“Heroic Disobedience”: The Forced Marriage Plot, 1748-1880

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B.A. in English, May 2012, Miami University
M.A. in English, May 2014, Boston College

A Dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of
The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
Of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 31, 2020

Dissertation directed by

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The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences of The George Washington University certifies that Leah A. Grisham-Webber has passed the Final Examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy as of 24 April 2020. This is the final and approved form of the dissertation.

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Dedication

For Nick and Nora

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my committee members: Maria Frawley, Tara Wallace, and Daniel DeWispelare. They have all provided invaluable advice and feedback. Without realizing it, the beginnings of this project began to germinate in the independent study Maria and I undertook my first semester as a PhD student; our discussions there (and since) have helped me grow as a scholar. Daniel showed me the ropes when I was a new PhD student and became my go-to for all sorts of questions and issues. I am so thankful that my time at George Washington University overlapped with Tara's tenure here; her encyclopedic knowledge of British literature and grammar rules never cease to amaze me. I am so grateful for their mentorship and the many hours they have spent reading my work over the years. I would also like to thank my outside dissertation readers, Talia Schaffer and Deborah Denenholz Morse, for dedicating time to this project. Women are often asked to undertake a lop-sided amount of academic service; they did not have to say yes to this, but they did – for which I am so grateful.

There are many additional members of my GW family to thank, including Holly Dugan for being such an excellent role model and Connie Kibler for everything she does for the department. Working with you in literature and the financial imagination taught me so much about teaching undergraduates. To my friends and collaborators Vicki Barnett-Woods, Sam Yates, Tyler Christenson, Beth TeVault, and Joshua Benson: you all pushed me to be my best and kept me sane. I know that you all will do wonderful things and I am so glad that we have been a part of each other's journeys.

I also owe thanks to the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences for awarding me a Summer Dissertation Fellowship, which allowed me to finish this project in a timely

manner. The Graduate Teaching Instructorship I was awarded from the CCAS has also been immensely helpful to me as both a scholar and a teacher through allowing me to create and teach nineteenth-century British horror stories to undergraduates.

Nick and Nora: to say thank you does not begin to cover how much gratitude I feel toward you both. I don't know what is next for me but knowing you will both be a part of it makes me unafraid.

Abstract of Dissertation

"Heroic Disobedience": The Forced Marriage Plot, 1748-1880

This dissertation examines eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British novels that use forced marriage as a plot structure to expose and subvert the oppression of women in British society. Each of the novels studied at length re-writes the forced marriage plot of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, highlighting the ways in which contemporaneous economic forces – the rise of capitalism in the eighteenth century, the slave trade, and speculation – drive the subordination of women. The first chapter of the project shows that, despite the depth of Clarissa Harlowe's interiority and the extent to which the mercenary nature of her family's greed is criticized, this novel promotes oppressive patriarchal ideologies. Beginning with chapter two, the project examines novels that mirror *Clarissa*'s plot with an important difference: they celebrate women who rebel against the oppressive patriarchalism of their respective periods. Chapter two analyzes novels by two of Richardson's peers, Eliza Haywood and Charlotte Lennox, whose novels *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) and *The Female Quixote* (1752) offer contemporary reactions to *Clarissa*. Chapter three focuses on forced marriage plot narratives, Mary Robinson's *Angelina: A Novel* (1796) and Charlotte Smith's novella "The Story of Henrietta" (1800), that situate forced marriage within the Atlantic slave trade to expose the material connections between the oppression of the enslaved and the patriarchal oppression of British women. Next, a brief Interchapter explains Jane Austen's connection to the forced marriage plot. Novels by Charles Dickens (*Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838-9, and *Dombey and Son*, 1848) and the little-studied Elizabeth Stone (*William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*, 1842) move chapter four into post-industrial

England during the rise of stock-market speculation and debates surrounding the morality of capitalism. Finally, chapter five examines Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1874-5) alongside contemporary commentary on gambling.

Table of Contents

Dedication……...…….……..….iv

Acknowledgements……..v

Abstract of Dissertation……...ii

List of Figures……..x

Introduction…….……1

Chapter 1 “Such Terms, Such Settlements!”: Clarissa Harlowe and the Patriarchy…….33
.
Chapter 2 “You are a strange Girl”: Lennox and Haywood Redefine Femininity……72

Chapter 3: “Will there not be virtue in my resistance?”: resisting tyranny in Charlotte Smith’s “The Story of Henrietta” and *Mary Robinson’s Angelina; A Novel*……..108

Interchapter: “Young Ladies that have no Money are to be pitied”: Jane Austen and the Forced Marriage plot……...……..…….160

Chapter 4 “Selling a girl”: Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Stone, and Post-Industrial Patriarchy…….166

Chapter 5 “Of course I have to think of myself”: Trollope’s Heroines and the Gambling Economy…….221

Coda “I do not repent”: Heroic Disobedience Beyond 1880……...270

Bibliography……277

Appendix……..324

List of Figures

Figure 1: Title page of Richardson's "A Collection"….……...63

Figure 2: Betsy and Munden……...101

Figure 3: James Gillray's "New Morality"……..113

Figure 4: Salvator Rosa, "Landscape with Tree Trunk"……..116

Figure 5: The Great Social Evil……...…183

Introduction

In 1747-48, Samuel Richardson's second novel, *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady*, was published to instant success. The novel went to a second edition in 1749, and a third greatly expanded edition in 1751, which to this day is one of the longest English-language novels ever published; coming in at over one million words, the third edition of *Clarissa* is almost twice as long as David Foster-Wallace's infamously lengthy *Infinite Jest* (1996). Additionally, *Clarissa*'s success has also been sustained. As the appendix to this dissertation shows, at least 20 versions of *Clarissa* were published in England between 1751 and 1902, not including many pirated editions printed without Richardson's consent. Several stage adaptations were performed throughout this period, including one in Paris that received rave reviews from Charles Dickens. In his Introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of *Clarissa* (1986, 2004), Angus Ross notes that Richardson's masterpiece has been in print ever since the first two volumes appeared in 1747 since Richardson "had the luck or prescience to hit on a story that became a myth to his own age, and remains so yet" (18). As the following chapters explore, *Clarissa* is indeed a novel that experienced immense relevancy long after Richardson's death, inspiring a ubiquity of authors to emulate *Clarissa*'s plot. This dissertation is in many ways about the *mythos* of *Clarissa*, to borrow Ross' terminology, and the ways in which it impacted British literature throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Throughout this project, I use *Clarissa*'s plot – and later novels that emulate it – to explore the deliberate processes by which women are taught that they are powerless, why this is done, and how, according to authors in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, women can circumvent the cycle of powerlessness and reclaim autonomy. I

make two key claims throughout the project. The first is that beginning in the mid-eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, novelists deployed forced marriage plots, which I define as plots in which a father figure attempts to force his daughter into a marriage that she does not want but that would be financially beneficial to himself, to critique manifestations of mercenary wealth accumulation and the specific ways that women suffered under this system. Samuel Richardson, though not the first British author to use this plot, popularized it in his 1747-48 novel *Clarissa*, providing inspiration for authors in generations to come, cementing his legacy as a pioneer in representing female subjectivity. As will be made evident throughout this project, the forced marriage plot novel is an ideal conduit for examining patriarchal power dynamics. Tyrannical fathers are pitted against their daughters in a struggle over whose will is more powerful. Of course, it is not always that simple, since the fathers have social and institutional powers on their side that tip the scales in their favor. In this sense, the conflict over a daughter's right to refuse an unwanted marriage represents a microcosm of larger socio-economic issues women faced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This seemingly simple plot mechanism reveals a complex network of social and literary issues pertaining to how women fit into Britain's changing economic climate, which put increasing value on wealth accumulation and consistently used women as a convenient conduit for transferring wealth between men. Forced marriage novels, then, dramatize this commodification of women into exchangeable economic tools in ways that comment on how both femininity and masculinity are constructed in the societies of the novels examined.

My second claim is that, despite a sustained critical insistence in Richardson's empathetic depiction of women (and more recent claims that Richardson was a proto-feminist), all of the subsequent authors considered here specifically engage with Richardson's forced marriage plot in ways that underline and rewrite the narrow version of female subjectivity praised in *Clarissa*. Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), Charlotte Lennnox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), Mary Robinson's *Angelina; A Novel* (1796), Charlotte Smith's *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800-02), Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39) and *Dombey and Son* (1846-48), Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe, Cotton Lord* (1842), and Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1874-75) depict the insidious impacts of the obsession with wealth accumulation, namely, the objectification of women into objects of exchange. As I argue in chapter one, while *Clarissa* is certainly critical of this commodification, the novel ultimately lapses into patriarchal definitions of femininity as defined by popular Christian ideology and women's conduct guides that dictate the need for women to embody values like mercy, humility, and a willingness to accept blame for wrongs committed by others. The subsequent novels, then, reverse this portrayal of femininity, celebrating instead women who live by their own, non-conforming, system of values.

The importance of plot

Before elaborating on these two key claims, I would like to briefly address the value of reading a specific plot type, here the forced marriage plot, across time. Focusing on plot is a critical lens that has, in many ways, been overlooked. In his Introduction to *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (1984), Peter Brooks remarks that "[p]lot is so basic to our experience of reading, and indeed to our very articulation of

experience in general, that criticism has often passed it over in silence, as too obvious to bear discussion" (xi). In 2001 Lois Bueler lamented the lack of critical attention paid to plot types: "the absence of critical attention [to plots] may reflect the complexity of mature plot structures," she explains:

> [n]ot only are they intricately patterned from an interlocking, richly motivated, and staggeringly large set of components, they are found in certain cultural habitats and do specific kinds of ideological work. Thus a critic interested in a plot type must have not just an insatiable appetite for stories but an interest in the study of cultures." (1)

When attention is given to plot, patterns emerge that reveal important insights into both the development of the novel and the historical periods that produced them.[1]

Katherine Binhammer makes a similar argument about the study of plot types in *The Seduction Narrative in Britain, 1747-1800* (2009), in which she argues: "[t]he repetition of a story at a particular moment in time…prompts at least two different interpretations of how history relates to narrative. The same story might be repeatedly told in order to popularize and naturalize a new historical idea, foregrounding a relation of similitude and emphasizing a mimetic or didactic function of narrative" (1). On the one hand, repeating a familiar plot can be used to emphasize the similarities between the old narrative and the new, causing a new ideology to seem familiar. "Or," Binhammer

[1] Bueler examines narratives that contain what she calls the tested woman plot, in which female characters face a serious moral dilemma but are ultimately "welcomed back from grave or exile, received back into marriage, allowed back into the good graces of a household, made the figurehead of a political or military campaign," though "the health celebrated is that of the patriarchal establishment that has regained its properly constituted hold on itself and its world" (13). Bueler's work is important in the development of the study of plot types, but it is necessary to note that the plot type she examines all, ultimately, support the subordination of women to men. My project, with its feminist lens, focuses on novels that portray female characters who fight against feminine subordination.

continues, “the repetition of a story could denote difference where the deviations within similarity point to a dynamic relation between material conditions and imaginative narratives; in this case, the fact of the story’s repetition would indicate both that changing historical conditions open up new objects of understanding and that narrative helps to constitute and resolve conflicts posed by those new objects” (1). In both cases, the repetition of a plot type disseminates ideological perspectives: it is about more than just narrative similarities. *Clarissa* is an important touchstone in both Bueler’s and Binhammer’s monographs, since, according to Bueler, Richardson popularized the novel as a form (over drama) while also “set[ting] out to render women’s voices”: two separate objectives that become inextricably connected, tethering the novel to explorations of female subjectivity (146). “The popularity of Richardson’s novel and the plurality of responses it invoked reflect how profoundly it spoke to a cultural awareness of, and interest in, the new inner world of women,” Binhammer agrees (21). A focus on plot – and, even more specifically, Richardson’s plot – according to these critics, reveals insights into the cultures that created them, particularly regarding the inner lives of women.

That *Clarissa* maintains an important role in literary depictions of female subjectivity is an undercurrent of this project. As Maia McAleavey explains in her own study of plot and Victorian novels, *The Bigamy Plot: Sensation and Convention in the Victorian Novel* (2015), “focusing on plot illuminates unexpected relationships between canonical and popular texts, allowing us to imagine new literary-historical genealogies” (13). Forging links between novels like *David Copperfield*, *Middlemarch*, popular sensation fiction, and seemingly disparate genres like ballads, McAleavey reveals novel

insights into formal connections between these genres. I also claim that new "literary-historical genealogies," to borrow McAleavey's term, emerge from a focus on plot, but in this case it is between Richardson's sustained influence on the novel via the forced marriage plot. That is, chapters two through five of this project highlight the ways in which Richardson retained literary and cultural prominence, but in a manner that complicates his legacy; for all those who championed his writing, there were also those who questioned the legitimacy of this praise.

Wealth and the commodification of women

Returning to the key claims of this project, I'd like to turn first to the socio-economic circumstances at play, since the forced marriage plot is, at its core, about the convergence of the novel and capitalism. Or, put more specifically, it is about the relationship between landed, aristocratic systems and the free market, which allowed unprecedented class mobility and wealth accumulation. The father figures in this dissertation fall under one of two categories: struggling aristocrats desperately trying to retain their ancestral land or aspiring self-made men eager to climb the social ladder. As Anthony Trollope's Lord Nidderdale points out in *The Way We Live Now* (discussed at length in chapter five), these socio-economic groups, though often understood as antagonistic, in fact developed a symbiotic relationship. A young aristocrat marrying an heiress "has become an institution, like primogeniture, and is almost as serviceable for maintaining the proper order of things," Nidderdale muses, "Rank squanders money; trade makes it; – and then trade purchases rank by re-gilding its splendor" (428). As capitalism took hold on the British economy, financially unstable aristocrats increasingly allied themselves with capitalist interests to "re-guild [their] splendor," as Nidderdale

puts it. Frequently such alliances took place via marriage, especially within the representational world of the novel. As the following chapters reveal, mercenary economies took a variety of forms throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The unprecedented class mobility of the eighteenth century, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the rise of speculation comprise the backdrops of the project. While there are certainly differences between these economies to which I will attend, a critical component they share is the use of women as economic tools in the effort to retain to achieve upward mobility.

This collusion between the waning aristocratic classes and ascendant "trade" class, as Nidderdale terms it, is a hallmark of the forced marriages examined in this dissertation. Pierre Bourdieu's "The Forms of Capital" (1986) is especially useful in understanding how these classes interacted – often relying on each other – to concentrate wealth and power among themselves. Arguing that a complete understanding of economic systems must "endeavor to grasp capital and profit in all their forms and to establish the laws whereby the different types of capital (or power, which amounts to the same thing) change into one another," Bourdieu defines other manifestations of capital, such as cultural and social capital, which play into – or make up for a lack of – economic capital (243). Cultural capital describes material representations which are used to portray a certain amount of economic capital. Embodied forms of cultural capital denote "what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*" and "presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" (244). An individual's body is inscribed with markers of "culture" and superiority that in turn indicate a certain

amount of economic capital required to acquire and maintain the cultural capital. Similarly, cultural capital in its objectified state is the physical manifestation of economic capital in objects like paintings, jewelry, or certain forms of writing. Bourdieu also identifies social capital, "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group," as a type of economic capital which "entitles them to 'credit,' in the various senses of the word" (248).

While cultural capital is certainly important to the men in forced marriage plot novels, such as Sir Edward Clarendon's tackily ostentatious home-improvement projects in *Angelina; A Novel* (discussed in chapter three), what their desire essentially boils down to is social capital: the desire to acquire it or the desire to exclude others from entry into their elite social group. The fathers (or stand-in fathers, like Ralph Nickleby) in these forced marriage plot novels all possess wealth; some, like Harlowe, Sir Edward, and Augustus Melmotte (*The Way We Live Now*, discussed in chapter five), have recently obtained wealth and desire to transform this wealth into power and legitimacy. As Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone explain in their foundational examination of wealth and status in England, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (1984), England, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presented mercantile and capitalist conditions that could afford significant upward mobility (8). Acquisition of a country estate was, to Stone and Stone, requisite to adopting the mantle of gentility and gaining acceptance into the top echelon of British society, which explains, for example, the urgency Caroline Bingly feels toward purchasing Netherfield for their family in *Pride*

and Prejudice (and certainly it is no coincidence that the Harlowes, Sir Edward, and Melmotte all purchase country estates in their respective novels), but this project underlines the importance of marriage as a pivotal means of achieving social capital. By strategically marrying off their daughters, men like Harlowe, Sir Edward, and Melmotte believe they will gain access to political power and influence in the groups into which they seek entry. Harlowe, for instance, plans to use the wealth and significant land holding of Solmes to buy a peerage for his own son; Sir Edward desires the social influence of an aristocratic son-in-law, while Melmotte believes the aura of prestige emanating from the ancient Nidderdale name will make him "not really free of the law, but almost safe from its fangs" (*The Way We Live Now* 549). Acceptance into the gentry and close association with the aristocracy will, these fathers believe, provide tangible benefits, and they see intermarriage as the most expedient method of obtaining their goal.

While some theorists, like Adam Smith in *Wealth of Nations* (1776), saw commercial money as a much-needed infusion into the British squirearchy – Smith claims "[m]erchants are commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen and when they do, they are generally the best of all improvers... A merchant is commonly a bold, a country gentleman, a timid undertaker" – others found this encroachment upon ancestral lands and ancient power structures threatening (313). Edmund Burke, for instance, famously defends the "advantages" of the aristocratic inheritance of land (33). "We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and an house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors," he claims in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790); power and privilege, which he inextricably connects to inherited land, should only belong to a select few (33). In

fiction, men like the Marquis (*The Female Quixote*) and Sir Harry (*Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite*) concur with Burke. Possessing aristocratic lineage themselves, they seek to bar outsiders from entry into their group, thus conserving its benefits for a select few. In forced marriage plot novels, fathers who buy into this ideology are defined by a desire for their daughters to marry from within their own social groups instead of outside the social group, preventing their influence and political power from spreading beyond their already-established kinship group. Chapter five, for instance, features a discussion of The Duke of Omnium, who in *The Duke's Children* (1880), believes: "it to be for the good of our country, for the good of our order, for the good of our individual families, that we should support each other by marriage" (449).

Whether attempting to gain admission to the dominant group or barring outsiders from entering, both sides rely on the belief that marriage is a business transaction between men. Claude Levi-Strauss famously observed this dynamic in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), concluding: "it is exchange, always exchange, that emerges as the fundamental and common basis for all modalities of the institution of marriage…Exchange…has in itself a social value. It provides the means of binding men together" (479-80). That is, marriage is not about love or romance between the two partners involved in the marriage, but about exchanging a woman – a daughter or sister – for the benefit of the men who control her. Like Bourdieu, Levi-Strauss views this exchange as economic, but also finds added benefits "such as power, influence, sympathy, status, and emotion; and the skillful game of exchange," which "consists in a complex totality of conscious or unconscious maneuvers in order to gain security and to guard oneself against the risks brought about by alliances and rivalries" (54). Marriage is

a game of exchange in which women seem to have little agency, used as they are as pawns in the machinations of their fathers, brothers, and husbands-to-be.

There is plentiful textual evidence that the exchange of daughters for money, influence, and political power is not limited to so-called primitive cultures observed by Levi-Strauss but was employed throughout British history. In a 1710 *Tatler* article, for instance, Richard Steele commented: "the best of our peers have often joined themselves to the daughters of very ordinary tradesmen," because of "valuable considerations" (410). Similarly, Stone and Stone quote "an indignant pamphleteer" who in 1733 "complained bitterly about the rise of 'a set of brocaded tradesmen, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, raising themselves to immense wealth, so as to marry their daughters to the first rank, and leave their sons such estates as to enable them to live to the same degree'" (19). James Nelson's 1763 *An essay on the government of children* observes: "[t]he Man of Trade marries the Daughter of the Gentleman; the Gentleman the Tradesman's Daughter: and again, the Gentleman makes his Son (the younger at least) a Man of Trade" (317). As late as 1884, Friedrich Engels characterized all bourgeois marriages as to some degree coerced by parents for financial or social capital, since, "[i]n the countries with English law, where parental consent to a marriage is not legally required, the parents on their side have full freedom in the testamentary disposal of their property and can disinherit their children at their pleasure. It is obvious that, in spite and precisely because of this fact, freedom of marriage among the classes with something to inherit is in reality not a whit greater in England and America than it is in France and Germany," which is to say, nonexistent (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and*

the State 88).[2] Examples such as these cause Stone and Stone to declare that "judicious marriages with heiresses" were a common mechanism for socio-economic elevation (10).

