

Of Grubs and Other Insects:
Constructing the Categories of “Ephemera” and “Literature” in Eighteenth-Century
British Writing

Paula McDowell

Abstract

The category “ephemera,” like the category “Literature,” is a classification that does powerful rhetorical, practical, ideological, and disciplinary work. This essay historicizes these value-laden classifications across disciplinary and period boundaries. It begins by suggesting how librarians and collectors have defined ephemera since the 1960s, then steps back to the eighteenth century in Britain, arguing that the categories of “ephemera” and “Literature” were reciprocally constructed parts of a classification system that was a response to the commercialization of letters and the proliferation of print. But today, new media technologies and digital archives are destabilizing centuries-old categorical distinctions, and eighteenth-century authors’ classification work can help us to think through the challenges and opportunities we face in the digital age



PROJECT MUSE®

Of Grubs and Other Insects: Constructing the Categories of
“Ephemera” and “Literature” in Eighteenth-Century
British Writing

Paula McDowell

Book History, Volume 15, 2012, pp. 48-70 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/bh.2012.0009>

BOOK HISTORY



Volume 15
2012

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/488252>

OF GRUBS AND OTHER INSECTS



Constructing the Categories of “Ephemera” and “Literature” in Eighteenth-Century British Writing

Paula McDowell

No matter what ephemera are, they are “difficult” materials.¹

In their work on “classification and its consequences,” Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star suggest that classification systems are “boundary objects.” By incorporating a degree of flexibility and ambiguity, and leaving certain terms open to multiple definitions, classifications represent multiple constituencies and function across different social worlds.² As an interdisciplinary publication, *Book History* offers an ideal forum for thinking about “ephemera” as a classification that functions not only *across* disciplinary boundaries but also, in some cases, to *uphold* disciplinary divisions that are too often unexamined. While collectors tend to define “ephemera” chiefly by example, and librarians and archivists often use the term as a collective noun for a type of “difficult” materials that do not fit (whether in terms of existing classifications or literally in terms of physical space), many literary scholars conceptualize “ephemera” as textual materials that may have been valued by someone at some time for some reason, but are without “enduring literary value” now. The phrase “ephemeral literature” is for these scholars an oxymoron: capital “L” Literature is, by definition, writing that has “enduring value.” “Ephemeral” materials such as broadsides, pamphlets, tracts, and newspapers are grouped together as “paraliterary,” “subliterary,” or simply “nonliterary” forms. But this particular idea of “literature,” I argue, and the larger classification scheme of which “Literature” and “ephemera” were reciprocally constructed parts, were products of the mid and later eighteenth century in Britain: a response to the commercialization of letters and the proliferation of print. “Ephemera” is not a *thing* but a classification. The category “ephemera,” like the category “Literature,” is not transparent, timeless, or universal, but a classification, existing in

history, that has done and continues to do powerful rhetorical, practical, ideological, and disciplinary work.

Bowker and Star propose that instead of working to “purify . . . (un)stable systems,” greater attention needs to be paid by classifiers and users to the historical labor “involved in building and maintaining . . . classification systems.”³ Where do classifications come from? Who upholds them, and how do (or should) they evolve? This essay begins by briefly suggesting how collectors, librarians, and archivists have defined “ephemera” since the 1960s. As the essay’s epigraph suggests, the one point on which almost all librarians seem to agree is that “no matter what ephemera are, they are ‘difficult’ materials.”⁴ For archivists faced with the task of defining, collecting, storing, conserving, classifying, cataloging, and indexing these materials,⁵ the most widely shared (though seldom openly admitted) understanding of the concept seems to be “material [that] does not fit.”⁶ “Ephemera,” I argue, is not so much a logical or viable practical category as the residue of prior classifications. It is a residual category, like “Other.” The central section of the essay then steps back in time to the eighteenth century in Britain, suggesting how the categories of “ephemera” and “Literature” were reciprocally constructed, and also suggesting the continuing consequences of this classification work for us today.

The bulk of the eighteenth-century literary marketplace consisted of religious, political, didactic, topical works, and especially “ephemeral” forms such as pamphlets. In the early part of the century, the English press underwent some of the most important transformations in its history. In 1695, the lapse of the Printing or Licensing Act of 1662 ended prepublication censorship and government restrictions on the number of printers throughout England, contributing to the geographical spread of printing and a vast increase in the number of printed texts. While the Printing Act had tried to limit the number of printers in all of England to twenty-four, by 1705 there were between sixty-five and seventy printing houses in London alone.⁷ This period also saw the institutionalization of a recognizably modern newspaper press. In 1702, the first daily newspaper appeared in London, and within a decade “about twenty single-leaf papers were regularly published in the capital each week.”⁸

Like most early-eighteenth-century gentlemen, Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) and Alexander Pope (1688–1744) held that some form of press control was necessary to maintain social order. After 1695, there seemed to be “no public punishment left, but what a good Writer inflicts.”⁹ In their view, the lapse of licensing had encouraged seditious, blasphemous, and otherwise

“factious” authors and given rise to the phenomenon popularly satirized as “Grub Street.” Although both Swift and Pope printed their works and sought fame as authors, both also modeled themselves as amateurs—distant from, yet commenting on the sordid (sometimes seditious) fray of the literary marketplace. In works such as *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), Swift’s satire on “corruptions in Religion and Learning”¹⁰ written over the decade following the lapse of the Licensing Act, and Pope’s mock-epic poem *The Dunciad* (1728–1743), Augustan satirists construct a powerful ideological binary of permanent versus impermanent works. In so doing, they contribute toward the later eighteenth-century (re-)construction of the category of “Literature”¹¹ not as fine writing or letters in general (its dominant pre-Romantic sense) but as a narrower subset of writing privileging creative or imaginative works and excluding political, religious, and controversial materials and genres such as broadsides, newspapers, pamphlets, and tracts. (Ironically, *Tale of a Tub* is a pamphlet-length work that was first published stitched together with other works by Swift’s publisher, possibly to make it appear more like a book, and the *Dunciad* was first published as an “unprepossessing little pamphlet of fifty-two pages, bearing no author’s name.”¹²)

In the same years that Pope was drafting the *Dunciad in Four Books* (1743), Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) was involved in a number of commercial publishing projects with bookseller Thomas Osborne. Johnson was cognizant of the same contemporary press developments as were Swift and Pope, yet he did not necessarily share their views. He associated freedom of the press with English liberty, and he openly set out to make a living as a professional author. Whereas Swift satirically scorned their era as “so blessed an age for the mutual felicity of *booksellers* and *authors*” (88), Johnson was not without a degree of pride when he styled the mid-eighteenth century “*The Age of Authours*; for, perhaps, there never was a time in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment, were posting with ardour so general to the press.”¹³ Beginning in 1741, Johnson wrote a series of occasional essays to promote Osborne’s projects. Among these essays is his important “Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces” (1744), which explicitly argues for pamphlets and tracts not only as “a very important part of an *English* library” but also as a variety of “literature” that should be valued, preserved, and patronized by the learned.¹⁴

