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WOMEN WRITERS AND THE GENEALOGY OF THE GENTLEMAN: MASCULINITY, AUTHORITY, AND MALE CHARACTERS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVELS BY WOMEN

Mary Elizabeth Harris
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WOMEN WRITERS AND THE GENEALOGY OF THE GENTLEMAN: MASCULINITY, AUTHORITY, AND MALE CHARACTERS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVELS BY WOMEN

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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WOMEN WRITERS AND THE GENEALOGY OF THE GENTLEMAN: MASCULINITY, AUTHORITY, AND MALE CHARACTERS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVELS BY WOMEN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

Mary Beth Harris

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2016

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

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In *The Rambler* No. 7 Samuel Johnson writes, "Other things may be seized by might, or purchased with money, but knowledge is to be gained only by study, and study to be prosecuted only in retirement" (III.36). The eminent man of letters is right about the work of study, but I must politely part ways with him on the issue of retirement. This dissertation would not exist without the help and support of so many.

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ABSTRACT

Harris, Mary Elizabeth. Ph.D., Purdue University, August, 2016. Women Writers and the Genealogy of the Gentleman: Masculinity, Authority, and Male Characters in Eighteenth-Century English Novels by Women. Major Professor: Manushag Powell.

This dissertation demonstrates that women authors in the eighteenth century carved out a space for their authority not by overtly opposing their male critics and society's patriarchal structure, but by rewriting the persona of the gentleman—the poster boy for eighteenth-century society's moral, masculine, and patriarchal values—and thereby advocating for novels as an important site for cultivating proper masculine behavior as well as a means of renegotiating gender relationships. Eighteenth-century feminist criticism has charted the wide-ranging and creative avenues women carved out for themselves within a male-dominated, patriarchal culture. However, critics have typically dismissed the male characters of eighteenth-century female authors as poorly written or fantasy wish-fulfillment, often assuming women had no real means of influencing masculinity. *Genealogy of the Gentleman* addresses this critical blind spot by focusing on one of the most iconic archetypes of masculinity: the gentleman. I argue that women writers used their novels to define and popularize the gentleman as the ideal version of Western masculinity, and that they did so for strategic, professional purposes. My dissertation charts how, over the course of the eighteenth century, women writers

commandeer the moral power of this gentleman persona, particularly his literary authority as the ideal author, reader, and critic. This intervention contributes to masculinity studies, which has made strides in correcting assumptions about Anglophone masculinity—that manliness is universal, innate, and rational, rather than particular, contextual, and performative. My approach offers to this conversation a crucial perspective on how women played a vital role in creating dominant standards of masculinity, and they did so by taking advantage of the performative nature of these standards in order to naturalize their own authorship.

INTRODUCTION

"Women do not write books about men"

--Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*[1]

"Rash young man!—why do you tear from my heart the affecting narrative, which I had hoped no cruel necessity would ever have forced me to review?"--Emma Courtney, *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney*[2]

Virginia Woolf's declaration is in many ways emblematic of much feminist scholarship. In *A Room of One's Own* she scours the shelves and finds copious books written by men about women, but a seeming absence of books written about men by women. Yet, Woolf does not dwell on this declaration; she makes it in passing, moving on to her main focus, which is the plight of the women author and the very real effect her economic, educational, psychological, and gendered circumstances have on her literary production. Women, struggling from their disadvantaged position, "do not write books about men"; they are too focused and busy countering the "mass[es] of paper" that men have penned about women (Woolf 27). On the surface, Mary Hays' 1796 novel *The Memoirs Emma Courtney* seems to be representative of this authorial syllogism. Hays'

novel appears almost exclusively focused on women and women's issues: it is written by a proto-feminist, it is dominated by the voice and life of its central female character, Emma Courtney, and its pages are filled with the vulnerabilities of a late-eighteenth-century woman at the mercy of her precarious finances, her lack of parental protection, and her overabundant passions. And as was often the case with women novelists in the eighteenth century, Hays was attacked for her frank portrayal of potent female passions and fears about the implications for young women readers: one reviewer even claimed that he only gave notice to Hays' novel "to guard the female world against the mischievousness of [this novel's] tendencies" (Hays 634). Thus, from a distance the content and the reception of Hays' novel seem to support focusing on its female connections: female author, feminist themes, female protagonist, and female readers.

But this is not Hays' own focus. She structures her novel, from the opening to the closing lines, as a series of letters directed towards a young man. Emma's epistolary memoirs are written to her protégé, Augustus Harley, "the son of [Emma's] affection" (Hays 270). Emma is not revisiting her painful, passionate history for the education of her own daughter (who has tragically, albeit conveniently, died), but for her adopted son. Her excessive passions are presented as instructive for a male reader, a nascent gentleman. Despite its apparent and overt femininity, *Emma Courtney* is a novel constructed with a male reader imagined as its in-text audience. Furthermore, Hays references William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) as a source text for her novel, and she clearly imagines a mixed-sex audience.[3] This fictional readership extends both inward and outward from the novel, because it pushes us to consider the ways a feminine experience, even in the binary-gendered world of late-eighteenth-century Britain, was still considered instructive

and applicable to the formation of a masculine identity. Mary Hays is writing about a man; actually she writes about several men just within this novel. Emma is surrounded by men: her rakish, neglectful father, her philosopher mentor, her volatile husband, and the sentimental, yet secretive, Augustus Harley, Sr. Finally, Emma is sharing her experience for the benefit and education of a young man; her experience as a woman is presented as educational and formative for a gentleman. The male critic's gendered commentary cited above reveals how pervasive, if untrue, the conventional wisdom about women's novels exclusively affecting other women was and continues to be. It is the male critics who, from the position of authority and gentlemanly concern for young ladies, categorize novel reading as increasingly feminine throughout the century, and we more modern scholars have inadvertently retained this conception. Woolf's statement still rings true, but it is bound up in perceptions created by Hays' male critics, not by reality. My dissertation shows that moments like the reader address in Hays' novel reveal a heretofore largely unexplored relationship between eighteenth-century women writers and masculinity, one in which women played an active and conscious role in the construction of one of the most dominant forms of masculinity: the gentleman. On a broader scale my project takes a first step in countering our long held blindness about women writers' portrayals of masculinity.

****

Eighteenth-century feminist critics have charted the wide-ranging and creative avenues women carved out for themselves within a male-dominated, patriarchal culture. However, critics have typically dismissed the male characters penned by eighteenth-century female authors as poorly written or fantasy wish-fulfillment, often assuming

women had no real means of influencing masculinity. "Genealogy of the Gentleman" addresses this critical blind spot by focusing on one of the most iconic archetypes of masculinity: the gentleman. I have entitled my project a genealogy because women writers played a powerful role in the construction, revision, and longstanding cultural appeal of the gentleman, in ways that still influence modern ideals of masculinity. For, despite his status as a conservative figure of patriarchy, the gentleman is also the leading man of a huge number of novels by women. Instead of seeing the gentleman as a concession to patriarchal dominance, my dissertation explores why women writers chose the gentleman as their leading man. "Women Writers and the Genealogy of the Gentleman" demonstrates that women authors in the eighteenth century carved out a space for their authority not by opposing their male critics and society's patriarchal structure overtly, but rather by rewriting the persona of the gentleman—the poster boy for eighteenth-century society's moral, masculine, and patriarchal values—and thereby advocating for novels as an important site for cultivating proper masculine behavior as well as a means of renegotiating gender relationships.

My generic focus is divided by gender. With the male authors I examine, I focus on their periodical, philosophical texts, and moral essays. In each of these genres the male author performs authorship either through his semi-fictional eidolon or through his own first-person voice, which creates its own idealized image of the author. In each there is always a division between the author as he is presented in writing and the actual author himself; in their own way these all reveal how the performance of the gentleman created an impression of innate, natural masculinity and binary gender. With my women writers, I focus exclusively on novels not in preference to other forms such as poetry, drama,

prose, and essays, but as a first step in examining women writers' impact on masculinity. I do think there is something distinct about fiction, and the novel form in particular, that enables a clear consideration of how women were crafting the gentleman's masculinity. Fiction allowed women writers to expose and revise the fictionality of innate gender and the gentleman's performance of it. Meanwhile, the structure of plot and the formal variety of the novel create access points for women writers to dramatize the gender dynamics of the gentleman. Within their novels, women writers used the conventions of romance, the voice of a meddling narrator, and the palpitations of amatory fiction to reveal the constructed and revisable nature of the gentleman. Again and again, women writers employ the gentleman in their marriage plots, and in doing so they display the dependence of his masculinity on women: how he seeks to regulate them, but that he is also open to their influence. Then these women writers slowly but surely play upon this dynamic to shift the balance of moral and authorial power to their advantage.

The gentleman was the emblem of eighteenth-century patriarchy, but in a new way. As I will demonstrate more fully in Chapters 1 and 2, the gentleman was the new man; he was a "sentimental family man" (Mauer 7) juxtaposed against the rake's "unrestrained" sexual consumer (G.J. Barker-Benfield 45). The gentleman is often considered a reaction to the Restoration rake and a move away from aristocratic power structures towards more middle-class, market-oriented structures. Erin Mackie's definition sums the gentleman up nicely:

> Gilded by codes of polite civility and restraint, eschewing personal violence for the arbitration of the law, oriented toward the family in an increasingly paternalistic role, purchasing his status as much, if not more, through the

> demonstration of moral virtues as through that of inherited honor, and gendered unequivocally as a male heterosexual, the modern English gentleman has been cited in contemporary masculinity studies as the first type of "hegemonic masculinity." (1)

What made this figure new was the fact that he created the sense that masculinity was innate, universal, and ahistoric. This rejection of the rake was supposedly a rejection of the performative and the ostentatious in favor of a virtuous, true subject. As Thomas King argues the new man of sense (another name for the gentleman) created the internalized, private subject.[4] Because the gentleman was a rejection of the aristocratic, courtly power of the rake, he also created a kind of narrow social mobility. While the gentleman was highly classed figure, because his status was dependent on an interconnection of virtue, education, and breeding (things that could be cultivated) rather than birth alone, his emergence indicated the materialization of "a world of limited yet measurable social mobility for the few who qualify as gentlemen" (Solinger 30). However, this new mobility was highly regulated by gender and new kinds of class markers; as Carolyn D. Williams points out, this internalization of masculinity with a private subjectivity created an "intersection of intellect and character," but "manly understanding was reserved for a privileged minority" (15). In other words, while the gentleman was the new masculine ideal, he was also a highly conservative figure. Yet, he marked a new era, and he created an access point to privilege, which I demonstrate women writers coveted.

The gentleman's dominance and popularity were the direct product of a deeply gendered literary culture: he was the ideal author, reader and critic—all of which were defined in turn through gender relations. As numerous critics, such as Maurer, T. King,

Powell, and Mackie have argued, the gentleman was also the ideal professional author, "masculine, genteel, disinterested" (Powell 4).[5] His taste, experience of the world, classical education, his class, and his moral benevolence made him the best of all possible authors. Consequently, he was also featured in literary works as the ideal reader and critic. In his recent book on the gentleman, J.D. Solinger points out that the development of the gentleman played a key role in "the development of literary forms" and required the "redefining gentility as an effect of literacy" (1, 7).[6] The "masculine prerogative" of authorship manifested through his regulation of and comparison with women (Runge 3). As opposed to the scandalous or commerce-driven woman writer, the gentleman was disinterested, supposedly motivated only to instruct and delight, without financial or sexual self-interest. As Maurer points out, the "moment when the bourgeois family man emerged as the prototype of desirable masculinity" inextricably linked "men's need to control themselves, both sexually and economically…with their role as monitors and reformers of women" (Maurer 3 & 8). This need manifested itself in the relationship between the gentleman author and his female readers; the gentleman reader and female texts; and the gentleman critic and female authors, readers, and characters. The gentleman author also established his masculinity through regulating and constructing women as readers in need of his guidance. The gentleman reader established his authority in contrast to the female reader. As Rebecca Tierney-Hynes argues, the gentleman was the "good reader," someone reliably rational, with "the ability to examine and separate ideas" (37). In contrast, the female readers were defined by their "unruly imagination…their general mental weakness and their susceptibility to the humoural disorders" and their overall inability to discern the difference between fact and fiction

(Solinger 74).[7] Meanwhile, the critic combined these skills to mediate and regulate between the public and authors, monitoring both female readers and writers.

Yet, despite his incredibly conservative character and regulatory function, women writers chose the gentleman again and again as "the ideal husband imagined by the authors of heroine-centered domestic fiction" (Solinger 3). This repetition has frequently been read as women writers kowtowing to patriarchal standards, a necessary penance and way around "the censorship of critics" (Craft 822).[8] Meanwhile, other critics, like Megan A. Woodworth or Eleanor Wikborg, see the gentlemen characters of women writers as a benevolent fantasy, the ideal hero representing a yielding of "a measure of authority" to the author and in a way that "author(ize)s" the heroine and women's agency in general (Wikborg 2). However, most often the gentleman characters of women writers are dismissed or politely sidestepped. Critics gesture to masculine desire or women writing about masculinity, much like Woolf does, in order to set it quickly aside. Critics may read the gentleman as oppressors, symbols of the patriarchy, whom women writers may overtly criticize or unconsciously obey, or they may call them unrealistic fantasies of patriarchy-bound women. Regardless, the critical thrust of these arguments is always driven by examinations of the female characters of women writers, not of the gentleman.

Despite the gentleman's ubiquity in women's writing, almost no scholarly work has been done with a focus specifically on the male characters of women writers. Individual articles have, of course, addressed individual male characters, but there has been little sustained attention or understanding of the ways women writers, individually and collectively, shaped cultural standards of masculinity. The one major exception to this gap is probably Jane Austen, whose gentlemen have received a great deal of critical

attention.[9] In the 1980s Janet Todd edited a special issue of *Women and Literature,* entitled *Men by Women* (1982), and Jane Miller published a book, *Women Writing About Men* (1986). Some more recent exceptions to this critical silence are Eleanor Wikborg's 2002 *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction,* Sarah Frantz and Katharina Rennhak's 2010 collection *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters 1750-2000,* and Megan Woodworth's 2011 book, *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement: Independence, War, Masculinity, and the Novel, 1778-1818*. By comparison, the list of books exploring the female characters by male authors are numerous and extensive, and studies on eighteenth-century gender, as it affects women, include just as much, if not more, Richardson, Fielding, and Defoe as they do Haywood, Behn, Burney, and Edgeworth.

I believe that what is really fueling our collective shelving of the gentleman (or perhaps more accurately failing to fuel wider critical interest) is the fact that, as a scholarly community, we have come to a critical consensus: the gentleman is boring. The gentleman hero can seem peripheral to the central heroine, orbiting her like a handsome, blank sun, waiting to swoop in and marry her. Here I am speaking of the gentleman specifically, the romantic lead of most eighteenth-century domestic and sentimental fiction. As Katherine Rogers writes, "The hero" in women's writing "too often, is merely [the heroine's] complement: the answer to her wishes" (9). En masse critics prefer the heroines of women writers to their heroes. We find the palpitations of a Haywood heroine's heart and the heaving of her bosom more compelling than the seductive machinations of Haywood's male seducers. In comparison to Charlotte Lennox's female quixote, Arabella, or Frances Burney's detailed and evolving Evelina, Glanville and

Orville seem more like Blandville and B'Orville to many critics. Some of this is entirely legitimate. The ongoing and dynamic feminist-recovery projects have brought the compelling and surprising array of female characters and perspectives to the critical table. Even in comparison to other men the gentleman can appear lack-luster; for example, the gentleman's polite virtue and reserve feels much less critically compelling than the rake's "threat of male sexual predation" (Croskery 70).

However, this is a critical blind spot, which fails to account for why women authors repeatedly invested in and chose the gentleman as their hero, and falls into the trap of treating normative masculinity as boring and invisible. First, it assumes that women writers did not have other options (or the imagination to come up with them), which repeats what eighteenth-century masculinity scholars Timothy Hitchcock and Michele Cohen point out is the problematic assumption that "there exist[ed] a single unified masculinity" in the eighteenth century (Hitchcock and Cohen 21). There were other models of masculinity (the rake, the squire, the fop, the tragic hero, the romance hero) and there were other plots besides the marriage plot. Yet women writers, with increasing frequency throughout the century, choose the gentleman and the marriage plot, and when we assume that women chose him because of cultural coercion and wrote about marriage because "their main subject would be love," it does a disservice to these women writers (Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist* 32).

It also ignores and repeats the very assumptions that are problematically built into masculinity: that it is normal, material, and easily identifiable. As Thomas Reeser points out, "It might seem odd to some to devote the entire book to the study of masculinity. After all, masculinity seems like an obvious thing, something we can and do take for

granted. We know what it is when we see it: it is commonsensical, produced by testosterone or by nature" (1). However, as masculinity theorists, like Reeser, R.W. Connell, and Halberstam, and gender historians like T. King, Randolph Trumbach, and George Haggerty point out, this is what patriarchy wants you to think.[10] This is what Connell identifies as "hegemonic masculinity" the picture of man as the rational, ahistorical, universal, and ungendered sex (68). According to Connell, this mode of masculinity began its cultural dominance in the eighteenth century via the masculinity of the gentleman. The gentleman's masculinity creates a "male body, which has been typically presented as an unchanging entity" (T. King 17). He is the private subject; he is innately rational and virtuous. However, this is not actual innateness; the gentleman is not natural; his masculinity is just as constructed as femininity and just as performative as the rake's. The gentleman was a "masculine ideal" and the "dominant persona" of male writers (Solinger 3). That is, he was not a reality: a persona, not a person. This means he can be adopted as a guise by other figures, not just biological men. He performs private subjectivity, which is the foundation of his masculinity, and women writers used this feature to slowly transform the gentleman into their creature, and to remake his authority in their image.

In exploring the male characters of women writers, my project unites the critical trajectories of eighteenth-century feminist scholarship and masculinity studies. By weaving together these scholarly threads, "Genealogy of the Gentleman" fills problematic (if unintended) gaps in both fields. As gestured to above, by ignoring the male characters of women writers, we have continued to re-inscribe many of the very gender categories we have been critiquing. For instance, as Shawn Lisa Maurer and

Megan Woodworth point out, feminist criticism of the eighteenth century, while it has embraced gender theory more broadly, often relies on a dated perception of masculinity, which "frequently ignore[s] the constructed nature of masculinity by subsuming it under the monolithic umbrella of an ahistoric patriarchy" (Maurer 1) relying instead on the "shadowy monolith of the ruling class male" (Woodworth 2).

One of the major goals of the feminist recovery projects has been to demonstrate the powerful, real, and creative influence women writers had on culture, to show how they were real peers to the now more canonical male writers of their time. However, in their attempt to bring the important and much-needed perspective of women writers, characters, and readers into the critical conversation, this criticism has become exclusively feminocentric in its focus. One reason is that we often have so little biographical information about many of these women writers, even prolific ones like Eliza Haywood, and as a result we often make "a woman writer into a heroine, linking her life and her writing together, so that one was judged in terms of the other" (Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist* 23). Criticism that pursues and examines the female characters of women writers is incredibly valuable and ever changing. At the same time, by making the female characters our near-exclusive focus, we have unintentionally reinscribed a kind of gender hierarchy between men and women writers. We do not so rigidly align male authors' interests or literary creativity to their male characters. Yes, we do relate Tom Jones to Henry Fielding and Robinson Crusoe to Daniel Defoe, but we do not reduce these male authors to their central male characters, because we have also given a tremendous amount of scholarly attention to the Molls, Roxanas, Pamelas, Clarissas, and so on. To clarify, my goal is to broaden the scope of our inquiry into major

women writers even further, to say that, like their male peers, they did not just reflect male gender norms: they participated in their construction. Whether they were conservative or scandalous, they had an active role in the ongoing conversation on gender, not just with respect to femininity and womanhood, but masculinity and manhood, too. The female characters created by women writers are fascinating and representative of a wide range of social influences, but so are the male characters.

Both feminist criticism and masculinity studies leave women writers out of the construction of masculinity. Again, this recreates the power structures of binary gender, because we have devoted an incredible amount of attention to the ways male authors created and regulated standards of femininity in their female characters. This isn't because the female characters are necessarily more realistic, either; Clarissa and Pamela are clearly unrealistic idealizations of feminine virtue; so, it isn't just that the male characters of women writers are fantasies or unrealistic. Both feminist scholars and masculinity scholars continue to maintain the assumption that the contours of masculinity, especially normative masculinity, are the exclusive terrain of men. Just to illustrate, when women do create central male characters they are frequently written off as effeminate, even when their characters completely align with normative standards of masculinity. For example, Sarah Fielding's *David Simple* (1744) is almost universally read as effeminate, almost to the point of being seen as a woman in drag. Schellenberg considers David a "feminization of the hero" (26). Meanwhile, Todd writes, "Sarah Fielding makes her protagonist a man although his predicament remains quintessentially female" (*Sensibility* 165).[11] This is despite the clear-cut ways these critics have connected David's character to the acknowledged figure of the Man of Feeling, which in the 1740s

was a popular, normative ideal of genteel masculinity. In both cases, critics read the fantasy or the feminization as a power play by women writers. Theoretically, women writers use "the feminizing of men, either to master them and take away their otherness or to soften their patriarchal potential by allowing them qualities usually assumed to be female: gentleness, patience, and sensitivity" (Todd, *Men by Women* 3). I contend, however, that far from effeminized ciphers, these gentleman leads actually manifest and define normative and important aspects of eighteenth-century masculinity.

Underlying both of these critical trajectories is the ideas that women lacked the ability to influence masculinity. There was and continues to be an assumption, voiced by Janet Todd that, in general, "women writers [have an] inability to create great men in society" (*Men by Women* 3). Todd's word choice of "inability" is particularly telling. Women writers, the thinking goes, lacked ability, meaning the literary and aesthetic talent, to create influential male characters. This, yet again, maintains an inequality between male and female authors. However, perhaps more pervasively, this supposed lack of ability seems to question whether women had access needed to influence masculinity. For example, the feminocentric focus on female characters has also led to the assumption that women writers were primarily and even exclusively invested in a female readership. In truth, this reflects neither the practice of women writers nor what we know about their actual readership. First, women writers clearly addressed male readers in their works; Mary Davys, Eliza Haywood, Aphra Behn and many others make direct references to male readers in their prefaces, dedications, and main texts. Women writers certainly also claim to speak to impressionable female readers, but this, as Catherine Gallagher points out, is a rhetorical gesture designed to help these authors

"capitaliz[e] on…femaleness" (xxiv). Nor is it a strategy unique to women readers: as my project will show, one of the key gestures of the gentleman author is his protective outreach to young female readers. In fact, the occasional address to a female reader is just one of many ways women writers copied and then co-opted the authority of the gentleman writer. Furthermore, the image of a homogenous, feminine readership for eighteenth-century novels (by men and women) is not an accurate reflection of reading demographics. Margaret Anne Doody and Laura Runge have both argued that the figure of the female reader was more ideological than factual.[12] As Doody points out, "To pretend that the novel is primarily directed towards females (including those of both middle and upper classes) is reassuring, for women (unlike youthful male aristocrats) are theoretically disabled from bringing concepts into social currency" (*True Story of the Novel* 278). The reality was that while female literacy was on the rise, men still made up the significant majority of the literate population, particularly early in the century. In fact, Jan Fergus has demonstrated that men, especially school-boys, were the primary consumers of fiction, and that "the tastes of male and female readers of all classes were not as different as many scholars have supposed" (43). Like gender itself, reading habits were much more fluid than is often imagined, even when there are rhetorical gestures toward binary structures. There was also a material motivation for women writers to appeal to male readers. As consumers, men had almost exclusive access to places of literary circulation: the bookshop and the coffee-house. Women may be presented as the imagined reader by women writers, but many of their actual readers were men, and one of the ways to address this readership (and to study it) is through male characters. While

the precise readership or even popularity can be difficult to measure in the eighteenth century, men were clearly a key part of a woman writer's audience.

Also, while critics have ignored the gentleman characters of women writers, there has been a growing consensus that women were incredibly important to the definition of eighteenth-century masculinity. In many ways the gentleman was defined "in terms of what he was not," namely, the rake (Solinger 17-18). The gentleman's masculinity was defined "against which femininity has been variously constructed and on top of which various transformation in masculine roles have been layered" (T. King 17). It was also defined in contrast to the rake, or to the fop's excessive femininity. As Dror Wahrman and Thomas Laqueur have convincingly argued, binary gender was part of a larger evolution of gender that took place over the course of the long eighteenth-century.[13] The growing modern system of binary gender, created a system where the gentleman's masculinity depended on generating positive relationships with women. As G.J. Barker-Benfield famously established, in the early and mid eighteenth century, there was a widespread "reform of male manners" (Barker-Benfield xxvi). In the cultural move away from the rake, men were meant to reform into gentlemen, and women played a crucial role in this reformation; they had the right "right to assert such standards in judgment of husbands," of how their husband should treat them (Barker-Benfield 248). As Harriet Guest argues, "Femininity may seem of small significance in some of the major transactions of cultural change, but it is always a part of what gives those transactions current value" (2). This included masculinity. One of the most crucial features of the gentleman's masculinity was his relationship to and dependence on women. He demonstrated his domesticity, his virtue, his heterosexuality, and his economy all through

his dealings with women. Whereas the rake consumed and used women (and sometimes other men), the gentleman reputedly respected and cared for women; it was his responsibility as the patriarch to do so. This is a key paradox: while the gentleman patriarch was supposed to rule women (however benevolently), he was also reliant upon them. For example, the gentleman was in large part defined by his politeness, and as Cohen argues, "the mutual conversation of the sexes, it was generally agreed, was the best way to achieve politeness" (4). In the broad social turn towards the gentleman as a masculine standard, "women were central to the sociability and conversation" (Hitchcock and Cohen 19).[14] The gentleman had to be more open to the influence of women than his rakish predecessor, and through this intersection women were increasingly viewed as the bastions of all things moral, domestic, and polite.[15] This feminine influence was also a source of constant anxiety for masculinity; the gentleman must be appropriately softened to be polite, but he must not slip into effeminacy (often emblematized in the rake or the fop).[16] His masculinity was reflected in his regulation of that difficult balance. Therefore, not only did women have access to male readers, these readers, if they were gentlemen or sought to be gentlemen, required the influence of women to attain this masculine status.

Furthermore, while critics may find the gentleman boring, long-standing popular audiences have found him incredibly appealing. I have only to mention my research to my non-academic friends or family members, and they immediately begin sighing over Mr. Darcy. Also, if the gentleman is one of the foundations for "hegemonic masculinity," which is still going strong today, then this popularity, the continued romantic appeal of the gentlemen to female (and male) audiences has played an important role in his maintenance. As I argue throughout my dissertation, men might have tried to write

themselves into being the gentleman, but it was women writers who made the gentleman desirable. In fact, it was by making the gentleman desirable that women writers were able to gain access to his channels of power.

Of course women writers were interested in the gentleman. In fact, they were in the best position to perform and construct the gentleman. Women can perform the gentleman through their characters, and in many ways they do so more effectively than men. Ideals are easier to imagine than to live up to; women writers did not assume the latter half of that burden when they engaged the gentleman. As Powell argues, "Really, the adequately masculine author was not a particularly common figure" (*Performing Authorship* 33). Using the gentleman's dependence on women, women writers revised and cultivated him as a character, making him desirable, attractive, and at the same time dependent on their authorship. Sarah S.G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak argue, "When women construct and write about men in fictional worlds, not only do they analyze the causes and effects of patriarchy…but they also construct their own realities, imagining alternative masculinities that are desirable from a woman's perspective" (2).[17] I push this even further: women writers did not just construct their own reality through their male characters, the constructed the reality of masculinity. Patricia Meyers Spacks states that "art makes things happen in life, partly by altering perceptions" (*Desire and Truth* 3). I argue that this is what women writers do throughout the eighteenth century: through their novels they slowly alter the contours of the gentleman in order gain access to his literary authority.

He was the bearer of literary authority and therefore the conduit for moral and cultural power and privilege. Women, especially women writers, had a clear cultural

investment in negotiating and taking over the gentleman. As Woodworth, who provides one of the few extended studies of the male characters of women writers, writes, "Women writers come to the question of masculinity" with an "agenda"; that agenda was "necessarily different…than their male predecessors and counterparts. Where men seek ultimately to consolidate their own power and refine it into a form more palatable to their subjects, women endeavor" to include themselves in these masculine privileges (3).[18] Rather than being a form of submission, the courtship plot becomes a tool in women writers' "radical quest for equality" (Woodworth 3). This plot structure allows women writers to infiltrate the gentleman's character and his authorial power and take it over from the inside.

Women writers co-opt the gentleman by taking advantage of the fundamentally performative nature of his masculinity, which was created through his literary roles as author, reader, and critic. Critics have identified the ways eighteenth-century authorship (and beyond) is inherently performative. Powell has demonstrated that the gentlemanly status of periodical authors is inherently performative. If, as Catherine Gallagher suggests, women writers were savvy enough to navigate the market, "capitalizing on…femaleness" (xxiv), then why wouldn't they be dexterous enough to capitalize on the gentleman's performativity? I demonstrate that this is exactly what they did. However, one reason I believe critics have not explored the woman writer's relationship to her gentleman characters is that it speaks to a kind of authorial ambition that is not as overtly feminist as we might like. It means that we have to confront the gentleman character as a deliberate choice, as a character that women writers not only embraced, but made popular and desirable. After all, as Haggerty points out, "No male character can avoid partaking

in masculine privilege" in his relationships to the female characters ("Male Privilege in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*" 42). Yet Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace and Eleanor Wikborg argue, "a feminist critic must be attentive to the dual feminine motivations of anger against and desire for what patriarchy offers women" (Kowaleski-Wallace 9).[19] The dual nature of the gentleman hero provides an ideal space for navigating this complex position held by women within a patriarchal society. These figures are often both positive fantasy and oppressive patriarchy at once, and my project will demonstrate that female authors constructed them this way to challenge and engage with their gentleman (or would-be gentlemen) readers and to turn the cultural power of the gentleman to their own ends. If, as I contend, female authors were not just reacting to external structures of masculinity, but actively participating in their construction, then it is important to recognize that they were modifying, not reinventing (or demolishing) the wheel when they made their male characters. This may challenge our desire to position female authors and patriarchy in constant, binary opposition, and the theoretical idea that antagonistic subversion is the only way for a disadvantaged population to exert power. These male characters push us to consider female authors as engaged with the-powers-that-be in a more nuanced way, because these characters challenge patriarchy while also playing on its structures, and their form relies on making these structures attractive, even as they are being modified.

Chapter Summaries

My project will move historically from the beginning of the eighteenth century through the turn of the nineteenth century. I will not be tracing the trajectory of the long

eighteenth century, because the Restoration was the era of the rake, and while this era will serve as a backdrop for my opening analysis, my project will begin with the gentleman's evolution as the persona of the periodicalist. I will begin with Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *The Spectator* (1711-1712) as an iconic representation of the gentleman as the new dominant mode of masculinity, and move through the century, ending with late eighteenth-century women writers, Elizabeth Inchbald and Mary Robinson, as examples of the full authority of the woman writer over the gentleman. My focus within this timeframe is both thematic and generic. In the overall trajectory of my project, I argue that female authors use and cultivate formal innovations in the novel to gradually shift the relationship between their gentleman and their own authorial position. By the end of the century, women are in fact creating more first-person male perspectives and more narrators who control and interpret appropriate male behavior in a direct way, which is surprising given the greater gender divide that existed by that point. Critics like Eve Tavor Bannet and Jane Spencer have noted that with the advent of binary gender categories women were seen as the bearers of morality, and that women writers used this new status to position themselves as "guides of public morality" (Bannet 1).[20] I agree: women writers do take on a more deliberate and confident position as moral authorities as the century progresses; however, I see this as the result of their co-opting the gentleman's authorial power. He was the ideal author, reader, and critic, because he was the regulator social morality. By the end of the century women authors are confidently taking on this role. By looking at the trajectory of male characters in female authors' works, these formal structures reveal women taking ownership over traditionally masculine aspects of authorship and criticism.

"Genealogy of the Gentleman" resists placing male and female writers in opposition and instead connects them dialectically to demonstrate how women drew upon and influenced the authorship and gender of their now-canonical male contemporaries. Chapters 1-3 pair female novelists and male essayists from the early through the mid-century and explore how women writers took an aspect of the gentleman designed to regulate women and codify feminine behavior—his role as didactic author, sympathetic reader, and moral critic—and created courtship plots that accept these features of the gentleman's authority but also reveal and capitalize on the gentleman's dependence of women.

Chapter 1, "Gentleman Spectator as Desiring Author: *The Spectator* and Mary Davys' *Reform'd Coquette,*" argues that the gentleman's role as the didactic author depended upon disguising (but not erasing) his own body and desires through regulating female readers. I argue Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's iconic periodical *The Spectator* (1711-12) represents the intersection between the gentleman's role as professional author and his masculinity's dependence on creating desiring female bodies. The female reader, especially the one in need of guidance and reform, was a necessary figure for establishing the gentleman's appeal as a moral guide in ways that blended the body and the literary. Mary Davys dramatizes this structure in her courtship novel *The Reform'd Coquette* (1724), in which her gentleman lover/mentor Alanthus disguises himself as an old man, Formator, to reform the vivacious coquette Amoranda. Davys dramatizes the fundamentally performative nature of the gentleman as a means of validating her own professional position; she reveals that the gentleman author relies not

on internalized gender but on formal structures that she, as a woman author, can repurpose for her own benefit.

In Chapter 2, "The Gentleman of Letters as Passionate Reader: Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* and David Hume's *Philosophy of Moral Sympathy*," I argue Haywood's 1719 novel and its central figure Count D'elmont anticipate David Hume's persona and philosophy, with Haywood employing modes of gentlemanly sympathy founded upon reading habits that look remarkably similar to those Hume would later endorse. This chapter repositions Haywood as an author whose construction of masculinity anticipates the Cult of Sensibility and examines Hume as a character in his own essays and writings; I bring literary attention to the philosopher and philosophical weight to the "Great Arbitress of Passion." By presenting D'elmont as a reformed rake, Haywood infuses the gentleman's role as a sympathetic reader with a desirability stemming from the passion of moral sensibility that replaces the force of seduction, and this emphasis creates an exemplary standard of masculinity that male writers, like Hume, felt compelled to attempt, however unsuccessfully.

Chapter 3, "Romancing the Gentleman Critic: Reading Criticism as Generic Courtship in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* and Samuel Johnson's *The Rambler*," argues that literary criticism in the eighteenth century is best understood through the metaphor of courtship, especially between gentleman critics and female authors, but that women writers took advantage and even cultivated this metaphor in order to exert influence over the behavior, masculinity, and literary influence of the gentleman critic. As a case study I look at the friendship and working relationship of Samuel Johnson and Charlotte Lennox. Critics have long struggled to define Johnson and

Lennox's relationship, to determine if they were peers and friends or if they engaged with each other according to more patriarchal structures. This chapter underscores the ways Johnson's role as gentleman critic depended, paradoxically, on both modes, and that Lennox actively engaged with both modes to achieve her own literary ambitions. In *The Female Quixote* (1752), Lennox uses her hero Glanville to explore the tension between the gentleman's personal admiration for an individual woman and his cultural responsibility to regulate and monitor female behavior. Glanville's courtship of the quixotic Arabella becomes a metaphor for literary criticism, with Glanville playing the role as critic and Arabella as female author and text. Through her play with the oft-derided genre of romance, Lennox reveals and then revises the gentleman's struggle between criticism and endorsement into a compromised role that is contingent upon a woman's authority.

Chapter 4, "The Gentleman as Authorial Drag—Inverting Plots, Homosociality, and Moral Authorship in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* and Mary Robinson's *Walsingham*," turns to the late century, and it synthesizes the ways women authors inverted these gentlemanly roles, rewrote them, and used them to dictate appropriate masculine behavior. The gentlewoman, rather than the man, now dictated morality and gendered behavior through her novels. In my last chapter I argue that by the late eighteenth century, women writers fully established themselves as authorities over the gentleman. Through provocative inversions of formal structure, plot, and gender roles, Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) and Mary Robinson's *Walsingham* (1797) position the woman writer as the instructor for appropriate masculine behavior and challenge late-century gender binaries by revealing that the best gentleman is a woman at

heart. The women writers perform the gentleman as a drag, a kind of structural gender bending, which passes until they choose to reveal the woman writer behind the masculine curtain. In doing so they reveal the constructed nature of binary gender, of the gentleman's masculinity, and establish their own moral authority.

Notes

[1] 29.

[2] Mary Hays (48).

[3] See Miriam Wallace's introduction to *Emma Courtney* and Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray; or the Mother and the Daughter* (15).

[4] See T. King (5).

[5] See Solinger (3), T. King (14-15, 125), Mackie (*Market a la Mode* 20-21) and (*Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates* 7), and Maurer (7).

[6] As Solinger writes, periodicals like "*The World*, *The Connoisseur*, and the famed *Gentleman's Magazine* promoted themselves as inexpensive and convenient purveyors of a brand of knowledge normally found through travel and experience" (7). See also Kowaleski-Wallace on "the apparently benevolent patriarch who was the bearer of that language" (11).

[7] Similarly, Runge writes, female readers were defined, often by these same male authors, as "the purported dedicatee, as the audience in need of edification, as the epitome of wayward female autonomy" (89). As Todd explains, from "the Middle Ages onwards, the association of romance with women and idleness was expressed in the constant male fear

that a perusal of fiction would corrupt female morals" (*The Sign of Angellica* 46). Doody points out, "The standard reader of a novel in the early eighteenth century is still imagined as a male, who is under continual threat from his own treacherous mind and emotions. Male novelists have a greater duty than ever to see that their novel is sufficiently masculine, and not to play wantonly with male fancy" (277).

[8] As a feminist gesture, this is frequently seen as a tactic of "submerged-meaning" (Craft-Fairchild 832); "These novelists create submerged meanings, meaning hidden within or behind the more accessible public content of their work" (Schofield 5). However, it has also been read as a kind of unavoidable submission to the powers that be.

[9] For example, in his book on Austen's men, Michael Kramp points out that Austen criticism often "depends upon a conception of masculinity as fixed and static" (5). As masculinity studies and works like Kramp's reveal, eighteenth-century men and male characters "rather than attempting to imitate a single and stable paragon of masculinity, must negotiate numerous intertwined and contradictory standards for proper maleness that are always inflected…and perpetually debated and revised" (Kramp 5). Kramp's argument is that Austen's men are politically informed creatures, whom Austen uses to renegotiate the post-revolutionary world of Georgian England.

[10] See Reeser (1-3), Connell (56, 68), Halberstam (1-4), T. King (3), Trumbach (9-10), and Haggerty (*Men in Love* 6).

[11] Bree also writes sees David as overly feminine: "In place of the traditional masculine qualities of physical strength and decisive action, David demonstrates qualities more often associated, then and even now with femininity" (xxiv).

[12] I agree with Doody, who writes, "I do not believe for a moment that this is a description of what *really* happened…though it is a true enough description of something wished for by cultural regulators" (Doody 278). Laura Runge explains that the ideal female reader's "relationship to the constitution of eighteenth-century reading audiences is tenuous…[female readership was definitely on the rise] but early fiction is not the exclusive discursive or material property of women" (89).

[13] In *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* Laqueur identifies this as a move from a one sex to a two-sex model. Meanwhile, in *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* Wahrman argues that gendered subjects emerged as the century shifted from the *ancien régime* of identity to the modern self, and up until the 1780s there was the *ancien régime* of identity, which included a "freer understanding of gender identity," and did not panic at ambiguity (33).

[14]Cohen and Barker-Benfield note similar shifts. Cohen connects this to a sense that women were the natural bearers of politeness and cultivation. Barker-Benfield argues that there was a "recognition of women as human beings from whom one might learn more manners than those men taught each other was a mark of civilization" (Barker-Benfield 139-140).

[15] See Barker-Benfield's second chapter, "The Reformation of Male Manners," especially pages 45-67.

[16] Cohen writes, "I argue that effeminacy designated a category of meanings expressing anxiety about the *effect* women—or the feminine—on the one hand, and desire, on the other, might have on the gentleman" (9). Cohen argues that this rejection of effeminate,

English masculinity sought to reject and define itself against French effeminacy, and Barker-Benfield argues that the culture of sensibility was tied to a new market that advocated against the effeminizing forces of luxury. For the man of sense, "effeminacy described in particular a man's failure to regulate pleasures to which all (male, female, child) were susceptible, a moral failure to establish the properly disciplined or 'manly' relation to his bodily pleasure that would signify his worthiness as a leader of a household and a citizen" (King 67). Masculinity was defined against femininity, and an overly effeminate man was a failed man, often embodied satirically in the fop.

[17] *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters, 1750-2000* takes a wide historical scope on this issue in order to counter Virginia Woolf's famous claim in *A Room of One's Own* that "women do not write books about men," "even if they explicitly claim not to do so" (Frantz and Rennhak 2). Frantz and Rennhak position their essay collection as a common-sense corrective because of course women have written about men, and they include essays by Shawn Lisa Maurer and George Haggerty.

[18] Woodworth focuses on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century women writers, and she is specifically interested in exploring how the era of revolutions connected the gentleman's masculinity with military characteristics.

[19] Wikborg "emphasize[s]…the vacillation so often to be found in the same text between endorsement of and opposition to such norms" (8).

[20] "The idea that women were naturally inclined to virtue, and could exert a salutary moral influence on men, was spreading; and so was the idea that it was through women's

tender feelings and their ability to stimulate tender feelings in men, that this influence operated" (Spencer *The Rise of the Woman Novelist* 32)

CHAPTER 1 – THE GENTLEMAN SPECTATOR AS DESIRING AUTHOR: *THE SPECTATOR* AND MARY DAVYS' *REFORM'D COQUET*

"I…do upon honour declare, I am pleased with what you have done; there is certainly a *secret pleasure in doing Justice*, though we often evade it, and a secret horror in doing ill, though we often comply with the temptation"—Lord Lofty, *The Reform'd Coquette*[21]

"If I can any way contribute to the Diversion or Improvement of the Country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, *with the secret Satisfaction* of thinking that I have not lived in vain"—Mr. Spectator, *The Spectator* #No 5 [22]

Mary Davys' *The Reform'd Coquette* (1724) follows the covert courtship of the coquettish Amoranda by her suitor in disguise, Alanthus. Alanthus disguises himself as an old man—Formator—in order to convert Amoranda from a coquette who loves the flattery of fools into a woman who appreciates and deserves a man of sense, such as

himself. Along the way Formator/Alanthus and Amoranda foil the kidnapping and seduction attempts of her other suitors who all use various forms of disguise and trickery to try to capture Amoranda and her fortune. All of Amoranda's would-be kidnappers/suitors end up dead, except for Lord Lofty. Lofty is the archetype of the aristocratic rake, who thinks "his quality sufficient to justify all his Actions and never feared a Conquest, wherever he vouchsafed an Attempt" (Davys 264). Within the larger novel, it is revealed, as an inset tale, that Lord Lofty has tricked, seduced, and abandoned the lovely Altemira. However, through a bed-trick (à la *Measure for Measure*) Amoranda and Formator trap Lord Lofty into marrying Altemira, thereby fulfilling his contract with her: "When my Lord had looked sufficiently round and saw how matters went, he found it was a folly to complain and was resolved to turn the Scale and show himself a Man of Honour at last" (289). Not only does Lofty resolve to make the best of his situation, he makes the declaration above: proclaiming that not only will he do the right thing, but that he secretly yearned to all along. Lofty declares, "I own my design was to wrong this innocent Lady, but I had an inward remorse, for what I was about, and I would not part with the present quiet and satisfaction that fills my breast to be Lord of the whole Creation" (289). On the surface, Lofty's reform suggests that the rake is but a performance, obscuring the true and virtuous nature of the gentleman, which exists in the hearts of all men (of a certain status).

However, I propose a different significance for Lofty's declaration, which is that the gentleman's masculinity is not powered by its authenticity—its supposed natural, innateness—but by its secret pleasure in pleasing others. In this chapter, I argue that, at his core, the gentleman is a figure of performance and pleasure, and that his secret

pleasure of pleasing is the distinct product of his masculinity's links to authorship. After all, as noted above, Mr. Spectator phrases the satisfaction he takes in authorship in words almost identical to Lofty's, in both vocabulary and sentiment. He claims a secret satisfaction for his essays, based on their ability to instruct and delight his readers. Yet, his publication of this secret desire belies its very premise as a secret. As I will demonstrate, this play at secrecy reveals the layered performance of the gentleman. In *The Spectator* we see the layered relationship between Mr. Spectator as eidolon and his authors, mainly Joseph Addison and Richard Steele; meanwhile, in *The Reform'd Coquette* Alanthus establishes his own gentlemanliness by disguising himself as Formator, the supposedly neutral, disinterested, father figure, all the while taking increased satisfaction in Amoranda's reform and her growing attraction to him as Alanthus. And, like the secret pleasure of pleasing readers, the secret identity of these authors is not so secret. In both cases it is the performance of the eidolon or disguised character that transfers gentlemanliness to its creator, rather than the innate gentlemanliness reverberating outward to the fictional identity. I argue that it isn't the man behind the mask that makes the gentleman—it isn't Alanthus, or Addison and Steele, or any gentleman author—but rather, it is the construction of a performance that is substantiated, made material, through its ability to please others. It is the fiction that makes the (gentle)man.

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This chapter will lay the foundation for my interrogation of the gentleman as the emerging dominant form of masculinity in the eighteenth century and how this masculinity was dependent on a mutually constitutive relationship with women that took

shape through literary authority (reading, writing, and criticism). One of the overarching arguments of my dissertation is that the masculinity of the gentleman was entangled with specific narrative forms, activities, and literary relationships. Initially laying a broad foundation, this chapter will focus on the didacticism of the gentleman author, and how this position was dependent upon performance and crafting a desiring female reader. This chapter will consider how *The Spectator* (1711-12) builds this relationship into its formation of the gentleman via its essay structure, aligning the new position of the gentleman with that of the male periodicalist. *The Spectator* is one of the most often cited and iconic examples of the move away from aristocratic modes of male authority and toward the private, domestic gentleman. Mary Davys' novel *The Reform'd Coquette; or, the Memoirs of Amoranda* directly engages with the Addisonian structure, revealing its very constructedness, through Davys' characterization of Formator/Alanthus. Davys was an admirer of *The Spectator.* However, her hero is more than an homage to the gentleman spectator; her characters reveal the ways the position of the objective male guide of young women is motivated by its own distinct desires. She embodies this dynamic in Formator/Alanthus's romantic desire for Amoranda, challenging the gentleman's own self-presentation as a neuter. Critics have linked the Gentleman with the moral and cultural project of *The Spectator* and earlier writers like the Earl of Shaftesbury, but many of these discussions have overlooked how the gentleman's character is the product of narrative form. What this chapter will reveal, as a first step, is how women writers, like Davys, contributed to the cultivation of this masculinity by making its formal aspects visible in their own narrative structure and style. Davys does not copy a Mr. Spectator in Formator; she recasts the *Spectator* and its whole rhetorical situation (gentleman authors,

instructive essay style, and female audience) within her novel. Formator/Alanthus represents both the eidolon and its author, and his engagement with Amoranda mimics the form of *The Spectator* essays as they are encountered by female readers. Davys, from her own position as an author, via her narrator's voice, is able to cultivate authorial power by revealing the machinations of the gentleman author's masculinity and delineating how the lessons to a female reader are necessary to the form of the gentleman, not because instruction is his ultimate goal, but because his desires—that secret pleasure in pleasing—take shape and give shape to his masculinity through these structures. By revealing the contours of the gentleman author's pleasure and its reliance on a female audience, Davys demonstrates how a woman writer can take advantage of this structure to inflect her own position with authority and power.

In this chapter I will argue four main points about the gentleman. First, I will prove that the gentleman *is* a performative masculinity. Traditionally, the gentleman has been seen as the contrast and rejection of the overtly performative Restoration rake, and, while I agree that the gentleman is meant to contrast the rake, rather than rejecting performativity, the gentleman is creating a new kind of performance. The eidolon and Formator are clearly performances, but, rather than being read as manipulations and lies, they are treated by their various audiences—the readers of *The Spectator* and Amoranda—as virtuous and pleasing characters who transfer virtue and gentlemanliness back onto their authors. Second, I will prove that the gentleman is a type of masculinity that relies on authorship, literary production, and narrative form to define his features. Critics have rightly pointed out that the gentleman became the ideal persona for eighteenth-century authorship, but I will carry this point one step further, and say that the

gentleman is the product of this emerging persona of authorship, that his defining features—moral didacticism, politeness, his pleasing others, and the corresponding pleasure he takes in this pleasing—emerge from the rhetorical situation of author/eidolon, text, and audience.[23] Consequently, this chapter links Mr. Spectator's desire to please and instruct his readers and Formator/Alanthus' desires for and to reform Amoranda, and argues that they are fundamentally the products of the same gendered structure; namely, the gentleman's masculinity and its need to author and authorize the desires of women. In order to be useful and pleasing, the gentleman must have an audience, especially a female audience, to desire his guidance and his person. However, while this regulation springs from a patriarchal source, I will demonstrate how it challenges many of our critical assumptions about the naturalization of the gentleman. If we understand that the gentleman is a fundamentally performative structure of masculinity—that it is a construct, not a subjectivity—we can also see how women authors, like Davys, co-opt this structure to favor their own authorship.

The Gentleman's Origins: Contrasting with the Rake

According to critics like Thomas King, Erin Mackie, Shawn Lisa Maurer, and G.J. Barker-Benfield, at the turn of the eighteenth century the gentleman emerged as a cultural remedy and rejection of the Restoration rake—and his nefarious aristocratic and sexual powers—and throughout the century the gentleman gained cultural supremacy as the ideal of masculinity. This story is in many ways true; the gentleman or the "bourgeois family man" did emerge "as the prototype of desirable masculinity" in a way that usurped

the dominance of the rake (Maurer 3). Clearly, the rake did not disappear from the literary or cultural landscape, but his centrality as the most desirable form of masculinity, especially in literature, faded. However, because of this cultural trajectory, many critics have read the gentleman as the categorical opposite of the rake. The rake was performative, embodied, selfish, and verbal, and in contrast the gentleman was natural, disembodied, selfless, and quietly demonstrative. Thomas King and Erin Mackie both describe how the rake was "Patterned on the courtly body's power to…mark, and extend itself across space" (King 3) and was celebrated for "his stylistic…aesthetic performative, mastery" (*Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates* 35).[24] The rake asserted his sexual and social mastery over others—women, boys, and other men—through his verbal and physical dexterity, and as Elizabeth Kraft argues, his infamous wit—verbal performance—was tied to his sexual consumption: "Wit…represented a materialism that emanated from the stimulated desires of the flesh" and the rake was the master of this fore-wordplay in prose, stage, and society (636-7).[25] Meanwhile:

> Gilded by codes of polite civility and restraint, eschewing personal violence for the arbitration of the law, oriented toward the family in an increasingly paternalistic role, purchasing his status as much, if not more, through the demonstration of moral virtues as through that of inherited honor, and gendered unequivocally as a male heterosexual, the modern English gentleman has been cited in contemporary masculinity studies as the first type of "hegemonic masculinity." (Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates* 1)

Barker-Benfield has famously linked this with the rise of the Cult of Sensibility, which, as I will explore more fully in Chapter 2, intertwined the emergence of moral sympathy

with a widespread reform of male manners. The general tenor of the contrast was that the rake was a figure of unrestrained luxury, while the gentleman was defined by his restraint. G.J. Barker-Benfield writes, “Rakes were unrestrained consumers” who treated “women as yet more consumer objects” (45, xxvii).[26] In contrast, the gentleman confined his sexual desires to companionate marriage and was judged by the care and deference he showed women.[27] Whereas the rake made an ostentatious show through his courtly dress, the gentleman dressed with greater reserve and economy. The rake’s libertine ways associated him with Catholicism (with its French taint) or even atheism, while the gentleman was staunchly religious and more importantly, stoutly Church of England.[28] The rake was loyal to his own sovereignty, while the gentleman was loyal to God, Queen/King, country, friends, family, and dependents. The gentleman seems to contrast the rake on every significant front.

The contrast of the rake and the gentleman, specifically the gentleman’s emergence as the new and dominant form of masculinity, is entrenched in critical discourses of subjectivity and gender. The gentleman was regularly considered the model of the “essential authentic self” and, as Mackie argues, “Above all, this essential authentic self is a sexed self” (*Market* 146). The rake’s more fluid sexuality and his courtly body align him with Dror Wahrman’s *ancien regime* of identity and Thomas Laqueur’s one-sex model, both of which were gradually replaced with a so-called modern self, which existed within a binary, two-sex system and inextricably internalized self and gender. Changing attitudes of gender marked the shift from “a primarily performative toward a more essentialized notion of subjectivity” (*RHP* 35).[29] According to King and Mackie, one of the most important results of this growing shift was the privatization of

the self and a consequent rejection of the rake's performance.[30] Whereas "the rake's prestige resides in the culturally confirmed success of his social performance rather than in fixed qualities of some internal self" (*RHP* 35), the gentleman's masculinity was presented as internal, a part of his private self.[31] The gentleman's private subjectivity—a "properly disciplined inwardness,"—was defined by his moral virtue, which took shape as heterosexual love, politeness, good taste, and sympathy--and this character, this subjectivity, required him to move into the social world and provide useful regulation of society (King 8).[32] Being socially useful was a defining feature of the gentleman's masculinity.[33]

This origin story is, on many levels, true; the gentleman is repeatedly positioned in contrast to, and in competition with, the rake. However, I would like to recalibrate what critics have read as the gentleman's rejection of the rake's performativity, and instead propose that the gentleman is not a rejection of performance but a new kind of performance, which relies on contrast—with the rake, but more importantly with women—to delineate its features. To be clear, I am not contesting that the emergence of the two-sex model or the gradual internalization of the gendered self. I am not disagreeing with critics like King and Maurer who argue that the gentleman defined his masculinity through domestic, private relations and a *representation* of his subjectivity as somehow internal and stable. Rather, I am arguing that these features require a new kind of performance rather than a rejection of performance. I would like to consider how the gentleman *played a role* in the early eighteenth century that represented an internalized or private self but was still, especially in these early decades, clearly recognized and even accepted as a performance. The gentleman is, paradoxically, an anti-performance,

performance masculinity. He *portrays* inwardness, disinterest, benevolence and virtue, as a rejection of the rake's selfish, excess performance. Furthermore, I agree that there was an active campaign to shift public taste from the rake to the gentleman, but the gentleman relied very much on the same kinds of power structures as the rake: dominance over others (especially women), narrative control, pleasure, and patriarchy. As Erin Mackie rightly points out, the new mode of the eighteenth-century gentleman draws upon and, in some cases, sustains a deep nostalgia for his Restoration predecessor, in large part because he enacts the privileges of patriarchy in similar ways. The gentleman and the rake are different mediums reinforcing the same structure.

The Gentleman as Author and the Performance of *The Spectator*

The crucial feature that enables the gentleman's performance of non-performance is his links to literacy and authorship. In this section I will demonstrate how *The Spectator* and the periodical form in general fundamentally intertwined the role of the gentleman with that of the author, and that the rhetorical situation of author-eidolon-text facilitated the gentleman's performance of innate interiority. The periodical emerged concomitantly with the figure of the modern gentleman around the turn of the eighteenth century. The gentleman was supposed to be useful to society; according to Solinger, the entire goal "of the gentleman's education …is to 'make him useful and acceptable to mankind'" (30). Therefore, the gentleman's gender was intertwined with his public status as a moral arbiter and monitor. Meanwhile, according to Mackie, periodicals like *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* played a key role in the new cultural priorities that validated the

gentleman—valorization of taste, breeding, cultivated politeness, and moral virtue and restraint—through presenting themselves as useful tools to cultivate their readers' understanding and sensibilities. Simultaneously, other critics have noted that the male authors of periodicals created standards that defined this sphere as white, male, and heterosexual. Pushing this a step further, I contend that authorship and periodicals played a crucial role in producing the modern contours of the gentleman. As Maurer writes, "the social periodical provides evidence for understanding the relationship between gender construction and class values" (7). Periodicals didn't just define the public sphere as gentlemanly; they created the very idea of the gentleman as we now know him. My argument is not that Addison and Steele invented the gentleman from scratch in *The Spectator* but rather they, through their stylistic form, their eidolon Mr. Spectator, and their self-conscious performance of authorship, Addison and Steele fired the cultural clay into the refined shape of the gentleman in a way that identified and defined this figure throughout the century.

Naturalizing the Gentleman as Author

To clarify the gentleman author's performativity, it is first necessary to lay out how *The Spectator* codified the gentleman as an author and how his masculinity was defined by the combination of his knowledge and neutrality. There is a deeply entrenched concept in our cultural memory that normative or hegemonic masculinity—to achieve patriarchal ends—was disembodied and invisible, and only let its sex be revealed when it was contrasted with femininity or non-normative masculinities. However, this is a partially inaccurate picture of the gentleman as he emerges through the periodical. It isn't

that the gentleman was disembodied; he was sensate—seeing and hearing—and therefore clearly embodied. But through his privacy he created a barrier between the reader and his physical body, and through his neutrality he presents himself as lacking sexual or economic desires. He does not deny a body; rather, his body isn't displayed or presented as desiring in the terms of feminine or other kinds of masculine bodies. Furthermore, rather than erasing the body, the periodical form and authorship allows for the gentleman's body to be both properly private but also circulating through the social world, enacting his necessary social role. Finally, all of these layers are deeply and clearly gendered as masculine, because they are based upon male privileges and set up a clear relationship that marks men as authors and women as readers.

The gentleman's gender and subjectivity were defined as the affect and product of literacy. The gentleman was a private subject, with certain theoretically innate features, but his powers, that is, his taste, sympathy, and politeness, required a new brand of education, one that went beyond the confines of the traditional classical education (though he was supposed to embrace that too). The gentleman was supposed to gain "knowledge of the world" (Solinger 7). He was supposed to unite his book learning with social and cultural experience of the world. Thus, the emergence of the gentleman required a redefinition of "gentility as an effect of literacy" (Solinger 7). What a man read prepared him to go out and properly experience the world, developed his sympathy, and cultivated his taste. A gentleman's reading blends the relationship between private and public: he cultivates his private subject through reading and then brings that knowledge to bear on his public experiences and interactions. The gentleman brought his knowledge to bear by regulating the society around him, and periodicals, which "promoted

themselves as inexpensive and convenient purveyors of a brand of knowledge," became an ideal vehicle for achieving this end (Solinger 7).

However, periodicals didn't just provide the gentleman with useful knowledge; they modeled and crafted his very subjectivity. In his role as useful monitor of the world, the gentleman is, in essence, a moral spectator of the world, and his characterization is the "particular moment when masculinity emerged as a spectatorial position identifiable with the subject position of language, symptomatic of desires constituted in language, and ostensibly available to all men qua men" (King 125). As King and Solinger point out, the periodical's "device of the editorial persona" became "a surrogate for the reader—a figurative spectator through whom the reader might learn about the world" (Solinger 7-8). The eidolon routinely claims an authoritative perspective, a clear sense and right to comment on the world around them. The periodical became an ideal vehicle for enacting the gentleman's spectatorial power, and in many ways this genre defined this particular power.

The features of the gentleman *authorized* a moral spectatorship and regulation, and this in turn translated into a mode of *authorship* that carried out the gentleman's social duty. If what a gentleman read helped instruct him on how to become gentleman, then who better to write for them than other gentlemen? Numerous critics have commented on how the gentleman became the ideal figure of authorship in the eighteenth century. As Manushag Powell writes, the "'ideal' professional author" was "a neutral individual unhampered by allegiance to private concerns" motivated by a desire to improve and benefit the world around him (*Performing Authorship* 4). What is crucial about the gentleman's knowledge is that it is useful, but not commercial. The gentleman

was a man of means, who may brush closer to trade than his aristocratic counterparts, but he is still above the necessity of financial need. He is economical in his personal habits, and therefore has no need to link his identity to commercial pursuits (at least not overtly). His knowledge is something he gives out of benevolence and duty; theoretically, it is not for sale. This stance of disinterested benevolence is precisely the role that periodical authors specifically (and male authors in general) carved out for themselves: free from financial necessity, gentleman authors merely sought to share their knowledge with their readers for the sake of public good.

Of all the periodicals, none directly defined the gender and characteristics of the gentleman or solidified his authorial powers more than *The Spectator*. The sheer preponderance of spectatorial language that critics have used to define the gentleman seems proof enough of this text's impact, but it goes even deeper into our common assumptions about the nature of masculinity. Speaking of contemporary culture, gender theorist R.W. Connell points out, "Mass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life" (45). This aspect of masculinity, of being both part of the world but private and concealed, touched by society and yet fundamentally untouchable at its core, emerges in the structure of the periodical. This effect of masculinity sounds exactly like Mr. Spectator's famous claims about his own character:

> I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species; by which means I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life. I am very well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a Father, and can discern the Errors in the

> Oeconomy, Business, and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as Standers-by discover Blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the Game. (i.1.1711.4-5)

His character or presented subjectivity is defined as both mixing with the world but maintaining a key separation of his self, his private subject. This is one of the defining effects of the gentleman's masculinity: this ability to be both constantly and expertly of the world but protected and removed from its influence. This is now considered the general effect of normative masculinity, what Connell terms "hegemonic masculinity", but it has its roots in the gentleman author as spectator.

Mr. Spectator's position is defined by his combination of literary and experiential knowledge and his neutrality, which are both deeply gendered. According to Maurer, periodicals, especially *The Spectator*, defined the vital "role of spectatorship in the construction of masculinity and the exclusion of women from its brand of universalism" (7). In *Spectator* No. 1 Mr. Spectator, Addison and Steele's iconic eidolon, claims to give "the Reader just so much of my History and Character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the Business I have undertaken" (i.5.1711). That is, he provides the reader with his credentials as a gentleman, but not so much as to erase the all-important sense of his distinct private subject. Critics like Powell and Anthony Pollock have noted how little information Mr. Spectator actually provides about himself, which is somewhat unusual. Among eidolons, "the Spectator…was famous for *not* satisfying his readers' curiosity on the matter of himself" (Powell 15). In No. 1 Mr. Spectator closes with a refusal; he declines to give an "Account of my Name, my Age, and my Lodgings" as well as "my Complexion and Dress" (i.5.1711, i.6.1711). Mr. Spectator denies the

reader access to his physical self; however, this reserve manifests as a kind of textual restraint, which delineates Mr. Spectator's privacy from his public mission as an author. He may decline to describe the shape of his nose or the cut of his coat, but Mr. Spectator is careful to articulate his credentials as a gentleman. He was "born to a small Hereditary Estate" which since "*William* the Conqueror's time" "has been delivered down from Father to Son whole and entire" (i.1.1711). He is gentry, but not lavishly so, nor is he aristocratic. After remarking on his taciturn infancy (a feature I shall return to later), Mr. Spectator carefully connects his love of learning and reading with a "knowledge of the world". He explains, while at school "I applied my self with so much Diligence to my Studies, that there are very few celebrated Books, either in the Learned or the Modern Tongues, which I am not acquainted with" (i.2.1711). After his father's death, "An insatiable Thirst after Knowledge carried me into all the Countries of *Europe*, in which there are things new or strange to be seen" (i.2.1711). He links these two forms of knowledge—literary and experiential—which mark him as a gentleman. After his travels, Mr. Spectator chooses to reside in London, where his knowledge and literacy allow him to move easily, almost invisibly, among the coffee shop, the exchange, the theatre, and the drawing room.

This mobility facilitates Mr. Spectator's authorship, but it also clearly reflects the privileges of masculinity. Mr. Spectator can produce his papers and comment on the world because he can move through it unobserved. Women, who were the object of the gaze, rather than the subjects, had no such liberty. Also, the nature of the gentleman's education, blending experiential, popular, and classical learning, was exclusively a male

prerogative. His ability to travel unaccompanied, and his university education, are male privileges. Even his status as a bachelor is a unique kind of male privilege.

Experience and education aren't enough to make the gentleman the ideal author, and the necessary element Mr. Spectator crystallizes in our imagination is the neutrality of the gentleman. In No. 4, where he first addresses his lady readers, Mr. Spectator professes, "I have the high Satisfaction of beholding all Nature with an unprejudic'd Eye; and having nothing to do with Men's Passions or Interests, I can with the greater Sagacity consider their Talents, Manners, Failings, and Merits" (i.19.1711). As Powell points out, Mr. Spectator's "power to remain an uninvolved spectator seems, in his formulation, linked to his ability to police others' actions. Mr. Spectator is unmarried, childless, neutral, detached. His authority comes directly from his not-all-living quality because it transforms what would be rudeness into a position of wisdom and neutrality" ("See No Evil" 262). In some ways, this neutrality is the most vital aspect of the gentleman because it speaks to the importance of desire in the gentleman's masculinity. It isn't that Mr. Spectator is asexual; it is that he is not presented as a selfishly desiring body. He has no personal motives attached to profit or to women. In terms of economics he writes because he feels a moral duty to instruct and delight. As a confirmed bachelor, his concern for women is not selfishly motivated, like the rake's. The arenas he proposes to guide women through are all about women's relations to men: "the becoming Duties of Virginity, marriage, and Widowhood" (i.21.1711), but he is just enacting his moral duty as a gentleman. Disinterest, financial and sexual, defines the gentleman and links him to the position of author. This neutrality is a key distinction between the gentleman's masculinity and the rake's. His one pleasure, as noted in my epigraph, is to instruct and

delight. This combination is so ubiquitous that it is a universally acknowledged fact that a piece of eighteenth-century literature must claim that it is both instructive and delightful. However, this dynamic was also, through these literary channels, linked to the gentleman. The gentleman was not just supposed to be useful, but also pleasing. In both ways, he is distinguished from the rake, because the gentlemen's pleasure, his "secret Satisfaction" is in pleasing others through his charm and usefulness, while the rake's sole goal is his own pleasure, which is highest when it comes at the cost of others.

Despite his bachelor neutrality, Mr. Spectator still defines his authorship through his relationships with women as readers, which in turn further genders authorship as a masculine privilege. So, in *Spectator* No. 1, Mr. Spectator takes care to define himself and his authorship in gentlemanly terms. He also indicates his goal: to benefit society. This translates into the gentlemanly role of social regulator. As Maurer argues, periodical authors and eidolons positioned themselves as "legislators of behavior and arbiters of taste" (9). *The Spectator*, from its earliest entries, identifies women as a target readership, which illustrates how the gentleman's role was to regulate society generally, but more specifically this cultural moderation was often directed at regulating women. In the same issue—No. 4—where he claims his vaunted neutrality, Mr. Spectator also directly addresses his prioritization and care for female readers: "The fair Sex…As these compose half the World, and are by the just Complaisance and Gallantry of our Nation the more powerful Part of our People, I shall dedicate a considerable Share of these my Speculations to their Service, and shall lead the Young through all the becoming Duties of Virginity, marriage, and Widowhood" (i.21.1711). The gentleman redefined a man's relationship with women. Whereas the rake was the sexual predator, who used and

discarded women, the gentleman was their benevolent protector. As Mr. Spectator articulates in No. 57, “Women were formed to temper Mankind and sooth them into Tenderness and Compassion, not to set an Edge upon their Minds, and blow up in them those Passions which are too apt to rise of their own Accord” (i.242.1711). On one level, women are a civilizing influence that the gentleman values and appreciates. Mr. Spectator links the gentleman’s respect for women to authorship: “When it is a Woman’s Day, in my Works, I shall endeavor a Stile and Air suitable to their Understanding. When I say this, I must be understood to mean, that I shall not lower but exalt the Subjects I treat upon. Discourse for their Entertainment, is not to be debased but refined” (i.21.1711). He promises to adapt his style and his authorial tone, to demonstrate his veneration for them, but it is also clear that his neutrality is necessary for his communication with women. He communicates as a disinterested bachelor who is on their side. He still needs to define his authorship in relation to women, because his authorship is linked to his masculinity. He therefore requires the contrast of feminine readership, but he must lace this relationship with the moral fiber of neutrality to carefully avoid the consumerist character of the rake. He is neutral but distinctly gendered.

I think it is vital that we understand the gentleman’s central feature as neutrality, because it recalibrates our vision of masculinity as disembodied in a way that lends more nuance and accuracy to our understanding of masculinity as a construction. There is this long-standing undercurrent that masculinity is both clearly, even obviously embodied, but paradoxically disembodied. Modern gender theorists like Todd Reeser, Connell, and Jack Halberstam have all noted the strange bodied-disembodied quality of masculinity.[34] Critical histories of eighteenth-century masculinity, particularly ones that look at *The*

Spectator frequently consider normative masculinity—which is often the gentleman—as invisible spectators of the world, whose gender only comes into focus through contrast with femininity or non-normative masculinities. This has lead to a rhetoric in which masculinity became a universalist principle by becoming disembodied. However, I think a closer look at *The Spectator* reveals that this is a misleading determination. Mr. Spectator is less disembodied than he is carefully constructed as privately bodied and neutral when it comes to desire. As noted above, Mr. Spectator doesn't deny a body; he declines to give his readers access to his private body, and Powell points out, Mr. Spectator's spectation was "a peculiarly sensual affair" ("See No Evil" 255-6). To be a spectator "involves far more than sight"—but also hearing, smelling, and feeling, which clearly relies on a kind of embodiment ("See No Evil" 256). Yet Mr. Spectator, for all of his observational embodiment remains "insubstantial or transparent" to his readers (257). Powell writes, "Seeing and unseen, knowing but unknown (biblically, one wonders?), he abnegates all but the most basic facets of his identity—his class and sex. These last he maintains by smugly proclaiming that people in his neighborhood speak of him only as 'the Gentleman'" ("See No Evil" 261). My larger point is that Mr. Spectator is a gentleman, not because he is disembodied but because he is privately bodied. He reveals the key features that mark him as a gentleman: class, sex, education, and neutrality, and then maintains the image of a private subject by refusing to reveal his physical body—which he clearly still has in a symbolic sense.