Such examples highlight the extent to which, historically, women have long been defined as objects of economic exchange. Steele, Engels, Bourdieu, Stone and Stone, and Levi-Strauss recognize the economic role women were forced into, but what is missing from their texts is any sort of in-depth acknowledgement of the steep emotional and material trauma this could cause women. Their observations are unquestionably useful in demonstrating the pervasiveness of this troubling phenomenon, but it is my contention that the novelists who address this commodification through forced marriage plots give voice to the women in those economic transactions. This dissertation, then, shows how the novel – specifically the forced marriage plot novel – is the ideal conduit for exploring the costs women pay when living in societies that see them as exchangeable commodities and not autonomous beings. Authors like Richardson, Lennox, Smith, Robinson, Dickins, Stone, and Trollope narrativize this conflict, privileging the perspectives of the women victimized by these economic practices; empathizing with their struggles against being defined by their exchangeability and, with the exception of *Clarissa*, celebrating the heroines' rebellion against the role prescribed by their respective societies.

Richardson's legacy

My second claim, that the authors discussed here use the forced marriage plot to engage with Richardson's depiction of femininity in addition to femininity in their respective time periods, is bolstered by an understanding of Richardson's longevity. Throughout his career and for long after, Richardson was remembered as an author with a

[2] Bourdieu makes a similar claim about modern society: parents can use indirect methods to dictate their children's marriages by controlling who their children meet (250).

particular talent for depicting both the female mind and proper moral values. Richardson's close friend Samuel Johnson was especially profuse in his praise of Richardson's works, setting the tone for later critics. According to James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), Johnson once claimed: "if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment," arguing that, in his fiction, "Richardson had picked the kernel of life" (292). The underlying claim here is that the sentiment, truth, and morality of Richardson's fiction set it apart from all else in the period, especially Fielding's.[3] Indeed, in a preface Johnson wrote for a *Rambler* essay guest-written by Richardson (discussed in more detail in chapter two), Johnson introduced his friend as: "an author who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue" (377). Understood as germane to his literary project, virtue was tethered to Richardson's reputation.

Examples of similar praise abound. Tobias Smollett wrote in his *The History of England: From the Revolution in 1688, to the Death of George II* (1760-65) that Richardson embodies: "a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command

[3] Boswell reports Johnson once stated that Fielding was a "blockhead" and a "barren rascal" (292). Upon Boswell's pressing him to admit that Fielding "draws very natural pictures of human life," Johnson responded: "[w]hy, sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed -he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all Tom Jones" (292). In a footnote Boswell writes: "Johnson's severity against Fielding did not arise from any viciousness in his style, but from his loose life, and the profligacy of almost all his male characters. Who would venture to read one of his novels aloud to modest women? His novels are male amusements, and very amusing they certainly are. – Fielding's conversation was coarse, and so tinctured with the rank weeds of the Garden, that it would now be thought only fit for a brothel" (292). The distinction made between Fielding and Richardson was clearly one of morality.

of human nature" (3:333). In his "Eloge de Richardson" (1762) written upon Richardson's death, Denis Diderot exclaims:

> The world we live in is his scene of action, his drama is anchored in truth, his people are as real as it is possible to be, his characters are taken from the world of society…Richardson sows in our hearts the seeds of virtue… they develop and we feel ourselves driven towards what is good with an enthusiasm we did not know was in us. (83).

Diderot believed that Richardson's novels transcended fiction through their realistic portrayal of life and for the moral lessons they instill in readers. Hannah More expressed a similar opinion, noting her appreciation for the influence *Clarissa* and *Charles Grandison* had on her own youth, claiming "they contain more maxims of virtue and sound moral principle than half the books called moral" (*Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More* 2:343). In her 1782 *Sacred Dramas* More credits Richardson: "[i]f some faint love of virtue glow in me,/ Pure spirit! I first caught that flame from thee" (283). Frances Reynolds, the sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds and a close friend of Samuel Johnson, wrote in her own (unpublished) memoir of Samuel Johnson's life that Richardson cultivated more acquaintances with women than was typical for men, crediting these acquaintances with his literary insights into the female mind. "To their society," she writes, "doubtless, Richardson owed that delicacy of sentiment, that feminine excellence, as I may say, that so peculiarly distinguishes his writings from those of his own sex in general" (*Johnsonian Miscellanies* 252). Reynolds here picks up on a thread that runs through much of the praise from Richardson's acolytes: that

Richardson's fiction provides special insights into the subjectivities and moral values of women.

Such criticism underscores the extent to which Richardson's reputation was tethered to what many in the eighteenth century saw as his praise-worthy depiction of femininity. This depiction is exemplified in *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady*, in which his embattled protagonist, Clarissa Harlowe, fights against her family and the devilish rake Lovelace, maintaining her Christian notions of virtue even under the most trying circumstances. Importantly, Richardson wanted his heroine to be considered a role model by young women. In fact, as the first chapter of this dissertation shows, he went so far as to consider *Clarissa* a novel/conduct guide hybrid of sorts – a notion that other readers embraced. In her Preface to her six-volume *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (1804), Anna Laetitia Barbauld emphasizes the instruction readers derive from his fiction, claiming "simplicity is warned, vice rebuked, and from the perusal of a novel, we rise better prepared to meet the ills of life with firmness, and to perform our respective parts on the great theatre of life" (xxi-xxii). Furthermore, she continues, "Richardson prided himself on being a moral and religious writer…he professed to take under his particular protection that sex which is supposed to be most open to good or evil impressions; whose inexperience most requires cautionary precepts, and whose sensibilities it is most important to secure against a wrong direction" (xxii). That is, Richardson saw women as the more vulnerable sex in need of moral education and believed that his novels were the ideal method for imparting the necessary knowledge.

Hannah More – always a staunch proponent of Richardson – praises his insight into and importance for women in her novel *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1811), in which her character Sir John claims:

> with deeper and juster views of human nature, a truer taste for the proprieties of female character, and a more exact intuition into real life than any other writer of fabulous narrative, [Richardson] has given in his heroines exemplifications of elegantly cultivated minds, combined with the sober virtues of domestic economy. In no other writer of fictitious adventures has the triumph of religion and reason over the passions, and the now almost exploded doctrines of filial obedience, and the household virtues, their natural concomitants, been so successfully blended. (299-300)

Sir John, working as a mouthpiece for More in this treatise on the importance of modesty, virtue, and obedience in young women, lauds Richardson's portrayal of female characters and their value as role models. Clarissa, for instance, is a model of ideal domesticity, taking pleasure and pride in managing the small dairy house her grandfather leaves her, performing works of charity within her community, and – until they try to force her into a repugnant marriage, at least – exemplifying daughterly obedience.

Brian Corman (2017) argues that around the turn of the nineteenth century, Richardson became an especially important figure in literary criticism thanks to critics such as Anna Letitia Barbauld, Sir Walter Scott, and John Colin Dunlop, who "determined the course of discussions about [Richardson] for the remainder of the century" (Sabor and Schellenberg, eds. 66). In his 1825 *Lives of the Novelists*, Sir Walter Scott refers to Clarissa Harlowe as "a character as nearly approaching to perfection as the

pencil of the author could draw," arguing: "[t]he conduct of the injured Clarissa through the subsequent scenes, which are perhaps among the most affecting and sublime in the English school of romance, raise her, in her calamitous condition, so far above all around her, that her character beams on the reader with something like superhuman splendour (37, 40). Only Richardson, Scott contends, could create such a paragon of virtue. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, critic Edmund Gosse called Richardson "one of the masters of our literature," noting that Macaulay labeled Richardson a "prose Shakespeare" before praising Richardson's "minute inquisition into the human heart, and especially the female heart" (*A History of English Literature 1660-1780* 115, 122).

Similar critical views are held by twentieth- and twenty-first century critics as well, who bestow on *Clarissa* an important place in the study of the novel and of British culture, especially regarding the portrayal of female subjectivity. Ian Watt (1957, 2001), for instance, argues that the "primary criterion" of early novels such as *Clarissa* "was truth to individual experience which is always unique" claiming that Richardson gave his characters deep "subjective and inward direction" to a degree that was unprecedented (13, 18). Individuality and subjectivity – the degree to which Clarissa defines her own will and identity in opposition to those around her – are keystones of Clarissa's characterization, according to Watt. Nancy Armstrong expands on Watt's perspective in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, where she examines the specific ways in which women are defined by Richardson and concludes that his portrayal is empowering. Noting that Clarissa Harlowe and Pamela Andrews both refuse the sexual advances of powerful men, Armstrong asks: "[w]hen in the history of writing before Pamela, we might ask ourselves, did a female, let alone a female servant, have the

authority to define herself so? To understand the power Richardson embodies in the non-aristocratic woman, one need only observe how he endows her with subjective qualities" (121). Like Watt, Armstrong points to an independent sense of subjectivity in Richardson's female characters: a stance that dominated *Clarissa* criticism throughout much of the mid-to-late twentieth century. These critics link conversations on Richardson's style – his use of the epistolary form and claim of truthful representation – to his portrayal of femininity, believing, like Janet Todd does, that "[t]he importance of Richardson for the feminine novel cannot be exaggerated…he concentrated thoroughly on an inner life made representative and archetypal" (142).

Richardson studies have since expanded, perhaps in large part thanks to Florian Stuber, Margaret Anne Doody, and Jim Springer Borck's The Clarissa Project, which resulted in the first scholarly facsimile reprint of the third edition of *Clarissa* and *Clarissa and her Readers: New Essays for the* Clarissa *Project* (1990, edited Houlihan Flynn and Copeland), which broadened Richardsonian criticism in diverse ways, focusing as much on his biographical and socio-historical contexts as much (if not more) as on his contributions to the novel as a form. Historical contexts have also been used to excavate a sense of subversive femininity in *Clarissa.* Sandra Macpherson (1998), for example, uses the Clandestine Marriage Act of 1753 (discussed at length in chapter two) to argue that *Clarissa* "is a sustained critique of the consensualist bias of eighteenth- century marriage law" that favors men over women (102). Using the context of the Jacobite Rebellion, Shea Stuart (2002) makes a similar argument, claiming that both Richardson and Eliza Haywood advocate "companionate marriage and a more contract theory oriented patriarchy" (560). Laura Rosenthal (2006) understands Clarissa's successful avoidance of

prostitution as evidence of her "agency" – "a quixotic economic virtue, one connected to her sexual virtue but not defined by it alone" (134). Of course, not all critics agree with these configurations of *Clarissa,* instead labelling Richardson as an active and eager agent of the patriarchy. Such critics see, as Toni Bowers (2011) does, Richardson's "wholehearted subscription to the virtue of subordinate obedience" and the problematic nature of aligning his work with feminist ideology (252). However, the critical conversation often sides with perspectives like Bonnie Latimer's in *Making Gender, Culture, and the Self in the Fiction of Samuel Richardson: The Novel Individual* (2013), where she contends:

> Richardson's fictions are instrumental in a cultural shift according to which women became imaginable as individuals – that is to say, as stable, autonomous, contained and rational selves. In his novels, Richardson rewrites the vocabularies of gender encountered in a variety of earlier genres and discourses, which generally do not allow for understanding women as individuals. (3)

Critics repeatedly emphasize Richardson's masterful depiction of female interiority which, as the quotes from Macphearson, Stuart, and Rosenthal reveal, can cause critics to connect Clarissa Harlowe's depth of characterization with a subversive depiction of femininity. What this project shows, however, is that detailed depiction of Clarissa's rich inner life does not necessarily make her a subversive character. Rather, the version of femininity that Clarissa embodies is ultimately one that maintains patriarchal power structures, despite Clarissa's emotional fortitude.

Chapter overview: *Clarissa* and its revisions

To fully elucidate why *Clarissa* must be read as ultimately supporting patriarchal hegemony, despite the care with which Richardson depicts her depth of spirit, chapter one focuses on Clarissa's relationship with her family – especially her despotic father. Examining the ways in which Mr. Harlowe departs from contemporary depictions of benevolent paternalism – he is a tyrant instead of a kind, supportive father – underlines the extent to which the novel vilifies Mr. Harlowe for privileging his own material comfort (and his son's political ambition) over his daughter's wellbeing. However, a focus on the third edition of the novel, with its expanded chapters and profuse paratextual material, betrays a darker message, one in which Clarissa's intense devotion to prescriptive femininity in fact supports the oppression of women. Though the Harlowes eventually become aware of their guilt, by that point Clarissa has already forgiven them, releasing her father from any blame in her kidnapping, rape, and eventual death, preferring to blame herself, for which the novel praises her. When *Clarissa* is read alongside paratextual material like the appendix Richardson entitled: "A Collection of such of the Moral *and* Instructive Sentiments Contained in the Preceding History as are presumed to be of General Use and Service digested under Proper Heads" and some of Richardson's personal letters, an oppressive version of femininity emerges. Despite the novel's clear disapproval of Mr. Harlowe's cruelty, these texts glorify qualities like duty, subservience, and humility in women; qualities, I argue, that strip women of their autonomy.

Chapter two marks the shift to forced marriage plot novels that include a revision of Richardson's prescriptive femininity. Charlotte Lennox and Eliza Haywood were

direct contemporaries of Richardson who wrote almost immediate reconfigurations of *Clarissa* that respond to their cultural moment's misuse of women in *The Female Quixote* and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Despite the praise for Richardson and *Clarissa* quoted above, not all reactions to the novel were positive. In Lennox's novel, the heroine's father stipulates in his will that his daughter, Arabella, must marry her cousin to inherit her whole fortune, thus ensuring that the family's estates and title will remain together. Arabella, however, has no intention of following this order simply because it is an order, forging her own path to marriage. Haywood's Betsy Thoughtless is pressured by her male relatives into marrying an abusive scoundrel for financial security, as Clarissa was, but once she marries she defies the orders of her husband and the conduct-guide advice she receives on how to deal with such a worthless husband, providing a scathing look at the sexual double standards of the period and the pitfalls of common marriage practices.

The first two chapters are specific in their criticisms of mid-eighteenth-century economic trends, in which upward mobility was, in many respects, a novel occurrence in Britain. Chapter three picks up with two turn-of-the-century novels that situate the forced marriage plot and heroic disobedience in another specific economy: the transatlantic slave trade. Mary Robinson's *Angelina: A Novel* and Charlotte Smith's *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* combine the despotic, marriage-forcing fathers with the figure of the slave owner, exposing material connections between the plights of the enslaved and white British women. These novels go beyond the metaphorical link between slavery and women's oppression Susan Meyer writes of in *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (1993), instead illuminating the cause-and-effect relationship between

the two through the all-encompassing power money provides to the slave owner.[4] Aligning the rebellion of slaves with the heroic disobedience of women, these novels go so far as to suggest retributive violence against the patriarch as a solution to tyranny. The dissertation next moves to a brief Interchapter, in which Jane Austen's novels are discussed in terms of their relationship to the forced marriage plot. While, as I address in the Interchapter, Austen's novels do not quite fit the characteristics of forced marriage plot novels as defined in this project, they are nevertheless a useful touchstone between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, given money's significant role in marriages across her corpus.

Novels by Charles Dickens (*Nicholas Nickleby* and *Dombey and Son*) and the little-studied Elizabeth Stone (*William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*) move chapter four into post-industrial England amidst the rise of stock-market speculation and precarious social attitudes about the morality of capitalism. Specifically, both Dickens and Stone are invested in exploring the impacts of this economy on women, who are depicted within the novels as largely excluded from the male-dominated world of finance and left with limited opportunities. While the preceding chapters focus mainly on young women who come from wealthy families, chapter four also includes a discussion of the ways in which working-class and poor women, like Kate Nickleby and Edith Granger (of *Dombey and Son*) are also forced into marriages, as youth and beauty are shown to be commodifiable qualities upon which women with few other options can rely.

[4] Meyer writes: "The yoking of the two terms of the recurrent metaphor, the 'white woman' and 'dark race,' produces some suggestion in the text of the exploited or vulnerable situation of the people in the race invoked" (142).

The fifth and final chapter extends the dissertation's discussion of speculative finance into the later Victorian period via Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*, with brief forays into other Trollope novels, such as *The Three Clerks* (1857), *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite* (1870), *The Prime Minister* (1876), and *The Duke's Children* (1880), which variously attend to the deep impact social and economic capital retained over marriage practices. Trollope is an author who utilized the forced-marriage plot often throughout his oeuvre, and who – uncoincidentally – also had sharp words for Richardson and his late-Victorian publisher E.S. Dallas, whose 1868 abridged edition of *Clarissa* claimed that Richardson's novel still held deep cultural resonances despite the fact that Victorian women are treated with more justice than women of the eighteenth century. Trollope's novels, which closely engage with contemporary financial habits, prove this claim categorically untrue as they reveal the many ways in which, despite the period's self-styled progress, women faced the same oppression Clarissa Harlowe did in the 1740s.

The novels discussed in chapters two through five utilize elements of the forced-marriage plot but with key departures from Richardson's tome. That is, in rewriting *Clarissa*, the authors use Richardson's plot to: critique his novel, challenging the critical threads that shape it as insightful and important for young women; expose the oppressive social structures of their own period as these relate to women – especially existent financial oppression; and endow their female heroines with what this dissertation terms heroic disobedience against the oppressive structures, providing models for young women to follow instead of the patriarchal models of narrowly-defined virtue and duty. Politicians and writers of later periods often fashioned their historical moment as more

advanced – better – than pervious eras, especially in terms of how women were treated. However, the writers considered in this project realized that women were in many ways just as oppressed in their respective periods as in the eighteenth century and invoking Richardson's master plot helps to expose that faulty rhetoric and to encourage women to advocate for themselves.

These novels are certainly not the only forced marriage plot novels written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Examples proliferate, especially when coercion tactics are employed by parents. Miss Melvyn of Sarah Scott's *A Description of Millenium Hall* [sic] (1762) faces a forced marriage, as does Jane West's heroine Sophia in *The Infidel Father* (1802). Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a forced marriage novella, *Mary: A Fiction* (1788), the advertisement to which states that the heroine "is neither a Clarissa, a Lady G –, nor a Sophie," distinctly separating Mary from the dutiful women in Richardson's corpus (3). Laura Fairlie in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859) is told by her father on his deathbed that he wishes her to marry Percival Glyde, which Laura takes as a binding command. The marriage between John Harmon and Bella Wilfer in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5) is forced, given that Old Harmon stipulates his son must marry Bella or lose his fortune. In *Daniel Deronda* (1876) both Gwendolyn Harleth and Princess Halm-Eberstein are forced into unwanted marriages.