Bowker and Star suggest that most classification activities become “silently embodied in the built environment and in notions of good practice. The decisions taken in the course of their construction are forever lost to the historical record.”¹⁵ Today, literary scholars tend to valorize creative

and imaginative genres such as poetry, drama, and fiction and marginalize or exclude the “Multitude of valuable Productions, published in small Pamphlets, or in single Sheets,”¹⁶ whose importance Johnson argued for (and which he read voraciously). Yet while classifications are “ordinary invisible,” they “become more visible . . . when they break down or become objects of contention.”¹⁷ One reason that the category of “ephemera” is becoming especially visible right now, this essay concludes by suggesting, is because new digital resources such as the *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (ECCO) are powerfully destabilizing centuries-old categorical distinctions such as “ephemeral” versus “enduring” and “nonliterary” versus “literary” works. One of the largest digital humanities projects ever undertaken, ECCO provides subscribers with immediate desktop access to facsimiles of more than 150,000 works. What exactly is an “ephemeral” work now, when the same pamphlets that Swift satirized in *Tale of a Tub* are digitally reproduced alongside his own text? By working to historicize the reciprocally constructed categories of “ephemera” and “Literature,” I aim to suggest how eighteenth-century authors’ “classification work” can help us to think through the challenges and opportunities we face as we construct and deconstruct “ephemerality” in the digital age. “Categories . . . are learned as part of membership in communities of practice.”¹⁸ By historicizing “ephemera” across disciplinary and period boundaries, we can defamiliarize a classification that is learned rather than natural, and that is currently evolving in ways that are not always fully recognized or acknowledged.

Ephemera as the Residue of Classification

Since the 1960s, collectors and librarians have increasingly worked to articulate the classification “ephemera.” Today, most “state-of-the-field” statements point to John Lewis as a founder of ephemera studies and as “one of the first people to use the word ephemera in a sense similar to that which librarians and others use the word.”¹⁹ A typographer and graphic designer by trade, Lewis did not offer an explicit definition of “ephemera” in his book *Printed Ephemera* (1962)²⁰ but rather relied on extensive illustrations to show “the type of material which [he] had in mind.”²¹ Later, Lewis offered a definition that loosely circumscribed ephemera chiefly by example: “a term used for anything printed for a specific short term purpose; such things as a bus ticket, a circus poster, a Christmas card. . . . There is hardly any limit.”²² The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) traces to 1938 the

use of the term “ephemera” to mean “printed matter of no lasting value except to collectors, as tickets, posters, greetings cards, etc.,”²³ a definition that closely resembles (and anticipates) Lewis’s. But Lewis’s work may have helped to popularize this usage even if he did not invent it, for this particular definition of “ephemera” was added to the *OED* only in 1993.

As the example of Lewis’s work suggests, one “difficulty with defining ephemera comes . . . from the fact that it has been circumscribed principally by example.”²⁴ As Timothy Young observes, “it is not uncommon to find the simplest definition formed as a negative: ephemera are nonbook material.”²⁵ While a few scholars and collectors have ventured “function-based” definitions (Young’s term), they almost always acknowledge that such definitions are inadequate. Chris E. Makepeace defines ephemera as “a transient document produced for a specific purpose and not intended to survive the topicality of its message or event to which it relates,” but he then immediately admits that an “ephemeral” item may nonetheless “be of interest to scholars and collectors after its topicality has expired.”²⁶ Most librarians understand ephemera as “nonbook *printed* materials,” but some also included handwritten items. Today, the link between ephemera and print is very common, but as I suggest below, the preprint etymological origins of the term “ephemera” remind us that this was not always the case.²⁷

Bowker and Star suggest that “a ‘classification system’ is a set of boxes (metaphorical or literal) into which things can be put to then do some kind of work.”²⁸ Coincidentally, this image is helpful in reminding us of the challenges faced by librarians and archivists. Much ephemera is, from a librarian’s point of view, “an unsolved problem.”²⁹ Virtually all librarians who have ventured definitions of ephemera—even those arguing for the importance of its preservation—offer definitions focusing on ephemera as “difficult” materials. As Florence M. Jumonville writes, “often lacking anything resembling a title page or even an author or a title . . . ephemera is the stuff of which catalogers’ and acquisitions librarians’ nightmares are made.”³⁰ Alan Clinton defines the audience for his book *Printed Ephemera: Collection Organisation and Access* (1981) as “all those who organise printed sources of knowledge.” He then in effect distinguishes ephemera as materials that are difficult to organize when he states, “materials . . . designated nowadays as ‘ephemera’ . . . are generally distinguished by being difficult to arrange and to find.”³¹ “Ephemera,” he continues, is “a class of printed or near-print documentation which escapes the normal channels of publication, sale and bibliographical control. . . . For librarians, it is in part defined by the fact that it tends to resist conventional treatment in acquisition, ar-

rangement and storage.”³² In other words, librarians often use “ephemera” as a collective noun for materials that do not fit “conventional treatment” and/or classifications. As Makepeace admits, many of the “definitions that have been advanced for ephemera are . . . merely alternative names. . . . Probably the most useful are either ‘fugitive material’ or ‘miscellaneous material’ as both descriptions imply that *the material does not fit into a particular category.*”³³

Bowker and Star define a classification as “a spatial, temporal, or spatio-temporal segmentation of the world. . . . The ideal classification system provides total coverage of the world it describes.”³⁴ But no classification ever provides total coverage, thus residual categories are inevitable. The category of “ephemera” enables the illusion of provisional completeness. What is most important, then, is not working to identify a single trait that would identify an item as “ephemera” but rather working to identify the *purpose* for so classifying items within larger professional and/or disciplinary systems.