Furthermore, Mr. Spectator creates a new kind of body for his masculinity: a textual body. Mr. Spectator's taciturnity actually reinforces his status—in a symbolic way—as a gentleman by marking his print authorship as distinct from verbal

performance. Pollock reads Mr. Spectator's taciturnity as anti-social and therefore antithetical to the gentleman as a model of politeness: "Critics often view Mr. Spectator…as a model of the polite sociability he is taken to promote, a reading that equates Mr. Spectator with his creators' public images…Mr. Spectator occasionally wants to be this kind of figure, but his behaviors and inclinations are hardly those of the stable social hero" (708). Pollock's reading overlooks the gentleman's theoretical contrast with rakish masculinity and its verbal dexterity. As noted above, part of the rake's power resided in his seductive verbosity. By categorizing himself as taciturn, Mr. Spectator indicates his extreme removal from the rake's external power of language. Instead, Mr. Spectator opts to present his ideas in print, with the gentlemanly motive of improving society:

> When I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own Taciturnity; and since I have neither the time nor Inclination to communicate the Fulness[sic] of my Heart in Speech, I am resolved to *Print my self out*, if possible, before I Die. I have been often told by my Friends, that it is a Pity so many useful Discoveries which I have made, should be in the Possession of a Silent Man. For this Reason therefore, I shall publish a Sheet-full of Thoughts every Morning, for the benefit of my Contemporaries. (No 1, i.5.1711, emphasis mine)

Mr. Spectator categorizes print as the mode of the gentleman; it is a means for him to communicate his useful knowledge to the world, to share himself for social benefit, but also still to maintain a proper sense of internality that resists the linguistic model of the rake: speech.[35] To be clear, I am not saying that Mr. Spectator is setting up a model of the gentleman as speechless; as Betty Schellenberg, Solinger, and Barker-Benfield argue,

polite sociability was a major feature of the gentleman. Rather, I note that Mr. Spectator's taciturnity can be read as a means of distinguishing the genres and literary modes of the gentleman from those of the rake. Furthermore, it links his body with his text. His body, as a text, seeks to please and be useful, rather than to consume.

If we understand the gentleman's body as textual, private, mobile, and neutral, it becomes clear that the form of the periodical itself creates the gentleman. Nancy Armstrong and Catherine Gallagher have famously articulated how women's bodies were transformed into desirable and legible texts.[36] However, I argue that the periodical actually made this a key, if somewhat illusory, feature of masculinity, of the gentleman. Just as Mr. Spectator moves throughout the city, observing and monitoring, so too does the actual periodical *The Spectator* circulate within coffeehouses, tea tables, and such. His body is private but also textual, material, and yet not sexualized or desiring. The body of the gentleman—as periodical essay—seeks to please others rather than itself, at least on the surface. The periodical contained, and in many ways, created the new knowledges of the gentleman, and through its fictional author character—the eidolon—it defined this knowledge as a function of authorship, and modeled the gentleman's duty to be useful to the world in its own essay structure.

The Periodical and Performing the Gentleman

I have demonstrated how *The Spectator* seeks to define its authorship as that of the gentleman, thereby playing a role in naturalizing the gendered features of the gentleman. Now, I will demonstrate how the gentleman and his role as moral author are in fact just as much of a performance as more demonstrative masculinities like the rake.

The very generic structure of the periodical reveals the ingrained performance of authorship. Periodicals are voiced by eidolons, fictional figureheads who serve as the spokespersons for the essays, presenting a single unifying voice, which is in fact written by multiple authors.[37] For example, Mr. Spectator is the creation Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, along with others. This creates a shadowy but tangible distance between author and eidolon. As Powell articulates, "Despite the eidolons' earnestness and conservatism about what an author ought to be—masculine, genteel, disinterested—there was a great deal of tension between the real identities of periodical authors and their eidolons" (4). As Powell rightly points out professional authorship, which germinated in periodicals, was by definition a performance. The actual situations of many periodicalists—and authors in general—was far different the class status, education, and disinterest—sexual and economic—of their eidolons.[38]

However, rather than creating a paradox, the distance between author and eidolon helps craft key aspects of hegemonic masculinity. R.W. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as the rationalistic, innate, embodied gender of Western culture, and the gentleman is clearly a key, defining version of this category. According to Connell, "Mass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life" (45). However, what makes this "true masculinity" is not necessarily a definite or actual body.[39] Instead it is linked to features that are categorized as innately masculine, like rationality, and while male bodies are clearly important sites for interpreting and coding masculinity, they are not necessarily the origin of our conceptions of masculinity. In this way, the performative separation between eidolon and author, where the two were separate, but sometimes unclearly delineated, became a defining

aspect of modern Western masculinity. Just as male bodies can be coded as representing authentic internal masculinity, the eidolon can be read as a vessel for the author's innate self. To label something a performance is not to deny its material impact. As Mackie argues, periodicals "establish… whiteness, maleness, and middle-classness" as the defining features of authorship and the public sphere (*Market* 152). While these features are constructed through the performance of authorship, they take hold of the cultural imagination in ways we still feel today.

Often when gender theorists have discussed the naturalization of hegemonic masculinity, I believe they are tapping into its performance of neutrality. Masculinity—in its western normative form—takes its shape from being observational rather than observed. This feature is the direct product of the didactic spectation of eidolons. Mr. Spectator is unique in his secrecy, but he is not in his perspective as commenter and observer of society with claims to a categorical neutrality. This is a performance; hegemonic masculinity *performs* neutrality, naturalness, disinterest, rationality, and restraint in ways that mask its patriarchal power, its embodied desires (sexual or otherwise) and its deeply anxious self-interest. So, to regroup, Mr. Spectator performs the role of gentleman author as a neutral spectator, and the distinction between his self and the actual authors reflects the performative nature of the gentleman author, which connects to the larger performance of hegemonic masculinity.

Mr. Spectator's body is quite literally, but not overtly, a text. What I mean is he is a fictional characterization, performing the role of gentleman author, and behind him are actual writers, primarily Addison and Steele. However, for readers there is a blurred sense of where one ends and the other begins. The gentleman author is both the textual

performance and the context in which real authors produce that performance. Here is the complex nexus of the gentleman author's performative authenticity. Powell rightly points out that "The periodical, taken specifically, is a key element in the development of the *narrative* self, without which, contested as it is, our own society would be almost unrecognizable" (7). The gentleman is a figure of narrative who performs authentic subjectivity, who is constructed to create a sense of public and private self. Yet, despite the fact that readers know that the eidolon is not the author, there is no clear cultural dissonance around the authenticity or moral rightness of the gentleman author. This is because by making the gentleman's masculinity a product of textual and narrative production, Addison and Steele recalibrate the relationship of authenticity to language. In an examination of Steele's "plain-style," Lupton writes, Steele "loosens language's dependence on external references as a measure of truth while facilitating the claim that language might establish its sincerity through the internal relationship of argument to style" (187). According to this logic, Mr. Spectator's language, which is his body, rather than his true attachment to an external referent, is what makes him sincere. In fact, whereas the rake can separate his language and his sincerity--his body from his designs--Mr. Spectator's body is metonymically inseparable from his text. Both types of masculinities are performative, but whereas the rake is increasingly categorized as a deceptive body who disguises his intentions with words, the gentleman's words are always tied to virtue and authenticity.

To be authentically a gentleman required a kind of adaptive performativity. Other authors and periodicalists clearly adopted this perspective, but Addison and Steele first define it in Mr. Spectator. However, rather than undercutting his status as a gentleman

figure, this feature is one of the defining aspects of the gentleman. There is a "shape-shifting quality" to the masculinity of the gentleman (Latimer 113). Rather than centralizing a singular performance of mastery and unique superiority, like the rake, the gentleman shifts in and out of different spheres and performances. For example, in perhaps the most frequently referenced essay in *The Spectator* Mr. Spectator recounts, "There is no Place of general Resort, wherein I do no often make my Appearance" (No 1. i.3.1711). He slips easily, almost invisibly in and out of balls, the exchange, the coffee house, the theater and the tea table thus making himself a "Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant and Artizan" (4). Mr. Spectator's experience is "speculative" rather than actual, but his ability to blend into different social arenas unnoticed marks his movements as those of the gentleman. The gentleman adapts to whatever situation he is in: that is what his knowledge of the world and good manners afford him. For example, later in the century Sir Charles Grandison—Richardson's über gentleman—would play the waiter at his own wedding to please his new in-laws: "Sir Charles, with an air of gaiety that infinitely became him, took a napkin from the butler…Adad! Said Mr. Selby, looking at him with pleasure—You may be any-thing, do any-thing; you cannot conceal the Gentleman. Ads-heart, you must always be the first man in company" (Richardson 6:233). As Latimer writes, "Sir Charles's masculinity is expressed in its characteristic combination of flexibility and immutability" (113). The gentleman is paradoxically able to move through society with ease and almost invisibility, and yet there is an absolute commitment to his gentility. Mr. Spectator defines this feature as the ability to move through the world, adopting and adapting to the social circumstances one encounters with

the kind of ease and anonymity that seems to indicate a disguise but paradoxically maintains an authentic self.

This adaptable mobility allowed the gentleman to obscure his own desires: sexual, rhetorical, and commercial. As Powell and Mackie both argue the periodical is tied to economic interest and market culture. Addison and Steele, and all periodicalists after them (male and female) wrote periodicals to sell them, to create profit. Thus, their claims of gentlemanly disinterest ring false, but their need to perform this disinterest created an undeniable impact. The façade of financial disinterest also calls into question Mr. Spectator's supposed sexual disinterest and its implications for the role of the gentleman as moral author. The gentleman authors must learn "*To entice their audiences to read*, and thereby ensure both their own paychecks and the continued survival of the medium", and so "authors began to offer up more than advice: they offered up themselves, or rather, they offered up a version of 'the author' to be taken and mistaken for themselves" (Powell 3-4, emphasis mine). Readers must be lured and cajoled into reading periodicals. The gentleman author could not sell his papers if he forced it upon his readers; this would be neither effective nor gentlemanly. His body or a version of it, his supposedly private self, must be desirable and circulated if his product is to survive. Mackie writes, the "modes and attitudes" prescribed by periodicals "are instituted not through coercion but through persuasion; they are understood to be freely adopted or declined by each individual" (21). This is why it is so vital that Mr. Spectator (and by extension Addison and Steele) both instruct and delight his readers.

The language of cajoling, pleasing, winning, takes on distinctive sexual overtones when we consider this dynamic between Mr. Spectator and his female readers. As with

finances, Mr. Spectator claims not to have vested interest in his female readers, beyond his altruistic benevolence. He is unmarried, and his one serious courtship (No. 261) does not go well. However, he still feels qualified to advise women about marriage. In fact, in No. 261 (December 29, 1711) where he describes his failure with a lady, whom he loses to a dashing, but seemingly shallow captain, he spends a great deal of time describing the key features of a happy, companionate marriage. However, his description of ideal matrimony and courtship takes on the metaphorical dimensions of his relationship with his readers. Courtship is a process of close examination and critique: "Before Marriage we cannot be too inquisitive and discerning in the Faults of the Person beloved" (iii.516.1711). He is the embodiment of inquisitiveness and he is continuously critiquing and finding out the faults of those around him, theoretically out of benevolence and a kind of social love. Unlike reading a novel or a play, reading a periodical takes on the dimensions of an ongoing relationship or a courtship, where Mr. Spectator critiques his readers via critiquing society. The recommendation of a long courtship equates to the desire for a long and continued readership.

On another level, the gentleman author's need to entice readers, to keep them interested and invested, speaks to seduction, flirtation, and the complex cultivation of desire. In this way, the gentleman is perhaps not as distinct from the rake as he would like to define himself.[40] The gentleman cannot seduce women per se, but by interweaving his features with those of his authorship, he can gain a kind of erotic control over them. Maurer argues that periodicals reveal the ways "men's need to control themselves, both sexually and economically, was inextricably bound up with their role as monitors and

reformers of women" (8). Thus, when Mr. Spectator writes, "I shall treat on Matters which relate to Females as they are concern'd to approach or fly from the other Sex, or as they are tyed [sic] to them by Blood, Interest, or Affection" (No 4.i.21-22.1711), he is using his didactic authority to order women's desires, to teach them which kind of men to desire.

Mr. Spectator is teaching women to desire his brand of masculinity. As Maurer writes, in periodicals, "men's interest in and concern with women and with the norms of proper femininity served simultaneously to construct a masculine role of identity for the sentimental husband and father of the emerging middle classes" (2). In No. 92 (June 15, 1711) Mr. Spectator claims, "I flatter myself that I see the Sex [women] daily improving by these my Speculations" (i.393.1711). Mr. Spectator defines himself through his moral regulation of others; his character is formed through improving his female readers. Mr. Spectator intends to educate women about proper feminine behavior. He critiques their fashion, both their love of dress and their vanity; he advises them to avoid being caught up in politics, as it is unfeminine and unbecoming of their sex. He advises them what to read (though more often he focuses on what not to read). These improvements or adornments of the fair sex are often directed at making them more attractive to men. In No. 73 (May 22, 1711) Mr. Spectator writes:

> I must return to the Moral of this Paper, and desire my fair Readers to give a proper Direction to their Passion for being admired: In order to which, they must endeavor to make themselves the Objects of a reasonable and lasting Admiration. This is not to be hoped for from Beauty, or Dress or Fashion, but from those

> inward Ornaments which are not to be defaced by Time or Sickness, and which appear most amiable to those who are most acquainted with them. (i.315.1711)

The ultimate goal of female cultivation is the admiration of men of sense. After all, as a true gentleman, Mr. Spectator also sees it as his duty to protect the impressionable minds of women: Mr. Spectator hopes to "keep [his women readers] from being charmed by those empty Coxcombs that have hitherto been admired among the Women, tho' laugh'd at among the Men" (i.393.1711). Thus, *The Spectator* creates a system where the veneration of women facilitates the regulation of women for the benefit of the gentleman. They learn to seek and value his admiration above those of all other kinds of men, and to measure their own self-worth by his esteem. He creates a self-fulfilling loop wherein his own masculinity becomes the most desirable because it critiques women, whose value is determined by his perspective, which is in turn valued because the women find it valuable, and around and around it goes.

This reciprocal relationship is constructed through literacy, through categories of author and reader. Women are constructed as readers in *The Spectator*; even when they write (as they frequently do) it is to express their opinions or gratifications as readers. Now, this is also true of Mr. Spectator's male readers, but the desiring appreciation of his female readers registers as especially important for his masculinity, because it establishes his sexual neutrality. It is necessary for the gentleman to construct women as desiring readers for two reasons. First, it facilitates his position as a desirable author. For example, in No. 95 (June 19, 1711), Mr. Spectator receives a grateful letter from Anabella, who opens her letter praising his kindness and benevolence:

> As I hope there are but few that have so little Gratitude as not to acknowledge the Usefulness of your Pen, and to esteem it a Publick Benefit, so I am sensible, be that as it will, you must nevertheless find *the Secret and Incomparible Pleasure* in doing Good, and *be a great Sharer in the Entertainment you give*. I acknowledge our Sex much obliged, and I hope improved, by your Labours, and even your Intentions more particularly for our Service. (i.404.1711, emphasis mine)

This is just one of many such letters Mr. Spectator receives, but what I find so compelling about this letter is how it reveals the channels of desire that the gentleman author constructs through the depiction of female readers. Critics have commented upon the ways the spectatorial gaze positions men, even the new sentimental gentleman, as desiring and controlling subjects. Maurer writes, "By emphasizing women's importance as desirable objects, this view of masculinity unavoidably represents men as continually desiring subjects, a position that conflicts with the authoritative aspect of masculinity…of self-regulation and embodied more generally in the role of father/patriarch" (97). The gentleman must control his desires, but must still express them to be properly heterosexual, which constructs "the dual nature of the male gaze, which when turned upon women, is at once judgmental and erotic" (Maurer 97). However, equally important is the ways his own desirability, and therefore his own performance and production, is dependent upon constructing women's desire for him, specifically his authorial guidance. The above passage remarks on the "*the Secret and Incomparible Pleasure*" Mr. Spectator derives from his role as moral author, and then immediately associates this with the gratitude female readers feel as the beneficiaries of his gaze. This creates a reciprocal kind of pleasure. Their correction and improvement constitutes his pleasure and

entertainment. This removes a layer of his supposed disinterest, and links back to the actual material necessity of *The Spectator* being a desirable text; it must be desired for it to be produced at all.

The construction of women as readers (grateful or otherwise) obscures the ways the gentleman's gender depends upon them. On some level, without readers there would be no text, and without text there would be no gentleman author. However, by constructing a system where women readers act as respondents to Mr. Spectator, the periodical creates a system that reinforces the gentleman's hierarchical power. He is the author looking out upon the world, and women are the subjects of his gaze and his critique—who are then the grateful, receptive respondents to his authorial production. But, as with pleasure, this structure does not accurately account for the reciprocity of these positions. Mr. Spectator only functions, and his identity only works, if there is an audience; as a genre, periodicals demand reader interaction. As Powell writes, "The notion of a performing structure to literature is particularly relevant to eighteenth-century essays, which often demand via their didactic appeals and intrusive narrators the active participation of the reader" (*Performing Authorship* 9). This extends outward in a gendered way. If Mr. Spectator is particularly interested in a female audience, then his identity is dependent upon his interactions with them. And, despite his deliberate status as a neutered bachelor, the nature of this interaction, I argue, takes on the tones of courtship and romance and deliberately rejects seduction.

However, to properly maintain his position of power and privilege, Mr. Spectator frequently mentions the need to monitor and adjust women's reading habits in order to help women cultivate proper kinds of femininity. In *Spectator* No. 37 (April 12, 1711), he

visits Leonora's library. Leonora is a lady-scholar of sorts, though her reading, like her library itself, is haphazard and scattered. Mr. Spectator reports, "As her Reading has lain very much among Romances, it has given her a very particular Turn of Thinking, and discovers it self even in her House, her Gardens and her Furniture" (i.158.1711). He isn't harsh or overly satirical of Leonora; rather, he strikes a tone of gentlemanly benevolence: "When I think how oddly this Lady is improved by Learning, I look upon her with a mixture of Admiration and Pity" (i.158). To aid Leonora, Mr. Spectator proposes to create of list of "such particular Books as may be proper for the Improvement of the Sex. And as this is a Subject of a very nice Nature, I shall desire my Correspondents to give me their Thoughts upon it" (i.159). Advice on ladies' reading becomes one of the gentleman author's many forms of "self-commodification" (Powell 3), except this one has erotic overtones. When Mr. Spectator claims he intends to "print himself out" he is making his body a text, in ways that anticipate Catherine Gallagher and Nancy Armstrong's discussion of women's bodies being transformed into textual bodies. However, the gentleman's textual body is both omnipresent and ephemeral. In tandem, we can now reinterpret Mr. Spectator and the gentleman's vaunted privacy, that authentic, private self, as a mechanism for creating and regulating desire. One of the functions of privacy—performed or otherwise—is to create desire in others, while delineating a restraint in oneself. As noted above, Mr. Spectator provides the reader with his credentials as a gentleman—his travels, education, a bit of his background—but not so much as to reveal the all-important sense of his distinct private subject. Among eidolons, "the Spectator…was famous for *not* satisfying his readers' curiosity on the matter of himself" (Powell 15). If he leaves the readers unsatisfied on one level, he also

leaves them desiring, and what they substitute for his physical body is his textual one. The denial of access to his actual body fuels an economic desire that is both satisfied and stoked by his textual body. His success relies on people, especially women, consuming his body through readership. However, Mr. Spectator continuously withholds his actual recommendations for their reading, for building their library.[41] This speaks to a desire, his masculine desire, for a kind of textual monogamy and monopoly. In a reversal of the rake who seeks to consume women, the gentleman seeks to be the desirable and consumable good, while still maintaining a patriarchal mastery over his readership by constructing them as dependent upon him.

One of the most frequent figures of Mr. Spectator's critique is the coquette.[42] As a gentleman, Mr. Spectator claims to criticize her because she is falling into vice and away from the true beauty of her womanhood, thereby making herself vulnerable to the degeneracy of coxcombs and rakes. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that coquettes pose a challenge to Mr. Spectator's authorial control. For example, in *Spectator* No. 45 Mr. Spectator critiques a young coquette for disturbing his enjoyment of a performance of *Macbeth.* He writes, "She had…*formed a little Audience to her self,* and fixed the Attention of all about her. But as I had a mind to hear the Play, I got out of the Sphere of her Impertinance"; "This pretty Childishness of Behavior is one of the most refined Parts of Coquetry" (i.194.1711, emphasis mine). She is a coquette because she dares to create an audience for herself, where her critiques of the play (she discusses Banquo in particular) become central. Mr. Spectator, as a purveyor of gentlemanly taste, has critiqued many plays in his essays. However, this young woman, as a coquette, uses flirtation and charm, to invoke the same kind of authorial power as Mr. Spectator, one

that charms and cajoles her audience for her own, and a lesser extent their, pleasure. The coquette is a "favorite satiric target of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele", because as Juliette Merritt rightly points out, "she is an unsettling, even threatening figure" despite their obsessive attempts to "persuade us of the frivolous coquette's insignificance" (Merritt 177, 180). Coquettes seek and create their own audience, primarily of men, the way Mr. Spectator seeks to claim an audience for himself, and this is why they must be regulated and controlled. In delaying marriage and reveling in her own feminine display, the coquette sits "in open rebelling against the standard rules of courtship" (Merritt 180). She also, and not unconnectedly, stands in opposition to standard rules of authorship, which "link…spectatorship to masculine privilege and superiority" ("See No Evil" 259). They are usurpers of authorship, and instead of occupying the comfortable space of a female reader, guided and monitored by the Spectator's gaze, they seek to perform a brand of authorship for themselves. Furthermore, Mr. Spectator's removal from her sphere is reminiscent of yielding a field of battle, as if the coquette, because she seeks her own pleasure rather than responding to his as the gentleman author, is too powerful a rival for him to contend with. In this way, coquettes seem to hybridize the verbosity of the rake and the authorial privilege of the gentleman.

Mary Davys—Dramatizing the Gentleman's Desires for Women and Self

The relationship of periodicals to the novel has become a more frequent touchstone for eighteenth-century criticism. Powell writes, "The periodical certainly helped to popularize fiction, not only fables and oriental tales but especially the particular type of fiction that turned on matters of family, manners, daily life, and contemporary

bourgeois issues—the novels that favored what Ian Watt dubbed formal realism" (7-8). It is precisely this trajectory that I will trace in my analysis of Mary Davys. Davy's novel *The Reform'd Coquette* (1724) is a problem text, resisting traditional proto-feminist and conservative readings. The stumbling block for many critics is Amoranda's conservative reform from coquette to wife, and the—to use a technical term—creepy factor of the Formator/Alanthus manipulation of her character. I argue that by considering Davys' novel as a response to the gentlemanly performance and structure of *The Spectator*, we can gain a more productive reading of Davys' text. Besides being a reader of the popular periodical, Davys actually references *The Spectator* in the novel itself.[43] I believe Davys takes pains to distinguish the performance of Formator/Alanthus from the other suitors in the novel. We should read Formator/Alanthus as performance à la the eidolon, where Formator, the seemingly disinterested, benevolent bachelor, dispenses advice that creates desire for the gentleman—Althanus—by transforming Amoranda from coquettish author into proper feminine reader. The performance of Formator, like that of Mr. Spectator, does not invalidate his power but rather facilitates it. Therefore, Davys uses her novel to reveal the plotting of the gentleman author figure, deliberately incorporating letters and lectures that echo the style and form of *The Spectator*. While Davys presents a potentially conservative plot, she reveals the machinations of the gentleman, and also takes advantage of the performative aspect of the gentleman author. If the gentleman author is a performance that validates the authorship of his creator, then a woman can deploy him as well as a man. This in turn, is also an early ventriloquey of masculinity itself. This is what Davys achieves in her novel.

Mary Davys and her work strike an odd, uneasy note in eighteenth-century scholarship. On the one hand, she was deeply enmeshed in canonical circles of eighteenth-century literary culture. Her husband was a friend of Jonathan Swift, and after his death Davys maintained an intermittent correspondence with Swift, repeatedly asking him for support—both literary and financial. She admired *The Spectator* and also owned a coffee shop in Cambridge, seating her within established literary and masculine culture. She published her novels by subscription, a rising publication practice, and her list of subscribers was rather illustrious: Alexander Pope, John Gay, Martha Blount, and at least two duchesses and other peers were among her subscribers for *The Reform'd Coquet*.[44] Meanwhile, Davys fits fitfully within feminist recovery projects; she is a woman who made her living by her pen and wrote popular novels that center on gender dynamics. And yet, almost no one has paid Davys any amount of sustained critical attention. She is often mentioned, or footnoted, in passing, included in general lists but quickly passed over for either more canonical or scandalous fare.

This is in part because feminist scholarship continues to struggle with what to do with Davys. She is a popular early-century woman writer, but there is a kind of vague critical consensus that Davys does not fit easily into the category of moral or scandalous female authors. As the widow of a clergyman, she does not fall within the fair triumvirate of wit—Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood. Some critics, like B.G. MacCarthy, biographer Martha Bowden, and Jane Spencer place Davys within the "female school of moral didacticism" made up of authors like Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Jane Barker, and Penelope Aubin (MacCarthy 251).[45] However, this categorization is often facile, including Davys in a list of other authors, and in each case critics tend to rely

on what little we know of Davys' biography—her status as a clergyman's widow and her links to prominent male authors—rather than her work to justify her inclusion in the category. MacCarthy and Eleanor Wikborg do identify Davys' *The Reform'd Coquet* as a forerunner of the mentor/lover, but neither treats Davys with any real, sustained critical attention.[46] Authors who have focused more attention on Davys have either found it difficult to categorize her as conservative or ignored the feminist/gendered issues of her oeuvre. Jean B. Kern sees Davys as uneasily negotiating a sort of middle ground between conservative and proto-feminist.[47] Meanwhile, critics like Natasha Sajé, Virginia Duff, and Tiffany Potter, read Davys as a subtle but definitely subversive proto-feminist writer.[48] Even as scholarship has moved beyond these categories, the authors they focused on have remained at the forefront of our critical discussion, leaving Davys behind, perhaps unintentionally.

Another slim track in Davys criticism links her to the rise of the novel. When she has been discussed in this line, Davys, like other authors such as Aubin or Haywood, has been figured as an anticipator—often a less skillful anticipator—of more canonical male authors. For example, William McBurney, perhaps the first figure mentioned in critical contexts of Davys, reads her as a forerunner of Henry Fielding who was drawing upon the work of male Restoration dramatists like Williams Wycherley and Congreve.[49] This line of scholarship still takes on gendered overtones, because Davys' contributions to the rise of the novel are routinely and rather oddly linked to supposedly masculine endeavors. McBurney semi-infamously described Davys in 1959, based on her writing style, as having a "hearty, somewhat masculine temperament" (350).[50] Victoria Joule does not call Davys masculine, but she does link Davys' literary work to "the largely male-dominated

developments of the realist novel" (Joule 31).[51] Oddly enough, in contextualizing Davys as part of the rise of the novel, critics' discussions of Davys' *The Reform'd Coquet*—and to a lesser extend her other works—focus more on Davys' preface than the actual novel itself. Davys' prefaces do seem unique, especially among early novels, because they are not dedicated to an actual or desired patron. Davys published most of her novels by subscription, and therefore her prefaces are often dedications to "The Ladies of Great Britain" or "To the Beaus of Great Britain." In this way her actual authorial production is similar to periodical authors', like Addison and Steele. Attention has been given to how Davys discussed her own writing, but little attention is paid to how writing and authorship function within the action of the novel itself. As I will demonstrate, authorship, in terms of actual writing via letters and the creation of an authorial persona, and eidolon, is a vital aspect of Formator/Alanthus's power and masculinity within the novel.

On some level, both of these critical paths to Davys have correct but incomplete instincts, which this chapter will address for two key reasons. First, the difficulty is that critics and scholars have attempted to locate Davys' proto-feminist or conservative streaks within the characters and action of her novel, linking Davys' stance as an author with the fate of her heroine Amoranda. However, if we consider the potential feminist aspects of Davys' novel as emerging from the structure and performative revelations of her text, rather than in the destiny of her central female character, then new arenas of intervention appear within Davys' work, ones that allow us to put her at the forefront rather than just banish her uneasily to the corners of our scholarship. Second, Davys was a relatively popular author, who used creative publication techniques (subscription) to

define an independent authorial persona, and whose courtship structure of lover/mentor clearly took hold in the cultural imagination. I am not arguing that Davys invented this dynamic. As Wikborg explores in *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction*, this figure has a history dating back to romances, and earlier eighteenth-century publications of Delarivier Manley and Eliza Haywood.[52] However, the semi-comedic marriage plot of *The Reform'd Coquette* is innovative, and does seem to resonate and carry through to later authors like Fielding or even later Jane Austen. I argue broadly that the recognizability of the gentleman and our cultural attachment to him is almost unconscious and automatic, and it is because we are so familiar with plots and structures like the one Davys creates here. If we can recognize the ways Davys is deliberately crafting this structure to serve her own professional validation, then this structure pushes past what Wikborg terms the "patriarchal lover" the "image of the powerful man…whose willingness to abstain from a measure of the sovereignty with which his maleness invested him would, at least in fantasy form, bring about a change in the power relations" between men and women (Wikborg 2, 6). Davys doesn't just create an uneasy pseudo-patriarchal fantasy man; rather, she proactively casts the constructed nature of the gentleman to suit her own innovations.

Formator/Alanthus as Eidolon/Author

Formator has proven a troubling figure for critics. As Sajé writes, Formator becomes a "litmus test" for readers: "Those who believe that Davys resists patriarchy see Formator as an ironical construct; others insist that he is the author's spokesman, advising proper behavior" (17). Sajé aligns with the former; she sees Formator as a subtle but

ironic tool that Davys uses to explore patriarchal manipulations within "reformed coquette" narratives. She writes, "The focus on Formator" during the process of Amoranda's reform "suggests that Davys is politically unwilling rather than narratologically unable to show us Amoranda's process of reform" (Sajé 171). Sajé is right to focus on Formator's centrality in these moments; however, I would like to tweak her trajectory a bit. I do think that Davys is playing with the paradoxical expectations of coquette reform tales; yet, I think Formator's character, rather than just being an emblem of patriarchy, represents the eidolonic nature of the new mode of the gentleman. Davys focuses on him during the reform section, because his masculinity is defined through its didacticism. At stake in *The Reform'd Coquet* is not Amoranda's femininity, or even her virtue, but Formator/Alanthus's masculinity.

Tellingly, one of the most difficult struggles in writing about *The Reform'd Coquet* is how to reference Davys' hero: what name(s) should one use and when? Some critics refer to him by his assumed name, Formator, rather than by his "actual" name, Alanthus. Others refer to him by Alanthus throughout, and some opt for the Formator/Alanthus option. What I find so intriguing about this is how it sheds light on the constructed nature of the gentleman persona. In some ways, Formator, because his character is the most present to us, is as real, or at least just as real, as Alanthus is. More importantly, I argue, Alanthus is just as fictional as Formator; this is the crucial aspect of his masculinity within this text. Both are personas, characters of manhood, who operate under the constraints of constructed gender and wield a similar authorial power within the novel. This struggle and division, the critical sense that Formator and Althanus both are and are not the same person, mimics the blurred lines readers created between the

eidolons of periodicals and their authors. Mr. Spectator was not Addison or Steele, and yet his gentlemanly performance rubbed off on readers' perceptions of them and their categorization as gentlemen. I argue that Formator is, fundamentally, Alanthus's eidolon who performs the disinterest of the gentleman author, covering the actual anxieties and desires of the engendered body of the gentleman himself. By reading Formator through the lens of the eidolon, we can see how Davys dramatizes the secret desires of the gentleman, connects his character to that new kind of performance, and demonstrates how his masculinity is dependent upon creating a gendered author/reader dynamic, one that reforms Amoranda from a threatening coquette—with powers of narrative control—into a properly receptive and desiring female reader.

Formator bears all of the markings of a gentleman author à la Mr. Spectator, which authorize his function—to instruct and delight, to monitor and cultivate—in fundamentally the same way as Mr. Spectator. He is a bachelor who enters Amoranda's life under the guise of reforming her coquettish behavior (as his name indicates, he will form her into a proper model of womanhood). Like the gentleman author, his appearance is a response to a social ill, and he emerges to correct his wayward audience. In fact, like Mr. Spectator, he is introduced in the form of a letter. Her Uncle Traffick, the source of her fortune and her absent guardian, writes a letter introducing Formator: *"Though he is an Old Man, he is neither impertinent, positive, or sour. You will, I hope, from my past Behavior towards you, believe you are very dear to me; and I have no better way of showing it for the future, than by putting you into such hands as* Formator's" (Davys 267). His age provides a shield for any presumptions of sexual ambition, as does his endorsement by her guardian and uncle, just as Mr. Spectator's neutrality provided a

moral weight to his perspective. Amoranda is initially skeptical of Formator, but Formator protests in a very Spectatorish way, "Madam…you quite mistake me: I am not of that disagreeable Temper you have described; I would have both Young and Old act with that very innocent Freedom you speak of: but what I inveigh against, is an immoderate Love of Pleasure, which generally follows the Young and too often leads them to Destruction" (268). Formator's moderation here is an echo of Mr. Spectator's, and Formator's qualification, his redefinition of pleasure, echoes Mr. Spectator's critiques of the fashionable world. Just as Mr. Spectator transforms his reticence into a valuable tool for his moral spectation, Formator recodes his age as something that provides him with perspective but also an appreciation for virtuous pleasure.

Formator delivers several lectures to Amoranda, which follow the gendered pattern of Mr. Spectator, inextricably linking her femininity with masculinity, critiquing female vanity and encouraging proper male attention. His lectures follow a predictable, generic pattern. Formator begins by lecturing Amoranda on the failings of female vanity, often by first invoking a nostalgia for a previous era's embrace of female modesty. He declares, "You have a Fortune that sets you above the World, but when I was a young Fellow, we used to value a Lady for her Virtue, Modesty, and an innate Love to Honour. I confess Madam…those are unfashionable qualities, but they are still the chief Ornaments of your Sex, and ours never think a Woman complete without them" (272). This echoes Mr. Spectator's proclamation, "Discretion and Modesty, which in all other Ages and Countries have been regarded as the greatest Ornaments of the Fair Sex, are considered as Ingredients of narrow Conversation, and Family Behavior" (No.45.i.193-4). Like Mr. Spectator, Formator proceeds to critique coquetry: "Give me leave,

Madam…to go a little farther, and tell you how great your misfortune has been, in being left so long to the Choice of your own Company; your Good-nature and want of Experience, together with a greedy Desire for Flattery, which (pardon me, Madam) is a Weakness attending the whole Sex" (Davys 272). He mimics Mr. Spectator's gentlemanly politeness, continuously asking leave before criticizing women. While this tactic does not seem particularly polite to us, Amoranda's reaction to it codifies it as politeness. She does not take offence, and instead feels charmed and eventually very pleased with Formator's lessons. In fact throughout the novel, she repeats with increasing frequency that she has "the greatest Inclination in the world to please" Formator because she "believe[s] him sincerely [her] Friend" (Davys 271). Her response as a reader—which I will detail more fully later—validates his gentlemanliness as polite and useful, just as Mr. Spectator's female readers confirm his gentlemanly status. Finally, like Mr. Spectator, Formator links Amoranda's coquetry with problematic masculinities: her flirtation "has encouraged such a heap of Vermin about you, as Providence would not suffer to live, were it not to give us a better taste for the brave, the just, the honorable and the honest Man" (272). Formator reiterates the *Spectator*'s castigation of rakes and the veneration of honest and honorable men (i.e. gentleman).

However, this is not just a moment of moral guidance, but also of sexual jealousy. Davys seems to play a game with her readers, deliberately revealing cracks in Formator's façade. It isn't just Amoranda's pleasure being reconfigured here; it is Formator/Alanthus's desire being justified and supported through Amoranda's reform. When Amoranda tells Formator about Froth and Callid's plans to abduct her, "Formator's Cheeks glowed with Anger, and, in the highest Transport of Rage, cried out, How can

such a Woman, such a lovely Woman as you are, subject yourself to such Company" (Davys 268). Formator justifies this exuberance as the product of his duty to her uncle and/or his protection of her virtue. When he asks to disguise himself as her to thwart Froth and Callid's schemes he declares, "Fear not, Madam…this Arm can still do wonders in so good a Cause; a Vindication of *Amoranda's* Honor fills my Veins with young Blood, that glows to revenge her Wrongs" (269), which serves as a pre-justification for how soundly he defeats Froth and Callid despite his supposed agedness. He claims that his cheeks become flushed and his arms become strong all for the sake of benevolent virtue, but Davys gradually hints and then reveals that these are the effects of Alanthus' passion for Amoranda. There are hints of a lover's language throughout: "every moment was lost to *Formator* that was not spent with *Amoranda*" (275). And as the perhaps more intuitive spinster, Maria, points out close to the final reveal: "Formator's Intellects seem to be perfectly sound; and for his Outside, there is nothing old belonging to it but his Beard, and that, I confess, is a very queer one, as ever I saw in my life" (313). By dropping hints, Davys is, I believe, testing the dexterity of her own readership, but also carefully indicating the ways that patriarchal concern, the benevolence of the gentleman author/spectator, is not as disinterested as it pretends. Furthermore, as with *The Spectator*, there is an economic interest at work too. Amoranda is a fabulous heiress, and while Formator/Alanthus is wealthy and titled in his own right, and not a fortune hunter, there is a financial link between the power Alanthus gains by performing Formator and teaching Amoranda to desire his masculinity, the man of sense, which echoes the coded but very real mercantile desires of the periodical authors. The

supposed benevolence of the gentleman is revealed to be a layered, secret vehicle of self-interest.

Disguise and the Authentic Performance of the Gentleman

By reading Formator as an eidolon figure we can unpack the complex and seemingly contradictory role of masquerade within the novel, which reveals Davys' distinction between the performance of the gentleman in contrast to the performances of rakes and libertines. All of Amoranda's suitors attempt some sort of deception or performance, most especially Formator/Alanthus, who not only masquerades as the benevolent Formator, but also as Formator masquerades as Amoranda in the scene with Callid and Froth. Yet other characters are condemned for their use of disguise. For example, Amoranda confronts Arentia and Berinthia/Beranthus and exclaims:

> If your Friend *Berintha* be a Man of Fortune and Honour, as you say he is, why has he used clandestine means to get into my Company? Do you think, Sir, *said she, turning to him*, I am so fond of my own Sex, that I can like nothing but what appears in Petticoats? Had you come like a Gentleman, as such I would have received you; but a disguised Lover is always conscious of some Demerit, and dares not trust to his right Form, till by a false appearance he tries the Lady. (296)

One could argue that it is Berintha/Beranthus's drag with its potentially homoerotic overtones being condemned here. In contrast, Formator dresses as Amoranda in the scene with Froth and Callid, and there is a weird dynamic where Froth and Callid are judged harshly for "not stand[ing] upon so much Ceremony" with Formator and "draw[ing their] Sword[s], though [they] took you for a Woman" (274). Clearly here it is not just the act

or nature of the disguise that creates dishonesty or condemnation. Formator and Beranthus both disguise themselves as women for ostensibly the same purpose: to win Amoranda; but with different results: Formator/Alanthus wins Amoranda, and Beranthus is run through and killed by Alanthus. (Notably, Alanthus's first physical appearance out of disguise is used to kill Beranthus who is still in disguise). Also, Amoranda's above speech seems to indicate that deception is the choice of cowards, who are afraid to come as they are, and yet Formator is never censured for his disguise.

Critics have extended her speech here to include an indictment of Formator/Alanthus; however, I think such arguments miss the more nuanced nature of authenticity and identity in the novel. On the surface, Formator's justification for his disguise is not far different from Beranthus'. Once his identity is revealed, Alanthus claims:

> I came to you, disguised like an old Man, for two reasons: First, I thought the sage Advice you stood in need of would sound more natural and be better received from an old mouth than a young one; next, I thought you would be more open and free, in declaring your real Sentiments of everything to me as I was than as I am. (316)

However, returning to the ways *The Spectator* codes Mr. Spectator's gentlemanly authenticity, the difference is not between performance and true self, but in the relation of language to performance. Identity and authenticity, especially gendered identity, were still in many respects tied to performance rather than to an internal self, even within the character of the gentleman in the early decades of the eighteenth century.[53] Mr. Spectator and the emerging gentleman were at once a rejection of rakish, libertine, and foppish

performances of masculinity, but the gentleman still functions as a performance. The gentleman's words, his text, perform his virtue, whereas the rake's language exerts influence that disguises his motives. Dress and disguise function along similar lines in *The Reform'd Coquet*. Formator's various disguises and his actual status as a disguise, theoretically still align with his actual character: Alanthus. Alanthus is the "true private" self or the author, while Formator is a disguise but not a lie. He is like the eidolon, who for all of his differences between his character and his author, still creates an association between his character and that of his authors in the minds of the readers. In contrast, Lofty's rakishness or Berinthus/Berinthia's drag are in some sense presented as inauthentic in that their words or dress disguise their motives. It is not the performance itself but the nature of the performance that seems to be in play here. Alanthus/Formator want the same reform in Amoranda. By allowing Alanthus to marry Amoranda, and for her to fall in love with him, Davys is playing up this ideal of gentlemanly performance and authenticity.

However, undergirding the gentleman's performance as authentic is a current of pleasure. Davys does not just accept that Alanthus is a private, natural, virtuous self; she also reveals how his self-interested desires drive the performance of Formator. If the gentleman's secret pleasure is in pleasing, then what validates his performance, what allows his pleasure to be secret, is the pleasing of others. Alanthus' performance as Formator reflects gentlemanly value on him—rather than deception—because it creates desire in Amoranda. In contrast to the rake, the gentleman needs his lady to approve of him, and her desire must validate his virtues and translate beyond exclusively sexual desire, towards a desire for guidance. Furthermore, by cultivating Amoranda's desire for

his self, but never taking advantage of said desire while he is performing as Formator, Alanthus/Formator avoids the nefarious implications of rakish deception. Once he has introduced himself as Alanthus, the gentleman's continued disguise as Formator allows him a voyeuristic spectatorship of Amoranda's desires. Telling her guardian about the Beranthus event, "when she came to the part, where the stranger was concerned, she blushed and sighed, saying, Oh *Formator*, had you see the fine Man, how graceful, how charming, how handsome" (302). When she receives a letter from Alanthus, we are told, "While *Amoranda* read this Letter, *Formator* watched her Eyes, in which he saw a pleasing Surprize [sic]" (304). Later he has the pleasure of hearing her repeat his own lessons back to him like Mr. Spectator's female readers expressing their gratitude for his benevolence:

> I remember, *Formator*, *said she*, you told me some time ago, that a Woman's conduct vindicated by one single Man of sense was infinitely preferable to a thousand Elogiums, from as many Coxcombs. I have now brought myself to an utter Contempt for all that part of our Species and shall for the future, not only despise Flattery but abhor the mouth it comes from. (302-3)

All of this gratifies and feeds Alanthus's desire for Amoranda. When the accident of a house fire reveals his identity, he finally voices his own burning desires. He declares, "My adorable *Amoranda*, if I value myself for any Action of my Life, it is for carrying on so clean a Cheat so long a time". He asks her pardon for the "trial of your Love" for "it was not possible for me to deny myself the exquisite pleasure I knew your kind Concern would give me; but good Heavens! How did my longing arms strive to snatch you to my bosom…that I might have sucked in the pleasing tears which dropped from your Lovely

eyes!" (317). And he prides himself on his masterful (very gentlemanly) restraint: "I hope…you remember, what a long time of Self-denial I have had, and that during *Formator's* Reign, I never dared so much as touch your Hand, though my Heart had ten thousand flutters and struggles to get to you" (320). He has acted the gentleman, regulating her sexuality and using this control to demonstrate his own gentlemanly restraint. However, in revealing his restraint, Davys also reveals the deeply desiring—in this case, physical desire—and the personal nature of the gentleman's desire, which stand in stark contrast to claims of disinterest. It also reveals how the performance as Formator transfers gentlemanly behavior onto the author behind it. Alanthus uses his behavior while playing Formator—his lack of physical seduction or contact—to confer gentlemanliness upon himself after all is revealed. It was his successful performance of neutrality, in contrast to his personal desires, that makes him a gentleman, because he is, in fact, not actually neutral.

The complex interplay of Formator/Alanthus's disguise and masculinity is one of the key ways Davys' novel reads back onto *The Spectator* the gentleman's embodiedness. As noted above, critics have connected Mr. Spectator's refusal to describe his physical body to his readers with the ways normative masculinity has been made invisible and seemingly disembodied. However, through her construction of Formator/Alanthus, Davys provides us with a metaphor and language for understanding how the eidolon/author dynamic is not a denial of the gentleman's body but a masquerade and disguise, which links the gentleman's physical body to text in new ways. As Powell and King have pointed out, Mr. Spectator is clearly sensate—hearing, seeing—and therefore clearly embodied. His refusal to describe a body is not the same as a denial of a body. It is the

privatization of the body on one level, and on another it is the translation of the gentleman's body into text. Mr. Spectator, as noted above, plans to "print himself out", and just as he describes his own body circulating seamlessly through London, so too does his textual body—the periodical itself—circulate through his readers' homes. What creates the tension surrounding the gentleman's body is not whether he has one, but whether it is desiring or not. The gentlemanly performance—the eidolon or Formator—requires a denial of selfish desire, specifically sexual or romantic desire (but also economic desire). The text of his body creates a desire in the reader, but is supposedly non-desiring itself. So, on this level the gentleman's body—his text—is not disembodied but undesiring in rakish terms. However, as my chapter has sought to demonstrate, there is another layer to the gentleman's desire: that of the actual author, or in this case Alanthus, which is personally, even selfishly desiring. Thus when we have sought to untangle the gentleman's disembodiedness, we have missed the mark, critically speaking, because normative masculinity is not a question of bodied vs. disembodied, but of neutral vs. desiring. This is what Davys so powerfully illustrates by translating the eidolon/author into her central male character.

Reforming the Coquette into a Proper Female Reader

When we read Formator/Alanthus through the lens of the performative author/gentleman we can illuminate the troubling aspect of Amoranda's reform as a necessary, if repressive, part of the formation of the gentleman's masculinity. As noted above the coquette is a threatening figure for the gentleman, because she wrests narrative control from him. She is less sexually threatening than the rake, but still verbally

nefarious, and she is a character type whose vocal influence challenges the gentleman's printed self.[54] As opposed to his rakish counterpart, the gentleman defines his masculinity through receptive relationships with women. Instead of conquering through his overtly sexualized body and language all those around him—men and women alike—the gentleman is defined through an author/reader relationship with women. As the benevolent author, he takes shape through women's open and willing reception of his text/body. However, Davys' plot reveals that this seemingly mutual relationship is coercive in its own way. It lacks the direct seduction or forceful ravishment of a rake, and instead becomes about reforming—literally reshaping—women into receptive readers and removing their position of narrative authority.

Amoranda's reform is not just about reforming a coquette; it is about transforming a feminine authorial and narrative power into a proper female reader. Amoranda begins her tale "pleased with a Crowd of Admirers", i.e. her own audience (Davys 261). As a coquette Amoranda is witty and verbally quick. However, as the novel progresses and she yields to Formator's guidance, she gives up narrative control. In the first two-thirds of the novel, whenever one of her suitors plots against her Amoranda exerts narrative control over the telling of these adventures and over the suitors. When Froth and Callid plan to abduct her, she comes up with her own plot to thwart them: two of her footmen will dress up as her and her maid and cudgel the would-be abductors. She tells her plan to Formator, proclaiming, "What do you think, *Formator*, *said she*, will not my Contrivance do better than theirs" (269). She is a better schemer than the men she encounters. I see the connection between scheming/plotting and the narrative plot as deliberate in this novel. Amoranda is crafting her own narrative, which defeats the masculine narrative of

abduction. As a coquette, she functions as a kind of author. Even when Froth and Callid are caught, she denies them narrative satisfaction. Callid starts, "But it is some Satisfaction to tell you how I would have used you had Fortune been so kind as to have put you in my power; know then, proud Beauty, I would——I know already (*said* Amoranda, *interrupting him*) as much of your designs, as you can tell me" (Davys 274). She cuts off his speech, denying him satisfaction of any kind (sexual or linguistic). When something of note happens, it is usually Amoranda who recounts it or speaks for others. When Lofty is tricked into marriage (another plan of Amoranda's) and apologizes to Altemira, Amoranda steps in and accepts on Altemira's behalf: "My Lord…I dare answer for *Altemira's* pardon" (289).

However, as Amoranda begins to yield to Formator's authority and guidance, she speaks and narrates less and less. Critics like Sajé see Amoranda's reform as a silencing, and in connection with *The Spectator* this train of thought seems accurate. As Powell has argued, many periodicals make women visible but not vocal or sensing. Women are displayed, but they are not allowed the same subjectivity (sensate selves) as their male counterparts. After Alanthus reveals his true identity, his sister arrives to discover where he has been keeping himself hidden away and what has happened to him. At every juncture until this, Amoranda has done the recounting, but here she yields the stage to Alanthus and her Uncle: "Lord *Alanthus* and Mr. *Traffick* are the fittest to give your Ladyship an account, which I leave them to do, while I beg leave to go and dress me" (319). Amoranda, now fully invested in Formator/Alanthus's role as author of her behavior, leaves to dress, while the gentleman tells the tale. Davy's reform of Amoranda seems to display this all the more vividly, because the heroine moves from vivacious,

mischievous coquette to virtuous wife-to-be, whose thoughts and will are re-aligned with both her guardian and mentor/lover. However, Davys subtly shifts this dynamic to reveal how reliant the gentleman's form is on narrative structure. She makes it clear that this narrative of silencing is not—as it is presented—about Amoranda's femininity or womanhood. At stake instead is the structure and style of the gentleman. And if she is not precisely a proto-feminist, Davys is certainly savvy in her dramatization of the gentleman's character, because she increases his dependence on her authorial terms.

Not only does Amoranda yield narrative control and centrality, she also evolves as a reader, which emphasizes and actualizes Formator/Alanthus' status as an author figure. There are ten letters exchanged throughout the novel, and eight of them are addressed to Amoranda. These letters are mostly authored by Alanthus—mimicking the form of many of the Spectator's essays—and allow us to trace the evolution of Amoranda's reading habits. One of the first letters she receives is an anonymous one from Alanthus:

> *THIS Letter, Madam, does not come to tell you I love you, since that would only increase the surfeit you must have taken with so many Declarations of that kind already; but if I tell you I am in pain for your Conduct, and spend some Hours in pitying your present Condition, it will, I dare say, be entirely new to you; since (though many have the same opinion of your Behavior) none have Courage, or Honesty enough to tell you so*. (265)

Alanthus claims a personal disinterest beyond the good of Amoranda's character, and he also declares that his criticism of her is courageous (i.e. masculine). In terms of authorship, this letter throws a kind of gauntlet. Alanthus states that he will not be one of

her admirers, that he will not tell her he loves her, and will instead critique her behavior from his position of masculine authority. When she first receives the letter she is outraged when her maid, Jenny, suggests the author seems to mean well: "Mean well…what good meaning can he have who persuades me to banish the Bees and live in the Hive by myself?" (266). However, by the time Alanthus rescues her from Beranthus, Amoranda sees this letter in a very different light: "No, *Jenny*, *said she*, that Letter which you call rude, I now see with other Eyes and have reason to believe it came from a Friend" (305). She is now a proper reader, open, receptive, and desiring of her gentleman's moral guidance, which is clearly linked with her new-found attraction to his physical body. Once again the gentleman's body and his text are intertwined in their ability and mission to create receptive female desire. Amoranda compares the letter she receives from Alanthus after her rescue to the original; she recognizes the writing. She even uses the original letter to flirt with Alanthus—in a proper, less coquettish way; she teases him about the letter, "in which you tell me you don't love me" (308). To which he gives a justification that could be lifted from *The Spectator*:

> I did not think Madam, you would have thought this Letter worth keeping so long, but you have put a very wrong Construction upon it; and I designed it as a very great Mark of my Esteem: I sent it to put you in mind of turning the right end of the Perspective to yourself, that you might with more ease behold your own danger. (308-9)

He begins from a point of modesty, and then explains why her reading is mistaken, further emphasizing her need for his guidance. This links feminine behavior with reading with the gentleman's role as didactic author. Alanthus reveals his eidolonic performance

and corrects Amoranda's misreading, both which he uses to establish his own gentlemanly virtue. Thus, Davys reveals the gentleman as a figure whose social role as morality monitor is tied to narrative production and control.

Davys makes it clear that the regulation of female readers is about the construction of masculinity. By commenting on her behavior and regulating her reading, Formator/Alanthus influences Amoranda's access to and desire for her other (less savory) male suitors. Just as Mr. Spectator advocates that women read his body/text and avoid bad or more frivolous reading, so, too, does Formator limit Amoranda's access to other male texts/authors. Most notably he denies access to Lord Lofty, the clearly charming and dexterous rake figure, "who had so great a value for his dear self, that he could hardly be persuaded any Woman had Merit enough to deserve the smallest of his Favours, much less a great one of being his Partner for life" (258). Witty and a successful seducer, Lofty's rank and devious behavior links seduction and literacy—he uses a contract to seduce Altemira and he reads Amoranda's mail without her permission—in ways that present him as a competing kind of male linguistic power and by extension a kind of authorship. This masculine contrast is a clear means of cultivating the metaphorical connection between Amoranda's readership and her taste in men, which is one of Formator's clearest goals: "*Formator* had by a daily application endeavored to form *Amoranda's* mind to his own liking; he tried to bring her a true taste of that Behavior which makes every Woman agreeable to every Man of Sense" (291). By controlling and linking her reading and her access to men, he reforms her taste, which is in fact forming her to his own ideal of womanhood. However, to be clear, the masculine competition is not necessarily an indication that the gentleman is the opposite of the rake.

Alanthus' control through his persona Formator is not in fact a departure from the rake, but a more covert version of his manipulations. Whereas Lofty attempts to manipulate Altemira and later Amoranda through covertly reading letters and stealing documents, Formator/Alanthus legitimizes a position of benevolent mentorship, which allows him to read and regulate Amoranda's letters and to watch her read and react to his own letters. They utilize the same vehicles—text and reading—to enact their ends.

By designing Alanthus as Amoranda's love interest, Davys dramatizes the ways the gentleman author designs his texts to cultivate a yielding desire for himself. In his first anonymous letter criticizing her coquetry, he writes: "*Consider, Madam, how unhappy that Woman is, who finds herself daily hedged in with self-ended Flatters, who make it their business to keep up a Vanity in you, which may one day prove your Ruin. Is it possible for any Fop to tell you more than you know already?"* (Davys 265). This message is designed to deflate her coquetry, but also create a space for the Man of Sense. For, while a fop cannot tell her something she doesn't already know, the gentleman with his authorial power certainly can. The goal of Alanthus, the reason he deploys the disguise of Formator, is to teach Amoranda to yield to his desirability as a gentleman. He cannot abduct her as Froth, Callid, Beranthus, and to a lesser extent Lofty attempt, because the gentleman author, as a gendered identity, requires the yielding of his reader. His masculinity necessitates Amoranda declaring, "I own, *Formator*, the groundwork of this Reformation in me, came from those wholesome Lectures you have so often read to me; but the *finishing stroke is given by my own inclination*" (303, emphasis mine). She must learn to be attracted to the Man of Sense. That is, theoretically, how the market of the gentleman author works.

On a structural level, Davys demonstrates how the gentleman can only truly appear when he has cultivated proper female desire. *The Spectator*, on a basic production level, required the desire of its readers to continue to be; it would only be printed if there was a market for it, and therefore Mr. Spectator's textual body would only continue to be if readers desired it. In a similar way, Davys makes Alanthus contingent upon Amoranda's desire. He first appears as a literal text—his letter—and then a figurative one—his eidolon Formator; however, he as an actual character and man is only revealed once Amoranda is well on her way to reform. He first "physically" appears during her harrowing encounter with Beranthus, and his continued presences—his visits and even the final reveal and marriage—depend on Amoranda's newfound attraction to the Man of Sense. Davys creates a plot that reveals the gentleman's dependence of the gentleman's body on the complimentary desire of female readers. He only truly comes into existence as a character—a being, a masculinity—when Amoranda wants him.

On one level, Davys' plot reads as conservative: the gentleman author successfully reforms the vivacious coquette into a woman reader who allows his masculinity to take shape in a virtuous and desirable light. However, Davys adds a darker dimension that calls into question Amoranda's yielding, revealing how the construction of a desiring female readership comes at a stark price to women and the bounds of proper feminine behavior. Alanthus creates strategies of delayed gratification for Amoranda: he sends her letters, but does not reveal his identity; he comes upon her being attacked by Beranthus and refuses to rescue her, only to return minutes later to save her at the moment of crisis; he visits her home, but won't provide his full history, etc. Each of these encounters, like Mr. Spectator's reluctance to reveal his body or provide a library for his

female readers, builds a kind of narrative anticipation and yearning, which becomes a trademark of the gentleman's character throughout the century. In Davys' novel this delayed structure takes on decidedly violent and manipulative proportions. The starkest example is when Alanthus comes upon Amoranda as she is about to be attacked by Beranthus (who is still disguised as a woman). Davys describes, "a graceful, fine, well-shaped Man upon one of [the horses], attended by two Servants; to whom she thus applied herself: Stranger, *said she*, for such you are to me, though not to Humanity, I hope; take a poor forsaken Wretch into your kind Protection and deliver her from the rude hands of a cruel Ravisher" (Davys 299). His reply is cold and judgmental: "I presume, Madam, you are some self-willed, head-strong Lady, who, resolved to follow your own Inventions, have left the Care of a tender Father to ramble with you know not who" (299). This is especially cruel and referential because the father figure he is referring to is in fact himself—linking the patriarchal overlap between father and husband in deliberate and troubling ways. He then rides off, declaring, "Well Madam… I am sorry for you, but I am no Knight-Errant, nor do I ride in quest of Adventures…Saying thus, he and his Servants rode away" (299). He does return and eventually save her from Beranthus (after she cries out for Formator). After his true identity is revealed, Alanthus provides a particularly horrifying explanation for his behavior. He tells Amoranda:

> I put on an Air of Cruelty, which, Heaven knows! my Heart had no hand in, and rode from you; I knew it would give you double terror, to see a prospect of relief, then find yourself abandoned; and I likewise knew, the greater your fear was then, the greater your care would be for the future…but I had yet a view in favour of

> myself, and had reason to believe the greater your deliverance was the greater value would you set upon your deliverer. (317)

First, he links his masculinity with performance: he pretends cruelty he does not feel—justifying performance as necessary and virtuous act in his case. He deliberately instills fear in her to teach her a lesson about her own vulnerability; reinforcing the gentleman author's message that women are in desperate need of his guidance. However, he also extends his reasoning to describe how making her wait for her rescue would exponentially increase her gratitude and desire for him. This moment of violence is linked to authorship, and his control of the plot and the sequence of the narrative. This manipulation is a dramatization of the gentleman author's cultivation of his appeal, especially Mr. Spectator's. Mr. Spectator withholds himself and, when it comes to creating a ladies library list, he withholds his assistance from his female readers, cultivating and increased sense of the need for his text, authorship, and guidance. Alanthus capitalizes Amoranda's trauma to create a greater reward for himself through her increased desire for him and a greater need for his masculinity. She cries out for Formator and is rescued by Alanthus, demonstrating her desire for eidolon, author, and text all at once. But the sheer violence of this scene punctuates the coercive aspects of the gentleman's seemingly benign masculinity. It does not deploy the same kind of violence as a rakish ravisher, but thrives on a kind of violent passive aggression.

Davys' Co-opting the Gentleman's Authorship

The greatest potential feminist power of *The Reform'd Coquet* does not lie with Amoranda, but in Davys' self-construction as an author. Critics have struggled so much

with this text because feminocentric readings often seek to align the heroine with her author. Critics have looked to Amoranda for signs of coercion or rebellion, and usually end up somewhere in the middle. Amoranda's transformation from vivacious coquette into domestic wife material is not presented as a negative outcome by the text. On this level, Davys spites our desires for such direct proto-feminist subversion. Instead Davys uses the structure of this courtship/reform plot to chart out a field for herself as an author and the character who endows her with this authority is not Amoranda but Formator/Alanthus. Amoranda's ultimate submission to Alanthus/Formator is not just necessary for patriarchy, but for Davys' authority. The gentleman author's authority depended on his performance of moral instruction and cajoling pleasure. People voluntarily yielded to him, and Davys creates this dynamic in her novel in order to demonstrate that a woman author can pull these moral strings just as well as a male one. In her prefatory material she performs the same authorial disinterest and independence with a feminine twist. Davys takes advantage of the constructed and performative features of the gentleman. If the eidolon can be different from his author, but still lend send the author his moral authority, then a woman author can adopt it as well as a man and validate her own ambitions.

If Alanthus' power comes from his ability to perform as Formator to direct Amoranda's reading, then it is important to note that there is another narrative voice who reveals itself to direct the readers of the novel: Davys herself. Davys continuously reminds her reader of her presence as the author through her narrator. Her intrusive, witty narrator is one of the features people connect to later male novelists like Henry Fielding. Her narrator interjects:

> What an unhappy Creature is a beautiful young Girl left to her own Management, who is so fond of Adoration that Reason and Prudence are thrust out to make way for it; 'till she becomes a prey to every designing Rascal, and her own ridiculous Qualities are her greatest Enemies: Thus it might have fared with poor *Amoranda*, had not a lucky hit prevented it, which the Reader shall know by and by. (Davys 264).

This voice intrudes throughout the novel, reminding us that there is yet another author beyond the plots of Amoranda and Formator/Alanthus. This happy accident is no accident, and initially seems to empower Formator/Alanthus' role as author in the text--and to a certain extent, Davys does empower the gentleman's position within the text: his plot prevails. However, the narrator's intrusion also reminds the reader the Formator/Alanthus is Davys' construction. His plot is actually her plot, which she can order despite not being a man herself, because the gentleman's power comes from his performance, not an actual private self.

In her dedication and preface to *The Reform'd Coquet* Davys commands the interdependence of masculinity on female readership, in ways that mimic and then co-opt the prerogative of the gentleman author. Mimicking the gentleman, the structure of Davys' dedication emphasizes how critiques of women's vanity paradoxically seem to lead to structures of masculinity. Davys begins her dedication "To the Ladies of Great Britain" by charting out a terrain of female readership commenting on female vanity and pleasure: "At a time when the Town is so full of Masquerades, Operas, New Plays, Conjurors, Monsters, and feigned Devils; how can I, Ladies, expect you to throw away an hour upon the less agreeable Amusements my *Coquet* can give you?" (Davys 252).

Women's pleasures in theatre and masquerades were often interwoven with criticism of female vanity. Davys also strikes a tone of polite didacticism: "If I have here touched a young Lady's Vanity and Levity, it was to show her how amiable she is without those Blots, which certainly stain the Mind, and stamp Deformity where the greatest Beauties would shine, were they banished" (253). Davys is not describing Amoranda's faults in order to ridicule her, but to instruct and to delight. She, like Addison and Steele, is presenting a portrait of female vanity to improve women everywhere. However, like her spectatorial predecessor, Davys cannot present a lesson to the ladies without including its connections to masculinity. After focusing primarily on female vanity and the potential vanities of authorship, Davys suddenly turns to the importance of distinguishing Men of Sense (i.e. gentlemen) from shallow flatterers:

> One little word of Advice, Ladies, and I have done: When you grow weary of Flattery and begin to listen to matrimonial Addresses, choose a *Man with fine Sense*, as well as a fine Wig, and let him have some merit as well as much Embroidery: This will make Coxcombs give ground, and *Men of Sense* will equally admire your Conduct with your Beauty. (253, emphasis mine)

Davys' major criticism of female vanity is that it gets in the way of recognizing and appreciating Men of Sense. She also links the role of female readership with the gentleman. Remember, she is offering her novel as a means to educate "the Ladies of Great Britain." Her book will help cure them of their vanity and recognize and then enjoy the higher quality appreciation of Men of Sense instead of the vapid large quantity of praise from coxcombs. What is especially exciting about this is that Davys is claiming for

herself the same role as the gentleman. Addison and Steele have Mr. Spectator, and she has Alanthus/Formator. This changes the valence of Formator/Alanthus as a priggish-mentor/father/lover figure. It doesn't make him progressive or any less conservative, but it brings overt attention to the constructed nature of this figure and the masculinity he represents. Furthermore, it creates a space where a woman can manipulate the gentleman for her own ends.

Davys co-opts the gentleman's prerogative to influence a cross-gendered readership; Davys claims the approval of male readers, just as *The Spectator* claimed the interest of its female readers. Davys is just as concerned with addressing and categorizing her relationship to male readers as she is to female ones. Immediately following her dedication to the ladies, Davys' preface charts her relationship to male readers as a way to validate her authorship. However, Davys is careful to portray her relationship as creatively independent. She starts with the "worthy Gentlemen of Cambridge" (253) whose "civil, generous, good-natured Behavior towards me, is the only thing I have now left worth boasting of" (254). She claims gentlemanly approval for her work: "When I had written a Sheet or two of this Novel, I communicated my Design to a couple of young Gentlemen, whom I knew to be Men of Taste, and both my Friends; they approved of what I had done, advised me to proceed, then print it by Subscription: into which Proposal many of the Gentlemen entered" (254). Then Davys does the delicate dance of independence and modesty, which so many female authors learned to perform. She writes, "As this Book was written at Cambridge, I am a little apprehensive some may imagine the Gentlemen had a hand in it" (254). Claiming a concern that such learned gentlemen will be thought guilty of writing her little novel she continues:

> I do…assure the World, I am not acquainted with one member of that worthy and learned Society of Men, whose Pens are not employed in things infinitely above anything I can pretend to be the Author of: So that I only am accountable for ever Fault of my Book; and if it has any Beauties, I claim the Merit for them too. (254)

Davys claims an approving male readership, but asserts her authorial independence. She flips and claims a key aspect of Mr. Spectator's authorial validation; just as he establishes his gentility through constructing fruitful relationships with his female readers, Davys creates validating relationship between her and her male readers. She carefully balances indicating their interest and approval, and marking authorship as distinctly and separately hers.

Davys plays a deliberately gendered game with her dedication and preface, which mimics the fluidity of Mr. Spectator. Like the gentleman author, Davys adapts her own identity to move seamlessly within different circles. In her dedication to the ladies Davys includes her own authorial brand of female vanity: "She who has assurance to write has certainly the vanity of expecting to be read" (*RC* 252-3), but she justifies her authorial vanity as a motherly instinct: "All Authors see a Beauty in their own Compositions…as Mothers think their own Offspring amiable, how deficient soever Nature has been to them." On one level Davys is clearly "capitalizing on [her] femaleness" (Gallagher xxiv). However, this combination of pseudo-self-deprecation accompanied by justification also strikes a similar tone as Mr. Spectator's revision of his quiet taciturnity to observational tool of authorship. Meanwhile, in her dedication Davys constructs her authorship according to the rules of the gentleman. While she gestures to financial need, stating, "though I must own my Purse is (by a thousand Misfortunes) grown wholly useless to

everybody, my Pen is at the service of the Public" (253), that is not what has motivated her pen. Rather, Davys writes, "Idleness has so long been an Excuse for Writing, that I am almost ashamed to tell the World it was that, and that only, which produced the following Sheets" (253). She even claims that her primary concern is for the "young unthinking Minds of some of my own Sex" (253). Critics have read this gesture as indicating an actual and exclusive focus on female readers. Instead, Davys is mimicking the prerogative of the gentleman author. Davys claims the gentlemanly prerogatives of servicing the public, especially young women, and idleness for her novel. She co-opts the various aspects of male and female authorship that most serve her purposes. The sheer utility and dexterity of this gesture, perhaps as much as anything else, echoes the prerogative of the gentleman author, who adapts and transforms to suit his purpose all the while claiming a kind of central authenticity.

Conclusion

As I will argue throughout this dissertation, despite his normative and conservative power the gentleman is by his nature a responsive performance of masculinity, because he emerges as a figure of authorship and fiction. Davys reveals the desiring nature of the gentleman figure and how the coding of female readership is a gendered plot. She does not create his desire; she reveals it. The gentleman by definition requires a willing female audience. Female readers (as representatives for readers in general) must submit voluntarily to the gentleman's guidance. However, this dynamic transforms the gentleman into a contingent figure. For all of his supposed independence (moral, financial, social, etc.) he depends on pleasing women. He only takes shape

through their pleasure. And despite his claims to disinterest (and therefore sexual disembodiment), the gentleman author repeatedly relies on metaphors of courtship and marriage to seduce his readers. It isn't that he is disembodied, but that he seeks to hide his embodiment. Also, his body only takes shape when it reacts to female bodies. The gentleman exists in a perpetual state of reaction: addressing society's moral character, correcting the behavior of women, passing judgment on literature, culture, and taste, etc. He can only correct society's behavior, especially women's, if there has been a misstep of some kind in the first place: perfection does not require correction. This is in large part a function of authorship. Contrary to popular standards the gentleman is not an invisible, disembodied form of masculinity; it is just that he is only made visible through relations to others. He functions through contrast, reform, and complimentariness. This responsiveness makes the gentleman such a productive and powerful model of masculinity for both male and female authors.