Forced marriage was clearly a plot action that authors found attractive, especially as a method of exploring issues of femininity, society, and oppression. As Ethel Newcome describes courtship in Thackeray's *The Newcomes* (1854-5) "we young ladies in the world, when we are exhibiting, ought to have little green tickets pinned on our backs, with 'Sold' written on them; it would prevent trouble and any future haggling, you

know. Then at the end of the season the owner would come to carry us home," comparing eligible women to paintings at an art sale (333). Given the breadth with which this plot device was deployed across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not all instances of forced marriage could be examined in this study. The novels selected share a few specific characteristics: the struggle over the forced marriage in question comprises a main plot line of the text; the plots contain distinct connections to *Clarissa*'s plot; as previously mentioned, there is a direct *quid pro quo* understanding between the father and suitor; and most of the fathers and stand-in fathers are punished for their tyranny, typically through a socio-economic fall. I have purposefully selected works by both male and female writers. Though the economic exchange of women was undoubtedly a woman's issue, men like Dickens and Trollope, spoke out against it, as well. Additionally, the dissertation features both well-known and studied works, like *The Female Quixote* and *The Way We Live Now*, alongside the works of lesser-studied novelists, such as Mary Robinson and Elizabeth Stone. This has been done to help resurrect their neglected texts from the archives and to show the variety of writers who reacted to *Clarissa* and their own historical moment through the forced marriage plot.

The term "heroic disobedience" is borrowed from Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, whose heroine, Arabella, uses the term to describe her refusal to marry her cousin – her father's choice in husband – simply because he demands it. Inspired by her own literary heroines, Arabella breaks with the patriarchal demands of her father and his supporters, insisting she has the right to marry on her own terms. This act – disobedience against the patriarch – is replicated in each of the novels examined and in all but *Clarissa* is shaped as a heroic decision on the part of the young women. Unlike *Clarissa*, the later

novels use these acts of heroic disobedience to enforce a young woman's right to develop and execute her own wishes, endorsing an empowered – and empowering – agency among women that was often denied women. The forced marriages contracted by the fathers are all unsuccessful; despite their best attempts, their rebellious daughters fight to avoid or leave the mercenary marriages they so dread, including in *Clarissa*. The difference between Richardson's novel and the rewritings of it lies in the latter's insistence that, despite the oppressive socio-economic circumstances in which women live, there are other options for women besides becoming exchangeable objects.

Money and the novel

Reading the novel alongside an analysis of its economic contexts is not a new line of inquiry; as Patrick Brantlinger puts it in *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694-1994* (1996), "from Defoe forward, realistic fiction, at least, is always in some sense about money" (144). For example, such works as Marc Shell's *The Economy of Literature* (1978), John Vernon's *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries* (1984), and James Thompson's *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (1996), and Mary Poovey's *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2008) focus on the representational nature of money and fiction: how the latter incorporates, interrogates, and tries to distinguish itself from the former.

Another common lens through which literature and money are examined together is the novel's wide usage as a means of commenting on the rise of capitalism. In *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature* (2013), for instance, Franco Moretti argues that the rise of the novel is inseparable from the emergence of the bourgeoisie. "A Friend

to Mammon: Speculation in Victorian Literature," by John Reed (1984) is one of the first essays to posit that British novelists used the figure of the speculator as "a topos for what many English people feared as the chief economic disease of their time," a theme more recently and extensively taken up by Tamara Wagner in *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction: Plotting Money and the Novel Genre, 1815–1901*, where she traces manifestations of the "stock market villain" (183, 165). Francis O'Gorman focuses specifically on Trollope's and Dickens' critiques of capitalism in his essay "Financial Markets and the Banking System" (2011) and his Introduction to Penguin's 2016 edition of *The Way We Live Now*. Such publications lead Jonathon Rose to declare in a 2004 book review: "[w]e are now witnessing the emergence of something quite unprecedented – a capitalist criticism" (489). "Capitalism and English studies," he explains, "are fraternal twins, born simultaneously, intimately related, but markedly different, and their sibling rivalry has always been intense. Literary criticism apparently cannot help but read capitalism suspiciously," inspiring generations of literature and criticism exploring the multifarious relationships between the two (490).

What is often lost in such examinations, however, is the specific impacts that the rise of capitalism had on women – a critical gap this project undertakes to fulfill. There are, of course, some notable exceptions to the void. Historian Amy M. Froide establishes the robust investing by English women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Silent Partners: Women as Public Investors During Britain's Financial Revolution*, 1690-1750, 2016). Lana L. Dalley and Jill Rappoport's *Economic Women: Essays on Desire and Dispossession in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (2013) features a collection of essays that explore a variety of instances in which "Economic Man" was, in fact

"Economic Woman" (1). Bringing gender and nineteenth-century economics together, they argue, illuminates "how, and with what social costs, the familiar story of Economic Man was written" (3). The focus on the costs women paid is a useful frame of reference for my own study, especially Kathryn Gleadle's contribution to the collection, in which she studies the journals of Katherine Plymley, who writes about her niece, Jane, who essentially starved herself to death. Jane and Katherine lived in a time of food and financial insecurity; Jane internalized discourses of moral economy to an extreme and fatal degree, showing, as chapters one, two, and four of this project do, that women at times internalized and perpetuated insidious economic practices themselves.

An examination of eighteenth-century novelistic depiction of women that has been informative to this dissertation is Mona Scheuermann's *Her Bread to Earn: Women, Money, and Society from Defoe to Austen* (1993), which zooms in on novels that depict women as active financial agents, since "[t]his emphasis on money suggests an orientation in the novels that places women in the real world, functioning within and dealing with practical daily problems" (30). Her sharp reading of *Clarissa* emphasizes the patriarchal power structures that trap Clarissa Harlowe: "Richardson shows not only that money does not give women power, but that it should not: Clarissa could enter litigation and be free, but good girls die first…In order for Clarissa to remain a paragon, she must never waver from her belief in her parents' goodness and her own guilt" (78). This parallels my own argument in chapter one, though Scheuerman's argument revolves around Clarissa's inheritance while mine examines her father's desire to exchange her in marriage for his own economic benefit.

When analyzing the matrix of women, the British novel, and economics, Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987) is an important touchstone. Armstrong describes the process by which a new kind of woman – the domestic woman – was written into existence across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which resulted in middle-class women emerging as the subjects of novels. Woman writers and women characters lead this charge, which defined domestic women as desirable, more desirable, in fact, than their counterparts: aristocratic women. This new ideology of domestic femininity "aimed at producing a woman whose value rested chiefly in her femaleness rather than in traditional signs of status, a woman who possessed psychological depth rather than a physically attractive surface, one who, in other words, excelled in the qualities that differentiated her from the male" (20). The aristocratic women, then "represented surface instead of depth, embodied material instead of moral value, and displayed idle sensuality instead of constant vigilance and tireless concern for the wellbeing of others" (20). What my project highlights, however, is the extent to which men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resisted this shift in idealized femininity, clinging to the sexual and ideological supremacy of the aristocratic (and in many cases, a similarly-configured wealthy bourgeoisie) woman because of the exchange value she represented. The "signs of status" inscribed in aristocratic or ultra-wealthy bourgeoisie women, as opposed to domestic middle-class women, made wealthy women a valuable commodity – the economic and social capital she represents inscribed on her body. George Hotspur, for instance (examined in chapter five), willingly admits he has no love for Emily, but knows a marriage with her will mean an end to his debts, given

the wealth he will obtain upon marrying her and the social respectability of his father in law, whose good reputation will keep George's moneylenders at bay.

Armstrong's influence is palpable in another important scholarly intervention in novelistic representations of the economic life of women. Women and money, or, more specifically, women with money, are the subject of Elsie B. Michie's *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners From Jane Austen to Henry James* (2011), in which she argues that heiresses "posed a social problem. If those rich women were exchanged outside of the group to which they belonged, the group's property would go with them" (10). She quotes Engels, who wrote in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*: "'the girl was not only permitted but ordered to marry within the gens, in order that her property [be] retained for the gens'" (quoted in Michie 10). Though Engels is discussing the ancient Greek family system, the characteristics of their culture that lead to forced marriages – a shift from material power to paternal authority and accumulation of wealth – apply to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well. Michie and I in many respects examine similar subject matter, the marriages of wealthy women, but our conclusions diverge. In the nineteenth-century marriage plot, according to Michie, the "hero is positioned between a rich and a poor woman and his choice of the poor woman is represented as enabling him to prove himself free from the crassness, vulgarity, and improper pride that taint the novel's wealthy women" (4). Mirroring Armstrong's configuration of anti-aristocratic femininity, Michie posits that in Victorian novels, the heiress is "[o]ften older and potentially infertile, she is engrossed by and identified with her wealth," and that it is in Trollope's novels that "for the first time, the rich woman is a character that is not only appealing but that represents

what the novelist represents as positive values" (16, 103). According to Armstrong and Michie, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British novels portrayed wealth-possessing women negatively: the converse of ideal domesticity.

This project, however, resists such categorizations, focusing instead on the extent to which masculine desire for wealth victimized women (and novelistic representations of fighting against this victimization). The women portrayed here are, with a few exceptions, the inheritors of immense wealth; rather than villainizing them for this wealth, novelists like Charlotte Lennox, Eliza Haywood, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Stone, and Anthony Trollope depict the problems this wealth causes. In response to Sir Harry's demand that Emily marry dull Lord Alfred instead of her second cousin George (whom she passionately loves), Emily "suffered under a terrible feeling of ill-usage. Why was she, because she was a girl and an heiress, to be debarred from her own happiness?" (*Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite* 205). A simple question, but a resoundingly profound one, as 132 years of forced marriage plot novels attests. Money, Emily implies, strips women of autonomy, turning them into objects of exchange between men. It was not until the Married Woman's Property Act of 1882, after the publication of the latest novel considered here, that coverture was altered, allowing married women to own and manage property left explicitly to them. Before this Act, apart from specific settlements like pin money, the bulk of a woman's inheritance belonged to her husband, meaning that fathers like Sir Harry seek a son-in-law who will be an ideal possessor of this wealth. Faced with this situation, Emily Hotspur concludes:

> [h]er father would fain treat her like a beast of burden kept in the stables for a purpose; or like a dog whose obedience and affections might be transferred from

> one master to another for a price. She would obey her father; but her father should be made to understand that hers was not the nature of a beast of burden or of a dog…She would be dutiful and obedient as a daughter, according to her idea of duty and of principle; but she would let them know that she had an identity of her own , and that she was not to be moulded like a piece of clay (205-6).

Fully awake to the injustice of her situation, Emily resolves to live by her own code. Recognizing her father's authority as *paterfamilias*, the narrator emphasizes that Emily will live "according to her idea of duty and principle" – her own system of values rooted in her independent formation of an "identity of her own," rather than blindly accepting the submissive role her father expects. This is a pattern that is repeated throughout forced marriage plot novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the heroic disobedience of these characters exemplifying both the injustices they face and their moral right to stand up for themselves. In each of these examples, the forced marriage plot tells of a woman's fight for and triumph in autonomy.

Chapter One

"Such Terms, Such Settlements!": Clarissa Harlowe and the Patriarchy

Samuel Richardson's 1748 masterpiece *Clarissa or, the History of a Young Lady* is an important touchstone in the history of the novel and in the development of the forced marriage plot, given the in-depth portrayal of Clarissa's interiority during her fight against mercenary economic practices. However, despite Clarissa Harlowe's heroic resolve to avoid an unwanted marriage and her bravery in the wake of Lovelace's manipulation, the novel's "beatification" of her, to borrow her cousin Morden's terminology, is predicated on her embodiment of conduct-guide formulations of femininity that emphasize a woman's submission to the *paterfamilias* (8:19). Clarissa's continued veneration of her father's authority despite his cruelty limits the degree to which she can be read as autonomous or feminist, since her ability to define her own social role is limited by her internalization of patriarchal definitions of femininity. Though Clarissa firmly believes in her right to refuse marriage with Solmes, she falls back on patriarchal value systems that emphasize womanly submission and obedience rather than enacting her own system of values.

This chapter focuses primarily on the relationships between Clarissa and her family members, since it is in these interactions that the novel's formation of ideal femininity emerges. As Scheuermen (1993) notes, "[t]he primary conflict in the novel is not between Clarissa and Lovelace but between Clarissa and her father," since upon his authority she must marry Solmes (62). Understanding the relationship between Clarissa and her father is a paramount – if underappreciated – element of the novel; much of *Clarissa* focuses on the heroine's struggles against Lovelace's abuse, but the full title of

the first edition (*Clarissa. Or, the History of a Young Lady: Comprehending the most Important concerns* of *Private Life. And particularly shewing, The Distresses that may attend the Misconduct Both of Parents and Children, In Relation to Marriage*) emphasizes the importance of parent/child relationships. The first section of this chapter addresses Richardson's advice to parents through his negative portrayal of the Harlowe family, who replace a Christian paternalistic family structure with one powered by greed. Rather than functioning as a benevolent patriarch, Mr. Harlowe is caught up in contemporary notions of upward mobility and favors the posterity of his family's legacy over treating them with kindness in the present. The second part of the chapter examines the idealized form of femininity that Richardson creates in his heroine, highlighting the extent to which compliance and subservience are touted as ideal feminine characteristics.

Family Structure, Wealth Accumulation, and the Harlowes

Though mercantilism reigned supreme in the eighteenth century, the degree to which non-aristocratic families amassed wealth began the gradual infiltration of capitalist ideologies. As E. P. Thompson (1978) succinctly puts it: "[t]his was a predatory phase of agrarian and commercial capitalism" (139). "What one notices about [the eighteenth century] first of all is the importance of money. The landed gentry are graded not by birth or other marks of status but by rentals: they are worth so many thousand pounds a year… This is the century in which money 'beareth all the stroke,'" he explains, quoting Raphael in Thomas More's 1516 *Utopia* (138). Or, as Hudson (2015) puts it, "[f]ollowing the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, British society remained under the firm authority of the monarchy, aristocracy, and the landed gentry. Nonetheless, Britain was also being transformed by the Financial Revolution after the Glorious Revolution of 1688" (1).

England represented a "paradoxical situation…a nation ruled by the old elite but increasingly dominated by commerce" (1). Looking back on the eighteenth century, Truman Marcellus Post (1856) posited that this was the period in which "Mammonism takes possession of the European mind. The money-god sits supreme in all temples," he explains, "[n]ot that man had not always loved money; or that the lust of gold is the peculiar vice of any age. But in this era, it suddenly towers aloft" (92).

Through the Harlowe family, Richardson enacts the drama that was playing out in the British social system as some non-aristocratic families amassed substantial personal wealth, affording high levels of social and political influence and, as Richardson portrays it, wreaking havoc on families. As Gunn (Blewitt, ed. 2001) explains, the established critical conversations surrounding *Clarissa*'s engagement with economics understand the novel as a conflict between emergent bourgeois values (as embodied by the Harlowes) and the waning, corrupt aristocracy (via Lovelace). Gunn, however, usefully complicates this reading, showing instead that in the novel, bourgeois values are aligned with aristocratic habits since together these groups comprised the majority of landowners and were mercenary in the methods they undertook to expand their influence. There was no clear fall of the aristocracy and rise of the middle class, but rather a transition period that benefitted both types of landowners. "Capitalism," Gunn writes,

> has already begun to predominate in both rural and urban areas at the time of *Clarissa*, leaving England in the hands of a relatively small and predatory class of people in possession of substantial land, substantial capital, or both, with the position of the landed proprietor remaining central as the tangible manifestation of power and the goal of nearly all wealth. In this model, capitalism has become

> the dominant mode of production, both for landed proprietor and City magnate, with both operating according to a logic of investment, production, and improvement, seeking the best return possible for their property. (Blewitt, ed. 143)

Clarissa, then, critiques those who, like the Harlowes and Solmes, represent a new, hybrid economic order that shirks the traditional tenets of the paternalistic, domestic space in favor of jockeying for wealth and power. As Gunn puts it, "[t]he novel's surface action depicts a conflict with the ruling class – a disagreement between rival predators – rather than a conflict between representatives of different classes. Despite the differences in their origins, Lovelace's family and the Harlowes are both clearly part of the privileged elite…" (Blewitt, ed. 144). Rather than characterizing these individuals as idealized bourgeoisie, Richardson construes them as motivated by a mercenary desire for land, wealth, and power.

This jockeying for wealth led to the (mis)use of young women as objects exchanged between men for financial purposes. In the eighteenth century, "[a]mong the aristocracy and ambitious gentry, courtship is conducted by fathers and by their lawyers who used women to facilitate financially expedient exchanges," according to E. P. Thompson (138). *Clarissa* portrays Richardson's disapproval of economically-motivated marriages through the Harlowes, who present "a vision of an emergent middle-class culture that abuses and even destroys its daughters to preserve a patriarchy that has become curiously outmoded but nonetheless remains necessary," Houlihan Flynn explains (1990) (Houlihan Flynn and Copeland 3). The Harlowes are members of the landed gentry and have made their money mainly through trade and the inheritance trade

produces; they hope to gain political power and prestige through their liquid assets. John Harlowe found "unexpected" wealth "from his new-found mines," Clarissa's father James "unexpectedly" inherited money, while the youngest Harlowe brother, Antony, by "East-India traffick [*sic*]" (1:28). This family was not always wealthy, but through mercantile success and strategic inheritances they have amassed enough fortune to cement their influence. Indeed, Clarissa's father is introduced as James Harlowe, Esq.; in this period esquire was a title that distinguished landowners and other influential citizens from the common man.[5] Already upwardly mobile, the Harlowe's master plan involves buying enough land to purchase a peerage for James Harlowe Jr., further facilitating their integration into the aristocracy, especially if James marries well. According to Stone and Stone (1984), "entry [into the elite class] was possible either through purchase of an already established country seat whose previous owner had sold out, or through inheritance of a smaller house (and estate) which was then enlarged as a visible token of increasing substance and aspiring status" (8). Land was so prestigious that it could, quite literally, buy power.[6] Some families "amassed so much wealth that they were able within one generation to acquire very extensive estates, build or enlarge a 'prodigy' house, and establish one of England's great aristocratic families" (Stone and Stone 10). The wealth-accumulation and social status to which the Harlowes aspire, then, was actually happening in Richardson's society, and his readers would likely recognize that their

[5] Stone and Stone (1984) explain the title squire "established a new social division, this time confined to those who owned a substantial landed estate and country seat" (8).
[6] In this period, it was common for landowners to elect representative MPs who had landowner's interests in mind. As Phillips (1979) puts it, the unreformed electoral system was characterized by "its three major flaws: the control of the borough seats in the Commons by individual patrons, the general lack of opportunities for popular participation, and electoral corruption" (76).

attitude is not a farfetched fictional creation, but a reflection of the power wrought by wealth.

Planning to aggregate their family's wealth into James' hands, the Harlowes are naturally dismayed when Clarissa, not James, inherits a significant property from their grandfather. Batsaki (2006) explains: "Clarissa inherited her grandfather's estate over the prior claims of his three sons and her elder siblings; this preferential treatment is an outrage to the laws of patriarchal primogeniture" (27).[7] Worried that their two wealthy uncles will follow the example of their grandfather and favor Clarissa over James in their wills, they lash out at Clarissa, blaming her for jeopardizing their plans to elevate the political and social standing of their family (1:77).[8] Clarissa explains:

> I have more than once mentioned to you the darling view some of us have long had of *raising a family*…a view too frequently, it seems, entertained by families which having great substance, cannot be satisfied without rank and title. My uncles had once extended this view to each of us three children, urging as they themselves intended not to marry, we each of us might be so portioned, and so advantageously matched, as that our posterity if not ourselves might make a first figure in our country. (1:77, italics in original)

[7] For more on the significance of the dairy house that resides on Clarissa's inherited property, see Lipsedge's 2009 essay: "'I was also absent at my dairy-house": The Representation and Symbolic Function of the Dairy House in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa,*'" in which she explains that during this period the dairy house was a symbol of affluence, domesticity, and Arcadian, pastoral virtues for women of the upper classes. However, she also points out that to the Harlowes, it represents (what they interpret as) Clarissa's duplicity and lack of duty to her family.

[8] As Richardson explained in a 29 October 1746 letter to Aaron Hill, the anxiety that James feels about Clarissa's property ownership is also the reason he is against her relationship with Lovelace. James is afraid that, since Lovelace has aristocratic connections and his own fortune, his and Clarissa's uncles will decide to put the future hopes of the family (i.e., their fortunes) into that line instead of giving it all to himself.