Etymology, Entomology, and the “Age of Authours”

“Ephemera” is the plural of the Greek *ephemeron*, meaning something that lasts only for a day. The *OED* defines ephemera as “1. An insect that . . . lives only for a day” and as “*Trans.* and *fig.* One who or something which has a transitory existence.”³⁵ Samuel Johnson used the term in both of these senses in *The Rambler*. In 1750, he satirized a “virtuoso” with a passion for “grubs and insects” who has “discovered a new ephemera.” In 1751, he defended the “authors of journals and gazettes,” suggesting that their “papers of a day, the *Ephemerae* of learning, have uses more adequate to the purposes of common life than more pompous and durable volumes.”³⁶ The fact that Johnson found it necessary to defend journalists as “liberal dispenser[s] of beneficial knowledge” suggests the low status of newspapers and periodicals in the contemporary hierarchy of literature. For Pope, “Journals, Medleys, Merc’ries, [and] Magazines” epitomized the “Grub-street race” (*Dunciad* 1, ll. 42, 44). Johnson found it necessary to defend the value of print “ephemerae” in part because “ephemera” has always been a value-laden classification. The *OED* definition of “ephemeral” supports this claim; it reads, “of insects, flowers, etc.: Existing for one day only, or for a very few days. . . . In a more extended application: That is in existence,

power, favour, popularity, etc. for a short time only.”³⁷ But note that there are two different options provided here: “ephemeral” can signify something or someone short-lived *or* temporarily valued. These dual significations help to account for the paradox that some so-called ephemeral materials—by etymology, lasting only for a day—in fact endure for a very long time. With respect to books (as distinct from most insects), it is often not the materials *per se*, but their *perceived value* that is short-lived. The visibility and value of “ephemera” often depends less on any shared trait than on who is doing the looking or evaluation. The *OED* definition of “ephemera” provides a usage example that underlines the ideological nature of this classification work. The example is from H. Francis Lester, who observed in 1886, “[A charwoman is] a kind of domestic ephemera which flutters briefly in the scullery and then is seen no more.”³⁸ The charwoman is presumably still in existence, even if she is “seen no more” by her employers after her job is done.

Now, it is no accident that the derogatory label “Grub Street” draws heavily on the word “grub,” meaning “the larva of an insect, esp. of a beetle; a caterpillar, maggot.”³⁹ Grub Street was the name of a street near Moorfields, London, which had acquired a reputation as being inhabited by “writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems.”⁴⁰ By the late seventeenth century, a “Grub Street” production was understood to be “pertaining to, emanating from, or characteristic of Grub-street; of the nature of literary hack-work.”⁴¹ A secondary meaning of “grub” was “a person of mean abilities, a dull industrious drudge, a literary hack.”⁴² The narrator of Swift’s *Tale of a Tub* is a member of the “Grub Street brotherhood” (29). A central target of Swift’s satire is the delusion of modern authors. More generally, Swift satirizes the hubris behind a cliché such as *vox audita perit, littera manet* (voices heard perish, letters written endure). In the new world of unrestrained print commerce after 1695, he suggests, *most* printed works are in fact “ephemeral.”

As I have suggested, Swift and Pope were deeply invested in constructing a distinction between “ephemeral” and “enduring” works and in categorizing their own writing as “enduring.” In both *Tale of a Tub* and the *Dunciad*, elaborate prefatory materials and/or illustrations participate in this classification work. In *Tub*, the title page and the page originally bound facing it have a thematic as well as physical relationship. The latter page lists “Treatises writ by the same Author . . . which will be speedily published” (Figure 1). This promotional list includes titles such as “A Dissertation upon the principal Productions of *Grub-street*,” “A modest Defence of the Pro-

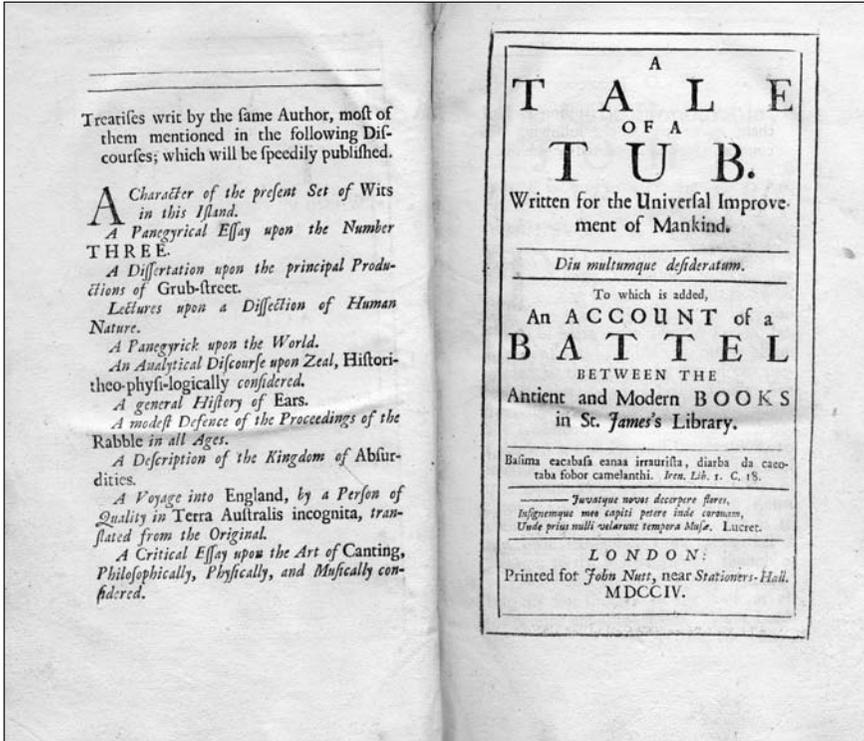


Figure 1 *A Tale of A Tub* (1704), title page and facing list of “Treatises writ by the same Author.” Princeton University Library.

ceedings of the *Rabble* in all Ages,” and, most intriguingly, “A general History of *Ears*.” Meanwhile, the title page proposes that in contrast to these ephemeral “Grub Street” productions, the current work has been “Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind.” In a prefatory “Apology” added to the fifth edition of *Tub* in 1710, Swift proposes that his own “book seems calculated to live at least as long as our language and our taste admit no great alterations” (2). The “Apology” continues Swift’s theme of the permanence or monumentality of his own work versus the ephemerality of most modern writing. He responds as follows to “two or three treatises written expressly against” (1) what he pointedly calls his “book”:

It may be thought unnecessary to take any notice of such *treatises* as have been written against this ensuing discourse, which are already sunk into waste paper and oblivion after the usual fate of common

answerers to *books* which are allowed to have any merit. They are indeed like annuals, that grow about a young tree and seem to vie with it for a summer, but fall and die with the leaves in autumn and are never heard of any more. (4; my emphasis)

As I have suggested, Swift's "book" was in fact not much longer than some of the pamphlets and essays written against it. But those treatises, he suggests, will not last. In the "Epistle Dedicatory To His Royal Highness Prince Posterity," Swift's narrator bows and scrapes before Prince Posterity and laments the cruelty of Posterity's "governor" Time: "his inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age that of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun there is not one to be heard of" (15). The narrator imagines that Time will inquire of these vanished works, "What is then become of those immense bales of paper which must needs have been employed in such numbers of books?" (16). Conjuring a series of images that will reappear in the *Dunciad*, he speculates that these Grub Street productions have been recycled as toilet paper or used as waste paper to wrap pies. But he laments that he cannot provide proof of his claims: "It ill befits the distance between Your Highness and me to send you for ocular conviction to a *jakes*, or an *oven*" (16).

