
Glover produces for the first time a critical edition in modern type of this provocative early feminist exposé of the English legal system that allegedly enslaved married women. Contemporary manuscript sources suffice to attribute The Hardships of the English Laws in Relation to Wives to Sarah (née Kirkham) Chapone (1699–1764), the wife of an Anglican clergyman, John, in Stanton, Gloucestershire.

The introduction presents a detailed biographical and critical account of Chapone’s elaborate tirade against the English legal suppression of married women, but it skims over a number of questions that inevitably arise in her narrative. Perhaps the most obvious one is whether this pamphlet may overstate the case against coverture—the legal restraints on married women and their rights to owning property. Glover ignores the argument by Joanne Bailey, cited in the bibliography, “that married women were not in reality confined within coverture’s regulations on credit and property ownership. Their economic activities were fairly broad and flexible and they had an instinctive sense of possession over some goods during wedlock, perceiving their contributions to marriage as a pooling of resources for familial benefit.” Curiously, in a letter to Samuel Richardson (September 21, 1754), included in an appendix to this edition, Chapone mockingly paraphrases her own words in Hardships about how the wife “being nothing” is “dead in law” while at the same time exuding confidence in her own husband’s good will in giving her equal space in their marriage. Bailey’s argument about the practical autonomy enjoyed by most wives despite coverture, in other words, seems to be borne out by Chapone herself, raising some doubts about her cri de coeur demeanor in Hardships. Perhaps twenty years after writing this fiery pamphlet and enjoying relatively more financial security, her mood had changed for the better.

After the 1730 reprints of Mary Astell’s major writings, including Some Reflections upon Marriage, which Richardson not only printed but apparently revised, Chapone emulates this protofeminist by using reports in newspapers and periodicals as evidence of the woman’s subordination under the marital contract. Yet, after carefully documenting the extensive influence of Astell on this writer’s religious and moral thought, Glover makes the baffling statement: “Chapone’s inspiration for writing and publishing a tract on the inequitable position of wives under the common law and challenging the biblical foundation of wives’ subservience that underpinned it is unknown.” What is most startling is the assertion that Hardships challenged “the biblical foundation of wives’ subservience” as a primary goal. While introducing A Letter humbly address’d to the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield (1750), Chapone responded with Remarks on Mrs. Muilman’s Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield (1750), printed by...
Richardson and reproduced here together with _Hardships_, Glover observes: “There appears to be no clear evidence suggesting why Chapone might have chosen to respond to this work at this time, although there is an interesting parallel with Astell’s response to the published accounts of another notorious woman, Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Maz-arin.” To this reader, at least, it is perfectly clear that Chapone is deliberately following her role model in attacking yet another “fallen woman,” Teresia Constantia Phillips, divorced by her Dutch merchant husband, Henry Muilman, whose impiety renders her beyond the pale despite her victimization by male predators. To be fair, however, the Routledge series editors should have queried these dubious remarks beforehand.

Evidently Chapone was not alone in producing this manuscript as well as getting it published, but Glover offers little interpretation of how this cooperative undertaking was being vetted not only by Mary Pendarves, later married to Patrick Delany, but also by other deeply influential members of the Stanton circle: “The first surviving reference to Chapone’s work appears in John Wesley’s diary; Wesley’s biographer Vivian Green notes that in July 1733 he is ‘talking in the garden, reading Varanese’s [Chapone’s] papers—for she engaged in writing—and playing cards in the evening,’ and the following year Wesley corrected her ‘Essay on Laws.’”

Without any manuscripts available, we can only speculate about the content of Wesley’s corrections; but elsewhere the introduction informs us that he recorded in his diary their “lengthy conversations” about theology during his visits at the rectory. Glover never asks the question, but it would not be surprising if they discussed the “Original Curse of Subjection passed upon the Woman” because the doctrine of Original Sin was a main topic of his sermons as well as his attack on the deists and the Hutchesonian natural law philosophers. Chapone’s bold invocation of William Wollaston in her argument for equality of the sexes might have irked Wesley, who deplored his building “a beautiful castle in the air” on abstract truth devoid of deity and revelation.