Moving forward into Chapter 2, I will show how the role of the gentleman expanded. As Maurer writes, "The periodical's narratives place only men in the position of moral reformer" (65). However, with the rise of sensibility and novelistic portrayals of the gentleman as ideal love interest, the moralizing influence of women began shifting the valence of power. Davys may subtly co-opt some of the gentleman's authorship for herself by revealing his performative aspect, but she does not challenge the dynamic of didacticism. Amoranda does not influence Formator/Alanthus; the chain of influence is a one-way street. However, by making the gentleman author's desires visible and tying them to a courtship plot, Davys helps create a space where his desires remain at the mercy of the woman writer.

Notes

[21] 289, emphasis mine.

[22] i.5.1711, emphasis mine.

[23] See the work of Erin Mackie *Market a la Mode* (145-147); Thomas King (125), Manushag Powell *Performing Authorship* (4, 11, 30-33), J.D. Solinger (3), and Shawn Lisa Maurer (9).

[24] King and Mackie both explore how the rake was defined by his personal sovereignty, that is, his ability to exert his will over others.

[25] According to Kraft, "Long before the Restoration, wit had been associated with errancy, a curiosity or intellectual longing that was seen as the mental equivalent of physical desire. With the Restoration, and the resulting celebration of style that included wordplay and verbal one-upmanship, wit continued to be associated with transgression and sexual freedom" (636).

[26] For more on the rake's bi- or pan-sexual modes see King, Randolph Trumbach, and Mackie.

[27] See Maurer for a thorough explanation of the gentlemen's chastity in her second and third chapters: "These chapters investigate the ways in which an emphasis upon marital chastity became the focus for a discussion of changing familial relations between husbands and wives, as well as between parents and children. While distinguishing between texts that focus primarily upon the dispersal of information (Chapter 2) and those that emphasize sexual reform (Chapter 3), I nevertheless contend that both

information and reformation were crucial aspects of men's fashioning of themselves, as well as women" (Maurer 4).

[28] There are of course a few exceptions to this. For example in Chapter 5 I will be examining Dorriforth, Elizabeth Inchbald's Catholic gentleman, but the conservative features of this character protects him, to a great extent, as well as his position in the late century, from the libertine attitude of the rake.

[29] As Mackie writes, "The easy 'bisexuality' of the Restoration rake is no longer available within a model that defines sexual relations within a paradigm of complementary difference" (*RHP* 8). Randolph Trumbach, King, and Mackie have explored how this created a mandatory and "exclusive heterosexuality" (Trumbach 14), which the gentleman enacts.

[30] Mackie writes, "the paradigm of sexual difference locates gender within an individual's innate character, his or her subjectivity; it makes gender a personal, private matter fixed inwardly" (*RHP* 7).

[31] This "political and personal privacy" is often considered one of the major shifts in gender, and especially eighteenth-century masculinity (King 5). See Wahrman's *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004) and Thomas Laqueur's foundational *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990). See also Randolph Trumbach's *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Volume One-Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* for a description of how this evolution explicitly reinforced the mandatory heterosexuality of eighteenth-century men.

[32] The gentleman's private subjectivity and sexuality were linked with the emergence of the private and public spheres. Going back to Jürgen Habermas, the public and private spheres were gendered and separate, with the public sphere being masculine and the private feminine. However, more recent criticism on the gentleman's masculinity has convincingly argued that the gentleman was not only the ruler of the public, traditionally masculine sphere, but was also largely defined by his role as the patriarch, provider, and sympathetic husband and father of the domestic sphere. See Maurer's *Proposing Men* and Karen Harvey's *The Little Republic*.

[33] According to King, "private men were bound together as a collective body through their shared stance toward the discourses constituting public interest: the public use of reason to see through the spectacle of courtly embodiment, one mode of penetration resisting another" (8).

[34] "Masculinity seems like an obvious thing" (Reeser 1) and "True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body" (Connell 45). And yet as Halberstam in *Female Masculinities*, Connell, and Reeser all point out, this is a construct because masculine bodies are various, diverse, and not always male.

[35] There is something here about the rake's relationship to theater and the stage that I haven't worked out yet. My instinct is that the rake's linguistic mode lends him to the genre of theater with its performance and play, while periodicals, like *The Spectator*, mark a new literary model that suits the new man, the gentleman, with is narrative self and more controlled and polite interaction with its audience.

[36] Armstrong famously analyzes *Pamela:* where "We may observe the transfer of erotic desire from Pamela's body to her words" (Armstrong 6). Meanwhile, Gallagher considers how authorship was feminized by women writers, who became "literal nobodies: authorial personae, printed books, scandalous allegories, intellectual property rights, literary reputations, incomes, debts, and fictional characters. They are the exchangeable tokens of modern authorship that allowed increasing numbers of women writers to thrive as the eighteenth century wore on" (Gallagher xiii)

[37] In her book *Performing Authorship* Powell provides a useful definition of the term eidolon and its origins: "The word 'eidolon' implies a spectral or insubstantial figure, as indeed a purely rhetorical projection of an author's editorial ego must be, existing, materially speaking, only in paper and ink. The term is fitting, if we think with reverence (as eighteenth-century authors certainly did) of Addison's famous periodical creation. Even so, we should be careful not to lean too heavily on the model implied by the ghostly Mr. Spectator when we consider these personas, for two reasons: one is that Mr. Spectator is in some ways an exception in his very abstractedness, and the other that, however abstract an eidolon might be, the audience would have been perfectly aware that a real flesh-and-blood author lurked in the background" (50)

[38] Powell writes, "Such unencumbered neutrality usually existed in stark contrast with the actual circumstances of the human author: the public face enabled the suppression of the private, but this was vexingly accomplished in terms that seemed to deny that such a dual personal existence was even possible" (*PA* 4).

[39] "True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body" (Connell 45)

[40] As Mackie writes, "The rake's sexual prolificacy can be appreciated as an expression of the very kind of heterosexual masculinity that is supportive of modern patriarchy" (*RHP* 9).

[41] No. 4, 37, 79, 92, 205, 572, all touch on women's reading and libraries in some way, with Mr. Spectator refusing to actually list readings outside of his own publication. Steele did publish *The Ladies Library* in three volumes in 1714, but in it he adopts the persona of a lady. This is further evidence of Steele performing his gentlemanly prerogative.

[42] There are numerous entries that reference or touch on the features of female vanity in ways that implicate the coquette. Some of the most clear and striking are: No. 45, which criticizes an excess of "gaiety" in women; No 79 which presents a letter from a supposed coquette, which is contrasted by a letter from another, less superficially frivolous woman reader; and No. 73, which claims that women love praise more than men and how this leads them into folly when they seek the vain applause like a coquette; it castigates women who seek "to Seduce Men to their Worship" (i.313)

[43] Speaking to Lord Lofty, "Pugh! said *Amoranda*, is that all? you know, my Lord, there are Misfortunes in all Families, as Sir *Roger de Coverley* says, come come, drink a Dish of Tea and wash away Sorrow" (287). This line is from *The Spectator* No. 109 (July 5, 1711). The specific line from *The Spectator* is "there are Misfortunes in all families" (I.??). I have not entirely worked out this passage. However, it is intriguing that Amoranda quotes this line to Lofty. This scene is part of one Mr. Spectator's visits to Sir

Roger's family estate, and the specific scene in No. 109 is Roger boasting about his family history to Mr. Spectator. Explaining how the portraits mark the powers, foibles, and progressions of his family, for "[Sir Roger] is a Gentleman who does not a little value himself upon his ancient Descent" (I). Sir Roger describes how the "the Persons of one Age differ from those of another, merely by" "the Force of Dress" "only". Amoranda is speaking to Lord Lofty here, laying the foundation for the bed-trick that will trick him into marrying Altemira. One minute she is calling out and laughing at his gallant declarations of love, the next he goes pale after receiving news of "a considerable loss" from his Steward (actually news that Altemira has regained her contract) (Davys 287). There is something potentially challenging about the coquettish heroine parroting the stuffy country gentleman's pompous pride in his heritage to the class and status conscious rake. There is also something to be said about Amoranda, the narratively threatening coquette, referencing as scene depicting homosociality amidst the evidence of patriarchal heritage. Sir Roger is telling his gentleman friend, Mr. Spectator, of his family, where men are strong or soft, and women become valued through their marriages. The coquette is demonstrating an authority of her own; the right to co-opt the gentleman author's language for her own plotting, in this case, the plot to get Lofty to fulfill his contract with Altemira. Sir Roger describes one ancestor, an heiress, who was whisked away for her fortune. Lofty thinks this will be his role, but instead he is the one trapped into marriage by the clever coquette.

[44] Numerous critics list this fact, but for more information on Davys' sparse, yet noteworthy biography, see Martha Bowden's article "Mary Davys: Self-presentation and

the Woman Writer's Reputation in the Early Eighteenth Century". Bowden writes, "The subscribers' list is interesting as much for what it contains as what it lacks. The names include Alexander Pope, John Gay, and Martha Blount, but neither Jonathan Swift nor Esther Johnson are on the list" (26).

[45] MacCarthy calls Davys and Jane Barker "priggish" writers who create heroines who "are all righteous, matter-of-fact prigs" (252). Bowden is more sympathetic to Davys, seeing her conservatism as the product of cultural constraints: "In the light of the expectations and restrictions on the woman wrier in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, we can clearly see Davys constructing a self that will conform to society's requirements" (18).

[46] To be fair, MacCarthy's *The Female Pen: Women Writers Their Contribution to the English Novel 1621-1744* (1948) is a survey of women writers, and it is one of the earliest critical works that takes the contributions of women writers to eighteenth-century literary production seriously. Also, Wikborg's *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction* (2002) is interested in categorizing different models of the "patriarchal lover", which relies on father figure like lovers, but while she mentions Davys in her chapter on "The Mentor" she spends most of her chapter investigating other novelists.

[47] Kern writes, "The pattern of manners which emerges from her novels is appropriate to her feminine viewpoint. Mary Davys's heroines never question the fact that they must 'choose a man' and marry, but they consistently resist the authority of fathers to make the choice for them" (32). Thus, women's choices are not adventurous but they are still their

own. I disagree with Kern's sense of Amoranda's resistance. That isn't the word I would use; however, I think Kern is right to pick up on the tension of Davys' work, the ways in which Davys is not fully subversive or conservative.

[48] Potter and Sajé write, perhaps, the two most current and compelling pieces on *The Reform'd Coquet*. In "'The Assurance to Write, the Vanity of Expecting to be Read': Deception and Reform in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet*" Sajé makes the boldest claims for the proto-feminist message of the novel, seeing Amoranda's reform as a patriarchal silencing. Potter sees Davys' novel as operating in a similar vein, but more subtly that Sajé. In "Decorous Disruption: The Cultural Voice of Mary Davys," Potter argues that Davys creates dual narrative layers, a conservative top layer and a more subversive, submerged meaning. In her article "'I should Not Care to Mix My Breed': Gender, Race, Class, and Genre in Mary Davys's *The Accomplished Rake, or Modern Fine Gentleman*," Duff focuses on how Davys' complicated status as an Irish, middling class, woman writer inflects her authorship, but Duff looks at *The Accomplish'd Rake; or the Modern Fine Gentleman*, which is less purposeful for my analysis.

[49] According to McBurney, "No English novelist before Fielding—with the possible exception of Mrs. Aphra Behn—was so extensively influenced by the theater as Mrs. Davys" (351).

[50] I say semi-infamously because anyone who writes about Davys mentions it, but since Davys is generally ignored this comment lacks the kind of larger impact of other odd critical comments.

[51] One exception to these tracts of criticism is Michael Genovese's article "Middlemen and Marriage in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet*," which reads the novel in terms of social rehabilitation of the economic and rising figure of the middleman. Another scholar who approaches Davys from a slightly different angle is Virginia Duff, who analyzes intersections of race, class and gender in her article "'I should Not Care to Mix My Breed': Gender, Race, Class, and Genre in Mary Davys's *The Accomplished Rake, or Modern Fine Gentleman*."

[52] Wikborg's book categorizes different versions of the father figure in her exploration of what she terms "the patriarchal lover" (2). She writes, "Many of the stories published by women in the period set an acute need for a father figure's validation against an equally acute need to produce texts, voices, and view of their own" (2). In her chapter "The Guardian" she looks at models from Manley's *The New Atlantis* and Haywood's *Love in Excess*; Wikborg categorizes Formator as Mentor in her fourth chapter.

[53] As Lisa Freeman argues in her book *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage,* in the early eighteenth century "an alternative model of identity based on the concept of character…marked a site of resistance to the rise of the subject and to the ideological conformity enforced through that identity formation" (1). Therefore, reading the gentleman as a performance and character is more historically accurate for the early eighteenth century. This also fits with Deidre Lynch and Solinger (something is missing here) connect with character model where "counts as character in this period is not only the 'person regarded as the possessor of specified qualities' but also the qualities themselves, such as a person's face or features, which today we

normally call *characteristics* (35)" (Solinger 31). See Lynch's *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning*.

[54] The coquette is less associated with wit than the rake, and her speech is often depicted as frivolous—frequently in works like *The Spectator*—but she is also displayed as verbally powerful in works where she is featured as the heroine: *The Reform'd Coquet* or Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791).

CHAPTER 2 – THE GENTLEMAN OF LETTERS AS PASSIONATE READER: ELIZA HAYWOOD'S *LOVE IN EXCESS* AND DAVID HUME'S PHILOSOPHY OF MORAL SYMPATHY

"In general we may remark, that the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each other's emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiment and opinions may be often reverberated."–David Hume[55]

"Now will I appeal to any impartial Reader, even among the Men…"—Eliza Haywood[56]

David Hume's comment on the *minds of men* operates on two levels. First, there is the universal construct of "the minds of men," one that implies both men and women but leaves men as the *de facto* face of humanity. However, there is a second, but no less culturally relevant or obvious, assumption, both within and without the eighteenth century, that the construction of the minds of men is the reflection and the province of other male minds, because they are the purest surfaces to reflect sentiment and opinions. For so long, critics have considered the Enlightenment mind of male thinkers to be an

ideal of eighteenth-century masculinity: seemingly rational, natural, and disembodied. These features are, as I have previously demonstrated, the key features of the gentleman, an enlightened man whose mind appears to both create and then reflect itself through writing, culture, and gender. The Enlightenment mind has wide-ranging reflective influence seeming to create, naturalize, and reproduce itself in a sphere of masculine hegemony. This chapter rethinks this perception by proposing a mirroring of minds not among men but between David Hume and Eliza Haywood. Critical discussions that have attempted to bring women writers into conversation with male enlightenment thinkers typically position women as oppositional and responsive to their seemingly more dominant male counterparts.[57] I will shift the focus of this criticism by considering the ways Haywood not only responded to, but also shaped the discourse and the gentleman reader through her male characters.[58] I argue the "Fair Arbitress of Passion's" rays enlighten Hume's mind, specifically the contours of his masculinity, his status as gentleman, and the characteristics that that persona requires him to perform. As Haywood's epigraph above indicates, the "impartiality" of the gentleman, his benevolent patriarchal light, is not as ingrained as he would have us believe. Instead, as I will demonstrate, Hume's regulation of women's reading, and by extension the gentleman's reading, too, stems from anxiety about being desirable.

Hume's persona of a gentleman reader functions as a fictional construct that relies on the narrative structures of Haywood's amatory fiction and manifests the paradoxical anxieties of authority and responsive desire that define the gentleman reader. In Chapter One, I established how writing showcases the gentleman's nature, working as the active display of his good sense. In this chapter, I argue that it is through his reading that he

cultivates this persona. Reading reformed masculinity: it instilled proper taste and sympathy into men, and transformed them into gentlemen. This—the relationship between a gentleman's reading and his moral reform—is what Haywood dramatizes in her novel, and what Hume attempts to perform personally through his essays. For Haywood, reading was an antidote for rakishness, in ways that participate in the cultural reform of male manners. Meanwhile, Hume uses the structures of this reform to rewrite the formerly stodgy, isolated man of letters as a social, attractive gentleman--specifically to rewrite himself, a self-identified man of letters, as a gentleman who inspires desire in his readers, especially female readers. Hume's metaphor of reflection is a particularly apt starting point for this chapter, because both Haywood and then Hume use sympathy, passion, and imitation to define and revise the gentleman's authority as a moral reader. In this way, the gentleman, by reflecting the light of his text and his reading, creates a beam that others are meant to mirror. What my chapter proposes is that Hume is imitating Haywood because, while the man of letters explicitly separates his gentlemanly reading from novel and romance reading (a step along the road to categorizing these genres as effeminate and feminine), decrying the seductive effects of such genres on vulnerable female readers, he attempts to co-opt their mechanisms of appeal, their formal seductions, for his own writings.

To be clear, I am not arguing for a direct line of influence in this chapter. I am not claiming that Hume read Haywood (though given her popularity and longevity it seems entirely plausible that he would have) and then directly transcribed her version of the gentleman onto his own literary performance. Instead, I am arguing for a heretofore unexamined channel wherein the modifications Haywood brings to her gentleman

character, D'elmont, reveal key aspects of the gentleman that become ingrained in Hume's own literary persona. Hume's version of the gentleman, at first glance, seems obvious; the male author uses his gender and its accompanying characteristics to justify the regulation of women through literary and sexual channels. At first glance, Hume's persona seems like a direct outgrowth from male models like *The Spectator*. However, by positioning Haywood as a forerunner of Hume, it becomes clear that gentlemanly regulation originates in a more complex literary milieu. Through her amatory style and narrative of rakish reform, Haywood creates a standard for the gentleman that depends upon a potent and omnipresent desirability, which is more gendered, romantic, and pronounced than the desire created by Addison and Steele. For the gentleman to be a gentleman, for his reading and sympathy to function and gain influence, women must desire him. His power is, therefore, dependent on women. And it is this quest for desirability that fuels Hume's revisions of his own persona, his formal style, and his regulation of women. Hume is seeking to perform the impossible gender standard that Haywood sets for masculinity, one that demands that men be both powerful and influential while being dependent upon not just women's approval, but their sexual desire.

Finally, by placing Haywood and Hume in dialogue with one another, we see that Haywood creates a philosophy of masculinity through her novels, specifically via the gentlemen in her very first foray, *Love in Excess*, while Hume crafts a fictional identity for himself as a gentleman through his philosophical writings. One of my broader goals is to reveal how critical readings of Hume and Haywood have opposite generic problems. Critics often use Hume's philosophy to provide cultural or intellectual context for ideals

and principles of the century, which, often ends up ignoring the textual, narrative, and structural aspects of the philosophical text.[59] For example, Catherine Gallagher explains her own focus on Hume as reflecting contemporary critical rather than eighteenth-century cultural priorities: "I have chosen *A Treatise* not because it was an influential work in the eighteenth century, (it was not) but literary critics are fond of quoting it to prove that eighteenth-century people believed that they naturally took on the emotional coloring of their human environment through the automatic operations of sympathy" (167-8). John Bender and Rebecca Tierney-Hynes have rightly pointed out how Hume's philosophy of identity relies on fiction, on narrative structure; John Mullan, Betty Schellenberg and Jerome Christensen acknowledge how Hume's philosophy informs his writing style; but these critics stop short of reading Hume himself, i.e. his persona in his philosophy and essays, as a fictional construction; they do not examine how his style deliberately performs the character of the gentleman. Furthermore, while critics have linked Hume to the novel, almost nobody links Hume's philosophy to the more "feminine" forms of fiction: romance, secret history, and amatory novels. One exception is Tierney-Hynes, who does position Hume as the literary inheritor of genres like romance and amatory fiction, but she links this to his philosophical concept of the imagination, and not to his own character. Meanwhile, until relatively recently, the philosophical aspects and impulses of Haywood's work, especially in her novels, have been overlooked. While Hume is an almost perfunctory touchstone for critical conversations on moral sympathy, Haywood is referenced much less frequently in conversations on sensibility and is almost entirely absent from discussions of its relationship to masculinity.[60] Recently critics like Kathleen Lubey and Tierney-Hynes have begun bringing Haywood into discussions of

the philosophical and moral implications of the passions on eighteenth-century culture, particularly in the realm of epistemologies of the self and the imagination.[61] My chapter will build upon these interventions and position Haywood as an author who not only depicts moral sympathy, but deploys it in a way that is directly concerned with the cultivation of the gentleman, and anticipates Hume's persona and philosophy of the passions. The true complexity is that neither author—no author in fact—is entirely originary or reactionary. However, by placing these two authors in dialogue I hope to shift the valences we usually ascribe to them.

The Cult of Masculinity: The Gentleman Reader and the Reform of Male Manners

Part of the impetus behind this chapter is the fact that Haywood and Hume occupy two key points in the trajectory of the cult of sensibility and its accompanying reform of male manners. Haywood's first novel, *Love in Excess* (1719) predates the cult of sensibility (typically associated with 1740-1770s), and therefore serves as a touchstone in the rise of this culture and its reforming men from rakes into gentlemen through cultivating sympathy and reading. Meanwhile, Hume's work is canonical in discussions of the philosophy of moral sympathy and its associations with the cult of sensibility.

The significance of the gentleman reader and the links connecting masculinity, reading, and sympathy emerge as part of the larger cult of sensibility, or the cultural and aesthetic movement that prioritized feeling and emotional expression in the cultivation of morals. However, critics like G.J. Barker-Benfield, Harriet Guest, Mullan, Schellenberg, and others have charted how this cult was the product of reforms and movements earlier

in the eighteenth century, which were linked to shifting models masculinity in particular.[62] One of the major tenets of this movement was the link between fine-tuned emotions—sensibility—and proper moral feeling—sentiment.[63] The sentimental novel ruled the day, and moral sympathy became the code of the era. Philosophies of sympathy articulated the idea that morality was dictated by our emotions and ability to feel for and identify with our fellow man, rather than by reason.

While I argue that Haywood anticipates Hume and the implications of moral sympathy on the structure of the gentleman, I will also present Hume's work as representative of this philosophy (an uncontroversial position).[64] Coming out of the tradition of the Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutchinson, and the Scottish Enlightenment, Hume's empiricist, skeptical philosophy was founded on principles of moral sympathy. In fact, in his oft-cited *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739-1740), Hume argues that, "Morality is a subject that interests us above all others: We fancy the peace of society to be at stake in every decision concerning it" (*THN* 455). Hume positions morality as a uniquely experiential and social concern in ways that radically depart from other, more rationalistic models of morality. Morals are not the product of reason, defined as "Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood" (458), but of feeling. Our reason can only lead us to facts about the relations between objects, and morality is about judging whether something is virtuous or not, not whether it "is or is not". Thus, "Morality…is more properly felt than judg'd of" because it is a "feeling or sentiment" (470). Our morality becomes a subjective experience driven by our individual passions and responses to the world around us. However, while moral sense is felt and dictated by individual minds, feelings and associations are shaped by society. Therefore, sympathy is fundamentally a

social principle, and human beings "can form no wish, which has not a reference to society" (363). Morality is not natural in the sense that it is a priori and rationalistic, but it is natural in the sense that each society creates standards of moral understanding through its commonalities and experiences, which become internalized in associations and the relations through which we feel our experience of the world.[65]

The growing popularity of moral sympathy had direct ramifications for eighteenth-century masculinity; a gentleman in the ideal sense was, of course, a man of thorough and proper sympathy, and it was this moral capacity that separated him from his rakish counterparts. The cult of sensibility was, according to Barker-Benfield, a "campaign for the reformation of manners target[ing]…male behavior" (xxvi). The "new male ideal was identified with Christian piety and goodness…influenced by courtly manners of the Renaissance," but rejected aristocratic luxury and "[r]akish insensitivity" (Barker-Benfield 247, 145). Rakes were predatory consumers who indulged in luxury, violence, godlessness, and the debasement and mistreatment of women. They were, by definition, selfish, self-centered beings lacking moral sympathy: they eschewed care for others or for the dictates of society. Meanwhile, prominent male thinkers like Hume, Adam Smith and other prominent members of the Scottish Enlightenment "idealized sensibility in men and implemented their social affections among themselves" (Barker-Benfield 132). This type of masculinity—pious, virtuous, domestic, polite, anti-rake—aligns with the gentleman.

The philosophy of moral sympathy fits in with the reform of male manners because it marks morality as something *a posteriori*, something that can and must be cultivated through personal experience in tandem with social influence. The gentleman

was not an innate form of masculinity; unlike the aristocrat, birth was only one feature of the gentleman, whose worth was defined by his education, taste, manners, experience of the world, and ability to properly govern and influence the morals of others. Sympathy not only distinguished the gentleman from the rake, but it also provided a potential antidote for rakishness; men could cultivate their moral feelings, and therefore reform from rakes into gentlemen, and two of the major forces at play in this reform were reading—the influence of literature over sympathy and the ways in which sympathy functioned metaphorically as reading—and women, who acted as the moral guides of men.

The cult of sensibility thus emphasized reform; the idea that through experience, the right kind of cultivation and sociality, manners could be softened and morality could be instilled, and reading became one of the vehicles for this reform. The gentleman, as explored in the previous chapter, positions himself as an objective moral authority, but this authority is, at its root, linked to his own romantic and sexual desires for women and his masculinity's need to be defined through his relationships to women. This desire is both semi-visible and necessary for the gentleman's overt heterosexuality and social authority, which often manifests in his regulation of women's behavior and reading. This same structure of regulation translates from the gentleman as didactic author to the gentleman as sympathetic reader. Language, especially literary language, made sympathy more available because it excited the imagination, but this capacity of language, especially in fiction, was "the source of much anxiety in the eighteenth century" (Tierney-Hynes 3). Literature's power to invoke the passions, to produce sentimental feeling and sympathy, created "ongoing efforts to stabilize the imagination's powerful

and passionate properties—to harness for moral ends the waywardness of the imagination" (Lubey 74). This cultural anxiety about the power of literature often focused on female readers. After all, as creatures of greater sensibility and less reason, women were considered more likely to be swept up by the forceful passions aroused by reading. In contrast, the gentleman is usually exempted from suspicions about his reading, because his reading was result of his personal cultivation and a proper masculine growth rather than a feminine excess of sensibility. This definition of the gentleman, as the more regulated, rational reader, is dependent on perceptions of women as more passionate readers. He was the temperate but feeling guide for proper social and literal reading, but that role required that he have someone in need of his guidance: women and, less overtly, other men.

What intertwines the gentleman's authority over reading and morality are the ways in which cultivating morality via sympathy became a process of metaphorical reading. This is part of why the intersection between Hume's philosophy of sympathy and reading has been one of the most popular for eighteenth-century scholars.[66] This statement extends outward in two ways. First, sympathy functions as a kind of metaphorical reading practice; the mechanisms of sympathy mimicked the mechanisms of reading. Second, reading is a valuable instructive tool for cultivating sympathy. To be sympathetic is to be able to properly read the world and the countenances and behaviors of others; as Hume would have it, "There is no spectacle so fair and beautiful as a noble and generous action; nor any which gives us more abhorrence than one that is cruel and treacherous" (*THN* 470). Sympathy is based first on observation of the world, of a spectacle: "Certain *sense data* (melancholy looks, open wounds, mournful language)

communicate an *idea* of someone else's emotional state (unhappiness)" (Gallagher 169). Then, the observer connects that idea via a relational principle (cause and effect, contiguity, or resemblance) with themselves (their own ideas and impressions), which, if the connection is strong enough transforms the idea into an impression (by adding force and vivacity) of the other person's emotions. This impression can have such force that the feelings we attribute to the other person can trigger the observer's own passions and moral feeling.

This process mimics the effect of language on the imagination. As Lubey argues, fiction can "provide evocative descriptions that raise readers' sensitivities to the suffering of others" by creating vivid impressions on the imagination (6). Of the power of language to nurture sympathy, Hume explains, "'Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours" (*THN* 481). Therefore we need language, a common language, to make the situations and feelings of others—both personally and culturally—understandable to us. Hume writes, "General language…being formed for general use, must be moulded on some more general views, and must affix the epithets of praise of blame, in conformity to sentiments, which arise from the general interests of the community" (214-15). Language makes sympathy possible; it allows us to socialize our sympathies, and for society to regulate morality. By extension, literature helps create shared language. Sympathy is entangled with reading because language and personal experience can trigger the imagination and impressions in the same way.

Sympathy is a form of metaphorical reading, which has its roots in literal reading practices and theories. Reading is therefore an instructive vehicle for our moral

sympathy. In his *Essays Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Hume explicitly connects literature with moral instruction: “The great charm of poetry consists in lively pictures of the sublime passions, magnanimity, courage, disdain of fortune; or those of the tender affections, love and friendship; which warm the heart, and diffuse over it similar sentiments and emotions” (238). Hume writes in the *Treatise*, “Poets themselves, tho’ liars by profession,” can create pleasure in their reader, which is significant because pleasure—feeling pleasure or pain—becomes the key indicator of sensibility for Hume (121). Therefore, because morality is not about truth or falsehood, what is or is not, literature’s fictional aspect does not interfere with its ability to invoke moral feelings and lessons. In fact, literature may be the best way to instruct and expand capacities for moral sympathy. According to Hume, our sympathy is more thoroughly engaged when it is somehow related to ourselves, “We perceive, that the generosity of men is very limited and that it seldom extends beyond their friends and family, or at most, beyond their native country” (602). Our sympathy is sparked by people whose interests are brought to our attention and related to our own, which language, especially fiction and character, have the ability to do. Hume claims, “I cannot feel an emotion…without it becoming in some sense my own.” As Gallagher argues, “Hume’s *Treatise* reveals why fictional characters were uniquely suitable objects of compassion. Because they were conjectural, suppositional identities *belonging* to no one, they could be universally appropriated. A story about nobody was nobody’s story and hence could be entered, occupied, identified with anybody” (168). Fictional characters’ situations and emotions can easily become our own, because there is not a barrier of an actual other self to mediate between the character’s emotions and our personal selves. This is why sentimental fiction became

such a crucial vessel for the adoption of philosophies of moral sympathy; sentimental fiction's display of virtue in distress produced sympathetic and then moral reflection.

This combination of reading as cultivating moral sympathy and moral sympathy mimicking reading had a distinct impact on the authority of the gentleman. A proper gentleman needs "the ability to *read* others and to modify and modulate" his behavior accordingly; his ability to adapt "according to social context" was one of the gentleman's "signature skills" (Solinger 31). The ability to read others and to act accordingly was linked with actual reading as "essential to the 'formation of taste'" and thus, it became a crucial part of the reform of male manners (Barker-Benfield 118). Taste was a regulating element for the passions. Hume writes, "I find, that [cultivating our taste] rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions" ("Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion" 93). This civilizing effect became especially important for reformers who sought to "improv[e] men through art" as a means of smoothing out their rougher aspects and encouraging their sensibility (Barker-Benfield 115). The growing popularity of literature and moral philosophy was one of the primary means for spreading sympathy, allowing its ideals to "touch…the perceptions of most literate and semi-literate people" (*Sensibility* 3-4). And the most literate was the gentleman, who, building off of the position of moral and didactic author (Chapter 1) became the most sympathetic reader**.**

The gentleman's influence as a reader was tied directly to the role of women as a driving force behind the reform of male manners: the gentleman must be softened by women; his morality must be a reflection of his respectful and polite engagement with women. This translates to a system where the gentleman must be a good reader of

women. According to Michele Cohen, Robert Jones, Barker-Benfield, and Schellenberg, a new emphasis on heterosociality was vital to the cult of sensibility, especially for men. In fact, as Barker-Benfield rightly points out, the reform of male manners was led by women, who sought to reform masculine behavior, moving it away from the luxurious rake ideal who victimized women to the more sensible, feeling domestic man (i.e. the gentleman), who held women and their position in his home and society in high regard. To cultivate proper sympathy, men had to seek out and embrace the company and influence of women. The cult of sensibility prioritized taste and politeness, which were also crucial features of the gentleman, and "the mutual conversation of the sexes, it was generally agreed, was the best way to achieve politeness" (Cohen 4).[67] This conversation linked the gentleman's politeness with domesticity and femininity, because "not surprisingly, the gentleman will find his greatest conversational happiness in his own home, in the company of his wife" (Schellenberg 15). This common ground was necessary for the gentleman's masculinity, again, referring back to Chapter 1, marking the ways this form of masculinity was defined through his relations with women.

One of the major points I am making in this project, both within this chapter and beyond, is that the gentleman was paradoxically a dominant form of masculinity that was continuously defined in a contingent relationship to women. Critics have pointed out that, within the cult of sensibility (and beyond) women played a vital and necessary role, "polishing men" into gentlemen (Cohen 4).[68] As Guest argues, in the eighteenth century, "Femininity may seem of small significance in some of the major transactions of cultural change, but it is always a part of what gives those transactions current value" (2). The social circle, the realm of conversation and social refinement, was the region wherein

women dictated the valence of value. Women were seen as more feeling, and more prone to sensibility, but this was a double-edged sword because it also marked women as more passionate and less in control of their own emotions. Yet this new prioritization of women's feelings created a space where women could "articulate…their sense of real and potential victimization by men, as well as their rising expectations on this and other fronts" (Barker-Benfield xxvi). This chapter demonstrates how writers like Haywood created this space for female influence over masculinity to exert their right to dictate male habits and reading. This, especially in relation to the gentleman as reader, placed men who wished to be gentlemen in a contingent position, both morally and sexually. Because women's wishes, manners, and desires give him shape, the gentleman must be responsive before he is influential. To be a gentleman a man must exert moral influence, which is the product of his relationships with women, but he must also avoid slipping into effeminacy.

The gentleman's persona, especially in contrast to the rake's, was supposed to be one of virtue and restraint, of prioritizing the good and feelings of others, especially women's, above his own desires. This feature has often made the gentleman appear passive or boring to critics, because, by his nature, he lacks the sexual aggression and passionate display of the rake. Meanwhile, it is difficult (but not impossible) for him to perform precisely same sentimental, sexual vulnerability as the virtuous heroine while not becoming emasculated. For example, Christensen reads Hume as a case study for the ways in which polite male authorship (i.e. the gentleman) becomes a form of literary castration where, in paying homage to women, while subtly asserting his authority, male authors demonstrate their polite "capacity to incapacitate themselves" (98).[69] For example, in his "Of Essay Writing" (1742), Hume considers men to be the rulers of the

learned sphere and women to be the sovereigns of the polite world. Within Hume's moral philosophy, men are placed in an inactive, passive position. For Hume reason (the realm of the learned sphere—i.e. men) "is utterly impotent", it cannot spur us to action; that is the realm of our passions, our feelings (the realm of women) (457).

I do not agree with Christensen that we should read the gentleman, or the male author, as a self-castrating figure, because this elides the agency of women like Haywood in the construction of the gentleman's character. His potential for passivity makes the power of the gentleman as moral reader so important for establishing, but also negotiating, his masculinity. Reading, in terms of moral sympathy, is first a passive, observational experience, dictated by society and in a new way by women, that in turn reflects outward as social influence. It is passivity that turns into power and authority, but restrained power and authority. It requires the gentleman to restrain his own personal desires on someone else's terms, but then his restraint becomes a powerful example that can be wielded over others.

For Haywood and Hume the gentleman's progression from influenced to influencer evolves according to similar philosophies of the passions. Both create systems wherein conflict between the passions creates standards by which the gentleman's moral character and sexuality are intertwined and measured. The gentleman is the man who properly negotiates his passions and can therefore regulate the passions of others; his passivity gives license to his agency. What positioning Haywood as the forerunner of Hume illuminates is how this gentlemanly regulation only functions if it accords with and produces feminine desire. The gentleman's self-restraint, the product of his cultivated sympathy, rewrites his potential passivity in ways that potentially liberate feminine desire

(Haywood) but also regulate it (Hume). Unlike sentimental femininity, which demands complex negotiations of passive obedience, the gentleman's regulation of the passions, both his own and others, depends on a matrix of responsiveness that must also present itself as a directing kind of authority.

Eliza Haywood's Count D'elmont: A Character Study in the Literary Education and (Re)Form of the Gentleman as a Sympathetic Reader

In her first novel, *Love in Excess* (1719), Haywood sets up a model of masculinity for her readers. She creates an exemplary male reader, the dashing Count D'elmont, for her actual male readers to emulate. Haywood intertwines D'elmont's excessively attractive masculinity with the cultivation of his moral sympathy through both literal and metaphorical reading. In these ways, Haywood participates in and anticipates aspects of the reform of male manners and the cult of sensibility. Furthermore, Haywood sets out to exert this influence deliberately and to validate her right as a woman author to do so. She challenges masculine critiques of novels and amatory fiction—anticipating Hume in a different way—and presents a case that her novels are, not only a valid, but an ideal tool for educating her readers in moral sympathy, especially for educating male readers in how to become desirable gentlemen. What Haywood adds to the gentleman is an infusion of potent desirability based in her own generic conventions. D'elmont becomes more, not less, desirable as he transforms into a gentleman, but what allows Haywood to achieve this is the open depiction of feminine passion. Critics have long noted the prominence of women's desire in Haywood; however, unnoted is how the vocalization and

dramatization of female passion provides an element that the new form of the gentleman requires in order to define his own virtuous contours. If the gentleman is supposed to be the new ideal of masculinity, if he is to successfully replace the rake through his sensibility, restraint, and moral feeling, he must maintain a competitive level of appeal for readers—both men and women. Haywood's solution is to create D'elmont, whose desirability rather than his desires drive the action of the text. D'elmont demonstrates his moral feeling through his reactions and responses, rather than his actions. Through her amatory style, Haywood is able to emphasize the need for the gentleman to be desirable in ways that later produce anxiety for real men, like Hume, who attempt to occupy and self-identify as gentlemen readers.

Haywood's Type?: Rethinking Haywood's Male Characters and Readers

Love in Excess is one of the most studied texts in Haywood's oeuvre. Yet as in the larger critical conversation on Haywood, scholarship on *Love in Excess* has typically focused on feminocentric themes: female readership, female characters, genre and femininity, and expressions of female desire.[70] Toni Bowers articulates this general position, arguing, "The central issue in *Love in Excess* is the problem of female sexual agency—the ability to recognize one's own desire and to express or act on it in an effective way" (229). When they have chosen a central figure, critics have often positioned Melliora as the central character of this narrative.[71] However, Count D'elmont is undoubtedly the main character of this novel. He is the only character who appears in all three parts of the novel, and his relationships with several (conveniently alliterative) groups of women shape the central action of each section. In Part One, D'elmont seduces

Amena, marries the jealous Alovisa, and hears his brother's tale of love for Annselina. In Part Two, D'elmont falls in love with his virtuous ward Melliora while being pursued by the coquettish Melantha. Finally, in Part Three, the lustful Ciamara attempts to seduce D'elmont, who is assisting Frankville's union with his lady, Camilla. Part Three also introduces the virtuous, but unalliterative (because she is matchless and mateless) Violetta, who dies for love of D'elmont. In each part, the female characters, while presenting dynamic portraits of female desire and passion, clearly orbit around the axis of D'elmont and his evolving masculine character. In fact, D'elmont's reform is all the more striking because the female characters do not evolve at all.[72] It is D'elmont's moral, sexual, social, and psychological development that the narrative is centrally—if not exclusively—concerned with.

Critics have typically dismissed D'elmont's desires and motivations as less interesting and less important than those of his female counterparts. In *Love in Excess,* Haywood's other works, and early eighteenth-century women's writing in general, male sexual desire "is a relatively straightforward matter…'self-interested,' 'short-lived and end-directed'" in contrast to female sexuality and desire which "is more problematic, more oblique because more difficult to square with familiar measures of virtue" (Bowers 230).[73] According to critics, the "typical" Haywoodian male is a predatory, rakish seducer, who is irresistibly attractive to his female counterparts, but usually leaves them abandoned and seduced (often pregnant). Because of the repeated features of these characters, the Haywoodian men are often discussed as plot devices rather than as fully developed characters. The selfish desires and sexual appeal of the male characters drive the narrative forward, usually propelling the heroines towards seductions and broken

hearts. Even the nobler male figures, like de l'Amye from *Lasselia; or The Self Abandoned* (1723) who "to the End of his Life he lov'd [Lasselia] with an undiminish'd Ardour," is still technically a seducer (*Lasselia* 42).[74] Within this critical thrust, Haywood's male characters—especially in her earlier amatory fiction—are treated as a type.[75] Character type indicates a kind of static nature that, while popular and influential in the eighteenth century, does not match D'elmont's character.[76] I am not denying that *Love in Excess* carves out the prominence of female sexuality in Haywood's aesthetic and literary career, but the unintended critical consequence of focusing exclusively on the female characters of this text is that D'elmont's importance in Haywood's larger novelistic[77] oeuvre is overlooked.[78] D'elmont's desires can be self-interested and end-directed, but they are not static. In Part 1 D'elmont scoffs at the idea of love, but then he falls in love with Melliora, and by the end of the novel he has learned to resist various temptations and become thoroughly domesticated, married, and "blest with numerous and hopeful issue" a "lovely" example "of conjugal affection" (266). He moves "from total insensitivity through suffering passion to happy marriage" (Oakleaf 12). Correspondingly, his desires shift from haphazard seduction to domestic desire.

Perhaps one of the reasons D'elmont's character fails to stand out to contemporary critics is that the reformed rake has become such an iconic, clichéd figure. He so litters the pages of modern romance novels, films, and television that he no longer strikes us as dynamic or interesting, and certainly not as a realistic portrait of character development or masculinity. In *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, Tania Modleski connects the Harlequin romance hero to Mr. B in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*; she argues that the romance hero's appeal is wrapped up in the

reform of the rake, where "in novel after novel, the man is brought to acknowledge the preeminence of love and the attractions of domesticity at which he has, as a rule, previously scoffed" (17). This trope became so established in the eighteenth century that Richardson famously struggled against it in *Clarissa*, fighting via revisions against readers' attraction to Lovelace and their desire for him to reform.[79] In fact, his own ideal gentleman, Sir Charles Grandison, was created to redirect this attraction from the dexterous and manipulative Lovelace.[80]

Our modern reactions to this character overlook how the structure of reform supported ideals of sympathy and the emergence of the gentleman as the ideal masculine figure. As laid out in Chapter 1, the gentleman was emerging as the new model of masculinity in opposition to the aristocrat, especially the libertine and the rake. However, in Haywood, instead of seeing the desirable gentleman, like Davys' Formator, as the rival and contrast of the rake, we see the amatory figure of the rakish seducer reformed into the marriageable gentleman. This trajectory for a character is a sign of the reform of male manners, because it requires the cultivation of sympathy (and by extension constancy, attention, consistency, and self-control). Thomas King has argued that one of the major shifts in the standards of masculinity was the privatization of the subject, the cultivation of "a properly disciplined inwardness," which internalized gender (8). This internalization of masculinity in particular marked itself as a restrained reform of the courtly male body (i.e. the libertine or rake). Connecting this with Barker-Benfield's work on the reform of male manners, this inward discipline was a defining feature of the gentleman, the private, domestic man of virtue and control. Displaying sympathy was a culturally recognized and sanctioned way of displaying this new internalized character

because an internalization of restrained self is precisely what the reformed rake narrative marks: “The reformed rake narrative simply joins the notion of natural-born character with that of progressive history to write a redemptive biography wherein change works to actualize subjectivity in the happiest of ways” (Mackie 54). The actualized subjectivity that emerges is the gentleman, and what marks his transformation is the cultivation of sympathy.

Reading D’elmont as a model for male readers and, more broadly, masculinity, challenges long-held beliefs that Haywood’s readership was predominantly made up of women. This perception is tied to nineteenth-century assumptions about genre and readership, which have been translated into widespread critical opinion. Christine Blouch connects assumptions about Haywood’s general, “frothy minded” female readership to nineteenth-century writers like Edmund Gosse (307).[81] Critics, from the earliest recovery scholars, like John Richetti, Ros Ballaster, Janet Todd, even through the most contemporary work on Haywood, by critics like Bowers and Lubey, and many others in between, have consistently relied on the notion that Haywood’s imagined and actual readers were primarily women.[82] However, Jan Fergus argues that the primary audience for novels was young men and school boys, and, within Haywood scholarship, Kathryn King, Patrick Spedding, and Manushag Powell all consider men important and obvious members of Haywood’s readership.[83] Laura Runge and William Warner have both pointed out how this perspective on eighteenth-century female writers in general is inaccurate.[84] On a common sense level, while literacy increased dramatically “during the seventeenth century... proportionally the number of male readers in society always exceeded the number of female readers” (Runge 89). Haywood was clearly aware of her

multi-gendered readership, and addressed her male readers directly. My epigraph is one example. In the beginning of the second part of *Love in Excess*, a poem by Richard Savage celebrates Haywood as a "mistress of the passions of both sexes" (as cited in Warner 91). More pointedly, in her dedication to *Lasselia* Haywood directly addresses a specific male reader, the Earl of Suffolk, and male readers in general:

> My Design in writing this little Novel (as well as those I have formerly publish'd) being only to remind the unthinking Part of the World, how dangerous it is to give way to Passion, will I hope, excuse the too great Warmth…for when the Expression being invigorated in some measure proportionate to the Subject, 'twould be impossible for a Reader to be sensible how far it touches *him*, or how probable it is that *he* is falling into those Inadvertencies which the Examples, I relate wou'd caution *him* to avoid. (vi-vii, emphasis mine)

The pronouns of this passage position the reader as male, and, while masculine pronouns have often stood in for a mixed gendered audience, it seems clear that Haywood considers her text as potentially instructive and titillating for men as well as women. Haywood matter-of-factly declares that men are susceptible to the heat of her passionate scenes, but that this passion can be morally instructive for them. Haywood argues that the passionate nature of her language is in proportion to the human passions she depicts. Furthermore, Haywood claims this pedagogical heat for all of her novels, including *Love in Excess*. Therefore, she is aware of and invested in her male readers. In fact, for her, as opposed to modern scholars, the address to men comes across not as provocative or revolutionary, but a matter-of-course.

It has been critics, and not Haywood herself, who have relied on the ideal of a female reader; as important as the female reader is, there are problems with assigning her to Haywood too exclusively. As noted in Chapter One, the idea of the susceptible, romance-inclined female reader was constructed by male authors like Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in *The Spectator* (1711-12) in order to establish their position as the gentleman author.[85] Also, as Gallagher points out, an address to female readers was one tool that women authors used for "capitalizing on…femaleness" (xxiv), rather than an actual indication that women authors exclusively sought female readers. It is important to step back and recognize the *constructedness* rather than the *exclusiveness* of the figure of the female reader, and to consider how actual readership departed from it in ways that open up new critical possibilities. The emphasis on the female reader of the novel has instilled the long-standing image of "the novel as the desirable and vulnerable female body" (Runge 92).[86] If we step back, and consider that Haywood was aware of her male audience, and we consider how D'elmont acts as a model for this readership, the way Pamela, Melliora, and other iconic heroines have been considered models of female readership, then suddenly the novel has a new association with a new desiring and desirable body: a male body. The *constructedness* of masculine reading, which like many aspects of dominant masculinity has been naturalized and hegemonic, suddenly comes to the fore.

Instead of an invisible body, Haywood presents us with the highly desirable and desiring body of D'elmont. The desirability of D'elmont's body is one of the driving features of the novel; as readers, critics, and scholars have all noted, D'elmont is a potent drug: "Every female character in the novel lusts after its irresistible hero Count

D'elmont…and virtually all, sooner or later, act on their desire" (Bowers 229). Women defy social conventions dictating female modesty and throw themselves at him (Alovisa, Melantha, & Ciamara); they attempt and often fail to resist his seductive charm (Amena & Melliora); they literally die for love of him, giving up everything they know just to stand next to him on a regular basis (Violetta). His desirability, as much (if not more) than his personal male desires, drives the action of the text.

Love in Excess: Setting the Scene for a Rake's Exit

The opening passage of *Love in Excess* presents us with D'elmont and sets up several key themes of the novel itself. I believe the layers of this passage, how they reverberate outward through the rest of the novel, demonstrate that Haywood is clearly invested in the trajectory and appeal of masculinity and the ways she links the form of her novel with the desirability of her hero, and vice versa. For the sake of clarity, I present the entire passage here:

> In the late war between the French and the Confederate Armies, there were two Brothers, who had acquir'd a more than ordinary Reputation, under the command of the great and powerful Luxemborg. But the Conclusion of the Peace taking away any further Occasions of shewing their Valour, the Eldest of 'em whose name was Count D'elmont, return'd to Paris, from whence he had been absent two Years, leaving his Brother at St. Omer's til the Cure of some slight Wounds be perfected.
>
> The fame of the Count's brave actions arrived before him, and he had the satisfaction of being received by the King and Court, after a manner that might

> gratifie[sic] the ambition of the proudest. The beauty of his person, the gaiety of his air, and the unequalled charms of his conversation, made him the admiration of both sexes; and whilst those of his own strove which should gain the largest share of his friendship; the other, vented fruitless wishes, and in secret, cursed the custom which forbids women to make a declaration of their thoughts. (*LE* 37)

Throughout the next section, I will detail how different aspects of the passage illustrate 1) that D'elmont begins as a classic aristocratic rake; 2) that this form of masculinity is marked as being on its way out of fashion and no longer viable; 3) the ways heterosocial desirability is a vital aspect of D'elmont's character, which sets up the appeal of the gentleman; 4) that Haywood is using D'elmont's desirability to mark out the appeal of her novel to readers.

The opening passage first sets up that Haywood designed D'elmont as an aristocratic rake. D'elmont is a soldier (militaristic), magnetically attractive, wealthy, aristocratic, persuasive, and French (both in manner and lineage).[87] Each of these features is linked within the British cultural imagination to the English gentleman's rival and forerunner, the rake. D'elmont is so seductive that he seduces Alovisa (and seemingly every other woman) without any real effort or knowledge of his seduction. Without any special sign or attention the unmitigated potency of his person pushes her beyond the bounds of female propriety, "that custom which forbids women to make a declaration of their thoughts" (*LE* 37). Alovisa writes multiple letters to D'elmont and then ruins Amena's reputation out of passionate jealousy. D'elmont comes across as the über rake.

The opening passage simultaneously emphasizes the power of reputation and ambition, key aspects of the rake's masculinity, while signaling that this masculinity is on

its way out of fashion. D'elmont's military prowess and fame have gained him courtly power through proximity to the King; his reception at court would "gratifie [sic] the ambition of the proudest". For D'elmont, "Ambition was certainly the reigning passion of his soul" (*LE* 76). Now removed from the battlefield of honor, Count D'elmont's ambition is both sexual and material, which map onto the ways rakes were seen as "unrestrained consumers" who "treated women as yet more consumer objects of sense" (Barker-Benfield 45, xxvii). In Volume One, what marks D'elmont's relationships with women as rakish is not only his consumption of them—he seduces and ruins Amena and then almost immediately marries Alovisa—but also the division between his sexual (Amena) and marital (Alovisa) appetites. Both feed his ambition. For D'elmont marriage to Alovisa is a political maneuver designed "promising a full gratification" of his social and financial ambitions (*LE* 76). Meanwhile, seduction and sex are a means of gratifying his militaristic code of honor. The first thing we learn about D'elmont is that he was a great soldier. This militaristic feature is part of the older regime of rakish masculinity, with its emphasis on dueling as a way to demonstrate male prowess and power.[88] This honor code translates from battle to seduction. Accordingly, his less-than-noble seduction of Amena takes on the tenor of conquest: "He had said too many fine things to her to be lost, and thought it as inconsistent with his *honours inclination to desist a pursuit* in which he had all the reason in the world to assure himself of *victory*" (*LE* 46, emphasis mine). Because he has said so many fine things, D'Elmont thinks that he is entitled to Amena's body and affection; he has, according to his own system, paid for the goods and has a right to consume her for sex and Alovisa for status. This sharply contrasts the ways the gentleman would become linked to the ideal of the companionate marriage, which

male sexuality was linked to marriage. According to Shawn Lisa Maurer, "Using seduction as a means to gain or display power, aristocratic sexuality stands in contrast to the prototype of middle-class love, in which sexual attraction between spouses cements the domestic relationship both emotionally and economically" (65). The gentleman channels his sexual desires into marriage, demonstrating through a "chaste heterosexuality" his "exemplary self-control" (97).[89]

However, the opening passage also links D'elmont's masculinity with foreclosure and ending. Haywood opens her novel with the ending of a war: "The Conclusion of the Peace taking away any further Occasions of shewing [his] Valour," D'elmont comes to Paris. In the first breath of the novel, Haywood deprives D'elmont of the context that defines his rakish masculinity, and he never truly regains it; instead he gains the new masculinity of the gentleman. Dueling is the domestic extension of militaristic honor, but D'elmont never fights any duels.[90] Aside from dueling, the extension of the rake's prowess and reputation is sexual conquest. But interestingly, despite his overwhelming and ubiquitous seductiveness, D'elmont is not a particularly successful rake: he does not actually consummate any of his seductions. In her later works, Haywood clearly produces numerous other rakes who do succeed in seducing, impregnating, and abandoning their ladies. However, D'elmont fails to achieve the sexual gratification he seeks. This does not mean there are no consequences for his seductions or that D'elmont is innocent, but by continually denying D'elmont sexual consummation Haywood creates a situation that emphasizes distinct stakes for rakish masculinity. Amena's reputation is ruined (it would be ruined either way, for the ramifications for women are unfair but independent of consummation), but the impact on D'elmont's masculinity is dependent on

consummation. Instead of consummation, Haywood presents readers with narrative pattern of anticipation and interruption. Secreted away in the garden, "[D'elmont] found [Amena's] panting heart beat measures of consent…in fine, there was but a moment betwixt her and ruine [sic]" (*LE* 58). But the moment is enough when Amena's maid interrupts the lovers, leaving D'elmont and Amena "half-blessed" (*LE* 58). The same pattern repeats in Volume 2 between D'elmont and Melliora. After sneaking into Melliora's bedchamber, D'elmont finds Melliora dreaming of him, which prompts him to leap into bed with her and declare, despite her protests, "By Heaven…I will this night be master of my wishes, no matter what to morrow may bring forth" (*LE* 117). However, "a loud knocking at the chamber door, put a stop to his beginning exstacy [sic]" (*LE* 118). D'elmont is thwarted yet again in the garden by Melantha's interruption. In fact, the one moment when D'elmont believes he has finally satisfied his desire—where he has finally schemed and successfully bedded Melliora--he has in fact been tricked by Melantha into bedding her.[91] Arguably, D'elmont has been raped in this scene, as the sexual predator becomes the prey, and this is the *only* time D'elmont has sex outside of marriage within the text; this is not a particularly rakish track record. All in all, D'elmont, despite his rakish appeal and seductive force, is consistently unsuccessful in carrying out his seductions. He literally only gains satisfaction after he marries Melliora, which is only allowed after his lengthy reform into a proper gentleman. Haywood presents the rake as an impotent, frustrated path of masculine sexuality. Throughout all of this frustration, D'elmont remains extremely desirable, which indicates that his masculinity remains intact; that is, he does not become effeminate through lack of consummation, but he

becomes more desirable as his failures begin to work a change upon his morals. This signals that his masculinity can be saved if he reforms to fit more gentlemanly patterns.

Love in Excess extinguishes all of its rakes. Neither the Baron nor the Marquess are successful rakes or survive the novel as such. After kidnapping Melliora, the Marquess is reformed into a gentleman (with D'elmont's help) and reunited with his fiancée in a moment of proper domestic sympathy. The Baron D'espernay is both more of a rake and a less successful one than D'elmont. The Baron becomes D'elmont's confidante in Volume 2, and encourages the now married D'elmont to seduce or—if push comes to shove—rape Melliora. The Baron encourages this for his own selfish reasons; he is love with Alovisa, "but it was with that sort of love, which considers more its own gratification than the interest, or quiet of the object beloved" (*LE* 134). Alovisa rejects the Baron in thoroughly domestic terms:

> I love my husband still, with an unbated[sic] fondness!...Canst tho' think? Thou, so different in all from him, that thou seems't not the same species of humanity, nor ought'st to stile[sic] thy self a man…Can'st thou, I say, believe a woman, blest as Alovisa has been, can e're blot out the dear remembrance and quit her hopes of regained paradise in his embrace, for certain hell in thine? (148).

The challenge to rakish masculinity is especially pointed here, and deliberately gendered. Compared to a husband, even a cruel one, the rake is hardly even human and definitely not a man, and there is no sexual satisfaction to be gained from him. To drive her point home, Haywood's Chevalier skewers the Baron in the final scene of Volume 2. The only sexual gratification provided for men is through marriage. In fact, the only character who gains clear sexual gratification outside of marriage is the coquettish Melantha. Haywood

constructs D'elmont and her other rakes to fit within the eighteenth-century turn away from rakes, portraying them as flawed models of nostalgia who represent "both the claims of elite privilege and the failures of its powers" (Mackie 42). Thus, Haywood, from the opening passage extending outward, categorizes the rake as an attractive but ultimately unsuccessful and frustrated masculinity, especially in contrast to the satisfaction achieved by the gentleman.

The opening passage primes the reader for the emergence of the gentleman as the new, appropriate mode of masculinity by emphasizing D'elmont's heterosocial appeal. One of D'elmont's defining features is his massive appeal to both men and women, that is, "The beauty of his person, the gaiety of his air, and the unequalled charms of his conversation, *made him the admiration of both sexes*" (emphasis mine). It isn't just women who find D'elmont desirable; while women crave D'elmont's romantic attention, men strive "which should gain the largest share of his friendship." The ideal man within the context of the novel is passionately admired by both men and women. This heterosocial popularity is founded on physical beauty and gaiety, but also on "the unequalled charms of [D'elmont's] conversation." Heterosociality and charming (i.e. polite) conversation went hand-in-hand with the cult of sensibility and anticipated Hume's philosophy of sympathy. Haywood uses this crucial characteristic to indicate a unique potentiality in D'elmont. Rakes were known for their charm and wit, but the other rakes in *Love in Excess* lack D'elmont's widespread appeal. Haywood uses heterosocial desirability to indicate D'elmont's gentlemanly potential.

Finally, Haywood uses D'elmont's appeal to shape the reader's response to the novel. Because of his centrality, D'elmont's appeal becomes, in essence, the appeal of the

novel as a whole. Via D'elmont's heterosocial desirability, Haywood is seeking readers of both sexes and wishes men to be friends with her novel, to emulate its hero, and for women to love it. In this way, Haywood is capitalizing on D'elmont's initial status as a rake. One of the key powers of the rake's performative power and seductiveness was his "status as an object of emulation" (Mackie 50).[92] To combat the dominance of the rake, the gentleman needed to become a figure other men desired to emulate (and that women wanted). The fact that Haywood reforms her rake, rather than merely contrasting him with a gentleman, demonstrates a keen savvy on her part, because it creates a system where the reform piggy-backs off of the more dangerous kinds of emulation that the rake inspires. The gentleman is not an innately sexy figure. He is the observer, the instructor; emulating him is moral, but not a particularly exciting male prospect. But by reforming her rake, Haywood provides a narrative pathway that makes the gentleman desirable, because he retains some of the attractions of his rakish predecessor without the actual risks or moral questionability of that figure. Haywood sets up a structure that also reforms her readers' desires. They begin by desiring the seductive rake and evolve into desiring the gentleman, which fits directly into emerging models of moral sympathy, where morality is not an a priori innate faculty made up of absolutes, but rather the product of experience--and in this case, reading.

Volumes 1 & 2: Teaching the Gentleman to Read through Sympathy

Haywood uses D'elmont as the model for her readers, creating a narrative structure that reinforces and intertwines desirable masculinity, sympathetic reform, and reading. The gentleman is literate and sympathetic, meanwhile the rake is a bad reader and lacking sympathy. Therefore, D'elmont begins the novel as a bad reader. When he mistakenly attributes Alovisa's letter to Amena, the Count misreads Alovisa's letters and Amena's eyes. When he discovers his mistake he curses his "intolerable stupidity, when he consider[s] the passages of Alovisa's behaviour [sic], her swooning at the ball, her constant glances, her frequent blushes when he talked to her" (*LE* 68). D'elmont has misread all of the signs presented to him both physical and textual, and in doing so he has failed to sympathize with Alovisa and Amena's feelings.

D'elmont's reform is supported by moments of readership, which begin in Part One with his brother, the Chevalier Brillian. Through the Chevalier Haywood anticipates the mechanisms of Humean moral sympathy and creates a symbolic moment of generic readership that contrasts and cultivates different kinds of masculinity. As established above, sympathy occurs when someone else's experiences and passions are brought close to us in such a vivid way that they become our own passions, and therefore, characters become an ideal vessel for this because their experiences can easily be subsumed by our own imaginations. The Chevalier is an ideal sympathetic primer for D'elmont. As brothers, D'elmont and the Chevalier share a "*great… resemblance in their persons*" as well as a "*sympathy* [sic] of their souls" (*LE* 68, emphasis mine). Also, the Chevalier is in love with Ansellina, who happens to be Alovisa's sister, which provides parallels of plot and action that D'elmont can relate to his own immediate personal experience. However,

beyond familial resemblance, the Chevalier functions as a literary, textual character that D'elmont relates to as a reader in ways that awaken and develop his sympathy. By viewing the Chevalier as a text within a text, we can see Haywood anticipating Humean models of sympathy and their relationship to reading. The Chevalier is the ideal character for D'elmont to learn to sympathize with, and the specific lesson that the Chevalier teaches is the importance of sympathizing with and respecting women; Haywood uses this encounter to emphasize the necessity of reading to developing better versions of masculinity.

The Chevalier is a different genre of masculinity than his brother, and his distinct generic features and D'elmont's response mark this inset tale as a moment of sympathetic reading. The Chevalier seems more like a hero from Madame Scudery's romances than Haywood's amatory fiction. Unlike the rakish D'elmont, the Chevalier has been susceptible to Cupid's bow, falling in love with Ansellina, who "is not indifferent" to the Chevalier, and whose beauty and virtue fills his noble breast with sighs and "something of an awe which none but those who truly love can guess at" (*LE* 68, 70). The Chevalier's love is chaste, austere, and respectful, and the style, tone, and structure of his inset tale "*The Story of the Chevalier Brillian*" categorize his tale and masculinity as romance. However, it is D'elmont's response to his brother's tale that marks this as a moment of didactic, sympathetic reading.[93] When the Chevalier arrives he, as a romance figure, is functioning as a plot device of "narrative delay" (Fuchs 9), and he then presents his delay in a way that creates a desire on the part of the reader for narrative. He tells D'elmont, "Alas! My dearest brother…such various adventures have hap'ned to me since we parted, as when I relate 'em will I hope excuse my seeming negligence" (*LE* 68). But

it isn't just his content, or the promise of his actual story that works to create narrative desire; his demeanor and body fills D'elmont with a kind of literary anticipation: "These words were accompanied with sighs, and a melancholy air immediately overspreading [the Chevalier's] face, and taking away great part of the vivacity, which lately sparkled in his eyes, raised an impatient desire in the Count to know the reason of it" (*LE* 68). D'elmont's desire to hear his brother's tale is a desire for his narrative, a desire for plot, action, character and detail; it is the desire of a reader. D'elmont correctly reads his brother's body, which contrasts his earlier misreading of Alovisa's. After hearing the tale, D'elmont's response is also that of a reader, but a reader sparked with sympathy. At the end of his tale, describing his current separation from Ansellina, "the afflicted Chevalier could not conclude without letting fall some tears; which the Count perceiving ran to him, and tenderly embracing him, said all that could be expected from a most affectionate friend to mitigate his sorrows, nor suffered him to remove from his arms 'til he had accomplished his design" (*LE* 75). D'elmont's response to his brother's suffering and tears, made meaningful by his romance narrative and self, sparks a tender response of comfort—i.e. a sympathetic and sentimental response. This is also the response of the reader of sentimental fiction, who sheds a tear at the sight of distressed virtue.

Haywood is not writing a romance. Instead she is using genre hybridity to illustrate the morally instructive power of reading for male readers and masculinity. Critics like Ballaster and Todd have positioned women writers like Haywood as the literary descendants of romance, and consider both genres as focused on the concerns of female readers.[94] They argue that Haywood uses inset tales from one woman to another in her amatory fiction to "engage the female reader's sympathy and erotic pleasure"

(Ballaster 170). This scene with D'elmont and the Chevalier shifts the didactic potential of Haywood's work from a female to a male reader, and reveals that not only women's bodies are texts. Instead of an interjection between two women (à la *The British Recluse* or *The Agreeable Caledonian*) Haywood presents an inset tale delivered from one man to another. In fact, the only inset tales in *Love in Excess* are between men: the Chevalier to D'elmont, and then later young Frankville to D'elmont.[95] In both scenarios, D'elmont is the listener and, I would argue, the reader who is asked to express and demonstrate his sympathy.

However, what is at stake in these moments of homosocial narrative exchange is appropriate masculinity itself. Haywood uses romance to contrast the ways patriarchal structures give shape to the masculinity of the rake with how generic structures, like romance, provide alternative lessons and masculinities that align with the shape of the gentleman. As noted above, much of this criticism of romance was deeply gendered; male authors, like Hume and Addison and Steele, often worried that romance was going to warp the imaginations of young women readers and give them unreasonable expectations of the world.[96] I have already indicated how this anxiety on the part of male authors is intertwined with masculinity. However, some eighteenth-century writers, like Clara Reeve, defended romance as an ideal vehicle for moral instruction, for both men and women. In her dialogue *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Reeve's spokeswoman Euphrasia argues:

> If [Romances] taught young women to deport themselves too much like Queens and Princesses, it taught them at the same time that virtue only could give lustre [sic] to every rank and degree.—It taught the young men to look upon themselves

> as the champions and protectors of the weaker sex;—to most respect;--to avoid all improper familiarities,…to expect from her the reward of their virtues. (I.67-8)

Romance represents a genre where men are supposed to respect and admire women and not seduce and abandon them.[97] Romance "repeatedly inverts conventional value systems" (Ballaster 46). Whereas D'elmont seeks conquest over Amena to protect his sense of pride and honor, the Chevalier is vanquished by his love. When he first meets Ansellina, the Chevalier recalls, "I found that she was mistress of a wit, poynant [sic] enough to be satyrical [sic], yet it was accompanied with a discretion as very much heightened her charms, and *completed the conquest that her eyes begun*" (*LE* 70, emphasis mine). Within this structure, men are measured by their heroic deeds and devotion to their ladies. In this regard, romance anticipates and aligns with the values of the cult of sensibility, where women ruled as the sovereigns of conversation within heterosocial circles of influence and where men were judged by their courtesy to women. This is the lesson D'elmont is supposed to learn by reading his brother's masculinity, and though the Count is not convinced, this moment of reading primes him for his encounter with Melliora. Haywood closes Volume 1, not with a scene of passion, but with the brothers debating the value of love and women. D'elmont teases "[the Chevalier] for placing the ultimate of his wishes on such a toy, as he argued woman was, which the Chevalier[sic] endeavoring to confute, there began a very warm dispute, in which neither of 'em being able to convince the other, sleep at last, interposed as moderator" (*LE* 78). Haywood uses this contrast between the brothers to illustrate that respect for women is what separates the gentleman from the rake.[98]

Haywood structures *Love in Excess* deliberately to emphasize the relationships among sympathy, reading, and masculinity. She closes Volume 1 with D'elmont's reading of the Chevalier, his first lesson in reading and sympathy. This lesson is put into immediate action at the opening of Volume 2. The Chevalier's narrative primes D'elmont for his own first experience with love—meeting Melliora. D'elmont is called to the deathbed of his guardian and mentor, Monsieur Frankville, who entrusts D'elmont—as a dying request—with the guardianship of his daughter Melliora. Haywood writes, "The first sight of Melliora gave him a discomposure he had never felt before, he *sympathized in all her sorrows*, and was ready to joyn his tears with hers" (*LE* 86, emphasis mine). D'elmont's own experience has not prepared him for this moment, but his reading, via the Chevalier's story, has. The Chevalier's lessons on love, where the man surrenders first, come home to roost. Furthermore, the mutuality that has been absent from D'elmont's relationships with women, but was emphasized in the Chevalier's story, also comes into play. Like the Chevalier's reading, this moment is defined as a mutual exchange of feeling and understanding: "Their admiration of each others perfections was mutual, and tho' he had got the start in love…yet the softness of her soul, made up for that little loss of time, and it was hard to say whose passion was the strongest" (*LE* 86). D'elmont's first real experience with love mimics the Chevalier's narrative more than his own previous experience with women. It also gives priority and strength to Melliora's feelings as well as D'elmont's, presenting them as a match and not as a predator and a victim. In this scene, Haywood emphasizes the instructive potential of fiction, because the romance tale of the Chevalier has proven more accurate in its account of love's passion than D'elmont's personal experience.