Swift also compares ephemeral Grub Street publications to victims of infanticide: "Unhappy infants, many of them barbarously destroyed before they have so much as learnt their *mother tongue* to beg for pity" (15). The notion of the poet as parent can be traced back at least as far as Plato, but in the eighteenth-century literary marketplace, publishing one's works was more likely to resemble an abandonment of one's progeny to its fate. Swift's coauthor of the *Examiner*, political scandal writer Delarivier Manley (who wrote several Tory pamphlets explicitly at his request), suggested that from the literary "Labourer's" point of view, most works were less likely to resemble immortal offspring than ephemeral "*Mushbro[o]ms* of a Night, or *Abortives* under the Mother-Pangs" that leave "their unhappy Parent the *Mortification* of seeing 'em *expire* as soon as they began to *Be*."⁴³ Elsewhere, Manley compared the writings of her Whig opponents to "still-born, shap[e]less Births, which but just appear'd and perish'd."⁴⁴

Pamphlets are prominent among the texts satirized in *Tale of a Tub*. Although Swift wrote many pamphlets himself (as well as ballads, songs, and other so-called ephemeral forms), and *Tale of a Tub* is itself arguably pamphlet-length, Swift rightly understood pamphlets as one of this period's major venues of public debate of political, religious, and otherwise controversial issues. Writing in the wake of the Revolution of 1688 (and, more

distantly, the English Civil War), Swift was deeply concerned with the power of the press to unsettle the stability of the nation and the Church of England. The narrator of *Tub* prides himself on having written “Fourscore and eleven pamphlets . . . under three reigns, and for the service of six and thirty factions” (33). Not surprisingly, he celebrates the new “liberty and encouragement of the press” (103). For a brief moment in the “Preface” to *Tub*, Swift models his satire as an “occasional” work written to help avert a crisis: “the danger hourly increasing by new levies of wits, all appointed (as there is reason to fear) with pen, ink, and paper, which may at an hour’s warning be drawn out into pamphlets and other offensive weapons ready for immediate execution, it was judged of absolute necessity that some present expedient be thought on” (18).

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the concept of ephemera would become more tightly linked to print and to “occasional” forms such as pamphlets. Nonetheless, Augustan satirists classify the writings of their enemies as ephemera regardless of those works’ format or length. In the “Epistle Dedicatory” to *Tub*, pointedly signed “*Decemb. 1697,*” Swift asserts, “I do . . . affirm, upon the word of a sincere man, that there is now actually in being a certain poet called John Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well bound, and if diligent search were made, for aught I know is yet to be seen” (17). The joke here is that Dryden, England’s poet laureate from 1668 to 1689, was still a prolific author and his lavishly produced folio edition of *The Works of Virgil* (1697) had just been published.⁴⁵ For Swift and Pope, the category of “ephemera” potentially included any works by any author against whom one held a grudge. Weighty folios like Dryden’s translation could be as “ephemeral” as yesterday’s news.

Yet even as the concept of ephemera was becoming more tightly linked to print, Swift emphasized that no form of inscription could escape Time’s terrifying swathe. *Tale of a Tub* is famous for a series of sudden gaps in the text whenever the narrator is about to “unravel” an especially “knotty point” (82). At these moments, asterisks indicate a “*Hiatus in MS*” (29). On one occasion, a footnote adds: “Here is pretended a defect in the manuscript; and this is very frequent with our author either when he thinks he cannot say anything worth reading, or when he has no mind to enter on the subject, or when it is a matter of little moment; or perhaps to amuse his reader . . . or lastly, with some satirical intention” (29 n.). Given the “transitory state of all sublunary things” (30), *all* writing is ephemeral. Accordingly, we are told, “by the word *critic* have been meant the restorers of ancient learning from the worms, and graves, and dust of manuscripts” (44).

At the same time, while Swift satirizes the age-old truism that written words survive (“*scripta manet*”), he also plays with unexamined assumptions about the ephemerality of voice. In *Tale of a Tub*, texts are insubstantial, while spoken words are material and weighty (and so potentially dangerous). At once drawing on and satirizing the views of the Roman Epicurean philosopher and poet Lucretius (d. 55 B.C.), Swift offers a theory of the materiality of voice (as well as a few tips for modern orators such as dissenting preachers). As the hack’s forthcoming “History of *Ears*” suggests, Swift consistently links print “ephemera” to dangerous oral practices such as dissenting preaching or seditious speech.⁴⁶ He drives home his point about the materiality—and threat—of oral discourse by quoting Thomas Creech’s 1682 translation of Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura*: “Tis certain then, that *voice* that thus can wound, / Is all *material*; *body* every *sound*.”⁴⁷

Like the title page of *Tale of a Tub*, the frontispiece (later title-page vignette) to the *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) is an integral part of the satire and participates in its classification work (Figure 2).⁴⁸ This illustration of an overladen ass depicts “ephemeral” texts (books as well as papers) on their way to be recycled. The building on the left appears to be a bakery, suggesting that these texts will be reused as waste paper to wrap pies. The motto from Horace’s *Epistles* can be loosely translated as, “carried down to the street that deals in perfume and incense.” As learned readers would recognize, the line in Horace continues: “and anything else that’s wrapped in useless pages.”⁴⁹ The ass is laden with texts now commonly called “ephemera” (newspapers and journals), especially political journals such as *Mist’s Journal* and the *Flying Post*. But strikingly, the beast is also laden with texts that we do not now normally classify as “ephemera”: enormous bound volumes. In Augustan satire, the category of ephemera potentially includes *any* work viewed as aesthetically or intellectually insubstantial. For Swift, as we have seen, this category included Dryden’s folio edition of Virgil; for Pope, it includes the works of political party writers such as Leonard Welsted and John Oldmixon and “lewd” authors such as Edward “Ned” Ward, who is best remembered as author of *The London Spy* (1698–1700). It includes the voluminous novels of Eliza Haywood, whose recently published *Secret History of the Intrigues of the Court of Carimania* (1726) is explicitly depicted. Finally, for now, it includes the works of Pope’s critics, such as John Dennis and especially Lewis Theobald (“Tibbald”), who had criticized Pope’s edition of Shakespeare and was immortalized as the first hero of the *Dunciad*. Throughout the poem itself, Pope continues this theme of the ephemeral-

