)importance placed on early women's writing. See the introduction to Sharon Harris's seminal *Early American Women's Writers to 1800*, as well as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812.*

her now famous indigo experiments. These same four years are the ones ELP recounts for her children in the above letter; the same four years that biographers and scholars reflect back on when writing ELP into our modern consciousness.

With so much focused on this brief period of her life, it is curious that ELP's letters reveal few details of the actual planting and cultivation processes. Not only is the 1785 letter the most complete in terms of its narrative scope (beginning with the first try at cultivation in 1740 and ending with the successful crop of 1745), it is also the most complete in that it provides a sense of how involved the project was. Only twelve letters in the letterbook mention indigo at all, and most of these abbreviate any issues or progress to a single line about the "indigo affair." ELP wrote to George Lucas when something catastrophic happened to the crop, but there are no documents detailing how or when she planted the seeds, nor are there records of how the plants had progressed in growth prior to their demise (usually from frost). She is largely silent about how she obtains knowledge on the plant's cultivation, or how she intends to refine her skills from year to year. There is no mention of the complicated production process, nor does she make a single comment regarding the dozens of enslaved workers who aided her in every aspect of the "indigo affair". From seed to dye, ELP's slaves planted, tended, harvested, fermented, beat, shaped, and dried: performing all the detailed work that was not recorded by the woman whose name is attached to it all. And herein lies the crux of the issue: ELP's letters about indigo cultivation—her claim to fame—are characterized by what they *do not* say just as much as what they do say.

Ironically, it is the silences in her writings that have largely enabled and sustained the romanticized version of ELP that continues to this day. For the eighteenth century male planter, explicit exercises of social, sexual and physical violence were one way to assert mastery on the

plantation, and thus conflicts with slaves and overseers are written into their narratives as acts of agency and power. In his diary entry for January 1712, William Byrd explains that one of his slaves, known as “Redskin Peter”, “pretended” to be sick. Byrd does not explain what evidence he finds to come to that conclusion, but the punishment is swift and brutal: “I put a [branding iron] on the place he complained of and put the [bit] upon him” (290). The following day Byrd makes the self-congratulatory comment that, “Redskin Peter was particularly well and worked as well as anybody” (290-1). Modern readers have been forced to grapple (sometimes reluctantly) with these presentations of mastery, which have complicated heroic assessments of several Founding Fathers, and challenged the foundations of American Exceptionalism.

In contrast, ELP’s letters never mention any instances of slave misbehavior or punishment. In fact, ELP rarely discusses the people enslaved on the Lucas plantations at all.[150] Her most protracted comment on slavery comes near the end of a list of personal resolutions written between 1748 and 1758, though the comment is less about the slaves themselves than it is about her perceived responsibilities as a slaveowner:

> I am resolved to make a good Mistress to my Servants, to treat them with humanity, and good nature; to give them sufficient and Comfortable Clothing, and provisions, and all things necessary for them, to be careful and tender of them in their sickness, to reprove them for their faults, to encourage them when they do well, and pass over small faults. not to be tyrannical, peavish or impatient towards them but to make their Lives as Comfortable as I can (ELP0331).

[150] Of the letters that do mention slaves, ELP is usually referring to groups of people that are transported from one plantation to another: “Wrote to Starrat about sending the Negroes down from Wacammaw.” One notable exception is a 1743 letter that discusses a foiled plot by several slaves to flee to St. Augustine, Florida. One of the Lucas slaves, Quash (later John Williams) is among the accused. ELP mentions that she went to Quash’s trial “when he proved him self quite Innocent.” For more on Quash’s life see Feeser, *Red White and Black Make Blue* (99-108).

Like many of her male contemporaries, ELP's philosophy on being a good mistress was infused with Enlightenment rhetoric of balance, moderation, education, and self-improvement. It is difficult to glean much about the day-to-day actions of ELP based on these resolutions, but the fact that resolutions are by nature aspirational, suggests that there were times when ELP did act tyrannical, peevish, impatient and critical.

These shortcomings were not, evidently, shared by her husband, whom ELP described as a paragon of virtue. Following Charles Pinckney's death in 1758, ELP wrote over a dozen letters to family and friends notifying them of the news, and mourning the man she loved. Most of the letters memorialize Pinckney's qualities in the abstract, but in one letter, ELP articulates the magnitude of the loss by recalling the reactions of the Pinckney family slaves, and in the process reveals some of her beliefs on racial difference:

> It would give you some idea of what he must have merited from mankind if you knew how much he was Lamented, for could Prayers or Tears have rescued him from the grave, he had never seen Death. Even his poor slaves (who are a people not generally esteemd the most tender) travele'd some thirty, some forty mile in the night, to see the last of a Master they almost adored, and several of them would willingly have given up their own lives, to have had his spared to their children, so strong did natural affection to their offspring work in these poor creatures, and so sensible were they of their great misfortune; & many of them now say they would rather serve his children than be free (ELP0193).