D’elmont’s new personal experience of passion immediately translates into improved sympathetic reading. After bringing Melliora home and introducing her to Alovisa, D’elmont is immediately cast into the sighings of a more sentimental model of masculinity: “His reflections were now grown far less pleasing than they used to be; real sighs flew from his breast uncalled” (*LE* 89). The reality of his sighs emphasizes that D’elmont is shifting away from the performative sighs of a rakish seducer and towards the genuine feeling of the gentleman. Melliora’s charms have “fired him with (impossible to be attained) desires he found by sad experience what it is to love, and to dispair [sic]” (*LE* 90). At this moment, D’elmont receives a letter from a convent-bound Amena; “Had this letter come a day sooner, ’tis probable it would have had little effect on the soul of D’elmont, but his sentiments of love were now wholly changed, what before he would but have laughed at, and perhaps dispised [sic], now filled him with remorse and serious anguish” (*LE* 92). Haywood has chosen to manifest D’elmont’s newfound sensitivity in deliberate moment of sympathetic reading. His ability to properly feel, read, and respond to said reading has been made possible through the combination of his new personal experience of love and his practice as a sympathetic reader with the Chevalier.

Haywood uses Melliora to create a space for women to comment and guide masculinity, through the sentimental vehicle of polite heterosociality. Through conversation and more cultivated reading skills Melliora seeks to reform D’elmont’s rakish behavior, and she challenges him on specifically linguistic terrain. The longest stretches of dialogue and conversation within the novel occur between Melliora and D’elmont. The subject is always their relationship, but the stakes of their conversation center on D’elmont’s masculinity. The rake does not speak the language of cultivated

sympathy; instead he speaks a language of charm, seduction, and conquest, which centralizes his own masculinity. D'elmont argues, with increasing verbal (and physical) forcefulness. When he has snuck into her room he responds to her protest by exclaiming, "What could'st thou think if I should leave thee? How justly would'st thou scorn my easie[sic] tameness; my dullness, unworthy of the name of lover, or even of man!" (117). In contrast, Melliora is continuously calls upon D'elmont to become the gentleman. Bowers positions Melliora within the framework of passive resistance, which allows her to create an alternative network of influence. Melliora's unique ability, what enables her to succeed where other women fail with D'elmont, is not that she completely denies her desire, but that she expresses it in the best way using sympathetic language. While Bowers positions this within a political framework, I think Melliora's insistent reminders of "her own desire" and "her position as dependent, resistant respondent" (Bowers 233) speaks to the shifting expectations of the gentleman. Haywood uses polite language to counter the selfish discourse of the rake.

To become the gentleman D'elmont must learn to speak the new language of heterosociality, which is a language grounded in sympathetic reading.[99] Melliora grounds her authority on these matters in reading and her ability to converse and debate morality and passion based on her reading. In almost each scene where D'elmont and Melliora debate love, Melliora has been reading. When he confesses to her for the first time, she is reading by the lake. In fact, Melliora's first speech in the book, following the death of her Father, is set firmly within the context of polite conversation, an afternoon tea of men and women. Melantha "divert[s] the company with some verses on love" (*LE* 106). In response this reading of amorous poetry, Melliora argues "against giving way to love,

and the danger of all softening amusements" (107). Melliora communicates this stern message "in a manner so sweetly surprizing [sic]" which reveals "the force of her reason, the delicacy of her wit, and the penetration of her judgment" and charms all of her listeners, including D'elmont (107). After, D'elmont catches Melliora reading Ovid and teases her for her hypocrisy. Melliora challenges D'elmont's reading with her own. She tells him, "[']is want of thinking justly" that leads lovers astray, "for in a lovers mind illusions seem realities," and if they were more reflective they would be better able to resist their passions when circumstance makes their wishes impossible (*LE* 109). D'elmont then tries to play upon her sympathy as reader of him: "A thousand times you have read my rising wishes, sparking in my eyes, and glowing in my cheeks…by all the torments of my galled, bleeding heart, swear that you shall hear me" (111). He appeals to Melliora here as a sympathetic reader, but he prioritizes his happiness over her virtue, which means his sympathy is still underdeveloped. Melliora does not completely dispel D'elmont's passion, and she almost gives into him numerous times. Instead, she creates a conversational exchange that challenges his self-interested desires by confronting him with the consequences for her and for larger standards of morality. According to Schellenberg, one of the main functions of novels within the cult of sensibility was creating plots that circumscribed "socially threatening individualistic desire" into a heterosocial "community of consensus" (4). Melliora is countering her own individual desires but also the selfish individualistic desire of the rake in an attempt to reform D'elmont into a gentleman, the man of community, consensus, and sympathy.

Volume 3: The Reformed Gentleman in Action

The final events of Volume 2 remove all the social and legal obstacles between Melliora and D'elmont's love—Alovisa and the Baron both die—but instead of rewarding the couple with marital bliss, Haywood delays their union. In guilt over Alovisa's death Melliora returns to the monastery, and in his own sadness, D'elmont sets out for Italy. Haywood immediately marks the shift in her hero: "*Ambition*, once his darling passion, was now wholly extinguished in him…he no longer thought of making a figure in the world; but his *love* nothing could abate" (*LE* 163). His only hope is that Melliora promises to write to him, which shifts their whole relationship to one of readership where he agrees to abide by the dictates of a female author. If Volume 2 demonstrated the usefulness of the Chevalier's lessons, then Volume 3 revolves around proving that D'elmont has become a gentleman and can put Melliora's lessons into action.

The gentleman, Solinger has noted, was defined by his education, was designed to make him a useful contributor to the improvement of society (29-30). Instead of asking others to sympathize with him, a gentleman must sympathize with others, especially women. To reiterate, "one of the gentleman's signature skills" was the ability to read others—to interpret their countenances, letters, and behavior—and to adjust his own behavior accordingly (Solinger 31). His sympathy is supposed to help others and allow him to navigate social contexts. In Volume 3, D'elmont demonstrates the appropriate maturity in his gentlemanly reading by sympathizing with the love-struck Ciamara and Violetta, and doing what he can to anticipate and mitigate their passions and discomforts. When he overhears Ciamara professing her passion for him:

> No consideration was of force to make him neglect this opportunity of undeceiving her; his good sence [sic], as well as good nature, kept him from that vanity, too many of his sex imitate the weaker in, of being pleased that it was in his power to create pains, which it was not in his power…to ease. (177)

Similarly, when Violetta trembles and stumbles over her words after meeting D'elmont, "Here was new cause of disquiet to D'elmont; the experience he had of the too fatal influence of his dangerous attractions, gave him sufficient reason to fear…that his presence was the sole cause of her disorder" (234). Gone is D'elmont's "intolerable stupidity" from Volume 1. He correctly interprets these women's passions, whether it is overtly expressive, à la Ciamara, through letters and declarations, or more subtle, à la Violetta's tremblings. In both cases, D'elmont, rather than indulging his vanity, seeks to ameliorate these women's destructive passions. He is not entirely effective in either case. Ciamara throws herself at him; Violetta follows him through the country disguised as a boy; both women die. But these drastic actions speak more to Haywood's investment in D'elmont's desirability, which is no less potent now that he is more virtuous, rather than to a failure of his sympathy. D'elmont's newfound sympathetic reading prowess has made him even more potent to the fairer sex even as he demonstrates a new ability to read ladies' countenances and act out of consideration and sympathy for their feelings.

D'elmont must also prove that he can resist temptation, thereby adopting the lessons of Melliora's polite conversation. To prove himself, the "gentleman" is often defined "in terms of what he was not" (Solinger 17-18). Haywood actually inverts D'elmont's own rakish behavior; instead of attempting to seduce women and sneaking into bedrooms, women attempt to seduce him and sneak into his bedroom. One of the

challenges of the gentleman as a literary figure is that he is caught between the figures of the rake—his masculine opposite—and the virtuous heroine—his feminine counterpart. D'elmont is raped by Melantha. However, this reveals the complicated sexuality of the gentleman. His virtue is not precisely vulnerable to trauma in the same way as a heroine, and he cannot demonstrate his masculinity through the seductions of the rake. Haywood crafts a unique solution to this quandary: she puts D'elmont into the same sorts of situations she puts her heroines. On a visit to Ciamara's house the Italian seductress hurls herself "exposed and naked to his view" into D'elmont's lap (*LE* 225). And "Tho it was impossible for any soul to be capable of a greater, or more constant passion than [D'elmont] felt for Melliora" D'elmont is "*still a man*" and almost succumbs to Ciamara's seductions; like the Amenas and Mellioras before him, D'elmont is only saved by a timely interruption. D'elmont, however, learns a lesson from his close call with Ciamara and uses his new-found caution in a later scene with Melliora. On their way to France to rescue Melliora, D'elmont, Frankville, Camilla, and Fidelio/Violette take shelter at the home of the Marquess De Saguillier (who conveniently happens to be the man who is holding Melliora captive in his home). Reversing D'elmont's bedroom invasions, Melliora sneaks into D'elmont's room. Disguised, she tells him, "I hope you are more a chevalier than to prefer a little sleep to the conversation of a lady, tho' she visits you at midnight" (249). D'elmont believes he has

> Met with a second Ciamara, and lest he should find the same trouble with this as he had done with the former, he resolved to put a stop to it at once, and with an accent as peevish as he could turn his voice to, "The conversation of lady's…is a

> happiness I neither deserve, nor much desire at any time, especially at this; therefore…leave me to the freedom of my thoughts." (249)

In terms of sympathetic reading, D'elmont does not penetrate Melliora's ruse. However, he does interpret the dangers of the scene in terms of his own past impressions and experiences with Ciamara, which is the more literal application of moral sympathy.[100] What is most striking about this scene is that the strategy D'elmont uses here—a false peevishness and excessive prudishness—is the same strategy Melliora used on him during her first discourse on love. He sounds rather pompous when he rebuffs her again: "I can esteem the love of a woman, only when 'tis *granted*, and think it little worth acceptance, *proffered*" (249). On the one hand, the conservative message of this scene seems to reassert "conventional representations of male agency and female passivity, leaving behind, to some extent, the early, more complex encounters between equivalent sexual agents" (Bowers 234). However, if we see this scene as D'elmont's adoption of Melliora's polite lessons, the dynamics of this conservative moment take on a slightly different valence. D'elmont is ventriloquizing Melliora; he is embracing her feminine influence and therefore acting as a gentleman. The gentleman is, in many ways, a conservative figure, but Haywood complicates this conservative masculinity with this moment of sexual vulnerability. D'elmont was almost seduced, and he almost lost his newfound masculine virtue with Ciamara, and he fears putting himself in a similar situation. The lines between seduction and rape were muddy, at best, in the early eighteenth century. In the interactions between Ciamara and D'elmont there is a provocative and definite air of sexual coercion to the earlier scene, which all of D'elmont's gentlemanly virtue cannot combat. D'elmont's defensive response to

Melliora speaks from a position where masculinity is sexually vulnerable. To protect his virtue from another sexually predatory woman, D'elmont embraces Melliora's sympathetic heterosocial influence by mimicking her arguments. Furthermore, some of the conservative politics of this scene are mitigated by the fact that as soon as Melliora reveals herself, "D'elmont turn[ed] to her indeed, with much more haste, than he had done to avoid her" (250). Like Melliora, D'elmont's prudishness is not a reflection of his actual, personal desire; it is a social defense. These scenes demonstrate D'elmont's restraint and, consequently, his gentlemanly conformity with monogamous and chaste male virtue, a final rejection of the rake's sexual consumption. It demonstrates power of Melliora's polite conversation; in his moment of sexual vulnerability, D'elmont adopts her discourse and is in turn rewarded.

D'elmont's sympathetic reading and support of heterosocial influence assume the authority of the gentleman when they become models for others' behavior. The gentleman's reading authority is supposed to be a useful guide to others; male authors like Addison, Steele, and Hume often think of young women, but this authority also extends to other men. If the rake is feared as a dangerous reproducing contagion, then the gentleman is the cure who combats the disease of libertinage by reproducing other gentlemen and reforming rakes. As a gentleman it is D'elmont's duty, part of his authority, to be a positive influence on other men. In Volume 3, rather than being influenced by his brother or the Baron, D'elmont acts as a mentor to young Frankville. Initially, Frankville seeks out D'elmont because he believes D'elmont kidnapped Melliora. However, "[T]he steady resolution with which he had attested his innocence, and the inexpressible sweetness of deportment, equally charming to both sexes, and

which not even *anger* could render less graceful, extreamly [sic] cooled the heat Frankville had been in" (*LE* 181). Haywood reiterates D'elmont's heterosocial appeal here, which brings attention to the ways he is seductive—socially, if not sexually—to both men and women. Once D'elmont wins over Frankville the two become fast friends, and Frankville immediately starts modeling his own life on D'elmont's. Like the Chevalier, Frankville presents D'elmont with his story as an inset tale. However, unlike the Chevalier, Frankville models his experience after D'elmont, both before and after meeting the Count, and he frames his own inset tale in terms of this emulation. Frankville left home "prompted by glory, and hope of that renown" that D'elmont had "so gallantly acquired" during his military service (187). The young man travels to Italy and befriends Cittolini, who wants to make a match between Frankville and his daughter Violetta. However, also like D'elmont, at the time "love was little in [his] thoughts, especially that sort which was to end in marriage" (188). In the meantime Frankville hears that Cittolini is courting a young women named Camilla, whom, of course, Frankville spies in a garden without knowing her name and is immediately smitten. Frankville tells the Count, "[L]anguage is too poor to paint her charms, how shall I make you sensible of the effects of them on me! The surprize—the love—the adoration which this fatal view involved me in, but by that which, you say, your self felt at the first sight of Melliora" (191). D'elmont is now a model for other men. Haywood's gentleman is a figure whose narrative and constancy can be an example to others.

Haywood uses D'elmont as tool for creating heterosocial community and domesticity, and she presents marriage as the only acceptable option for the men in her novel. Unlike the Baron, who encouraged seduction, the reformed D'elmont leads every

young man he meets into proper domestic relations, i.e. marriage. First, he helps Frankville escape Italy with his beloved Camilla. Then they rescue Melliora from the Marquess, and in so doing, reform the Marquess by reuniting him with his fiancée Charlotta. After the tragic, yet sentimentally powerful death of Violetta, "one happy hour confirmed the wishes of the three longing bridegrooms" (226).[101] Haywood's emphasis on the longing of the bridegrooms rather than the brides confirms that this novel is concerned with the reform of men. Here, finally, in the last paragraph of the novel, Haywood tactfully indicates that D'elmont (and Frankville, the Marquess, and the Chevalier) will finally get the social and sexual satisfaction they have been pursuing throughout the novel. It is telling that none of the other men get married until the end of the novel, and every man who does not marry ends up dead (the Baron and Cittolini). The women have slightly different fates; though many of them die (Ciamara, Alovisa, and Violetta) or marry happily (Melliora, Ansellina, Camilla, and Charlotta), Amena takes vows, and while Melantha marries, the coquette's bed tricks, pregnancy, and hasty marriage don't fit neatly into this world of death or domesticity. However, for all of the men it is happy marriage or death. Those are the only two options.

Haywood's Formal Seduction and the Desirable Gentleman

Through the character of D'elmont, Haywood charts a masculine reform from rake to gentleman, and she centralizes the role sympathy and reading play in that transformation. She anticipates crucial aspects of the gentleman's character, namely, his authority as a sympathetic reader. Haywood deploys this narrative for her own authorial

benefit. Haywood uses the form and plot of her novel to seduce her readers into desiring the gentleman. She creates informed and sympathetic readers, and, in doing so, she validates her genre and her own right to influence masculinity and morality. She makes this desirability an integral part of the gentleman in ways that have lasting effects on writers like Hume. Critics have often considered the gentleman an erotic bore; the Glanvilles, Orvilles, and the Grandisons of the literary landscape are the correct and virtuous choices, but they lack the erotic thrills of a Lovelace or a Tom Jones. However, Haywood's form and style in *Love in Excess* infuses D'elmont's reform with an erotic pull. D'elmont's seductive appeal is not dimmed by his reform; instead, his appeal is heightened by it. The gentleman isn't just as desirable as a rake: he is more desirable. Women become more aggressive with him. Men imitate D'elmont.

What enables Haywood to do this are two reciprocal formal elements: narrative delay and her passionate prose style. As noted above, Haywood builds desire for D'elmont's reform by delaying his character's sexual gratification with his partner of choice. Haywood literally makes her readers wait for satisfaction until the last paragraph of the novel. Through her plot and style, Haywood fuels the readers' passion for D'elmont's passion. Haywood's style has been one of the most noted aspects of her writing, both within her own era and modern scholarship. "The dashes, exclamation points, and ersatz cadences…drive the reader along to the near-climax" (Richetti 201), which creates "a grammar that linguistically and typographically raises desire" in the reader (Lubey 100).[102] I agree with Lubey's argument that Haywood is using her text to create desire in order to impart a lesson to readers; however, unlike Lubey, I think Haywood is using D'elmont's reform to reach male as well as female readers. Through

D'elmont's near seductions—both his attempts on Amena and Melliora, and Ciamara's attacks on him—Haywood continually seduces her readers, but frustrates their consummation. If "the telling of a story of seduction is also a mode of seduction" (Ballaster 24), then readers are being seduced into desiring the gentleman, because it is only with him that they achieve narrative satisfaction. Haywood develops a seductive style of her plot and her prose, which would become her trademark: to recalibrate her readers' desires, shifting them from the rake to the gentleman.

Haywood seduces her readers into imitating D'elmont; she creates informed, sympathetic readers. D'elmont's evolving masculinity is linked to his own ability to read and sympathize with those around him. He learns his lesson first through the Chevalier and romance, but Haywood's readers learn through her amatory style. Haywood's passionate style becomes an "erotic shorthand" (Richetti 201) that creates a kind of informed, expert readers, "adept in the grammar of eroticism that characterizes the heightened scenes in the novel" (Lubey 100), who are then able to interpret the passions properly. Haywood creates knowing readers who are invited to grow with D'elmont as his reform progresses. For example, at the height of his sympathetic powers, D'elmont correctly reads Violetta's countenance, and in this moment, Haywood deliberately invites the reader to join him. Violetta has sought a secret meeting with D'elmont and Frankville to help Frankville win back Camilla. Haywood writes, "[Violetta] trembled indeed, but whether occasioned by any danger she perceived of being taken notice of, or some other secret agitation she felt within, was then unknown to any but herself" (*LE* 234). What is striking about the passage is the seeming obfuscation Haywood's narrator exhibits, claiming the lady's trembling manifests a "secret agitation" that only Violetta knows,

when this is clearly not the case. D'elmont immediately recognizes the tell-tale signs of the "too fatal influence of his dangerous attractions" and so does the reader. By Volume 3, Haywood has trained her readers in the same sympathetic reading skills that D'elmont now possesses. Haywood is asking her readers to emulate the gentleman through their own reading, which, as I have argued, is so central to the gentleman's persona that to read like the gentleman is to become the gentleman. While not speaking exclusively to a male audience it seems clear that Haywood was speaking, at least in part, to a male readership. She could be playing with the distinctions between male and female reading authority; however, for my purposes, it seems clear that she was carving out a particular relationship between masculinity and readership, and using her amatory style to instill it.

By linking D'elmont's reading authority with her style, Haywood intertwines the project of masculine reform--what will become the reform of male manners--with her authorship and genre. She marks amatory fiction as a valid form of moral instruction, suitable for polite conversation, and she also validates her own role as a female author as a means of exerting proper and potent heterosocial influence. Many critics have noted the preponderance of women expressing their desires in *Love in Excess*.[103] Meanwhile, the reform of male manners was fueled by "Women's publication of their wishes and feelings on an unprecedented scale" (Barker-Benfield xxvi). Expressing desire for D'elmont is a mode of women publicizing their wishes, and the overwhelming expression of female desire speaks to a shift in the power structures of desire. Feminine expressions of desire are not always successful in *Love in Excess*; however, almost all the women who desire a gentleman and not a rake (Melliora, Charlotta, Camilla, and even Ansellina) get the men they desire.[104] All of the women influence D'elmont's sympathetic

development, and their desiring expressions either help transform him or prove him a gentleman. While readers may be titillated by D'elmont's attempted seductions and Melliora's responsive passion, the structure of the text drives us to desire the gentleman, for D'elmont to learn Melliora's sympathetic lessons. Haywood's style, which creates a push and pull between these forces, makes this instruction compelling. Through her form, Haywood justifies her right as a woman writer to instruct her readers, including her male readers, on the ideal and proper shape of masculinity: the gentleman, and the role women are entitled to play in his character. Haywood claims for her writing the same kind of instruction that sentimental fiction would later claim for itself.[105] However, unlike the gentleman of sentimental fiction, whom critics see "inevitably marked by complacency" (Todd 95), D'elmont is able, powered by the seduction of Haywood's style, to walk the line between effeminate passivity and rakish aggression.

A Reform of the Man of Letters: Hume's Attempt to Regulate Desirability

The sheer popularity of Haywood's novel and of her writings afterwards seem to speak to the effectiveness of her narrative seduction, but I would like to emphasize that the desirability of her reformed gentleman carried forward into actual practices of masculinity.[106] Hume's self-presentation is the literary inheritor of the kind of gentlemanliness that Haywood carves out in *Love in Excess*. While critics have rightly identified Hume as a participant and contributor to the cult of sensibility, few have directly connected his philosophical systems and his writing style to masculinity studies. Barker-Benfield and Christensen are the only writers who directly link Hume's writings

with masculinity.[107] In this final section, I will look at Hume's work and demonstrate how the features that critics have used to mark Hume as a representative figure of the cult of sensibility—endorsing heterosocial politeness and the links between moral sympathy and literary practice, especially reading—also mark Hume's investment in marking himself as a gentleman, therefore endowing his work with the moral authority and positioning himself and his work as desirable fodder for reader's (especially women's) consumption.[108] Ultimately, Hume fails in his attempts, both formal and sexual. However, the fact that he demonstrates a compulsion to perform desirability—both in his writing, and by extension, in his body—speaks to the influence of Haywood's generic gentleman. It also sheds light on the motivation for the gentleman's conservative regulation of female reading, revealing that this impulse to inscribe idealized feminine behavior springs from the complicated relationship between the constructed nature of an ideal masculinity and the anxious pressure it creates.

Hume clearly presents himself as a gentleman, by birth, breeding, and, most importantly, education. In his autobiographical essay "My Own Life" (1778), Hume is careful to chart out a proper, but not overly aristocratic lineage for himself; "[he] was of a good family" with a series of distant but clear aristocratic connections: "My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender" (MOL 1). However, unlike women authors who used financial need to justify writing, Hume, like the gentleman personas of Addison and Steele, is careful to say it was his love of improvement and learning that led him to write. In fact, Hume turns away from more lucrative professions to pursue his gentlemanly writings: "My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my

family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning" (1). His writings, especially his early works like *The Treatise,* were not financially successful, but Hume writes, "My frugality had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so; in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds" (MOL 3). Demonstrating modesty, frugality, and moderation, Hume positions his familial, authorial, and financial situation in a gentlemanly light, emphasizing his independence and proper restraint. Hume's authorship is not a product of his need, but a privilege and duty of his gentlemanly independence.

Positioned firmly within the cult of sensibility, Hume constructs his own careful reform of male manners, more covertly than Haywood, but no less deliberately. However, instead of reforming the rake, Hume seeks to rewrite the man of letters as a gentleman through reworking his reading, his associations with books, as a source of sociality and sympathy. In his writing Hume seeks to align his own identity as a man of letters with that of the gentleman, categorizing himself as a "man of letters" in "My Own Life" (3). This label has, to modern ears, a rather gentlemanly ring to it. However, in the early decades of the eighteenth century, "The historical separation between gentlemen and men of learning was not only social and institutional. It was also cultural and sociological" (Solinger 26). The man of letters was considered the musty fellow of the university, full of specialized and esoteric knowledge, with no ability or interest in engaging with a wider audience. However, as the gentleman was re-imagined as a figure of learning and literary authority by writers like Addison and Steele in *The Spectator*, "reimagining the

gentleman necessitated revising as well the very notion of learning" (Solinger 26). Being literate, in a cultivated and tasteful way, became a crucial feature of the gentleman, which made aspects and features of the man of letters newly valuable and necessary to this figure. Hume takes full advantage of this opportunity to present himself and his work as that of the gentleman. His desire for a "union" between the learned world of scholarship and philosophy and the conversable world of politeness and social pleasure echoes Mr. Spectator's call to bring "Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses" (*Spectator* 10, 1711, p 44). The separation of these spheres, is "one of the greatest Defects of the last Age, and must have had a bad influence on both Books and Company" ("Of Essay Writing" 2). Hume laments that conversation without recourse to "History, Poetry," "Politics", and "Philosophy" is unsuitable for rational creatures: "Must our whole Discourse be a continued Series of gossiping Stories and idle Remarks?" (2). Meanwhile, "Learning has been as great a Loser by being shut up in Colleges and Cells…this moping recluse Method of study" has made philosophy as "chimerical in her conclusions as she was unintelligible in her Stile and Manner of Delivery" (3).[109] In Hume we again have the gentlemanly call to bring high-minded learning into contact and conversation with the social diversions of the world.

The key intersection between the man of letters and the gentleman was literary; the gentleman needed to become an informed reader and the man of letters grounded his reputation on being able to read and instruct others to read properly. As noted above, Hume's philosophy has become a popular site for eighteenth-century critics to connect sympathy with reading; Hume explicitly links his identity as a philosopher with his love

of reading, and through his language of the passions he also connects it, implicitly, with his philosophy of sympathy. Hume opens "My Own Life" (1776), "[I] was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments" (1). By identifying literature as the ruling passion of his life, Hume implicitly connects it to sympathy and morality. The passions direct our moral feelings, and reading is the ruling, the most powerful, passion that directed Hume's will and actions. Taste was a regulating element for the passions. Hume writes, "I find, that [cultivating our taste] rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions" ("Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion" 93). Therefore, his love of reading, rather than isolating the man of letters, transforms the man of letters into a man of passions who translates cultivated taste into moral sympathy.

Like Haywood's reformed rake, Hume's reform of the man of letters required a new embrace of heterosociality. The Earl of Shaftesbury is often held up as one of the philosophical forerunners of masculine politeness and learning. Alexander Pope is also frequently referred to as a man of letters, as one of the first independent, professional male authors. However, in these earlier models there is an embrace of learning, taste, male camaraderie and virtue, but there are more frequent vocalizations of suspicion or outright rejection of heterosociality, of women's influence. Within this masculine, cultural context "any man who wishes to be distinguished from boys and beasts should begin by differentiating himself from women; he must avoid female influences, and eliminate or control all those elements in his own nature, including irrationality, that he perceives as feminine" (Williams 11). This distinction comes out of Shaftesbury's

versions of the man of letters and polite masculinity, which was much more stoic and removed from society than Hume's. The duty of men—exclusively aristocratic men, in Shaftesbury's version—was to work and study for the good of society. For Shaftesbury there were two forces that could corrupt unequivocally: "the quest for commodities, or the consumption of particular goods and services; and the desire for (and ultimately the desires of) women" (Jones 21). So, on one front Shaftesbury is anticipating, perhaps even fostering, the reform of male manners and its critiques of the rake as an unrestrained consumer. This harsh critique of women as frivolous and distracting to men is in direct opposition to the heterosociality of the gentleman and the cult of sensibility.[110]

As Jones and Christensen point out, in Hume we see the shift in the reform of male manners: for Hume, women must play a part in the cultivation of morality, and proper society must be heterosocial. Women are "the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation" ("Of Essay Writing" 2). Meanwhile, men reign over the learned sphere. Hume fancifully desires a "league" between these two states; in other words, a mutually beneficial heterosocial sphere of cultivated, pleasurable understanding. However, within this league, Hume presents women as vessels of delicate feeling and politeness as the more necessary influence. In "Of Essay Writing" (1742) Hume "approaches [the ladies] with Reverence" and even goes so far as to say, "and were not my Countrymen, the Learned, a stubborn independent Race of Mortals, extremely jealous of their Liberty, and unaccustom'd to Subjection, I shou'd resign into their fair Hands the sovereign Authority over the Republic of Letters" (369). Hume admires the conversable world's "capacity to exchange information and exercise the mind while producing mutual pleasure" but he also sees this sphere as having the ability "to engage in even more challenging and

socially profitable 'exercises of understanding'" (Schellenberg 1). The sovereigns of conversation had an important duty to society. The cultivation of moral sympathy required women and feminine influence that was directly linked to the shaping of masculinity; Hume makes sure that he is positioned as one of the cultivated men who appreciates the importance of the fairer sex. He emphasizes the power of women in this sphere, even more overtly than Addison and Steele; women were "sovereigns" of the polite world, who could perhaps do a better job than men if given the chance.[111]

Through his ethos as a gentleman, founded upon his sympathy, reading, and proper sociality, Hume presents his writings and philosophy itself as proper tools for moral sympathy, as polite and conversable. At the end of Book 1 "Of the Understanding" from his *Treatise*, Hume interjects his own personal experience as an example of the necessary balance between the polite and learned spheres. He writes, sometimes "I am confounded with all these [philosophical] questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, inviron'd with the deepest darkness" (*THN* 269). In these dark moments, Hume turns to sociability to "obliterate all these chimera. I dine, I play a game of back-gammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends" (*THN* 269). Then after his spirits are restored through company, Hume grows quiet again: "I feel my mind all collected within itself" and he returns to his philosophical work (270). This personal essay on his own sociability and struggles with philosophy comes at the very end of his first book, immediately following his section on "Personal Identity". Hume uses his self to position philosophy as sympathetic with the social world. These spheres are mutually beneficial, rather than exclusive.

Hume's attempt to unite the manners of the conversable world with the intellect of the learned sphere through his own form and style echoes Haywood's achievement of popular readership. As Bender, Mullan, and Gallagher point out, Hume was interested in reaching the same kind of popular audience as *The Spectator*, which means (among other things) an audience of both men and women.[112] In the advertisement for "Of Morals", the third and final book of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume writes, *"I am hopeful it may be understood by ordinary readers, with as little attention as is usually given to any books of reasoning"* (advertisement). Hume explicitly links this goal for wide readership with his book on sympathy, the social system of sentiment. He tries to approach his readers with a text suitable for the conversable world, one that moves philosophy out of its dusty cell and into the drawing room. By politely hoping a heterosocial audience will find his work instructive and agreeable, Hume claims a position as a gentleman author who seeks to instruct and delight his readers more for their own benefit than his own; (though, as with Addison and Steele, Hume is still seeking to benefit himself as well). However, Hume's quest for gentlemanly popularity was not successful: in "My Own Life," he recalls, "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots (2).[113]

As Haywood showed, the stylistic impact of a gentleman is a key part of making his masculinity appealing. He cannot occupy his authority with taste and cultivation if he is not attractive or charming. Hume believed the failure of his *Treatise* "had proceeded more from the manner than the matter" (MOL 3). So throughout his life, Hume continuously reformed his style to gain the wide appeal associated with the gentleman,

but to little avail. As Mullan and Gallagher argue, Hume tried to adopt a more accessible style, à la Addison and Steele, in his later works *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* as well as his collected *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*.[114] His main changes in search of a larger, more polite audience met with modest success, which indicates that, despite his philosophical aspirations, one of the driving aspects of Hume's own authorship was being desirable to readers. Speaking of his 1752 *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* Hume writes that "in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on the subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best"; yet "It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world" (MOL 4). According to Mullan, "as Hume himself saw it…It was as if the philosophical text itself could not be socialized, for it addressed its readers not as social but as philosophical beings" (10). That is, Hume's style could not, because of its very nature, produce the kind of sociable conversation that he sought; it could not enact his own philosophy. While Mullan may be correct up to a point, his focus on sociability overlooks the ways Hume's focus on form is tied to his persona as a gentleman. Hume expresses an awareness that form and sympathetic appeal go hand-in-hand, and he demonstrates his keen desire for readers to find his works engaging. For Hume, formal appeal reflects on his, and any author's, character. Hume writes, "We choose our favorite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humour and disposition. Mirth or passion, sentiment or reflection; whichever of these most predominates in our temper, it gives us a peculiar sympathy with the writer who resembles us" ("Of the Standard of Taste" 281). The ideal sympathetic friend is the gentleman; he is the authoritative reader of sympathy, and if Hume's work lacks this

appeal, then Hume himself is lacking as a gentleman. If readers are unable to sympathize with him, then he is a poor instructor of sentiment.

In order to distinguish how Hume's obsession with the appeal of his writings connects most overtly to Haywood's generic connection between the gentleman's sympathetic reading and formal seduction, I first need to lay out how Haywood anticipates Hume's version of the passions, not just their connection to moral sympathy, as noted above, but the ways in which passions and moral sympathy can compete and conflict. These conflicts often manifest as a struggle between self-interest and social good—the well being of others. Hume's theory of the passions reflects this struggle, and it becomes clear that Hume uses his authority as a gentleman reader to mask his self-interested desires as necessary for the moral good of women. The potential conflict of the passions is why society becomes so important for cultivating morality, for both Haywood and Hume. Many critics, in aligning Hume's theory of the passions with sentiment and sensibility, slip past the ways his system of the passions struggles with the conflict between selfish passions and more proper kinds of moral sympathy. That is because, for Hume, "Whatever other passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge, or lust; the soul of animating principle of them all is sympathy; nor wou'd they any force, were we to abstract entirely from the thoughts and sentiments of others" (*THN* 363). Sympathy appears fundamentally altruistic. By extension, "Love is always follow'd by a desire of the happiness of the person belov'd, and an aversion to his misery" (*THN* 367). Hume's sense of love and happiness appear more sympathetic than Haywood's initial depiction of love, but in both strong passions inevitably compel action, almost beyond an individual's will.

However, the sentiments of others only animate people when they are brought near us and made to appear connect to our selves. There is a selfish streak even to sympathy, and Hume's philosophy of the passions struggles with these contradictory aspects of sentiment. For Hume, the passions—altruistic or selfish—feed off of each other. For instance, romantic love "not only appears in its peculiar symptoms, but also in inflaming every other principle of affection, and raising a stronger love from beauty, wit, kindness, than what wou'd otherwise flow from them" (*THN* 481). Hume's theory of sympathy grounds morality in the passions, but this system does not erase the conflict between our more immediate and selfish passions and our morality. In fact, for Hume:

> We naturally desire what is forbid, and often take a pleasure in performing actions, merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposite to the passions, is not always able to overcome them; and when it fails of that effect is apt rather to encrease [sic] and irritate them. (*DP* 16)

The force of forbidden desire is one of the strongest passions that Hume articulates; it is as compulsory as Haywood's depiction of love: "*Love*, is what we can neither resist, expel, nor even alleviate, if we should never so vigorously attempt it; and tho' some have boasted, 'Thus far will I yield and no farther,' they have been convinced of the vanity of forming such resolutions by the impossibility of keeping them" (*LE* 165). Yet, like Hume, the compulsion Haywood associates with love is not the product of a single passion either, and she anticipates the ways our competing passions can create moral conflict. For instance, in D'elmont's case, "He admired! Adored! And wished, even to madness! Yet had too much honour, too much gratitude for the memory of Monsieur Frankville, and too sincere an awe for the lovely cause of his uneasiness, than to form a

thought that could encourage his new passion" (*LE* 90). D'elmont's passion for Melliora is visceral and physical, driving him to seduce her. But his love for her also him fills him with concern for her honor and happiness. This competition between desire for sex and virtue—with sex usually winning—is the repeated theme of Haywood's novels, usually attributed to her heroines. Critics have read this tension both as a cautionary tale to young women and a revelatory description of female sexual desire. However, I see Haywood emphasizing a system of passions where the passions, especially when they compete, increase their force. The pull of love towards seduction or restraint is not a tug of war; it is a storm system that builds its force off of the combined energies of oppositional fronts. Morality for Hume is tied to pleasure and pain, and can be exacerbated by conflicting desires. We attach virtue to what we find pleasure in, but Haywood anticipates a conflict of passions that muddles our sense of virtue, because our pleasures are divided and put into competition with each other.

For both authors, this struggle becomes a defining feature of the gentleman. As we saw in Haywood, D'elmont doesn't reform into a gentleman simply because he falls in love with Melliora or because he loses all selfish desires, but because he learns to restrain his passions through the proper heterosociality and an increasing desire for proper moral sympathy via the cultivation of his reading. In Hume we see a similar need and emphasis on society's influence to redirect the passions and teach restraint. Morality becomes social because that external influence allows people to cultivate their passions in ways that allow them to overcome their potentially selfish impulses: "As we establish the *laws of nature*, in order to secure property in society, and prevent the opposition of self-interest; we establish the *rules of good-breeding*, in order to prevent the opposition of

men's pride" (*THN* 597). Society gives structure to our sympathies and passions in ways that offset our self-interest for the greater good. This then manifests in how we engage with society; the laws of good breeding "render conversation agreeable and inoffensive" (597). It is from this experience and polite interaction that Hume believes individuals can develop a "*strength of mind*" that allows them to prioritize "the calm passions above the violent" or, in other words, restrain our selfish desires or our pleasure in the forbidden (*DP* 162). Society allows for the cultivation of a sense of sympathy whereby individuals learn to feel pleasure in less selfish acts. It doesn't entirely take away selfish pleasures, but it reroutes associations towards spectacles of sensibility and sympathy. The society that exerts the most influence over taste and politeness is the society of women, and the society that most needs women's polishing influence is men.

Hume's characterization as a gentleman expresses this conflict of desires, a conflict that reveals itself through a Haywoodian structure of entangled disinterest and seduction. Hume attempts to guide female readership as a means of demonstrating his gentlemanly restraint, and by his refusal to play the rake, but he ends up relying on a seduction plot to create desire for his manhood in female readers. This is a revision and reaction to the version of the gentleman we see so carefully articulated in Haywood's work. Whereas Haywood created a gentleman whose reading is subject to feminine influence and then influences other male readers, Hume seeks to regulate female readers, and this requires a kind of seduction, but the gentlemanly kind. Hume's identity as a gentleman depends upon his relationship to women, and he, like many of his contemporaries, "still demonstrated the tendency of even enlightened men to claim that women were essentially creatures of sensibility" who needed male benevolence (Barker-

Benfield 137). Hume writes, "As nature has given *man* the superiority above *women*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions" ("Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" 193). Now, if the gentleman is a persona of readership, then what the gentleman reads, and what cultivates his proper taste and feeling, is of particular importance. When Hume speaks of his love of literature, he is speaking of a love for poetry and the classics. Poetry can excite "all kinds of passions" and even when those passions are "most disagreeable, such as grief and anger," poetry provides a kind of "satisfaction" in the reader, which can be instructive (*CPM* 238). Hume references Virgil, Homer, and other ancients, and frequently quotes Alexander Pope, for whom he had a great admiration. He also enjoys history, philosophy, and the periodicals of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. For moral instruction and the cultivation of their taste, gentlemen read many things, most of them written by other gentlemen.

However, there were also genres that they definitely did not read, or more accurately, genres they claimed very vocally that they did not read (whether this matched reality or not) and "they didn't, above all, read romances", amatory fiction, or scandal writing of any kind (Tierney-Hynes 5). These genres were seen as beneath the gentleman's reading and therefore dangerous for female readers. Hume opens his essay "Of the Study of History" (1741) with a criticism of women's reading habits: "There is nothing which I would recommend more earnestly to my female readers than the study of history…the best suited both to their sex, and education, much more instructive than their

ordinary books of amusement, and more entertaining than those serious compositions" (388). This statement reiterates the seeming balance between the polite and learned spheres, positioning history as the proper text to balance both concerns. More significantly for my purposes, the "ordinary books of amusement" are romances, secret histories, and other types of scandal fiction. Hume claims, "I may indeed be told that the fair sex have no aversion to history…provided it be *secret* history" (388). Hume marks himself as a gentleman reader through his own reading tastes, but that taste becomes the most visible when it is presented as advice to women readers.

On the surface this appears to be a departure from Haywood's model of the gentleman reader, both in its overt regulation of women and its rejection of passionate forms of fiction. However, Hume's criticism of more passionate or frivolous genres of reading reveals how the gentleman's role as moderator of reading is actually an expression of his desire to be attractive, both textually and physically. Hume argues that, "romances and novels" create "an appetite for falshood [sic]" (388). His complaint is not just that these types of reading inflame women's more passionate sensibilities, but that they give women the wrong ideas about men. History offers an important departure from these genres because it provides women with "knowledge…*[t]hat* our sex, as well as theirs, are far from being such perfect creatures as they are apt to imagine, and, *That* Love is not the only passion, which governs the male-world, but is often overcome by avarice, ambition, vanity, and a thousand other passions" (388, emphasis original). The falsehood so objectionable in romances and novels is their portrayal of masculinity. It gives women the wrong idea about men and fails to represent the varying passions that affect men's decisions. Thus, part of the gentleman's authority and guidance as a moral

reader is to instruct women how to best understand men, and, more importantly, to properly appreciate the gentleman. This desire for desirability is precisely the tool Haywood crafts into her own version of the gentleman.

To manufacture his own desirability, Hume creates a covert seduction tale for himself: he presents himself as a disinterested gentleman, but resorts to attempted seduction to inspire desire for his character. Like the gentleman spectator, Hume argues that his advice comes from a place of care for women; his persona, via his properly developed sentiment, is comfortable with a bit less objectivity than his gentlemanly predecessor, Mr. Spectator. Softening his critique of women's reading habits, Hume writes, "I know not whence it comes, that I have been thus *seduced* into a kind of raillery against the ladies" (389, emphasis mine). The language of seduction seeps into Hume's essay, which is striking because he is explicitly critiquing seductive genres, and claiming that they teach women false lessons about men and love. Furthermore, Hume, like D'elmont, is vulnerable to seduction. He is not positioning himself as predatory, but as receptive to seduction. There is also something of romance in Hume's description of women as sovereigns of the conversable world. Hume positions himself as an ambassador and supplicant to women: "As twou'd be an unpardonable Negligence in an Ambassador not to pay his Respects to the Sovereign of the State…so it wou'd be altogether inexcusable in me not to address myself, with particular Respect, to the Fair Sex" ("EW" 369). This metaphorical imagining of women as rulers who must be approached with respect has a similar air to Haywood's Chevalier.

In the essay, Hume shifts between seduced and potential seducer. He opens with an anecdote about what is essentially his attempted narrative seduction of a young lady:

> I was once desired by a young beauty, for whom I had some passion, to send her some novels and romances for her amusement in the country; but was not so ungenerous as to take the advantage, which such a course of reading might have given me, being resolved not to make use of poison'd arms against her. I therefore sent her Plutarch's Lives, assuring her…that there was not a word of truth in them from beginning to end. She perused them very attentively, 'till she came to the lives of Alexander and Ceasar, whose names she had heard of by accident; and then returned me the book, with many reproaches for deceiving her. (388)

Being desirable is one of the central appeals of the gentleman, and Hume opens with a statement that emphasizes how the "young beauty" desires him. Hume, like Haywood, blends bodily and literary desirability. Patricia Meyers Spacks argues the plots of eighteenth-century novels both represent and create desire, illuminating "the history, politics, and manners of their age not only by embodying prevailing ideology but, often, by reshaping ideology closer to the heart's desire" (6). Hume plays with this concept of plotting, implying that he could seduce this young woman with these seductive forms of reading (he could plot through their plots) but he does not want to "take the advantage" that romances or novels might give him. He clearly desires the young woman, but he seems to be resisting the rakish temptation to "make use of poison'd arms against her". Instead, Hume presents himself as the benevolent, seemingly disinterested gentleman, who would never take advantage of a young woman's weaknesses. He uses this moment to construct a narrative of his own gentlemanly virtue and restraint.

Hume presents himself as a gentleman in this passage, recommending readings that he claims benefit the young woman's understanding. However, Hume's choice of

reading is not as disinterested as it first appears: he recommends history, and in his own lifetime, Hume was best known as a historian, not as a philosopher. It was his six-volume work, *The History of England* (1754-1762), which covered the history of England from Julius Caesar to the English Civil War that gave Hume his financial independence.[115] Therefore, when he advises young women in general, and this young beauty in particular, to read history, he is asking them to read *him*. By presenting a genre that is more representative of his literary appeal as fiction, Hume attempts to co-opt or capture the seductive potential of the very genres he is critiquing. This is the kind of effect Haywood creates for D'elmont: the ability to be seductive without continuing to be a seducer. However, Hume is not able to achieve this effect. The young woman rejects his literary play—being a savvier reader than Hume has given her credit for—and castigates him for lying to her. And his own writings failed to achieve the popularity he sought. Most importantly for my case, Hume, who for many is one of the representatives of the man of letters and moral sympathy, demonstrates a clear anxiety about his desirability, and that his desire for wide appeal is clearly linked to his masculinity, specifically to his self-presentation as a gentleman. He even uses the language of seduction, the language of authors like Haywood, to try to create this appeal, because, Haywood has so intertwined the gentleman's ability to be a sympathetic, authoritative reader with his attractiveness, with his heterosocial and heterosexual appeal. The ideology of the gentleman is now intertwined with plots—amatory or otherwise—that create desire.

Hume's gentlemanly persona reveals how the gentleman was the product of narrative, a kind of literary construction with clear attachment to the model of masculinity manufactured by authors like Haywood and genres like amatory fiction.

Critics have discussed how Hume's "definition of personal identity turns on concepts of literary practice" (Tierney-Hynes 30). For Hume, there is not a stable a priori self; instead, we create our sense of identity from the relationships we establish between our ideas and impressions; our perceptions "are link'd together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other…Had we no memory, we never shou'd have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of cause and effects, which constitute our self or person" (*THN* 261). As Bender, Tierney-Hynes, Lubey, and others have pointed out, this makes the self a narrative structure: "Narrative makes precisely the substitution of succession for identity that Hume says we make in attributing personal identity to ourselves. Narrative sequence and the fiction of personal identity are inseparable" (Bender 37).[116] The self becomes a narrative construct, a product of reading our own experience. Hume writes, "The identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one" (*THN* 259). Not only identity itself, but specifically the identity of the gentleman becomes a narrative construction. The gentleman is a reader who enacts his gentlemanly moral prerogative by reading the world around him through the lens of moral sympathy, a right that he has cultivated through his own reading and the cultivation of his taste, which then circles back and creates his identity. This loop goes around and around. If the gentleman is built upon his reading, than his identity is built upon character and plot. This opens up the real possibility that actual gentlemen are formed by fictional gentlemen, and blurs the lines between the two in ways that bring attention to the constructed, textual nature of the gentleman as a form of masculinity. More specifically, it brings attention to the subtle influence of Haywood's model of masculinity and the gentleman's links to fiction by women. Genres that

gentleman authors dismissed—amatory fiction and romance—create structures that, through the popularity of these forms, become interwoven into the cultural practice and form of the gentleman.

Conclusion

To close, I would like to gesture back to my Haywood epigraph. Its larger context involves *The Female Spectator* (1744-1746), where Haywood brings attention to the problems with men barring women from "the most pleasant and profitable" of studies: philosophy. She criticizes, "O but, say they, Learning puts the Sexes too much on an Equality, it would destroy that implicit Obedience which it is necessary the Women should pay to our Commands:—If once they have the Capacity of arguing with us, where would be our Authority" (363 Book X). Haywood then appeals to her impartial readers, male and female, "If this very Reason for keeping us in Subjection does not betray an Arrogance and Pride in themselves, yet less excusable than that which they seem so fearful of our assuming" (363). This dimension, this unpacking of seemingly flat yet powerful, naturalized masculinity and its influence over women, is what I have hoped to accomplish in this chapter. By pairing Haywood and Hume I have charted how the gentleman reader's masculinity became an important aspect of his cultural definition, linking sentiment and literary structures. It also created opportunities for feminine influence, which while not entirely triumphant, were influential and allow us to see the ways men were regulated by gender constraints and how women had avenues to influence these constraints.

We often read regulation as the expression of cultural dominance and privilege. And those aspects are there in Hume; men, specifically straight, white men of a higher class, are clearly privileged and given access to cultural control. This chapter is not an apology for their privilege, but I do think it is important to examine the ways these mechanisms of regulation, which are oppressive, emerge from a complex system of influence that operates on more than the two levels of dominant versus subversive. If we shift focus and imagine regulation as a need to rewrite women's desire, not just for masculine pleasure, but out of a performance anxiety men feel over the definition and standards of masculinity, we can demystify this cultural dominance and privilege and see how women played a role in its construction. This anxiety is the product of women's pens; it is the product of unrealistic gender standards for men that women like Haywood crafted to create space for their own influence. To conform and perform to these standards, men like Hume deployed their privilege to regulate women.

Finally, this chapter highlights the power of the gentleman, but also the dissonance in our critical memory of this figure. Hume, despite his lack of widespread popularity, has remained a canonical and representative figure of his time, and there is something odd about our critical prioritization of Hume within eighteenth-century culture. Compared to Haywood, Hume's lack of widespread popularity is startling. This, of course, speaks to one of the major aspects of the feminist recovery projects, which have successfully and adeptly pointed out that previously non-canonical female authors, like Haywood, actually had as much, and in this case, more popular impact and influence than more canonical figures, like Hume. Hume is surely important; he was read by popular authors like the Fieldings and his influence as part of the Scottish Enlightenment

is far-reaching. Yet I find it intriguing that Hume was not popular with eighteenth-century readers when the question of popularity is central to the masculinity of the gentleman, and yet he has become the representative of culture, whereas Haywood's fictional gentleman, whose impact and appeal was wider, has been ignored. We have, in essence, privileged the "real" man over the fictional. Yet, as my chapter shows, the gentleman is a fictitious identity, which is powerful and culturally important, but it is not any more achievable for men than Clarissa's feminine virtue is for women. Furthermore, just as men stood to gain power through controlling definitions of femininity, women stood to gain from influencing definitions of masculinity.

Notes

[55] *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-1740) (365).

[56] p. 363 *The Female Spectator* Book X (1746).

[57] See Brian Michael Norton *Fiction and the Philosophy of Happiness: Ethical Inquiries in the Age of Enlightenment*, Karen O'Brien's *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, and Bannet's *The Domestic Revolution*.

[58] Tierney-Hynes is a good model of a critic who investigates similar themes in a way that considers how male and female authors were in mutual influential dialogue, even if the male authors consistently positioned themselves in opposition to what they considered feminine forms.

[59] John Bender explores Hume's philosophy as means of formulating the self as a narrative construction; John Mullan explores the intersections between Hume's form and his philosophy of sympathy; Jerome Christensen use Hume's career as a case study for

intersections between authorship, the rise of capitalism, and power. More recently, Rebecca Tierney-Hynes has argued that the fictional-self Hume's philosophy depicts draws on novelistic conventions and passionate conceptions of the imagination. However, in most of these studies, except in Tierney-Hynes' work, Hume is presented as key source material for larger ideological structures, more than the product of such structures. See John Bender's 1987 *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*; Jerome Christensen's 1987 *Practicing Enlightenment: Hume and the Formation of a Literary Career;* Betty Schellenberg's introduction to her 1996 book *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel, 1740-1775*; and John Mullan's 1988 *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. See Rebecca Tierney-Hynes' 2012 *Novel Minds: Philosophers and Romance Readers, 1680-1740*.

[60] One emerging exception to this is the most recent (still in conference paper form) work of Kathryn King, who has begun postulating that Haywood sought to be remembered as poet, whose work in many ways anticipates sentiment. My work approaches Haywood from a different angle, and connects her work to masculinity rather than poetry and traditions of homosocial female praise.

[61] See Lubey's chapter on Haywood, "'Too Great Warmth': Joseph Addison, Eliza Haywood, and the Pleasures of Reading," in *Excitable Imaginations*. Tierney-Hynes explores the relation between Haywood's amatory passion and philosophies of the passions in her article "Fictional Mechanics: Haywood, Reading, and the Passions" and, while she doesn't focus extensively on Haywood, her book *Novel Minds* discusses similar

relationships between Enlightenment philosophers like Hume and women writers and feminine genres. Both Lubey and Tierney-Hynes are part of what I see as a larger critical movement to bring women writers into discussions of the Enlightenment. JoEllen DeLucia's *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759-1820*, Eve Tavor Bannet's *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminism and the Novel,* Karen O'Brien's *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* and Brian Michael Norton's *Fiction and the Philosophy of Happiness: Ethical Inquiries in the Age of Enlightenment* are also representative of this trend. Though, what is striking about Lubey and Tierney-Hyne's work is their incorporation of early eighteenth-century women writers, especially fiction writers; many investigations of women in the Enlightenment focus on mid and late century women writers, with a usual nod to Mary Astell in the early century as a woman philosopher. But Lubey and Tierney-Hynes take a serious and specific look at the roles that genres like amatory fiction and romance played in the cultivation of popularization of Enlightenment principles.

[62] Barker-Benfield links this to the reform of male manners. Mullan argues that it emerges out of the need to represent newly important social bonds. Similarly, Schellenberg ties it to the growing desire for social and moral consensus via polite society. Guest links this to shifting ideas "small changes" in gender definitions and the relationship between public and private.

[63] I am drawing this distinction from Janet Todd's *Sensibility: An Introduction*. In the eighteenth century, as Janet Todd explains, sensibility "came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display

compassion for suffering" (*Sensibility* 7). Sensibility is tied and sometimes considered interchangeable with sentiment, which links these refined and responsive feelings with morality. Sentiment is a "moral reflection, a rational opinion usually about the rights and wrongs of human conduct" or "a thought, often an elevated one, influenced by emotion, a combining of heart with head or an emotional impulse leading to an opinion or principle" (*Sensibility* 7).

[64] Lead critics like Janet Todd, Gallagher, Bender, Mullan, Tierney-Hynes, Barker-Benfield and Schellenberg have noted the role of sympathy in Hume's writings and the social aspect of Hume's moral theories.

[65] Hume writes, "there was never any nation of the world, nor a single person in any nation, who was utterly deprived of" feelings of morality, "who never, in any instance, shew'd the least approbation or dislike of manners. These sentiments are so rooted in our constitution and temper, that without entirely confounding the human mind by disease or madness, 'tis impossible to extirpate and destroy them" (*THN* 474). This temper is formed by our society, by us living within a community or nation, and it is so ingrained that it can feel innate. For Hume this accounts for different cultures having different senses of virtue and vice; they each create their own social codes through their collective experiences and associations.

[66] As Rebecca Tierney-Hynes succinctly articulates, "Hume's theory of sympathy is effectively a theory of reading" (30). For Bender, Hume's depiction of the imagination and the self is based upon narrative structure. Gallagher and Barker-Benfield both see

reading as a vehicle for developing and practicing sympathy. Kathleen Lubey and Tierney-Hynes both connect philosophies of sympathy with novelistic language.

[67] Barker-Benfield writes, "Above all, and this cannot be too strongly emphasized, the man of feeling was shown to respect women and make common ground with them" (249).

[68] These features will all have been defined in Chapter 1 and the introduction to my project.

[69] Christensen writes, "The generous male alleviates his natural superiority by a 'complaisance' 'studied' in the example of the female whom in his gallantry he seeks to please" (98). He continues, "Male superiority is not denied, but the *appearance* of superiority is regarded as a 'breech of decency,' to be avoided like any other 'peculiarity of manner'" (98). I think Christensen goes too far with the castration metaphor; however, he is right to pick up on the ways in which politeness places gentlemen into unusual positions where they must be both subservient or passive and dominant.

[70] This is a ubiquitous thread in Haywood scholarship. However, I believe the essays collected in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*, edited by Kirsten T. Saxton & Rebecca P. Bocchiccho serve as good examples of this terrain. Also Ros Ballaster's *Seductive Forms*: *Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*.

[71] Bowers and Lubey both focus on Melliora as the primary character within the text, who centralizes the themes envoked by the other female characters. See Bower's *Force and Fraud* Chapter 8 "Making a Virtue of Complicity: Haywood's Scandal Fiction," which

focuses on *Love in Excess*. Bowers argues that, within a tapestry of female desire, Melliora survives with her virtue intact because she successfully negotiates female passivity. In *Excitable Imaginations* chapter, "'Too Great Warmth': Joseph Addison, Eliza Haywood, and the Pleasures of Reading," Lubey takes a different approach, saying that the only thing that protects Melliora is a timely knock on the door (74). However, Lubey still centers her analysis of *Love in Excess* on Melliora, who Lubey argues represents the struggle of regulating the imagination's connection to bodily pleasure: "Melliora cannot distinguish between the ideas of her imagination and the material world. In this most dramatic, most amatory of examples, the imagination leads erotic fantasy to assume form at the level of the body. Those 'thoughts'—of love, of seduction—that ought to be guarded by the imagination are in fact betrayed by it" (74).

[72] This is not to say that these female characters are not dynamic or complex, but their central motives and characters do not change over the course of the novel. Alovisa is always jealous; Ciamara is always selfish and lustful; Melantha is a coquette, through and through; Melliora is passionate yet virtuous; Violetta self-sacrificing; etc… Whereas D'elmont evolves from being an ambitious rake to a sympathetic gentleman.

[73] Lubey writes, that in comparison to the complicated machinations of female passion, "men's motives for pursuing love and sex seem almost invisible" in Haywood's novels (98). As Margaret Case Croskery writes, Haywood's "plots are almost all driven by the tangible, amoral, directive, conflicted, incarnate experience of female desire, as opposed to the simple threat of male sexual predation" (70).

[74] In her 1724 novel *Lasselia: or, the self-abandon'd* Haywood presents the illicit love story of Lasselia and the married de l'Amye. The two embark on an affair, which (rather unusually for Haywood) is based on mutual love. However, when they are discovered de l'Amye does the noble thing and reconciles with his wife and Lasselia retires to a convent. In an inset tale we do discover that de l'Amye had fundamentally seduced and abandoned another young woman, so he is not entirely noble in his relations with women. However, Haywood is careful to emphasize de l'Amye's constancy to Lasselia. On a larger scale, I hope my work on *Love in Excess* opens up our examination of Haywood's male characters, like de l'Amye who represent—on closer inspection—more of a spectrum of male behavior with repeated but not mutually inclusive features rather than a single type.

[75] One exception to this critical trend is Philidore, from Haywood's novella *Philidore and Placentia* (1727); Jennifer Thorn has noted "Philidore's astonishingly un-Haywoodian refusal of amorous dalliance" (184). Thorn's very phrasing represents the type casting I am discussion above. On a slightly different note, I agree that Philidore stands out, but not because he is the only main, male character in Haywood's work (he is not; Haywood has several prominent and central male characters in her novels, especially in her midcareer novels). Also, in another work I discuss the dangerous, manipulations of Philidore's particular masculinity at greater length, which is not exceptional for its virtue despite what other critics have argued.

[76] For more on the influence and importance of character types during the eighteenth century, see Deidre Shauna Lynch's *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning*.

[77] I say "novelistic" here because Haywood's plays and other writings—her periodicals (*The Female Spectator* [1744-1746] and *The Parrot* [1746]), her conduct books (*The Wife* and *The Husband* [1756] are two examples), her works on Duncan Campbell (*A Spy Upon* the Conjurer [1724] and *The Dumb Projector: Being a Surprising Account of a Trip to Holland Made by Duncan Campbell* [1725]), some of her political writings (The Invisible Spy [1755] is an example) all feature male narrators or central male figures. These figures have a wider variety than her novels—men, a parrot, seducers, concerned fathers, a deaf, mute, psychic celebrity; however, like her novels these male voices and figures are still largely critically neglected. Critics have examined these works, but not specifically for their relationship to masculinity. A notable exception is Felicity Nussbaum's analysis Haywood's writings on Duncan Campbell (see her chapter "Fictions of Defect: Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood" [23-57] in her book *Limits of the Human* and her essay "Speechless: Haywood's Deaf and Dumb Protector" included in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood* [194-216]). However, Nussbaum's analyses, while provocative, and clearly concerned with gender, zero in on Campbell because of his unique status as a kind of defective masculinity. My project hopes to consider how Haywood is also invested in and influential in her constructions of more normative and dominant masculinities.

[78] In fact, this lumping together of Haywood's male characters is, I think, a convenient but problematic categorization. Haywood does work within types, but within this spectrum there is a variety amongst her male, as well as her female, characters. My hope is that this chapter serves as a first step towards reexamining Haywood's male characters, not to contradict, but to add nuance and build upon the work that has been done on her female characters.

[79] This is of course rather ironic, because, as Modelski points out, *Pamela* is one of the clearest examples of the reformed rake trope, and *Pamela'*s popularity probably has a fair amount to do with this figure's enduring popularity.

[80] For a reading of *Sir Charles Grandison* as a solution for Lovelace and the rake see Megan A. Woodworth's introduction to her book *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement: Independence, War, Masculinity, and the Novel, 1778-1818* (1-29). See also Helen Thompson's "Secondary Qualities and Masculine Form in *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*."

[81] See "'What Ann Lang Read': Eliza Haywood and Her Readers" from *Passionate Fictions*. Blouch is specifically references Goose's essay "What Ann Lang Read", where he postulates, based on Ms. Lang's library containing Haywood's works that Lang was an frivolous, servant girl, who lacked proper taste in literary merit, hence her well preserved collection of Haywood's works. Blouch, using contemporary scholarship puts pressure and explores the difficulty with pinning down Haywood's readers. While Blouch mentions one male reader of Haywood, William Musgrave, and male critics of Haywood, she maintains that Haywood's readership was probably feminine.

[82] See Richetti's *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739*; Ballaster's *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740; Todd's The Signs of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660-1800*. These are all representatives of the now foundational vanguard of early Haywood scholarship. Bowers' *Force and Fraud* and Lubey's *Excitable Imaginations* are good representatives of more recent engagement with Haywood and her audience.

[83] See Fergus (43), Spedding *A Bibliography of Eliza Haywood* (315, 771), K. King's *A Political Biography* (10-12), and Powell *Performing Authorship* (151).

[84] For example, Warner notes that Haywood included central male, as well as female characters, citing *Love in Excess* as a prominent example.

[85] Blouch also provides a brief but clear support of this interpretation in "What Ann Lang Read" (308).

[86] The most famous and earliest version of this association is Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987). While some of Armstrong's claims have been disputed the association between the female author/character/reader and text have continued to be incredibly powerful and widespread.

[87] These terms and features of the rake is articulated more definitely in Chapter 1 and the Introduction, where I lay the foundation for how the gentleman is replacing the aristocratic rake. However, to provide some brief support here: each of these features has been linked to the mode of masculinity that preceded the English gentleman. The Count is preceded by his reputation, specifically, his reputation for military prowess, which Barker-Benfield argues is part of the older regime of rakish masculinity, with its

emphasis on dueling as a way to demonstrate male prowess and power. Barker-Benfield writes, aristocratic, rakish masculinity was "traditionally bound up with classical and warrior ideals," which manifested in dueling practices, which were quickly falling out of favor in the early eighteenth century (Barker-Benfield 104). For his military service, D'elmont is rewarded according to aristocratic rules via his reception from the King and the Court. As Thomas King argues, according to Restoration standards "Manliness was not a set of privileges accruing to the membership of a 'natural group' of biological men, but the performative effect of preferment and autonomy within a patriarchal society" (King 4-5). As he and Mackie have both remarked, power and therefore masculinity within this setting was about embodied proximity: "closer proximity to the monarch" (Mackie 50) equated to manliness and status, because "the sovereign body [was] the primary place and the center around which power relations were exercised" (King 3). Therefore, from the opening passages of the text, Haywood is signaling that D'elmont's masculinity begins from a foundation of aristocratic masculine privilege. King, Mackie, and Barker-Benfield all link these aristocratic modes of manhood with the rake or the libertine, whose seductiveness is amplified by his French lineage and context. As Michele Cohen argues, in the rise of the gentleman, Frenchness came to signify both refinement but also a dangerous seductiveness.

[88] Barker-Benfield argues that aristocratic, rakish masculinity was "traditionally bound up with classical and warrior ideals," which manifested in dueling practices, which were quickly falling out of favor in the early eighteenth century (Barker-Benfield 104).

[89] D'elmont's explicit heterosexuality is one of the features that primes him to become a gentleman and one key way to distinguish D'elmont's eighteenth-century rake status from his earlier Restoration brethren. As Erin Mackie argues, "Unlike their Restoration forefathers, the iconic rakish figures of the eighteenth-century culture are emphatically heterosexual" (9). Whereas Restoration rakes, like the infamous Earl of Rochester, embodied a more fluid moment in masculinity and sexuality. Rochester wrote about his sexual escapades with women and boys without much differentiation, and no shame. The rake's omnivorous, sexual voraciousness became one of his defining features. However, despite his appeal to both sexes, D'elmont is rigorously heterosexual, as are Haywood's other male rakes. As I discuss in Chapter One, Mackie, Thomas King, and Randolph Trumbach have all articulated that this distinction is crucial, because it marks the eighteenth century's move towards a heteronormative model of masculinity and a stronger categorization of innate, gender difference.

[90] D'elmont does defend Frankville from a band of ruffians, but this isn't precisely a duel. Alovisa also accidentally impales herself on D'elmont's sword at the end of Volume Two, but the almost carnivalesque nature of that scene, D'elmont's passivity in the act, along with Alovisa's frustrated sexual passion. and the clear phallic overtones of the act, foreclose this as a moment of rakish masculine prowess. In Volume Three, where D'elmont is a fully reformed gentleman, D'elmont almost duels when Frankville accuses D'elmont of abducting Melliora. However, despite a heated passion on both sides, the two men discuss the situation rather than drawing their swords, following the chosen path of gentlemanly restraint advocated by Richard Steele in his periodical writings and *The*

Conscious Lovers. For more on dueling's connection to the rake and the cultural move away from dueling see also Robert B. Shoemaker's "Reforming Male Manners: Public Insult and the Decline of Violence in London, 1660-1740." Drawing on Barker-Benfield's reform of male manners Shoemaker argues that insult took the place of the duel as a means for defending male honor: "The new emphasis in prescriptions for male behavior was thus on talk rather than action, and this was reflected in the growing popularity of the public insult among men, a type of behavior which, while it would be condemned as uncivil by the ideologists of politeness, was arguably encouraged by their efforts to suppress violence and the new importance they gave to male conversation" (Shoemaker 138).

[91] One could possibly say this patter repeats a third time with Ciamara; D'elmont only manages to avoid sleeping with her by a lucky interruption. This moment of role reversal plays to the same rhythm as the earlier scenes, except now D'elmont is the one in danger of seduction. By that point, he is clearly no longer a rake, but the repetition of the pattern keeps the reader's passions heated, and heated for D'elmont.

[92] According to Mackie, part of the rake's power was his **"**status as an object of emulation" (Mackie 50). Barker-Benfield describes Rochester's "symbolic power" as representative of the rake's authority and discusses the rake's tendencies to travel in packs, luring in other men (45).

[93] As Patricia Meyers Spacks argues, "Fiction creates and conveys its truths through plot. The dynamic narrative organization of events we call plot engages our desire" (2).

[94] In *Signs of Angelica* Todd uses romance to align eighteenth-century women authors—both scandalous like Behn, Manley, and Haywood, and virtuous, like Penelope Aubin. She writes, "The heroic French romance was primarily concerned with love and with women as writers and readers" and it was these themes that carried over to eighteenth-century women writers (48). In *Amatory Forms* Ballaster details the importance of love in romances and eighteenth-century novels by women (43-9).

[95] This male-male exchange is not unique in Haywood's oeuvre. *Philidore and Placentia* also includes an inset tale exchanged between men.

[96] Some authors did worry about the effects of romances on men. One comedic example is Alexander Pope's "Rape of the Lock" (1712); in his mock epic, Pope satirize the Baron as a romance reader: "…to Love an altar built,/Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt./There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,/ And all the trophies of his former loves" (37-40). For Pope, the corruption of romance reading is the same for men as women; it makes them silly. Later in the century Johnson would write his famous *Rambler* 4 critiquing different kinds of fiction, especially romance, for their effects on young people, of both sexes.

[97] Ballaster writes, "Love is perceived as the sole motivating force of history and our only means of understanding its processes" (47).

[98] The Chevalier is not a gentleman; his generic codes of romance make him a knight more than a gentleman. However, the lessons D'elmont learns from him are not mimetic, they are sympathetic. D'elmont is supposed to learn lessons of respect and courtesy, which he then deploys in the more modern vein of the gentleman via his conversations

and interactions with female characters. He is not supposed to become the Chevalier; he is supposed to read the Chevalier and adopt the lessons of his character in the mode of a gentleman. In fact, that D'elmont doesn't ever become a Knight like the Chevalier further emphasizes the reader/text dynamic of their relationship. And it speaks to a mode of literary imitation that Haywood may be advocating for her readers, who, try as they might, can't and probably shouldn't be exactly like D'elmont (otherwise half the women of England would be dead from passion); they should, instead, learn his lessons of reading and sympathy.

[99] As Bowers argues, "In response, [to D'elmont's seduction] Melliora speaks what amounts to a different language" (233).

[100] At ASECS 2016, Toni Bowers put a great deal of pressure on my reading of this scene. She pointed out that D'elmont does not successfully identify Melliora. However, for me, this is less important. According to Hume, sympathy is not about mind reading; it can't be. Objects must be brought near us; we must connect them to ourselves and our previous experiences for them to make sense at all. Sympathy is about applying past experience and precedent in ways that illuminate, as much as possible, emotional situations. Furthermore, while I think that D'elmont's lack of penetration could be read as a sign that he has not completed his sympathetic/gentlemanly journey, I also think there is a bit of a power play here on Haywood's part. She wants the gentleman reader to need her, the female author. If he is perfectly able to penetrate every situation, this just reinforces a phallic kind of masculine hegemony, which I think Haywood is resisting.

Her gentleman reader needs to be more sympathetic and considerate, but not all knowing or perfect, because his limits create a space for her authority.

[101] I am sorry to pass so quickly over Violetta's death here. A longer version of this project, would include her death scene as a final display of D'elmont's sympathy—a space that, more than perhaps any other in the novel, positions him as a sentimental hero. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I have had to pass it by.

[102] For Richetti, this stylization allows Haywood (and her readers) to get away with a sexual naughtiness she would otherwise have not been allowed. Lubey sees Haywood as instructing readers, especially young women, to internalize the wary lessons of seduction that Haywood's larger oeuvre presents.