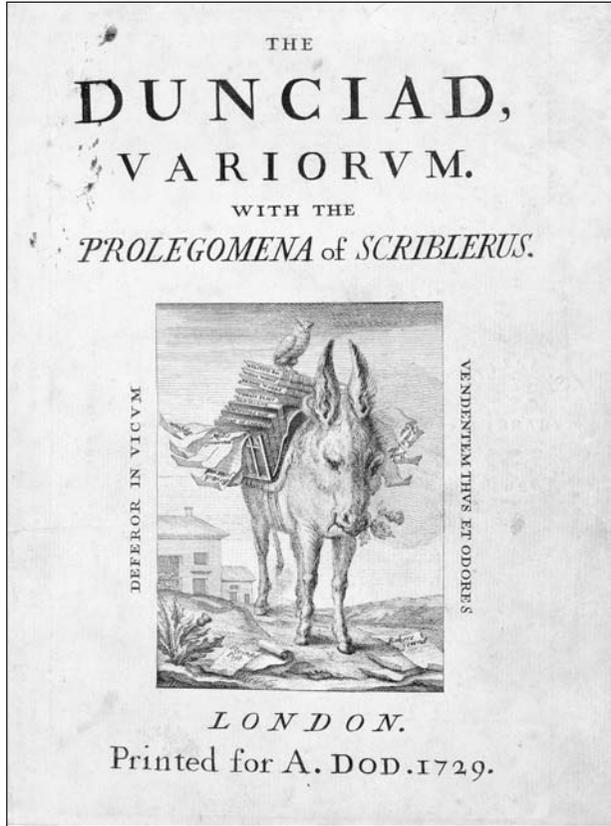


Figure 2 *Dunciad Variorum* (1729), title-page vignette. Princeton University Library.

ity of “inferior” writing and insists that lengthy and/or long-winded works (such as Richard Blackmore’s sleep-inducing Arthurian epics) should also be classified as “ephemera.”

In Book 1 of the *Dunciad*, disapproved works are compared to momentary “Monsters” (1.38) and “Maggots” (1.61). One meaning of “Monster” is an improperly formed fetus or still-born birth. Surveying the environs of Grub Street, Queen Dulness

beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
 Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
 ‘Till genial Jacob, or a warm Third day,
 Calls forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:

How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
 How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
 Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
 And learn to crawl upon poetic feet. (1.55–62)

In this passage, two species of ephemera overlap: short-lived insects and short-lived texts. “Half-form’d” literary creations are compared to half-formed insects (“Maggots,” or larva), half-formed reptiles (“spawn”), and even half-formed human embryos or infants (“embryo”, “new-born,” “learn to crawl,” “taught to cry”). Grub Street works are not written by sentient individuals with agency but rather laid like “spawn.” They sometimes, but not always, develop into works (as maggots develop on rotten food or flesh). We first meet the mock-hero of the poem surrounded by his aborted drafts: “Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay, / Much future Ode, and abdicated Play” (1.121–122). As we have seen in Swift and Manley, it was quite common in this period for authors to compare “ephemeral” works to abortions, stillbirths, or the victims of infanticide.

Yet something about Pope’s powerful passage here gives us pause. His satire depicts a *perversion* of the creative process, as Queen Dulness’s “un-creating word” (4.654) is a perversion of the word of God. But in fact, the creative process satirically depicted in these lines is remarkably reminiscent of what we know about his own method of composing verse. Pope is well known to have written verse in clusters of couplets, then later (sometimes much later) tied together selected lines and passages into poems. Swift described his friend’s method in “Dr. *Swift* to Mr. *Pope*, While he was writing the *Dunciad*” (wr. 1727). He represented Pope’s poetry as a series of colliding “Atom[s]” that suddenly seemed to stick together in a “Lump.” He also suggested that Pope used recycled “ephemera”—personal letters—on which to write his poems:

Now Backs of Letters, though design’d
 For those who more will need ‘em,
 Are fill’d with Hints, and interlin’d,
 Himself can hardly read ‘em.
 Each Atom by some other struck,
 All Turns and Motions tries;
 Till in a Lump together stuck,
 Behold a *Poem* rise!⁵⁰

In Swift’s depiction of Pope’s creative process, “Hints,” “Turns,” and “Motions” suddenly stick together in a “Lump”—resulting, almost by an in-

nate force, in a poem. (The movement of the “Hints” or “Atom[s]” here resembles the Lucretian atoms Swift satirized in *Tub.*) In Pope’s depiction of his mock-hero’s creative process, “hints, like spawn . . . in embryo lie,” “Till genial Jacob, or a warm Third day, / Calls forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play.” The big difference, of course, is that in Pope’s case it was a great poet—Pope—who was pulling together the “Hints” of verse, rather than a market-oriented publisher such as Jacob Tonson (“genial Jacob”) or a playwright seeking “a warm Third day” (the theatrical benefit night when the author got the take).

For Augustan satirists, the category of ephemera could include folios as well as pamphlets, handwritten as well as printed works, and certain types of oral and performative practices as well as texts. In Pope’s satire, ephemeral works are unfinished even when they are printed. But as a reminder of the ideological nature of classification work, what if we were for a moment to consider the “ephemeral” aspects of Pope’s own poem? Pope is well known to have been a relentless reviser of his works. In Maynard Mack’s formulation, “the typical Pope poem is a work-in-progress. . . . states of provisional wholeness and balance occur along the way.”⁵¹ The *Dunciad* occupied Pope “in one way or another for at least half his life.”⁵² In addition to numerous versions circulated in manuscript, David Vander Meulen suggests that there were “three major revisions . . . in thirty-three separate editions and about sixty impressions and issues by the time of the first posthumous collections of [Pope’s] *Works* in 1751.”⁵³ It is fair to see not only every manuscript revision but also every *printed edition* of the *Dunciad* as a “work-in-progress”: a provisional (in some sense ephemeral) statement that would soon be replaced by a more perfect work. Pope died in 1744, but if he had lived longer, it seems likely that the *Dunciad in Four Books* (1743) would not have been his last.

Ephemera as “Literature” or the Antithesis of “Literature”?

The same years that Pope was writing the *New Dunciad* (1742) and the *Dunciad in Four Books* (1743), Samuel Johnson was writing advertisements for Thomas Osborne. In 1741, Osborne had purchased one of the largest private libraries in England, the “Harleian Library,” consisting of some 50,000 bound volumes and thousands of pamphlets, tracts, and broadsides formerly belonging to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford. Planning to market