ELP's recollection of this moment is understandably colored by her recent loss, and there are no alternative accounts to either confirm or deny her description of Pinckney's slaves.

In general, scholarship on ELP identifies her as an unusually progressive slaveowner, citing two letters from the early 1740s that discuss a plan to teach slaves to read.[151] The above letter, however, suggests that perhaps ELP was less atypical than is usually assumed. Her aside that slaves fundamentally lack tenderness echoes Thomas Jefferson's description of physiological differences between whites and Africans in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in which Jefferson ascribes the ability to fully experience emotions like tenderness, grief, and love as something specific to whites. For Africans, Jefferson concludes that "In general their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection."

At first, ELP's letter appears to challenge Jeffersonian logic. Despite her comment that slaves in general are not particularly "tender", ELP suggests that their feelings of mourning for their deceased master are in line with her own. Everyone, it seems, is affected by the loss of Pinckney. Yet ELP's purpose in describing the extraordinary reaction of Pinckney's slaves has little to do with the people themselves. Rather, ELP utilizes their presence as a sign of Pinckney's extraordinary abilities as a master. The grief of the enslaved is thus interpreted by ELP as a product of white intervention, but more importantly, her text reimagines black grief as evidence of planter benevolence.[152]

Taken at face value, ELP's letter suggests that these slaves saw Charles Pinckney as an ideal owner, one who was so magnanimous that they felt it preferable to stay in the service of the

[151] For more on ELP's plan to educate her slaves, see Chapter 1.

[152] In *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, historian Walter Johnson explains that it was through the possession of slave bodies that whites defined themselves as planters: "As they narrated their upward progress through the slave market slaveholders small and large were constructing themselves out of slaves. Whether slave buyers figured their independence as coming of age or coming into their own, an investment, necessity or benevolence, it was embodied in slaves" (Johnson 88). While Johnson's focus is on nineteenth-century slave markets in New Orleans, the ideological motivations of white planters that he identifies apply to those from earlier time periods.

Pinckney family, than be freed.[153] In all likelihood, the possibility of manumission, as intimated in the ELP letter, was not an option: Charles Pinckney kept a detailed will that specified which slaves ("with all their future Issue and increase") would be inherited by each member of his immediate family.[154] Even with Pinckey's will, the death of a master marked the beginning of a perilous time in the lives of people who were legally treated as property. As the executrix of Pinckney's estate, ELP was now in charge of the plantations and could buy, sell, rent, or move property as she saw fit. If Pinckney owed money to creditors, for example, those debts could be discharged through the sale of valuable assets such as land or slaves. Complicated lines of inheritance could further obscure the slaves' fate. George Washington's will famously stipulated the manumission of all his slaves upon the death of his wife Martha, yet this declaration applied to fewer than half of the three hundred and seventeen slaves of Mount Vernon. Washington did not have the power to manumit the approximately one hundred and fifty slaves that made up his wife's dowry via first husband Daniel Parke Custis—they reverted to Custis's grandchildren after Martha's passing.

What were business transactions for the Pinckneys and Washingtons broke ties of friendship, family, and community for the people they enslaved. Within this context, the outpouring of emotion that ELP witnessed might have less about Pinckney's death than it was a realization of impending upheaval for themselves. Such situations recur throughout slave narratives of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, and the incongruity of perspectives between master and slave highlights the inability (or perhaps refusal) of planters to acknowledge the emotional trauma that they imposed upon those they kept in bondage. A scene from

[153] Such value judgements are, of course, intensely problematic when applied to chattel slavery. My intention in discussing the relative "goodness" of slaveowners is not to defend or mitigate the practice in any way.
[154] Since the Pinckney children were all under the age of thirteen at the time of their father's death, it was ELP's responsibility to maintain the estate, though her position as the head of the Pinckney household was designed to be transitional.

Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* serves as an effective counterpoint to ELP's description of the death of Pinckney. Douglass was living in and working in Baltimore when the death of his master, Captain Anthony, forced him to return to the plantation so he could be properly "valued" and redistributed with the rest property. Perhaps the valuation of the Pinckney estate necessitated a similar convergence of slaves to Belmont Plantation; a scenario that would radically alter how we read ELP's letter.[155] For Douglass, his return to the Anthony plantation serves as a painful reminder of "the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder":

> I have no language to express the high excitement and deep anxiety which were felt among us poor slaves during this time. Our fate for life was now to be decided. We had no more voice in that decision than the brutes among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough--against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties—to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings.