By “raising a family” her uncles do not mean having and raising children but elevating their family’s social rank. Clarissa explains that the Harlowes are interested in the “posterity” of their family; they want their family’s legacy to grow and prosper in the future while reaping the social benefits of elevated rank in the present. Specifically, Clarissa’s father and uncles hope to concentrate enough wealth and property in her brother to “give him such an interest as might entitle him to hope for a peerage,” which requires help from Solmes (1:77). Clarissa’s aunt explains:

> But what shall we say about the terms Mr. Solmes offers. Those are the inducements with everybody. He has given hope to your brother that he will make exchanges of estates, or at least that he will purchase the northern one; for, you know, it must be entirely consistent with the family views that we increase our interest in this country. Your brother, in short, has given in a plan that captivates us all; and a family so rich in all its branches that has its views to honour must be pleased to see a very great probability of being on a footing with the principal in the kingdom.” (1:118)

This marriage would allow the Harlowes to exponentially increase their land holdings, as Solmes’ extensive property abuts their inherited land. They strike a deal: Solmes will get Clarissa in exchange for signing her property, which becomes his upon their marriage, over to James in addition to some of his own land, formulating Clarissa as a bargaining chip in this exchange. They believe, as Bueler (2011) puts it, that “sons inherit their fathers’ positions and become superiors themselves, but daughters never do, being given instead into the possession of other men” (27). That is, they see her as a commodity they can barter toward their own ends. Through the Harlowes and their dealings with Solmes,

Richardson provides a critique of the ways that money and self-interest eclipses all other concerns, becoming the driving force in the family dynamic.

Eighteenth-century fatherhood

Clarissa presents a sense of unease regarding who gained access to wealth and power in England, how they obtained it, and what this did to family structures. According to the novel, Mr. Harlowe – as the father – is in a position to protect and nurture his family, but instead the greedy wealth-building ethos he embodies causes him to victimize his own daughter. In post-Enlightenment England, the ideal father-figure held dual roles as the *paterfamilias* or monarch and as a nurturer. Sir Robert Filmer's 1680 claim that fathers were bestowed with "Royal Authority over their Children…by the Ordination of God himself" maintained a relevance throughout the eighteenth century (as the repeated reprints of his treatise *Patriarcha* evidences), yet other theories of fatherhood developed in the period (12). Daniel Defoe's 1715 *The Family Instructor*, for instance, encourages fathers to model benevolent Christianity as told through vignettes highlighting the father's role as nurturer. Realizing that he has been lax in his son's religious instruction, the father in one of the dialogues exclaims: "Dear Child! You ought to have been told who God is before now; indeed I have neglected to instruct thee as I ought to have done, but I'll tell thee now, my Dear" (22). The father is loving and affectionate, bestowing gentle endearments on his son and inculcating a strong sense of religion in him. Thus, it was the father's duty to protect the family and encourage a Christian lifestyle. Fathers were discouraged from imposing physical punishment and were encouraged to take on a gentler, more sentimental form of authority as opposed to acting as unforgiving, rash tyrants while maintaining their role as the family's authority figure. Lawrence Stone

(1977) refers to this family structure as the closed domesticated nuclear family, which is characterized by an affective bond between members.

> The four key features of the modern family – intensified affective bonding of the nuclear core at the expense of neighbors and kin; a strong sense of individual autonomy and the right to personal freedom in the pursuit of happiness; a weakening of the association of sexual pleasure with sin and guilt; and a growing desire for physical privacy were all well established by 1750 in the key middle and upper sectors of English society. (22)

The importance of a father's playing a nurturing, positive role in the life of his family passed through British thought in the eighteenth century even as older ideologies pertaining to the father's ultimate authority within his home persisted: indeed, the two are not mutually exclusive, as Bailey (2010) has stated, but still speaks to the increasing belief that a father's rule over his family should be a kindly, nurturing rule.

Mr. Harlowe's mercenary outlook, however, stunts his role as his family's nurturer as he disavows the Christian paternalistic model of fatherhood for one that is self-serving, making *Clarissa* as much about how not to behave as a father as it as about proper behavior of daughters. Indeed, Richardson printed an updated edition of Defoe's *The Family Instructor,* entitled *A New Family Instructor* in 1732, an indication he found Defoe's nurturing version of fatherhood relevant. Due to his obsession with "*raising*" his family Mr. Harlowe victimizes his own daughter; as the head of the family, Mr. Harlowe is in a position to protect Clarissa, but instead he lets James terrorize her to "mortify" her into a "sense of duty" rather than taking charge of the matter himself (1:151). Bowers (2011) argues that from Richardson's perspective, Mr. Harlowe's main fault is that he

abdicates his role as head of the family to his son, who then goes on to rule with an iron fist. Perry (2006) contends that by splitting the patriarchal power between the father and the son, Richardson allows Clarissa to partially rebel against it, in that she can direct her anger toward her brother's manipulation of her family while remaining respectful of her father, rendering Clarissa "both obedient and independent" and preventing her from ever being "disrespectful of patriarchal authority" (67-8). Both Bowers and Perry indicate that the relationship between Mr. Harlowe and his son is atypical and leads to issues within the Harlowe household, especially when compounded by Arabella's antagonism and Mrs. Harlowe's utter powerlessness. Believing that any inheritance bestowed upon his sisters is wasted, James' favorite platitude is: "a man who has sons brings up chickens for his own table…whereas daughters are chickens brought up for the tables of other men" (1:73). Configuring his sister as a bartering tool he can use toward his own ambitions, James shows no regard for Clarissa's autonomy, valuing his personal gain more than his sister's emotional well-being. Ross (1985, 2004) has linked James' power over his family to James II, who took his authority "to demented lengths and destroyed his own power as king" (19). While James' tyranny over Clarissa is obviously unjust, eighteenth-century notions of fatherhood dictate that Mr. Harlowe, as *paterfamilias,* is ultimately the authority in the household. Letting James execute his machinations indicates Mr. Harlowe's approval of his son's actions.

Isolated from her community, friends, and eventually even her parents, Clarissa effectively becomes a prisoner in her own home: her family her jailers, her crime refusing the marriage they force upon her. "I will be obeyed, I tell you; and cheerfully too!" her father threatens, "Or you are no child of mine" (1:50). She explains to Anna Howe that

her family expects her "*to be as dependent upon* [her] *papa's will as a daughter ought to be who knows not what is good for herself.* This is the language of the family now" (1:79, italics in original). Though James has been the mastermind behind the mechanics of her oppression, here Clarissa pinpoints her father as its ultimate source. It is Mr. Harlowe who allows his daughter to endure such mistreatment and who is ultimately blamed for the misery it causes. His mercenary desire for wealth and influence eclipses his role as the family's nurturer, enabling the whole family to treat Clarissa – the marriageable daughter – as nothing more than an object for their own use. As she complains to Anna: "I am to be treated by my brother and, through his instigations, by my papa, as a slave in this point, and not as a daughter" (1:138). Tyrant that he is, Mr. Harlowe no longer sees Clarissa as an individual being but as an economic tool he is willing to force into an undesirable marriage. As Clarissa begs to remain single, her family is busy drawing marriage settlements and ordering her wedding dress against her will, even threatening to forge her signature on the marriage license and hire compliant witnesses if she does not comply.

Clarissa has strong reasons for rebuffing Solmes' proposal – "Rich Solmes," as her family calls him – whose characterization as one of the novel's villains is explicitly linked to his financial habits, underscoring the degree to which contemporary economic habits negatively impact the family unity within the novel (1:33). As Watt (1957, 2001) puts it, Solmes "is most unpleasantly typical of the rising middle class: mercenary with the squalid concentration of '*an upstart man*'" (221, emphasis Watt's). Specifically, primogeniture is at the heart of Clarissa's repugnance toward Solmes; though he inherited massive wealth and land holdings – enough to assist poorer relations – he is a miser who

selfishly hoards his wealth. According to Rule (1992), primogeniture was increasingly common among non-aristocratic families in the mid-eighteenth century, since it allowed the value of an estate to accumulate over generations, augmenting the family's wealth and influence over time (41). This is exactly what the Solmes clan has done (and what the Harlowes hoped for before Clarissa inherited such a significant estate). Clarissa explains that Solmes "was not born to the immense riches he is possessed of: Riches left by one niggard to another, in injury to the next heir, because that other is a niggard," and that he is going to "rob" the rest of his family of their rightful portions of the family money to negotiate a marriage settlement for Clarissa (1:81, 80). Solmes' family raised specific branches of the family at the expense of others, disregarding Christian family values. Always depicted within the novel as a scoundrel, Solmes is clearly condemned for neglecting poverty-stricken family members for the sake of amassing a valuable estate.

Through Richardson's portrayal of Mr. Harlowe, James, and Solmes, the villainy of these men appears in full force, especially when considering the cruel, mercenary ways in which they grasp onto emerging capitalist ideologies of estate building that were becoming more prevalent within the period. Caring more about their financial success and political power than common decency, they relentlessly persecute Clarissa. Mr. Harlowe's guilt is especially palpable given the ways in which he deviates from his role as the family's nurturer, morphing instead into its tyrant. However, as the remainder of this chapter shows, Richardson's condemnation of emerging capitalist greed that manifests in wealthy men like Mr. Harlowe and Solmes is not a blanket condemnation of the larger patriarchal social and legal structures that allow such men to exist, but rather is

used to further highlight Clarissa's idealized sense of virtue in rendering herself submissive to patriarchal ideologies regarding a woman's proper role in society.

"An authority I will never dispute": *Clarissa,* conduct guides, and supporting the patriarchy

Calling on existing social discourses, especially conduct-guides and religious advice, Richardson uses his heroine to construe women into a narrow, pre-determined version of feminine virtue contingent upon respecting the patriarchy at all costs. Despite her family's mistreatment, in the end Clarissa takes all the blame for the misery they cause and maintains her sense of duty toward her father, which necessarily distances Richardson from a feminist stance. Though she asserts her will in her refusal to marry Solmes and Lovelace, Clarissa considers her father "an authority I will never dispute"; her commitment to her father, despite his many flaws, becomes the cornerstone of her characterization (2:29). In short, Clarissa is portrayed as an ideal woman because of her extreme respect for the patriarchy, especially patriarchal conduct-guide discourses of the home and Christianity that kept women powerless. Such texts – and *Clarissa* – follow Gayle Rubin's (1997) formulation that in examining the patriarchal nature of societies, "one begins to have a sense of a systematic social apparatus which takes up females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products" (158). These "products," virtuous and submissive women, are perfectly conditioned to uphold and serve the patriarchal society that created them in the first place. The doctrines in these conduct guides and *Clarissa* teach young women to always subjugate their own wills, rendering them passive, submissive figures that impede feminist causes.

Richardson's perspective on women does not exist within a vacuum. Rather, he draws on profuse political, social, and religious discourses which taught women that obedience and subservience are women's ideal virtues. Such guides have dual purposes: they define women by submissive characteristics that reify women's powerlessness – and men's ultimate authority. For instance, the political pamphlet/conduct-guide hybrid *The Present State of Matrimony: Or, the Real Causes of Conjugal Infidelity and Unhappy Marriages* (1739) by Philogamus argues that the state of marriage is declining in England because women have too much freedom and suggests counteracting this by, among other things, forcing women to wear "dading-strings" and "hanging-sleeves," articles of clothing typically only worn by toddler-aged children, until they are married (22). Arguing that women must be actively kept dependent on men their whole lives, Philogamus believes forcing women to wear physical markers of childhood long into adulthood is one way to enforce his vision. Richard Allestree's *The Ladies Calling* is another pertinent example. This popular conduct guide was first published in 1673 and was still in high demand decades after its publication: new editions were published regularly until 1787. An Oxford-educated cleric who served as a religious counselor for Charles II (among other impressive offices), Allestree is perhaps best-known for his 1658 religious guide *The Whole Duty of Man*.[9] Showing little faith in the intelligence or reasoning capabilities of women, Allestree claims in *The Ladies Calling* that women have a "natural imbecillity [*sic*]" and he emphasizes meekness as an important quality in women, since "[m]eekness is generally subservient" (36, 46). Though meekness was in

[9] *The Whole Duty of Man* is mentioned in *Pamela II* when Pamela and Lady Davers see a copy of it in a local cottage and remark approvingly on its use among children (335). One of Oxford University's libraries is named The Allestree Library to this day.

some ways related to Christian notions of humility and obedience to god's will, in a socio-political context it worked to keep women "subservient," to borrow Allestree's term, to men. Women who believed that meekness was a desirable quality of femininity were, by logical extension, more likely content in subordinate positions in their households and societies. Such is the case with Mrs. Harlowe who, though she and Clarissa have previously shared a close relationship, does not impede her husband's machinations. Furthermore, Allestree's guide refers to women in the third person; he addresses a male audience about molding ideal, subservient women.

Wentenhall Wilkes' 1740 *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady, Being a System of Rules and Informations: Digested Into a New and Familiar Method, to Qualify the Fair Sex to be Useful, and Happy in Every Scene of Life* was in its fourth edition by the time the third edition of *Clarissa* was published in 1751. Like Allestree, Wilkes combines religious and practical advice he purports will help women become more virtuous, but which also keeps women in subordinate roles. His central message is that women should look forward to heavenly rewards rather than earthly ones; getting to heaven (as a woman) requires earthly toils and sacrifices. There is little grey area between morality and immorality: a woman is one or the other. Mercy, forgiving others who may or may not be worthy or forgiveness, and humility are especially important elements of femininity to Wilkes. He describes his ideal woman as someone whose "Bowels are full of Mercy, and she prefers the Necessities of others to her own superfluous Delicacies; she moderates her own Enjoyments, to be the better enabled to relieve [others]" (89). Women, that is, obtain joy in giving joy to others, not in experiencing it for themselves. He defines humility as "a Meekness of the Understanding,

a Meekness of the Will, and a Meekness of the Affections" (92). Charity and humility are, of course, important to Christianity – especially in the New Testament – but these Christian virtues are extracted and marketed to young women in ways that discourage them from cultivating their own subjectivities. Rather, their identities are defined for them, emphasizing their social and religious duty to always put others – and the welfare of the home – first. As Francis Lynch wrote in *The Virgin's Nosegay, Or the Duties of Christian Virgins* (1744):

> Home is where a Woman shines most, 'tis her proper Sphere; it was assign'd her by Nature; and does she behave as she ought there, she is sure of Applause from all her Acquaintance, of Reverence, Duty and Respect from her Children and Servants and what she should ambition above all Things in this Life, of Love and Esteem from her Husband. (188-9)

Lynch echoes his fellow conduct-guide authors in locating the home as the center of a woman's virtue. According to Lynch it is a woman's moral obligation to create a domestic space that is pleasing to her family, especially her husband, and the pleasure of these domestic endeavors must encompass her whole being. Interrogating this interpretation of Christianity reveals a dark view of women's lives in the eighteenth century. That is, this advice kept women in subservient social roles, tethering salvation to domesticity and subservience, preventing women from developing their own autonomous identities. Since women were often more useful as objects of exchange between men, it was expedient to instill in them that it was their ultimate duty to remain meek, humble, and content within the home. Female virtue was thus irrevocably shackled to submissiveness to the patriarch, whether father or husband.

Despite the close associations between conduct guides and *Clarissa*, Marks was compelled to argue in 1986 that: "there has yet to be any extended consideration of [*Clarissa*] in light of what Richardson had intended to write, that is, a conduct guide," and this assertion remains largely true of *Clarissa* criticism (3). Marks, and Keymer (1992) after her, make compelling cases that Richardson explicitly created *Clarissa* as a novelistic version of a conduct guide.[10] Indeed, in a letter to Dorthey Bradshaigh Richardson wrote that he hoped she would keep her copy of *Clarissa* alongside other popular conduct guides, implying they are all the same genre of writing. Clarissa, then, is an amalgam of the idealized, submissive versions of femininity lauded by Allestree, Wilkes, Lynch, and the others; she embodies self-sacrificing conduct-guide qualities, such as mercy, in ways that underscore her function as a role model for other young women. Indeed, in the Preface Richardson alludes to Clarissa as a woman of "virtue and honor" and as "an Exemplar to her Sex": she is a guide for other women to follow (1:iii, iv).

One quality that Richardson dwells on is Clarissa's sense of mercy: she forgives her family for the many ways they mistreat her and blames herself instead. Toward the end of her life Clarissa obsessively writes letters and a will to be delivered to her family after her death. In these letters Clarissa down-plays the role that her family (especially her father) played in pushing her out of the domestic space into Lovelace's arms while highlighting her own and Lovelace's faults. To her "*Ever-honoured*," "*Most dear*" father, Clarissa appeals for mercy as a supplicant, rather than one who has been gravely wronged

[10] Keymer sees *Clarissa* as a novel/conduct-guide hybrid (xviii, 105). Additionally, Richardson wrote to Aaron Hill on 1 February 1741 that he wrote *Pamela* "to promote the cause of religion and virtue" (Carroll, ed. 41).

(8:22, italics in original). “With exulting confidence now does your emboldened daughter come into your awful presence by these lines, who dared not but upon This occasion [her impending death] to look up to you with hopes of favour and forgiveness; since, when This comes to your hands, it will be out of her power ever to offend you more” (8:22). Begging her father’s forgiveness, she shapes herself as the only guilty party in her downfall, ignoring her father’s tyrannical behavior. “Still on her knees,” Clarissa begs, “let your poor Penitent implore your forgiveness of all her faults and follies; more especially of that fatal error which threw her out of your protection” (8:22). Ostensibly referring to leaving her father’s home, Clarissa again blames only herself for the events that transpired, even though her father enabled – even encouraged – her mistreatment to a degree that precipitated Lovelace’s kidnapping plot.[11] Following the lead of contemporary conduct-guide authors Clarissa extends qualities like mercy to an extreme degree, actively condoning her father’s behavior and reifying the notion that only women must face consequences for the actions of others.

Clarissa even looks to exonerate her brother, whom she describes to Belford as “really a worthy young man, but perhaps a little too headstrong” (8:16). A “worthy young man”? A “little too headstrong”? Earlier in the novel James is equated to Clarissa’s slave driver, yet as she nears the end of her life her tone toward her family stresses her culpability, not theirs. Writing to “implore [their] pardon,” she explains that “every vein

[11] Clarissa does go so far as to admit that leaving her father’s home with Lovelace was “involuntary”; the novel is clear that she does not go willingly but is pressured into receiving his letters by her family concerns (8:23). As Clarissa writes to Anna, “I am very uneasy to think how I have been *drawn* on one hand, and *driven* on the other, into a clandestine, in short, into a mere lover-like correspondence, which my heart condemns” (1:149). She does not want to exchange letters with Lovelace, but fears if she stops corresponding with him he will attack her brother; she does not willingly run away with him but agrees to meet him and is abducted through Lovelace’s intricate, pre-meditated plan. As Eagleton (1982) points out, some critics try and obscure this fact when analyzing the novel (64-5).

of my heart has bled for an unhappy rashness" (8:23). Again, she underscores her fault in leaving the family circle without acknowledging the huge role they played in expelling her from it. She goes on to ask James for his "pity" and to "forgive her faults, both supposed and real," imploring him not to attempt vengeance on Lovelace: "ought an innocent man run an equal risk with a guilty one?" (8:25-6). Clarissa's mention of her "supposed" wrongs subtly indicates she has been mischaracterized, yet even as she acknowledges his unfairness her tone is apologetic. As discussed above, Richardson makes it clear that both James and Mr. Harlowe are indeed guilty parties in Clarissa's fall into Lovelace's trap. These passages from her letters, however, imply James is an innocent party rather than a primary antagonist. Clarissa extends mercy to everyone except herself, firmly victim-blaming herself to vindicate her father and brother.