the materials at a profit, he engaged Johnson and bibliographer William Oldys, Harley's former secretary, to produce a detailed sale *Catalogue* describing the library's contents. A monumental work of scholarship, the *Catalogue* was published in five volumes between 1743 and 1745. Osborne then engaged Johnson and Oldys to assist him in producing a collection that would reprint about 1,700 of the Harleian Library's thousands of pamphlets and tracts. For both the *Catalogue* and the *Harleian Miscellany* (8 vols., 1744–1746), Osborne published lengthy advertisements, including descriptions and justifications of the projects written by Johnson: "An Account of the Harleian Library" in *Proposals For Printing . . . A Catalogue of the Library of the Late Earl of Oxford* (1742)⁵⁴ and "An Account of this Undertaking" in *Proposals for Printing . . . The Harleian Miscellany* (1743). Finally, in 1744, Osborne published the first volume of the *Harleian Miscellany*, containing an "Introduction" by Johnson now commonly known as "An Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces." In all of these essays, Johnson argues for the enduring importance of so-called ephemeral forms such as occasional and controversial pamphlets, which he explicitly includes under the rubric of "literature." Later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors would contribute to the construction of our modern narrowed notion of "literature" as consisting chiefly of creative and imaginative works (especially poetry, drama, and fiction), but throughout his life Johnson defined "literature" broadly as "learning; skill in letters."⁵⁵ The "tracts, single sermons, and small treatises" preserved in the Harleian Library, he proposed, provide valuable "knowledge of *the literary transactions* of past ages." The *Catalogue* of the library's contents would itself be of value to "those whom curiosity has engaged in *the study of literary history*, and who think the intellectual revolutions of the world . . . worthy [of] their attention."⁵⁶ Ironically, to be well read in what Johnson called "literature," one would have to be well read in many forms now commonly excluded or marginalized by literary scholars. Both Johnson and Oldys, in his earlier work *A Dissertation Upon Pamphlets* (1731), explicitly valued occasionality as a positive characteristic. As Oldys observed, pamphlets have "this considerable Advantage, that springing usually from some immediate Occasion, they are copied more directly from the Life."⁵⁷ Pamphlets' enduring value paradoxically lies in their occasional nature: the way that they capture "truth from living witnesses."⁵⁸

Eighteenth-century authors and publishers were intensely aware of the relationship between format and the reception (and survival) of texts. As Mr. Spectator wrote in 1711, "A Man who publishes his Works in a Volume, has an infinite Advantage over one who communicates his Writings to

the World in loose Tracts and Single Pieces.”⁵⁹ (Swift’s publisher may have been thinking along these lines when he published *Tale of a Tub* stitched together with other works.) Johnson repeatedly theorized the relationship between format and the perceived value of printed texts. He lamented that the unassuming appearance and size of pamphlets often caused them to be overlooked in favor of “Volumes, considerable only for their Size.”⁶⁰ He urged that “many advantages may be expected from the perusal of these small productions, which are scarcely to be found in that of larger works.”⁶¹ Here again Johnson closely echoes Oldys’s *Dissertation Upon Pamphlets*. Oldys observes that “Many good old Family-Books are descended to us, whose Backs and Sides our Grand-sires Buff’d, and Boss’d, and Boarded against the Teeth of Time, or more devouring Ignorance, and whose Leaves they guarded with *Brass*, nay *Silver* Clasps, against the Assaults of Worm and Weather,” while many “Pamphlets *which really are well written . . .* daily perish in the common Wreck, for Want of a helping Hand.”⁶² Drawing on the French terms “*feuille volante*” and “*piece fugitive*,” Johnson evokes the association of “fugitive pieces” with vagabondage even as he argues for these works’ enduring “valu[e]”:

It has been, for a long Time, a very just Complaint, among the Learned, that a Multitude of valuable Productions, published in small Pamphlets, or in single Sheets, are in a short Time, too often by Accidents, or Negligence, destroyed and intirely lost. . . . This Observation hath been so often confirmed by Experience, that, in the Neighbouring Nation, the common Appellation of small Performances is derived from this unfortunate Circumstance; a *flying Sheet*, or a *Fugitive Piece*, are the Terms by which they are distinguished, and distinguished with too great Propriety, as they are subject, after having amused Mankind for a While, to take their Flight and disappear for ever.⁶³

(“Fugitive” means “one who flees or tries to escape from danger, an enemy, justice, or an owner” as well as “something fleeting, or that eludes the grasp.”⁶⁴) Johnson’s conviction that “pamphlets and small tracts [are] a very important part of an *English* library”⁶⁵ may be usefully contrasted with the views of Thomas Bodley, who labored (unsuccessfully) to have pamphlets excluded from the library he founded at Oxford in 1603. Bodley viewed plays, almanacs, pamphlets, and the like as “baggage bookes,” “not worth the custody in such a Librarie.”⁶⁶ The term “baggage” connotes something portable, as does Johnson’s term “fugitive papers,” but it also connotes someone impudent or shady, and it implies that these materials are mere

“trash.” In opposition to such a view, Johnson and Oldys link pamphlets with freedom of speech and English liberty. Johnson suggests that “the form of our government, which gives every man, that has leisure, or curiosity, or vanity, the right of enquiring into the propriety of publick measures . . . may be reasonably imagined to have occasioned innumerable pamphlets, which would never have appeared under arbitrary governments.” The reign of Charles I (1625–1649) and its aftermath, the English Civil War period (1649–1660), was a “time of confusion, and disturbance, and disputes of every kind,” and it was also, not coincidentally, a time when the pamphlet press exploded. Johnson acknowledges the trauma of this period, but he continues to support freedom of the press. He also coins a new name for this tumultuous era: “I know not whether this may not properly be called, *The Age of Pamphlets*.”⁶⁷

Conclusion: What is “Ephemera” Now?

In the early eighteenth century, Swift and Pope satirized proto-professional literary critics and scholars such as Dennis and Theobald. In the early nineteenth century, Samuel Taylor Coleridge suggested that there were now so many critics that their individual verdicts were rendered harmless “noise” because they could no longer be heard above the general buzz. In a chapter of the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) on “the present mode of conducting critical journals,” he observed, “Gnats, beetles, wasps, butterflies, and *the whole tribe of ephemerals and insignificants*, may flit in and out and between; may hum, and buzz, and jarr; may shrill their tiny pipes, and wind their puny horns, unchastised and unnoticed.”⁶⁸ Today, in the early twenty-first century, digital humanities resources such as *ECCO* provide us with immediate (though not unmediated) access to the works of Swift, Pope, and Johnson and their critics, shedding new light on the distinction Coleridge helped to forge between men of “Literature” like himself and mere “ephemerals.” *ECCO* also gives us immediate access—300 years later—to texts that Johnson theorized as “fugitive papers.” In many cases, we confront these texts “naked”: without hierarchical classifications or even clear generic distinctions, calling on us to reassess our own evaluative criteria and classification schemes.