Though writing approximately seventy years after ELP, Douglass's expression of the trauma that slaves experienced when a master died strongly resonates with ELP's description (but not her interpretation) of the Pinckney slaves' grief. Perhaps ELP was one of those considerate and kind masters who did not "sunder forever" the bonds formed within slave communities, though it is possible that she was not. Any appraisal of ELP would require a great deal of speculation, and ultimately such evaluations of mastery are not particularly productive. ELP's silence on slavery is important because it has produced openings for others to rewrite the history of enslavement in a similar way. We might never be able to fill in these gaps, but interrogating ELP's story and identifying where these gaps in her narrative are is important.

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[155] There is no documentary evidence to support such an assertion, however, it would offer a reasonable explanation as to why the Pinckney slaves traveled to Belmont (beyond expressing their grief at the loss of Pinckney).

ELP's Maternal Legacies

ELP begins the letter to her children recalling her own life as a young woman, when she discovered and developed her love of the natural world. This interest, she claims, was nurtured by her father, George Lucas, who sent ELP a variety of plant specimens from Antigua for her to cultivate in Carolina with the hope that "those amusements might produce something of real and public utility." The letter does not mention the more pressing concern of George Lucas's mortgaged properties, nor does it reference the plummeting market value of rice (Carolina's primary cash crop). By simplifying the factors that led to the cultivation of indigo, ELP conceptualizes this endeavor as one that utilized her interests in service of the greater good. ELP's letter contains a plantation counter-narrative whereby commodity agriculture is the natural product of interest in "the vegetable world", and the pursuit of personal wealth is a "public utility". Like the farmer of Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, ELP's letter memorializes the moment that she "wisely spr[u]ng forward to the anticipated fields of future cultivation and improvement, to the future extent of those generations which are to replenish and embellish this boundless continent" (Crevecoeur 15). From her perspective some forty years later, the seeds she planted as a young woman had grown exponentially, and now served to replenish and embellish a new nation. This magnitude of this contribution was not lost on the recipient of ELP's letter, who could count him (or her) self among the carefully cultivated.

There is, of course, one major issue that differentiates ELP's industry from that of the farmer "who himself felled the first tree in his plantation": the use of slave labor (15-16). In *Letters*, Charles-Town is positioned in opposition to the northern colonies: whereas Farmer James's "plantation" recalls the utopian project put forth by William Bradford, the plantations of

Carolina are connected to the Old World archaism of Peru.[156] With slaves performing the bulk of plantation labor, the planter loses the critical ability to garner strength and character from farming the land. This, coupled with the sultry climate, created a vacuum of physical and moral degeneration for the white colonists that lived there. According to Jennifer Rae Greeson, Crevecoeur's othering of Charles-Town is the crucial point upon which his text—and in a larger sense, the exceptionalism of the United States— pivots. Crevecoeur establishes the American farmer as the new norm, while the aberrant planter is contained in the "geographical repository" of the South (29).

If Crevecoeur's *Letters* is an example of an overall intensification of regional difference in the decades after the Revolution, ELP's letter does not reflect these divisions. While it is doubtful that ELP penned her letters with the intention of portraying an "American" persona, her letter reflects the American ideal as well as Farmer James himself. And unlike Farmer James, whose experience in Charles Town haunts the remaining letters, ELP's story was produced, and is all too often reproduced, without addressing the specter of slavery. Her legacy is singular in this sense. At a time when even the most venerated Founding Fathers have (rightfully) come under scrutiny for their role as slave owners, ELP is rarely evaluated in this way. This omission is all the more curious given her rise in popularity over the last forty years.

As we saw in chapter three, the complicated nature of ELP's legacy is perhaps best understood through the material transmission of her effects through the generations of Pinckney women. Though indigo was ELP's most profitable and popular venture, her work with silk cultivation has been of interest to subsequent Pinckney descendants. One reason for this could be that the cultivation of silk was an unfinished project for ELP: whereas indigo culture in Carolina

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[156] This reconceptualization of Carolina as the northern edge of a circum-Caribbean empire is explored in Christopher Iannini's *Fatal Revolutions: Natural History, West Indian Slavery, and the Routes of American Literature*. See also the Introduction to this dissertation.

was established, widely disseminated, and on the decline by the 1780s, silk culture was a promising, but consistently fledging industry in the South.[157] ELP's daughter Harriott worked alongside her mother to develop a silk industry during the elder's lifetime, and after ELP's death she continued to seek out methods for expansion.[158]