[103] As Bowers writes, "more than one woman takes sexual initiative with D'elmont" (229). I would argue that all the women, except Melliora, take the initiative with D'elmont, and even "Melliora is not simply the object of D'elmont's desire: she is also an actively desiring sexual subject" (Bowers 231). Bowers argues that almost all of this aggressive female desire is punished, except for Melliora's careful balance of passive obedience.

[104] Amena, Melantha, and Alovisa desire D'elmont in his rakish form, and Ciamara desires D'elmont in a purely selfish, physical way, that ignores the psychological and moral features of his new gentlemanly character. Violetta is the only woman who desires D'elmont as a gentleman who isn't rewarded.

[105] Lubey argues, "Like sexual narratives, sentimental texts provide evocative descriptions that raise readers' sensitivities to the suffering of others and aim to create a consensus of ethical perspective" (6).

[106] See Oakleaf's introduction to the Broadview edition of *Love in Excess*.

[107] In his book *Practicing Enlightenment: Hume and the Formation of a Literary Career,* Jerome Christensen uses Hume as a case study to explore roles of capitalism, market culture, and gender in defining the role of the author as a vehicle of Enlightenment ideology. Christensen is more focused on Marxist theory and challenging the hegemony of Enlightenment principles, but his discussions of gender and how Hume is deliberately positioning his authorship with masculinity have been helpful for my own work in this chapter. Barker-Benfield positions Hume as a part of a larger cultural apparatus that is concerned with masculinity. Meanwhile, Christensen, one of the few critics to devote extensive analysis to the trajectory of Hume's career, presents Hume as a representative case study for how masculinity became tied to Enlightenment principles through authorship, and examines how Hume represents his own social practice and his self.

[108] Critics draw on both Hume's early *Treatise* and his later essays, as will I. While in many ways, Hume's philosophical outlook remained consistent throughout these works, as he himself writes, many of his essays are his *Treatise* "cast anew" ("My Own Life" 3).

[109] Hume writes, "By that Means, every Thing of what we call *Belles Lettres* became totally barbarous, being cultivated by Men without any Taste of Life or Manners, and without that Liberty and Facility of Thought and Expression, which can only be acquir'd by Conversation. Even Philosophy went to Wrack by…And Indeed, what cou'd be

expected from Men who never consulted Experience in any of their reasonings, or who never search'd for that Experience, where alone it is to be found, in common Life and Conversation?" (3).

[110] Jones and Barker-Benfield attribute this shift to changes in market culture, where proper consumption of goods, governed by good taste and concepts of beauty and domesticity, recalibrated cultural attitudes.

[111] As noted in Chapter 1, Addison and Steele are clearly invested in a heterosocial exchange; tea-tables were after all a sphere where women had polite control. However, I do think that Hume's rendition of this message places women more directly in control and in a position of higher power.

[112] For Townsend, Hume was still part of an elite tradition and positioned his writings accordingly; Hume wanted to "join the past masters…He sees himself as a part of a long tradition of humanistic thought" (3). While I agree with Townsend up to a point—Hume was explicitly not writing for other professional philosophers—I am find Mullan's arguments that Hume's intended audience was a wider and more popular audience of men and women who were interested in polite society, personal morality, taste, and happiness more compelling. Mullan writes, "Hume turned to…the 'Addisonian essay', a form of 'polite' and accessible writing designed for 'an audience of men and women of rank, property and position in local and national life, who were preoccupied with questions of social role, personal conduct and private happiness in an increasingly complex, commercially oriented society'" (11)

[113] Hume's works were not completely unnoticed; over the course of his life, Hume writes, "notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances" as to keep Hume comfortably independent ("MOL" 6). But the winds and seasons of readership did not favor Hume.

[114] See Mullan (11); See Gallagher's discussion of Hume's popularity (or lack thereof) (167-8)

[115] Hume also wrote *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1646–69)

[116] Lubey grounds this with the power of erotic scenes: "[E]ighteenth-century narratives of intimacy confirm the absolute centrality of the pleasures of erotic reading to the production of self-conscious, autonomous, and rational individuals—in short, to those ideals of personhood long associated with the Enlightenment" (8)

CHAPTER 3 – ROMANCING THE GENTLEMAN CRITIC: READING CRITICISM AS GENERIC COURTSHIP IN CHARLOTTE LENNOX'S *THE FEMALE QUIXOTE* AND SAMUEL JOHNSON'S *THE RAMBLER*

"CRITICK…1. A man skilled in the art of judging of literature; a man able to distinguish the faults and beauties of writing"
—Samuel Johnson[117]

"Since you Sir have been so good to engage on my Side I think I may set these inhuman Criticks at defyance[sic]"
--Charlotte Lennox to Samuel Richardson[118]

The eighteenth-century critic, by definition, was a *man*, and frequently in the minds of eighteenth-century scholars, *the man*, that is, *the critic* was Samuel Johnson. He both literally and metaphorically defined the critic. He supported this definition with passages from other male authors: Alexander Pope, John Dryden, and Jonathan Swift. The critic is thus defined through and by the work of male authors. The role of the critic is to judge literature and to separate each work's beauties and its faults, and what qualifies him for this position is his taste; he displayed the signs of a classical education and experience of the world. Frequently, the critic presented himself as gentleman, and the categories of criticism—beauties and faults—were gendered in ways that excluded women from the highest praise but also from the role of critic. In this way, the gentleman

critic seems like the mortal enemy of the female author, a foe to be fought against; this is certainly part of the portrait presented in Charlotte Lennox's letter to Samuel Richardson. Lennox penned the above letter when she was attempting to publish her second and most famous novel, *The Female Quixote* (1752), and Richardson and Johnson were her correspondents and assistants in this endeavor. At first glance, it appears the vulnerable yet defiant woman writer must rely on her male patrons—Richardson and Johnson—to defend her novel. Yet, in both epigraphs, all is not as it seems. Johnson, despite his own definition, struggles in his own performance as the gentleman critic; in *The Rambler* he brings overt attention to the performative aspects of the gentleman critic. Meanwhile, though Lennox turns to Richardson and Johnson to assist in her publication, she does not kowtow to them. Rather, as a savvy author she pulls the prominent gentlemen to her side, transforming the gentleman critic from her opponent into her champion, and co-opting his power for her own authorial ambitions.

The gentleman's literary authority as author, reader, and critic are all interconnected aspects of his cultural cachet; however, while Chapter One focused on the gentleman as instructive author, and Chapter Two examined his position a moral reader, Chapter Three will consider how gentlemanly authorship and reading combined into the role of the gentleman critic. As the critic, the gentleman is once again deeply connected to women and femininity; they are frequently the subject, text, and audience of his critique. To a certain extent both the gentleman as author and reader act as critics. Addison, Steele and Hume all offer advice and critiques of women's reading and of literature in general. This chapter adds is how the standards of the gentleman cultivated by women writers influenced the iconic representative of criticism. Furthermore, I argue

that in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote,* Lennox symbolically represents the relationship of the gentleman critic and female author, which allows us, in turn, to gain an understanding of Johnson's relationship with Lennox, especially in the 1750s when he published his famous *Rambler* essays and she published *The Female Quixote*.

Johnson is—according to almost any measure—the icon of eighteenth-century authorship; primarily a moralist, Johnson also constructed and presented important ideas about literary criticism throughout his writings. However, the Johnson of the 1750s was not the looming figure he would later become later in the century, and his depictions of literary criticism in *The Rambler* are various. At its highest, the critic is a heroic figure or a glorious goddess, guided by the principles of virtue, truth and nature that so motivated Johnson's moral ideals. At its lowest it is a selfish, superficial, mode of engagement, driven by pride, vanity, and fashion, a mock-heroic mode of being. The gender dynamics of Johnson's criticism are nebulous; however, the features he aligns with good criticism either in his description of criticism or in his own critical essays—judgment, reason, classical education, imagination—are considered the rightful (if not perfectly exclusive) province of the gentleman. However, at the same time Johnson, in his own criticism, especially of Milton, is hard on canonical authors and other critics who stick rigidly to ancient generic principles. While Johnson clearly displays and values classical learning and knowledge, he questions the value of only mimicking these rules and styles for a modern context. Furthermore, the bad critics—the shallow wits or overly stuffy scholars—are primarily depicted as men, specifically as failures of would-be gentlemen. When Johnson wrote the *Ramblers*, the cultural ideology of gender was shifting into a binary and complementary gendered mode. However, at this pivotal junction Johnson

resists some of the traditional markers of gentlemanly authorship and performance: the eidolon, a clear and direct critique of women and their manners, repeated addresses to female readership, and so on. Johnson's own relationship with Lennox, especially in the 1750s, is more collegial than patronizing, which demonstrates a departure from the gentleman's benevolent regulation of women writers. Johnson's resistance to gentlemanly condescension to female readers and gentlemanly neutrality will become key features in my rereading of Arabella's cure and her relationship to Doctor. Rather than seeing Johnson escape the gendered ideology of the gentleman or his historical moment, what I propose is visible in the *Rambler*—and more completely in *The Female Quixote*—is the way this authorial power is starting to be disconnected from the gentleman. I am not arguing that the gentleman stops being a figure of critical and literary authority, but rather that by mid-century some of the features that define literary authority are no longer *so exclusively* the gentleman's to wield.

In my other chapters I explored how the features of the didactic author and the moral reader defined the character of the gentleman. Here, I want to shift the valence slightly, to focus on how Lennox uses the courtship plot of *The Female Quixote* as a metaphor for understanding the gender dynamics between the woman author, Arabella, and the gentleman critic, Glanville. Initially, I imagined that Glanville—the dull but relatively inoffensive gentleman—would emerge as the representative of the critic, seeking to guide Arabella's assertive self-authorship according to a clear patriarchal script. However, Lennox does not present the gentleman as the only or even the best type of critic. Rather, he is presented as offering one acceptable, well-meaning perspective among many, and his gentlemanly authority is used repeatedly to endorse alternative

kinds of literary value and to interrogate overly presumptive masculine perspectives. Glanville is a critic because he teaches other people how to read Arabella; he isn't just a reader, he attempts to mediate and regulate the relationship between Arabella and her readers, always with the idea of appreciating and valuing Arabella and of teaching other people to see her value. He also criticizes amoral and selfish modes of authorship (Sir George). In this way, he is superior to the superficial Mr. Selvin or the manipulative Sir George, but he is not as insightful, effective, or powerful as the Countess, the Doctor, or—in certain circumstances—Arabella herself. Yet, he is the critical voice united to Arabella in a symbolically significant marriage. Lennox presents a matrix of criticism that no longer requires the gentleman as its ideal vessel, and endorses a gentleman critic who is deliberately not the best reader, but is rather a good, tasteful critic, who is open to the influence of his female author, who becomes her ally, and who demonstrates proper regard for other critical voices based on their virtue and ability rather than their gender. It is possible for Lennox to do so because the links between the gentleman and authorial power are no longer so concretely dependent, because by mid-century the work and revisions of women authors have begun to have a clear effect. Also, male authors like Johnson have become less comfortable about performing aspects of the gentleman that they themselves do not have, such as a classical education or a genteel upbringing.

Recalibrating Lennox and Johnson's Relationship

On one side of this chapter stands Samuel Johnson, perhaps the most looming figure of the eighteenth-century world. His work and his life became the portrait of the

eighteenth century for the nineteenth century, and even through our current day. His huge oeuvre, the wide variety of his body of work, his own large and unwieldy physical body, the extensive accounts of his life, his connections to almost all of the major literary figures of his day, seem to touch and connect the most iconic and dynamic aspects of eighteenth-century culture and memory. He catalogued canonical authors—both historical and his contemporaries—in his *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781) and his own life was recorded in three best selling biographies, the most iconic now being James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791). In fact, one of the challenges of Johnson scholarship is separating Johnson in his own writings from the Johnson of the biographies.[119] He is bound up in our very language. Yet this is a Johnson who emerges over time and in retrospect.

On the other side stands Charlotte Lennox, whose biography is almost as sparse as Johnson's is abundant. Lennox is most remembered for her supposedly bad temper and difficult disposition, for being the author of *The Female Quixote* (1752), and for her connection to Johnson. Johnson, Richardson, and Fielding praised her work, especially *The Female Quixote.* She had a long career, writing six novels between 1751 and 1791, several collections of poetry, one of the first works of professional literary criticism in *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753-4), translations, and other prose works. She was the daughter of an army captain, lived abroad in Gibraltar, New York, and Canada. She was on friendly terms with Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Joshua Reynolds, and on decidedly unfriendly terms with Hester Thrale, Elizabeth Carter, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. According to Norma Clarke, "Throughout her life she either bit the hand that fed her or contemptuously disdained to eat the crumbs" (70). She was distinguished by

Johnson among all the other women he knew for her literary talent. In 1784, Johnson told Boswell, "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's, with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found: I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superiour[sic] to them all" (Boswell 1278).

The relationship between Lennox and Johnson has become one of mutual recovery, and has become an evolving sounding board for some of the crucial discussions on authorship and gender in the eighteenth century. When Johnson was categorized as a misogynist, Johnson scholars like Kemmerer, Clarke, Sarah Morrison, and others drew upon his relationships with women, especially with Lennox, to reveal the more nuanced portrait of Johnson's gendered relationships.[120] In this vision of Johnson, he was the mentor, the admirer, the patron of women writers and thinkers including Hannah More, Frances Burney, Hester Thrale, Sarah Fielding, Frances Sheridan, and Lennox. The scene from John Hawkins's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1787) of Johnson celebrating Lennox's publication of *The Life of Harriet Stuart* with a party, apple pie, and "a crown of laurel" has become the counterpoint to Boswell's recounting of the dancing dogs and women preachers scene (285).

While viewing Johnson as a patron of women writers has recuperated his reputation among Johnson scholars, Lennox critics have a more ambivalent view. To a certain extent "our understanding of Lennox's literary life is predicated" on her relationship with Johnson and other male authors, and this relationship was clearly "beneficial, but also probably restrictive" (*Performing Authorship* 185) This is because the very concept of patronage, when it collides with gendered dynamics, has an almost inescapable taint of patronizing control. Women authors were in a more vulnerable

position, which critics argue was limited "in various ways by masculine approval" (Spencer 92); women writers therefore "became very careful to write in the way that men found acceptably feminine" (92). If they didn't, and if they were radical, women writers "would probably not have been read" and therefore women had to acquiesce or at least create the appearance of doing so (Craft 821). This is how critics have historically characterized Lennox's relationship to her male peers, specifically with regards to *The Female Quixote*. Because of her "heavily filial" relationships (*Performing Authorship* 185) with Johnson, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Richardson, Lennox has been characterized as a "man's woman" (Malina 277). Early critics like Todd remarked on how "Charlotte Lennox achieved extraordinary approval from famous and respectable literary men" (*Sign of Angellica* 151). In terms of the *Female Quixote*, despite the fact that Lennox had already published *Harriet Stuart* the year before in 1751 and a collection of poetry in 1747, Lennox had trouble getting *The Female Quixote* published. Lennox wanted the prominent Andrew Millar to publish her novel, and Millar had sent her manuscript out to independent readers—as was his custom—two of whom in November of 1751 rejected the novel.[121] Within the same month both Johnson and Richardson intervened for Lennox, convincing their friend John Boyle (then Earl of Orrery) to read the book and talk to Millar. By 1752, Millar had accepted the publication and the book was printed in March 1752. The novel "immediately received extravagant praise from prominent literary figures" (Schürer xxx). Fielding praised Lennox's quixotic tale in *The Covent Garden Journal* on March 24, 1752. He compared *The Female Quixote* to *Don Quixote*, finding it equal or superior to Cervantes's famous text on several fronts, stating, "Upon the whole, I do very earnestly recommend it, as a most extraordinary and most

excellent Performance" (194). Two weeks later a "brief but favorable review" (Hanley 29) of *The Female Quixote* was published in the March issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (22:146), possibly written by Johnson.[122]

While the interventions clearly benefited Lennox, the connotations of the more socially vulnerable female author depending on more established male peers can be troubling, especially when critics have examined the troubling ending of *The Female Quixote*. It makes Arabella's reform from quixote to wife feel like giving in. After all, one of the reasons Fielding praised the work was for using the dated genre of romance "to expose all those Vices and Follies in her Sex which are chiefly predominant in Our Days, that it will afford very useful Lessons to all those young Ladies who will peruse it with proper Attention" (194). In light of this praise, critics like Laurie Langbauer have argued that "*The Female Quixote* does in part agree with Fielding's reading; it equates romance and women's sexuality by focusing on the improprieties of romance, emphasizing how the wildness of romance offends against sexual decorum" (79). Even critics like Debra Malina or Margaret Anne Doody, who see feminist potential in Arabella's quixotic devotion to romance, read the ending as a defeat, the result "of accepting the rules of her 'fathers' and 'brothers,' acquiescing to the advice of her male contemporaries" (Malina 277).

The longstanding debate about the authorship penultimate chapter of *The Famale Quixote* represents this very issue. The question of whether Johnson wrote the chapter, or whether Lennox wrote it to gain favor with powerful male authors, has plagued the novel for years.[123] Thankfully, Norbert Schürer's recent collection of Lennox's correspondence has fundamentally put this debate to rest.[124] In a letter on March 12, 1752 Lennox sent

Johnson a copy of her book, and asked him to "read over the latter part of the second Voll. [sic] which you have not yet seen" (29, *emphasis mine).* As Schürer rightly points out, if Lennox had finished the novel by this point, and was asking for Johnson's advice, Johnson could not have written the scene with the infamous Doctor. However, for some critics "it hardly matters whether Johnson actually wrote the crucial chapter" because "if not literally, at least metaphorically, Dr. Johnson articulates the view of the world that persuades Arabella to abandon her dream of creating meaning, interest, and power beyond the domestic sphere" (*Desire and Truth* 15). The Doctor feels like a symbol, a textual embodiment of the gendered oppression of women writers within a system that privileged the gentleman critic.

However, this portrait of Lennox as the dependent author in need of a powerful male patronage does a disservice to Lennox and actually misrepresents key aspects of her relationship with her male peers, especially Johnson. First, in the early 1750s Johnson and Lennox, as far as their literary careers went, were much more of a level than the longstanding image of Johnson as patron, Lennox as disciple implies.[125] The Johnson of the 1750s, especially the early 1750s, was not the Johnson of posterity or even of the later half of the eighteenth century. He had been commissioned to write the *Dictionary* and he was publishing his *Rambler* essays, which were indeed successful, but Johnson began *The Rambler* "largely to have a source of steady income as the dictionary money began to run out" (Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers'" 579). Despite the two-decade disparity in their ages—Johnson was in his early forties while Lennox was in her mid-twenties—as far as their careers go they were not in radically different positions. Johnson was more thoroughly immersed in literary culture than Lennox, but she had published a collection

of poems and a novel. Both of them were publishing because they needed the income, and for both of them the early 1750s was the moment when they fully emerged, Johnson with *The Rambler* and Lennox with *The Female Quixote*.

The Lennox-Johnson-Richardson correspondence concerning *The Female Quixote* does not reveal a woman cautiously yielding to the opinions of dominant men, but rather a collective of colleagues, and a savvy author seeking to achieve her own professional goals very much on her own terms. Even Lennox's correspondence with the great Richardson, who was fully established in the 1750s as the author of *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), shows a young writer who feels no compunction seeking or rejecting advice as it serves her own interests. In a letter on November 22, 1751 regarding Millar's criticism, Lennox writes to Richardson, "The many alterations he insists upon being made, and his exceptions to almost all the Characters Incidents and language, make it necessary to write a new Book if I woud [sic] please him," which she clearly refuses to do (Schürer 15). One of Millar's readers demanded the removal of the "History of Miss Groves", because it was too scandalous, and yet that amatory insert stands today in the first volume of the novel. Instead of yielding to Millar, Lennox asks Richardson (and Johnson) to intervene on her behalf. At other times, she takes suggestions. For example, in a letter on January 13, 1752, Richardson responds to Lennox's question about whether she should extend her novel into three volumes. He writes, "It is my humble Opinion, that you should finish your Heroine's Cure in your Present Vols" (21):

> You are a young Lady have therefore much time before you, and I am sure, will think that a good Fame will be your best Interest. Make therefore, your present work as complete as you can, in two Volumes; and it will give Consequence to

> your future Writings, and of course to your Name as a Writer; And [sic] without a Complement I think you set out upon an admirable Foundation. (21)

Richardson seems clearly to be engaging with her as a professional author, advising her to build a foundation for a bright literary career. But this also serves Lennox's own desire to publish the novel in haste because she needs to make a profit, and Lennox was not above criticizing and going around the great Richardson if it served her purpose. As a matter of fact, when Richardson, whom Millar hired to print Lennox's novel, was delayed so much that, according to Lennox "Mr. Millar [became] apprehensive the Book will not be printed till it is too late to be published" that season, Lennox asked Johnson to intervene on her behalf with Richardson, which she "would look upon it as a particular favour" (23). In response Johnson pointed out the advantages of waiting to publish: "If you can stay until next year the prospect of [success] will be better" (26). However, Lennox sticks to her guns: in a February 3rd letter, she claims, "Tho I am far from thinking writing my talent [and] I am sure it is not my inclination, yet since my ill[ness o]ne has made it the only means of my Subsistence [at] present" (23). She does not want to wait, and her novel did appear in March 1752, rather than later in the Fall. Lennox got her way.

The penultimate chapter of *The Female Quixote* takes on a different tone when one looks at this correspondence. First, critics who feel that the ending was rushed are somewhat validated. After all, in January 1752, Lennox was clearly debating adding a third volume to her novel, which Richardson advised against, which seems to suit Lennox's own desire for more immediate financial gain. This means she would have finished the novel between January and early March. The novel was published on either

March 12 or 13, and on March 12, 1752, Lennox sent a copy to Samuel Johnson with its new ending:

> Permit me to intreat your acceptance of the inclosed [sic] Book, and of my sincere acknowledgement for your kindness during the Writing of it. if you do me the favour to read over the latter part of the second Voll. [sic] which you have not yet seen you'll find I have not cured my Heroine in the manner I proposd [sic] being too much confind [sic] in Room to do justice to the—admirable Character I intended for her imitation, and was forced to content my self with shewing by a few Words only my extream [sic] admiration of it. (Schürer 29) [126]

Johnson writes a reply to Lennox on the same day, stating, "I am extremely obliged by your kind present, and wish it the Success which it deserves" (32). First, as Schürer convincingly argues, the fact that Johnson hadn't seen the ending indicates that not only did he not write the Doctor, but that he had no direct hand in his construction. The alternate ending that Lennox is referring to using Richardson's *Clarissa* to cure Arabella. She does mention both Richardson and Johnson in this chapter, and in Richardson's January 13th letter, he suggests that using his novel would perhaps be a bit heavy handed: "The method you propose, tho' it might flatter my Vanity, yet will be thought a Contrivance between the Author of Arabella, and the Writer of Clarissa, to do credit to the latter" (21). Richardson takes steps to prevent his star from overshadowing Lennox's—preserving her authorial power and centrality. Some critics have read midcentury women writers as "cowering women writing dull, didactic prose fiction" (Carlile 11); however, in these scenes we see Lennox as a master of her marketplace, to borrow Susan Carlile's name for midcentury women writers: "Women novelists of the

1750s controlled, that is, were masters of, rather than mistresses to, their literary circumstances" (11). Lennox was clearly just such an author.

In the rest of this chapter, I propose that we rethink the dynamic between Johnson and Lennox. As I will demonstrate, given their symbiotic working relationship, it seems unlikely that Lennox is either satirizing or kowtowing to Johnson in her use of the Doctor. It also seems equally unlikely that Johnson is a blanket misogynist, whose criticism dictates proper gender and authorial boundaries to Lennox. This is not a simple scenario of the gentleman critic monitoring and controlling the female author. Instead I will look first at Johnson's *Rambler* and then at Lennox's *The Female Quixote*. By comparing these works, it becomes clear that Johnson's depiction of literary criticism creates a spectrum, a variety with incongruities and allusions to romance imagery and the language of gallantry. Meanwhile, Lennox takes up this portrayal of authorship and criticism as heroic and dramatizes the matrix of critics and authors in her novel, revealing the gentleman critic—Mr. Glanville—to be dependent on a symbiotic relationship with the woman writer Arabella.

Gallant Criticism, the Gentleman Critic and Samuel Johnson's Ambivalent Performance in *The Rambler*

Samuel Johnson's first periodical, *The Rambler,* has continued to be a canonical text within the eighteenth century, and new critical work on periodical studies and the aforementioned recalibration of Johnson scholarship reveal how this work has lent itself to evolving scholarly interests. It was published in 208 twice-weekly installments from March 20, 1750 to March 14, 1752, and like its author, *The Rambler* sits at the crossroads

of numerous eighteenth-century literary paths. It was read and reissued long into the nineteenth century, and it was a favorite of both male and female writers from Boswell to Jane Austen. Also, like the works of the other male figures featured in this dissertation—Joseph Addison and Richard Steele and David Hume—*The Rambler* has become a favorite for eighteenth-century scholars seeking to provide cultural context for their arguments. For example, the (in)famous *Rambler* No. 4, with its critique of modern literature, is perhaps one of the most cited sources for critics exploring the rise of the novel, romance, the recovery of women writers, readership studies, and genre studies. Critics working on *The Female Quixote* repeatedly turn to Johnson and frequently to *Rambler* No. 4 for context. However, despite its now established status, Johnson's own authorial performance is ambivalent, his relationship to genteel masculinity less confident, and, correspondingly, his relationship to women less patronizing, which calls into question key components of the gentleman's literary authority, specifically his neutrality.

Also like its author, *The Rambler* has widely varying critical treatments, depending on what camp of scholars one asks. In the wider critical vista, Johnson is *the Samuel Johnson* who "dominated the literary scene through the middle years of the century, [and] offered, rigid prescriptions for novelistic propriety" (Spacks, *Novel Beginnings* 8). Yet when Johnson wrote *The Rambler* he was not the literary giant he was later in the century; *The Rambler* certainly had a role in marking that territory for Johnson, but the essays themselves have taken on grander and grander stakes throughout time, in part because "Johnson's periodical writings reached an even wider audience in the century after his death than they did during his lifetime" (Korshin 52).[127] My

argument is not that *The Rambler* is not an important and influential text within the 1750s, but rather, that when critics—especially feminist recovery critics—have approached this particular text, they tend to see it through that nineteenth-century lens, the view where Johnson looms large and established as the great man of letters of his century, who is rigid and moralizing. However, when he is viewed more directly, he quickly transforms into a figure of inconsistency and "contradictory impulses" (Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers'" 572). Critics of *The Rambler* have especially noted "shifting and often contradictory responses" that readers had, and continue to have to the text and of Johnson's own voice and respondents within the text (Henson 54).[128] Kathleen Nulton Kemmerer and Sarah Morrison have applied this ambivalence or incongruity to reread Johnson's supposed misogyny, while Eithen Henson has used it to explore the strange dance of embrace and critique in Johnson's discussion and use of romance imagery.

This latter view is the one I will adopt in this section, but I will apply it specifically to the evolving role of the gentleman as the de facto vessel of literary influence. Johnson's periodical style and literary criticism reveal a much more ambivalent connection between the figure of the critic and the gentleman than has often been assumed of Johnson and his work. In his work we see the evidence that the categories that so intertwined literary authority with the gentleman's masculinity are coming untethered. The links have not been entirely severed; again, as is typical of Johnson there is a kind of fluid inconsistency in his depictions of criticism. On the one hand, much of the language he uses to describe proper and ideal criticism invokes gendered associations—the descriptions of judgment, calls for common sense and reason,

the use of classical languages and allusions—are linked with the gentleman's masculinity. However, Johnson appears hesitant to critique women in the same ways as his essayist predecessors; he does not "address" the ladies in order to establish his masculine dominance, nor does he categorize certain topics—including criticism—as exclusive to a gender. Furthermore, the images of authorship and criticism fluctuate throughout his essays—at their most ideal, authors and critics are heroes of literature, bringing order and glory; at others, they are comedic, vain hacks, who perform better in text than in company. The combination of all of these sometimes inconsistent, depictions reveals a "liberating rather than constraining" (Johnston and Muggleston 5-6) aspect of *The Rambler*, in which the gentleman is no longer the exclusive voice of literary authority. I have demonstrated how women authors deployed and revised the gentleman to maneuver their way into his authorial privilege; in Johnson we see the ways their efforts have loosened the gentleman's grip on the reigns of influence, which Lennox confidently grabs hold of for herself.

Criticism and Masculinity

One of the ways Johnson's *Rambler* is entangled in cultural connections with the gentleman is through the gendered dynamics of criticism. As Laura Runge has argued, eighteenth-century literary criticism was, by its very nature, deeply gendered and continuously evolved to reflect the current debates and standards of gender and gender difference. The gentleman was the ideal critic, and literary criticism itself operated on deeply gendered terms. As I have already demonstrated, the gentleman's masculinity became intertwined with authorial power; he was the ideal author and the ideal reader. Therefore, by the logical extension of these powers, he was also the ideal critic.

Literature—in all its various forms—was the vessel of didactic instruction, cultural commentary, and the transmission of sentiment. Therefore, "the act of writing or speaking about literature assumed a certain authority, and despite (or, perhaps, because of) that century's keen awareness of the limitations of language, the critic became responsible for discerning truths about literature" (Runge 6). The critic combined the informed reader's expertise and taste with the author's ability to instruct and delight.

These faculties had gendered associations, which evolved throughout the century. For example, imagination was increasingly labeled as feminine because it was considered "unintellectual and ephemeral" (Runge 29). As Kathleen Lubey and Martha Kvande argue, engaging the imagination was an embodied experience; readers were thought to *feel* imaginative experience.[129] This sensibility gendered men's and women's reading; reading became a mark of gendered difference.[130] Women were seen as more embodied, or at least more subject to their bodies, with greater sensibility and more flammable passions, and as such, they were more associated with and subject to imagination. In contrast, "men were believed more capable of the discipline required to read correctly…Essentially, men were able to transcend the physical effects of reading because they could control the process" (Kvande 222). Men had greater capacities for judgment and intellect. The combination and proper regulation of these faculties became a defining aspect of the gentleman's masculinity; it was how he demonstrated his gender and his taste all at once. For example, as Lubey argues:

> Joseph Addison's man of taste stands composedly at the polite end of the spectrum, set apart from his unrefined counterparts by his capacity to take autonomous pleasure in the objective world. His mind performs a powerfully

> civilizing function, synthesizing expansive and disparate entities with his own sense of order and beauty. (71)

The English gentleman was able to regulate his imagination through the governance of his more rational mind; “Presumably” Lubey argues, “interpretation or ‘judgment’ tames the body from becoming *too* warm” (Lubey 88). These faculties were the direct product of the gentleman’s education; his combination of classical learning and “knowledge of the world” (Solinger 27) and these “critical faculties remain[ed] the exclusive prerogative of men” throughout the century (Runge 28).[131] This was the feature that enabled him to comment on both literature and gender relations. The critic was meant to have judgment, intellect, *and* imagination so that *he* could properly categorize the merits of literature. His dexterity emerges in his ability to regulate and use all three.

The gendered aspects of criticism did evolve throughout the century; they were influenced by the growing number of women writers, but also by the increasingly binary and internalized sense of gender difference. As Thomas Laqueur and Dror Wahrman argue, the genders moved from a one to a two-sex model.[132] However, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, women gradually claimed more and more moral authority for themselves. As G.J. Barker-Benfield argues, women used an increased proclamation of their internal morality to fuel the reform of male manners.[133] This increased association cemented certain patriarchal aspects of gender difference—specifically about the innate purity and virtue of women. However, this also influenced perceptions of other kinds of critical judgment. Especially by the middle, and into the late period of the century, “the beautiful and moral realm is celebrated in gallant terms as the pseudo-literary field of women”

(Runge 28). Thus, women gained a new kind of foothold in the terrain of the gentleman critic, even if the broader field of faculties were still primarily his.

It was not just the characteristics of the critic that were gendered; it was also the ways in which literature itself was measured and judged. This is what Runge calls the "hegemonic function of criticism" whereby gendered language and associations were used to assess literary judgment and value (17).[134] This manifested in several ways throughout the century. One way was through overtly gendered language: good work was spirited, vigorous, even manly; they transcended or ascended by connecting with universal principles of reason and virtue. We still see this in the descriptions of eighteenth-century authors. Johnson is frequently viewed as a "manly" author (*Performing Authorship* 32) and Mary Davys was praised for her "somewhat masculine temperament," because her style seemed to anticipate Henry Fielding (McBurney 350).[135] This is a holdover in our own discourse from the eighteenth century.

Some of the gendering of criticism was coded through universalizing language. There was a tendency to see great literature—like the increasing reverence for Shakespeare in the eighteenth century—as tapping into some universal human spirit. For example, in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), Alexander Pope writes: "But true expression, like the unchanging sun/ Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon;/ It gilds all objects but it alters none" (315-7). The ideal of a "true expression" which is "unchanging", which improves the reader and its subject, is the mark of good work. Just as masculinity became internalized as the private subject, and aligned with reason, the natural, and the innate, so too the categories of literary value took on gendered layers. Good literature was rational, moral, and tapped into the universal, while lesser forms became superficial, fluffy,

seductive, and so on—features usually used to criticize and characterize women.[136] Meanwhile, the critic—like the ideal author—was neutral, objective, and disinterested—above the sway of his passions and self-interest. This is not to say that women never wrote criticism or were never admired for their work, but these women were frequently viewed as exceptions to the rule or as properly confining their scope to feminine topics: domesticity, moral sentiment, and so on.

The critical assessment of genres reinforced gendered hierarchies. The novel was frequently (if not exclusively)—both within the eighteenth century and in current scholarship—categorized as a feminine form. As Runge and Moody argue, "The *perceived* femininity of the eighteenth-century novel can in great measure be attributed to the constructed image of the female reader of fiction" (Runge 87, emphasis mine).[137] As I have demonstrated, the construct of the impressionable female reader in need of the gentleman's guidance was a powerful one, even if it was to a point fabricated in order to construct the gentleman's own gender and literary power. Theoretically the novel—unlike certain classical genres of poetry—did not require its readers to have a gentleman's education, making it more accessible to women readers; it was an emerging and relatively new form. However, despite the supposed femininity of the novel, the "best" novels were still written by men. This is because—as with the gentleman critic—the male novelist was better able to control imagination through his intellect and judgment.[138] The novel and its readers were still subject to patriarchal hierarchies.

Thus, criticism was the gentleman's prerogative, and he was responsible for directing readers—especially impressionable female readers. With these definitions, male authors like Richardson became paragons and redeemers of the novel, while scandalous

women writers like Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and the early Eliza Haywood were the seductresses leading unknowing readers astray. More risqué male authors like Fielding or Smollett could fall on either side of the line, but were generally revered for their manly spirit and the great scope of their work, while women authors like Frances Burney, Charlotte Lennox, and later Jane Austen were applauded for supposedly staying within their proper feminine spheres.

Given these categories, it is no wonder that many scholars have read Johnson as a prime example of *the* hegemonic gentleman critic. Johnson's firm investment in morality and universal virtue fit the mold, as well as his criticism of modern fiction, his protective instincts for young readers, and his own theoretical neutrality and control over his passions. For example, Johnson writes in *Rambler* 18, "I, who have long studied the severest and most abstracted philosophy, have now, in the cool maturity of life arrived to such command over my passions, that I can hear the vociferations of either sex without catching any of the fire from those that utter them" (III.99, May 19, 1750). Johnson's emphasis on his experience, his discipline, his present but controlled passions, are all classic marks of the gentleman and the critic. These are the marks of intellect and judgment, capable of regulating the passion-driven imagination. Here we see how this knowledge is linked to assessing gendered relations. The gentleman critic's codes and guidance usually took the form—overtly or covertly—of regulating female sexuality and desires and of maintaining patriarchal structures. No. 18 is Johnson's first extended discussion of marriage, and he justifies his own abilities to categorize bad motives for marriage based on his experience of the world and the ability to regulate his passions.

This clearly echoes both Mr. Spectator and David Hume's justifications for their own authorial expertise.

This same kind of expertise justifies Johnson's role as a literary critic. It is his experience and discipline that fundamentally divides Johnson from the impressionable young readers of *Rambler* No. 4. More than any other individual *Rambler* essay, *Rambler* No. 4 is frequently used as standard-bearer for eighteenth-century critics interested in literary criticism and gender, and therefore reveals the longstanding critical assumptions about Johnson's attitudes towards literary criticism and gender. Originally printed on March 31, 1750, No. 4 is Johnson's "most extended and widely known discussion of the power of fiction on the imagination of the young" and it echoes common anxieties about "dangers of fictional models" tradition" (Henson 69). No. 4 critiques the "works of fiction, with which the present generation seems more particularly delighted" and is most directly a critique of Fielding's work—his "comedy of romance" and an advocacy for the moral writings of Richardson (III.19). However, *Rambler* 4 has also frequently been read as a critique of women readers, feminine genres (specifically romance and the novel), and by extension, women authors.

Scholars have read *Rambler* 4 as an example of the gendered dynamics of criticism, where the supposedly rational, informed, and experienced male critic condescendingly protects and regulates impressionable female readers. Johnson is concerned with the moral ambiguity of modern fiction where "Many writers…so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages, that they are both equally conspicuous" (III.23). Johnson worries:

> These books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life. They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impression…easily following the current of fancy. (III.21)

Swayed by their fancy and unguarded by experience, these young readers will lose "the abhorrence of [the characters'] faults, because they do not hinder…pleasure, or, perhaps, regard them with the same kindness for being united with so much merit" (III.23). On the surface, "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" could appear to be directed specifically at women readers. When we consider the depictions of young women and their reading habits from Johnson's predecessors like *The Spectator*, and the feminine associations of the imagination, it is understandable but wrong.

The second layer is Johnson's supposed criticism of the 'feminine' genre of romance. Romance was the "the realm of excess and nonsense" and therefore of women (Langbauer 64). As Laurie Langbauer and Patricia Meyers Spacks argue, "Romance…acts as a lightning rod for the anxieties about gender at the heart of every depiction of the sexes" (Langbauer 66) because it revealed the "truth of female desire" (Spacks, *Desire and Truth* 14).[139] Women who read romances, even intelligent women, were "taken to task" for their preferences (Todd 48).[140] As for men, one of the jokes in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712) is that the Baron "To Love an altar built,/ Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt" (37-8). The Baron—*a man*—is subject to ridicule for his feminine indulgence in Pope's mock epic. Not only were romances seen as frivolous and silly, they were also seen as potentially dangerous, especially to women readers, and Johnson is often cited as one of the key decriers of their dangers. *Rambler* 4

is usually referenced as Johnson's clearest critique of romance reading. He wonders, "Why this wild strain of imagination found reception so long, in polite and learned ages" and proclaims that "almost all fictions of the last age will vanish, if you deprive them of a hermit and a wood, a battle and a shipwreck" (III.20). Linking his concern for young readers with his remarks about romances, scholars frequently reference Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and Johnson's own problematic fondness for romances. As a "boy he was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry" and he blamed "these extravagant fictions" for the "unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession" (Boswell 36). Johnson's own potentially quixotic feelings, combined with the gendered associations of female readership and romance, have led to an accusation that "In periodicals like *The Rambler*, Johnson spent a lot of time decrying romance as the production and corruption of women" (Gardiner 7). By extension, critics have read Johnson's critique of fiction, impressionable readers, romance, and novels as a not-so-coded critique of women writers. According to common critical wisdom, the novel was seen as a feminine form of writing; it was "the literary form most accessible to women and, by the time of *The Rambler*, strongly influenced by successful women novelists" (Morrison 36). Thus, Johnson is just a particularly prominent link in the patriarchal chain of literary criticism.

Indeed, critics have become too comfortable with this reading of *Rambler* 4 and of Johnson's periodical in general. Morrison points out, "Critics tend to bring women into a discussion of *Rambler* 4, *only* when they recall Johnson's concern for the impressionable reader of fiction…or when they note male concern over the numbers of 'unlettered' women writing sensational fiction" (36-7, emphasis mine). These readings of

Rambler 4 tend to map judgments of women readers and genres— à la *The Spectator*— onto Johnson's essay. This is not to say that bringing in a wider context to interpret the text is an inaccurate method; however, I do think these arguments have, to a certain extent, obscured attention for what Johnson actually writes. Johnson does not actually identify women readers as his target demographic. Both Morrison and Kemmerer pay keen attention to Johnson's use of gendered nouns and pronouns, and in this way *Rambler* 4 is the "most consistently plural of all the essays," meaning that Johnson chooses pronouns that are plural, potentially both inclusive and gender neutral (Morrison 36). Ambiguity emerges because much of the language of criticism presents itself as universal, but is actually operating on deeply gendered lines where masculinity is the de facto universal. However, unlike *The Spectator*, which directly criticizes women's reading, Johnson's more general phrasing at least opens up a possibility to "read *Rambler* 4 against a broader range of works of fiction by writers of both sexes" (Morrison 36-7).

Furthermore, Johnson does not actually present romances as dangerous in this essay. In fact, in *Rambler* No. 4, as Henson rightly points out, "Johnson's own objections to dangerous fiction are not directed at romance, but at modern novels, principally those of Smollet and Fielding" (70). Johnson is not worried about romances creating quixotes. He actually expressed a deep affiliation and affection for quixotes, just two *Rambler*s earlier in No. 2.[141] He is worried about *Tom Jones* encouraging vice, and "contrary to the long historical tradition of romance criticism," Johnson denies romance's ability to manipulate reader (Henson 70).

This is not to say that there are not gendered implications and patriarchal aspects to Johnson's work, or that his relationship to romance is entirely uncritical or always

clear. After all, in No. 4 Johnson denies romance a power over young readers that he clearly felt it had over him, and in No. 2 he claims that all readers are in some sense quixotes. Here we encounter a Johnsonian inconsistency. In his own reading life, Johnson did blame romance for his own unsettled turn of mind, but in *The Rambler* he denied such an influence is possible.[142] It is this kind of incongruity that we find in Johnson's role as the gentleman critic, and in his depiction of criticism and authorship. Yes, it is true that Johnson does perform some of the aspects of the gentleman in his role as critic, but this maneuver is a performance. It is a performance—as I have already established—in the same sense that the gentleman's masculinity is always a rhetorical performance, but it is also performance in that Johnson is more aware of it. As I will demonstrate in the next section, Johnson is not Mr. Rambler, nor does he pretend to be.

Johnson's Rambler and Destablizing the Gentlemanly Performance of Authorship

The gentleman is a performance, created through text and rhetorical situation, and therefore the gentleman critic is an extension of this performance. Despite its ubiquity, the *Rambler* is a difficult text to pin down, and Johnson's persona within it is remarkably slippery in ways that have made its relationship to gender difficult to determine. In this section, I will look specifically at Johnson's performance in the *Rambler* by comparing it with *The Spectator*. The trajectory I have traced so far through Addison and Steele and Hume is one where the gentleman's performance becomes more anxious for the male author throughout the century. As identity shifted from something more fluid towards a privatized self, the anxiety of living up to one's persona became more loaded. While it is clearly drawing on the periodical tradition of *The Spectator*, *The Rambler* resists some of the key conventions of Addison and Steele's creation: the eidolon's backstory, the

separation between the eidolon and the author, the overt appeal to and critique of female readers, and the gendered division of topics are all relatively absent from Johnson's *Rambler*. Surprisingly, one of the ways Johnson plays and resists the role of the gentleman is through his unexpected use of romance imagery to represent both authorship and criticism. Authors and critics are sometimes heroic and sometimes mock heroic, and while sometimes this language seems to reinforce literary ideals and endeavors as masculine, they are fluid and changing, which Lennox will later take advantage of for herself. What emerges is a destabilizing performance of the gentleman that brings attention to the gentleman's supposed neutrality and his authority over gender.

Johnson's eidolon, Mr. Rambler, blurs the lines between the author and eidolon; this voice is more withholding but also more directly representative of his author than previous eidolons. In *Rambler* No. 1 (March 20, 1750), Johnson goes through some of the established periodical motions; his eidolon expresses his "desire for pleasing," establishes his investment in morality (the "two great moves of the human mind are the desire for good, and the fear of evil"), and modestly professes that if his works are not beautiful they can "be at least pardoned for their brevity" (III.4, 6, 7). However, as Powell and Kemmerer note, he is even less revealing than the taciturn Mr. Spectator.[143] He provides no biography, no credentials, no charming anecdotes, and no geography. Instead he brings attention to his act of entering the world, and the performativity of it all: "Perhaps few authors have presented themselves before the public, without wishing that such ceremonial modes of entrance had been anciently established" (III.4). After all, the desire of pleasing is dangerous for the author, who risks ridicule and rejection. Johnson's Rambler wishes for a system of authorship where "a man could glide imperceptibly into

favour of the publick, and only proclaim his pretensions to literary honours when he is sure of not being rejected" (III.6). Johnson brings deliberate attention to the anxieties of authorship, while denying his readers the biographical information they have come to expect of their eidolons. Instead, the Rambler—sounding very like Johnson—brings the reader's attention to the performative aspect of authorship, whereby the author steps out onto the stage nervously awaiting the audience's approval.

Johnson's *Rambler* reveals the authorial wizard behind the eidolonic curtain. Yes, he published the *Ramblers* anonymously, but "Johnson's authorship was a fairly open secret" (Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers'" 575), and Johnson himself said in his final *Rambler* essay, "I have always thought it the duty of an anonymous author to write, as if he expected to be hereafter known" (V.318).[144] This disrupts the role of the eidolon, who is supposed to "point to the existence of *an* author" but not necessarily "meant to disclose the truth of *the* author" (Powell, *Performing Authorship* 26). The eidolon is an act of impersonation for the author; it is the performance of "both a 'real' and an imagined subjectivity" (Powell, *PA* 26). But Johnson's voice resists this. The Rambler sounds like Johnson more than other eidolons, whose authors "usually signal their artificiality with deliberately over-the-top rhetoric, perhaps by being too perfectly genteel or even too perfectly scurrilous" (Powell, *PA* 26-7). Johnson "modifies the eidolon into more of a veil than a figurehead, and a thin one at that" (Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers'" 575). In fact, when discussing the *Rambler* almost no critics—sans Powell—truly distinguish between the eidolon and Johnson.[145] Yet Johnson does not entirely collapse himself into his eidolon. He does not create a fictional biography for the Rambler, but neither does he populate the text with his own biographical details. He does not mention his marital

status—which is in keeping with the bachelor eidolon tradition—or his own upbringing and education.[146] Instead, Johnson "obscures through omission" (Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers'" 575).

This omission is relevant to my discussion of the gentleman because the author's biography—whether it was a fictional eidolon's such as Mr. Spectator's in *Spectator* 1 or an actual one like David Hume's narrative in "My Own Life"—was how he established his credentials, his gentlemanliness. Now, Johnson's content--his classical references, his moral essays, etc.--establishes his gentlemanliness on some level. However, Johnson's own biography does not fit the mold of the gentleman. He did not attend university; he was often in financial straits; and he did not have a genteel upbringing. Therefore, he, more than most authors, is aware of how one can perform in writing in ways that do not represent one's actual life. As noted above, in *Rambler* No. 18, Johnson gestures to his experience of the world, a common gentlemanly claim. Yet he gestures to the performative aspects of his periodical entrance into the world, but refuses to populate that performance in the traditional way.

I see this omission functioning on two levels. First, it indicates Johnson's awareness that he does not live up to the cultural standards of gentility required of the gentleman, and second, an awareness that the gentlemanly performance of neutrality and benevolence is, in fact, a performance. There is a competing desire in Johnson's performance of authorship in *The Rambler*, which speaks to the evolution of the cultural standards of the gentleman. As gender and identity become more fully internalized, the ability to overtly "perform" a persona to establish one's masculinity becomes less imaginatively possible. Johnson manifested a very real anxiety about his ability to

personally live up to this standard. As Powell and Deutsch have articulated, there was a clear discrepancy between Johnson's authorial persona and his actual economic and social situation. Deutsch connects this to what she calls the two Johnson tradition. One Johnson, the masculine, über man of letters is "the picture of a gentleman" with "pure manners", clever anecdotes and confident prose--the literary giant he came to be and was beloved for being (4). Meanwhile, the second Johnson was "awkward, ungainly, and plainly dressed", a figure who "could only imitate well-bred behavior" (4). With his unruly body, physical tics, and middle-class upbringing, the "formal and moral transcendence of [Johnson's] literature resists but never quite detaches entirely from the famous deformities" of Johnson himself (Powell, *PA* 32). He lived without financial security for much of his life, but unlike his fellow "gentlemen" authors, Johnson did not perfectly perform financial disinterest. Johnson once said, "No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money" (Boswell 302). Now, in the *Rambler* Johnson did not proclaim his financial necessity, but he did acknowledge the discrepancy between an author as he appears in writing, versus how he appears in life. In *Rambler* No. 14, published May 5, 1750 Johnson writes, "It is not difficult to conceive, however, that for many reasons a man writes much better than he lives" (III.75). This is a revelatory admission that recognizes the distance between eidolon and author, or even between authorship and life. If "the authority of the eidolon comes from its *pose* of gentility, humour, or knowledge, not from intrinsic abilities associated with the anonymous author," then Johnson is openly acknowledging this pose as such (Powell, *PA* 32, emphasis mine). It does not entirely break down the transference of masculinity from authorial performance to the author himself. Johnson is still widely considered manly as an author; he still provides an

example of the transferable aspect of gendered performance, but there is a clear recognition that this is a performance, distinct from his body and his self in some crucial way.[147]

Johnson's resistance to fully performing the gentleman author in *The Rambler* calls attention to the impossibility of the gentleman's perfect neutrality. Instead of proclaiming himself a gentleman, in *Rambler* 18 (May 19, 1750) he "place[s him]self a kind of neutral being between the sexes" (III. 98). Kemmerer theorizes that Johnson's quest for a kind of authorial androgyny marks his suspicion of the gendered categories of his historical context.[148] I see Johnson's proclaimed sexual/gender neutrality as an extension of the gentleman author's own supposed neutrality, perhaps even a parody of "Addison's insistence on maintaining political neutrality" (Kemmerer 61). The reason so many gentleman personas claimed to be bachelors was to create a clear sense of their sexual and moral objectivity; eidolons and gentleman authors routinely denied economic and sexual self-interest, seeking only to please and instruct for the benefit of their readers, not themselves. By presenting himself as a neutral arbiter, Johnson performs this neutrality, at least in the moment, but, as Kemmerer points out, he also spends time "persistently calling that impartiality into question" in ways that "underscore…the difficulty of seeing the whole truth from one's own limited perspective, which is always inescapably gendered" (64). Johnson acknowledges how we are forever swayed by our own interest. In No. 93 (Tuesday, February 5, 1751) he writes, "Criticks, like all the rest of mankind, are very frequently misled by interest" (IV.132). As a critic himself, this seems like a clear acknowledgement of his own potential limitations. He continues: "There are prejudices which authors, not otherwise weak or corrupt, have indulged

without scruple; and perhaps some of them are so complicated with our natural affections, that they cannot easily be disintangled[sic] from the heart" (IV.132). Interest and influence are so pervasive that despite our best efforts, we are not always aware of them.

Johnson also refuses to perform the neutral gentleman's deference to the ladies. In No. 18, the neutrality that Johnson proposes for himself is meant to enable him to mediate between the sexes. Typically, male authors profess objectivity, a neutrality as a means for justifying the regulation of gender, especially female sexuality. This female regulation usually presents itself as benevolent correction and protective affection. Famously, in *The Spectator* No. 4 (March 5, 1711) Mr. Spectator proclaims his devotion to "the fair Sex":

> As these compose half the World, and are by the just Complaisance and Gallantry of our Nation the more powerful Part of our People, I shall dedicate a considerable Share of these my Speculations to their Service, and shall lead the Young through all the becoming Duties of Virginity, marriage, and Widowhood. When it is a Woman's Day, in my Works, I shall endeavor a Stile and Air suitable to their Understanding. When I say this, I must be understood to mean, that I shall not lower but exalt the Subjects I treat upon. Discourse for their Entertainment, is not to be debased but refined. (I.21)

Here is the expression of gentlemanly politeness and concern. Mr. Spectator promises to compliment his lady readers by providing them with gender appropriate material, specifically information that dictates their relationships with men. Throughout *The Spectator* Addison and Steele criticize coquettes, bad women readers, lady gamblers, and

so on.[149] Their interest is in control and influence that validates their own authorship. In contrast, Johnson does not make many addresses to the ladies, and he does not designate Women's Days within his periodical. In *Rambler* 34, Johnson articulates that he has been "censured for not imitating the politeness of his predecessors, having hitherto neglected to take the ladies under his protection, and give them rules for the just opposition of colours, and the proper dimensions of ruffles and pinners. He has been required by one to fix a particular censure upon those matrons who play at cards with spectacles" (III.129, June 5, 1750). Johnson calls out *The Spectator* and those who seek to compare his *Rambler* to it. His specific gesture to politeness is a direct indictment of gentlemanliness. Speaking with women in a particular way, with a proper kind of condescension to their delicacy and interests was appropriate, and by not addressing them, Johnson (according to his readers) has not been properly performing his gentlemanliness.

Some critics have read this admission as evidence of Johnson's misogyny or his general disinterest in female readers. For instance, Korshin misreads No. 34 as evidence that "Johnson…did not at first expect the *The Rambler* would appeal to a feminine audience" (61).[150] However, I am more inclined to agree with Kemmerer and Morrison that, rather than ignoring women readers, Johnson is resisting the gendered ideology that claims some topics are beyond women's intellectual understanding.[151] As Powell, Kemmerer, Morrison, and even Korshin point out, Johnson is fairly liberal (if not radical) in his ideas about women's education and capacities, and he acknowledges the ways society is to blame for women's ignorance or superficiality.[152] Unlike *The Spectator*, which spends a great deal of time categorizing and criticizing female types—the coquette for example—Johnson presents human foibles, which can appear in both men and

women, “emphasizes the shaping role of circumstance in forming character to explain certain gender differences” (Morrison 27). For example, he criticizes female card players in No. 15, but is equally harsh regarding men’s dissipation and wastefulness in No. 197. In *Ramblers* 39-43 he defends women’s rationality, and “shows that relationship of female rationality to male happiness” (Kemmerer 76).[153] There are nine essays on marriage or courtship, but they are not labeled as women’s topics, and include just as many male correspondents as female ones.[154] Rather than distinguishing between male and female topics and segregating his readership, Johnson instead presents his topics as beneficial for all his readers. This will become especially important for my rereading of Arabella’s cure scene and the dialogue between her and the Doctor.

Johnson’s style, his use of pronouns and universals has an ambiguous relationship to gender. He does rely most frequently on either plural pronouns or masculine ones, which according to critics like Spacks “excludes the female” (Spacks, *Desire and Truth* 19). This reading aligns with Runge’s arguments that universalizing language and principles were gendered as masculine and used to create hierarchies that disadvantaged and controlled the feminine. However, as Kemmerer and Morrison have explored, Johnson’s use of plural pronouns and balance of male and female examples resists this categorization or at the very least demonstrates an opportunity for more inclusive readership.[155] Also, as Kemmerer points out, by deliberately acknowledging women’s intellectual capabilities and creating balanced examples, Johnson also creates a system that recalibrates masculinity: “His work redefines male experience so that men do not need to project weakness and self-hatred on to women” (Kemmerer 20). Unlike *The Spectator,* Johnson does not rely on critiquing coquettes to establish his masculinity.

Johnson is no proto-feminist; he emphasizes marriage as the greatest source of human happiness (and misery) and he frequently idealizes the domestic sphere and women's place within it. However, Johnson is aware of the roles that authors and literature play in the construction of gender. He writes, "The men have, indeed, by their superiority of writing, been able to collect the evidence of many ages, and raise prejudices in their favour by the venerable testimonies of philosophers, historians and poets" (III.98). Authorship is a masculine field and has subsequently empowered men and their representations of women. It seems to me that this is an acknowledgement of how culture has become an accumulation of male narratives, which have fed off each other and justified their own perspectives, a kind of gendered echo chamber. However, to the ladies Johnson grants the "the appeal of the passions" and a "more forcible operation than the reverence of antiquity" for "if they have not so great name on their side, they have stronger arguments" (III.98-9).[156] This is clearly not a proto-feminist statement, but we do see the effects of the reform of male manners, the idealization of women as more connected to the passions and sentiments in a morally powerful way. If these gender categories are problematic, they are so in a way that lends force to feminine perspectives and cuts into the legacy of masculine authorship. By calling attention to the gendered canon of history, philosophy, and poetry, Johnson is also indicating an awareness of his own gendered authorship. For his claims to neutrality are the very same ones those historians, philosophers, and poets made throughout the ages. He is once again gesturing towards his own neutrality, his gentlemanly authorship, as a construction that cannot escape the interests and biases of gender and history.

If Johnson is aware of the performative nature of both gender and authorship, specifically the gentleman author's neutrality, then how does this affect his portrayal of criticism and his own role as a critic? Johnson may reveal the constructed nature of gender in authorship, but his depiction of criticism and his own role as the critic re-inscribe some of these divisions, though in unexpected ways. Johnson performs the gentleman categorizing the author and the critic as heroes, caught in a perpetual struggle for truth, virtue, and literary greatness. Johnson uses a surprising amount of romance imagery to represent both authorship and criticism as heroic endeavors. This seems a bit at odds with the characterization of "the glum pragmatism of Samuel Johnson's Mr. Rambler" (Powell, *PA* 34). However, at the same time, Johnson frequently brings attention to the arbitrary nature of critical standards and cultural context of literary taste. What we see in *The Rambler* is a demonstration of how the language of gallantry became intertwined with the gentleman's language of criticism, and how Johnson, despite his unease about performing the gentleman, deploys this language to establish his own critical credentials.

Johnson's romance influence is not initially apparent. At first glance his descriptions of authorship, criticism, and literature are straightforward, regulatory and practical. In *Rambler* No. 3, he writes "The task of an author is, either to teach what is not known, or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them" (III.14-15, March 27, 1750). The author's job is didactic and relatively straightforward. Meanwhile, in No. 92, "Criticism reduces those regions of literature under the dominion of science, which have hitherto known only the anarchy of ignorance, the caprices of fancy, and the tyranny of prescription" (IV.122, February 2, 1751). The job of the critic is to create a

science of literature, to bring the seductive and dangerous realm of the imagination under the regulation of the intellect and judgment, and to "undeceiv[e] the reader" (Mullan 81). Finally, as Spacks writes, "It hardly needs demonstrating that Johnson believed in literature's moral function" ("Subtle Sophistry" 539). In the famous *Rambler* No. 4, literature is meant to "convey knowledge of vice and virtue" because its pleasant form is more effective "than axioms and definitions" (III.22). It is to be realistic above all things because "the greatest excellency of art, [is] to imitate nature" so long as it properly "distinguish[es] those parts of nature, which are most proper for imitation" (III.22). This all seems straightforward. The author should write to instruct and delight; his subject should be life in its finest, most proper realism; and the critic should guide readers by legislating the science of art.

However, juxtaposed with these moments of rational lucidity, scattered throughout *The Rambler* are romance-infused depictions of the seductive sway of fiction, of the author and the critic as heroes entering the fray to attain literary glory. Eithen Henson—perhaps the first critic to devote serious work to Johnson's own romance influences—rightly points out that even when criticism is portrayed as scientific in No. 92, romance sneaks in: "Criticism reduces those regions of literature under the dominion of science, which have hitherto known only the anarchy of ignorance, the caprices of fancy, and the tyranny of prescription" (144). The images of over-throwing tyranny have strong ties to the knight errant and his constant questing. In No. 3, Johnson follows the straightforward depiction of the author's morality with an "Allegory of Criticism", wherein the Goddess of Criticism—"the eldest daughter of Labour and of Truth"—gradually yields the immediate field to Time, but in her absence her scepter is eventually

tainted by Flattery and Malevolence, "and TIME passes his sentence at leisure, without any regard to their determinations" (III.19). She retreats "thenceforth to shed her influence from afar upon some select minds, fitted for its reception by learning and by virtue" (III.16, 18). These select minds, like the authors, are described throughout *The Rambler* as the "heroes of literature" (III.17).[157] The attainment of literary greatness is "garlands…gathered from summits equally difficult to climb with those that bear the civic or triumphal wreaths" (III.117). (He crowned Lennox with a garland, marking her, a woman writer, as one of these heroes). It is the proper duty "of the heroes in literature to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by discovering and conquering new regions of the intellectual world" (IV.362). Johnson is transforming the polite, potentially mundane role of the moral critic and author into a heroic feat.

The romance imagery Johnson uses is more overtly connected to masculinity. In this way Johnson is attempting to redefine his gentlemanly ability strictly through his writing, wherein writing, rather than his actual life or person becomes the heroic masculine endeavor. According to Henson, Johnson's romance influences come from the chivalric romances of his youth. These—in contrast to the French romances that Arabella reads—tend to center around male knights wandering, questing, idling around the country in search of great deeds through which they can prove their worth.[158] The testing ground for this masculinity is violence, specifically honorable combat, and this imagery is frequently what Johnson turns to in order to depict the author and the critic.[159] No. 93 (February 5, 1751) is one of the clearest examples where the author and his critics are depicted in combat with each other: "He that writes may be considered as a kind of general challenger, whom every one has a right to attack; since he quits the common rank

of life, steps forward beyond the lists, and offers his merit to the publick judgment" (IV.133-4). Authorship is heroic, but it invites criticism, and its merit is tested by its ability to withstand good and bad critics, because "no man can justly aspire to honour, but at the hazard of disgrace" (IV.134). In this battle, the critic has his role to play too: "The duty of criticism is neither to depreciate, nor dignify by partial representations, but to hold out the light of reason, whatever it may discover; and to promulgate the determinations of truth, whatever she shall dictate" (IV.134). The two are embattled but in a mutually honorable way. The language of romance allows Johnson to hold up the interdependence of author and critic as mutually honorable in a way that subtly—if not overtly—codes them as masculine.

However, sometimes Johnson uses this same imagery to satirize the author and the critic, bringing a quixotic tone to their 'heroic' struggle. In *Rambler* 176 (November 23, 1751), the author and the critic's battle takes on comedic overtones, because "some circumstances of misery are so powerfully ridiculous, that neither kindness nor duty can withstand them….and…give way to instantaneous motions of merriment" (V.164). Johnson continues, "Among the principal of comick calamities, may be reckoned the pain which an author, not yet hardened into insensibility, feels at the onset of a furious critick" (V.164). Here ensues a comedy of self-importance, where the author "full of the importance of his work, and anxious for the justification of every syllable, starts and kindles at the slightest attack" while the critic, "eager to establish his superiority, triumphing in every discovery of failure, and zealous to impress the cogency of his arguments, pursues him from line to line without cessation or remorse" (V.164). Here the overly sensitive author and the zealous critic become figures of humor; this isn't because

the struggle in authorship isn't virtuous for Johnson, but that when it is not pursued in its proper form, it descends into comedy.

While Johnson is willing to laugh at both the author and the critic—just as he is willing to play with his own authorial performance—he is frequently more critical of the critic. This is because, within this paradigm of heroism, the critic "hazards little" while the author's "quiet and fame, and life and immortality are involved in the controversy"; "The critick's purpose is to conquer, the author only hopes to escape" (V.164, 165). The critic is by nature peripheral, his glory lesser than the author's because it requires less risk, less danger. While Johnson is protective of hackney or lesser authors, he is much harder on bad critics.[160] In No. 158, Johnson explains how misleading our trust of critics can be:

> We owe few of the rules of writing to the acuteness of criticks[sic], who have generally no other merit than that having read the works of great authors with attention, they have observed the arrangement of their matter, or the graces of their expression, and then expected honour and reverence for precepts which they never could have invented (V.76, September 21, 1751).

Critics expect praise for their reading rather than their creation, and often fall into the fallacy of creating arbitrary rules based on their reading rather than separating out what is worthy versus what is unworthy. Good criticism—to "read for ever with the attention necessary to just criticism"—is difficult (IV.132). Yet critics "presume to superintend the taste or morals of mankind," but they frequently fail to "distinguish that which may be praised from that which can only be excused" (V.78). This produces "accidental prescriptions of authority" (V.66), and rules "drawn…from precedents" rather than

"reason" (V.78). For example, in No. 37 Johnson pokes fun at the "writings of the modern criticks" who demand that all pastoral poetry take place in a "golden age" (III.201, July 24, 1750). Johnson "cannot indeed easily discover why it is thought necessary to refer descriptions of a rural state to remote times" other "that, according to the customs of modern life, it is improbable that shepherds should be capable of harmonious numbers, or delicate sentiments" (III.201). These modern critics have misread their genre, taking a convention for a law, in "considering pastoral, not in general, as a representation of rural nature, and consequently as exhibiting the ideas and sentiments of those, whoever they are, to whom the country affords pleasure or employment, but simply as a dialogue, or narrative of men actually tending sheep" (III 202).[161] The error of these critics initially seems silly and harmless, but Johnson points out that creating rules for literature that are based on convention rather than some higher insight leads to generic stagnation.

When Johnson actually engages in literary criticism in *The Rambler* he attempts to perform the proper masculine rigor of the good critic. The good critic must be able to recognize both the faults and beauties in an author's work. Decades after *The Rambler,* (and after Lennox's own critical work) Johnson manifests this in his own criticism. He does not shy away from attacking some of the literary giants of English literature: Milton, Dryden, and Pope in particular are subject to harsh scrutiny in *Lives of the Poets*. As Mullan points out, "The *Lives* is remembered for its dismissive treatment of some works now universally admired: Milton's 'Lycidas,' Donne's poems, or Pope's *The Dunciad*" (72). Mullan characterizes Johnson as a fault-finder, which makes sense. Johnson recognizes this feature in himself. In No. 94, one of his many critiques of Milton,

Johnson writes, “Those who are determined to find in Milton an assemblage of all the excellencies which have ennobled all other poets, will perhaps be offended that I do not celebrate his versification in higher terms” (IV.142, February 9, 1751). If Johnson’s criticism of critics centers on their slavish devotion to the works of previous or established authors (which is distinct from the gleeful attacks of established critics on new authors), it makes sense that he would, in his own practice, resist this. As Mullan writes, “When Johnson tracked down faults, he wrote as if he were performing the accepted duties of a critic” by finding the faults and the beauties of a work (77). This is tricky because beauty is subjective: “this quality is merely relative and comparative; that we pronounce things beautiful, because they have something which we agree, for what reason, to call beauty, in a greater degree than we have been accustomed to find it in other things of the same kind” (IV.121).[162] Johnson professes that “Much of the beauty of writing is of this kind” (IV.122). This is because language evolves through time and “one language cannot communicate its rules to another” (IV.102).[163] Johnson writes, “No word is naturally or intrinsically meaner than another; our opinion therefore of words, as of other things arbitrarily and capriciously established depends wholly upon accident and custom” (V.126).[164] It is the critic’s job to sift through this, and to acknowledge the contextual nature of language.

Johnson never explicitly says that all critics are men; rather, he figures criticism as a manly struggle of valor. However, he does define bad criticism as specifically a masculine failing, for excluding female culture and conversation. There are the shallow wits, who take the easy road to fame: “Men who have flattered themselves into this opinion of their own abilities, look down on all who waste their lives over books, as a

race of inferior beings condemned by nature to perpetual pupilage, and fruitlessly endeavoring to remedy their barrenness by incessant cultivation, or succour their feebleness by subsidiary strength" (V.55).[165] These men have natural genius, but they have not cultivated their judgment and intellect into learning. These are men who imitate the genius of others. Then there are the stuffy scholars, "those who have been bred to scholastic professions" who have "passed much of their time in academies where nothing but learning confers honours, to disregard ever other qualification, and to imagine that they shall find mankind ready to pay homage to their knowledge, and to crowd about them for instruction" (IV.363).[166] These men have not developed their conversation and politeness, which is the province of heterosocial society and the influence of women. Johnson proclaims a sad fate for this homosocial man of letters: "He that can only converse upon questions, about which only a small part of mankind has knowledge sufficient to make them, curious, must lose his days in unsocial silence, and live in the crowd of life without a companion" (IV.364). The bad critic is, at least on one end, a man who cannot engage with women—as readers, friends, and so forth—a key aspect to the gentleman critic's success.

The depiction of criticism and authorship in Johnson does not escape gendered power structures. Johnson's use of romance language has strong ties to the language of gallantry, which Runge demonstrates was one of the most dominant tones of criticism, which often mimicked the language of courtship. The critic would protect his readers, guard their virtue, and court their favor. Henson argues that Johnson is primarily invested in a romance tradition that is masculine. He writes, "apart from the seductive enchantress, the amorous and erotic side of romance plays a part neither in Johnson's

imagery nor in his imaginative identification with the adventurer of romance nor in his response to literature, I need not be concerned with this moral issue" (Henson 52). However, when Johnson introduces his periodical and his authorship in *Rambler* No. 1, he compares his entrance as an author with that of an eager lover. "Love" is the "state which fills the heart with a degree of solicitude next that of an author" and the author stepping onto the literary stage is, in his eagerness for praise, in danger of being "he who too soon professes himself a lover, raises obstacles to his own wishes, and those whom disappointments have taught experience, endeavour[sic] to conceal their passion till they believe their mistress wishes for the discovery" (III.5-6). This language of the author as male lover, obsequiously seeking his audience and praise, is the very language of gallantry that Runge is talking about. It positions the author—and similarly the critic—as a masculine gallant or gentleman, who lowers himself to beseech his reader, who is figured as feminine. This does not mean that authors were all men or that all men sought only women readers; rather, this gendered language allowed the masculine to become the position of authority and influence, while the feminine became the province of the receptive and the passive. This creates a system that dictates the interdependence of the genders and the subordination of women. Johnson does not escape this system in his language, and it is this aspect of his depiction of criticism that Lennox brings to the surface and reforms in her novel. She takes advantage of his own anxiety about the connections between masculinity and literary authority to create a wider field that includes an array for critics orbiting around a female author. She therefore reveals the hegemonic systems that govern authorship, while simultaneously taking advantage of the cracks in the system.