In wading through the “great heaps” of pamphlets in the Harleian Library, Johnson lamented that “the Duration of the Monuments of Genius and Study, as well as of Wealth and Power, depends in no small Measure

on their Bulk.”⁶⁹ But today, with digital archives, the relationship Johnson posits between the size and survival of texts is no longer necessarily the case. In fact, the opposite may now be the case, for it is easier to digitize a broadside than, say, *Clarissa* (Samuel Richardson’s attempt to capture fleeting thoughts and passions by “writing to the moment” in one of the longest novels ever written). As I have suggested, one reason the classification “ephemera” is becoming especially visible right now is because it is breaking down. In the age of *ECCO*, is “ephemera,” with its ancient etymological tie to things lasting only for a day, really any longer a viable (logical or practical) classification for digitized texts? Full-text digital archives such as *ECCO* are currently destabilizing “Literature” and “ephemera” by helping us to historicize these reciprocally constructed classifications. As I have argued in this essay, the late eighteenth century in Britain saw the entrenchment of a classification system still with us today. It saw the separating out of “Literature” as an increasingly narrow subset of the broader category of “writing,” and the separating out of “ephemera” as a distinctly inferior category of (chiefly printed) materials apparently of interest primarily to historians and collectors. Our post-Romantic notion of the literary typically excludes or marginalizes what Johnson called “fugitive pieces” and valorizes creative and imaginative genres such as fiction, poetry, drama, and belles lettres. But as I have also suggested, this particular idea of the literary, and the larger classification system of which it was a part, was itself a product of the later eighteenth century and a response to the burgeoning market for print.

For literary scholars confronted with a vastly expanded archive, new—and sometimes not so new—questions press upon us with heightened urgency. What should be the place of “nonliterary” writings in our scholarship and our classrooms? What should be the place of so-called ephemeral forms, such as pamphlets, broadsides, and tracts? For literary scholars wishing to take “ephemera” seriously (both as a set of objects and as a classification), one possible response to the still-familiar question “But is it any good?” may be: “Good for *what*?” Classification and evaluation are closely linked. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith has suggested, “of particular significance for the value of ‘works of art’ and ‘literature’ is the interactive relation between the *classification* of an entity and the functions it is expected or desired to perform.”⁷⁰ As Oldys argued in his defense of pamphlets in 1731, so-called ephemeral forms are inherently neither “Good” nor “Bad”: “the Word *Pamphlet*, or *little Paper Book*, imports no reproachful Character,” but is “Good” or “Bad,” “Learned” or “Illiterate . . . according as the Subject makes the Distinction.”⁷¹

A comparative search for “ephemera” in the *OED* and Wikipedia suggests how this concept has already evolved. Whereas the *OED* makes no mention of electronic ephemera, Wikipedia defines “ephemera” as “transitory written and printed matter not intended to be retained or preserved,” then adds a subheading for “Video and Audio Ephemera.” It notes that the “capacity and reach provided by resources such as the Internet Archive and YouTube have made finding and sharing video ephemera . . . dramatically easier.”⁷² Ironically, the same new media technologies that are currently enabling the almost exponential proliferation of “transitory [material] not intended to be retained or preserved” do, in fact, potentially allow for its almost infinite preservation. What, then, is “ephemera” now?

As anthropologists, as well as media theorists have shown, we cannot function without classifications. But as Bowker and Star suggest, “a key for the future is to produce flexible classifications . . . which explicitly retain traces of their construction.”⁷³ The most poignant (and instructive) moments in Johnson’s accounts of his near-epic confrontation with the “great heaps of pamphlets” of the Harleian Library are when he reflects upon his own classification labors and begins to admit that none of the classification systems he has used really works. He begins optimistically, announcing in his prospectus for the *Catalogue* that “the books shall be distributed into their distinct classes.”⁷⁴ The following year, he admits that “it has been no small labour to peruse the Titles, in order to reduce them to a rude Division, and range their Heaps under General Heads.”⁷⁵ Another year later, when the first volume of the *Harleian Miscellany* is published, he admits with regret that several seemingly straightforward classificatory schemes have had to be abandoned as impractical: “Of the different methods which present themselves . . . the two which most merit attention, are to distribute the treatises according to their subjects, or their dates; but neither of these ways can be conveniently followed.”⁷⁶ Ultimately, Johnson was forced to admit the inadequacy of even the simplest classification system when seeking to organize a vast, complex collection of materials. We would do well to share his self-consciousness and his humility when devising (or using) our own classification systems. Whether ephemera is a logical, practical, or empirical category, the residue of prior classifications, or a smear word that can be applied to just about anything (as it was for Augustan satirists), it is time for us to historicize the classifications that we have inherited from our predecessors and to ask whether they still work.

Notes

1. Alan Clinton, *Printed Ephemera: Collection Organisation and Access* (London: Clive Bingley, 1981) 13, qtd. in Timothy G. Young, "Evidence: Toward a Library Definition of Ephemera," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 4 (2003): 11–26, 17.
2. Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 324.
3. *Ibid.*, 13.
4. Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 13, qtd. in Young, "Evidence," 17.
5. For this list, I am paraphrasing Chris E. Makepeace, *Ephemera: A Book on Its Collection, Conservation, and Use* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985), 1.
6. Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 4.
7. Michael Treadwell, "London Printers and Printing Houses in 1705," *Publishing History* 7 (1980): 5–44, 6.
8. Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (London: Associated University Presses, 1987), 19.
9. Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (New York: Longman, 1999), 34. Further references will be cited parenthetically.
10. Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 2. Further references will be cited parenthetically.
11. In using capital "L" Literature to distinguish this narrower category from the earlier, broader understanding of "literature" as fine writing or learning or letters in general, I am following the practice of Clifford Siskin in *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); see 232 n. 16.
12. Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 457.
13. Samuel Johnson, *Adventurer*, no. 115, 11 December 1753.
14. "The Introduction" ("An Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces"), in *The Harleian Miscellany; or, A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Tracts, As well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the Late Earl of Oxford's Library*, 8 vols. (London: Printed for T. Osborne, 1744–1746), 1:i–viii, rpt. in Murphy, *Works* 2:240–249, 243.
15. Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 17.
16. Samuel Johnson, "An Account of this Undertaking," *Proposals for Printing, by Subscription, The Harleian Miscellany* (London: n.p., 1743).
17. Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 2–3.
18. *Ibid.*, 287.
19. Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 5; see also Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 14–15, 24.
20. John Lewis, *Printed Ephemera: The Changing Uses of Type and Letter Forms in English and American Printing* (Ipswich: W. S. Cowell, 1962).
21. Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 5.
22. John Lewis, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (London: Studio Vista, 1976), 9, qtd. in Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 5.
23. *OED Online*, Additions Series 1993, s.v. ephemeron, n.: Add. [2.] b. pl. ephemera.
24. Young, "Evidence," 12.
25. *Ibid.*, 16; see, for instance, Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 8.
26. Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 10.
27. The debate on whether the category of ephemera includes manuscript materials is extensive and unresolved. The Ephemera Society of America website defines "ephemera" as "a broad range of minor (and sometimes major) everyday documents intended for one-time