The generations following Harriott did not seem to share their ancestors' commitment to silk cultivation as a money-making venture, instead viewing the endeavor as a small-scale hobby. While the interest in silk many have waned, nostalgia for the woman who attempted to bring that industry to fruition did not. Generations of Pinckney women circulated textiles made from silk grown on Belmont Plantation—some sewn into complete garments, others just swatches of fabric— alongside the story of the ancestor who made them. In 1829 Harriott Pinckney Horry sent a swatch of her mother's silk to a friend. Attached to the silk was a short note describing the woman who had made that textile over eighty years prior. The details that Harriott provided suggest that she garnered a great deal of pride from the small scrap of fabric. The note describes how the raw Carolina silk was woven into three dresses of exceptional quality: "considered in England equal to any imported." Harriott explains that her swatch came from the one dress that was not given away in England.[159] This dress was inherited from her mother, and subsequently she bequeathed it to her own daughter, Harriott Pinckney Horry Rutledge. In another letter from that year, Harriott wrote to Margaret Anne Glover Waites after hearing that one of her daughters was interested in cultivating silk worms. The eighty-one-year-old Harriott tells Waites that silk cultivation was a "favorite amusement of my mother ~~& my~~

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[157] For more on silk see chapter 3.

[158] Travelling back from Philadelphia in the fall of 1793, Harriott toured several weaving and garment factories, noting the machinery they used, how much cloth a factory could produce in a day, etc.

[159] It is not entirely clear how Harriott obtained pieces of fabric from the dress. As was common in the Eighteenth Century, ELP's silk dress was modified in the years following its creation to reflect new fashion trends. It is possible that Harriott's swatches came from excess fabric generated during such an update.

~~self~~", and to encourage the young girl, sent along another swatch of silk from ELP's dress "thinking you might like to see what your daughters labour may produce." Harriott's two letters are significant in that they protect and replicate the legacy of ELP through these pieces of (literal) material. In saving the fabric and its history, Harriott performed an important act of preservation during a time when women's words and work were often not seen as valuable.[160] In saving these scraps of silk and carefully cataloging them, Harriott created a lasting archive of ELP's work. Moreover, her eagerness to disseminate these items to other women suggests that this was not intended as a static collection, but a living archive of women's productive efforts.

Generations of Pinckney women continued to pass down ELP's silk, and in so doing drew inspiration from an ancestor that they never had a chance to meet. An 1843 letter from Harriott Pinckney Holbrook (great-granddaughter of ELP) to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook (another great-granddaughter of ELP) tells the familiar story of ELP's silk project, though this time it was accompanied by layers of generational matter. To write the letter, Holbrook unfolded the scrap of silk from ELP pinned onto the note from Harriott Pinckney Horry. Remembering that *her* mother (Harriott Pinckney Horry Rutledge) had held the items "great care & some little pride", Holbrook penned the story of these women, adding her own voice to the fold. Several years later Holbrook would publish the first biography and letters of ELP.[161]

Placed within a tradition of early American women writers, ELP's work tells a compelling story of a smart, creative, and slightly rebellious young woman who challenged the social limitations placed on her abilities. When reading ELP's letters, it is nearly impossible not to "root" for her, as Cokie Roberts's *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Country*

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[160] Early print appearances ELP in print focus more on her reproductive abilities (sons Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Thomas Pinckney) than anything else.
[161] Eliza Lucas Pinckney, *Journal and Letters of Eliza Lucas, Now First Printed*, edited by Harriott Pinckney Holbrook (Wormsloe, GA, 1850).

relates: “The indigo experiment would have discouraged a less determined soul than the teenage girl. But Eliza persisted in planting the crop and trying to turn it into due despite ridicule from the neighbors who were all experienced planters and certainly ‘knew better’” (5). A questioning personality born into restrictive place and time, ELP’s story embodies a kind of American exceptionalism. Unfortunately, the focus on ELP as an exceptional female figure has perpetuated a pervasive silence upon the plantation culture from which she came. Just this year the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History placed ELP’s silk dress on display as part of their “American Stories” exhibit.[162] A plaque accompanying the dress reveals the problematic limitations of relying on the standard ELP legacy:

> Eliza Pinckney’s Dress, 1750-80, Made in England from silk she cultivated in South Carolina. Most women could not choose independent careers of run for political office in the 1700s, but they could help shape public life through family and personal relationships. From a young age, Eliza Pinckney managed her family’s South Carolina plantations, established indigo as a marketable crop in the colony, and later raised two sons who became important officers in the Revolutionary War and political leaders afterward.

The Smithsonian plaque provides an interesting take on ELP as it depicts her as the person single-handedly responsible for indigo cultivation without exploring the implications of being an active participant in plantation life. All too often the stories—even scholarship—on ELP’s life replicate this rhetorical distance between her accomplishments and the slaves who were forced to provide the indispensable physical and intellectual labor that made the plantation system functional.

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[162] http://americanhistory.si.edu/american-stories/1776-1801-forming-new-nation

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