The Female Quixote: Courtship as Criticism

The great question surrounding *The Female Quixote* is whether Lennox is criticizing romance, or subversively embracing its prioritization of the feminine. Critics have gone back and forth, landing at every point along the spectrum. However, no one has stopped to ask how the gesture of including romance illuminates the gender and literary dynamics in the cultural relations between the author and the critic. I argue that Lennox deliberately sets up a novel that reveals the ways writing and authorship are structured through a metaphorical courtship dynamic, which takes on larger importance between women authors and their powerful gentleman critics. Arabella and Glanville's courtship is fundamentally a prolonged debate of literary criticism, in which Arabella, the female author of her own romance adventure, is critiqued, both positively and negatively, by her gentleman critic, Glanville, as well as by a variety of other characters. Lennox draws upon the characteristics of criticism in *The Rambler*. She brings attention to the gendered implications of his gallant, heroic criticism by recasting the author--one of the "heroes of literature"--as a would-be romance heroine, and emphasizes the ways courtship infuses the gendered relations between female authors and their gentleman critics. Instead of reading *The Female Quixote* as a competition between the modern Novel and the Romance, I believe that Lennox uses these genres to depict the rigid expectations set for women writers, who like the heroines of both, are expected to perform extreme and unrealistic forms of virtue. Lennox is not putting these genres in competition with each other; she is using them to create an argument about who is allowed to speak and in what ways, and about how literary agency is deeply gendered.

Lennox takes advantage of the performative revelations and cracks in Johnson's gentlemanly persona to reveal that women can also deploy judgment, intellect, and imagination, and that some of the best critics are in fact women. I will demonstrate how the relationship between the gentleman critic and female author was shaped around metaphors of courtship. However, I demonstrate how Lennox uses this dynamic to cast the gentleman critic as just one of many possible critical perspectives.

Critically speaking, *The Female Quixote* is not unlike *The Reform'd Coquet*; it is a problem text for feminist critics. Is it conservative or subversive (or more maddening yet, ambivalent)? Is it anti-romance and pro-novel, or pro-romance and anti-novel? Does it reveal the novel's superiority or debt to the romance?[167] Initially, critics like Janet Todd and Laurie Langbauer argued that Lennox's novel—despite its revelations about feminine desire—is a relatively open-and-shut case about the dangers of romance reading for young women, who need to reject the romance and embrace the moral novel à la *Clarissa*.[168] Gradually, critics like Margaret Anne Doody started seeing a subversive, feminist potential in Arabella's romance code, which demanded history, adventure, and centrality for women and their desires. With its centralization of love, romance "repeatedly inverts conventional value systems" and rewrites history as dominated by women (Ballaster 46). Heroes and villains struggle, battle, wage war, and overthrow oppressive regimes, all for the sake of love and a heroine. With this focus in mind, critics have read Arabella's quixotism as a subversive rebellion against a culture and society that requires women to play a passive role in the world and in love. Yet, as with Davys' novel, the heroine and all of her disruptive, powerful energy reforms and embraces heteronormative marriage and domesticity. After all, as Margaret Anne Doody points out

in her revelatory introduction to the Oxford edition of the novel, "Quixotes must be brought back within the pale, tamed, made to recant" (xxix). Further complicating the ending for critics is the role of the good divine, the Doctor, who is a clear proxy for Samuel Johnson, whose entrance at the end of the novel feels, to many critics, like an abrupt abdication of feminism to patriarchy.

One of the challenges of the current debate is the struggle with romance and its effects on Arabella as a reader.[169] I would like to shift the focus a bit to think about romance as serving an authorial function within the text, namely that Lennox uses romance to mark Arabella as an author figure, and to use the language of gallantry to reveal the ways criticism is shaped by gendered dynamics between women writers and gentleman critics. Ellen Gardiner reads *The Female Quixote* as a "form of literary criticism" (1). However, Gardiner argues that Lennox proves she can play the game of the moral critic through the conservative reform of Arabella; "the need to control and contain women's desire for romance" demonstrating that as an author, Lennox can play the gentleman's game (1).[170] Gardiner is correct that the true problem with romance is that "reading the romance produces the desire to write", but she does not directly read Arabella as an author figure. Instead Gardiner positions her, as so many other critics do, as an example of problematic female reading, and focuses on the male figures—especially Sir George—as author figures (2). Romance is so generically distinct, and Arabella's quixotism so sharply contrasts the world around her, that her role as an author becomes clear through its contrast. David Marshall argues, Arabella "can be a heroine but never an author" because she is too bound by imitation to romance (121). Marshall cites the scene between Miss Glanville and Arabella in Book III, where Arabella asks

Charlotte for her history: "Your History, said Miss Glanville! Why, will you write your own History then? I shall not write it, said *Arabella*; tho', questionless, it will be written after my Death" (110).[171] It is easy to see why critics have focused more on Arabella as a reader than an author.

However, in her quest for adventure, Arabella is expressing a desire to create a narrative for herself. She wants to plot. As Spacks argues, "To plot—in literary as well as the 'real-world' sense—is itself a political act. It establishes the narrator's power and indicates his or her relation to power" (8). Arabella wants to create a narrative with her life; she has a "determination to create significance" (Spacks, "Subtle Sophistry" 534). This is one of the fundamental desires of the quixote: to generate plot and seek narrative. Arabella expresses an authorial prerogative in rewriting the world to fit her quixotic vision. Catherine Craft-Fairchild labels what I call an authorial prerogative as a "refashioning of histories": "Arabella…not only refashions history, but also rewrites the stories of the women around her. She transforms Miss Groves into an unfortunate innocent lady…and turns a prostitute into a persecuted maiden, in defiance of the horrified Glanville" (833). In both episodes Arabella creates fiction, but there is something decidedly Johnsonian about her fictional impulses. Both of these episodes—Miss Groves' history in Book II and the disguised mistress in Book IX—have their own generic tone, that of amatory fiction. Miss Groves has been seduced by a rake, had two children out of wedlock, and is now secreted in the country and in a secret marriage; meanwhile, the officer's mistress is disguised in boy's clothes and accompanying her lover in a public garden. Arabella rewrites both of these women as virtuous heroines. She writes a fiction that clearly does not fully represent the lives of the women she

encounters, but in doing so Arabella does not “so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages, that they are both equally conspicuous” (III.23). She may not represent life precisely as it is, but she commits to creating stories of intense virtue.

In her desire to create narrative, Lennox’s female quixote is not unlike the coquette. Arabella “speaks the language of ‘Power’ characteristic of the coquette” (Gordon 504). She expects devotion and obedience from her lovers, for them to live and die by her commands. Arabella quite confidently declares that “If…[Glanville] loves me not well enough to die for me, he certainly loves me but little; and I am the less obliged to him” (*FQ* 39). As noted in Chapter One, the coquette was a threatening figure to the male author, because she was a female figure with narrative power and ambitions; she created her own audience and controlled the narrative around her. Todd has noted the similarity between the female quixote and the coquette, but she reads this as further evidence of Lennox’s conservative message.[172] I believe that Arabella is actually a successful author figure, because she is able to exert influence over her readers, that is, her fellow characters. However, to fully understand the influence of her female authorship, I must first lay out how this text creates a metaphor of courtship and criticism.

Lennox invokes Johnson’s romance-infused picture of authorship and criticism and reveals how the rules of engagement change when the sex of the author does; she reveals how much more rigid and confining the role of author-heroine is for women than for author-heroes. For Johnson, the author and the critic are combatants, mutual “heroes of literature.” However, the structure changes when the author becomes a heroine rather than a hero. As Todd points out, Arabella is limited—just as the reformed coquette is—because “activity in the world can only concern her relations with men—she cannot ride

abroad like the Don or even tumble in inns like the quixotic Tom Jones" (152). A heroine, even a romance one, must in some sense take a passive role in her adventures in order to keep up the presentation of her unimpeachable virtue. This is also true in terms of female authorship. Through Arabella's quixotism, Lennox is also speaking to the burdens and boundaries of female authorship. First, to escape charges of prostitution and to justify the virtuous aspect of their economic needs, women authors were expected to demonstrate or perform a disinterested, unimpeachable, yet vulnerable character. This is what Catherine Gallagher has famously argued as women writers' "author-selves", which were "not pretenses or mystifications, but as the partly disembodied entities required by the specific exchanges that constituted their careers" (xix). However, this is the exact characteristic performed early in the century by the gentleman author. The moral aspects of authorship were newly transferrable to women in the mid-century, according to Gallagher, because of the simultaneous emergence of the domestic sphere and its connection to the innate morality of women, as well as "the creation of a separate and especially 'dignified' class of authors, who could be distinguished from venal flatterers and party hacks" (148). This combination resulted in a "new disinterestedness and high-mindedness was imputed to women as a sex and to 'men of letters' as a profession" (Gallagher 148). The extreme demands of romance's standards of female virtue thus also highlight the hyperbolic commands of eighteenth-century femininity, especially for women writers. Yet at the same time, the standards of romance reveal a new possibility for female authorship, a vehicle for authorship and empowerment.

Lennox uses Arabella's quixotism to show how the language of gallantry dominated literary criticism. During the eighteenth century the language of gallantry

"was readily absorbed by the expanding bourgeois discourse and served as the dominant—but by no means only—pattern of communication between the sexes" (Runge 19). For example, Mr. Spectator addresses the ladies and declares that they are "the more powerful Part of our People" through "the just Complaisance and Gallantry of our Nation" (I.21). This is, in part, the mark of the gentleman's politeness. He displays deference to women, holding them up as vessels of virtue and moral authority. This is then manifested through language that pays homage to women. Hume's depiction of women as "the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation" is another example of this ("Of Essay Writing" 369). The obsequiousness of the gentleman's politeness is a veil for the actual power dynamics of gender relations. For example, in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" Hume declares that, "As nature has given *man* the superiority above *women*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour[sic], and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions" (193). This is also the language of courtship. Courtship was a pseudo-empowering state for young women; it is the one time in a young eighteenth-century woman's life where she was able to express some sort of choice, the acceptance or rejection of her suitor. However, courtship is also ultimately a temporary situation, and so is the high status afforded to women as the beloved. The gentleman's slavishness is a "temporary subordination" that the gentleman uses to gain his own ends, and also empowers his own status; he can "defend his generous attention to women as the actions of a benevolent patriarch" (Runge 22).

The language of courtship and gallantry was the vernacular of literary criticism, and it is this dynamic that Lennox illuminates in *The Female Quixote*. Arabella has been taught "that Love [is] the ruling Principle of the World; that every other Passion [is] subordinate to this" (*FQ* 7). She has learned the language of gallantry, but she has learned it from romances. She does not just see herself as a woman worthy of a gentleman's politeness, she sees herself as a literary heroine worthy of great deeds. After her father declares his desire that she marry Glanville, Arabella is taken aback: "[T]ho' she always intended to marry some time or other, as all the Heroines had done, yet she thought such an Event ought to be brought about with an infinite deal of Trouble" (*FQ* 27). She expects the actions of gallantry, and not just the language. Her suitors must not just say they are enslaved by her charms; they must perform great services for her. Arabella will not be won with the gentleman's normal politeness, and her rule as the supreme object of desire will be much longer than a traditional courtship.

Arabella's body is clearly aligned with and genders her authorship. In other parts of this dissertation I have resisted the feminocentric alignment of the female author's body with her text. However, in *The Female Quixote* I believe Lennox is deliberately inviting us to link Arabella's body with her desire for authorship. After all, Arabella's desire for authorship, for narrative production, is the desire to have history of her own, to plot out her own life; it is also translated through the desire to be beloved. This was also common for critics, who would approach the text in the language of gallantry or courtship. This critical strategy was used whether the author was male or female, though it was used more heavy-handedly if the audience or author was a woman. By aligning Arabella's body with her text and authorship, Lennox brings attention to this

phenomenon, and then uses it to revise the power dynamics between the woman author and the gentleman critic.

If we read Arabella's desire for adventure as a desire for authorship, then her expectation of lovers, of how men should treat her, and how the wider world should receive her, becomes a metaphor for criticism. Instead of meeting her critics, and taking on all challengers who come on the field of combat, Arabella the heroine meets them on the gendered terrain of love and courtship. She expects "that her Lover should purchase her with his Sword from a Croud[sic] of Rivals, and arrive to the Possession of her Heart by many Years of Services and Fidelity" (27). Instead of facing a barrage of challengers, she faces an onslaught of suitors. After all, despite her supposed delusion, most of the men who meet Arabella desire her. Arabella—with exponentially more confidence than Johnson's lover/writer from *Rambler* No. 1—expects to be admired and well received. After all, she is holding herself to an incredible standard of female virtue and "Her Glass, which she often consulted, always shewed her a Form so extremely lovely, that, not finding herself engaged in such Adventures as were common to the Heroines in the Romances she read, she often complained of the Insensibility of Mankind, upon whom her Charms seemed to have so little Influence" (7). Lennox genders the heroism of the author and the critic. Instead of combatants, Arabella the author heroine expects her critics to emerge as lovers; rivals with each other and not with her. This takes on empowering tones, because Arabella is the object of desire for many of the male critics, but through the structure of romance she is very much in control and vocal about her own desires and expectations. Rather than modestly wishing for forgiveness or acceptance by

her audience—a gesture repeated ad nauseam by women writers—Arabella commands devotion from her audience and critics.

Mr. Glanville, a Gentleman Critic

This reading brings greater significance to Arabella's primary love interest, Mr. Glanville. He is *the* gentleman critic of the text, and his masculinity and critical perspective is contrasted and compared with a variety of other masculine and feminine perspectives throughout the novel. Mr. Glanville has traditionally been read either as the bland vehicle of patriarchy (Mr. *Blandville*) or damned with faint praise.[173] In fact, he has been read little; his character is routinely passed over for the more colorful characters of Arabella, Charlotte, and Sir George; even the Countess and the Doctor, who both appear abruptly and only briefly in the novel, have received an exponentially greater amount of critical attention than Mr. Glanville. He is at best the "well-meaning suitor" who is acceptable by contrast: "his noninterference and his continuing concern proving him more acceptable than others" (Spacks, "Subtle Sophistry" 535). He doesn't try to lie to Arabella like Sir George, nor ridicule her like Charlotte or some of the lesser male characters. Therefore, he is begrudgingly acceptable. He is much better than "those suitors whom tyrannical fathers or guardians impose on romance heroines", like Solmes in *Clarissa* (Lynch 55). There is a sort of consensus that Glanville isn't a monster, so he is sort of okay—faint praise indeed.

However, Glanville is clearly a gentleman. He is polite, avoids gossip, and spends a great deal of the novel attempting to protect Arabella from ridicule. Even with the comedic characters, like the pompous Mr. Selvin "Mr. *Glanville*…ha[s] too much

Politeness and Good nature to insist too long upon" ridiculing Selvin and smoothly changes the topic of conversation (*FQ* 267). He has also read as a gentleman; he can discourse on "*Grecian* History" (153) with Arabella for hours, and he has also read Richardson and Johnson—specifically *The Rambler*.[174] He enters the novel "having just returned from his Travels," completing his gentlemanly experience of the world (27). He is the most dexterous conversationalist, because he takes "a great deal of Pains to turn the Discourse upon Subjects, on which the charming" Arabella—who may be the most brilliant conversationalist—"could expatiate, without any Mixture of that Absurdity, which mingled itself in a great many others" (*FQ* 153). Despite her romantically principled resistance to her father's choice, even Arabella has "too much Discernment not to see Mr. *Glanville* had a great deal of Merit; his Person was perfectly handsome; he possessed a great Share of Understanding, an easy Temper, and a Vivacity which charmed every one" (30). He is a consummate gentleman.

Glanville also functions as a critic within the text. Rather than just responding as a reader to Arabella, he attempts to mediate between Arabella as an author and society as her readers, always for Arabella's benefit. He also criticizes other would-be author figures in the text (Mr. Selvin and Sir George), drawing on references to Johnson and Richardson to do so. According to Johnson, the purpose of the critic is to identify both the faults and beauties of an author; this is precisely Glanville's struggle with Arabella. On the one hand, "Her Character was so ridiculous, that he could propose nothing to himself but eternal Shame and Disquiet, in the Possession of a Woman, for whom he must always blush, and be in Pain" (117). Yet on the other, "[H]er Beauty had made a deep Impression on his Heart: He admired the Strength of her Understanding; her lively

Wit; the Sweetness of her Temper; and a Thousand amiable Qualities which distinguished her from the rest of her Sex" (117). As Langbauer points out, "to a contemporary reviewer…what [was] most objectionable about Arabella's romanticism is her pride" (88). Yet this is precisely what Glanville validates in Arabella, for when compared to the "Charms of Mind and Person," her Follies seem "inconsiderable and weak" (117). Glanville's desire to *possess* Arabella speaks to the traditional undercurrent of gallantry within gender relations. However, his validation of her merit also serves a literary function within the text. The gentleman critic approves, sometimes against his own interest, the heroine author.

Glanville's desire to reform Arabella becomes a metaphor for the critic's desire to exert his will over a text. Glanville's primary concern is that Arabella will be ridiculed by the world, that a wider audience will not see in her the beauties that he sees. In this way, Arabella's move out into the world--her entry into society--mimics a journey to publication. This maps to Johnson's *Rambler* No. 23 (June 5, 1750). In this essay Johnson describes how critics behave differently with a published novel and a manuscript. He writes, a published book "is considered a permanent and unalterable; and the reader…accommodates his mind to the author's design…often contented without pleasure, and pleased without perfection" (III.127). However, if the text is still a manuscript, "he considers himself obliged to show, by some proof of his abilities, that he is not consulted to no purpose, and, therefore, watches every opening for objection, and looks round for every opportunity to propose some specious alteration" (III.127). Johnson reveals that the heat of criticism for a manuscript is much more about the critic's ego and self-interest than it is about the text itself. Likewise, Glanville's desire to reform Arabella

is self-indulgent; he wants her to give up her romances, because then she will not demand such great sacrifices of him, and hopefully she will yield to her father's injunction to marry him.

However, Lennox revises the gentleman critic's sense of entitlement through Glanville and Arabella's courtship. Arabella's quixotism requires Glanville to recalibrate his gentlemanly gallantry. Romance has inured Arabella to the flattery of gallantry. When Sir George took the opportunity of "saying a hundred gallant Things to her…she received [them] with great Indifference; the most extravagant Compliments being what she expected from all Men" (119). Arabella accepts flattery as her due, and "provided they did not directly presume to tell her they loved her, no Sort of Flattery or Adulation could displease her" (119). Flattery does not sway Arabella, but, more importantly for the gallantry-infused language of criticism, she refuses to let her critics/suitors talk to her of love. This forces Glanville to engage with Arabella using a different lexicon, which is more of a challenge than he might first anticipate. Glanville, like the gentleman author, criticizes coquettes for their tyranny over conversation:

> How often have you and I, Sir *George*…pitied the Condition of the few Men of Sense, who are sometimes among the Croud[sic] of Beaux, who attend the Two celebrated Beauties to all places of polite Diversion in Town? For those Ladies think it a mortal Injury done to their Charms, if the Men about them have Eyes or Ears for any Object but their faces, or any Sound but their Voices. (*FQ* 148)

Glanville sounds very like Mr. Spectator in this scene, further establishing his gentlemanly judgment and character. Yet this is precisely the subject matter Arabella denies him, much to his consternation. Flattery does not hold her captive, and Glanville is

perpetually frustrated that Arabella—for much of the novel—denies him the privilege of expressing his love to her. This is because Arabella disrupts the critical and gendered power structure of gallantry. In Book I, Glanville and Arabella debate this very issue. Glanville contends, "If the Person who tells you he loves you, be of a Rank not beneath you, I conceive you are not at all injured by the favourable Sentiments he feels for you; and, tho' you are not disposed to make any Returns to his Passion, *yet you are certainly obliged to him for his good Opinion*" (44, emphasis mine). Men play subservient roles, but in doing so they command obligations of women. However, Arabella counters, "Since Love is not voluntary…I am not obliged to any Person for loving me; for, questionless, if he could help it, he would" (44). Arabella denies the gentleman critic what he considers his due. If she—as an author—is worthy of love and consideration, it is a fact of her virtue and beauty, and not something she is obliged to the critic for.

Glanville is forced to talk to Arabella about a much wider variety of topics, and this facilitates growing his admiration and recognition for her skills as an author, which transcend the typically feminine topics of love, courtship, and domesticity. Glanville and Arabella have the most extended dialogues in the novel, with the possible exception of Arabella and the Doctor's conversation at the end. Their first extended exchange—after Arabella has stopped attempting to banish Glanville for offending her—is the above one on the obligations created by love. Arabella wins the debate, because Glanville agrees to abide by her rules and stops speaking to her of love until she gives him permission. From then on, they speak of Greek history (153), the nature of Beauty (149-150), and the proper use of raillery (267-9).[175] In fact, these dialogues actually become more fleshed out as the novel progresses. Their discourse on Greek history is mentioned in passing;

their dialogue on Beauty takes up about a page, while Arabella's advice on the proper use of raillery is given an entire chapter: Book VII, Chapter Six, "Which contains some excellent Rules for Raillery" (267). Arabella is increasingly the central voice of these discussions, especially the one on raillery, where Glanville serves as a polite prompter and sounding board for her longer definitions and explanations. Arabella can hold her own on all of the kinds of topics usually reserved for the gentleman author. Because Glanville cannot bind Arabella to the traditional language of gallantry, she is revealed to be a much more dexterous author.

His admiration of Arabella also evolves from seeing her as exceptional among her own sex to seeing her as exceptional, period. Early in the novel Glanville repeatedly praises her in comparison to other women. He tells his father: "Her fine Sense, and the native Elegance of her Manners give an inimitable Grace to her Behavior; and as much exceed the studied Politeness of other Ladies I have conversed with, as the Beauties of her Person do all I have ever seen" (64). This speaks to the ways women authors were often compared to other women writers, as they were not considered the equals of their male peers. However as the text continues, Arabella is more and more frequently compared to traditionally masculine figures. Sir Charles proclaims that she "speak[s] like an Orator" and "if she had been a Man, she would have made a great Figure of Parliament, and that her Speeches might have come perhaps to be printed in time" (*FQ* 269, 311). These compliments "give great Joy to *Glanville*" because others see the merit in Arabella that he sees (311). Lennox is also charting a path whereby, when the woman writer is freed from the constraints of the criticism of gallantry, she is able to be heard

and valued on the same grounds as her male peers, and be applauded by the gentleman critic for it.

This perspective allows us to rethink Glanville's complicated desire for Arabella's reform. If we view it as a patriarchal desire for control and ownership, it is decidedly unnerving. This perspective is not entirely illegitimate; after all, as noted above, Glanville does desire "the Possession of" Arabella. Once again, the gentleman is revealed to be self-interested. However, reading Arabella's reform as a straightforward, top-down, control mechanism, ignores the ways Lennox creates a productive negotiation between her author and critic, which revises aspects of the gentleman's character. Glanville is ultimately unsuccessful in his personal attempts to reform Arabella. He facilitates her encounter with the doctor, but he does not himself reform Arabella. Instead, his greatest purpose is to protect Arabella and to put her in positions to display her talents.

This highlights the force of Arabella's authorship, and the influential impact of her form. Glanville ends up adapting to Arabella's romance codes. Rather than egotistically forming her to his taste, he forms himself to hers. As Langbauer and Bannet have acknowledged, Arabella is a compelling force, who blurs the lines between quixotism and reality through the sheer force of her presence. She is incredibly beautiful, virtuous, and wealthy, all of which create "the need to please her…[and] force polite and desiring men to do her wishes, even against their better judgment" (Bannet 562). Supposedly Arabella's delusion is that all men, or at least a significant majority of them, will fall in love with her, and that this love will dictate their actions. Encounters like the servant Edward or Mr. Hervey are supposed to deflate our perception of Arabella's heroine status. However, "Arabella…is very much a romance heroine " (Langbauer 67).

Most of the men who meet her do desire her, both for her incredible beauty and her wealth, and several of them go through complicated maneuvers to attempt to win her favor. Mr. Hervey unsuccessfully attempts sending letters through Lucy in Book I. Sir George fabricates his own romance history for the entirety of Book VI and also creates and executes the complicated Princess of Gaul ruse in Book XI. In the same book, Glanville spies Sir George and a veiled lady—whom he believes to be Arabella—emerging from a secluded cottage.[176] Glanville reacts with all of the fury and righteous jealousy of a romance hero: "Transported with Rage at this Sight, he snatch'd up his Sword, flew down the Stairs into the Garden, and came running like a Madman up the Walk in which the Lovers were" (357). This shows an evolution in Glanville from his first encounter with romances, who "began to tremble" when he saw "the Weight of those voluminous Romances" (49). From Book I to Book IX, Glanville has embraced the rules and interpretive structures of romances, as displayed by his jealous duel with Sir George.

Arabella collapses the divide between Johnson's author and his writing. In No. 168 Johnson writes, "Those who profess the most zealous adherence to truth are forced to admit that she owes part of her charms to her ornaments, and loses much of her power over the soul, when she appears disgraced by a dress uncouth or ill-adjusted" (V.126). Arabella's authorship is like this truth; her beauty and ornaments create a power over the soul of others, which is only possible if she is virtuous. This is made clear when Arabella attends her first ball out in society. After hearing of her unusual dress in the style of Princess Julia, society is ready to pounce on Arabella at the ball: "It is not to be doubted but much Mirth was treasur'd up for her Appearance…when the Sight of the devoted fair One repell'd…the designed Ridicule of the whole Assembly" (272). Everyone is "aw'd

to Respect by the irresistible Charm in the Person of *Arabella*, which commanded Reverence and Love from all who beheld her" (272). And despite, or perhaps because her dress is that of romance—she is both literally dressed like Princess Julia but also metaphorically dresses in the codes of virtue and heroism—she compels those around her to play by her rules. Glanville's critical fear that society will ridicule Arabella is largely unfounded.

This rewrites the relationship between the critic and the author. Instead of challenging the author, the gentleman critic becomes her subordinate, her devoted suitor. As Gardiner, Bannet, Lynch, Malina, Roulston, and Spencer have all noted, "against his better judgment" (Lynch 57) Glanville "finds himself acting the part of a romantic hero" (Spencer 191). This allows "Arabella… [to] control…the terms of his courtship" (Roulston 30). On some level, this is motivated by Glanville's own feelings: "he was passionately in Love with her, resolved to accommodate himself, as much as possible to her Taste, and endeavor to gain her heart by a Behavior most agreeable to her" (*FQ* 45-6). Instead of forcing the female author to yield to the gentleman critic's standards, he yields to her, and "he, like any hero of romance, must not win the heroine's heart without 'an infinite deal of Trouble'" (Malina 280). What is significant is that her approval matters more than his. Her intrinsic value is never truly up for debate. Yes, Arabella reforms at the end, but it is Glanville who must accommodate her first. Her desires for heroism—duels and service—must come first. Furthermore, if his goal is to have Arabella as his wife, Glanville's revision has a greater impact on this ending than Arabella's reform. He must prove himself worthy of her; she is already worthy of him. She is wealthier, more attractive, and of a higher status. The author is of a higher status

than the gentleman critic. He is a gentleman, but she is not a gentleman's daughter--she is a lady. The woman author occupies the position of power for almost the entirety of the novel, and the gentleman critic must adapt to her.

Lennox distinguishes some characters as critics and others as readers within the text, and Glanville becomes the model that allows us to compare and measure this difference. He is the one who identifies other critics, both good ones like the Countess and the Doctor, and bad ones like Mr. Selvin. He also contrasts with Sir Charles, Charlotte, and fashionable society, who function as a wider—less informed—reading audience. He distinguishes Arabella's value as an author from the hack author, Sir George.

Sir George, the "nefarious and deceitful upper-class gentleman of leisure," is the character critics have most frequently identified with authorship in Lennox's novel (Gardiner 2).[177] Unlike his rival, Glanville, Sir George is "well read in Romances himself, and had actually employed himself some Weeks in giving a new Version of the *Grand Cyrus*" (*FQ* 129).[178] Sir George is immediately linked with authorship, or at least attempted authorship, but he is also characterized by his lack of commitment to the labor and diligence of authorship. His authorship becomes a tool for masculine manipulation; he attempts to use Arabella's "Foible, to effect his Designs" of marrying her and taking control of her person and her fortune (*FQ* 130). His first attempt at authorship within the novel is his romance-styled history, which takes up the entirety of Book VI. However, as Doody notes, "Sir George shows that he never got the point, never understood women's place (or Woman's place) in the romance" ("Shakespeare's Novels" 301). Instead of praising and admiring his heroic qualities, Arabella scolds Sir George: "In my Opinion,

resumed *Arabella*, Mr. *Glanville* spoke too favourably of you, when he called you only inconstant; and if he had added the Epithet of Ungrateful and Unjust, he would have marked your Character better" (*FQ* 250). Sir George is performing authorship like the gentleman, but his performance is not successful; he cannot pull it off.

Importantly, Sir George's history is sparked by Glanville's criticism of his character. Glanville's criticism of Sir George's authorship validates both Glanville's critical perspective and Arabella's authorship. Roulston argues that the "male characters," and especially Glanville "confirm Sir George's…mastery over the genre…By analyzing and critiquing Sir George's performance *as* a performance, they maintain the distinction between romance and realism, thereby keeping Arabella in the marginal realms of fiction and madness" (36). Roulston is right that Glanville recognizes Sir George's performance as a performance, but he is not confirmed in his mastery; instead Sir George is taken to task for being a hack author. Sir Charles teases, "It is pity you are not poor enough to be an Author; you would occupy a Garret in *Grub-street*, with great Fame to yourself, and Diversion to the Public" (252). To which Sir George responds with a list of his half-hearted attempts at authorship:

> Oh Sir…I have Stock enough by me, to set up for an Author Tomorrow, if I please: I have no less than Five Tragedies, some quite, other almost finished; Three or Four Essays on *Virtue, Happiness, &c.* Three thousand lines of an Epic Poem; half a Dozen Epitaphs; a few Acrostics; and a long String of Puns, that would serve to embellish a Daily Paper, if I was disposed to write one. (252)

Sir George has attempted basically every kind of popular writing, and finished none. He even fancies himself "a very accurate Critic"; he ridicules Dryden "for want of Invention,

as it appeared by his having recourse to [Romances] for the most shining Characters and Incidents in his plays" (*FQ* 129). However, Glanville—in one of his longest speeches of the entire novel—sharply criticizes Sir George as a "Critic at the *Bedford* Coffee-house" (253). Sir George is a "Demy-wit" who, along with his other fashionable brethren:

> Sit in Judgment upon the Productions of a *Young*, a *Richardson*, or a *Johnson*. Rail with premeditated Malice at the *Rambler*; and, for the want of Faults, turn even its inimitable Beauties into Ridicule: The Language, because it reaches to Perfection, may be called stiff, laboured, and pedantic; the Criticisms, when they let in more Light than your weak Judgment can bear, superficial and ostentatious Glitter; and because those Papers contain the finest System of Ethics yet extant, damn the queer Fellow, for over-propping Virtue; an excellent new Phrase! which those who can find no Meaning in, may accommodate with one of their own; then give shrewd Hints, that some Persons, though they do not publish their Peformances, may have more Merit, than those that do. (253)

Glanville sounds like an echo of *The Rambler*, and Sir George is the image of the "swarm of reasoners…who, instead of endeavoring by books and meditation to form their own opinions, content themselves with the secondary knowledge, which a convenient bench in a coffee-house can supply" (IV.281).[179] Not only is Glanville's criticism Johnsonian in spirit, his style and tone also invoke Johnson's style: the length of Glanville's sentences, and the emphasis on light and virtue feel very Johnsonian. Glanville's criticism of Sir George's coffee-house critiques echo *Rambler* No. 2: "Censure is willingly indulged, because it always implies some superiority…And the pleasure of wantoning[sic] in common topicks[sic] is so tempting to a writer, that he cannot easily resign it; a train of

sentiments generally received enables him to shine without labour, and to conquer without a contest" (III.9). Sir George "shine[s] without labour" and seeks the easy way out. He mimics the genres and writings of others, and indulges in common topicks. He criticizes established authors, but produces nothing of merit himself.

By presenting Sir George as an author figure and subjecting him to Glanville's criticism, Arabella's own authorial merit becomes clearer by contrast. In *Rambler* No. 93 Johnson writes: "For the duty of criticism is neither to depreciate, nor dignify by partial representations, but to hold out the light of reason, whatever it may discover; and to promulgate the determinations of truth, whatever she shall dictate" (IV.134, February 5, 1751). The critic's job is to reveal the merit of the author or text to the readers, and this is what Glanville does. Glanville is able to see that Sir George is not just a hack but is actually dangerous. Sir George is seeking to mislead and take advantage of Arabella, and he has no qualms about deceiving her about Glanville's character during the Princess of Gaul episode, nor leading Charlotte on throughout the novel. He is the embodiment of "False taste" that is "always busy to mislead those that are entering upon the regions of learning" (IV.88). Meanwhile, Arabella is an author who commits fully to virtue, and to creating a plot driven by her own virtue. But her virtue also shines forth in scenes like the one with Sir George. She is not taken in by his story—she believes it is true, but she also sees his lack of virtue—and this highlights her own virtue and understanding. As Johnson writes in *Rambler* No. 4: "Virtue is the highest proof of understanding, and the only solid basis of greatness; and that vice is the natural consequence of narrow thoughts, that it begins in mistake, and ends in ignominity" (III.25). Sir George, motivated by greed, is an author of narrow thoughts and is therefore lesser than Arabella who—despite being a

quixote—demonstrates virtue and understanding throughout the text. Glanville assesses both works and the ways they are fictional and highlights the merits or failings of both authors. This illuminates the woman writer's moral superiority over the self-interested gentleman. Lennox has enlisted the gentleman critic to her camp, using Johnson's own reasoning and style.

While Lennox empowers Glanville's criticism as a gentleman, she also interrogates and plays upon Johnson's ideals about criticism and the features that empowered the gentleman as critic. One of the satirical examples is that of the bad scholar/critic in the figure of Mr. Selvin. Mr. Selvin is a self-proclaimed expert on the classics, a key foundation of the gentleman's education and critical expertise. However, Lennox presents him as a figure of satire—revealing the power of such knowledge to be superficial, and therefore undercutting its validity as a gendered foundation for literary criticism.

Mr. Selvin is a comedic representation of how classical knowledge—praised for all of its profound, cultural depth—can be a superficial way to justify criticism and create status. Arabella encounters the faux-scholar Mr. Selvin and the beaux Mr. Tinsel in Book VII Chapter 5 of the novel. Mr. Selvin "*affected* to be thought deep-read in History, and never failed to take all Opportunities of displaying his Knowledge of Antiquity, which was indeed but *very superficial*" (*FQ* 264). Rather than studying deeply, Mr. Selvin has memorized a few "Anecdotes by Heart" (264) and impresses his listeners by "fix[ing] the Time by computing the Year with the Number of Olympiads" (265). He seeks "Attention" rather than actual knowledge (264). He is like one of Johnson's coffee-house critics, one of the "Echoes" who "adopt the criticisms and remarks, which happen to drop

from those, who have risen, by merit or fortune, to reputation and authority. (IV.281)

Johnson sees these men as silly but ultimately harmless creatures.[180]

However, in satirizing Mr. Selvin, Lennox is calling out one of the great bastions of the gentleman's critical authority: his classical education. A great deal of this dissertation has focused on how the gentleman's social and experiential knowledge—his politeness and his conversation—structured his masculinity and empowered his role as author, reader, and therefore, critic. "The key issue, in other words, is not what literature the gentleman was expected to read, but rather, what literature he was expected to have" (Solinger 24). However, a crucial feature of his critical voice and power was his classical education. As Runge argues, "Knowledge of the classics remained a definite class and gender marker throughout the period" (32). Runge and Carolyn Williams both articulate how "the classics were perceived to be the culture's greatest purveyor of masculine values" (Runge 32).[181] This "manly learning" was denied most women (Williams 27).[182]

Johnson's own critical reputation—his status as a gentleman critic and man of letters—is supported by his classical learning, specifically by his ability to display his familiarity with the classics through epigraphs, allusions, and citations. Yet Johnson's learning represents him in a way that is in tension with the class associations of a classical education. Gentlemen were supposed to be educated at university; there classical knowledge was a mark of their class privilege—a direct product of their families' means and status. However, Johnson was unable to complete his studies at Oxford when he initially attended, because he and his family lacked the funds. Yet, through his own voracious reading, Johnson developed a terrific dexterity with the classics, which allowed him to present himself in his writings, like the *Rambler*, in ways that mark him as a

gentleman. Almost every *Rambler* has a classical epigraph—originally printed without translation—which establishes both his own critical merit, and also genders the experience of his readers. Though Johnson is an advocate for women's education, he is also clearly a carrier of classical male privilege, and this lends itself to his own establishment as a gentleman critic and author. I believe Johnson was still writing for a wide audience, and not deliberately excluding women readers with these allusions, but this factor speaks to the ways reading was itself a gendered act, and masculine reading—because it had access to classical learning—became the more valuable and provided a theoretically greater foundation for the critic's judgment and assessment of literary value.

This potential, this questioning, is what Lennox explodes in her depiction of Mr. Selvin, bringing fully into the direct light the gendered implications of this knowledge. Lennox equates the great masculine domain of the classics with the supposedly feminine field of gossip and superficial coffee-house echoes. Mr. Selvin is not fundamentally different from the gossipy beau Mr. Tinsel: both comment primarily on the sexual escapades of women. Mr. Tinsel tells the "Histories" of some scandalous ladies at the ball, while Mr. Selvin recounts the "history" of Princess Julia who "Tho' the Daughter of an Emperor, she was, pardon the Expression, the most abandon'd Prostitute in *Rome*" (274, 273). Lennox reveals that what the classical, masculine version of history reinforces is a patriarchal control over women's bodies that serves the same social purpose as gossip. In contrast, Lennox presents Arabella's romance knowledge as a tongue-in-cheek, feminocentric classics. The romances Arabella reads take real historical figures and people as its characters. When Mr. Selvin calls Princess Julia a prostitute, Arabella passionately defends her, citing her romances as evidence, and "Mr. *Selvin*, not daring to

contradict a Lady whose extensive Reading had furnish'd her with Anecdotes unknown almost to any Body else, by his Silence confess'd her Superiority" (274). The superficiality of Selvin's knowledge reveals how one of the major markers of the gentleman's critical authority can be just as ridiculous as silly romance reading. Classics, something supposedly so deep and valuable, can be used as a superficial veneer.

Glanville is repeatedly used as a litmus test for knowledge and the value of criticism, and Lennox uses her gentleman to empower feminine modes of criticism. As with Sir George, Mr. Glanville recognizes Mr. Selvin's shallowness; Glanville knows that it is Mr. Selvin's "Custom to mark in his Pocket-Book all the Scraps of History he heard introduced into Conversation, and retail them again in other Company; he did not doubt he would make a Figure with the curious Circumstances *Arabella* had furnish'd him with" (273). Glanville knows that Selvin will recite from Arabella, not because her information is more accurate, but because his own knowledge is too shallow to discern the difference. Thus, when the Countess enters the scene, Glanville's approval of her and his desire for her assistance create a scenario where a woman can be just as effective and insightful a critic as a man. Lennox's description of the Countess is especially pointed: "This Lady, who among her own Sex had no Superior in Wit, Elegance, and Ease, was inferior to very few of the other in Sense, Learning, and Judgment" (322). The Countess has wit and elegance, but she also has sense, learning, and judgment, what Runge identifies as the exclusively masculine realms of the critic. The parallel descriptions of the Countess' features feel deliberate. Lennox creates a female character who is defined by her possession of critical faculties. She is also a reader and expert in romances—she knows "the Language of Romance" and can return Arabella's "Compliment in a Strain

as heroick as hers" (325). In this way she brings a knowledge and insight to her interactions with Arabella that Glanville lacks. This also redeems romance reading—to an extent—from the selfish, shallowness of Sir George. Rather than resisting her help—standing some sort of gentlemanly ground—Glanville is "fill'd…with an inconceivable Joy at the Countess's Intention. He had always been a zealous Admirer of that Lady's Character" (323). Glanville welcomes and validates the Countess's character and even hopes that her abilities transcend his own. Numerous critics have embraced this potential in the Countess, and are disappointed that she isn't the figure who cures Arabella of her quixotism.[183] However, Lennox creates a dynamic matrix of critics, and while most of them are men—Glanville, the Doctor, Sir George, and Mr. Selvin—the best critics are representative of both sexes—Glanville, the Doctor, the Countess, and Arabella. Furthermore, the worst critics are always men, who attempt to use their masculine privilege to manipulate those around them.

The Doctor as Critic & Arabella as Critic

At last we come to Arabella's cure, the penultimate chapter, and the good Doctor. What most modern scholars remember about the Doctor is his parroting of Johnson's moralistic outlook on literature, that "The only Excellence of Falsehood, answered he, is the Resemblance to Truth" and his harsh criticism of romance as criminal fictions where "Women to exact Vengeance, and Men to execute it; teach Women to expect not only Worship, but the dreadful Worship of human Sacrifices" (378, 380). Critics who find the Countess a vessel of feminist possibility find the Doctor incredibly disappointing; they see her exit as "leav[ing] room for the voice of male authority" (Spacks, "Subtle

Sophistry" 535). As Craft argues, "The language of romance is women's language, a tongue that men cannot understand, and its ultimate achievement is to establish a community of women" (836). However, Lennox is not interested in an exclusive "women's language"; instead here she is interested in Johnson's language, in the gentleman's language of criticism, and she uses Arabella's cure and the character of the Doctor to take ownership of this language. Lennox accomplishes this in two ways. First, by having the Doctor speak to Arabella as an equal and not as a young woman, and second, by Arabella's own critical voice anticipating and mimicking the Doctor's and therefore Johnson's.

One of the most important features of the Doctor's dialogue with Arabella at the end of the novel is that he shifts from speaking to her as a polite young lady to debating with her as an intellectual equal—possibly even his superior. Lennox writes that the Doctor "lamented pathetically the Ruin such a ridiculous Study had brought on so noble a Mind; and assur'd Mr. *Glanville*, he would spare no Endeavors to rescue it from so shocking a Delusion" (367). This sets up the scene to be exactly how many critics see it: a patriarchal squashing of Arabella. The doctor—"a nameless symbol of what the culture sees as best in patriarchy" (Gardiner 8)—steps in and reforms the wayward force of feminine desire. However, he makes several missteps throughout and is often "completely embarrass'd" (370), and he does not patronize Arabella. The Doctor is not in total control of the conversation and actually starts the debate almost by accident: "The Doctor saw that he had not introduc'd his Discourse in the most acceptable Manner; but it was too late to repent" (*FQ* 369). He is not totally calm and collected—not the perfect rational gentleman—and he gets carried away by "Vehemence…[and finds] himself

entangled" several times throughout the debate (374). He even acknowledges his missteps to Arabella: "I confess, Madam, my Words imply an Accusation very remote from my Intention" (*FQ* 374). He acknowledges and praises Arabella's intelligence, stating, "Madam…whoever is admitted to your Conversation, will be convinc'd that you enjoy all the Intellectual Excellence can confer" (370).

Most importantly, he decides that to have a full and clear dialogue with Arabella he has to change the gendered tenor of their conversation. The Doctor explains that he is "accustom'd to speak to Scholars [with] Scholastick Ruggedness" and worries that "in the Heat of Argument" he will depart from the "Respect to which [Arabella has] so great a Right, and give Offence to a Person I am really afraid to displease" (*FQ* 371). He is fundamentally asking for permission to stop talking to Arabella as a refined lady, and to speak to her with the same kind of pointed debate he would use with a fellow scholar. This is, on some level, ungentlemanly, but it creates a space where Arabella and he can debate outside of the language of gallantry or gendered politeness, and shows that he sees Arabella as an intellectual equal capable of such a debate. This is also one moment of many in which Arabella controls the terms and tone of the debate. She gives him permission to proceed, stating boldly that she would be "content…to obtain Truth upon harder terms" (372). Even after this agreement, the Doctor mistakes Arabella's meaning at times and sometimes fails to communicate his own accurately. Arabella claims, "I have read…I hope without Injury to my Judgment, or my Virtue" (374). To which the Doctor replies that he has been "ashamed of [his] Negligence" (374). Arabella responds, "I will not pardon you…without enjoining you a Penance for the Fault you own you have committed" (374). His penance is to prove that romances are "Fictions," "that they are

absurd," and "that they are Criminal" (374). Arabella "holds her own quite admirably" (Palo 227); she sets the terms of the debate, and she uses his own missteps to demonstrate her command and control over the conversation. This is hardly a patriarchal blood bath.

Furthermore, while critics have long noted that the Doctor sounds like Johnson, they have ignored the ways Lennox has ventriloquized Johnson through male and female characters throughout the novel, including through her quixote Arabella. The Doctor does sound like Johnson. He even mentions *The Rambler* (and Richardson) in his arguments (377). He mentions Johnson as "the greatest Genius of the present Age" and includes his praise of Richardson as a novelist who "Has taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue" (377). Lennox quotes Johnson's criticism as part of the ultimate debate in her novel, exploring the dynamics of literary criticism. The Doctor argues that romances have the opposite effect of a moral novel like *Clarissa;* romances "give new Fire to the Passions of Revenge and Love; two Passions which, even without such powerful Auxiliaries, it is one of the severest Labours of Reason and Piety to suppress, and which yet must be suppressed if we hope to be approved of in the sight of" God (380). However, as Motooka rightly points out, "Arabella and the good doctor reason much alike" (263). I have noted above that Glanville echoes Johnson in his criticisms of Sir George and Mr. Selvin, but in terms of virtue and morality, Arabella is the first and perhaps most decidedly Johnsonian voice within the novel. Yet according to Henson, Arabella's "weightiest style is still far from Johnson's" (138). However, I disagree. I think that Arabella's voice actually anticipates the Doctor's—and therefore on some level—Johnson's voice. In some ways Arabella is the strictest critic of fiction, demanding absolute mimetic potential. After hearing Mr. Tinsel's gossipy "histories" Arabella

expostulates on the purpose of hearing histories, which sounds precisely like Johnson's critique of fiction. Arabella argues that vice ought only be shown "to make its Deformity appear more hideous":

> A virtuous Mind need not be shewn the Deformity of Vice, to make it hated and avoided; the more pure and uncorrupted our Ideas are, the less shall we be influenc'd by Example…'Tis sufficient therefore to shew a good Mind what it ought to pursue, though a bad one must be told what to avoid. In a Word, one ought to be always incited, the other always restrain'd. (Lennox 277)

This sounds just like Johnson's plea to protect innocent young readers from ambivalent displays that mix vice and virtue, and the need for fiction to present only the best examples to its readers. She also criticizes those who crow too loudly for fame and glory for making a "Kind of Traffick between Virtue and Glory, barter just so much of the one for the other, and expect like other Merchants, to make Advantage by the Exchange" (304). She even criticizes women who take too much care with their dress: "How mean and contemptible a Figure must a Life spent in such idle Amusements make in History?" (279). But she turns the tables and is even harsher with the men of society, whose "Figures so feminine, Voices so soft, such tripping Steps, and unmeaning Gestures, have ever signalized either their Courage or Constancy" (279). All of these speeches fill Glanville with "Extacy" (304). Arabella is mimicking the voice of the gentleman author and critic. She critiques fashion à la *The Spectator,* but she flips the center of the censure to men of fashion, inverting the masculine prerogative of the gentleman author. She also vocalizes Johnson before the Doctor, and with just as much force. I do not read this as a subservient parroting on Lennox's part. She shows how the gentleman critic's voice, like

the performance of the gentleman author or reader, is a performance. It can be transplanted and co-opted. Glanville the gentleman can use it, as can the scholastic Doctor, but so can Arabella.

The problem looming over my argument is, of course, Arabella's reform. If she is indeed a co-option of the gentleman critic's voice as well as a powerful figure of female authorship, how can her reform be anything but a bad ending, a defeat? To deal with this, we must reexamine the doctor's arguments about romance with a somewhat more open mind. In our feminist fervor for romance, I think we as a critical body have overlooked the gendered rigidity of romance. Yes, it does centralize women in ways that are empowering, and Spacks and others are right that it centralizes women's desire. However, unlike Spacks I do not think "Romance tells the truth of female desire," or at least not the whole truth (*DT* 14). Romance contains female desire within heterosexual love stories, which, while they delay marriage, do not avoid it. Love and relationships with men are still very much at the center of heroines' lives. True, they have histories and adventures to share, and they build bonds with other women, but these all serve the larger narrative trajectory that bounds though captivity, battle, and hermitage, to marriage. If Arabella's quixotism is a desire for authorship, romance does seem to represent a narrow kind of authorship, one bound by rigid gender and generic prescriptions. Arabella's own desires conflict with her romance plots at several junctures.[184] For example, other than acknowledging that she "Does not hate" Glanville, she isn't really any more able to express her desires than a realistic heroine in domestic fiction. Also, as Marshall points out, Arabella's "subservience to the authority and prescription of romantic forms almost kills her" (122). This extends outward to Lennox's arguments about authorship.

Arabella's dedication to romance is possibly an endorsement of feminine forms, but it is also an indictment of the limited generic possibilities for a woman writer. In the Doctor's final point, he says, "Love, Madam, is, you know, the Business, the sole Business of Ladies in Romances" (381). Lennox continues, "*Arabella's* Blushes now hinder'd him from proceeding as he had intended"; this is the final straw that makes her "Heart yield…to the Force of Truth" (381). This does feel gendered in problematic ways, until we consider that maybe what the Doctor is speaking to is not female sexual desire, but women authors' potential and desire. Writing romance means forever writing about love, which as Katherine Rogers points out repeats problematic conventions of gender and authorship: "Women were expected to write romances, and love was supposed to be the only subject they knew; yet they were under great pressure to keep their works morally unexceptionable" (13). Now, it could appear that I am re-inscribing the superiority of the novel as a form over the rigidity of romance. That is not my intention. The generic limits of romance are not actually all that different than the generic limits of novels, at least in terms of what women were expected and allowed to write about. This is not a question of generic competition, but of authorial agency. Arabella has proven herself capable of discussing all of the same topics as the gentleman author, and perhaps we can read her reform as Lennox's nod to the larger potential open to women writers. Not that they should not be able to have histories, write novels or romances, but they should not be bound to the confines of these topics and genres.

In the same vein, it seems possible to recalibrate our understanding of Arabella's marriage to Glanville. Is there a way to read Glanville's desire to reform Arabella as a productive model of criticism, at least in part? We should consider Johnson's decree that

authors and their ambitions need to be tempered with criticism. When Glanville begs Arabella, "Speak in your own Language, I beseech you; for I am sure neither hers, nor any one's upon Earth, can excel it," he seems to be asking her speak outside generic constraints (116). If we view him as a critic, and we understand the limited perspective of romance authorship, then perhaps her reform creates the potential for Arabella to speak her own language, to be an author on a wider scale that encompasses the same terrain as the gentleman author. After all, if Glanville claims that no one can excel her language, that also means she is superior to Glanville and what he represents. It is a call for her to step past quixotic imitation. Throughout the *Rambler* Johnson cautions authors about the dangers and limitations of imitation: "No man ever yet became great by imitation. Whatever hopes for veneration of mankind must have invention in the design or the execution; either the effect must itself be new, or the means by which it is produced" (V.59).[185] Johnson sees this as a common failing, even among great authors, like Virgil and Milton.[186] In reforming the quixote, Lennox advocates for modes of female authorship that get a chance to do more than imitate, that have the potential for greatness. Perhaps as Motooka says, "no amount of argumentation will convince anyone that *The Female Quixote*'s bad ending is good" (252). But perhaps our dissatisfaction with Arabella's marriage speaks to the limits of both the romance and the novel just as much as anything else. After all, as Henson points out, the *Female Quixote* does "have a conventional romance ending" (137). This is also the conventional ending of the novel, which gestures to the fact that Lennox is not concerned with the novel's superiority to the romance, or vice versa. Instead she is concerned with the agency of authorship, with who gets to speak and how they are authorized to present themselves.

Rather than reading the marriage as a yielding of agency, I read this ending as a moment of critical and authorial unity, one in which the female author successfully performs her role and gains the evolved support of her gentleman critic, who has internalized many of her own desires and generic conventions. As noted above, Glanville has adapted to Arabella throughout the novel, and rather than combating her as a critic, he has advocated for her throughout the novel. Nor does he see his critical judgment as superior to hers or even to other women, as seen with the Countess. He has attacked male authors (Sir George) and questioned bastions of male privilege (Mr. Selvin), all the while consistently upholding the inherent and superior value of Arabella as an author figure. I argue that we should read the marriage of Glanville and Arabella as a kind of partnering of the gentleman critic and the woman writer, one that has acknowledged the gendered dynamic of criticism, invoked and rejected aspects of the language of gallantry, but still works within the gendered structures of society at large. Unlike the hack writer, Sir George, and the shallow Charlotte, Glanville and Arabella share every "Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind" (383). The novel as a whole revises the gendered dynamic of the gentleman critic and the woman writer.

Conclusion: Lennox as Critic

The ending of *The Female Quixote* may feel traditional, but Lennox's own career seems to follow the more expansive potential she maps onto Arabella. Lennox's next publication, her follow-up to *The Female Quixote*, was *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753-4). In this work, Lennox combines "neoclassical precepts with the authority of female

domesticity in her unseasonable criticism of Shakespeare" and traces and summarizes the source materials for Shakespeare's plays, many of which are romances (Runge 128). *Shakespear Illustrated* came out one year after *The Female Quixote* and was advertised as "With Critical Remarks" "By the Author of the Female Quixote" (Doody, "Shakespeare's Novels" 296). While it has not been historically well remembered, Lennox's *Shakespear* caused quite a stir in its own moment. It caused controversy, but its scholarship on Shakespeare's source texts became important, leaving a mark on eighteenth-century criticism; Johnson referenced it repeatedly in his own edition of Shakespeare's works. In finding fault with the rising forefather of the masculine literary canon, Lennox "has left a legacy of irritated responses" in her wake (Runge 138). However Lennox, as a woman writer in a climate where gender roles were becoming more and more binary, felt she had the prerogative to present a work of literary criticism. She had published a collection of poems, and two romance-infused novels—*The Life of Harriot Stuart* and *The Female Quixote*—all endeavors firmly within the growing, but defined purview of women writers. She follows these performances up with a work of criticism, stepping confidently out into the rather exclusive terrain of the gentleman critic.[187]

There is not a great deal of critical work on Lennox's *Shakespear*.[188] What little critical work there is on Lennox's *Shakespear* is also most frequently noted through its relationship to Johnson. He wrote the dedication to the first two volumes of the text. Lennox is notably critical of the bard in her remarks; for example, in her comments on *Measure for Measure*, she writes, "I think, wherever Shakespeare has invented, he is greatly below the Novelist; since the Incidents he has added, are neither necessary nor

probable" (*Shakespear Illustrated* 24).[189] This has led critics like Jonathan Kramnick to read Johnson's dedications as a kind of apology or softening.[190] Writing as Lennox in the dedication, Johnson proclaims that Shakespeare's "works may be considered as a Map of Life, a faithful Miniature of human Transactions, and he that has read *Shakespear* with Attention, will perhaps find little new in the crouded world" (x). However, what Kramnick overlooks is that this pattern, or general praise followed by detailed and pointed criticism, is the same pattern Johnson uses in both *The Rambler* and more overtly *Lives of the Poets*. Johnson himself is, as noted above, especially hard on the supposedly great and canonical authors. That is the job of the critic, and rather than seeing his dedications as an apology, I agree with Runge that it is more productive to seem them as a mark of Johnson's esteem for Lennox (165). In a letter written in either April or May of 1753, Johnson expressed his unequivocal delight in Lennox's criticism:

> I should be sorry to lose Criticism in her bloom. Your remarks are I think all very judicious, clearly expressed, and *incontrovertibly certain*. When Shakespeare is demolished your wings will be full summed and I will fly you at Milton; for you are a bird of Prey, but the Bird of Jupiter. (Schürer 45)

Johnson does not condescend to Lennox. He sees her arguments as clear and incontrovertible. He wants to fly her at Milton, an author he himself famously criticizes in both *The Rambler* and *Lives*. Johnson viewed Lennox not as a feminine interloper to the gentleman's terrain, but a critic of equal and powerful merit. In fact, since Johnson's *Lives* follows Lennox's own critical work, he may be mimicking her voice, as much as expanding on his own. Once again, we see Lennox engaging with Johnson and him with her, not as a patron but as a colleague. She has not left the gentleman critic idolized on

his pillar; she has flown at him, like a bird of prey, and taken his critical voice for her own. Lennox has actualized, at least on some level, the critical possibility she presented in her quixotic heroine.

Less commented upon is how Johnson, in both *The Female Quixote* and *Shakespear Illustrated*, played the female author. Johnson wrote the dedications to both the novel and the first two volumes of the critical work. In both he presents himself as Lennox, as "the Author?" (*FQ* 4). The question mark in the novel's preface seems to call playful attention to Johnson's performance. In both texts he plays the classic, modest female author, writing to male patrons—first the Earl of Middlesex and then Lord Orrery. In the preface to *Shakespear* he modestly declares, "My *Sex*, my *Age*, have not given me many Opportunities of mingling in the World; there may be in it many Species of Absurdity which I have never seen" (*SI* viii).[191] Madeleine Kahn would categorize this as a narrative transvestism, whereby a male author abdicates his authority to adopt a feminine persona.

However, before exiting this chapter, I would like to gesture to a phenomenon that Lennox and Johnson's relationship seems to anticipate, what I will call in my final chapter a kind of narrative drag. If, as I have argued, the women writers of the eighteenth century have gradually usurped the gentleman's literary authority, chipping away and revising his power as an author, reader, and critic, then perhaps Johnson's own performance as Lennox can speak to the ways authorship for both genders is coming untethered from innate identity. Johnson can ventriloquize Lennox, and she can ventriloquize him, because they have the same authorial prerogative. It opens up new

potential. For example, one of the most disappointing speeches Arabella makes at the end of *The Female Quixote* seems to abdicate all of her agency:

> Turning to Mr. *Glanville*, whom she beheld with a Look of mingled Tenderness and Modesty, To give you myself, said she with all my remaining Imperfections, is making you but a poor Present in return for the Obligations your generous Affection for a Partner for Life by a Man of your Sense and Honour, I will endeavor to make myself as worthy as I am able to such a favourable Distinction. (383)

On one level Arabella is vocalizing the common plea of the female author: a plea of modesty, unworthiness, nothingness and dependence, what Gallagher calls "capitalizing on…femaleness" (xxiv).[192] This was a common and useful strategy for women writers. However, a twist appears when we consider that the voice we heard use this strategy first was Johnson--that is, Johnson performing Lennox in the dedication to the novel. Perhaps, Lennox is parroting Johnson, joking at his play of female authorship here. This would mean that the subservient heroine author is actually a gentleman in disguise. This loop plays again when we remember that the good gentlemen critics of the novel, Glanville and the Doctor, are actually Lennox. They may draw upon Johnson, just as Lennox herself might in her criticism of Shakespeare, but behind that curtain the best men with the greatest insight turn out to be a woman's puppets. Lennox and Johnson both play ventriloquist with each other, which is striking because it seems to mark new terrain for women writers. While male authors, like Richardson, Daniel Defoe, Addison and Steele, and Johnson, had presented feminine voices in their works, for a woman novelist to play

at a gentleman author, especially an established one, marks a fundamental shift in the power of authorship within the novel.

Notes

[117] *Dictionary* (203).

[118] Schürer (16-17). This is from a letter Lennox wrote to Richardson on November 22, 1751.

[119] Kathleen Nulton Kemmerer opens her book, *A Neutral Being Between the Sexes: Samuel Johnson's Sexual Politics*, with this very quandary, citing the infamous women preachers anecdote from Boswell's *Life* (13). See also Helen Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson*, where she presents the two Johnson problem in her Introduction.

[120] See Kemmerer in *A Neutral Being*: Kemmerer's book is an exploration of how Johnson, in his own writing, contrary to Boswell's depiction, resists key aspects of misogyny, advocates for women's education, and interrogates gender categories. See also, Morrison's "Samuel Johnson, Mr. Rambler, and Women", which investigates Johnson's uses of pronouns, gendered language, and so on to build on Kemmerer's case. Some critics, like Manushag Powell in her article "Johnson and His 'Readers' in the Epistolary *Rambler* Essays" and Jacqueline Pearson in her book *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835* read Johnson as "not a feminist, but a moralist" ("Johnson and His 'Readers'") or not quite a misogynist, but definitely "ambivalent" (Pearson 31) in his gender relations.

[121] I am relying on Schürer's account of this publication saga in his introduction to Lennox's correspondence: "in keeping with his usual practice…sent the manuscript to three independent readers, two of whom are named (though unidentified) in the present correspondence: Mr. Seymour and Mr. Gray" (xxxii).

[122] There is some debate about whether or not Johnson actually wrote this advertisement. Hanley claims that Johnson did; however, Duncan Isles disputes this claim. For an account and analysis of these reviews and the publication of *The Female Quixote* see Brian Hanley's "Henry Fielding, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Richardson, and the Reception of Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* in the Popular Press." Regardless of whether or not he wrote this particular review, through his advocacy with Millar, his correspondence with Lennox, and his praise of Lennox throughout his life, it is clear that Johnson also appreciated *The Female Quixote*.

[123] For a great summary of this debate, which began with John Mitford in 1843, see Patricia Hamilton's "'The Only Excellence of Falsehood': Rethinking Samuel Johnson's Role in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*." Hamilton does not have the benefit of Schürer's collection, so she is not as confident in putting the authorship question to rest, but the article is still helpful to anyone looking to understand the evolution of this debate.

[124] In his introduction Schürer writes: "The first eleven items of correspondence collected here between Richardson, Johnson, and Lennox specifically concerning the publication of *FQ* (only six of which were known to Isles and the editors of the Oxford edition of *FQ*) prove beyond a doubt that Lennox did indeed write the chapter herself" (xxxiii).

[125] Kemmerer presents a summary of this trajectory through the mid 90s (15). Some of the classics in this early debate are Gea Annette Brack and O.M. Brack, Jr.'s "Johnson as Patron" and Isobel Grundy's "Samuel Johnson as Patron of Women".

[126] Schürer attributes this letter—rightly so in my opinion—to Johnson based on its date and correspondence with the production of *The Female Quixote*. Schürer convincingly rules out Richardson, Millar, and Orrery, because of other letters and because Johnson sent a letter on the same day to Lennox, which seems pretty clearly to be a reply to this one. For more, see Schürer's annotations of this letter on 30-31 of *Charlotte Lennox: Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents*.

[127] In his essay, "Johnson, the essay, and *The Rambler*," Paul Korshin argues that *The Rambler's* influence grew over time: "Besides the original run of the 208 essays, there were more than twenty reprintings of the entire work by 1800 and, in the nineteenth century, there were another three dozen separate editions of the work plus twenty more reprintings in editions of Johnson's works" (52).

[128] The inconsistency and incongruity of Johnson's work has become one of the most ubiquitous acknowledgments of Johnson scholarship. In fact, Freya Johnston and Lynda Muggelstone's recent edited collection, *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum*, is devoted to this issue; the swing between the rigid and the inconsistent, multi-layered Johnson. In the introduction they write, "Readings of the Johnsonian pendulum operate within a similar divide. Johnson's potential embrace of rival impulses—a salient feature of his like, work, and reception—begins to seem a matter for celebration rather than complaint" (Johnston and Muggleston 6). Within this collection see John Richetti's

"Johnson's Assertions and Concessions: Moral Irresolution and Rhetorical Performance". Other critics who make much of the inconsistency or incongruity of Johnson, especially in *The Rambler,* include Eithen Henson, Powell, Morrison, and Kemmerer.

[129] In *Excitable Imaginations*, Lubey connects erotic images in amatory fiction with empirical and epistemological philosophies. She writes that amatory and erotic fiction, "Asked to engage their imaginations at once to feel sensible arousal and to contemplate its significance, readers are thought to emerge from erotic episodes newly attuned to their own capacities for self-determination in moral and social matters" (Lubey 3). See also Kvande's essay, "Reading Female Readers: *The Female Quixote* and *Female Quixotism*," in *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*. She writes, "Reading itself was understood as fundamentally physical was well, both because it depended on seeing and because it activated the imagination" (Kvande 220)

[130] For more on this, see Runge, Lubey, Kvande, and Jacqueline Pearson's *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835.*

[131] For more on the gentleman's education, see J.D. Solinger's *Becoming the Gentleman*: "Even the most casual student of eighteenth-century literature and culture can identify the basic pieces of the aristocratic male's liberal education: a carefully paced and closely supervised course of reading and travel, consisting of the study of ancient and foreign languages, history, poetry, rhetoric and the fine arts. The mathematics of the ledger book and the new sciences of the Royal Society were pieces of this program" (Solinger 24). According to Johnson's *Dictionary,* "a liberal education, the second entry suggests, is one befitting or 'becoming a gentleman'" (Solinger 25)

[132] See Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* and Wahrman's *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (7). See *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (30)

[133] See *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (xxv).

[134] "Because distinctions of literary worth are often articulated through cultural constructions of gender, the formal as well as the moral criteria of literature correspond with specific historical gendered constructions" (Runge 3)

[135] Powell argues that Johnson's categorization as manly defies cultural standards (*Performing Authorship* 32).

[136] This entire section is clearly indebted to Laura Runge's book, *Gender and Language in British Literary Criticism 1660-1790*.

[137] See Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (277). Runge and Doody both demonstrate that the ideal of the female reader did not necessarily match actual patterns of eighteenth-century readership, but this figure still served an important ideological function when it came to categorizing the novel's values and dangers. See Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation for a more in-depth discussion of this issue.

[138] Runge argues that we can see this evaluation clearly in our canon construction; for example, "With a few notable exceptions, the numerous novels published after Richardson and Fielding and before Jane Austen have generally been viewed as a bad lot, and one for which women are chiefly responsible" (118).

[139] As Todd explains, "The heroic French romance was primarily concerned with love and with women as writers and readers. It was connected with the salons of the *precieuses* who aimed to speak in refined intellectual way and to cultivate good social manners—inevitably such women were much mocked as pretentious and ignorant by men, most famously Moliere" (Todd 48).

[140] Todd describes how "learned Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter could be taken to task for her romance-addiction" (48).

[141] Johnson affectionately describes how all readers are, on some level, quixotes: "When the knight of La Mancha gravely recounts to his companion…very few readers, amidst their mirth or pity, can deny that they have admitted visions of equally strange, or by means equally inadequate. When we pity him, we reflect on our own disappointments; and when we laugh, our hearts inform us that he is not more ridiculous than ourselves, except that he tells what we have only thought" (III.9, March 24, 1750).

[142] Perhaps the key is that Johnson is marking a generational difference in readership. Romances have fallen out of fashion. The chivalric romances of his boyhood reading and the French romances of Arabella's are no longer a danger to modern young people.

[143] See Powell's article "Johnson and His 'Readers' in the Epistolary *Rambler* Essays" (572, 575) and her book *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (55), and Kemmerer, *A Neutral Being Between Two Sexes* (60).

[144] No. 208, March 14, 1752**.**

[145] John Richetti acknowledges that Johnson's *Rambler* relies on a "rhetorical performance", but in the sense that Johnson is examining his own morality and criticism

self-reflexively, not in the traditional distinction between eidolon and author (39). Richetti writes, “Over and over again, Johnson tends to the paradoxical, the questioning not just of opinions held by implicit adversaries but even at times of what would seem to be his own thoughtful countering of such opinions” (41-2)

[146] Powell writes, “Most male eidolons, especially the more private ones—Johnson’s Mr. Rambler, for example—make little or no mention of wives one way or the other” (Powell, *PA* 137)

[147] As Powell points out, Johnson is like masculine authorial Teflon, because “despite being in fact a hack writer for much of his career and despite suffering all manner of bodily ailments, remains in the collective memory a towering symbol of masculine authorship: Johnson and his prose are so manly that his former hackney character is forgotten, even undone” (*Performing Authorship* 32)

[148] Kemmerer argues that Johnson expressed a “skepticism about cultural constructs of gender and an approval of psychological androgyny are important features of his thought” (Kemmerer 19). Kemmerer defines “androgyny” in “the psychological sense. Psychologists who study androgyny say that although the sex of an individual is biologically determined by his or her genes at conception, sex roles are learned from others” (20). Kemmerer’s larger interrogation of gender within Johnson’s work is insightful.

[149] I present a more detailed argument about this in Chapter 1.

[150] Korshin reads *Rambler* 34 as Johnson’s somewhat belated attempt make concessions to women readers.

[151] As Morrison points out, “The term ‘women’s topic’ is not Johnson’s, of course, and it is questionable whether he thought the *Ramblers* on domestic life and on courtship and marriage were or ought to be of more interest to women readers than would other *Rambler* essays” (24). Meanwhile Kemmerer sees Johnson as a “‘witness’ who lends his voice to women” and treats women as capable intellectuals (23).