Chapone’s enthusiastic endorsement of Delany’s _Revelation Examined with Candour_ (1732), its many editions printed by Richardson, is mentioned but again without interpretation of its relevance to the argument in _Hardships_. Neither is the fact that Pendarves as well as Chapone was very intimate with Wesley before moving on to marry Delany after his first wealthy wife’s death in 1743. Since becoming acquainted with him during her trip to Ireland in 1731, it may be that Mary influenced Chapone to read this book. Perhaps it was Delany’s basic argument that Adam could not have known about the fact that the male was destined to cleave to a woman into one flesh without the revelation in Genesis that struck Chapone the most. After demonstrating from Wollaston and Hobbes that equality of the sexes is evident from the law of nature, Chapone embraces Delany’s quirky view that the custom of women’s subordination is proof of revelation. Even though _Hardships_ courageously attacks the injustices of the English laws concerning married women and property, as in Astell’s pioneering jeremiad, we are left dangling with the orthodox submission to the biblical myth of the Fall.

Despite the generous bibliography, the annotations are sometimes spotty. The allusion to “a very ingenious Writer” lacks a note, and the original misspelling “disadvantagious” should be confirmed as well as an explanation for “Court of Delegates in Doctor’s Commons.” Documentation for the “Annals of Queen Mary I” would be helpful for the reader unfamiliar with this history, and the same for clarifying the reputation of Wollaston and
Hobbes. Perhaps the most egregious omission, however, concerns the quotation on the title page from Job xvi. 4, 5, 6; and Psalm lvi. The editor merely corrects the reference error to lvi rather than to lv. But this passage from Job resonates in Clarissa’s Meditation XVII when she finds herself alienated from her “implacable” friends as a victim of her father’s wrath. Since the advertisement of Hardships in Weekly Miscellany quotes in full these biblical lines, Chapone herself wanted to emphasize her own situation of being an outlier daring to confront her own women readers in her complaint against the laws of the land. Since Richardson not only printed but financially supported Webster’s religious periodical, which published three letters on Hardships, including the invitation to Chapone to contribute to it and her humble refusal, it would not be surprising to find that he already knew her at this time, well before becoming her printer for the pamphlet reply to Constantia Phillips in 1750.

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The Trouble with Tea is an excellent study of the politics of tea consumption in the eighteenth century, with a pronounced focus on North America. In this way, it provides some deeper context for the role of tea in the American Revolution, especially the so-called Boston Tea Party, which, as many have observed, was no tea party. The book demonstrates the long history of both increasing demand for, and complaints about, tea in colonial British North America. The first chapter provides a thorough account of the emergence of tea as a major commodity in the commerce of the English East India Company (EIC) in the early years of the eighteenth century. Having been initially focused on the textile trade in India, EIC’s fortunes were transformed in 1713, when the company negotiated access to the port of Canton in China. By 1717, the EIC was making regular annual commercial voyages to China in which tea was an important commodity: predominantly single green tea, and after the midcentury bohea, a brown or red tea. Within a matter of decades, tea came to be the most significant commercial item of EIC trade.

Merritt’s account is based on some archival work with EIC records and calendars of papers, and an extensive survey of the scholarship on the company over the last half century. After the first chapter, the focus pivots from the metropolitan concerns of the EIC’s China trade to Britain’s North American colonies. Merritt describes how the consumer revolution in colonial America enhanced a taste for luxury commodities such as tea and tea-wares, although comparatively unsophisticated in its expression. Tea, with no nutritional value and no domestic cultivation, was a particular target for criticism of exotic luxuries, both economic and moral. Between 1720 and 1740, American consumers demonstrated both a growing demand for tea, and a growing sophistication in the tea trade and more refined and elaborate tea services. The market for tea in North America was undertaken through the East India companies in London and Amsterdam. Merritt sees the market in tea, and ideas about tea as expressed in medical tracts, poetry, commercial and geographical treatises, as an Anglophone and transatlantic venture. Nonetheless, her