Mercy, or forgiving others, was often touted as an important quality in a Christian woman, such as in Wilkes's conduct guide (where he wrote that a woman's "bowels" should "be full of mercy"). While mercy is important to Christianity, in the eighteenth century it was disproportionately shaped as necessary in women over men. Wilkes insists that "Revenge and Malice are the Fruits of Disobedience, and the Offspring of Hell; and should therefore be avoided, as Monsters made for Ruin and Destruction" (85). To refuse mercy and forgiveness is to be vile and lowly; in the novel characters like James, Arabella, and Lovelace indulge in low feelings like malice and revenge while Clarissa is above them – she forgives all who sin against her. As noble as this may seem there is a darker side to it as well. Often conduct advice included mercy in discussions of dealing with abusive fathers and husbands. Wilkes advises that a wife's "Meekness and Complacency, are the only Weapons wherewith to combat an irregular Husband" (173).

Lynch echoes this claim in *The Virgin's Nosegay* as well. To deal with a drunk husband he advises that "a Smile will have more Effect upon a Man in Liquor than a reproachful Look" (186-7).[12] Richardson, Wilkes, and Lynch teach women to forgive all grievances they may have against their *paterfamilias*, even when the behavior is bad or harmful. In emphasizing the need for women to exhibit mercy even in extreme cases, these authors instruct women to silently endure harsh treatment from their families and do so with smiles on their faces, promoting silence on wrongs endured and forgiveness for the abuser.

Clarissa's internalization of her society's victim-blaming paralyzes her, foreclosing any possibility of a happy ending. "[A]nd now," she writes, "being led to account for the cause of my temporary calamities, [I] find, I had a secret pride to be punished for, which I had not fathomed: and it was necessary perhaps that some sore and terrible misfortunes should befall me, in order to mortify…my pride, and…my vanity" (8:29-30). Charging herself with vanity and pride, Clarissa renders herself culpable for the steps her family (and Lovelace) pushed her to take. Her letters and the last scenes of her life reveal her peace with death given God's promise of forgiveness, but readers might ask if she had anything to be forgiven for in the first place? As the expanded conclusion to the third edition reminds readers:

> The unhappy Parents and Uncles, from the perusal of these Extracts [of her letters], too evidently for their peace, saw, That it was entirely owing to the

[12] Mary Wollstonecraft attacks this dictate in *Maria, or The Wrongs of Women* (1798). "Women who have lost their husband's affection are justly reproved for neglecting their persons, and not taking the same pains to keep, as to gain a heart; but who thinks of giving the same advice to men…why a woman should be expected to endure a sloven, with more patience than a man, and magnanimously to govern herself, I cannot conceive" (79).

> avarice, the ambition, the envy of her Brother and Sister, and to the senseless confederacy entered into by the whole family, to compel her to give her hand to a man she must despise, or had she not been a CLARISSA, and to their consequent persecutions of her, that she ever thought of leaving her father's house. (8:252)

This conclusion, written by Mr. Belford, is unequivocal in its condemnation of the Harlowe family's attempt to force Clarissa's marriage with Solmes and the subsequent ways in which this rendered her susceptible to Lovelace's trickery. By the end of the novel the Harlowes recognize their role in Clarissa's death and are punished with immense regret and misery (indeed, both Mr. and Mrs. Harlowe are dead within three years of Clarissa's demise, seemingly crushed by the weight of their guilt). However, an important aspect of Clarissa's characterization is that she both forgives her family for their past treatment and shifts the blame for their antagonism onto herself, embodying patriarchal configurations of female meekness. In the updated Introduction to the novel's third edition, Richardson asserts:

> It was not only natural, but it was necessary, that she should have some faults, were it only to show the Reader, how laudably she should mistrust and blame herself, and carry to her own heart, divested of self-partiality, the censure which arose from her own convictions, and even to the acquittal of those, because revered characters, whom no one else would acquit, and to whose much greater faults her errors were owning, and not a weak or reproachable heart. (1:vii)

Admitting that Clarissa makes mistakes, Richardson doubles down on the notion that she is noble for taking the blame for her tragedy despite the fact that her family members are really the ones at fault. Clarissa does not just forgive her family, but, as Richardson

points out, she "acquit[s]" them, indicating that – in Clarissa's mind, at least – they are blameless. Instead, Clarissa blames herself, falling into the toxic trap of victim blaming, earning praise from her creator. As the earlier volumes of the novel make clear, Clarissa is aware of the role her family plays in her tragedy, but at the end of her life she overlooks these faults to the point that she blames herself for them. She is no blind dupe, but rather she openly upholds the patriarchal values instilled in her by her family, culture, and religion and becomes a scapegoat to ease their consciences: for this Richardson celebrates her as a paragon of virtue and "the Vehicle [for] the Instruction" of readers, as Richardson reminds readers in the postscript to the third edition (8:297) .

Another component of Clarissa's affirmation of patriarchal authority is her act of willing her property to her father. Clarissa's grandfather empowered her with the right to will her property as she desired: an unusual act within this period, when men were so often the controllers of wealth and women had few rights to private property ownership. However, as Belford mentions, her grandfather was suspicious of the Harlowe family's motives and guessed they would attempt to control the estate he desired Clarissa to own, so he explicitly states in his own will that Clarissa is able to will her property – her grandfather's legacy – however she desires.[13] A few minor legacies are left to friends like Mrs. Hervey and Mrs. Norton, but her "ever-honoured Father" obtains the bulk of her estate as Clarissa's final act of mercy, duty, and humility (8:99). As Scheuermann (1993) has said of Clarissa's will: "[i]t is part of Clarissa's virtue that her filial regard for her parents is absolutely unshakable," and she shows this in her final act by leaving her estate

[13] Aware of her family's designs for this land she even attempts to use it as a bargaining chip, offering to give the land to her father in exchange for his voiding her engagement to Solmes, but even that is not enough for the Harlowes.

to her father (79). Or, as Carnell (2011) puts it, Clarissa embodies "traditional paternalism"; she "is aware that her father is unjust or she would not consider escaping with Lovelace; however, the principle of divine right theory means that the monarch is always right, even when he acts tyrannically" (Blewett, ed. 127, 123). Cognizant of the cruel treatment she has endured at the hand of her father, both directly and indirectly (through the freedom he gave James and Arabella), yet in the end Clarissa's sense of duty to her patriarch transcends his mistreatment of her. This is, perhaps, the ultimate act of respect for patriarchal authority, as Clarissa is in effect funding the continued mercenary estate-building practices that victimized her, signaling her compliance with the system.

Interlude: *Pamela II*

I would like to present a second example from Richardson's oeuvre that interacts with issues of female subservience in similar ways, showing that the patriarchal message imparted in *Clarissa* is no anomaly, but exemplifies Richardson's attitude toward women: his sequel to *Pamela* (1740). Two additional volumes were added to the original text in January 1742 that update readers on Pamela's life since her marriage to Mr. B.[14] One of the central points of conflict in the sequel is whether Pamela will breastfeed their baby. Though many genteel women utilized the services of wet nurses, in the mid-eighteenth century there was an increasing awareness that breastfeeding one's own baby provided health benefits to both mother and baby, and Pamela is aware of these theories: "where there is good Health, free Spirits, and plentiful Nourishment; I think [nursing] an

[14] Richardson updated the title to: *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded, In a Series of Familiar Letters from a Beautiful Young Damsel to Her Parents: and Afterwards, in Her Exalted Condition, Between Her, and Persons of Figure and Quality, Upon the Most Important and Entertaining Subjects, in Genteel Life.: Publish'd in Order to Cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes*. This title emphasizes the extent to which Richardson intended this novel to be didactic.

indispensable Duty. For this was the Custom, of old, of all the good Wives we read of in Scripture. Then the Nourishment of the Mother must be most natural to the Child," she reasons (4:10). Additionally, Pamela worries wet nurses might drink or be unhealthy in ways that could negatively impact the baby. Mr. B, however, is adamant that Pamela will not breastfeed their child for purely selfish reasons, fearing that breastfeeding will diminish Pamela's beauty, that spending time around a nursing baby will be bothersome to him, and that nursing will keep Pamela from engaging in sex with him.[15] The narrative makes it clear that Pamela is in the right – she has scientific facts and biblical precedent on her side – but Mr. B's word is law in their household. Pamela writes to Miss Darnford: "could you ever have thought, Miss, that Husbands have a Dispensing Power over their Wives, which Kings are not allowed over the Laws?... Can you believe, that if a Wife thinks a Thing her Duty to do, and her Husband does not approve of her doing it, he can dispense with her performing it, and no Sin shall lie at her Door?" (3:370). Mobilizing political discourse, she explains that within their society a husband's power over his wife is more exhaustive than the power a King has over his subjects, rendering her compliance compulsory. A husband's opinion thus takes precedence over a woman's own wishes, even if his opinion is deeply flawed and selfish. What is most important – more important that nursing one's own child or following one's own conscious – is obeying the patriarch.

Ultimately, Pamela concedes and does not breastfeed their son, a decision that Latimer (2013) cites in support of her argument that Richardson's fiction subverts patriarchal authority:

[15] It was a common belief in the eighteenth century that sex spoiled breastmilk. For more on eighteenth-century breastfeeding practices, see Toni Bowers' *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760*, pp. 159-163

> Pamela's decision to obey is significant: she can see her duty as a mother and as a wife, even if Mr B cannot see his as a father and husband. Her judgement and action are separate – but both morally validating, because she understands the requirements of motherhood but also the regrettable necessity for wifely submission. Her decision to obey is politically safe without compromising her native ability to judge. In this manner, Pamela hints at the fictionality of submissive femininity, denaturalising it: it is dependent upon the consent of the submissive, and is not natural or inevitable. (83)

Pamela knows that breastfeeding is better for their son, but she also believes it is her duty as Mr. B's wife to obey him without argument. Latimer views this as a progressive depiction of femininity, since Pamela submits to her husband of her own free will after carefully weighing her options, as opposed to blindly following his order. Emphasizing the fact that Pamela's instinct is to breastfeed, Latimer argues that rational, individualized thinking such as Richardson depicts in Pamela was rare in depictions of women in this period. However, as Latimer also points out, Pamela disregards her better judgment in order to obey Mr. B, even though she knows doing so could come at the cost of their infant's wellbeing. Latimer's larger argument is that "submissive femininity" is only a myth in Richardson's work; his heroines do not embody feminine submissiveness since they think critically and make decisions for themselves. However, if Pamela knows that Mr. B is wrong and selfish for forbidding her to nurse their infant, why does that make her decision to obey him any less submissive? If anything, it is anti-feminist in the sense that in *Pamela II*, as in *Clarissa*, Richardson glorifies women who submit to patriarchal powers even though they know that these are flawed. In fact, Clarissa makes a similar

argument when Anna suggests Clarissa turn to the courts to retain her right to her property: "I would sooner beg my bread, than litigate for my right with my father: Since I am convinced, that whether the Parent do his duty by the Child or not, the Child cannot be excused from doing hers to him" (2:57-8). Admitting her father is not properly fulfilling his paternal role, she still insists in her duty to him. Richardson's novels promote self-sacrificing notions of femininity that were intended to keep women powerless within the larger social structure; a woman who always obeys her husband – flawed though he may be – is one who will not threaten patriarchal hegemony. Despite Richardson's awareness of the oppression women faced he still values women who revere the patriarchy rather than rebel against it.

Clarissa's canonization and idealized domestic femininity

Clarissa further praises the heroine's self-sacrificing spirit of duty to her family through a letter Anna writes memorializing Clarissa's admirable qualities. In this letter readers get concrete examples of the ways in which Clarissa's enacts feminine duty that can be easily replicated in the reader's own life. Such passages augment Clarissa's portrayal as an ideal woman, further aligning her with the embodiment of conduct-guide and religious guidelines that the novel ultimately enforces among women. The novel contains a laundry list of Clarissa's venerable qualities, almost all of which emphasize the duty of a woman to put the needs of her home and family above her own desires. For example, Anna praises Clarissa's skills in managing her dairy house and her ability to entertain others by reading aloud, singing, and painting. She also extolls Clarissa's aptitude for and love of needlework, charity to the poor, moderate and healthy diet, hatred of cards and games of chance, preference for listening rather than speaking,

regular and productive daily schedule, and desire to never sleep for more than six hours a night to maximize the waking hours in which she can be industrious and charitable (8:214). Elegiac in tone, Anna's praise emphasizes the ubiquitous ways Clarissa's sense of self-sacrifice manifests itself in her daily life. From a feminist perspective, however, the qualities that Anna (and Richardson) laud in Clarissa all emphasize self-sacrifice to the point of never putting one's self first. Richardson's ideal woman is one who always strives to be in the service of others, denying her own desires while linking her identity to the home.

Richardson also highlights the connection between feminine virtue and the domestic space by contrasting Clarissa's love of homemaking with Sally Martin's and Polly Horton's lack of interest in domestic pleasures. In the third edition of *Clarissa*, Richardson expands the Conclusion to give Sally and Polly backstories that function as cautionary tales warning young women to value domestic pleasures over worldly ones. Sally's story emphasizes the "part[ies] of pleasure," love of all "public diversions," and "luxurious living" that she experiences as an adolescent inculcated an insatiable appetite for pleasure (8:258). Unlike Clarissa, Sally "hated the Needle" and considers "Family-management" "a qualification only necessary for hirelings, and the low-born" (8:259-60). Her disdain of household work and quiet amusements is indulged by her parents, who encourage her to marry for money. Like Clarissa, Sally has immoral parent figures but unlike Clarissa she has an innate desire for social amusement and glamor which cause her to fall prey to Lovelace; the sexual relationship she commences with him in turn precipitates her fall into prostitution, showing that love of social amusements and luxury lead to ruin. Polly's story is similar. After the death of her father, her mother embarks on

a mission to ensnare another husband. Watching her mother's highly flirtatious behavior exposes Polly to an immoral faction of society. Mother and daughter spend their days "in active and idle amusements, and kill-times, as some call them" (8:266). That is, they waste time in pursuit of idle pleasures that do not benefit either the domestic space or personal virtues. The lax morality exhibited by Polly's mother also instills in the daughter a love of romance novels, "that sort of Reading, which is but an earlier debauchery for young minds" (8: 266).[16] By the time Polly is fifteen, she "was ready to fancy herself the Heroine of every Novel...She glowed to become the object of some Hero's flame" (8:266, 268). When Lovelace enters her life he perfectly fits her perception of a romantic hero, promising amusement and sex but – unfortunately for Polly – without the security of marriage, which throws Polly into a life of prostitution.

As Sabor (1998) points out, the expansion of Sally and Polly's back-stories in the expanded third edition adds complexity to their characters. "These young women did not appear in the world just to torment Clarissa," he writes, "they have life stories too" (Stuber, ed. xx). These life stories show connections to and disruptions from Clarissa's narrative arc. One the one hand, they all have parents who set bad examples for their daughters. On the other hand, Sally and Polly willingly follow in their parents' footsteps by shunning the pleasures of the domestic space for the lures of public amusements and scandalous romances. Richardson parrots conduct-guide authors like Allestree, who wrote that: "[s]he who is first a prostitute to Wine, will soon be to Lust also," and that modesty is "a thing so essential and natural to the Sex, that even the least declination

[16] Charlotte Lennox takes up the supposed immoral impacts of novel-reading in *The Female Quixote* (discussed in chapter two), as does Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey*, though these texts also reveal the gendered nature of the bias against romances.

from it, is a proportionable receding from Woman-hood; but the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay sets them as far beneath those, as an acquir'd vileness is below a native" (*The Ladies Calling* 15-16). Young women allegedly have very little self-control, and one seemingly small moral slip, such as drinking or reading romances, inevitably leads to worse offences from which women can never recover. Speaking of Sally aiding an abortion, Belton alleges "Thus, unchastity her first crime, murder her next" (8:264). "Murder" is described as the obvious next step after engaging in sexual activity – there is no grey space when it comes to women's virtue. After Lovelace's first (failed) rape attempt, Clarissa declares that "I am sunk in my own eyes"; even though she actively tries to resist Lovelace's sexual advances, rather than encouraging them like Sally and Polly, she still subscribes to such a narrow view of feminine virtue that she sees herself as permanently damaged goods (5:199). This narrow view of virtue, tied irrevocably to virginity, infuriated Mary Wollstonecraft, who later in the century laments that girls are, "as it may emphatically be termed, *ruined* before they know the difference between virtue and vice…A woman who has lost her honour, imagines she cannot fall lower, and as for recovering her former station, it is impossible; no exertion can wash this stain away" (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 143, italics in original). Arguing that society should reexamine its definition of virtue, Wollstonecraft quips: "[w]hen Richardson makes Clarissa tell Lovelace that he had robbed her of her honour, he must have had strange notions of honour and virtue. For, miserable beyond all names of misery is the condition of a being, who could be degraded without its own consent!" (143). So deeply has Clarissa internalized patriarchal, conduct-guide formations of femininity that she sees her very identity as degraded by Lovelace's villainy. *Clarissa*, then, ultimately upholds

conduct-guide configurations of femininity that place narrow restrictions on what qualifies as proper womanly behavior to mold women into ideal upholders of patriarchy.

Paratexts as keys to reading *Clarissa*

Richardson included a vast amount of paratextual material with the various editions of *Clarissa* that instill a didactic message about female virtue while presenting a narrow definition of femininity. One of these paratextual materials is an appendix called "A Collection of such of the Moral *and* Instructive Sentiments Contained in the Preceding History as are presumed to be of General Use and Service digested under Proper Heads," published with the third edition in 1751 and also as a stand-alone volume that same year, which in many aspects encourages readers to use the novel as they would a conduct guide, providing succinct examples of proper conduct within the novel. This appendix contains an alphabetical table of themes present in *Clarissa*, such as "Advice and Cautions to Women," "Beauty and Figure," "Duty" and "Obedience," to name a few, along with brief words of wisdom pertaining to the relevant topic and page numbers where readers can look up examples of where those lessons were imparted in the novel (see figure 1). The advice given in this section supports the central messages of the novel and gives an especially harsh take on feminine virtue. "A Collection" contains tidbits such as: "If a woman be not angry at indecent pictures or verse shown her by a libertine, but smiles at them, she may blame herself, if she suffer from his after-attempts"; "A fallen woman is more inexcusable than a degraded man, as, from the cradle, the Sex is warned against the delusions of men"; and "A man who insults the modesty of a woman, as good as tells her, that he has seen something in her conduct, that warranted his presumption" (8:310, 8:313, 8:311). Blaming young women for the advances of men

A

COLLECTION

Of SUCH of the

Moral *and* Inſtructive SENTIMENTS,

CONTAINED IN THE

PRECEDING HISTORY,

As are preſumed to be of

GENERAL USE and SERVICE.

Digeſted under Proper HEADS.

With References to the Volume, and Page, where each Sentiment, Caution, Aphoriſm, Reflection, or Obſervation, is to be found.

Adverſity. Affliction. Calamity. Misfortune.

GREAT allowance ought to be made for the warmth of a ſpirit embitter'd by undeſerved diſgraces, vol. i. p. 214.

People in Misfortune are apt to conſtrue even unavoidable accidents into ſlights or neglects, ii. 145.

Adverſity is the ſtate of trial of every good quality, ii. 149.

People in Adverſity ſhould endeavour to preſerve laudable cuſtoms, that ſo, if ſunſhine return, they may not be loſers by their trials, *ibid.* iii. 44.

When Calamities befal us, we ought to look into ourſelves, and *fear*, ii. 238. 246.

Misfortunes are often ſent to reduce us to a better reliance than that we have been accuſtomed to fix upon, ii. 245. v. 338, 339.

No one is out of the reach of Misfortune. No one therefore ſhould glory in his proſperity, ii. 245.

Be

Figure 1: Title page of Richardson's "A Collection." English Short Title Catalogue.

regardless of the circumstances, “A Collection” holds women to a higher – and double – standard. There is an automatic assumption that a woman who receives the attentions of a rake has asked for it; it is victim-blaming in its purest form. Richardson paints a dichotomous image of good and bad. That is, a young woman can either be entirely good and virtuous and therefore above those whose virtue is compromised, or she has a compromised virtue and is susceptible to others of the same kind.