[152] Powell, “Johnson and His readers” (582), Kemmerer (20), Morrison (24), Korshin (62).

[153] Kemmerer presents a detailed reading of these essays (76).

[154] Morrison calls these essays the “Marriage Group” (39); they include Nos. 34, 35 (male letter writer), Nos. 39, 45 (correspondent, unclear gender), Nos. 113 & 115-6 (Hymenaeus), 119 (Tranquilla), 167 (Hymenaeus & Tranquilla).

[155] In “Mr. Rambler’s language we also find the following:

1. Regular use of all-inclusive first-person plural pronouns by Mr. Rambler
2. frequent authoritative generalizations about mankind and men, but extreme caution in making pronouncements about women as a distinct group
3. regular strategic alternation between masculine singular and non-gendered plural forms
4. balanced male and female examples throughout; and
5. a combination of personification of abstractions and the passive voice that avoids gendered discourse” (Morrison 29)

[156] After all, “it is to little purpose that Socrates, or Euripides, are produced against the sighs of softness, and the tears of beauty” (III.99).

[157] The first reference of the “heroes of literature” is in No. 21 (May 29, 1750), but Johnson repeats this language throughout the *Rambler*. Johnson uses the same phrase in No. 137, (July 9, 1751). Besides this phrase, the imagery Johnson uses is frequently referential of a knight or challenger on a quest for glory.

[158] Henson writes, “What, then, is the example young men are offered? Johnson’s first definition of ‘chivalry’ as ‘knighthood; a military dignity,’ reminds us that the major part of romance has to do with fighting: enemies are attacked on the slightest provocation, wounded, dismembered, and killed, sometimes in unimaginable numbers; armies confront each other; and thousands die…It is an absurdly violent world (in that this violence is scarcely remarked or questioned) and its code demands constant bloodshed” (45-6)

[159] On some crucial level this is rewriting the masculinity of authorship in ways that recycle and rework the honor code of the duel. However, instead of actual violence, we now have the heroic field of the page.

[160] Speaking of hackneyed or less profound authors in *Rambler* 93, Johnson writes, “There is indeed some tenderness due to living writers, when they attack none of those truths which are of importance to the happiness of mankind…I should think it cruelty to crush an insect who had provoked me only by buzzing in my ear” (IV.133). *Rambler* No. 145, August 6, 1751 is another defense of these writers.

[161] Johnson has similar criticism for the rules of lyric poetry in *Rambler* 158: “From this accidental peculiarity of the ancient writers the criticks deduce the rules of lyrick poetry” (V.77, September 21, 1751)

[162] No 92, February 2, 1751.

[163] No. 88, Saturday, January 19, 1751.

[164] No. 168, October 26, 1751. See Johnson's criticism of Milton in *Rambler* No. 88: "our language is overstocked with consonants" and "Milton therefore seems to have somewhat mistaken the nature of our language, of which the chief defect is ruggedness and asperity, and has left our harsh cadences yet harsher" (IV.102 January 19, 1751)

[165] No. 154, "The inefficacy of genius without learning" September 7, 1751**.**

[166] No. 137, July 9, 1751.

[167] There are several layers to this critical debate. There are critics who read the whole novel as a clear rejection of romance—and anti-romance—in favor of the novel. I would include Todd (*Sign of Angelica* 152) and Langbauer (62) in this list, but also Jane Spencer (*Rise of the Woman Novelist* 189), Christine Roulston (27), and Mary Patricia Martin (51). Then there are critics who see romance as having proto-feminist potential like Margaret Anne Doody (Intro xxx), Eve Tavor Bannet ("Quixotes, Imitations, and Transatlantic" 563), Katherine Beutner (165), Catherine Craft (836), Debra Malina (281), Sharon Smith Palo (228), Deborah Ross (95), Helen Thompson (171), and Catherine Gallagher (195). Within this set of critics there are subsets. One group—Spacks, Malina, and Gallagher—sees romance as having feminist potential, but that the ending of the novel is a conservative foreclosure of this possibility. There are critics, like Doody and Motooka (257), who see the ending as inevitable and conservative, but unable to undo the feminist potential of the whole novel. Martin sees Arabella's ending as conservative, and Lennox's authorial achievement as subversive. Meanwhile, Beutner and Palo read the

ending itself as having some sort of feminist potential. Another group reads the ending as ambivalent or hybrid in some way: Scott Paul Gordon (509), Ellen Gardiner (9), James Lynch (61), Ross, Thompson, and Bannet. Within this thread there are critics who read the whole novel, and not just the ending, as ambivalent or hybrid: Gordon, and Jacqueline Pearson (201, 2013) are included here.

[168] Laurie Langbauer's book *Women and Romance: The Consolations of Gender in the English Novel*, specifically her second chapter, "Diverting Romance: Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*," is one of the foundational pieces of criticism on *The Female Quixote*; every one who has written about this novel since, is in some way responding to her arguments. Langbauer writes: "Women and romance are constructed within the male order and the established tradition of prose fiction that grows out of and upholds that order; they are constructed as marginal and secondary in order to secure the dominance of men and novels" (2). Janet Todd's *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660-1800*—is one of the foundational texts in the feminist recovery projects and famously categorized women authors as moral or scandalous. She puts Lennox in the former category, because she reads the ending of the *Female Quixote* as fundamentally conservative. Arabella has been taught a lesson by male authority figures and from now on "What Arabella will read in the future is obviously Samuel Richardson" (Todd 154); "In the end Arabella is redeemable because, with all her faults, she already has many of the attributes of the new sentimental heroine" (Todd 157).

[169] Langbaurer writes, "Another way to read the mad Arabella is as the novelist's fantasy of wish-fulfillment. She is the ideal-reader, completely given over to the sway of the text,

attesting to the power of romance, a power the novelist desires for her form too" (65). See Kvande (220), Gordon (501), and Todd for more on Arabella's role as a reader (154-7).

[170] Gardiner focuses on Sir George as the primary author figure (2-4) and not Arabella. While I agree that Sir George is representative of a particular kind authorship, I do not see him as being as successful as Gardiner does or quite as privileged by his gender as she marks him. I also think she misses the larger potential of Arabella's authorship.

[171] Arabella has been castigated for a desire to have someone else record her history, and yet this is precisely what Boswell did for Johnson. Johnson's adventures were recorded, without any impropriety. Now, while Lennox clearly could not have foreseen the impact of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* on Johnson's posterity, surely Arabella's interest, her desire for a Boswell, is not so outrageous. Perhaps Lennox is Arabella's Boswell.

[172] Arabella's "mistake is like the coquette's, the assumption of too great female significance and social power" (Todd 152).

[173] I am stealing the phrase: Mr. Blandville (like Boreville instead of Orville in *Evelina*) from Manushag Powell, who is fairly convinced that she got it from somewhere else. However, since this is as far as the trail leads at this juncture, I am attributing this witticism to her.

[174] He mentions these in his criticism of Sir George's authorship and romance attempt (*FQ* 253).

[175] In fact their discourse on Beauty is prompted by Glanville's very gentlemanly criticism of the coquette's desire for flattery. Arabella counters this with "What Subjects afford Matter for a more pleasing Variety of Conversation, than those of Beauty and

Love? Can we speak of any Object so capable of delighting as Beauty, or of any Passion of the Mind more sublime and pleasing than Love?" (149). (Here Arabella means love in the abstract, not love for her). Their conversation is so engrossing that Sir George "forget[s] the [Romance] Character he assumed" (148).

[176] Even Charlotte—the skeptical coquette—is swept up in the spirit of romance. She is the veiled lady with Sir George; she has literally copied Arabella's dress in order to spy on Sir George—a very romance-style maneuver.

[177] In fact, according to Marshall, "Sir George is the only character in the novel who is presented as an author" (113). See Gardiner (2). See Roulston (36).

[178] Langbauer argues that Sir George's romance reading makes him feminine in some sense (91). However, Marshall (113-115), Gardiner (2), and Roulston (35) counter this in their readings of him as a plotter who seeks to usurp control of the text. Most romances were written by men.

[179] No. 121, May 14, 1751. See also No. 154, September 7, 1751.

[180] Johnson sees this echo chamber effect as necessary, because developing expertise in any field is incredibly difficult, and most mere mortals do not have the time or the ability to master even one field: "Even those to whom Providence has allotted greater strength of understanding, can expect only to improve a single science. In every other part of learning, they must be content to follow opinions, which they are not able to examine" (IV.282).

[181] In her book *Pope, Homer, and Manliness: Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Classical Learning*, Williams explores the ways classical Homeric ideals of manliness

informed eighteenth-century masculinity, using Pope as a central figure: "The most effective means of preserving manhood among the nobility and gentry was commonly believed to be the classical education known as 'manly learning'" (Williams 27).

[182] Interestingly, the mid century saw a few prominent examples of women who cultivated a classical education, like Sarah Fielding and Elizabeth Carter. Fielding taught herself Greek and Latin because "Classical texts were studied not only as models of elegant expression, but as essential contributions to contemporary debates on moral, ethical and philosophical issues, then seen very much as male preserve" (Bree xvii). Fielding was "widely praised" for her translation of Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates With the Defence of Socrates before his Judges* (1762) (Bree xvii). However, Fielding and women like her were the exceptions, for the classics were the domain of the gentleman; women who ventured into this terrain were "labeled…as masculine" often as an insult but occasionally as a compliment (Runge 29).

[183] Spacks sees the Countess's exit as making way for male authority, and sees the Countess as a figure of unfulfilled possibility: "The Countess brings no authority to bear on the misguided girl; she operates by means of 'charm' thus exemplifying woman's limited resources. And she leaves, her work of persuasion radically incomplete" (*DT* 16). Gordon argues, "The countess' cure holds out the possibility that romance, read rightly, could still produce generous behavior" (511). Craft sees romance as a language for women that the Countess and Arabella can participate in together (836). However, numerous critics also see the conservative strain in the Countess, whose history takes up a single paragraph and seems to represent "a highly conservative view of virtuous

femininity, which relegates women's history to fiction and romance, negating the possibility of a virtuous autobiography" (Roulston 38). See Craft (837), Beunter (177), and Zimmerman (376).

[184] She cannot justify leaving her father's home to flee an unwanted marriage:

> She did not remember to have read any Heroine that voluntarily left her Father's House, however persecuted she might be; but she considered, that there was not any of the Ladies in Romances, in the same Circumstances with herself who was without a favoured Lover, for whose sake it might have been believed she made an Elopement (35).

Critics have noted Arabella's commitment to precedent in this passage, which is actually a false precedent. Many romance heroines fled their father's homes. More importantly for my case, no one has remarked that Arabella feels trapped because she does not have another lover to elope with. What motivates a heroine's actions is her virtue, but also the man she loves. Without such a man, Arabella cannot act.

[185] No. 154, September 7, 1751.

[186] In No. 121, May 14, 1751, Johnson cautions: "If Virgil could be thus seduced by imitation, there will be little hope, that common wits should escape" (IV.284). He criticizes Virgil's construction of Dido's afterworld depiction: Virgil "had his imagination full of Ajax and therefore could not prevail on himself to teach Dido any other mode of resentment" (IV.284). I think there is a potential argument about gender and depiction here, which goes beyond the scope of this project. He also frequently criticizes Milton for trying to make poetic forms translate into English that, in Johnson's

opinion, does not work. One example is No. 88, January 19, 1751: "Milton therefore seems to have somewhat mistaken the nature of our language, of which the chief defect is ruggedness and asperity, and has left our harsh cadences yet harsher" (IV.102)

[187] Periodicals by women like Haywood's *The Female Spectator*, or philosophical works by women like Mary Astell, are also examples of women stepping into traditionally masculine terrain. My argument is not that Lennox is the *only* or even the first woman to do this, but that her work, a sustained piece of criticism, does feel unprecedented and significant within its historical context.

[188] Runge's chapter, "Aristotle's Sisters: Behn, Lennox, Fielding, and Reeve" presents a case study of Lennox's *Shakespear* as an example of criticism done by women (137-148); then there are Doody's "Shakespeare's Novels: Charlotte Lennox Illustrated" and Jonathan Kramnick's "Reading Shakespeare's Novels: Literary History and Cultural Politics in the Lennox-Johnson Debate".

[189] She is especially critical of the Bard's depictions of women. In *Measure for Measure*, Lennox finds it incredibly unsatisfying that "The cruel, the vicious and hypocritical *Angelo*, marries a fair and virtuous Woman, who tenderly loved him, and is restored to the Favour of his Prince" (*SI* 25). In the source text by Cinthio, the Angelo character is properly punished for his transgressions.

[190] Kramnick argues Johnson's dedication is "singularly fraught and ambivalent" because, contrary to Lennox's proto-feminist text, Johnson's dedication positions "Shakespeare against the novel as a masculinized high-cultural form" (446-7, 449). According to Kramnick, in the dedications—where Johnson pretends to be Lennox—"He

has Lennox apologize" for her feminine preference for novels" (449). However, this reading overlooks the ways praise followed by harsh criticism characterized Johnson's criticism in *The Rambler* and later in *Lives*. For example, in his repeated criticism of Milton, Johnson will begin or end with an acknowledgment of Milton's importance and beauty, but then spend the bulk of the essay criticizing him for being "somewhat mistaken the nature of our language, of which the chief defect is ruggedness and asperity, and has left our harsh cadences yet harsher" (IV.102). (Query: why repeat this citation? See earlier endnote)

[191] In the preface to *The Female Quixote*, he presents, "The Dread which a Writer feels of the public Censure; the still greater Dread of Neglect", the "subtil Sophistry of Desire" and a wish to avoid "Impropriety" (4).

[192] Gallagher writes, "many women writers emphasized their femininity to gain financial advantage and that, in the process, they invented and popularized numerous ingenious similarities between their gender and their occupation. Far from disavowing remunerative authorship as unfeminine, they relentlessly embraced and feminized it. And, far from creating only minor or forgettable variations on an essentially masculine figure, they delineated crucial features of 'the author' for the period in general by emphasizing their trials and triumphs on the marketplace" (xiii)

CHAPTER 4 – THE GENTLEMAN AS AUTHORIAL DRAG: INVERTING PLOTS, HOMOSOCIALITY AND MORAL AUTHORSHIP IN ELIZABETH INCHBALD'S *A SIMPLE STORY* AND MARY ROBINSON'S *WALSINGHAM*

"No; by woman alone can man be rendered amiable"

–Lady Aubrey, *Walsingham*[193]

My final chapter relies on the gentlemanly models of male literary authority established in the previous chapters, but it does so to examine how late-eighteenth-century women novelists can invert this power, marking how clearly they have established women's sway over gentlemanly behavior. These late-century novels position the female, not the gentleman, author as the instructor for appropriate masculine behavior. These writers design their gentlemen characters in ways that demonstrate how female authors could use complementary gender categories to their advantage, and sometimes to challenge late-century gender binaries in the process. I read this usurpation of gentlemanly literary mastery by female authors as a mode of drag. This mode presents characters as gentlemen, but then are revealed to be literally or structurally women passing for men. Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) and Mary Robinson's *Walsingham* (1797) reveal that the best gentleman is in fact quite womanly. This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I briefly lay out the binary structure of late-eighteenth-century gendered thinking and its impact on the ideal of the gentleman. In this

section, I reveal how the binary structure linked the gentleman's masculinity to male homosociality and patriarchal power not necessarily in new ways, but in more rigid ways. I also define my use of the terms "drag" or "transvestism" as structural apparatuses rather than diagnoses. My second and third sections look directly at Robinson and Inchbald as case studies for this phenomenon.

Robinson's and Inchbald's work represents inversions of the gentlemanly relationships and authority I have laid out in my first three chapters. Even though it was written later, I will first turn to Robinson's *Walsingham; or the Pupil of Nature* because it more overtly illustrates the gendered constructions and drag structures I am examining; after all, "Sir" Sidney is literally a woman performing in drag as a gentleman. I will consider the ways Robinson crafts Walsingham as a representative of how well-educated (both experientially and scholastically) men are not necessarily good readers of the world, and that women, educated as men, present much less damaging figures and better gentlemen. I will connect this to Chapter 2 because Walsingham so clearly desires to be a gentleman of letters. However, he is an inept reader of the world, because he does not develop appropriate relationships with the people he knows to be women. This makes Walsingham an untrustworthy narrator: if he cannot connect with women, then he cannot learn to read like the gentleman, nor can he establish the credibility of the gentleman. There is also a challenge to the heteronormative requirements of the gentleman in Walsingham's mantra of desire for Isabella and his homosexual panic over Sir Sidney. Meanwhile, I will also underscore how Sidney is actually a better gentleman, more sensible, more rational, and a better protector of female virtue than Walsingham: a woman makes a superior gentleman.

Moving on, I argue Inchbald's *A Simple Story* plays with the reformed coquette genre and attendant masculinities discussed in Chapter One. Through an examination of her male characters and her novel's two-part structure, I will demonstrate that Inchbald marks the passionate wit of the coquette as the most appropriate instructor of sensitive masculinity. Critics have, for the most part, read the sentimental Matilda as the inheritor of her vivacious mother's legacy. However, I argue that this is a narrative trap, one that the novel asks us to resist. Instead, Rushbrook, the handsome young gentleman, is actually the reincarnation of Miss Milner's vivacity. Through recasting her coquette as a gentleman and mirroring scenes between Miss Milner/Dorriforth and Rushbrook/Elmwood, Inchbald reveals the ways desire is a structure of plot, not of gender, and she recasts the courtship plot as one of male homosociality, further emphasizing the gendered power structures of her day. However, rather than reinforcing the gender divide, her revision of the coquette as gentleman resists the categorization of gentlemanly features as being innate. I will then link both of these novels back to my argument that female authors validate their own literary power over the gentleman by remaking his authority as their own. If the best gentleman is actually a woman, then the best author and critic is now also a woman.

The Late Eighteenth-Century: Binary Gender and Gentlemanly Homosociality

By the time Robinson and Inchbald wrote their novels in the 1790s, gender identity had undergone a kind of calcification; i.e., gender in the late eighteenth century was largely considered binary, complementary, and innate. The later decades of the century complete what Dror Wahrman labels the "gender-play-to-gender-panic"

transition (47). Critics like Wahrman and Thomas Laqueur argue that there was a more fluid perception of gender as a spectrum in the early century that was gradually replaced by an attitude that the genders are innate, separate, and complementary in the later century.[194] Up to the late eighteenth century, men and women could imagine "alternatives to the prevalent norms as viable, tolerable, unthreatening, at times even appreciable" (Wahrman 14). However, by the 1780s, "Reactions characterized by tolerance or begrudging acceptance…were superseded by ones of anxiety and disbelief" (21). Within this system a man or woman had "innate character" and "his or her… gender [was] a personal, private matter fixed inwardly" (Mackie 7). Anything that threatened this system was labeled aberrant, criminal, and dangerous.

The gentleman became, in a fuller sense than before, the protector and guardian of these gender boundaries; it was his role to regulate this system, and at the same time to make it seem appealing. The genders were not only innate; they were supposed to be complementary, each side playing its role to reinforce cultural structures—the family, the nation, separate public and domestic spheres—in the face of the tumultuous political climate of the 1790s (the era of revolutions). As Megan A. Woodworth argues, the gentleman was the ideal, benevolent patriarch of this system, with women as his grateful subjects. However, despite his now supposedly innate and complete natural authority, the gentleman's authority still depended inextricably upon being pleasing to women:

> While women must please men, men must make themselves worthy of being pleased—they must be sufficiently manly and must prove themselves worthy of their positions of power and authority. Marriage is the way to ensure the proper

> functioning of this complementarity, and so a kind of socioeconomic equality in marriage is necessary. (21)

In other words, women needed to buy in to this social order for the gentleman's power to function.

What made the late-eighteenth gentleman pleasing was his rationality and the restraint of his passions. This sounds, on some level, identical to the earlier gentleman described in this text, and indeed the gentleman is not a figure of radical evolution. In fact, he is deliberately constructed to be pleasing, soothing, anti-radical; he is the force for social order and domesticity, which took a firmer hold on the cultural imagination as the century wore on. What is new is the prominence his orderliness took in the late century. In the midst of political upheaval, the cult of sensibility fell out of fashion. As George Haggerty explains, whereas in the mid-century, sensibility was the "liberating" key to the reform of male manners, "Unchecked sensibility is a threat to order in the later eighteenth century" (*Men in Love* 82, 109). The "man of feeling," formerly celebrated, "was now looked on with suspicion" (Ward 1). To be clear, the gentleman was still to be sympathetic and caring, especially to women and those dependent upon him, but his masculinity was established more deliberately by "through being in control of his desires and passions" (Woodworth 22). The act or display of overcoming passion in the interest of virtue is not exclusively masculine, but it becomes a display of masculine strength and rationality through its connection to the cult of sensibility. While the late-century gentleman may still possess the intense emotions of the man of feeling, through his innate rationality and sense (his masculine features), he governs them.

Within this world of binary, supposedly innate gender roles, women were seen as naturally domestic, nurturing, and moral beings, which women novelists increasingly turned to their advantage. The gentleman also held moral authority, but as a result of the reform of male manners, women had become and maintained their status as civilizing agents. This influence came to be seen as an innate aspect of femininity. However, women were also supposed to be yielding and submissive, accepting—nay, loving—the gentleman's guidance and control. On one level, this categorization made women "complicit in their own subjection" (Woodworth 14). However, on another, as Eve Tavor Bannet, Nancy Armstrong, Woodworth, and others have pointed out, this role as moral arbitress gave women novelists a new kind of power in their literary influence.[195] As Bannet and Karen O'Brien argue, women played a large role in constructing the "doctrine of 'separate spheres'" because these gendered divisions gave them moral and literary influence; women writers "constructed the family as a subject about which women might properly and authoritatively speak" (Bannet 1-2).[196] Women used and cultivated the language of innate gender difference to their advantage, using the "languages of moral authority or personal worth" (Guest 16) to critique family and gender relations and analyze "abuses of power and pleas for those in power not to exceed their rights, erudite enumerations of variations in social practice or demolitions of vulgar masculine prejudice" (O'Brien 15). Whether the women writers in question are considered conservative or radical, critics over the last few decades have agreed that they all largely used the argument of their moral authority as women to justify their arguments and authorship.

Surprisingly, no one has yet connected this late-eighteenth-century moral certitude associated with women writers with the moral authority of the gentleman. It seems clear that this trend among late-eighteenth-century women writers comes from the redistribution of the gentleman's earlier literary dominance, and the result of the subtle revisions to the gentleman's character enacted by women like Mary Davys, Eliza Haywood, Charlotte Lennox, and others. However, most critics (except Woodworth) see this influence as being largely, if not exclusively, directed at or through women. For example, according to Bannet, women novelists create heroines as "models for readers' imitation" (61). The critical focus has been on the heroines, whether they are viewed as conservative models of domesticity and virtue like Evelina or Belinda, as warnings of the dangers of radical philosophy like Amelia Opie's Adeline Mowbray, or as progressive victims of patriarchal oppression like Wollestonecraft's Maria or Mary Hay's Emma Courtney. This isn't to say that masculinity is never displayed or of interest to these critics; Bannet and Wikborg devote attention to father figures, and the love interests and marriages of the heroines are always addressed as a metaphor either endorsing or critiquing patriarchal culture.[197] Yet the emphasis of and vehicle for critique is usually determined by the heroine, who is presented as a model for female readers and a proper object for masculine sympathy or protection.

Woodworth's analysis of the late-eighteenth-century gentleman is a recent exception to this critical tendency. She rightly points out that women had a clear interest in reworking gender relations and the gentleman's dependence on women for their own advantage. However, she sees this feminine intervention with the gentleman as a late-eighteenth-century phenomenon, whereby women writers such as Frances Burney, Jane

West, Charlotte Smith, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen were revising the gentleman who hadn't existed as a romantic ideal until Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (10). Woodworth contends Richardson was the first author to make the gentleman desirable to women (which many critics might contest, because Grandison, like other gentleman leads, is still frequently considered rather boring himself). However, as my chapters on Davys, Haywood, and Lennox have all pointed out, the issue of the desirable, attractive gentleman was actually of paramount interest in earlier popular novels by women. Late-century women writers are not belatedly intervening in a masculine discourse; rather, their work is the capstone of a century's worth of female influence over the gentleman. Women's late-century moral authority is the final ingredient for their co-option of the gentleman's literary authority. In a binary gender system, they rewrite this brand of authority as their property, frequently revealing the constructed nature of the binary system at the same time.

While my analysis will focus on Robinson's *Walsingham* and Inchbald's *A Simple Story,* I want to gesture briefly to the larger trend their novels are working within. In my first three chapters I traced how Davys, Haywood, and Lennox used their male leads to represent and revise the gentleman's role as author, reader, and critic--the various categories of his literary authority. In these novels, the authors and their narrators gesture to their own authorial control. In the later decades of the eighteenth century, women writers begin speaking more and more directly to male readers (both literal and metaphorical) and using more first-person male narrators. For example, in *Evelina* (1778) Burney begins her novel through an exchange of letters between Lady Howard and Mr. Villars, Evelina's guardian; however, once Evelina leaves the nest, the bulk of the novel

is presented in her voice speaking to and with Mr. Villars. While she is admittedly a young woman seeking advice and guidance from a male father figure, the novel also prioritizes her feminine perspective in presenting her world experience to a male reader. By the time we arrive at Mary Hays's *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796), the novel opens with an inversion of Evelina's structure. The heroine opens the novel by proclaiming, "RASH young man!—why do you tear from my heart the affecting narrative, which I hoped no cruel necessity would ever have forced me to review" (Hays 48). Instead of uncertainly seeking advice from a male guardian figure, Hays's heroine presents her life story retrospectively as advice to then-inexperienced Augustus Hartley. Charlotte Smith placed a male perspective at the center of her epistolary novel *Desmond* (1792). Maria Edgeworth also created a series of first-person male narrators. Her first novel, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), presents the unreliable comedy of Thady Quirk's character. *Ennui* (1809) and *Harrington* (1817) likewise use first-person male narrators with their own distinct voices. In *Ennui* Edgeworth literally unmakes and then reforms Glenthorn into a gentleman, and there is something about the puppet-like quality of his narrative voice that gestures towards Edgeworth as the gentleman's puppet master.[198] Of course, looming at the turn of the nineteenth century is Jane Austen, the übermensch of gentleman. These are just a few examples, a sample set of a larger trend in the late eighteenth century that carries over into the early nineteenth century, where women writers take an increasingly direct voice in their depictions of the gentleman. Thus, rather than binding women to exclusively female audiences, the late-eighteenth-century climate seems to mark a turning point in the confidence and authority on the part of women writers to control, narrate, and dictate the proper behavior of the gentleman. This control

is the literary inheritance of earlier women writers; in their established and confident claims as moral arbitresses, these women writers have fully taken over the gentleman's authority, and where the gentleman used to speak and dictate to women, women writers now have their own authority to speak and dictate to men.

From within this wider field I have selected Robinson and Inchbald's texts because of the interesting symmetry between these two women. Both were actresses and acclaimed authors during the 1790s. Both women moved within similar intellectual and literary circles that included William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, though Inchbald quarreled with the couple publicly after their marriage. In contrast, while Inchbald lived frugally and independently off of her pen, Robinson was forever paying off debts, both her own and her lovers'. In fact, Robinson first published her poetry in 1774 in order to settle her husband's debts and get him, herself, and their daughter out of debtor's prison. While Robinson was most remembered for her scandalous affairs, especially with Prince George, "Inchbald retained a sterling reputation throughout her life that leaves her largely beyond reproach" (Robertson 2).[199] And yet both women were very much in control of their images. According to Ben Robertson, Inchbald's good reputation was in large part due to her careful self-fashioning; she maintained a "personal…unsullied" reputation while also managing "the professional persona that she projected as an actor and writer" (3). For example, Inchbald helped widely circulate an anecdote about how as a young actress she had to thwart the advances of Thomas Harris; to protect her virtue and stop him from kissing her, she supposedly yanked his wig off and then ran out of the room.[200] Meanwhile, Robinson was "one of the best known examples of a woman actor's loss of personal reputation" (3). Her very public, if short-lived, affair with the Prince of Wales

was just one of many relationships that labeled her as a fallen woman. Yet Mary Robinson managed to reinvent herself as a well respected poet and editor, and quite deliberately through her memoir *Perdita* (1801), in which she and her daughter recast Robinson as a sort of sentimental heroine and a celebrated, hard-working author.

Perhaps drawing on their own performances as actresses and as authors, Inchbald and Robinson's novels represent some of the clearest versions of late-eighteenth-century woman authors' authority over the gentleman and the accompanying interrogation of binary gender identities. Both texts perform expected gentlemanly plots and conventions. *Walsingham*'s frame narrative is a young gentleman's guidance to a female reader. Walsingham narrates his life to Rosanna, hoping that she will learn from his sorrows and sympathize with his pain as he details his rivalry with his cousin Sir Sidney Aubrey and his supposed love for Isabella Hanbury. *A Simple Story* presents two masterful plays of generically defined courtship plots: the reform of the coquette and a sentimental novel. The main character who bridges the gap between the two parts is the iconic gentleman, first as a guardian lover and then as a sentimental father. *A Simple Story* appears in Part 1 to be the tale of yet another mentor/lover instructing his wayward female subject in proper regulation and sense, which ends in mutual love, and Part 2 appears to be a tale rewarding a young woman for passive obedience and patient, long-suffering sentiment.

Despite what appear to be straightforward narrative surfaces, of these texts employ a kind of narrative drag or transvestism with their gentleman characters.[201] The drag and gender play in Robinson's novel is more obvious; in *Walsingham* the supposed rival, Sir Sidney—who is the best gentleman in the novel—is revealed to have been both in love with Walsingham and a woman the whole time, and Walsingham, who used to

hate Sir Sidney with manic intensity, decides he is in love with her; the two are married. Meanwhile, in *A Simple Story* a close examination of plot structure and character reveals that—contrary to popular critical opinion—the vivacious Miss Milner is not replaced or apologized for via her daughter Matilda, but is rather reimagined as the charming gentleman Rushbrook. I argue that Inchbald has put her plot in drag. Both texts use their gentleman figures to play with gender conventions and patriarchal structures, questioning the influence of male homosociality and the rigid idealization of innate gender difference.

However, before diving into my close examinations of each novel, I will define my terms. I am using the theoretical structures of drag or transvestism, because in contrast to homosexuality or transgender identity, both drag and transvestism resist a commitment to an innate subjectivity.[202] They are both fundamentally performances of gender, and they can be hyperbolic and (especially in drag's case) even comedic in their exaggeration; they *play* with gender identity, revealing it to be schtick, albeit a powerful and often serious one, and much more fluid and permeable than popular conceptions of gender often admit. I draw on, obviously, Judith Butler's theorization of the relationship between gender and drag which suggests "that 'imitation' is at the heart of the *heterosexual* project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations" (85). Gender is a performance that constitutes the self, and not a product of the deliberate agency of the self: but it is a culturally inscribed performance, one where sex is not a choice of the subject but an inscription of social norms, regulated and reinforced by structures of normal and abnormal. Inchbald, Robinson, and every other author I have presented do the

very thing Butler resists; they deliberately assume the gender role of the gentleman, and reveal it to be a garment of sorts.[203] Without insinuating anachronistically that Inchbald or Robinson completely enact Butler's anti-humanist theory of gender performativity, I do contend they reveal a proto-feminist, if not anti-humanist, sense of the performative nature of gender that anticipates Butler's theories.

These terms lend themselves to interrogating the gentleman, because, as I have demonstrated throughout this project, the gentleman relies on performance: performance of neutrality, performance of gentility, performance of private subjectivity—but always a performance. By performing and then unmasking the gentleman's drag, Inchbald and Robinson tap into and reveal the fissure in one of the longest-standing cultural anxieties: the innate, embodied, material security of masculinity. The gentleman is one of the founding forms of hegemonic masculinity; by revealing this subjectivity to be a performance one that can be successfully, even seamlessly, imitated by women threatens the foundation of patriarchal social order. As Judith/Jack Halberstam and Margery Garber point out, there is something especially threatening about undoing the ideal of masculinity, of decoupling it from the idea of innate male subjectivity or the material male body, because when women can perform what Halberstam calls "female masculinity," we "glimpse … how masculinity is constructed as masculinity" (1).[204] As Garber points out, the construction of men is tied into general or universalist ideals of "self-fashioning" (102): men aren't made by society; they supposed to make themselves.

Inchbald and Robinson achieve this very disruption in their writing, which allows us to reinterpret their gentlemen as performances of masculinity that point to masculinity more broadly as a construct. Often the male characters of women writers are seen as

effeminate; as Todd argues, “the mystery of manhood in much female fiction appears ultimately to be female,” but because the men are feminized (*Men by Women* 5).[205] However, modern gender theory allows us a better framework for understanding how these women writers successfully perform masculinity through the gentleman, and then reveal that performance to be their own without trapping our understanding of their male characters within the binary of effeminate/masculine. Again, this is where transvestism or drag allows for a structure of interpretation that is useful. I realize that these terms are not interchangeable; however, what these women writers do seems to exist somewhere in between. The transvestite can be read as a form of cross-dressing, which on some level does not defy heterosexual categories, and perhaps seeks a kind of gender play of passing. In contrast, drag has a much more overtly performative aspect to its gender performance. What these women writers are doing seems to exist in between these two forms of gender performance. Like the transvestite, they do not totally resist heterosexuality, even if they play with cross-dressing and even pass. However, like drag these displays of passing are ultimately revealed, rather dramatically, to be performances, which befuddle if they do not smash heterosexual or patriarchal channels of desire.[206]

Speaking of the male transvestite, Madeliene Kahn points out that “Transvestism temporarily suspends the rules of logical consistency. The transvestite is a woman *and* he is a man”; this figure is a figure of paradox: “He asserts that something both is and is not true at the same time” (Kahn 14, 17). In my use of narrative transvestism, I am clearly adapting Madeleine Kahn’s terminology from her exploration of male authors who adopt female first-person personas; like her, I am using transvestism not as a “diagnosis” of the author’s actual psyche, but as “a metaphor” for “literary structures”, which “furnishes

helpful analogies to the structures that govern an essentially literary masquerade, and it directs our attention to the dialectic of display and concealment exhibited by these eighteenth-century texts" (Kahn 11). I am using drag in a similar way. While Inchbald and Robinson are not themselves transvestite subjects, they so convincingly perform the gentleman through their plots and characters that they reveal the constructed nature of the gentleman's character; they draw on "one of the most important aspects of cross-dressing…the way in which it offers a challenge to easy notions of binarity, putting into question the categories of 'female' and 'male,' whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural" (Garber 10). Then, taking things one step further, they both pull the curtain back.

Inchbald and Robinson both use a model of drag or transvestism to interrogate binary gender and patriarchy, and they both explore gender and patriarchy as structures, not innate identities. One of the common threads in their texts is the need to undo or disrupt the structure of male homosocial desire, one of the major lynchpins of patriarchal order that the gentleman was deployed to enforce. Robinson and Inchbald seek access points into patriarchal power. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick famously established, patriarchy runs on triangulations of male homosocial desire, in which men consolidate "control over the means of production and reproduction of goods, persons, and meanings" through their bonds with other men (22). These bonds are structured through triangles, where women filter desire by serving as objects of exchange between men. As masculinity theorist Todd Reeser points out, these bonds protect male dominance because the triangle "keeps men from serving as objects of exchange, leaving them only in the role of exchangers" (62), but "these kinds of triangles do not always function in a neat or

stable way" (64). To illustrate, Reeser poses several questions: "What happens if women control the configuration of the triangle and co-opt it for feminist ends?" and "Can a transsexual, a cross-dressed man or woman, or someone of indeterminate sex hold a position in the triangle?" (65). This disruption is what we see in Inchbald and Robinson. Because of its potential connection to homosexual desire, male-male homosocial desire is always on some level unstable, despite its supposed cultural rigidity. In Robinson, the male rival of our hero turns out to be a woman, and in Inchbald, the structure of the plot interrogates this triangle in a way that appropriates the masculine privilege to the woman. Both authors upset the system by transforming men into objects of exchange.

The Gentleman in Drag: Tricky Triangles and Disruptive Courtship Narratives in Mary Robinson's *Walsingham*

Because of its twist ending, *Walsingham* has one of the strangest, most convoluted, and outrageous plots in eighteenth-century fiction. It begins as an epistolary tale and quickly transforms into a first-person narration of Walsingham's life from infancy to present. The hero of the novel, Walsingham, oozes romantic sensibility; he writes in his opening letter to Rosanna, "Cold and cheerless sorrow has been my companion; and the shaft which pierced my bosom was winged by a resistless hand—the hand of nature" (Robinson 43). Walsingham describes his virtuous mother's death, his adoption by his coquettish aunt, Lady Aubrey, and his eventual displacement in her affections and household by his cousin, Sir Sidney Aubrey. Once they both reach adulthood, Walsingham's rivalry with Sidney is intensified by Sidney's supposed

usurpation of Walsingham's supposed love interest, Isabella Hanbury. Fleeing their Welsh estate after an unsuccessful duel with Sidney, Walsingham embarks on a journey that takes him from Bath, to London, and to various shadowy roads and coaches around England. Along the way he falls into gambling, in and out of prison, in and out of money, and in and out of flirtation with several women (all of whom Sidney steals, except for the one Walsingham rapes, Amelia Woodford)--all the while maintaining his maniacally devoted love for Isabella. Eventually the machinations of the novel propel Walsingham back to Glenowen, the Aubrey estate, and Sidney is revealed to be a woman, and deeply in love with Walsingham. Sidney had been raised as a boy by her widowed mother Lady Sidney and the nefarious Mrs. Blagden to maintain control of the estate. However, all is made right: the homosocial rivalry is immediately transfigured into heterosexual love; Walsingham transfers his affections from Isabella to Sidney without even pausing for breath. After some appropriate time for Sidney to learn to be a woman again, and one or two more deaths and near fatal accidents, everyone who has survived the novel pairs off and lives happily ever after.

Feminist critics have recovered *Walsingham* with a gleeful delight driven by gender theory. The combination of the surprise of Sidney's sex coupled with Robinson's own scandalous life and authorship is irresistible to the modern scholar. Most critics have followed in the footsteps of Chris Cullen's formative article, "Mrs. Robinson and the Masquerade of Womanliness," which reads Sidney's gender performance through the lens of Judith Butler's gender theory.[207] Whether critics interpret Sidney as a transvestite figure or one of androgyny, they all eagerly agree that Robinson is playing with and challenging binary gender.[208] Critics debate whether the ending, Sidney's reveal and

reeducation, ultimately "bows to the injunction to reconsolidate naturalized identities" (Cullens 268), or whether it maintains that gender identity is the product of culture and education. My reading is definitely continuing the tradition that sees Robinson as challenging binary gender categories. I add that Robinson is particularly interested in the construction of the gentleman, and in using the masculinity of the gentleman to gain access to homosocial power structures. Sidney is *the* ideal gentleman of the text, and her ability to perform this version of masculinity without detection threatens binary gender categories.[209] It also gives her (and vicariously Robinson) access to the privileges and power struggles of male homosociality. Within this structure, Sidney's performativity reveals that gendered society runs on performance, that the performance on some level makes the man, and that through genteel masculine performance a woman can co-opt the machinations of patriarchal authority in ways that subordinate masculinity and men like Walsingham. This implies a critique of male-controlled narratives and plots, which finds "real" men wanting compared to the female-authored gentleman: Sidney.

The Threat of Passing for the Gentleman

Sidney's performance as a gentleman is both threatening and traditional. It is threatening because no one suspects her. Robinson's tale is not unusual because it presents a cross-dressing woman, but because Sidney passes so seamlessly as a man. Figures like Charlotte Charke, Henry Fielding's 1746 *The Female Husband* (based on Mary Hamilton), tales of female soldiers, even Robinson herself, who performed in breeches roles, would have been familiar (if not favorable) reference points for *Walsingham*'s readers.[210] However, as Wahrman and Julie Shaffer argue, it was believed

that "late-eighteenth-century heroines…simply could not pull it off" passing for men (Wahrman 27). When women, especially in fiction, tried to pass for men they came off as "effeminate" or "sexless men" (Shaffer 149), and the more they tried to repress or disguise "their femininity, the more irrepressibly it re-emerged" (Wahrman 27). A woman's femininity was, theoretically, supposed to shine through any masculine disguise. Therefore, as Shaffer argues, "If *Walsingham* followed the model taken by other later eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century depictions of cross-dressed women, the real sex of the male-masquerading Sidney would be apparent to Walsingham and, indeed, to everyone else" (149). In fact, Sidney's lack of detection is precisely what some contemporary readers of the novel found objectionable. A critic in *The Analytical Review* wrote, "The circumstances upon which the distress turns is … little probable, and frequently ludicrous" (501). Most pointedly, a review in *The Monthly Mirror* reads:

> That a proud and unprincipled woman should resolve to educate her daughter as a youth, to prevent the family title and estates from devolving to the next male heir, may be credited without much difficulty: —but that this daughter should arrive to maturity, and mingle in the dissipations of high-life, indiscriminately associating with men, and conducting herself in all respects like those of the present age, without detection, or even incurring the slightest degree of suspicion, is an event that shocks probability and staggers belief. (506)

It isn't the act of crossdressing, especially for gain, that is surprising to the critic; it is that nobody, especially the men Sidney associates with, never find her out. This is figured as an impossibility because other men would of course recognizes Sidney as a woman. Yet, no one in the novel actually does; Walsingham certainly does not, and because he is the

primary narrator, the reader has little chance to anticipate the plot twist. Even the more steady Colonel Aubrey, Mr. Optic, and Mr. Hanbury do not suspect Sidney's sex. Readers were not deterred by this supposed ridiculousness; *Walsingham* was a hit and a best seller. It was published by Longman on December 7, 1797 and went into a second edition by New Year's Day. In fact, the critic's disbelief seems like an example of how, according to Garber, female-male "transvestism is *normalized*, by interpreting it in the register of socio-economic necessity" (69). This is a way to reinscribe this performance within understood power structures, as something that achieves an end rather than creating an actual, passable identity or subject. The critic seems to be retrospectively reinscribing normalcy and gender boundaries, rather than proving their innate existence.

Within the text, Robinson universally affirms that Sidney passes for a man, and not just any kind of man, but the best kind: the gentleman. Even Sidney's harshest critic, Walsingham, affirms repeatedly that Sidney is not just manly, but is the ideal man: indeed, Sidney's real superiority is the cause of much of the strife between them. When they reunite as adults, Walsingham begrudgingly admits:

> Sir Sidney was exactly the being whom Isabella had described—handsome, polite, accomplished, engaging, and unaffected. He sung, he danced, he played on the mandolin, and spoke the Italian and French languages with the fluency of a native. Yet these were not his only acquirements; he fenced like a professor of the science; painted with the correctness of an artist; was expert at all manly exercises; a delightful poet; and a fascinating companion. (Robinson 129)

Sidney has the ideal combination of taste, cultivation, and physicality that defines the gentleman: "accomplished, engaging, and unaffected." She is "neither an effeminate nor

a socially deviant male in the way that those writing on fops and homosexuals suggest" (Shaffer 158). Not only can Sidney sing and dance, but she is classically and culturally educated, has traveled the continent (gaining that material yet ephemeral knowledge of the world), and excels in the gentlemanly, and highly classed art of fencing. (Interestingly, a majority of these skills are perfectly compatible with the accomplishments of an upper-class woman. However, rather than revealing Sidney's gender, Robinson seems to be indicating that the differences between men and women, and how society judges the skills or polish of the upper classes isn't all that different. Men and women are more similar than they are complementary).[211]

Sidney out-gentleman's Walsingham at every turn and on every level. Numerous critics have noted that Sidney is "the epitome of the perfect man" (Russo and Cousins 40).[212] She is generous and supportive whereas Walsingham is destructive and frantic. This is true of their relationships with men and women alike. For example, when Colonel Aubrey comes to Sir Sidney for a loan, Sidney gives her uncle the money (in defiance of Lady Aubrey's wishes). However, when Walsingham attempts to help the Colonel, he fails on every possible front. The Colonel defends Walsingham's honor in a duel with Lord Linborne; the Colonel feels intense guilt for the rest of the novel because he believes he killed Linborne. More devastatingly, Walsingham rapes and then refuses to marry Amelia Woodford, the Colonel's fiancée; and when the Colonel marries Amelia to save her honor, Walsingham ends up killing her. (It is one of those hyper-sentimental moments of optical violence: he enters a church; she sees him and dies of lovelorn, emotional distress). In fact, every time Walsingham attempts to help someone, he fails; he loses track of them (Julie de Beaumont, Mr. Randolph) or someone else has to step in

to pay the bills (i.e. when Mr. Optic pays the poor author's rent, or when Colonel Aubrey fights his duels). In contrast, like a gentleman, Sidney can duel masterfully, but chooses not to. When Walsingham challenges Sidney to a duel—quite literally over Isabella's body—Walsingham fires at Sidney and misses, while Sidney (in true gentlemanly fashion) fires into the air. Sidney is always amiable with Walsingham and even offers her cousin money, which Walsingham refuses. Walsingham is perpetually in the wrong place at the wrong time, and he never follows through on his plans. He *intends* to join Colonel Aubrey by enlisting in the army, but he gets sidetracked. He *intends* to rescue Isabella from Sir Sidney's seduction/clutches/abandonment at various points in the novel, but whenever the opportunity arises he falls limply away. For example, Walsingham explains that after "Sir Sidney's elopement with Lady Emily, had left [Isabella] entirely unprotected, and I had more than half resolved to revisit Glenowen, in hope of finding her; when pride condemned the meanness of the experiment" (Robinson 225). Walsingham's jealousy of Sidney is founded on a deep-rooted sense that Sidney is the better gentleman at every possible measure.

Of clear importance, Sidney is clearly the better gentleman in his relationship to women. Sidney explains, "Wherever I go, I make woman my companion; whatever I meditate, I consult a woman: in short, when I abandon the sex I cease to live; for existence is not worth preserving when woman is forgotten" (131). Whereas Sidney has been raised by women and sees "woman [as] a charming creature…a gentle associate where she has power to command," Walsingham is routinely misogynistic. He calls and treats Isabella as property throughout the novel. Most blatantly, when he kidnaps her, brings her to Lord Kencarth's house, and violently embraces her, she shouts for help:

“Oh, my lord [Kencarth]…rescue me from this monster!” to which Walsingham replies, “My Lord, I command your absence…this lady is my property” (395). Furthermore, while he claims to love her he routinely castigates her to her face, to the reader(s), and to others as the “vain, capricious, barbarous Isabella!” (284). A perfect gentleman would never speak of a woman he loves, or even a woman he dislikes, this way. Even his compliments are condescending; speaking of Lady Arabella, he proclaims that “the lovely Lady Arabella, who had hitherto *appeared* to be the most affected of high-bred triflers, was, in reality, a reasonable being” (423). How generous.

Sidney is both more honorable and more desirable than Walsingham, which makes him, yet again, more masculine and more of a gentleman. Women are attracted to Walsingham: Lady Emily Devlin flirts with him; Lady Amarantha invites him to spend the season at her hunting lodge; and Amelia and Arabella even claim to love him—but “few men [are] more lovable than Sidney” (Shaffer 156).[213] Sidney seduces Lady Emily away from Walsingham, “for she has never had such a lover as Sidney Aubrey” (163).[214] Isabella and Arabella side with Sidney over Walsingham. In fact, the “only [event] that decisively marks Walsingham himself as male” is his rape of Amelia (Setzer 318). This is his only consummated sexual encounter with a woman within the text. Sidney’s more potent desirability--his more appealing masculinity--is something Walsingham himself can’t deny. Thinking of Isabella, Walsingham bemoans, “She can not do otherwise than love him! thought I. He is too generous, too exquisitely worthy, not to impress the female heart with admiration bordering on idolatry!” (140). In Walsingham’s eyes, and therefore from the central perspective of the novel and readers, “Sidney is, indeed, [Walsingham’s]

superior" (Binhammer 229). Sidney is the irresistible, perfect gentleman, while Walsingham is a haphazard libertine and misogynist.

Importantly, however, Sidney's masculine appeal and perfection are presented as the product of female authorship. In Butlerian terms, Sidney is a gentleman because her mother "names" her a boy: "The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm" (Butler xvii). This is a moment of authorship; Lady Aubrey creates and authorizes Sidney's masculinity. She is also the one, as my epigraph illustrates, who insists that she seek the society of women. To the traditional tutor, Mr. Hanbury, Lady Aubrey insists, "by woman alone can man be rendered amiable." She actually repeats this phrase three times during their dialogue. The debate between Mr. Hanbury and Lady Aubrey clearly references traditional, masculine education. Lady Aubrey first mentions that a man needs women to be amiable when Mr. Hanbury suggests that Sir Sidney be taught to "resemble some of the ancients" (92). This is one of the cornerstones of the gentleman's education. When Lady Aubrey insists on a female influence for her child, Mr. Hanbury accuses her of supporting the nefarious education of Lord Chesterfield, but Lady Aubrey surprises him and possibly Robinson's readers by declaring, "The precepts of Chesterfield are generally either useless or criminal" (92). Chesterfield's influence involves a homosocial system that uses women, and Lady Aubrey rejects it, just as she does the homosocial classical education of the ancients. She aligns both as excluding the influence of women. Admittedly, Lady Aubrey is described as a coquette; a vain, faded beauty; and ambitious, but she also raises the best man in the novel. Walsingham, who is educated exclusively by men, and by no means by evil or ignorant ones (Sir Edward, Mr. Hanbury, Colonel Aubrey, and Mr. Optic), fails on all

fronts. The deliberate contrast aligns gender construction with authorship. Lady Aubrey constructs Sidney's masculinity, and she and other women define Sidney's virtuoso performance as the gentleman. Isabella also "authors" Sidney in a letter to Walsingham; already "half in love" (127) with Sidney, she writes:

> Sir Sidney is an angel! Never did nature form so wonderful a creature! How shall I describe him? What pen can do justice to the model which mocks the powers of description? … –Oh Walsingham! I will not attempt to delineate them; they would mock the powers of a more experienced artist. Then, his manners are so fascinating, so polished, so animated! (128)

Isabella brings attention to her authorship, her role as the "artist," with all the proper modesty of the classic woman writer. But her description, and thus her authority, is reaffirmed by Walsingham himself: "Sir Sidney was exactly the being whom Isabella had described" (129).

Meanwhile, Walsingham's supposedly innate masculinity is guided by all the traditional modes of masculinity. He is taught to embrace reason, to sympathize with nature, and to seek truth and virtue, and while he espouses all of these ideals (especially in the card rooms and parlors of high society) he rarely manages to live by these values. Walsingham, who can't get anywhere on time or be useful to anyone really, is also a figure satirizing the gentleman author--for whatever his other deficiencies, he always manages to find a scrap of paper to scrawl out a piece of poetry. Yet here, too, Sidney surpasses him, for she is literally and metaphorically a better author and reader than Walsingham. Sidney writes a sonnet, so well that Walsingham assumes the lines are "merely a translation; they are not my cousin's composition…they bear evident traits of

that romantic tenderness which distinguished the Italian poets" (146). As Ellen Arnold argues, the genre of Sidney's sonnets speaks to a gentlemanly education, and "her poem convincingly acts the part of a poem written by a well-educated man" (Arnold, "Genre, Gender, and Cross-Dressing in Mary Robinson's *Walsingham*" 61). She can write like the gentlemen, which in part makes her a gentleman. Walsingham writes more poems, but these have their own kind of drag effect; many of the poems included in the novel were reprinted, or had already been printed in Robinson's collections of her poetry. Contemporary critics may have found the plot "perplexed" (*The Anti-Jacobin* 503) or even "disgusting" (*The Monthley Mirror* 506), but many of them praised the inset poetry as having "great delicacy and beauty" (*The Analytical Review* 500) and being "very superior to those with which novel-writers usually treat us" (*British Critic* 509). The value of Walsingham's poetry, then, is the product of Robinson's own literary reputation, which was inextricably wound up in her public identity as a woman. Robinson was known as "English Sappho," and she had gained a high reputation for her poetry before she embarked on writing novels. In fact, in many ways, she was more revered and more remembered for her poetry. Like Charlotte Smith, she was admired by and influenced the Romantics; Samuel Coleridge was a particular correspondent and admirer. So, Walsingham's authorship is celebrated, but it relies on the reputation and the awareness of the actual woman writer behind it.

Within the text, Walsingham's writing about and interpretation of events is repeatedly called into question, and revealed to be misogynistic and self-serving. Walsingham pathologically misinterprets everything and everyone around him. He misreads Isabella and Arabella's defections to Sidney as seductions. He misreads

Sidney's love for him. He mistakes Amelia for Isabella at the ball; in fact, he mistakes numerous women as Isabella at the ball. He does not qualify as a gentlemanly, sympathetic reader, despite his claims to sentiment and prophetic insight.[215] Just when the reader forgets they are in an epistolary tale, Walsingham brings attention to his own narration: "Rosanna, my pen trembles as I proceed; but you have commanded, and I will obey your wishes" (Robinson 119). This repeats the convention of the gentleman seeming to instruct and seek sympathy from female readers, and also reiterates the false language of gallantry and masculine subservience, because Walsingham never delivers on being a gentleman. He repeatedly rewrites women as blamable for their loss of virtue, which is also sometimes the figment of his own imagination. When he believes Isabella loves Sidney, he describes her "as the dupe of her own vanity" (163). He actually walks back his accusation that Sidney is a libertine, because "Sir Sidney's youth and inexperience were ill suited to the machinations of seduction; and I concluded that Isabella was more than half to blame, in yielding to his passion" (163). He also finds Amelia guilty of immodest curiosity. He gradually revises her rape in his narrative to ameliorate his guilt. First, he claims, "I could have loved her, had I not known Isabella" (269). After raping her, he laments, "I knew not how to meliorate her fate," which isn't true because just across a semicolon he acknowledges, "I ought to have married her" (296). Yet in the next breath he argues, "There was mercy in refusing" because their marriage would be followed "with all the hideous train of reproach, indifference, repentance, and disgust" (296). In the next paragraph he moves even further away from his guilt, claiming, "She was, in fact, the victim of her own fatal curiosity" (296). Even more despicably, when Mr. Optic urges him to marry Amelia, arguing that it is his duty

to restore her good name, Walsingham blames Amelia's rape on her lack of virtue: "The frailty which had rendered her my victim, made me suspect that she would scarcely fulfill, with honour, the duties of a wife" (300). He repeats the same argument he did with Sidney and Isabella. Men rewrite situations of women's sexual vulnerability to their own advantage, making women responsible for the protection of their own virtue, and absolving the male participants in the narrative of blame. Robinson (perhaps drawing on her own experience as a publically ridiculed fallen woman) uses Walsingham to dramatize the conventions of male authorship.

Infiltrating the Homosocial Triangle

Sidney's passing is threatening, because "Passing as a narrative assumes that there is a self that masquerades as another kind of self and does so successfully; at various moments, the successful pass may cohere into something akin to identity. At such a moment, the passer has *become*" (Halberstam 21). By successfully performing masculinity, Sidney is, on some level, actually a gentleman. She demonstrates that the gentleman's masculinity is a performance, and one that women can do as successfully and even better than men. This has unique ramifications for homosocial relationships within the text, because for most of the novel, Walsingham treats Sidney as his homosocial rival to almost hyperbolic proportions. Meanwhile, as Katherine Binhammer and Emily Allen point out, there is a simultaneous structure wherein, "As the true object of Sidney's affection, [Walsingham] is essentially traded from female hand to female hand" (Allen 88).[216] This creates provocative potentials for the text. Sidney's performance of masculinity is so authentic that it allows her (and therefore Robinson) to

infiltrate the structures of male homosocial desire and gain access to patriarchal power. This works on two levels: the traditional homosocial triangle (Male-Female-Male), and the inverted homosocial triangle (Female-Male-Female). In the traditional configuration, Sidney's drag allows Robinson to reveal the charged undercurrent of homosocial desire, its homoerotic anxieties, and how it is used to reinforce patriarchal courtship narratives. In the second, inverted letter, the novel's triangulation allows Robinson to place Walsingham in the objectified position. By configuring the biological man as an object of exchange, Robinson reveals the objectification of women to be just a superficial construct based on power, and not an actual state of their being.

The classic homosocial triangulation that appears to drive the plot of the novel is Walsingham and Sidney's rivalry over Isabella. Critics have not traditionally questioned Walsingham's love or attraction to Isabella, his childhood companion.[217] However, Walsingham's commitment to Isabella is entirely fueled by his rivalry and homoerotic attraction to Sidney. I say homoerotic because Sidney's masculinity--her performance as the gentleman--is so convincing that Walsingham commits to it, and the features that Walsingham finds attractive in Sidney are those of the gentleman: benevolence, attractiveness to women, charm, ease, lack of affectation, education, and so forth. Walsingham's attraction to Isabella follows all sorts of plots and mantras about complementarity. In their very physicality they are complements: "Isabella was one year younger than myself. I was tall, athletic, and almost as dark as an Egyptian: she was fair, beautiful, and gentle as the first breath of morning!" (Robinson 118). They seem destined to be together, and Walsingham insists that their affection is mutual until Sir Sidney intrudes. In fact, before Sidney, Walsingham claims all of the pure, yet romantic affection

of the young sentimental hero; his love for Isabella "was the idolatry of innocence; nothing sexual contaminated my bosom; for the beauty of her person only presented to my mind an epitome of her virtues!" (Robinson 119). The lack of erotics is especially striking when one contrasts this description with the sexual insults and inferences Walsingham heaps on Isabella after her supposed abandonment of him, and the kind of sexual fervor that infuses his rivalry with Sidney. Furthermore, Walsingham's desire for Isabella is always mediated by distance and obstacles. Looking back he recalls, "It was not till I was separated from Isabella [at University] that I knew how tenderly I loved her…fatally conscious, that she was the object of my enthusiastic idolatry" (Robinson 126). When Sidney seems to throw over Isabella for Lady Emily or Arabella, rather than seeking out the woman he claims to love beyond all reason and pride, Walsingham never acts. Many critics explain this as the revelation of patriarchal homosocial desire: Isabella only becomes truly desirable when Walsingham can use her as an object of exchange with another man. This is, to a certain extent, true.

However, Robinson does more than reveal this structure; she dramatizes the homoerotic anxieties and undercurrents created by such systems. Walsingham's rape of Amelia is commonly understood as a mediated form of homosocial sexual violence. Walsingham is using Amelia as a substitute for Isabella, whom he wants to hurt in order to exact revenge on Sidney. However, Amelia is also a more direct conduit for Sidney, which charges the rape with a homoerotic panic. Despite the fact that Walsingham is an unreliable narrator, critics place implicit faith in his supposed attraction to Isabella and, by extension, in his claim that Amelia is the uncanny double of Isabella. When he first describes Amelia in detail, Walsingham writes, on top of all her intellectual and moral

virtues, "[Miss Woodford] had yet a stronger claim to my interest my feelings; a claim, not more singular than dangerous! She resembled, fatally, strikingly resembled Isabella" (261). However, a closer look at Amelia's physical and intellectual description aligns her more closely with Sidney than with Isabella. All we know about Isabella's physical appearance is that she is the fair counterpart to Walsingham's darkness. However, Amelia and Sidney share a rather distinct feature: auburn hair. Right before he claims that Amelia fatally resembles Isabella, Walsingham notes: "To these attractions [of mind] Nature had given a person beautifully commanding! Tall, fair, finely formed, with light *auburn hair*, and eyes beaming with sensibility that bespoke the purest and most genteel affections" (261). When meeting Sidney as a child, Walsingham remembers, "He was indeed beautiful! His countenance was fresh and animated; his person well formed, and his eyes expressive of sense and benevolence… while the deep glow which mantled over his cheek was contrasted with a *profusion of dark auburn hair,* falling in natural ringlets" (Robinson 89, emphasis mine). In a novel with almost no specific physical descriptions, Amelia and Sidney's similar hair color is striking. However, Amelia shares other features with Sidney. She is tall, her manners too are "unaffected," and she has been "Polished by a foreign education" and "a correct judgment, joined to extreme delicacy of sentiment" (Robinson 261). In the carnivalesque confusion of the second masquerade scene, which precedes the rape, Walsingham actually has a heated exchange with Sidney before absconding with Amelia. He claims to be searching for Isabella, but what lights the fuse on his spark of desire is actually his dialogue with Sidney.

The similarity between Amelia and Sidney also allows us to reinterpret Walsingham's supposed attraction to Isabella. Like Sidney, Isabella has received a hybrid

education, one that includes softer feminine as well as masculine subjects. At her dying father's request, Isabella is taken out of a mechanistic finishing school, and placed in the care of Mr. Hanbury, the tutor. Her father wants Isabella to have a classical education, because "There can be no rational objection to such a mode of education, as long as a woman is gifted with those mental powers which place her on an equality with man" (117). Isabella's education actually aligns her with Sidney, and Walsingham's attraction to her "every day improved in graces, both of mind and person" is actually an echo of his desire for homosocial bonds (119). Isabella "was the counterpart of her brother—generous, candid, and enlightened" (126). She is also, from the beginning, a replacement for Sidney. When he and Mr. Hanbury bring her back to Glenowen, Walsingham declares, "From that moment I became attached to Isabella, as I had been before estranged from Sir Sidney Aubrey" (119). Thus, all of Walsingham's professed desires for women are actually coded desires for Sidney.

Again, all of these desires—even the homoeroticism—are in keeping with traditional formulations of masculine homosocial desire. Walsingham's relationships with women allow him to negotiate his attraction to Sidney without slipping into homosexuality, and they also structure desire as a channel of power existing between men. However, in her depiction of this intensely charged rivalry, Robinson reveals that what fuels Walsingham's commitment to Isabella, his hyperbolic insistence that they are meant to be, is actually a false and tyrannical narrative of patriarchal lineage. Walsingham does not spontaneously fall in love with Isabella; the idea of their union is suggested to him and crafted by Mr. Randolph and Mr. Hanbury. When Hanbury and Walsingham arrive to collect Isabella from her uncle, Mr. Randolph teasingly calls

Walsingham "Isabella's intended husband" (118). Mr. Hanbury even promises Mr. Randolph that "It will be the pride and pleasure of my life to render them worthy of each other" (119). Recall that Isabella and Walsingham are, or ideally would be, complementary. He is dark; she is fair. Supposedly he is masculine (rational and passionate) while she is feminine (sympathetic and nurturing). Their marriage is the machination of a patriarchal courtship plot, designed to reinforce the ideals of complementary gender, which is tied to financial gain and power. Mr. Randolph leaves his fortune to Walsingham and Isabella, promising Walsingham a larger portion if he marries Isabella. Walsingham's rhapsodizing about nature, and his love for Isabella, are all acting out this patriarchal script. Walsingham's frantic commitment to it is the righteous fury of patriarchy attempting to actualize its own systems of power.

Walsingham's sexual violence is self-serving violence enacted against a counternarrative, one where he is the object of exchange and not one of the agents. It is also a false narrative that does not reflect nature or reality. Isabella actually becomes the primary narrator of the counterplot; she reveals that the courtship plot is entirely of Walsingham's making and one of patriarchal construction. Kept silent throughout much of the novel, Isabella finally confronts Walsingham with his own delusion. In the face of one of his many rages about her unfaithfulness, Isabella exclaims, "Are you frantic…Will you never hear reason, and act like a thinking mortal?...I declare, that you, who ought to be the first to credit my assertion, are the only being upon earth that suspects me of dishonor" (415). She denies his claim to her and her affections: "In what instance have I merited resentment from you…I have ever loved you as a brother." Walsingham, seeking to regain narrative control, responds, "Would to God my affection had been of that cold

and tranquil nature which might suit a brother's bosom" (415). To which Isabella explains, "Then you deceived yourself…your virtues, your attachment charmed my mind, but never touched my heart. I have not deceived you, Walsingham. —I have never entertained a thought beyond the intercourse of friendship; and even at this moment, when I have no wish, no reason to dissemble, I frankly own that my heart is devoted to—" (415). Here Walsingham inserts his claims to a homosocial plot, interrupting Isabella's sentence with, "Sir Sidney Aubrey" (415). This undercuts Walsingham's whole narrative and reveals the tyrannical bias of his first-person narration. All along the reader has been hearing of Isabella's betrayal, theoretically being asked to trust in Walsingham's declarations of love for Isabella (which most critics have done), and Isabella reveals that it has all been a fantasy--a fabrication of his, and by extension, of Hanbury and Randolph. Isabella even reveals that Walsingham's desire for her isn't even really about her; she reveals the homosocial/homoerotic desire lurking beneath Walsingham's actions. When Walsingham violently seizes Isabella after the second masquerade, he blames her for Amelia's rape. He exclaims that it wasn't his fault, because he mistook Amelia for someone else. However, when Isabella asks whom Walsingham mistook Amelia for, "The question struck my brain with electricity. I was convulsed in every joint—she smiled insultingly. Love, rage, revenge, again assailed my soul. I snatched her to my heart—she shrieked" (394). This is the moment when Walsingham declares Isabella his property. However, what I find most striking about the scene is the fact that he does not name her in this moment. Instead he attempts to grab her and kiss her, asserting his heterosexuality and masculinity defiantly, but perhaps unconvincingly. If Amelia actually represents and looks like Sidney, then the person who sparked Walsingham's desire is not

Isabella but Sidney, whom Walsingham passionately asserts is a man and rival. Isabella thus calls out and reveals the superficial machinations of patriarchal courtship plots and how they fail to create the harmony between men and women they promise, because they fail to represent actual feminine desire. They cannot represent or even successfully construct women's desires, because they use women as objects in larger consolidations of property.

It is important to remember that Isabella has already played the part of a female author with respect to Sidney's masculinity. Therefore, her undoing of Walsingham's courtship plot is another indication of the power of female authorship. Through her, Robinson reveals her own authority to critique the tyranny of male courtship narratives, and their negative and misogynistic portrayal of women as either valuable, complementary property (wife material) or wasted, devalued property (fallen women).

While Walsingham fails to achieve the power he seeks through homosocial triangles, Sidney succeeds. Sidney uses the structure of patriarchal power to assert dominance over Walsingham as an object of exchange. Perhaps the triangle actually inscribes the power of patriarchy, but also reveals that a woman can perform the male role within that triangle. This is the effect of Sidney's gender reveal. We can now reread the plot as supporting female-driven homosocial triangles. However, counter to masculine triangulations of rivalry, these female-majority triangles function through solidarity. Instead of being a victim of vanity, Isabella is revealed to be a loyal friend who has protected and supported Sidney. Isabella has absorbed her genteel education too well to be an object of male homosocial exchange; rather than learning the socially constructed lessons of the "trivial claims of sexual rivalry," she has truly learned that

"she is capable of prouder, nobler acquirements! That she is born with reason, which should break through the trammels of custom, and assert its equal rights with those tyrants who would enervate her mind, and bend her lofty spirit to the yoke of ignorance and slavery'" (Robinson 117). The irony is that the education that was supposed to make her the perfect companion for Walsingham has made her alert to his deficiencies and unwilling to play the flattened role he selects for her.

Walsingham's rage, his passionate frustration, is presented as an outcry against tyranny, and by understanding the infiltrated homosocial structure of the novel, we can read this as Robinson's criticism of women's subordinate gender role. Sidney's superior performance of masculinity has put Walsingham in a subordinate and objectified position. For example, as a child Walsingham had been instructed:

> never to contradict Sir Sidney; never to interrupt him when speaking; never to call him cousin, or to refuse obeying whatever he should think proper to command, Sir Sidney was amiable and would have been the delight of my bosom, had nature been permitted to take place of compulsion; but the stern authority which enforced obedience, chilled the young buds of friendship and esteem, as the nipping frost withers the infant blossoms of the year, which a fostering sun might have nourished to perfection. (Robinson 111)

Walsingham is expected to perform the role of the woman in a binary system of gender. Women are expected to yield, to listen, to be submissive--and they are expected to love their gentleman rulers. Walsingham's defiance, his chaffing despite Sidney's benevolence and generosity, speaks to the oppression of women under even the enlightened rule of the gentleman. As Woodworth articulates, this is the soft tyranny of

the gentleman, which makes women complicit in their own oppression, while still consolidating male power and privilege.[218] Therefore, Walsingham's outcries against tyranny reveal the injustice of the very gender system his courtship narrative tries to enact. He isn't crying out against the gentleman's system of tyranny through homosocial exchange; he is crying out against being an object of exchange and the expectation that he should be submissive and grateful within this system.

Robinson has not undone triangulated power structures; instead, she has hijacked them to serve the desires of women. Critics have posited that Sidney's gender reveal creates a kind of "rapid rereading" of the text (Allen and Binhammer).[219] As Binhammer points out, in the first reading, which assumes Sidney is a biological man, the classic homosocial rivalry seems to inscribe natural gender binaries. However, Sidney's revelation and the successful performance of gentlemanly masculinity undoes this system, while still managing to take control of its power structures. Even though Walsingham waxes romantic about nature and mankind's naturalness and his status as a child of nature, his own nature is radically inconsistent; from the beginning we doubt his inscriptions of innateness, especially as they inscribe gender. To be clear, I am not arguing that Walsingham is effeminate, as some critics have done. He isn't denied power because he isn't properly masculine. Rather, he is out-manned by Sidney within his own system of gender privilege. Robinson reveals that this system functions on performance, not naturalness, and that the best performer of masculinity can run the machine. If Walsingham is feminized it is because of his position as an object, not because of a failure of innate masculinity. Nature does not create the system; the system creates nature.