or short-term use” (www.ephemerasyociety.org/whatisephemera.html). This definition does not limit ephemera to printed items; nonetheless, the examples discussed overwhelmingly consist of printed materials. Several of the most important general studies or statements implicitly or explicitly restrict “ephemera” to printed materials; see, for instance, Lewis, *Printed Ephemera and Collecting Printed Ephemera*; and John E. Pemberton, *The National Provision of Printed Ephemera in the Social Sciences* (Coventry: University of Warwick Library, 1971). A few widely cited studies either explicitly argue against such a position or prominently acknowledge other scholars’ inclusion of manuscript materials; see, for instance, Clinton, who restricts his own subject matter to printed materials but also acknowledges the Ephemera Society of America’s earlier definition of “ephemera” as “printed or handwritten items, produced specifically for short-term use and generally for disposal” (*Ephemerist*, November 1975, unpaginated, my emphasis; qtd. in Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 18). Makepeace notes that Lewis “concentrates on printed items and ignores the fact that there can be manuscript items of ephemera” (Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 6), while Michael Twyman notes that although his late coauthor, Maurice Rickards, focused on printed ephemera (see, for instance, Maurice Rickards, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* [Oxford: Phaidon/Christies, 1988]), their coauthored encyclopedia includes some manuscript items (Maurice Rickards and Michael Twyman, *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera* [New York: Routledge, 2000], v). Young observes that “the currently accepted term in LCSH [*Library of Congress Subject Headings*] is *printed ephemera*” and concludes, “the introduction of the word *printed* . . . is significant. Though such materials may be hard to classify, they do belong to the print tradition” (“Evidence,” 13). But he then undermines any certainty about such a statement when he cites other information science reference works that include “printed ephemera” as a subset of the larger category “ephemera” (suggesting that not all ephemera is printed).

28. Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 10.
29. Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 19.
30. Florence M. Jumonville, “Printed Ephemera—The Raw Materials of History,” *LLA Bulletin* 53 (Fall 1990): 55–57, 56.
31. Clinton, *Printed Ephemera*, 7.
32. *Ibid.*, 15.
33. Makepeace, *Ephemera*, 4–5, my emphasis.
34. Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 10–11.
35. *OED Online*, 2nd ed., 1989, *s.v.* ephemera, *n.*², 1 and 2.
36. Samuel Johnson, *Rambler*, no. 82, 29 December 1750, and no. 145, 6 August 1751, respectively.
37. *OED Online*, 2nd ed., 1989, *s.v.* ephemeral, *adj.*, 1 b. and 2. a., my emphasis.
38. H. Francis Lester, *Under Two Fig Trees* (London: Ward and Downey, 1886) 33, qtd. in *OED Online*, *s.v.* ephemera, *n.*², 2.
39. *OED Online*, 2nd ed., 1989, *s.v.* grub, *n.*, 1.
40. Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary* (London, 1755).
41. *OED Online*, *s.v.* Grub-street, *n.*, 2. *attrib.* or as *adj.*
42. *OED Online*, *s.v.* grub, *n.*, 2 b.
43. Delarivier Manley, *Memoirs of Europe* (London, 1710) 1:1, qtd. in Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678–1739* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 251.
44. Delarivier Manley, *The Duke of Marlborough’s Vindication* (London, 1711) 12, qtd. in McDowell, *Women of Grub Street*, 252.
45. *The Works of Virgil: Containing his Pastorals, Georgics, and Aeneis. Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1697).
46. I argue this in detail in my current book project, “Fugitive Voices: Print Commerce and the Invention of the Oral in Eighteenth-Century Britain.”

47. Creech trans., *De Rerum Natura*, Book 4, qtd. in Swift, *Tub*, 28n.
48. The ass was published as a frontispiece to the first edition of the quarto *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) and reappeared as a title page vignette in the second edition published later that year.
49. Horace, *Epistles*, Book 2, Epistle 1, ll. 269–270, in Horace: *Satires and Epistles, and Persius: Satires*, trans. Niall Rudd (London: Penguin, 1986), 182. As I have suggested, Swift and Pope consistently link print “ephemera” with certain kinds of disapproved oral discourse, which they satirize as meaningless “Noise” (for example, see *Dunciad* 2.221ff.). The ass is an animal known for its loud braying voice and enormous ears; similarly, the owl (depicted here near the ass’s ears) is associated with noise (as its species names “hoot owl” and “screech owl” suggest). The owl is also associated with nocturnal activities; thus in the *Dunciad* the owl is associated not with Athena, goddess of wisdom, but with Queen Dulness (see 1.271), who is “Daughter of . . . eternal Night” (1.12).
50. Swift: *The Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 321–322, lines 9–16.
51. Maynard Mack, *The Last and Greatest Art: Some Unpublished Poetical Manuscripts of Alexander Pope* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), section 4 of unpaginated General Introduction.
52. David L. Vander Meulen, *Pope’s Dunciad of 1728: A History and Facsimile* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), xi.
53. *Ibid.*, 23.
54. Samuel Johnson, “Account of the Harleian Library,” in *Proposals For Printing, by Subscription, The Two First Volumes of Bibliotheca Harleiana* (1742), rpt. in Arthur Murphy, ed., *Works of Samuel Johnson*, 12 vols. (London: Printed by L. Hansard for J. Nichols, 1810), 2:227–239.
55. Johnson, *Dictionary* (1755), s.v. “literature.”
56. Johnson, “Account of the Harleian Library” (1742), *Works* 2:232, 231, 230, my emphasis.
57. William Oldys, *A Dissertation upon Pamphlets* (London: n.p., 1731), 9.
58. Samuel Johnson, “Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces” (1744), *Works* 2:243.
59. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *Spectator*, no. 124, 23 July 1711, in Donald F. Bond, ed., *The Spectator*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1:505–508, 505.
60. Johnson, “Account of this Undertaking.”
61. Johnson, “Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces” (1744), *Works* 2:243.
62. Oldys, *Dissertation upon Pamphlets*, 9, my emphasis.
63. Johnson, “Account of this Undertaking.”
64. *OED Online*, 2nd ed. 1989, s.v. “fugitive,” B. n., 1 a. and 3.
65. Johnson, “Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces” (1744), *Works* 2:242–243.
66. Thomas Bodley, *The Letters of Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*, ed. G. W. Wheeler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926) 222; 40.
67. Johnson, “Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces” (1744), *Works* 2:241, 247.
68. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. 21, in H. J. Jackson, ed., *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985; 2009), 381, my emphasis. Coleridge himself formerly worked as a “Hireling” for the *Critical Review* (*Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956], 1:318).
69. Johnson, “Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces” (1744), *Works* 2:248; Johnson, “Account of this Undertaking.”
70. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 32.
71. Oldys, *Dissertation upon Pamphlets*, 2.

72. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephemera>.
73. Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 326.
74. Johnson, "Account of the Harleian Library" (1742), *Works* 2:227.
75. Johnson, "Account of this Undertaking."
76. Johnson, "Essay on . . . Fugitive Pieces" (1744), *Works* 2:248.