The section entitled “Duty. Obedience.” is especially fraught with the distillation of patriarchal ideology into advice for women that glorifies the self-sacrificing nature of womanhood and renders women subservient. For instance, Richardson advises, “[t]he merit of Obedience consists in giving up an inclination,” and “[w]here is the praise-worthiness of Obedience, if it only be paid in instances where we give up nothing?” (8:332). Perfect obedience, which he pegs as necessary to female virtue, requires a woman to sacrifice her own desires, especially to her parents, since “[t]he Duty of a child to her parents may be said to be anterior to her very birth” (8:333). “It is better for a good Child to say,” he continues, “her Parents were unkind to her, than that she was undutiful to them” (8:366). According the Richardson, being a daughter necessitates obeying others, even in situations when doing so involves enduring unkindness or injustice. Notably, the section “Duty. Obedience.,” contains almost no male pronouns as do the other sections (since “A Collection” includes advice for men as well as women). The section emphasizing duty and obedience is explicitly directed at women, highlighting their importance to the female experience as defined by Samuel Richardson.

Richardson's Letters

If the preceding examples from the novel (especially its interaction with contemporary conduct guides) and its paratextual material are not convincing enough, a final clue to Richardson's oppressive view of women's identity-formation is found throughout his many letters. Richardson carefully saved and documented the letters he wrote and received with a mind toward their being published after his death, and he was even known to circulate some of the letters he received among his friends during his lifetime. As Warner (1979) explains, Richardson's letters are good guides to his political and social views. In fact, Warner notes that Richardson sometimes quotes his own novels in his letters, "as they were the scripture of this epistolary dominion" (145). In his letters Richardson refers to his novels when discussing real-life scenarios, and vice-versa, showing the extent to which he wanted his readers to think of his novels as models of conduct. For example, Richardson explains in a November 26, 1749 letter to Susannah Highmore, an eighteenth-century poet who likely came to know Richardson through her husband, the famed painter John Highmore, that Clarissa owes her parents complete obedience despite their mistreatment of her. "Is the girl to be the judge," he asks dismissively, "and is she to dispense with the word and thing called duty, should her parents be less indulgent that she would have them to be?... the want of duty on one part justifies not the non-performance of it on the other, where there is a reciprocal duty" (Carroll, ed. 131). Richardson emphasizes the importance of a daughter's obedience throughout his letters, especially when his correspondents question Clarissa's loyalty toward her father.

Echoing this again on December 21, 1749 to Frances Grainger, he argues: "because [Clarissa] had it to reflect, that for 18 out of 19 Years of her Life, she had the Love, the Admiration, and almost the Adoration of her Parents and Uncles. And if for that one year they were despotic, arbitrary, tyrannical, were ever Parents more severely punished for their Tyranny, than they" (Carroll 138-39). The tolerant, loving treatment Clarissa enjoyed for her first eighteen years of life necessitates her obedience and loyalty, despite their cruel behavior to her. In his letters Richardson is not advocating for the mistreatment of young women such as the Harlowes enact on Clarissa, but neither does he admit the Harlowes are wrong for believing in their authority over Clarissa. Richardson's writings betray an underlying assumption that women are naturally inferior and thus unable to make informed, rational decisions themselves. Women who made their own decisions, then, were free to select partners without considering the financial or political interests of the family, which was a real anxiety in a period when marriage was relied upon as a method of retaining or building a family's fortune. By following the orders of the family patriarch, however, a woman could be led to the expedient choice.

Another pertinent example of Richardson's troubling characterization of women's familial duty is found in the relationship he fostered with Hester Mulso Chapone, a young Bluestocking with whom Richardson conversed about literature and social issues. After meeting at a social event, the two struck up a conversation about whether Clarissa should feel guilty for disobeying her father's order that she marry Solmes. As Thomason (2009) explains in her analysis of Chapone's letters to Richardson, Chapone's texts are wonderfully complex documents themselves. "She creates a fictional father-daughter relationship with Richardson that allows her to appear humble and charming while she

presents controversial views" (326). Chapone discusses views on marriage and female authority that were highly controversial in this period. In fact, the editor explains in the Preface to an 1803 edition of Chapone's letters, her family members initially didn't want her correspondence with Richardson published because "the sentiments contained in these letters were not adapted to an age in which parental authority and filial obedience are so much relaxed as in the present" (vi). In short, they were afraid about how her controversial views would impact her legacy. The editor, however, convinced her family to publish her letters as examples of bravery and wisdom in the face of a formidable opponent. The editor describes Richardson as someone "who both in his public writings, and (as it has been affirmed) in his private character, carried these notions [of filial obedience] to the most rigid extreme," praising Chapone's "discernment to detect, and courage to combat the errors of a work received with so general, nay, even enthusiastic approbation as the 'History of Clarissa Harlowe,'" lauding Chapone as a pivotal figure in exposing the patriarchal ideologies undergirding Richardson's work (viii).

In her letters to Richardson Chapone argues that Clarissa should feel no guilt for disobeying her father, or even for leaving his house. Criticizing Clarissa's deep sense of duty to her parents, Chapone describes Clarissa's "unreasonable apprehension of paternal power" (83). Unlike critics, such as Samuel Johnson, who praised Richardson's representation of the female mind, Chapone does not believe Clarissa accurately represents the way real-life women would react to the same set of circumstances.[17]

[17] According to George Birkbeck and Norman Hill's 1897 *Johnsonain Miscellanies*, for instance, Johnson believed "Richardson owed that delicacy of sentiment, that feminine excellence, as I may say, that so peculiarly distinguishes his writings from those of his own sex in general" to all the time he spent with women, and that *Clarissa* in particular "was the first Book in the world for the knowledge it displays of the human Heart" (251, 252).

Unfortunately, some of Richardson's letters to Chapone have not survived (which is somewhat surprising given how religiously Richardson kept his correspondence), but one can get a good sense of their subject and tone from Chapone's. On November 10, 1750, for instance, Chapone wrote:

> You think I expressed myself too strongly with regard to forced marriages, and perhaps I did, for I always considered marriage in a more solemn light than the generality of people do… I did not expect from Mr. Richardson, to have heard any excuses, any palliatives for their sordid, base way of thinking; I did not expect to hear from HIM that 'daughters many times have reason to wish that they had been prevailed on,' to give their hands where their hearts refused to be given... that however strong your aversion may be to your lover, you can't fail of loving your husband; as if the ceremony of marriage could alter the nature either of the man, or the woman, and remove the natural antipathy between worth and baseness, between good sense and folly, between the grovelling [*sic*] dirty little soul of a Solmes, and that of the almost divine Clarissa. (56-7)

Based on the context of this letter and the quotes from Richardson's earlier letters that Chapone includes, it appears the two are discussing a hypothetical scenario in which Clarissa, or a woman like her, marries Solmes. Chapone, clearly against forced marriages, is shocked that Richardson endorses "prevail[ing] on" daughters to marry "where their hearts refused to be given." Seemingly, Richardson wrote to Chapone that the bond of marriage would change a woman's mind, causing her to feel affection where she previously felt contempt. This same argument comes up again in a later he wrote Chapone dated April 18, 1752, in which he says: "...had [Clarissa] been prevailed upon to

go to the Alter with Solmes, there can be no doubt, but she would have made him an excellent Wife. She would have endeavored to love him" (Carroll, ed. 207). This is, perhaps, a shocking statement for readers of *Clarissa* to come across; Richardson actually wrote that Clarissa could have been happy if she had been forced or tricked into marrying the repulsive Solmes. It begs the question: if marriage with Solmes wouldn't have been that bad, does that mean her parents were right all along? Should she have submitted and married him? Does this imply that all that transpired with Lovelace is her own fault? These are questions that cannot necessarily be answered with certainty. Nevertheless, they are questions raised by Richardson's comments in his letter to Chapone.

In one sense, there is a disconnect between Richardson, author of *Clarissa*, and Richardson, writer of misogynistic letters. That is, Richardson makes it clear in the novel that a marriage with Solmes would be disastrous, especially since Solmes plans on ruling their future home with fear instead of love.[18] Despite the unfortunate series of events that transpire, Clarissa is justified in refusing Solmes as a husband. However, in his letters Richardson presents forced marriages in a different, gentler, light, indicating that Richardson held different standards for real women than his fictional characters. Critics do not know exactly what Richardson wrote to Chapone to prompt her 1750 letter, but viewpoints such as those in his April 1752 letter show the degree to which Richardson, as a man in the mid-eighteenth century, internalized and endorsed elements of his day's patriarchal attitude toward women despite his recognition that men like Solmes and Mr.

[18] Anna tells Clarissa about a conversation between Solmes and Sir Harry Downeton in which Solmes says: "Fear and Terror…looked pretty in a Bride as well as in a Wife…It should be [my] care to perpetuate the occasion for that *Fear*, if [I] could not think [I] had the *Love.* And, truly, [I] was of the opinion, that if LOVE and FEAR must be separated in Matrimony, the man who made himself *feared*, fared best" (2:63). It is also in this conversation that Solmes says that Clarissa's "Estate…would richly repay him for all he could bear with [her] shyness," indicating his financial interest in her (2:62).

Harlowe commodified women as financial tools for their own social advancement. As Carroll puts it in his introduction to *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* (1964), throughout his letters Richardson "betrays his quite conventional assumption of male superiority" and "did not trust women to act independently" (22, 23). This is especially obvious in statements that surface in his letters, such as: "Women are safest when dependent" (203).[19] In the end, Clarissa's characterization, the novel's paratexts, and Richardson's letters prove his own involvement in propagating an idealized, submissive feminine subjectivity that upholds patriarchal culture

Conclusion

The debate surrounding Richardson's depiction of femininity – whether it warrants celebration or condemnation – has existed for centuries, as Chapone's letters show. As critical interest in the development of the novel emerged in the mid-to-late twentieth century, *Clarissa* was often looked to as a key text in the development of novelistic development of women. That is, critics like Watt and Armstrong posit that Richardson strove for a realistic, true-to-life, complex representation of female subjectivity in a way unlike preceding writers. However, many critics since then have pointed to a more oppressive undertone to Richardson's depiction of femininity in Clarissa Harlowe. Still, however, there is a critical impulse to excavate moments of feminism in Richardson's text. In this chapter I have pointed to moments in Richardson's writing that challenge arguments positing any latent or obvious proto-feminist portrayal of female subjectivity. Looking at the relationship between Clarissa Harlowe and her parents, the novel's paratextual material, Richardson's letters, and the ways in which

[19] 2 March 1752, Richardson to Chapone.

these overlap with – and configure themselves as – contemporary conduct advice for young women, I show in this chapter the ways in which the female subjectivity displayed in *Clarissa* conforms to generations of patriarchal, oppressive treatment of women that relegates them to submissive, domestic positions even as it condemns the Harlowe family's mercenary treatment of Clarissa. Rather than creating in its heroine a sense of autonomy and self-constituted subjectivity, the novel ultimately reifies predetermined notions of femininity that strip women of their autonomy. Though Clarissa does betray moments of rebellion (through her refusal to marry Solmes and her illicit correspondence with Lovelace and Anna), at the end of the novel she repents of these actions, justified though they were, and exalts in her sense of duty to her father despite the pain he causes her. Clarissa is full of mercy, charity, and, in the end, an unwavering sense of duty to her father. While these characteristics are depicted as praise-worthy, when examined alongside conduct guides, paratextual materials, and Richardson's letters, their oppressive outcomes are revealed, in which they are used to form women who never question their *paterfamilias* and who will accept the blame for social evils caused by powerful men. In Clarissa's case, this victim-blaming paralyzes her within the narrative, preventing her from moving forward to a happy ending. As the following chapters show, however, later writers (and some of Richardson's contemporaries) took issue with the novel's victim-blaming and compliance with anti-feminist ideologies even as they use the forced marriage plot, adapting it to explore the (mis)use of women as exchangeable commodities in their own periods.

Chapter Two

"You are a strange Girl": Lennox and Haywood Redefine Femininity

As *Clarissa* reveals, during the mid-point of the eighteenth century, novelists were interested in the growing role that money played in family life. The Harlowes, corrupted by their increased desire and ability to climb the social ladder, saw their daughter as a commodity they could exchange for social and political clout with Solmes as a strategic ally. However, as the novel also reveals, existing attitudes about the role of women in this changing society remained fraught, often tethered to notions of submission and "virtue" – a euphemism for virginity – that imbued women with social and material value. Richardson's novel, intended as a guide in morality, upholds conduct-guide formulations of femininity that emphasize the need for submissiveness in women and plays a part in blaming victims for the wrongs others have done to them even as criticizes the socio-economic forces that victimized her in the first place.

Clarissa Harlowe's story captured the attention of eighteenth-century readers, but not all the reactions were positive. The following chapter examines novels by two of Samuel Richardson's contemporaries: Charlotte Lennox and Eliza Haywood. These women, both of whom had complex professional relationships with Richardson, rewrite the plot of *Clarissa* in *The Female Quixote* (1751) and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1750), adapting the plot in ways that expose the oppressive underpinnings of the original. Arabella and Betsy's families desire financial and social; dictating the marriages of these young women is, they believe, their best means of accomplishing their goals. Much like the Harlowes, they attempt to force the young women into marriages that Arabella and Betsy find undesirable, but which would be financially expedient to

their families. Additionally, these novels interact with contemporary events, such as the Clandestine Marriage Act, that show forced marriages for financial gain were not just the stuff of fiction, but a real threat to young British women. Unlike Richardson, however, these women writers – who both knew the grim realities of unstable economic situations – create heroines who rebel against the oppressive systems they face. Arabella and Betsy fight for autonomy; the forced marriage plots they experience are used to model female subjectivity that is not defined by humility and obedience but a willingness to fight for one's own definitions of womanhood and virtue.

Charlotte Lennox and Samuel Richardson

Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* is commonly discussed in terms of its similarities to *Clarissa*, especially since Lennox cultivated a professional relationship with Richardson. In fact, Carlile (2018) begins her critical biography of Lennox with the image of young Charlotte Lennox standing at Richardson's front door. "[T]o Charlotte, Carlile explains, his influence could make the difference between paying the rent in the space she shared with her unreliable husband…or having to slip away again in the night because they could not pay their bills" (3). This meeting, obtained with the help of Lennox's friend Samuel Johnson, was one that Lennox hoped would propel her career forward:

> Her clothes were worn, even threadbare, and she may have worried he would only see her as a charity case…Making an impression on him was essential, but she wouldn't do it in the usual way that women impressed men at this time. Her mind was the commodity he would assess, and he had a draft of the early part of her second novel, *The Female Quixote*. She was desperate for him to see her literary

> talent…Richardson's help could be the difference between a few more years of stability or a return to the transience that had dominated her young life. (3)

In Carlile's telling, Lennox's career – and economic stability – hinged on this meeting with Richardson, configuring him as a crucial player in her literary success. Similarly, Doody (2008) articulates: "Richardson was to act as her agent and advisor in the preparation of *The Female Quixote* for the press" (xiii). "[A]s a novelist," Isles (2008) adds, "he gave her literary advice; as a printer, he printed the first edition of *The Female Quixote*; as one of London's most prominent men of letters, he used his influence in the literary world on her behalf" (419).[20] Lennox, in such criticism, is portrayed as owing a great debt to Richardson, who is said to have had a great influence over *The Female Quixote*. While this is true to a degree, this chapter delves into the fissures – both formal and ideological – that existed between Lennox and Richardson, emphasizing her independence from Richardson's influences.

Much twentieth- and twenty-first-century criticism of Lennox's novel focuses on its form and the ways romance tropes are used to critique society and the literary market, in which the novel was quickly becoming established as a superior and masculine form of fiction by writers like Richardson, Fielding, and Defoe. "We can read Lennox's own text as a self-conscious intervention in the debate over the new fiction," according to Martin (1997), "one that uses both romance and novel to expose the gendered rhetoric of the dominant discourse" (46). As Jones (2000) puts it, *The Female Quixote* critiques certain

[20] Isles contends Richardson's feedback on *The Female Quixote* was fairly superficial, though she did follow his advice that she shorten the intended-three volume novel to two volumes (422). Additionally, as archival discoveries have shown (see Brack and Carlile 2003), Lennox became very frustrated with Richardson during the printing process of the novel, as there were serious delays in its printing. Lennox seems to have retained at least a little resentment toward Richardson for this for some time, and the second volume of *The Female Quixote* was printed by a different printer.

tropes of romantic fiction, as Richardson and Fielding do, yet within this critique is also "a counter-critique of the idealisation of domestic virtue and companionate marriage in the Richardsonian novel" (207-8). That is, these critics place Lennox in a prominent position within the development of the novel in eighteenth-century England. While male authors were shaping the novel, as a genre, toward formal Realism, Lennox was also thinking about the direction of the novel and what constituted Realism – especially realism from a female perspective. While most critics highlight the disparity between Arabella's romantic, dramatic perception of life and the Realist fiction of Richardson, this chapter shows the ways in which Arabella's romance-inflected fantasies are framed in a manner that highlights their connections to reality as experienced by young women, especially considering its relationship with popular conduct guides for women, patriarchal legislation, and Richardson's *Clarissa*. Readers are then able to see the degree to which Lennox critiques her own society's hypocritical treatment of young women. Popular literature of the period often taught young women to be wary of men, yet, ironically, this is exactly what Arabella is reprimanded for doing. Arabella, as the title of this chapter indicates, is considered "a strange Girl" because of her odd beliefs and behaviors (41). The qualities that make her seem "strange" to her family are also qualities that diverge from accepted performances of femininity. In Lennox's telling, however, these qualities – her independent spirit and willingness to define her own values – are celebrated. Through Arabella's reenacting of Clarissa Harlowe's trials, Lennox provides an alternative configuration of femininity based on autonomy, not submission to patriarchal authority.

Richardson's influence over the production of *The Female Quixote* is well-documented, but the degree to which *The Female Quixote*'s plot mirrors *Clarissa* bears further scrutiny. For example, the central plot device that moves each story forward is the father's insisting on his right to select his daughter's husband. While the Marquis, Arabella's father, is more patient with his daughter than Harlowe, more closely resembling the nurturing model of fatherhood Defoe advocates in *The Family Instructor*, he still is resolute in his decision and in his power to enforce it. The Marquis proves that even fathers who appear kind still wield authority over their daughters. "Know, Bella," he explains, "that I not only permit [Glanville] to love you, but I also expect you should endeavor to return his Affection; and look upon him as the Man whom I design for your Husband" (39). Like Clarissa, she is expected to obey her father's plans without question. The Marquis continues, "you have never, he said to her, disobeyed me in any one Action of your Life; and I may with reason expect you will conform to my Will in the Choice I have made of a Husband for you, since it is impossible to make any Objection either to his Person or Mind; and, being the Son of my Sister, he is certainly not unworthy of you" (41). Though he is less bullying in his demand than Mr. Harlowe, the Marquis is nonetheless forcing his daughter into marriage with her cousin. Like Clarissa, Arabella's past obedience reassures her father that she will comply with this demand. Despite this, many critics overlook the fact that Arabella faces a forced marriage. Ross (1991) does address it but insists that Arabella's resistance to the marriage "is made to seem especially foolish because her father is less overtly bullying than Juliet Capulet's or Clarissa Harlowe's. He simply expresses the wish that his daughter marry the man of his choice and hopes that her filial affection will incline her to accept" (99). Though the

Marquis does not resort to the extreme measures that Clarissa's father does, close reading of his language reveals that he is insistent; he does more than express a wish, as Ross characterizes. In fact, he tells Glanville that he intends to "bestow" Arabella to Glanville through this marriage (30).