Plot in Drag: The Erotic and Authorial Pleasure of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*

I will readdress with the implications of the ending of *Walsingham*—the various heterosexual unions—at the end of this chapter, which reads Robinson and Inchbald's endings together to reveal a larger trend of women authors' growing authority. For now, I will turn to the structural drag of Inchbald's plot. In *A Simple Story* Inchbald uses the plot of her novel to reveal that the woman writer holds the power of moral authority over this plot and her readers, and that she has the right to instruct readers with respect to masculinity. The two-part structure and seventeen-year leap in the plot between Part 1 and Part 2 is one of the most provocative features of Inchbald's 1791 novel. Critics have argued over whether this text is a carnivalesque subversion or a conservative reinforcement of patriarchy due to the juxtaposition of the story about the aggressively coquettish Miss Milner and the conservative Dorriforth with that of their passively obedient daughter, Matilda. However, pairing Miss Milner with Matilda puts limiting parameters around how we understand the structural possibilities of the text—parameters that are grounded in overly rigid assumptions about gender categories. A second look reveals that Inchbald has, in fact, dressed her plot in drag, hiding the subversive energy and pleasure of the coquette in the passionate young gentleman, Dorriforth's nephew. It is the witty, sentimental Rushbrook who is the reincarnation of Miss Milner. Thus, the narrative power of the vivacious coquette is not banished or even reformed, but is rather reincarnated into a gentleman. Or, perhaps more accurately, Inchbald reveals the ways plots create and construct desire and gender in ways that recoup the narrative power of

the coquette into the gentleman. I argue that Inchbald uses this gender reversal to interrogate late- eighteenth-century truisms about innate gender difference, with a keen awareness of the role plot plays in defining these standards through their structures of desire, erotics, and pleasure. One of the key structures of desire that Inchbald reinterprets is male homosociality. Triangles of masculine desire, as we know from *Walsingham*, often reinforce patriarchy, but if Rushbrook is actually the new Miss Milner then the channels of desire and power between him and Dorriforth question this traditionally male dynamic. What emerges instead of an exchange of Matilda as the woman/property, is a revelation about the ways patriarchal powers and masculine authorship have constructed the idealized sentimental heroine to reinforce their own control. Throughout, Inchbald brings overt attention to her role as the author and her right to construct these plots, to her own moral authority. In Inchbald, the woman writer emerges to usurp this control and renegotiate gender identity and relations.

Inchbald's novel has proven a rich and critically challenging text. It, like almost all of the other texts included in this dissertation, has left critics divided. In the space of a page turn between Volumes 2 and 3, seventeen years have passed and Miss Milner, "the beloved Miss Milner," is "no longer beautiful—no longer beloved—no longer…virtuous" (Inchbald 194). Part 1 (Volumes 1 and 2) trace what appears to be a standard domestic novel plot between Dorriforth the Catholic priest and his beautiful, coquettish ward, Miss Milner. Miss Milner develops an illicit passion for her guardian, which is reformed into a viable one when Dorriforth unexpectedly inherits the title of Lord Elmwood and is released from his vows. After they admit their mutual passion, misunderstandings and power plays ensue, which almost divide the lovers, but which are ultimately conquered,

and Miss Milner and Lord Elmwood are married and thrown into wedded bliss at the end of Vol. 2. In the gap that occurs between Volume 2 and 3, though, we discover that Lord and Lady Elmwood were happy and had a daughter, but while Elmwood was away and uncommunicative for three years in the West Indies, Lady Elmwood had an affair with her former rakish suitor, and she is now dying in banishment with her daughter, whom Elmwood, in a spirit of tyrannical revenge, banished along with her mother. He has since imposed a law for his friends and dependents that no one may speak his wife or his daughter's names in his presence. Lady Elmwood, dying, bequests their daughter back to her former guardian, and Part 3 of the novel traces Matilda's precarious position of hiding from her father in his own house, and their eventual reconciliation at the end of the novel.

Critics are nearly as divided as the Elmwoods in trying to make sense of this. Terry Castle's dynamic reading of it in *Masquerade and Civilization* has set the tone for much of the current scholarly engagement with the text. She sees the novel as unapologetically feminist and subversive: "Each half of the novel is structured as a chain of violations. The pattern of rebellion is linked to the struggle for power between men and women: the law is masculine, the will that opposes feminine" (294).[220] Many critics interpret the second part of the text as less transgressive than Castle, but they have maintained the gendered opposition of the text. Fundamentally, almost all critics agree that the novel is centrally concerned with gender, with the relationships between the sexes.[221] They agree that we are meant to see Matilda as her mother's literary inheritor, and that the whole potential of the novel hinges upon the implications of this pairing.[222] However, critics like Jane Spencer, J.M.S. Tompkins, Patricia Meyers Spacks and others

(almost everyone except for Castle) find the more submissive Matilda and the second part of the novel thoroughly dissatisfying, because they see it as a "kind of atonement on Inchbald's part for the boldness of the first" part and Miss Milner (Spencer xx).[223]

The text seems to invite this mother/daughter pairing. As Castle writes, "The underlying narrative structure, or what one might call its symbolic plot, is almost identical to that of the first half" (323). In part one we have a young, beautiful woman who has lost a beloved parent and is left unprotected in the world (Miss Milner). She is bequeathed to a guardian, who becomes a surrogate mentor/father figure, and their relationship pitfalls drive the action of Volumes 1 and 2. In part two, we encounter yet another young, beautiful woman who has lost a beloved parent and is left unprotected in the world (Matilda). She, too is bequeathed to a guardian, in fact the very same guardian, who is her father. Their relationship and its gaps and problems drive the action of Volumes 3 and 4.[224] All of this (not to mention the alliteration of mother's and daughter's names) seems to push Matilda into "her mother's place, in the reader's mind as well as in the narrator's, with remarkable celerity" (Castle 322). This critical perspective is supported at points by the other characters. Miss Woodly imagines "Matilda as [Lady Elmwood] risen from the grave in her former youth, health, and exquisite beauty" (Inchbald 221). When Lord Elmwood accidently encounters his daughter—who faints like the good sentimental heroine that she is—her "name [does] not however come to his recollection—nor any name but this—'Miss Milner—Dear Miss Milner'" (274).

However, the pairing of Matilda and Miss Milner is a narrative trap, one that the text cleverly sets up but also asks us to resist. First, *A Simple Story* is a novel in which the characters consistently misread each other; their interpretations do not offer a reliable

guide to the reader. Miss Woodly and Dorriforth both misread Miss Milner's secret and forbidden passion for Dorriforth as a reserved passion for a rakish suitor, Lord Frederick. Miss Woodly also interprets Miss Milner's blushes and confusion as a sign that she is in love with Lord Frederick, which Miss Milner scoffs at: "Do you suppose I love Lord Frederick?...Do you suppose I *can* love him?" (71-2). She then dramatically confesses to Miss Woodly the fact that the readers have guessed, but that the virtuous spinster and dutiful guardian have both missed, that Miss Milner is in love with Dorriforth. These misreadings from two of the supposedly most rational and virtuous characters—the two most immune to the influences of the fashionable world, without the snobbery or condescension of Sandford or Mrs. Horton—act as a warning. The signs that appear obvious—in this case, Miss Milner's blushes—are not necessarily what readers imagine.

By extension, the novel resists these surface readings of its characters' interiorities. In fact, the text explicitly asks us to question the resemblance between Miss Milner and her daughter. While Matilda examines her father's portrait, Inchbald writes:

> In the features of her father [Matilda] was proud to discern the exact moulds in which her own appeared to have been modeled; yet, Matilda's person, shape, and complection[sic] were so extremely like her mother's that at the first glance she appeared to have a still greater resemblance of her, than of her father—but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's (220).

The text aligns Matilda more with her father than with her mother, and positions a physical resemblance to her mother as a cursory "first glance" that fails to identify the more important aspects of her character. Inchbald challenges our desire for a return of Miss Milner; we as readers desire her character and feel her narrative absence as a

vacuum. In seeking to fill this void we mistakenly look for embodied resemblance, i.e. gendered resemblance. In approaching the text this way, critics have inadvertently repeated the very gender structures they are seeking to critique: binary structures of gender and identity. While analyzing the problems and constructed nature of binary gender, we have inadvertently repeated and abided by these strict structures.

Critics do have the right instincts about the "important patterns of duplication" between the two major parts of *A Simple Story* (Spacks 196).[225] But Matilda possesses "too much of the manly resentment of her father" to be her mother reborn (Inchbald 259). Instead, I would like to turn attention to perhaps the most ignored character of the novel: Rushbrook. It is Rushbrook's childhood banishment that first reveals Elmwood's tyrannical streak and foreshadows both Miss Milner and Matilda's banishments. (Rushbrook's mother, Elmwood's sister, married without her brother's consent, and when she dies, Elmwood maintains the son, but refuses to see him). Few critics discuss Rushbrook as a character, beyond noting that he falls in love with Matilda in Part 2. In this light, Rushbrook and his courtship of Matilda are considered "almost an afterthought" (Haggerty 669). Critics who do discuss him, like Catherine Craft-Fairchild, George Haggerty, Catherine Breashears and John Morillo, have read him as "juvenile, helpless, and ultimately, if implicitly, impotent" (Morillo 219).[226] He is also generally considered less domineering, virile, and masculine than Elmwood.

In fact, it is his "softer sentiments," this supposed effeminacy, that simultaneously align Rushbrook with Miss Milner's character and with the gentleman. Rushbrook and Miss Milner are remarkably similar in physicality, demeanor, their treatment by other characters, and in the structure of the plots. They are criticized and aligned for the same

strengths and failings. Miss Milner is all “sprightly vivacity…natural gaiety” (13); she is “beautiful beyond description” (50). Likewise Rushbrook is an “extremely handsome young man” and “a perfect man of fashion” like his benefactress (230). Like Miss Milner, he also has “an elegance and persuasion in his manner almost irresistible” (230). Like Miss Milner, he has a “youthful, warm, generous, grateful but unthinking mind” (241). Beyond temperament and attractiveness, both Rushbrook and his benefactress have a tendency towards performative behaviors. Both of them are flawed: they bend the truth or lie to protect the secrets of their hearts. Miss Milner lies about loving Lord Frederick—convincing her whole audience of her feelings—in order to protect Dorriforth from dueling with Lord Frederick. She also plays the haughty mistress in order to test Dorriforth’s love. Similarly, Rushbrook, conceals and obfuscates with Elmwood in order to protect others. Elmwood turns up unexpectedly when Rushbrook and Miss Woodly are talking about Matilda, and Rushbrook, “with the most natural and happy laugh that was ever affected,” covers for them both, protecting both Miss Woodly, Matilda, and himself from Lord Elmwood’s wrath (234). Because of such behaviors other characters, especially Sandford, the Jesuit, see them as feckless, frivolous, and fickle. Even Miss Woodly rewrites the scene with Rushbrook to his disadvantage: “She saw in this little incident the art of dissimulation, cunning, and duplicity in its more glaring shape; and detested the method by which they had each escaped” (234). Yet, despite their foibles both of them are saved from division with Lord Elmwood by Sandford’s *deus ex machina* intervention. Within their respective parts, neither of them are punished for their performance; rather their performances serve to create plot, which leads to resolutions (of sorts) and fulfillments of desires.

The performative behaviors of Miss Milner and Rushbrook are features of authorship, and the somewhat ambiguous blending of performance and virtue in both Miss Milner and Rushbrook echo the gentleman's authorial performance. The ability to perform in order to regulate and control an audience is precisely what the gentleman does when he acts as an author. He presents it as moral authority and neutrality. However, Miss Milner's and Rushbrook's performances—even when undertaken to protect others—are socially coded as nefarious and illicit. Here we find the intersection between the gentleman's performance and the sharp-eyed monitoring of women, especially women writers. Inchbald blurs the line between gender and authorship.

To compound this, the hasty critical portraits of Rushbrook overlook how all of the features that scholars read as effeminate are actually crucial aspects of the gentleman's character. As I have demonstrated, the gentleman is supposed to be considerate, feeling, and to readily engage his sympathy on behalf of others. Inchbald underscores the fact that within traditional courtship plots, these are the very same features of the reformed coquette: Miss Milner is sympathetic, giving money and selling her own jewels to help Mrs. Hillgrave, and intervening for little Rushbrook. Her blushes are a sign of her deep feeling and a will to govern her illicit love for Dorriforth. She even thinks of Sandford, her nemesis, instantly getting medicine for his headache. Coquettes have an element of the gentleman author in them (Chapter One), which is why they are both desirable and threatening. Rushbrook inherits these virtues. He struggles to help Matilda and to reform the harshness of his guardian. By aligning Miss Milner and Rushbrook, Inchbald accomplishes three ends. First, it allows us to revise the courtship plot and the figure of the supposedly reformed coquette; if Rushbrook is the second Miss

Milner, then the coquette is not reformed into the sentimental heroine, but reincarnated as the young gentleman. Second, it allows us to reinterpret the seemingly simplistic homosocial bond between Rushbrook and Elmwood, and interrogate Elmwood's fraught, victimizing masculinity as the dominant or ideal masculinity. Third, aligning Rushbrook with Miss Milner allows us to read Matilda's extreme virtue and resemblance to Dorriforth, not as the punishment of female vivacity and narrative desire, but as the fictional gendered construction used to enforce patriarchal tyranny, which the figure of the female author seeks to reclaim for herself. Ultimately, by constructing her most refined gentleman (Rushbrook) to have so much in common with a vivacious coquette, Inchbald creates a model of masculinity that captures the appeal of the gentleman and maintains his markers of masculinity, but evacuates his performance of the literary tyranny of the patriarchal gentleman. She brings an end to the classic gentleman's literary tyranny and marks his moral authority as the responsibility of the woman author.

To be clear, while Rushbrook and Miss Milner share many characteristics, I do not contend that Rushbrook is a "feminized hero—a hero who shifted from his main sphere of action from public to private life" (Wikborg 12). His features are decidedly and deliberately aligned with those of the gentleman. As with Sidney, Rushbrook's ability to charm and please, to feel sympathy, are all properly, rather than aberrantly masculine. In fact, he is a very accomplished gentleman: "He had made an unusual progress in his studies, had completed the tour of Italy and Germany, and returned home with the air and address of a perfect man of fashion—there was, beside, an elegance and persuasion in his manner almost irresistible" (Inchbald 230). Nor is Miss Milner a masculine woman. Instead, Inchbald creates a kind of gender transformation through her plot and structure.

The gentleman is a construct, and Inchbald takes over his authorial powers through her plot. What makes Rushbrook a drag version of Miss Milner is not his body or his genitalia (metaphorical or otherwise); it is his character's plot, the ways they are both situated within plots that create desire, and how they both construct plots to counter patriarchal tyranny. As Spacks argues, Inchbald's plot "explores negative consequences of energy in male and female embodiments" (190). However, Spacks aligns Miss Milner and Matilda and argues, "*A Simple Story*, which also treats energy as a problematic quality, organizes its plot toward reconciliation but demonstrates, as few of the decade's other novels do, the costs of harmonizing rationality and emotion, 'masculine' power and 'feminine' sympathy" (195).[227] As Craft-Fairchild argues, "masquerade [is] the creation of an image or spectacle for the benefit of a spectator" (7). It represents a "distance or proximity between the representation and the self beneath" (7). (Again, the ambiguous but real distance between the performance and the author is a key aspect of the gentleman's authorial power). Rather than just looking at the mask of an actual masquerader, my argument dwells on the performative features of plot, how plot creates the image or spectacle, while the reader functions as spectator. Plot and gender are structures. Specifically, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the gentleman is a construct, a structure vulnerable to occupation, and Inchbald is using one structure—her plot—to reveal the constructedness of the other—the gentleman. In doing so she undoes the purportedly innate aspects of gender for both masculinity and femininity.

The End of the Gentleman's Literary Tyranny

The recognition of Miss Milner and Rushbrook's pairing brings a more focused criticism to the character and tyranny of Dorriforth/Elmwood. In Part 1, Dorriforth/Elmwood feels like the gentleman in all his glory. He is handsome, well-educated, but not musty: "He refused to shelter himself from the temptations of the layman by the walls of a cloister, but sought for, and found that shelter in the centre of London, where he dwelt, in his own prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance" (Inchbald 3). He, quite literally, practices what he preaches: "every virtue which it was his vocation to preach, it was his care to practise" (3). Like Formator/Alanthus, he is tasked with reforming a coquette from a position of supposed neutrality (priesthood). Similarly, like Glanville, he also seeks to protect a young woman from social ruin. Like D'elmont, he is fundamentally passionate, capable of sparking illicit desire (which is ultimately made safe through marriage), and incredibly desirable; he fights two duels and Miss Milner claims, "I love him with all the passion of a mistress, and with all the tenderness of a wife" (72). However, in Part 2, "Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compassionate, the feeling, the just Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injustice" (194-5). Yet, Inchbald has been careful to show in the first part of the novel that this transformation is not actually out of character for Elmwood:

> Although Dorriforth was that good man that has been described, there was in his nature shades of evil—there was an obstinacy; such as he himself, and his friends termed firmness of mind; but had not religion and some opposite virtues weighed

> heavy in the balance, it would frequently have degenerated into implacable stubbornness. (34)

His rigidity with his sister—Rushbrook's mother—extends to her orphaned son, whom he supports out of duty but without "one trace of compassion for his helpless nephew" (26). One of the most striking aspects of the description of Dorriforth's "obstinacy" is how it is renamed "by he himself, and his friends" as "firmness of mind." This relabeling is clearly gendered. Gentlemen are not vengeful or tyrannical: they are firm of mind, resolute, and so on. This indicates one of the major themes of Inchbald's novel, which is the ways gender inflects description. Miss Milner and Rushbrook share many of the same characteristics, but the naming of these features is influenced by gender, a blind Inchbald undoes with her plot.

Rushbrook and Dorriforth/Elmwood are both gentlemen; however, the drag or cross dressing of the Rushbrook/Elmwood plot, the way it repeats the same narrative structure but with two male characters, is used to critique Dorriforth/Elmwood's role as patriarchal gentleman. Rushbrook has all the markers of the gentleman, but he is symbolically and structurally connected to Miss Milner; whereas Dorriforth/Elmwood is the gentleman classic—of sorts—the gentleman as he has been constructed to serve and reinforce patriarchal power structures. His neutrality is false—a cover for his actual desires for Miss Milner and then more overtly for revenge. Miss Milner and Rushbrook are the only two characters who directly defy Dorriforth/Elmwood's tyranny by confronting him with those he has banished, which is a repeated structuring of scenes and narrative, which is not as fundamentally altered by the gender switch as one would first assume. Miss Milner brings young Rushbrook back into his uncle's life. Meanwhile,

Rushbrook is the only character who speaks about Matilda and the unjust treatment she receives from her father. Interestingly, he first mentions Matilda through her mother to Lord Elmwood: "If I feel gratitude towards you my lord…I must also feel it towards her, who first introduced me to your protection" (290). In his passionate, but necessarily hidden love for Matilda and his dependence on her decision (ambiguous though it may be), Rushbrook repeats Miss Milner's position with Lord Elmwood. In fact, I suggest that Inchbald endorses this less patriarchal and tyrannical man as an alternative to the harsh Lord Elmwood. What brings out the best in men is not the enforcement of patriarchal tyranny, but the occupation and revelation of the appeal and the unfair position of the rebellious coquette. Rushbrook has the characteristics of the gentleman, minus the patriarchal pride, self-interest, and power--not because he is effeminate, but because he occupies a distinctive position within a plot and power structure. In doing so, he reveals the moral and positive features of the gentleman to be just, and available to women. At a minimum, Inchbald exposes "masculine" authority as an arbitrary label that should not exclude women. She also demonstrates that female attractions are not necessarily less attractive when they are inhabited by the gentleman.[228]

Re-forming the Reformed Coquette Plot

Reading the plot of *A Simple Story* as a plot in drag allows us to disrupt the habit of reading Miss Milner as a punished, reformed coquette. The deliberately divided structure of the novel invites us to resist a traditional linear reading of the plot. Most critics have noted (with perhaps a bit of frustration) the strangeness of "the novel's signature feature"—the two-part structure (Morillo 214). Critics have attempted to bridge

this gap by connecting Miss Milner with her daughter, or in some more recent cases by centering their analysis on Dorriforth/Elmwood.[229] However, I am inclined to agree with Parker that, "Each of the two parts of *A Simple Story* is fairly unified in itself. Put together, however, they violate our notions of textual closure" (256). Inchbald's individual parts seem to move toward closure, but the overall structure resists closure; it resists a linear, straight-through line of interpretation. Catherine Craft-Fairchild argues that this represents the novel's commitment to parting and separation: "The bulk of the text is about necessary separation, and the movement of the novel is toward breaking apart" (102-103). I would like to shift this a bit: perhaps, rather than being focused on separating, the novel is invested in narrative resistance. Inchbald plays upon and foils readers' desire for traditional courtship and sentimental plots, spoiling and discombobulating the very structures that readers expect and that women writers used to establish their authorship. And she does it with deliberate and visible control. The leap across 17 years is the drop of an authorial guillotine.

In Part 1, Inchbald interrogates the patriarchal structures and desires of a popular version of the courtship plot: the reforming of a coquette. As explored in Chapter 1, the coquette represents a threat to the gentleman author's narrative control. (In a different way, so does the female quixote, as demonstrated in Chapter 3). Along these lines, Dorriforth, the gentleman, is supposed to regulate Miss Milner's coquetry, and Volumes 1 and 2 plot out a battle of wills, with Miss Milner sometimes yielding to the influence of her guardian, that is, until he becomes her lover. Sounding like a hybrid of Amoranda and Arabella, Miss Milner declares to Miss Woodly that she will test her lover: "As my guardian, I certainly did obey him; and I could obey him as a husband; but as a lover, I

will not…for if he will not submit to be my lover, I will not submit to be his wife" (154). Throughout, Miss Milner plots. She plots to conceal her feelings for Dorriforth—lying about her love for Lord Frederick and then denying it—but it is after she attains Elmwood's affections that she attempts takes full control of the narrative, to wrest control from her guardian/lover. Critics see the second part of *A Simple Story* as the conservative punishment of Miss Milner's feminine power play, and the socially acceptable toll for her coquettish flaws. It also, at least initially, appears to be a punishment for her plotting, for her desire for narrative control (a metaphor for authorship). In this light, the sentimental and passive Matilda allows her life to be plotted for her, abiding by rules and being swept hither and yon by the forces—the male forces—around her. However, if Miss Milner isn't reformed into a submissive Matilda, if she lives on as the charming Rushbrook, then this changes the moral tone of the novel's trajectory, because those vivacious characteristics are not eradicated from the text; instead, they are validated. If we step outside of linear progression, we can read Rushbrook's features back onto Miss Milner and legitimately argue that Inchbald isn't identifying Miss Milner's "flaws" as feminine failings in need of righteous regulation, but rather, more human features that resist gender categorization. She presents an awareness that society may justify its restrictions based on gender, but this is a false justification. Meanwhile, the authority of the gentleman to author women is subverted. If the coquette "needs reforming, but her lover-mentor's efforts to teach her fail" (Spencer, *Rise of the Woman Novelist* 158) then his gentlemanly power and the legitimacy of his authorship are called into question.

Interrogating Homosociality: Rushbrook vs. Elmwood

Inchbald reveals that desire for the gentleman and the structures of patriarchal control are created through plot, but she also points out the structural rather than the innate forces that support this system. In an adjacent fashion to Robinson, she upsets a traditional homosocial relationship between Rushbrook and Elmwood and infuses it with an eroticism that mirrors Elmwood's relationship with Miss Milner. The Miss Milner/Rushbrook drag may seem like a conservative gesture: the coquette's feminine transgressions are made acceptable when they are performed by a man. However, I think Inchbald resists this by creating mirrored erotic scenes, which challenge gender's relationship to narrative pleasure. There are several mirrored scenes between Miss Milner/Dorriforth and Rushbrook/Elmwood, mostly revolving around the guardian's desire for one of his charges to marry a partner of his choice and their refusal to do so based on romantic desires that they must keep secret from him. The reconciliation scenes also bear a striking resemblance to one another, but for the sake of time, I will focus my attention on the former. Rushbrook and Elmwood's interactions mirror Miss Milner and Dorriforth's. Both Miss Milner and Rushbrook are restrained by Dorriforth/Elmwood's own proclamations from revealing their true desires to him: Miss Milner is prohibited from expressing her desire for him because of his priesthood; Rushbrook by Elmwood's iron mandate against mentioning Matilda's name in his presence; and both from their dependent positions as his ward or heir. Yet in these repeated scenes (both are put to the test more than once), Miss Milner and Rushbrook tread the careful line of respectful but

passionate defiance. Miss Milner responds to her guardian stating, "No…my heart is not given away," and asks not to be compelled to answer more clearly, claims a preference for living single, and refuses to say more (25). The sexual tones of the scene are clear. Dorriforth pushes her:

> Unless your heart is already given away, Miss Milner, what can make you speak with such a degree of certainty?...He thought of Lord Frederick while he said this, and he fixed his eyes upon her as if he wished to penetrate her sentiments, and yet trembled for what he might find there. (25)

This interrogation, the patriarchal assumption that if her heart is not engaged, then Dorriforth, as her guardian, should be able to choose for her, is a literary convention all its own. However, Dorriforth's desire to penetrate Miss Milner's motives gives a clear erotic thrust to the gentleman's prerogative as the moral reader and critic. His trembling and fear also reveal his own desires and sexual competition with Lord Frederick, which explodes into proprietary violence when the lordling seizes Miss Milner's hand and begins to "devour it with kisses…Dorriforth with an instantaneous impulse, rushed forward, and struck him a blow in the face" (61). These interrogations of Miss Milner's heart are erotically charged, indicating the mutual passion of the characters and the charged desire and sense of possessive ownership lurking beneath Dorriforth's gentlemanly guardianship.

However, as with Walsingham and Sidney, when this same structure is put in drag, the erotics between Rushbrook and Elmwood take on a kind of rivalry and violence. In part two, Rushbrook replies to similar probing in a strikingly similar fashion. Dorriforth interrogates him using the same script, usually reserved for heroines: "Lord

Elmwood proposed a wife to him; and in a way so assured of his acquiescence" that Rushbrook is forced to reveal "his embarrassment." In his reply, Dorriforth asks him, "You have no engagements, I suppose?" (251, 252) Rushbrook prevaricates, "I have only to say, my lord…that although my heart may be totally disengaged, I may yet be disinclined to the prospect of marriage" (253). In both cases Dorriforth/Elmwood tries, rather heatedly, to compel a younger person to yield to his commands by invoking his authority as guardian and friend. With Rushbrook, he utters "rational and seeming conciliating" speeches in a "threatening manner" with "menaces" and "severity" upon his countenance (253). Yet both refuse, despite their profuse blushes and deeply affected emotions, thus presenting similarly defiant responses to his authority. Morillo has noted the dialogue between Rushbrook and Elmwood is similarly "archly sexualized" (219). Morillo sees this as Elmwood emasculating Rushbrook, but I read this as a narrative link between Rushbrook and Miss Milner (219).

The erotic link between these two narratives is most blatant in the two reconciliation scenes. Both Miss Milner and Rushbrook are threatened with Elmwood's banishment. In Miss Milner's case it is Elmwood's intended self-imposed banishment from her, a decision he reaches after she defies him by attending the masquerade and allowing Lord Frederick into her company again. In Rushbrook's case, Elmwood banishes his nephew for breaking his law and mentioning Matilda's name to him. In both cases, at the moment of parting and crisis, Sandford intervenes as a *deus ex machina*. The first scene is filtered through the language of marriage vows. In the first, Sandford commands Elmwood, "My Lord, take this woman's marriage vows; you can ask no fairer promises of her reform" (191). In the second, Sandford commands, "take this young man

from the depth of despair in which I see he is sunk, and say you pardon him" (292). The similarity of the language and of Sandford's commands casts the second scene in the same light and tone as the heterosexual union of the first. Even though Rushbrook and Elmwood are both men, rather than reading as homosocial exchange, the plot structures this as a heterosexual union. Inchbald brings attention to her workings as the author. In both cases, Sandford—the most critical and conservative character in the text—radically shifts his attitudes towards Miss Milner and Rushbrook. The abruptness of this shift in character perception signals Inchbald's deliberate display of authorial power. She is the *deus* and the plot is the *machina*, which she can deploy to reveal the very workings the society and narrative.

The scenes with Rushbrook undo and interrogate male homosociality and its reinforcement of patriarchal structures. Critics like Breashears and Craft-Fairchild have read Rushbrook and Elmwood's relationship as one of several homosocial bonds that preserve power for men through their exchange of women. According to Breashears, "Reasserting [Dorriforth's] masculinity can be done only through interaction with another man in a scene that reverses his earlier humiliation" (466). Dorriforth/Elmwood's homosocial competition with Lord Frederick (Miss Milner's suitor and Lady Elmwood's illicit lover) structures the erotics and power struggles of the first half of the novel and spurs the fissure of the second. Elmwood only reconciles with Matilda when she is kidnapped by the brutish Lord Margrave.

It is this repetition of narrative that I think resists seeing Rushbrook and Elmwood as reinforcing more traditional homosocial power structures (à la Sedgwick), and it is also the erotic recreation of the scenes that makes the drag of her plot so provocative.

According to this structure, Rushbrook's courtship and defense of Matilda establishes his homosocial power struggle with Elmwood. In this light, Rushbrook's desire for Matilda is not "a particular affective state or emotion" but an "affective or social force, the glue that maintains male privilege" (Sedgwick 2). By marrying her he maintains his status as heir, even after the father and daughter reconcile, thus maintaining the patriarchal system of power where women become vehicles for property exchange. But given Rushbrook's allegiance to Miss Milner, we must question the force and power of this homoerotic charge; yes, it recreates a heterosexual dynamic but it does not reinforce a traditionally patriarchal bond. If, as Sedgwick argues, "the shapes of sexuality, and what *counts* as sexuality, both depend on and affect historical power relationships" (Sedgwick 2), then by presenting a homoerotic scene that is actually the reimagining of a heterosexual power struggle between the gentleman and the coquette, Inchbald reveals the constructedness of this system. Inchbald challenges the homosocial monopoly on "the apportionment of forms of power that are not obviously sexual…control over the means of production and reproduction of goods, persons, and meanings" (Sedgwick 22). Furthermore, she is strongly aware of the roles literature, novels, and plots have had in constructing and reinforcing these systems.

The rivalry of Rushbrook and Elmwood reveals the competition between women authors and the gentleman. Rushbrook's masculinity is not successful because he dominates Elmwood, or sways Matilda's desires; this is not how he gains power or authority. Instead, he is successful because he reveals Inchbald's right to construct and critique masculinity. He is the ideal gentleman precisely because he does not force the female characters to yield to him nor does he engage men to reinforce the patriarchal

property systems of late-eighteenth-century society. As the reincarnated Miss Milner, Rushbrook is fundamentally the gentleman evacuated of his patriarchal strings and investments. Meanwhile, Dorriforth/Elmwood is the gentleman with all of his patriarchal substance, hidden behind the now established veneer of disinterest and virtue. Rushbrook's challenge to Elmwood represents a competition for authorial control, and Rushbrook, in the face of Elmwood's tyranny, is clearly in the moral right of the novel, and Rushbrook is the only one who braves his guardian's wrath to correct him. Since Rushbrook is in his own way the heir of Miss Milner, his challenge is also hers. It is both the literal repetition of her advocacy of young Rushbrook himself, and also the challenge of the woman writer to the gentleman's authorial and cultural power on his own terrain, within the form of homosocial exchange.

Matilda: Critiquing Fictional Gender Categories and the Gentleman's Literary Tyranny

I will deal with the deliberately ambiguous ending of *A Simple Story* in the final section of this chapter. However, before moving on to my analysis of *Walsingham* I would like to deal with Matilda, Inchbald's hyperbolically sentimental and passive heroine. Matilda has "all the qualities of the sentimental heroine" (Parker 262): she "faints and weeps and pines…[and] She offers no threat to the social order or to a reader's sensibilities" (Spacks 201). Matilda patently refuses to disobey her father, no matter how absurd his mandates (live in my house but never let me see you) or harsh his edicts (I didn't tell you I would be home, and happened upon you on the staircase without fair warning, but you need to get out and be punished). She also has no sexual desires, unlike Miss Milner, Rushbrook, or Elmwood himself. Her only desire is to obey her

father; she obediently only sees Rushbrook as a brother, which seems more an expression of generic ideals than a commentary on Rushbrook's desirability. (As the sentimental heroine Matilda is not supposed to desire or to express desire without permission of some sort; therefore, she does not.) There is perhaps a kind of dark comedy lurking beneath the highly charged sensibility of the second part of the novel: the coercive and strange rules of Lord Elmwood feel so extreme and Matilda's passive obedience so absolute that it verges on ridiculous. However, the implications for authorship and gender are deadly serious. If we disentangle Matilda from her mother, that is, if we recognize that Rushbrook's plot is the repetition of Miss Milner's, that allows us to revisit the function of Matilda's character and her sentimental plot. Through Matilda's story, Inchbald reveals the narrative tyranny of the gentleman author and the masculine control over the sentimental heroine. As indicated above, Matilda actually most closely resembles her father, the tyrant, and not her mother, the vivacious coquette. Inchbald is revealing the ways gentlemanly authorship used its own kinds of drag—the sentimental heroine—to control gender power structures.

Through Matilda, Inchbald dramatizes Kahn's concept of male-female narrative transvestism, whereby male authors take on the voice of the powerless, sentimental heroine to serve their own ends. Matilda has the "manly resentment of her father" (259). The sentimental heroine is the revenge of manly resentment; it traps women into systems where the only acceptable resistance is the highly fraught and coded structure of passive obedience. In fact this structure creates the gendered system that has continually tricked and trapped critics of the novel. Women must either be totally passive, or they are labeled rebellious coquettes who should expect to be punished and either reform or die in tragic,

loveless, obscurity. We are so comfortable with this system, with our expectations of how these plots must play out, that we do not question them in *A Simple Story*. Yes, critics interrogate the gendered implications of these plots, but they assume the plot itself is somehow obvious and stable.

The true rivalry of Part 2 is the one between Rushbrook and Matilda, because it reveals the competition between the woman author and the gentleman author. Rushbrook is the woman writer's undoing of patriarchal gentlemanliness and the establishment of her own authorial power. Matilda is the feminine construction of patriarchal control. Haggerty notes the "oddly inverted family triangle of desire" among Matilda, Rushbrook, and Elmwood, but he reads it as "Rushbrook … vying with Matilda for a place in Lord Elmwood's affections, just as he vies with Lord Elmwood, later, for a place in hers" (667). Yet it is actually Matilda who competes with Rushbrook, not Rushbrook with Matilda. She jealously sees Rushbrook as her father's "parasite" (Inchbald 232); such petty jealousy reveals the fictionality of the sentimental heroine's virtue. As a completely virtuous sentimental heroine, Matilda cannot be blind to Rushbrook's virtues; it is her duty to acknowledge them: "Yet the more favourable her opinion of his mind and manners, the more he became a proper object of her jealousy for the affections of Lord Elmwood, and was now consequently an object of greater sorrow to her, then when she believed him less worthy" (240). Her role as the sentimental heroine is impossible to perform. Inchbald is, furthermore, careful to make this competition one-sided. Matilda's increasing jealousy and its correlation to Rushbrook's virtues is "the reverse on his part towards her" (240). Her gentleman bears no ill will to the sentimental heroine. The female-authored, coquette-inspired gentleman figure and his plot are not bitter toward the

sentimental heroine of patriarchal domestic fiction; instead he displays sympathy and understanding toward this ideal and its impossible standards.

Conclusion: The Unfinished/Resistant Endings and Authorial Power

To conclude this chapter, I would like to address the strange and ambivalent endings of these novels, which will hopefully yield a less ambivalent ending to this dissertation. In their construction of their gentlemen as a form of drag, of gender as a performative structure of power, both Robinson and Inchbald disrupt patriarchal power structures and order, and from this position they confidently critique the power and behavior of the more traditional male figures of their texts. However, the endings of both novels have been read as capitulations. This is the perpetual paradox of many eighteenth-century women writers: the feminist or proto-feminist potential of their texts seems forever trapped, foreclosed, or reduced by an obligatory, conservative ending. Both of these texts seem to end along the traditional trajectory of the courtship plot: Walsingham (after almost accidentally killing Sidney) is happily reunited with his "transcendent Sidney" who has now "so completely…changed" (Robinson 495). Meanwhile, Rushbrook has declared his love for Matilda to Lord Elmwood, and the novel closes with him proclaiming this even to Matilda herself. Rushbrook tells his cousin, "I boldly told 'Elmwood' of my presumptuous love, and he has yielded to you alone, the power over my happiness of misery.—Oh! do not doom me to the latter" (Inchbald 337). Both texts, after struggling against the strictures of convention for so long, seem to slip back into it at the last minute.

However, because Robinson and Inchbald used their novels to interrogate plot structure, gender, and authorship, we are able to re-read and contextualize these endings as maintaining, rather than abjuring, resistance. Robinson has exposed Walsingham's perspective and authorship as unreliable; therefore, we should not inherently trust that Sidney has radically transformed. After all, as noted above, Sidney as a man already resembled both Isabella and Amelia in manner and education. Therefore, rather than reinscribing binary gender roles, as so many critics fear, the ending of the novel actually maintains the constructed nature of gender. Walsingham, the pathologically mistaken, codes Sidney now as wonderfully feminine, but still intelligent. But these are the same features that already marked Isabella and Amelia. Robinson is not equating these features with women, marking them as innately feminine; rather, she is demonstrating how gender is constructed by perception. Walsingham now perceives Sidney to be a woman, so he sees her as feminine. He, his narrative, his perspective, transforms her from rival to wife; these roles are not innate to her. We should know better than to trust his narrative.

By closing the novel with an epistolary frame, Robinson brings clear attention to the relationship between gender and authorship. We are abruptly reminded that Walsingham has been writing retrospectively to a female reader, seeking to present himself as an object of sympathy and desire. At the same time, Robinson redeems the moral position of female ambition. Lady Aubrey's great sin is supposedly ambition; that is what led her to author Sidney's masculinity in the first place, which is a metaphor for female authorship in general. Women writers, especially Robinson, were ambitious. Lady Aubrey may be castigated for her vanity, but her authorship wins the competition: she produces the best gentleman. Her authorship is superior to that of her gentleman peers—

despite her flaws. To further validate this connection, Isabella, so often dismissed as Walsingham's object, has created her own secret sub-plot, by marrying Lord "dash his wig" Kencarth. While this might seem abrupt, it also feels like a moment of female-desired authorship. Isabella has been silenced for most of the novel, not because she has no plans or subjectivity, but because Walsingham has forcefully cast her within the patriarchal plot of homosocial exchange and courtship. However, in defiance of that triangulation, she has sought and achieved her own desired end. Leaving a letter (a literal artifact of authorship) she runs off and marries Kencarth, and at the end she is positioned as the powerful, superior force in their relationship. The "viscount" is now "a repentant rover" under his "gentle amiable monitress, the happy origin of a reformation which graces her power and evinces his understanding" (496). Isabella is the monitress; her power, as a figure of female authorship, has reformed Kencarth, we can only assume in Sidney's (not Walsingham's) image. Finally, even Sidney—the infiltrating transvestite—has plotted her own fate. Governed by figures of female authorship, Sidney has managed to maintain her fortune, pursue and gain the man she desires, cultivate strong and positive relationships with other women (transcending rivalry), and still remains the best gentleman in the novel. Her courtship plot—the pursuit of Walsingham—has beaten his—the pursuit of Isabella and homosocial rivalry. Sidney is not found out; like the late-eighteenth-century female author, she chooses to be revealed and claims a moral high ground and authority while doing so.

Inchbald is, perhaps surprisingly, even more successfully resistant than Robinson. She does not guarantee Rushbrook and Matilda's marriage. Instead she writes, inserting her opinionated narrator into the dramatic void: "Whether the heart of Matilda, such as it

has been described *could* sentence him to misery, the reader is left to surmise—and if he supposes that it did not, he has every reason to suppose their wedded life was a life of happiness" (Inchbald 337). Inchbald directs her notes to a male reader. Certainly this could be a gesture to the male-universal, but the clear implication is that Inchbald feels entitled to gesture to, at a minimum, male as well as female readers, and to instruct men on the moral possibilities of her ending. She resists closure in the end, just as she has done throughout. Inchbald has not resisted a singular courtship plot: she has resisted two, one in each part, and in both cases she does so with direct authorial intervention. She claims as her right the ability to govern readerly desire. As Lee argues, Inchbald "exposes the fictionality of the fabricated image of a coquette as a projection of male desire and fear" (213). However, she also reveals how these kinds of courtship plots create desire, desire for the gentleman and for the patriarchal power and regulation he represents. Inchbald disrupts these forms. That is the effect of the page turn from Volume 2 to Volume 3: "Courtship and marriage in *A Simple Story* do not involve tenderness—instead they are revealed as erotically charged power struggles that contain implications of dissolution in their very origin" (Craft-Fairchild 102). She does not dramatize the dutiful, patriarchally constructed Matilda doing her duty and wedding Rushbrook; instead she calls out to her reader. She asserts her own power at the end, stepping out of the dynamics of plot to reveal her own authority.

With both Robinson and Inchbald we see a departure from the tactics of Mary Davys, Eliza Haywood, and Charlotte Lennox explored in the first three chapters of this project. This is the fulfillment of the eighteenth-century gentleman as tool for the woman writer. She has so revised him so that he is not just her vehicle but her subject, and the

authorial power that attends him is now open to her. Both Inchbald and Robinson present themselves and their texts as morally instructive (didactic author); through their plots, figures of female authorship, and narrators they reveal themselves as the most insightful and sympathetic readers (moral reader); and both of them critique plot structure within their works and did actual literary criticism (the proper critic). They performed the roles of the gentleman author, and make these roles their own. The gentleman is never a figure of revolution, but, slowly but surely, women writers manipulated his position of conservative power for their own ends. These positions are rightfully theirs, and from this vantage point women writers like Edgeworth, Austen, Mary Shelley, and others would continue to critique and construct the gentleman and other iconic representatives of masculinity, secure in their right to voice and influence masculinity and patriarchal structures.

Notes

[193] Robinson, *Walsingham* 92.

[194] Dror Wahrman has discussed this in his study of the eighteenth-century turn away from what he terms the *ancien regime* of identity. Thomas Laqueur has positioned this shift in the move from the one-sex to the two-sex model. As Dror Wahrman argues, by the late eighteenth century, gender had turned a corner from the *ancien regime* of identity to the modern self. There had been gender norms throughout the century, but there had also been more flexibility and tolerance in regards to departures from these norms. Men and women would still be criticized for stepping too far across the masculine feminine

divide. Wahrman draws upon the theater, specifically the changing attitudes towards breeches roles to trace this differentiation (48-55).

[195] Armstrong famously argues in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* that while "literature devoted to producing the domestic woman…appeared to ignore the political world run by men" these domestic novels were foundational in creating the modern, political subject, who was first and foremost a woman" (Armstrong 4, 8). Meanwhile, focusing specifically on the late eighteenth century, Bannet argues that during the Age of Revolution, there was a fourth revolution: the *Domestic Revolution*. In her book by that title, Bannet argues that women were not subject to but helped to create the doctrine of separate spheres, and they constructed the family as a unit they had moral authority to speak about above all others. The family unit was symbolic of the nation and its health, and women used their domestic moral authority as a vehicle for political influence, especially in regards to critiquing and reconstructing gender relations and politics. See also Karen O'Brien's *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Meanwhile, Woodworth argues in *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement: Independence, War, Masculinity, and the Novel, 1778-1818* that women writers used the figure of the gentleman to exert influence through similar politically symbolic, domestic channels. In *Small Change: Women, Learning, and Patriotism 1750-1810* Harriet Guest also argues that women exerted influence through the domestic that translated to political influence (13-25): "In most of the context considered in this book, domesticity gains in value as a result of its continuity with the social or the public, and not only as a result of its asocial exclusions. This project

considers domesticity in relation to learning, patriotic politics, and work in order to reveal the extent to which it is only ever one of a set of contradictory demands on women" (Guest 15).

[196] This is what Bannet labels as the Domestic Revolution, in her book by that title. O'Brien argues, "women writers fashioned accounts of their influence and moral activity that depended, not so much upon the continuity, as upon the *analogy*, of the domestic and civil realms" (12).

[197] See Bannet, *Domestic Revolution* (52). Wikborg's book, *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction.* explores this figure; see (2-5).

[198] I think Glenhourn's discussions of women, and his surprise that they are rational beings, is important. One of the best realizations of Glenhourn as a gentleman puppet being animated by plot is when he finds himself at Geraldine's "feet…making very serious love, before [he] knew where [he] was" (236).

[199] For a thorough analysis of Inchbald's reputation, both her personal and professional ones, see Ben P. Robertson's *Elizabeth Inchbald's Reputation: A Publishing and Reception History*.

[200] For a more detailed analysis of this scene see Emily Hodgson Anderson's "Revising Theatrical Conventions in *A Simple Story*" (5-6). The anecdote is recorded in John Taylor's memoirs; Taylor was a close friend of Inchbald's. As Anderson details, "Though scholars have questioned its veracity, the anecdote was widely circulated, and, legend or truth, it illustrates the singular challenges that faced actresses and hopeful female playwrights" (6).

[201] I am drawing on Madeleine Kahn's definition of narrative transvestism, though I am applying it in reverse. She focuses specifically and male-female narrative transvestism: Defoe to Moll Flanders or Richardson to Clarissa. Drawing on psychoanalytic definitions of transvestism (which are dated), Kahn even claims that there are no real female transvestites (2). She uses this, in part, to justify her focus on male authors who are giving up authority by adopting a female persona, vs. woman writers who uses male voices to gain access to authority.

[202] Here I am clearly drawing on the gender theory of Judith Butler and her post-humanist resistance to the subject: "There is no subject prior to its constructions, and neither is the subject determined by those constructions" (84).

[203] Butler writes, "For if I were to argue that genders are performative, that could mean that I thought that one woke in the morning, perused the closet or some more open space for the gender of choice, donned that gender for a day, and then restored the garment to place at night. Such a willful and instrumental subject, one who decides *on* its gender, is clearly not its gender from the start and fails to realize that its existence is already decided *by* gender. Certainly, such a theory would restore a figure of a choosing subject—humanist—at the center of a project whose emphasis on construction seems to be quite opposed to such a notion" (ix)

[204] I employ here Halberstam's groundbreaking *Female Masculinity* and Margery Garber's *Vested Interests.*

[205] Todd continues, "The feminization of men, so heady a female fantasy, is part of this strategy, as well as a utopian longing and a homage to the mother who…so often shadows the man who seemingly displaces her" (Todd, *Men by Women* 7-8)

[206] I realize that I have not entirely worked through this terminology, in a satisfactory way. I realize that transvestism and drag are not interchangeable terms, but because I have not yet found a middle ground terminology or perhaps a more properly structural terminology or expression, I will use both terms in an attempt to indicate the strange intersection of passing and performance of gender at play in these works.

[207] One exception to this is Emily Allen's "Loss Incommensurable: Economies of Imbalance in Mary Robinson's *Walsingham,*" which reads "*Walsingham* [as] a novel about loss" (67). Allen does not seek "to occlude gender as a category of analysis, but to think about how the novel's most remarkable feature—the shock disclosure of Sidney's sex, which, coming as it does at the end of the novel, engenders a last –minute rereading of both plot and character—is part of a larger system of imbalances and inversions that are all certainly informed by gender, although never fully reducible to it" (Allen 68-9).

[208] Cullens, Eleanor Ty, Amy Garnai, Sharon Setzer, Julie Shaffer, and Katherine Binhammer all read Sidney's crossdressing as a kind of transvestism. Ellen Arnold and Stephanie Russo and A.D. Cousins see Sidney as figure of androgyny. Meanwhile, Whitney Arnold and Leigh Bonds read *Walsingham* through the lens of Robinson's own drive for celebrity and performance, especially her connection to breeches roles.

[209] I have debated which pronoun or combination of pronouns to use for Sidney. I have settled on "her," though I'm still not entirely sure this is the correct one. However, I want

to highlight that Sidney's masculinity, and all masculinity is performed, and distinguishing "her" from that performance, I hope, helps reinforce this system.

[210] I am not arguing that all of these forms of cross-dressing are the same. Women in breeches roles pass within the world of the play, but the audience is in on the joke, whereas female soldiers like Hannah Snell passed for years without detection. I am merely gesturing to the idea of female crossdressing, as unexpected, nefarious, and titillating, as existing within the cultural awareness of Robinson's readers.

[211] I am indebted to the comments of Manushag Powell for this insight.

[212] See Shaffer (156). Binhammer writes, "Sidney is, indeed, [Walsingham's] superior" (229). See Ellen Arnold (61).

[213] Binhammer presents an intriguing counterargument to my claim, reading Isabella/Sidney's female homosociality as potentially homosexual; she explores the continuum between "female friendship, feminist solidarity, and same-sex desire?" (222).

[214] Lady Emily further illustrates Walsingham's misogyny. When Sidney hears that Lady Emily is attracted to Walsingham, he/she asks "'Pray, my gallant cousin, what is this Lady Emily Delvin?'…'A woman,' answered I…'Pshaw!' cried he peevishly; 'I mean what sort of woman?'

'Handsome, lively, and rich,' replied I. 'Young enough to make hearts ache, and too old to be the dupe of her own'" (Robinson 193). To Walsingham, she is just a woman, but Sidney is able to see women as individuals, with nuance and variety.

[215] At one point Walsingham claims to be prophetic: "A painful sensation, which has never failed to inform me with prophetic horror, when any event nearly interested my feelings, at the moment chilled my breast" (Robinson 329).

[216] Binnhammer's article is an exploration of female homosociality and its potential erotics in *Walsingham*; she points out the simultaneity of the homosocial structures, writing that, until the very end of the novel, "female homosociality appears to be precisely the opposite: male homosocial desire played out over the exchange of Isabella" (225).

[217] Modern critics almost never question Walsingham's love for Isabella: Garnai writes, "Walsingham, for most of the novel, is in love with his childhood companion, Isabella" (109). W. Arnold writes, "The novel's main plot follows the hero, Walsingham Ainsforth, as he struggles to overcome his feelings for Isabella Hanbury, whome he believes to be in love with his cousin, Sir Sidney, Aubrey" (58). See Allen (87) and Shaffer (151). Neither did eighteenth-century critics. A reviewer in *The Monthly Review* calls Isabella "sentimental", the woman "whose charms had been able so long to enchain the heart of Walsingham" (498).

[218] She rightly points out, "Does the enlightened despot or benevolent dictator lose any power by being enlightened or benevolent, or is his power increased because obedience is cheerfully given in exchange for mild treatment and the appearance of free will?" (17)

[219] Allen argues that, "the novel, engenders a last–minute rereading of both plot and character" (68). Binhammer writes, "triangulations neither conform to a dominant plot nor to a counterplot" and "we can see how, retrospectively, the heterosexual desire

prompts the male homosocial desires since Sidney's participation is based upon her desire for Walsingham. In other words, the two desires are functioning simultaneously" (230)

[220] George Haggerty also sees the novel as a feminist critique and triumph, but he reads this as the effect of the abject female suffering displayed in the novel, rather than as a triumph of feminine desire: "Inchbald insists that all female power is illusory, even that power she so infamously wields over male desire" (Haggerty 670). Caroline Breashears also reads the ending as a kind of feminine triumph, though in more moderate terms than Castle: "Lord and Lady Elmwood are reconciled in spirit" (467). Candace Ward also sees subversive potential in Matilda as Miss Milner's inheritor (16).

[221] Apparently the only critic who completely disagrees with this line is Michael Boardman, who scoffs at what he calls the "egregiously farfetched ideological readings of the novel" (209). "Only critics who begin by assuming all narrative must be political can find political meaning in Inchbald" (Boardman 209). He is a lone voice of taciturn discontent in the otherwise lush recent critical garden on Inchbald.

[222] The one clear exception to this is Jo Alyson Parker, who sees Matilda not as the conservative or transgressive rebirth of her mother but as a second, limited category of womanhood: "In effect…allows Inchbald to test out two versions of female power or influence—that which derives from an active resistance to authority [the coquette] and that which derives from a passive acquiescence to it [the sentimental heroine]" (Parker 257).

[223] Almost all critics read Matilda as the parallel or reincarnation of her mother, and, as Spacks notes, “Most readers have found Miss Milner a more compelling figure than her daughter” (196). For example, Jane Spencer reads Matilda as the boring “atonement…for the boldness” of her mother (qtd. Spencer xx). Spencer writes, “The impulsive Miss Milner, a fine and subtly drawn example of the thoughtless heroine, is replaced by her dutiful and colourless daughter” (*Rise of the Woman Novelist* 160).

[224] This repeated father-daughter dynamic has sparked several psychoanalytic/Oedipal readings of the novel; see Catherine Craft-Fairchild (6), Haggerty (656), and Parker (263). Also, for more on the father/mentor/lover figure see Eleanor Wikborg’s *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women’s Fiction*; see also Eve Tavor Bannet’s *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminism and the Novel*, in which she reads the Dorriforth/Milner, Elmwood/Matilda relationship this way, and sees their various reconciliations as a kind of hermaphrodite ideal, a relationship where both partners share feminine softness and masculine sense (82). Haggerty connects Dorriforth to the “the demon-lover-mentor” of Gothic fiction (657). Dorriforth is basically read exclusively in terms of his role as the father/mentor/lover figure. The lone exception to this is Hye-Soo Lee, who argues, “For all his father guardianship of his ward, Dorriforth is not exactly a mentor figure for the heroine” (215), but Lee’s article only addresses the first part of the novel, which makes her reading of Dorriforth incomplete. I don’t disagree with this general categorization of Dorriforth as lover/mentor; however, I think critics have forgotten the highly charged mentor/father/erotic dynamic between Elmwood and Rushbrook, which presents an interesting and unexpected version of this relationship.

[225] See Castle (323).

[226] Breashears: "As a man of feeling, however, Rushbrook also remains unattractive because ineffectual" (469). Spacks calls him Matilda's "would-be lover" (336). "Rushbrook is easily dismissed by Matilda because he is feminized in relation to that starkly 'masculine,' all-powerful Lord Elmwood" (Craft-Fairchild 15). Haggerty argues that Rushbrook is "emasculated" compared to the commanding Lord Elmwood and "timid and despairing," which makes him a good match for the "battered and broken Lady Matilda" (Haggerty 667, 668).

[227] I part from Spacks in my alignment of Rushbrook/Miss Milner, which enables a different conceptualization of what she terms energy. I read the plot in drag because I see Inchbald invoking the classic standards of the coquette, that energy, and packages that into a young man, Rushbrook, revealing that the theoretically binary and contrasting features of masculinity and femininity exist on a much more permeable boundary than is assumed in the late eighteenth century. Castle and Craft-Fairchild have gestured towards this in their investigations of masquerade in the novel. See Castle's *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* and Craft-Fairchild's *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women*. For Castle, masquerade is a carnivalesque space of subversive energy; in *A Simple Story* the "libertarian impulse has too its specifically feminist dimension, for this is a world, above all, of female gratification" (292). Craft-Fairchild respectfully disagrees with Castle's feminist embrace of the masquerade, arguing, "Women perceived the way in which the masquerade conformed to patriarchal

structures; in their writing, they attempted to outline how its apparent freedoms were frequently nothing more than sophisticated forms of oppression" (Craft-Fairchild 3).

[228] This is another articulation indebted to Powell's feedback.

[229] Breashears argues, "It is difficult for the imagination to leap forward seventeen years, and many readers are disappointed to find the details of Lady Elmwood's fall unnarrated. This omission seems more aesthetically satisfying, however, if the reader considers Inchbald to be maintaining her focus on the difficulties that men faced as they negotiated competing models of manhood" (460). Min also focuses more on Dorriforth/Elmwood, because "Readers of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple story* have found it difficult to reconcile the discrepancy between the first and last two volumes of the novel—between the irrepressible Miss Milner and the subdued Matilda, who seem to represent two irreconcilable models of femininity" (105).

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Ward, Candace. "Inordinate Desire: Schooling the Senses in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*." *Studies in the Novel* 31.1 (1999) 1-18. Electronic.

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Wikborg, Eleanor. *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002. Print.

Williams, Carolyn D. *Pope, Homer, and Manliness: Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Classical Learning*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Wood, Lisa. *Modes of Discipline: Women, Conservatism, and the Novel after the French Revolution*. Lewisburg: Buckness University Press, 2003. Print.

Womersley, David ed. *Cultures of Whiggism: New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005. Print.

Woodworth, Megan A. *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement: Independence, War, Masculinity, and the Novel, 1778-1818.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. Print.

Wright, Lynn Marie & Donald J. Newman ed. *Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006. Print.

Zimmeran, Everett. "Personal Identity, Narrative, and History: *The Female Quixote* and *Redgauntlet.*" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 12:2 (2000) 369-390. Electronic.

VITA

VITA

Education

Ph.D. English
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN (expected August 2016)

Research Interests:	Eighteenth-century British Literature; female authorship in the long eighteenth century; masculinity studies; eighteenth-century readership and its relationships to genres, philosophy, prose fiction, especially amatory fiction and the emergent novel, and form. Current research combines these threads by examining female author's male characters as vessels for crafting and interrogating emergent eighteenth-century forms of masculinity and its relationship to genre and form within prose fiction.
Dissertation:	"Genealogy of the Gentleman: Masculinity, Literary Authority, and the Male Characters of Eighteenth-Century Female Authors"

Committee: Manushag Powell (Chair), Geraldine Friedman, Emily Allen, Marilyn Francus

M.A. English Literature
Villanova University, Villanova, PA (2011)

Thesis:	"From Mystical Silences to Cultural Language Games: Reading the Evolution of Forster's Prophets through Wittgensteinian Language" *Thesis awarded with distinction*

Committee: Megan Quigley (Chair), Heather Hicks

B.A. English Literature and Philosophy
Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN (2009)
Suma Cum Laude

Scholarship

Articles

"Upsetting the Balance: Exposing the Myth of Masculine Virtue and Desire in Eliza Haywood's *Philidore and Placentia*." *Eighteenth Century Theory and Interpretation*. (Forthcoming Fall 2017)

Awards and Honors

Research Grants

Purdue Summer Research Fellowship (Summer 2015)

Teaching Awards

Mary Gitzen Excellence in Teaching Award for "Classroom, Communication in ESL for International Teaching Assistants," Oral English Proficiency Program, Purdue University (Spring 2015)

Quintilian Award for Instruction in Composition, Purdue University (Fall 2012)

Writing Awards

Winner, Purdue Literary Awards, Kneale Award Category of Literary Criticism: "Upsetting the Balance: Exposing the Myth of Masculine Virtue and Desire in Eliza Haywood's *Philidore and Placentia*" (Spring 2015)

Winner, Purdue Literary Awards, Kneale Award Category of Theory and Cultural Studies: "Prophetic Paranoia: Blake's *The Book of Urizen* and the Enactment of the Paranoid Subject" (Spring 2015)

Winner, Purdue Literary Awards, Von's Bookshop Category of Literary Criticism "*Howards End*, Anti-Slumming, & Forster's Map of the English Character" (Spring 2014)

Honorable Mention, EC-ASECS Molin Prize "Vignettes of Violence: Leonora Sansay's *Secrete History; or the Horrors of St. Domingo* and the Formal Recovery of Violence Against Women" (Winter 2014).

Honorable Mention, Purdue Literary Awards, Von's Bookshop Category of Literary Criticism "Getting Jazzy in Prague: The Cultural Shift from Modernism to Postmodernism" (Spring 2012).

Awarded Distinction for master's thesis by Villanova University (Summer 2011)

Conference Presentations

2016 "What's in a Rake?: Unbracketing Masculine Desire in Amatory Fiction," American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Pittsburg, PA)

2016 “Uncovering the Gentleman: Recovering the Male Characters of Eighteenth-Century Women Writers,” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Pittsburg, PA)

2015 “The Singularity of Arabella’s Dress as Material Generic Power in Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*,” Aphra Behn Society Conference (Summit, NJ)

2014 “A Funny Kind of Drag: The Erotic and Authorial Pleasure of Elizabeth Inchbald’s *A Simple Story*,” East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Newark, DE).

2013 “Vignettes of Violence: Leonora Sansay’s *Secrete History; or the Horrors of St. Domingo* and the Formal Recovery of Violence Against Women,” East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Philadelphia, PA).

2013 “A Portrait of Neoclassical Masculine Virtue and Desire in Eliza Haywood’s *Philidore and Placentia*,” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Cleveland, OH).

2013 “Re-orienting Female Secret Keeping in Susanna Centlivre's *The Perplex'd Lovers* and *The Wonder*,” Early Atlantic Reading Group Colloquium (West Lafayette, IN).

2012 “‘Be not too curious to pry into the Reasons of Women’: The Politics of Female Secret Keeping in Susanna Centlivre's *The Perplex'd Lovers* and *The Wonder*,” East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Baltimore, MD).

2012 “Upsetting the Balance: Exposing the Mythmaking of Masculine Virtue and Desire in Eliza Haywood’s *Philidore and Placentia*,” Early Atlantic Reading Group Colloquium (West Lafayette, IN).

2012 “E.M. Forster & Ludwig Wittgenstein: Mystical Silences and the Love that Dare Not Speak Its Name,” Queertopia! 2012 (Chicago, IL).

2011 “‘This smiling empty passivity’: Ira Levin’s *The Stepford Wives* and the Gothic Nature of *The Feminist Mystique*,” Delaware Women’s Studies Conference (Newark, DE).

2011 “Reading Ira Levin’s *The Stepford Wives* as a Gothic Rendition of *The Feminist Mystique*,” Elizabeth Cady Stanton Conference (Villanova, PA).

2011 “‘The Grammar of Cultural Collaborations’: Tutor-Tutee Relationships and Meeting the Needs of Graduate ESL Students,” Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association (West Chester, PA).

Editorial & Research Experience

Editorial Assistant, North American Victorian Studies Association (May 2013-May 2015)

- Manage NAVSA social media via updating member blogs (“Of Victorian Interest” & “Member Publications”) and Twitter feed with upcoming CFPs, symposia, special issues, publications, etc.

Editorial Assistant, *BRANCH: Britain, Representation, & Nineteenth-Century History* (May 2013-May 2015)

- Maintain and update *BRANCH* databases, train and supervise undergraduate assistants, coordinate schedules, copyedit submissions, edit assistant training materials, communicate with Dino Felluga, the general editor, and with undergraduate assistants.

Editorial Assistant, Department Newsletter, Purdue University (August 2013-May 2015)

- Compile department write-ups, design and organize the newsletter, copyedit the final newsletter, coordinate with the senior editor, seek out photos or graphics from various contributors.

Graduate Research Assistant to Jean Lutes, Villanova University (Spring 2011)

- Assisted Dr. Lute’s ongoing research projects in early twentieth-century American women journalists and crime stories through gathering materials, fact checking, data entry, and other such work.

Graduate Research Assistant to Heather Hicks, Villanova University (Fall 2009-Fall 2011)

- Assisted Dr. Hick’s ongoing research projects in twentieth-century apocalypse and disaster narratives through gathering materials, fact checking, data entry, and other such work.

Teaching & Tutoring Experience

Purdue University

Teaching Assistant, *Gender and Literature* [ENGL 360] (Spring 2016)

- Instructor of record, fully responsible for text selection and materials [25 seats].
- Focused on the mutually constitutive nature of literature and gender from the eighteenth century to the present; read a variety of genres such as satires, romances, domestic fiction, adventure tales, gothic horror stories, poetry and songs, canonical and non-canonical novels. Upper-level students expanded close-reading skills and writing skills, examined historical depictions of gender while working with theories of feminist criticism, masculinity studies, sexuality, and race to understand gender as not only socially but narratively constructed.

Teaching Assistant, *Introduction to Fiction* [ENGL 238] —"Dangerous Words and Women: Female Reading, Writing, and Revision" (Fall 2014)

- Instructor of record, fully responsible for text selection and materials [30 seats].
- Focused on how gender, specifically femininity, has been tied to the development and anxieties surrounding the form and influence of fiction, and how fiction, in turn, has shaped our understanding of gender. Students learned to close-read texts, discussed how historical context, class, and race complicate assumptions about gender and privilege, drew connections between works of authors ranging from Jane Austen to Jhumpa Lahiri, and crafted literary-based argumentative essays using textual evidence for support.

Teaching Assistant, *Pirates!* [MARS 220/ENGL 232/CMPL 230] (Fall 2013)

- Graded all exams and papers for Manushag Powell's large cross-listed lecture on Pirate literature [70 seats], and held regular office hours to meet with students about their work. Ran class lecture for two class periods during the semester [see Guest Lecture topics below].

Teaching Assistant, *Freshman Composition* [ENGL 106]—"Writing about Writing" (August 2011-Present)

- Instructor of Record, fully responsible for text selection and materials [20 seats].
- Focused on teaching students to examine, explore, and critique the ways writing is grounded in unique contexts and situations. Students had extensive practice in writing different genres and media (creative, academic, and digital); students were taught to focus process, revision, and rhetorical situation in order to give them a practical tool kit to move forward and adapt to the academic and professional writing they will encounter as undergraduates.

Tutor, Purdue University Oral English Proficiency Program (January 2015-present)

- Conducted 50 minute weekly tutoring sessions with the goal of helping international graduate students taking ENGL 620 build up their oral English proficiency in order to gain university certification to work as a T.A.

Tutor, Purdue University Writing Lab, (August 2012-May 2014)

- Conducted 30-minute peer tutoring session with the goal of teaching students to address the various composition approaches and academic styles of a variety of undergraduate and graduate writing projects.
- Designed and delivered workshops: Topics included professional writing, graduate research skills, second language writing strategies, e-mail etiquette, APA and MLA style, effective conclusion writing, crafting the argumentative thesis, and writing effective admissions essays, personal statements, and cover letters.

Purdue Guest Lectures

2015 “Benevolent Oppression and Female Authorship in Nineteenth-Century American Short Stories by Women” [2 classes]
“Marcia” (1892) by Rebecca Harding Davis; “Miss Grief” (1880) by Constance Fenimore Woolson; and “A Jury of Her Peers” (1916) by Susan Glaspell
Aparajita Sagar’s *Gender and Literature* (ENGL 360).

2014 “Monstrous Alterity: Lesbian Vampirism in *Carmilla*” [2 classes]
2013 *Carmilla* (1872) by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu
Derek Pacheco’s *Gender and Literature* (ENGL 360-Honors).

2013 “Form, Desire, and Salvation in *Goblin Market*” [1 class]
Goblin Market (1862) by Christina Rosetti
Dino Felluga’s *British Literature, Romanticism to Modernism* (ENGL 241).

2013 “*Wuthering Heights*: Battleground of Romantic and Victorian Reading” [3 classes] *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Bronte
Dino Felluga’s *British Literature, Romanticism to Modernism* (ENGL 241).

2013 “Pirate Musicals!” [1 class]
Blackbeard; or the Captive Princess (1798) by John Cartwright Cross & *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan
Manushag Powell’s *Pirates!* (MARS 220/ENGL 232/CMPL 230).

2013 “Crafting the Image of the Pirate: Captain Bartholomew Roberts” [1 class]
A General History of the Pyrates (1724) by Captain Charles Johnson
Manushag Powell’s *Pirates!* (MARS 220/ENGL 232/CMPL 230).

2013 “Eliza Haywood’s *Love in Excess* and the History of the Romance Novel” [1 class] Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association.

Villanova University

Tutor, Villanova University Writing Center (September 2009–2011)

- Conducted 50-minute peer tutoring sessions with the goal of teaching students to construct a thesis-driven argument and improve their academic voice over the course of their university career.
- Designed and delivered workshops: 30-minute writing workshops twice a semester to undergraduates and larger weekend workshops for visiting high school students. Topics included using in-text citations, proof-reading, effective conclusion writing, crafting the argumentative thesis, writing effective admissions essays, and revisiting general rules of grammar.

Professional Programs

Writing Instructor, Warrior Scholar Project, University of Michigan (Summer 2014-Present)

- Co-taught and developed a weeklong intensive workshop on college writing to veterans transitioning from active duty to the university.

Reading Instructor, Institute of Reading Development (Summer 2010, 2011, & 2012)

- Taught two terms of five-week summer reading courses with the goal of assisting students with their reading skills. Courses ranged from pre-kindergarten reading readiness classes to adult speed-reading programs.

Saint Mary's College

Tutor, Saint Mary's College Writing Center (September 2007 – May 2009)

- Conducted one to two hour peer-tutoring sessions with the goal of teaching students to construct a thesis-driven argument and improve their academic voice over the course of their university career.

Teaching Assistant [ENG 110] Mary's College English Department (Fall 2007– Spring 2009)

- Graded students' daily writing assignments, organized and lead class discussions and lectures for Dr. Linnea Vacca's Introduction to Literature course [20 seats].

Service to Profession

Syllabus Approach Leader for *Writing About Writing*, Purdue University (Fall 2014-Spring 2015).

President, Early Atlantic Reading Group, Purdue University (Summer 2014-present).

Colloquium Chair, Early Atlantic Reading Group, Purdue University (2013-2014).

Graduate Studies Committee Representative, Graduate Student English Association, Purdue University (2012-Present).

Publication Forum Committee Assistant, Graduate Student English Association (2012-2013).

Write an Article Month Committee Chair, Graduate Student English Association (2012-2013).

Philosophy and Literature Representative, Graduate Student English Association (2011-2012)