Additionally, an under-discussed aspect of *The Female Quixote* is the degree to which the Marquis uses Arabella as a vehicle for inheritance. With no sons, his title – Marquis – will descend to his nephew Glanville, whose father is only a Baronet. Arabella will inherit her father's estate, but contemporary property laws mandated that a woman's property became her husband's upon marriage: selecting a son-in-law also meant selecting the person who will ultimately control the Marquis' property. Glanville, then, represents an endogamous marriage that allows the family estate and title to remain within their clan, cementing the Marquis' legacy in future generations while lifting the rank and fortune of the Glanville line. As in *Clarissa*, readers are presented with a father who sees his daughter as the vehicle for actualizing this process of inheritance. Though the Marquis "could not resolve to force her Consent," he "intended only to use Persuasions to effect what he desired," believing Arabella can "be prevailed upon to comply" (42-43). That is, the Marquis does not plan to physically force or threaten Arabella with violence, as the Harlowes do, but the narrative is clear that this marriage is nonetheless forced. What kind of "Persuasions" does the Marquis intend to use? How does he think he can prevail her into compliance? The novel leaves these questions temporarily unanswered, but the Marquis is firm. He insists: "you must not think it strange, if I insist upon directing your Choice in the most important Business of your Life" (42). Despite the level-headed tone he takes with his daughter, the Marquis

unwaveringly demands that Arabella's choice in husband is his to make and, tellingly, describes it in economic terms: marriage is, to him, a business decision and thus made by the paterfamilias. As with Harlowe, the Marquis' selection of a husband for his daughter is about family lands and inheritance – he wants his estates to be kept within their family and he wants to appoint the guardian of that property himself.

The Marquis is trying to combat the breaking up of estates (which enriched people like the Harlowes) by keeping his lands and title intact. After his banishment from court, the Marquis' estate becomes his source of pride. "The vast Extent of Ground which surrounded [his] noble [castle], he had caused to be laid out in a Manner peculiar to his Taste…if this Epitome of *Arcadia* could boast of only artless and simple Beauties, the Inside of the Castle was adorned with a Magnificence suitable to the Dignity and immense Riches of the Owner" (6). Hurt over his banishment, the prideful Marquis pours his ego into his estate. Already at an advanced age when Arabella is born, he knows that her future husband will become the caretaker of this estate and wants it managed accordingly. Who better than his own nephew – the future Marquis – upon whom the current Marquis can rely to uphold the integrity of the estate and not sell it off to the newly-formed middle class who were eager to add prestige to their newfound wealth. From as early as the seventeenth century, Stone and Stone (1984) explain, there was concern among the aristocracy about the infiltration of their ranks by "self-made newcomers" who would lead to the "decline of the gentry" by "men from outside the country and of dubious background" (17). There was an impulse among those who held these fears that prestige (land, titles) must be kept among those whose birth – not new money – qualified them for it. Though the Marquis never explicitly states this, his

obsession with his estate suggests a desire to keep it in trustworthy hands; forcing his daughter into a marriage with her cousin is a measure the Marquis is prepared to take in order to do so.

Forced marriage and the Clandestine Marriages Act

As Parliamentary debates show, the issue of forced marriage was a social issue in addition to one played out in novels: these debates culminated in the 1753 Clandestine Marriage Act, which effectively legalized forced marriages in the name of estate-building. The ideologies that enable men like the Marquis to dictate the marriages of their daughters were not isolated, fictional events, but a narrative that mimics contemporary attitudes toward women: namely, that their autonomies were secondary to the economic endeavors of their families. Before the Clandestine Marriage Act there were fewer regulations surrounding marriage ceremonies. The mutual consent of the couple and absence of other living spouses were in many cases the only legal requirements to marry. Debate over the efficacy of these laws pepper the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; bills introduced in 1690, 1712, and 1719 endeavored to define marriage practices and streamline the process, though the two latter reforms failed to pass. By 1736, however, the arguments about why reform was needed were shifting, becoming increasingly focused on using marriage to protect the property of landowners. A 1736 bill was introduced by Viscount Thomas Gage, who claimed that "many Persons under age, who are entitled to considerable Fortunes, are frequently married without the Consent of their Parents and Guardians, to the great Prejudice and Ruin of many Families" (quoted in Probert 215). Probert (2009) explains that "among the solutions proposed was the equally class-specific suggestion that agreements to marry would not be

regarded as contracts of marriage if either party to the marriage, or their parents, owned property above a certain value" (215). Marriage was increasingly discussed in terms of financial and class issues, rather than as a religious sacrament.

Marriage regulations were taken up by parliament again in 1753 when Lord Hardwicke introduced "An Act for the Better Prevention of Clandestine Marriages," as the full title of the bill stated. According to Francis (2003), most clandestine marriages were simply "irregular" marriages, or, weddings not conducted in strict adherence to canon law (156-7). Clandestine marriages were not necessarily secret marriages, but the bill's supporters held that irregular marriages (which were common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) were easier for a couple to conduct without the knowledge of their parents. Hardwicke's Act proposed several new regulations: Anglican clergymen must officiate weddings; banns must be read three times in the parish where the marriage was to take place, or a special license could be granted by the bishop; and – most controversially – the written consent of fathers was required for marriages of individuals under 21 years of age. The bill was specific in privileging the authority of fathers over mothers, extending the already-extreme authority men like Harlowe and the Marquis had over their children's lives.[21]

According to Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, the bill's supporters celebrated policing marriage as a method of consolidating wealth among the already affluent. As the M.P. A. G. Ryder argued, "How often have we known the heir of a good family seduced,

[21] A father's approval or disapproval of a child's marriage always over-ruled the mother's if they disagreed. Additionally, a father could appoint a guardian or trustee to provide dis/approval in case of his death. This guardian or trustee's dis/approval took precedence over the mother's, as well. If the father was dead and had not appointed a trustee, only then would power of legally approving or disapproving of her child's marriage go to the mother. However, as Probert points out, if the mother remarried then her new husband, not her, would get the power of approval. Additionally, mothers could be deemed insane or unfit to provide written approval, but fathers or male guardians could not (226).

and engaged in a clandestine marriage, perhaps with a common strumpet? How often have we known a rich heiress carried off by a man of low birth, or perhaps by an infamous sharper?" (3). The suitability of a spouse was not measured by intrinsic qualities but by their economic potential; both heirs and heiresses were considered vulnerable and in need of legal protection. Fathers, then, would have the authority to prevent marriages they classified as imprudent in the name of protecting – and augmenting – family wealth. "I think we should contribute to a lord's being always sure of matching himself with some rich heiress," M.P. John Bond argued, "and thereby restoring the lustre and the independency of his family" (quoted in Harth 128). This bill was touted as one that would secure the economic, social, and political superiority of those who already held high positions; it was not about protecting young men and women from marriages that might make them unhappy but was meant to protect the privileged position of their patriarchs.

Legislation that enabled estate hoarding was distasteful to some Members of Parliament. Robert Nugent derided his colleagues in the House of Lords, critiquing the self-interested nature of the bill: "should the Bill be passed into a law, they will thereby gain a very considerable and a very particular advantage; for they will in a great measure secure all the rich heiresses in the kingdom to those of their own body" (Cobbett 14). This is the sort of wealth concentration that the Marquis hopes for via the marriage of his daughter and his nephew. At its core, the Clandestine Marriage Act was about consolidating wealth (and thus power) among those who already held it, extending the power that fathers held over the marriages of their children allowed for greater control of wealth. Though *The Female Quixote* was published before the final passage of the

Clandestine Marriage Act, the conversation surrounding the issue proliferated from the failed 1736 Act through the successful passage in 1753, infusing Arabella's struggle with social relevance; beneath the seeming mockery of Arabella's quixotism lies a serious commentary on the social (mis)treatment of women.

Arabella's Heroic Disobedience

While Arabella's plight mirrors Clarissa Harlowe's in many respects, Lennox creates in her a heroine whose version of femininity differs from Clarissa's, especially in her refusal to meekly revere the authority of her father out of a sense of blind duty. She is shocked by his demand, immediately insisting on her right to marry on her own terms:

> *Arabella*, whose Delicacy was extremely shocked at this abrupt Declaration of her Father, could hardly hide her Chagrin; for, tho' she always intended to marry at 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; and that it was necessary she should pass to this State thro' a great Number of Cares, Disappointments, and Distresses of various Kinds, like them; 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 Fidelities. The Impropriety of receiving a Lover of a Father's recommending appeared in its strongest light. (27)

Arabella has absorbed ideas about courtship from her romance novels. She expects marriage to be one of the great dramatic events of her life and wants a husband who must pass through strenuous trials to prove his love. Roulston (1995) posits that Arabella lengthens the duration of Glanville's courtship (despite the Marquis' demand that

Glanville expedite the process) because courtship was a period during which women held the upper hand: "within eighteenth-century parameters, the time of courtship constitutes the only period of female agency and autonomy, in which the female subject can control social relations," which thus "enables the relation between female beloved and male lover to be transformed into a feudal relation between lord and servant, in which the female beloved never becomes an object of exchange or subject to circulation (31, 32). Thus, refusing to be forced into marriage on her father's timeline, Arabella enjoys a position of relative power over the men in her life that temporarily eclipses her role as an object of exchange between men. However, the passage above suggests an additional, if simpler, reason for her "Chagrin" over this betrothal. While Glanville is not financially mercenary in the same manner as the undesired suitors discussed later in this project are (and he does apparently have genuine feelings of affection for her), to Arabella he represents an undesirable lover in that he has not proven himself worthy.[22] While, on the one hand, it is easy to mock Arabella's expectations of courtship as ridiculous (she expects marriage "to be brought about with an infinite deal of Trouble"), on the other hand what she essentially wants is a lover she knows is worthy of her. She lauds the men of her romance novels, who "haply sighed whole Years in Silence, and did not presume to declare his Passion, till he had lost the best Part of his Blood in Defence [*sic*] of the Fair one he loved" (90). She wants a lover on whose affection and steadfastness she can rely; one who has proven himself worthy of her esteem, rather than one forced on her and accepted

[22] Lennox makes it clear that Glanville is truly smitten with Arabella but does leave the specter of financial motivations hanging over the novel. Glanville will only inherit a fraction of the Marquis' estate if Arabella marries someone else. His father, Sir Charles, is constantly frustrated with Arabella's whims and worries she will be an embarrassment as a wife, "but she is one of the best Matches in England for all that," according to Sir Charles, because of her wealth (202).

without question. What Arabella fights for is her right to apply her own values to her search for a husband. She "strengthen[s] her own Resolutions…by those Examples of heroic Disobedience," she finds in her romance novels (27). Though ridiculed by the other characters in the novel, these romance heroines model alternative forms of femininity that embody strength, resilience, and independence. Arabella looks up to these strong women; she praises Amazonian women for their physical strength and bravery. Thalestris, for instance, "tho' the most stout and courageous of her Sex, was, nevertheless, a perfect Beauty; and had much Harmony and Softness in her Looks and Person, as she had Courage in her Heart, and Strength in her Blows" (125). Arabella's cousins see physical strength, bravery, and beauty as paradoxical – impossible – aspects of femininity, but Arabella admires these qualities in women and models herself on them, rather than the narrower definitions of femininity espoused by the Glanvilles and eighteenth-century society at large.

The Female Quixote and conduct guides

There are two moments in the novel that critics tend to cite as examples of the ways that Arabella's romance novels have overly excited her imagination. Both the carp-stealing incident, when Arabella thinks their thieving grounds-worker is a nobleman in disguise who wants to kidnap her and the later scene in which she jumps into a river because she thinks the same man is going to rape her, are looked upon as moments when Lennox is criticizing Arabella and the way she has allowed herself to become influenced by romance novels. Ross (1991), for instance, is one of many scholars who argue that Arabella has been mis-educated by her romance novels, and that "whereas Betsy Thoughtless and Harriot Stuart were falsely secure, Arabella is falsely apprehensive, even

paranoid; she constantly expects rape from the most unlikely quarters…" (97).[23] I, however, would like to echo the commentary of Doody (2008), who points out that "it is nonsense to tell a young woman that rape and abduction are only in fictions," especially given "the high value placed in virginity in well-born marriageable girls" (Lennox xxx-xxxi). To Doody, "the novel itself has presented such dangers as distinctly possible in contemporary real life…" (xxx). Indeed, one might remember Richardson's earlier novel, *Pamela*, and the extreme measures Mr. B takes to possess Pamela, or the ruse that Lovelace conducts to entrap (and then rape) Clarissa. So many of the discourses that a young woman like Arabella would have been exposed to underscore the constant threats of which Arabella is so wary, and for which the characters around her chide (or mock) Arabella.

Additionally, many of the romantic notions that seem silly in Arabella's character were also, paradoxically, found in popular conduct literature for women in the period. It is not just novels that warned young women about the need to safeguard their virtue, as Doody points out, but also, I argue, conduct guides. Viewed in this light, Arabella's over-the-top reactions become understandable responses to fears that were inculcated into young women of her age. For instance, Sarah Astell's *Reflections on Marriage* (1700) warns young women of measures men may take to entrap them in unhappy marriages, teaching them to avoid victimization. Though first published several decades before *The Female Quixote*, *Reflections on Marriage* was extremely popular – and polemic – well

[23] Langbauer (1984), for instance, argues that Lennox "condemns romance as specious fiction" (29). Jones (2000) makes a similar claim, though she posits that within Lennox's critique of Romance novels there also resides condemnation of Richardson's glorification of domestic femininity (207-8). Thompson (2002) calls *The Female Quixote* an "anti-Romance," and Levin (1995) argues that the novel portrays Arabella "cured of the 'disease' of romance reading and transformed into the perfect wife (85, 275).

into the eighteenth century. Astell is sometimes referred to as the first British feminist, and a look at *Reflections on Marriage* shows why.[24] In what some critics term her most radical treatise, Astell equates marriage with slavery and husbands with tyrannical masters. Some of the most famous passages from this text include her warning: "she who Elects a Monarch for Life, who gives him an Authority she cannot recall however he misapply it, who puts her Fortune and Person entirely in his Power…so as that it is not lawful to Will or Desire any thing but what he approves and allows" (32). Marriage is represented as a risk for women; Astell calls on the same link between husband and monarch seen in Chapone and Filmer (as discussed in chapter one). To Astell and Chapone, this link may be legally and socially sanctioned, but it is inhumane. Astell goes so far to note that a man "may call himself [a] Slave a few days," as he courts a woman, "but it is only in order to make her his [slave] all the rest of his Life" (25). Men, according to Astell, alter their behavior to appear submissive to women so that they can snare a woman for life: women must be wary of such behavior. Additionally, Astell warns that a suitor may make himself appear worthy to charm a woman's parents but in reality just wants a wife to manage his physical and domestic desires, making it clear that parents are susceptible to the guises of a suitor, as well.

While courtship, on the one hand, could represent a period of empowerment for women, it was also, on the other hand, a time of potential vulnerability. As Astell explains it, the favorable manner in which men presented themselves to women could be a façade masking base desires. Though, of course, Richardson would not create Solmes and Lovelace for another 40 years, Astell's depiction of men brings those two villains to

[24] For example, see Perry's entry for Astell in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2009).

mind. She advises women to assume that all men are threats. "A Woman therefore can never have too nice a Sense of Honor," Astell explains, "she can never be too careful to secure her Character not only from the suspicion of a Crime, but even from the shadow of an Indiscretion" (83-84). Women, that is, should not implicitly trust men, especially during courtship. Virtue, in Astell's configuration, is not tethered to notions of duty or blind submission but is a tool young women should call on when making decisions about their future. Young women must develop their own system of values instead of blindly accepting those society imposes. Astell goes on to warn young women: "Preserve your distance then, keep out of the reach of Danger, fly if you wou'd be safe, be sure to be always on the Reserve, not such as is Morose and Affected, but Modest and Discreet, your Caution cannot be too great, nor your Foresight reach too far" (83). Women, in other words, must be equipped with the knowledge to think and act for themselves.

Many of the anxieties that Arabella faces in *The Female Quixote* – and that Astell warns of in her conduct guide – are the same issues that lead to Clarissa's downfall in Richardson's novel. Clarissa faces a forced marriage that she is desperate to stop, and her path to doing so involves trickery and rape at the hands of a predatory but socially charming rake. Lennox's appropriation of *Clarissa*'s plot reminds readers that young women were taught from an early age that their virginity, or as it was more euphemistically termed, their virtue, was their most important asset and must be protected at all costs. In this light, are the seemingly extreme lengths Arabella takes to safeguard herself truly faulty? In an episode that mirrors Clarissa locking herself in her room to keep Lovelace at bay, Arabella, after turning down Glanville's proposal, converses with him through a locked door. "Mr. Glanville, still supposing her in Jest, intreated [*sic*] her

to open the Door; but, finding she continued obstinate, Well, said he, going away, I shall be revenged on you some time hence, and make you repent the Tricks you play me now" (34). Readers are privileged with the information that he is jesting, but Arabella does not have the tools to decipher this. Everything she has read, along with popular social mores, have taught her that this is an actual threat. Indeed, later in the novel Glanville wishes the Marquis "had laid a stronger Injunction upon [Arabella] in his Will to marry him; and regretted the little Power his Father had over her" (65). Even kind-hearted Glanville believes force a legitimate manner of achieving marriage to Arabella.

Arabella's conversion

The ending of *The Female Quixote* has long been a sticky wicket for Lennox scholars. This is partially born out of the persistent, though now-debunked, myth that Samuel Johnson wrote the penultimate chapter of the novel in which Arabella is brought to see the error of her ways. This theory goes back to an article that literary critic John Mitford wrote for *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1843, in which he asserts that the chapter in question is written in a different style from the rest of the novel: Johnson's style. Weak evidence, certainly, but that single essay was enough to perpetuate a serious misunderstanding of *The Female Quixote* for over a century and a half. Indeed, even as recently as the early 2000s, some Lennox and Johnson scholars alike have continued to assume that chapter XI of volume II, teasingly subtitled "Being in the Author's Opinion, the Best Chapter in this History," was written by Johnson.[25] However, scholars such as Brack and Carlile (2003) and Schurer (2012) have thoroughly debunked that

[25] Brack and Carlile (2003) do an excellent job chronicling the history of this myth from its 1843 origin through the present. Examples of scholars who have perpetuated the myth include: Small (1935), Orr (1970), Dalizel (1970), Carnie (1984), Ross (1991), and Fleeman (2000).

misconception.[26] There was, however, a working relationship between Lennox, Johnson, and Richardson that has led some critics to over-estimate Richardson's and Johnson's influences over the novel and to misunderstand the reverence that *The Female Quixote* shows toward those two figures in general and toward *Clarissa* in particular. In fact, there is evidence in the ending of *The Female Quixote* to suggest that she is satirizing both Richardson and Johnson.

After Arabella jumps in a river to save herself from what she imagines is an attempted rape, "The Doctor" (also called "The Divine") chastises Arabella her for her seemingly irrational behavior and love of romance novels. Initially the Doctor finds himself "not so well prepar'd [to instruct her] as he imagin'd," and is "at a Loss for some leading Principle, by which he might introduce his Reasonings" (368). This conversation is important because it depicts Arabella's rendering a would-be male authority-figure powerless in the wake of her own arguments. If the Doctor is a representation of Samuel Johnson, it is significant that a young woman, such as Arabella, is able to get the upper hand on him in conversation.[27] The Doctor fumbles through his conversation with her; he finds himself "completely embarrass'd" and flustered due to his inability to clearly express his points; he is not just having a difficult time making Arabella see his perspective, but she actually renders him speechless with her wit, intelligence, and logical

[26] Among the most convincing evidence that these scholars point to in their respective arguments is found in letters sent between Lennox, Johnson, and Richardson. Of particular interest is a letter that Lennox sent to Johnson with a copy of her book fresh from the first printing that indicates Johnson had yet to read the final chapters of the novel. Brack and Carlile also examine the publication history of the novel to show how the stylistic differences that occur in the penultimate chapter can be attributed to Lennox's need to write a longer chapter than she had planned and variances in the type-set that the printer made to avoid wasting paper.

[27] Brack and Carlile are again useful. They explain: "[t]hat Johnson was Lennox's model for the Divine…is made clear in a letter long in the collection of the late Herman W. Liebert and now in the Beinecke Library" (172-3).

arguments (370). The Doctor seems surprised to find "much to praise in her Discourse," and he even tells her she possesses "all that Intellectual Excellence can confer" (369, 371). Though he "also found much to blame," in her past conduct and beliefs, he realizes that she is articulating and adhering to her own system of values. Notably, Arabella's spirited take-down of the Doctor's arguments leave him "entangled" and "submissive" to her assertions, "I confess, Madam, my Words imply an accusation very remote from my Intention," he admits (374). She leaves him tongue-tied and feeling unable to respond effectively to her arguments. Rather than acting demure, submissive, and humble when faced with the Doctor's arguments, Arabella stands up for her own beliefs.

The Doctor's goal is to convince Arabella that romance novels have filled her head with frivolous nonsense and she needs to denounce these, shape up her conduct, agree to marry Glanville, and become a sensible wife. Many critics view the Doctor as successful in his endeavor. Ballaster (2000), for instance, argues: "Arabella's concessions to the doctor, and her conversion to domestic ideology, and her agreement to marry Glanville, mark however the book's closure and containment, indeed, silencing its heroine. As reader of the novel, Arabella's verbal power comes to an end" (208). Romance novels encourage Arabella to argue with men, set her own standards for marriage, and define her own values: qualities that did not make for submissive wives. Giving these up, presumably, indicates her accepting the Doctor's mandate. Notably, when discussing acceptable literature, the Doctor suggests Richardson's *Clarissa,* calling it a novel by "an admirable Writer of our own Time": fiction that "has found the Way to convey the most solid Instructions, the noblest Sentiments, and the most exalted Piety, in the pleasing Dress of a Novel, and, to use the Words of the greatest Genius of the present

Age, 'Has taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue'" (377). According to the Doctor, novels can be valuable if they are moral tools for imparting virtue and wisdom to their readers, as *Clarissa* does. Some, such as Schellenberg (2005), take this praise of Richardson at face value. "Richardson is explicitly authorized here, in contrast to the writers of heroic romances," she argues, "Lennox chose to write an ending, in short, which does nothing to dismantle the hierarchies of gender and reading upon which her plot is constructed" (10). To her, "Lennox's use of *Clarissa* in *The Female Quixote* is much more derivative in its adulatory, generalized representation – the novel is reified, rather than analyzed" (112-13). However, there is plenty in this chapter to suggest that Lennox is satirizing and criticizing Richardson, rather than praising him.

The Doctor's claim that Richardson "Has taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue" is a quote from Johnson. In February 1751 Richardson wrote an essay for the *Rambler*; in his short preface to this essay, Johnson writes: "The reader is indebted for this day's entertainment, to an author from whom the age has receiv'd greater favours, who has enlarg'd the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue" (451-2). Richardson is clearly portrayed as having valuable insights on virtue and human nature. In the essay that follows, Richardson provides commentary on these matters, specifically on the ways in which young women have perverted virtue for their own entertainment, lamenting that young women have "generally given up to negligence of domestick business, to idle amusements, and to wicked rackets, without any settled view at all but of squandering time" (452). He goes on to write wistfully of the days when church was the only public place women went, and when a woman didn't develop romantic feelings for a man until

after she had her parents' permission. In fact, Richardson spends much of the article defining ideal courtship as one which has first been brokered between the suitor and the young woman's parents. "That a young lady should be in love," he insists, "and the love of the young gentleman undeclared, is an heterodoxy which prudence, and even policy, must not allow. But thus applied to [through her parents], she is all resignation to her Parents" (454). Richardson promotes a version of courtship that deprivileges women's autonomy: a notion that Lennox undermines through Arabella, who insists Glanville court her on her own terms.

In this *Rambler* essay Richardson also bemoans that financial settlements were provided for women upon marriage, which he sees as a dangerous avenue for female independence. "Two thousand pounds in the last age, with a domestick wife, would go farther than ten thousand in this," he posits, "Yet settlements are expected, that often, to a mercantile man especially, sink a fortune into uselessness; and pin-money is stipulated for, which makes a wife independent, and destroys love, by putting it out of a man's power to lay any obligation upon her, that might engage gratitude, and kindle affection" (169). As he does in *Clarissa*, Richardson here critiques changes underway in British financial norms; in the novel it is obsessive wealth accumulation being criticized, while here it is the different – though related – topic of marriage settlements. Placing some of the blame for economic dissipation on bourgeois men ("mercantile men"), women are the primary perpetrators, since eighteenth-century women, as compared to the more domestically-minded women of the seventeenth century, are too financially independent, which circumvents dependence on the *paterfamilias*. In her reference to this *Rambler* essay, then, Lennox draws attention to Richardson's misogyny, separating her work from

ideology that supports the ultimate authority of men by creating a female protagonist who defies submissive womanhood.

Empowered femininity in *Harriot Stuart*

The Female Quixote is not Lennox's only work that engages with *Clarissa.* Her earlier novel *The Life of Harriot Stuart, Written by Herself* (1750) "offered a response to the popular English novels of her day such as *Pamela, Clarissa*, and *Tom Jones*," portraying "parents who say they won't coerce their daughter into an undesired marriage (but still exert pressure on her decision)," as Carlile (2018) articulates (68). Harriot's father does not mean to force her into an unwanted marriage, but does note of her Catholic beau, Dumont: "I would rather follow you to a grave than see you married to one of the religion he professes" (80). Harriot's mother, however, is keen to marry her off: "when your father and I think proper to dispose of you," she tells her daughter, "take care to obey us without murmuring" (79). When her father dies, her mother's tyranny becomes the guiding parental force as she tries to pressure Harriot into marriage to obtain financial security. While the parental relationships and their ramifications are less at the core of this novel than in *The Female Quixote* (Harriot is independent of her parents for much of the novel as she is chased around Europe and America by a series of Lovelace-like suitors), it is noteworthy that after being abducted by her would-be-lover Belton, her father welcomes her back home with open arms, praising the way she handled the situation – a far cry from the way cold, unforgiving James Harlowe treats Clarissa after her abduction. Even Harriot's mother (with whom Harriot has a difficult relationship, likely modeled on Lennox's relationship with her mother) is her ally in the end.[28] After

[28] For more on the autobiographical elements of *Harriot Stuart* see Carlile (2018), especially on connections between Harriot's and Lennox's mothers (64),

hearing of Harriot's many Clarissa-like adventures and interactions with men of ill-repute, she "embraced me several times," Harriot notes, "assuring me, my conduct had given her the highest satisfaction" (265). Rather than embracing her role as a victim, Harriot remains in control of her own sense of identity and virtue, refusing to let the persecutions she endures define her. In *Harriot Stuart*, as Carlile (2018) puts it, Harriot is a heroine who "is far more in control than Clarissa of her own outcome," emphasizing the empowerment that comes from women's autonomy (68).

Harriot obtains her happy ending – marriage with Dumont, a reunion with her family – because she fights for it. Unlike Samuel Richardson, Lennox created heroines who, when faced with adverse circumstances, are empowered to define their own futures. As Howard (1993) explains: "While Lennox uses and transforms many of Richardson's plot actions (the abduction from the garden, for instance, or the penknife scene), her emphasis is on an active and realistic heroism…[Harriot] adapts to the threatening world in which she finds herself. She learns to recognize that the threat lies not so much in the fantastic dangers posed by Indians and pirates, but in the selfishness and brutality of Harlowe-like parents and Lovelace-like 'lovers'" (151). In one memorable moment, Harriot even wields a knife and stabs a would-be rapist. While Lennox's novels certainly mirror Richardson's, the notable differences in the free will and agency of their respective heroines is evident; Clarissa is only allowed happiness in heaven while Harriot Stuart and Arabella heroically fight for their right to happiness and self-determination on earth, even if it means departing from common definitions of obedient, demure womanhood.

Betsy Thoughtless and the perils of forced marriage

Before concluding the chapter, a brief examination of Eliza Haywood's 1751 *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* will provide another example of a Richardsonian contemporary who utilized the forced marriage plot in ways that criticize the period's treatment of women. Like Arabella, Haywood's character Betsy Thoughtless provides a model of resistance to oppressive configurations of femininity that permeated the period. Though *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* diverges from the other novels under consideration in this project due to the fact that Betsy's forced marriage is rooted less in the financial gain of her male guardians and more in contemporary notions of virtue, the links between this novel and *Clarissa* – and the examination of female subordination – provides an important contribution to this chapter.[29]

Though less is known of Eliza Haywood's personal life than of Charlotte Lennox's, her infamously vitriolic relationships with contemporary writers are well known. Pope, for instance, slandered her in *The Dunciad* (1727), and Fielding and Richardson were deeply critical of her work. King (2012) explains that by the mid-point of the century, Fielding, Richardson, and Haywood were competitors whose "rivalry was no longer friendly" (70-1). In a letter that Richardson wrote to Hester Mulso Chapone on December 6, 1750, he describes Haywood, along with Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley, as "Womens [*sic*] Poison!" that has "injured, disgraced, and profaned [the] Sex" (Carroll, ed. 173). Haywood's 1741 satire *The Anti-Pamela* is merciless in its mocking of

[29] While Betsy's marriage is less explicitly tied to the financial gain of her father/guardian figure as it is in *Clarissa* and *The Female Quixote*, the novel makes it clear that the link between marriage and economic gain is a priority in Betsy's social sphere. In fact, one of her first sincere love interests, Mr. Saving, is denied as a husband (in part) because she lacks the extreme wealth his father requires for his son's wife. "The sordid nature" of Saving's father was such that "all the merits of Miss Betsy would add nothing in the balance, if her money was found too light to poise against the sums his son would be possessed of" (40). Accordingly, the relationship is cut off.

Richardson's original, suggesting that the disdain for each other's work was mutual. Nevertheless, there remains a symbiotic relationship between their work. As Backscheider (1998) states (expanding on the arguments of Warner): "Richardson and Fielding set out rather consciously to disavow, absorb, yet erase and obliterate their female predecessors" (83). While Richardson denied that Haywood influenced his work, a reading of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* reveals that Haywood is more transparent about the impact Richardson had on her own work. Reading *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* as a forced marriage plot novel with ties to *Clarissa* expands on the criticisms of *Clarissa* present in *The Female Quixote* and shows the damaging impacts of forcing a young woman into marriage.

It is crucial to understand that Betsy's eventual marriage to Munden is a forced marriage – a fact that, as with *The Female Quixote* – has not been given proper critical attention. Like Arabella, Betsy is an orphan. Lacking parents, her social position is seen as especially vulnerable since parents – especially fathers – were considered sources of control and stability over young women. Betsy has a team of legal and de facto guardians, including her brothers, Sir and Lady Trusty, and Mr. Goodman. Examining the relationships these characters have with Betsy – and the bad advice they give her – shows the pervasive manner of social ideologies pertaining to feminine submission. Viewing Betsy as vulnerable, her guardians pressure her to marry. For example, while on his deathbed, Betsy's guardian, Mr. Goodman, advises Betsy's brother she should get married as soon as possible to avoid any damage to her reputation: the longer a young woman remains unmarried, his logic goes, the greater the chances that people may question her virtue. (Goodman also tells Mr. Thoughtless he should give up his mistress

to redeem his own reputation, but the latter ignores this advice). The Thoughtless brothers conclude they must each "exert all the influence he had over [Betsy]" and convince her to get married, for, as they see it, "marriage was the only sure refuge from temptation" (337-338). Worried that her fun-loving attitude and fortune will lay her open to fortune hunters, they see themselves as agents who need to safeguard their sister's reputation. For them, this means marriage. Lady Trusty, the only female role model young Betsy has, encourages this pressure from the Thoughtless brothers. "Consider, my dear child, you have no tender mother, whose precepts and example might keep you steady in the paths of prudence; – no father, whose authority might awe the daring libertine from any injurious attack, and are but too much mistress of yourself" she implores Betsy, "[i]n fine, thus environed with temptations, I see no real defence [*sic*] for you but in a good husband" (207). Betsy lacks parents to provide authority and teach obedience: two of the most important qualities in young woman's life in this period. Without these, Lady Trusty fears Betsy is susceptible to unscrupulous young men and encourages marrying her off as quickly as possible, since husbands were also a source of authority over women. The society in which Betsy, Arabella, and Clarissa live feared women's autonomy and sought to keep women moored to an authority figure.

Betsy isn't forced into her marriage with Munden via violence or threats in the same way that Clarissa is, but it is still forced. It is an example of what Kowaleski-Wallace (1991) calls "new-style patriarchy" (110). She explains:

> over the course of the eighteenth century, older-style patriarchy, with its emphasis on paternal prerogative, hierarchy, and the exercise of force, had gradually yielded to new-style patriarchy with its appeal to reason, cooperation between the

> sexes, and noncoercive exercise of authority. From another perspective, new-style patriarchy no longer operates according to the fear of punishment or injury but according to the more psychologically compelling themes of guilt and obligation. (110)

Though I disagree that the "new style" of patriarchy completely supplanted the other, more violent style (in fact, many examples of traditional patriarchal shows of power are examined throughout this project), I agree with Kowaleski-Wallace's contention that there are also subtle ways in which patriarchal power structures were supported in the eighteenth century. Kowaleski-Wallace is speaking specifically of Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), but hints of new-style patriarchy are found in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless,* as well. Haywood shows that forced marriages are not just the fodder of novels like *Pamela* or *Clarissa,* but that there were many ways in which parental pressure is exerted over young women like Betsy – even under the guise of a kind friend like Lady Trusty.

Betsy is not a flawless character; she enjoys London life, fashion, and the attention of men. Like Arabella, Betsy desires her courtship experience to be just that: an experience that is her own and not dictated by her elders. "One has no sooner left off one's bib and apron," she laments, "than people cry, – 'Miss will soon be married.' – And this man, and that man, is presently picked out for a husband" (489). Betsy is only fourteen when Mr. Goodman starts seriously considering a husband for her, meaning that she would go directly from fatherly authority to the marital authority of a husband without ever having a taste of autonomy. Betsy resists this father-to-husband transfer, desiring instead a chance to enjoy her youth. As the narrator relates:

> she was a little vexed to find herself pressed [into an engagement with Trueworth] by one so dear…she thought she could be pleased to have such a lover, but could not bring herself to be content that he should ever be a husband. She had too much good sense not to know it suited not with the condition of a wife to indulge herself in the gaieties she at present did, which though innocent…might not be pleasing to one, who, if he so thought proper, had the power of restraining them. (93)

In *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood reveals a world that restricts the agency of young women from every angle. As evidenced by Philogamus' conduct guide *The Present State of Matrimony: Or, the Real Causes of Conjugal Infidelity and Unhappy Marriages* (1739, discussed in the previous chapter), there was a belief that women must always be under the authority of a man: father then husband. Betsy, like Arabella, believes she is entitled to a sense of autonomy. As Ross (1991) states, "Haywood and Lennox asserted a fairly revolutionary moral principle: that young women, as well as young men such as Tom Jones, learn virtue through experience. They thus opposed the commonly held idea that goodness in women is a kind of blankness, as chastity is merely an absence of sexual contact" (70). The challenges faced by Betsy, then, underscore the double standards regarding the behavior of young men and women, pointing out the unfair treatment women endure. Betsy's brother, for instance, is free to conduct affairs with as many women as he pleases, yet he expects Betsy to submit placidly to his demand that she marries, curtailing her freedom.

The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless reveals the pervasive nature of eighteenth-century society's fear of autonomous women and the power of such discourse; so strong

are the forces compelling Betsy toward marriage that she, though strong-willed, succumbs. Unfortunately for her, Munden proves a tyrannical husband, highlighting the danger of pressuring marriage. Munden's philosophy of marriage aligns with contemporary patriarchal notions: he is the type of lover Astell warns women against in *Reflections on Marriage* (1700: a man "may call himself [a] Slave a few days," as he courts a woman, "but it is only in order to make her his [slave] all the rest of his Life," 25). "Looking on the case of a lover with his mistress, as the same with one who is solliciting [*sic*] for a pension, or employment, had armed himself with patience, to submit to every thing his tyrant should inflict, in the hope that it would one day be his turn to impose laws," the narrator explains of Munden (295-6). Marriage, to Munden, is an economic arrangement. Like Solmes, he looks forward to the time when, as her husband, he can punish her for her wavering attitude during their courtship. As Stuart (2002) explains, "Betsy, bullied by her brothers and more subtly by the Trustys, cannot choose [a husband] carefully. Her brothers look into Munden's financial affairs and that is enough…Betsy is married to her current suitor because his financial credit is good and it will save her social credit" (568). Though Betsy's guardians will not benefit financially from her marriage, as Stuart explains, her marriage is still configured as a business transaction to the men involved.

Temporarily submitting to young Betsy's caprices, Munden looks forward to the day when his authority will reign supreme. "[H]e considered a wife no more than an upper servant, bound to study and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom she had given her hand; – and how obsequious and submissive soever he appeared when a lover, had fixed his resolution to render himself absolute master when he became a husband"

Figure 2: Munden killing Betsy's pet squirrel. The British Museum.

(507). Extreme as this sounds, the emphasis on wifely submission echoes that found in contemporary conduct guides (such as those by Philogamus, Richard Allestree, Wentenhall Wilkes, and Francis Lynch discussed in the previous chapter). A particular facet of Munden's cruelty is his abuse of his wife's pin money. Though this money should be Betsy's to spend as she pleases, Munden demands she spend it on groceries and other household luxuries for himself – including the servants' salaries. Munden and his mistress even try to get Betsy to pay for the latter's lodgings; when this fails, Munden keeps his mistress in their home, forcing Betsy out. This blatant violation of their marriage settlement harks back to Richardson and his belief, expressed in the *Rambler* essay Charlotte Lennox quotes, that pin money gave women unnecessary independence from their husbands. Munden is economically abusive, which keeps Betsy dependent on him and isolates her from her allies. There is also a distinct threat of violence present in Munden – he brutally kills an innocent pet squirrel while displeased with Betsy. Notably, throughout Betsy's trials, Lady Trusty encourages her to silently endure his abuses since their society attached such a harsh stigma on women who leave their husbands – even when those husbands were abusive; "consider how odd a figure a woman makes who lives apart from her husband," Lady Trusty implores (511). More concerned with Betsy's retaining the façade of a contented marriage than with the actual emotional and physical well-being of her friend, Lady Trusty exemplifies the extent to which Betsy's society perpetuated the abuse of women. Mercy, humility, and victimhood are the qualities that Lady Trusty encourages in Betsy: the same qualities for which Clarissa Harlowe is praised. This episode of Betsy's story shows the damaging impacts of forcing young women into marriage and valuing subservience over autonomy.

While Betsy's marriage to Munden dramatizes the misery that young women faced in oppressive marriages, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* includes another important corrective to the Richardsonian forced marriage plot; Haywood creates a character who rejects the submissive role her society designates for her and takes her future – her happiness – into her own hands. The final straw for Betsy comes when Munden begins an affair with her brother's cast-off mistress right under Betsy's roof. Betsy leaves her husband, citing his failure to make her "even tolerably easy," and his "ill-usage" of her (594). Unfortunately for Betsy, divorce or legal separation from her husband were not likely.[30] As Wright (2004) points out, a man could get a legal separation from his wife from simple accusations of the wife's infidelity, but a woman had to prove her husband's adultery and provide an additional reason for the divorce, such as physical abuse (which Munden threatens but never actually carries out), incest, or other specific crimes. Separations were handled by ecclesiastical courts, which, as Foyster (2009) explains, typically coaxed couples back together rather than carrying out separation petitions (14). Even more troubling is the fact that husbands could file for "'restitution of conjugal rights' against a spouse who deserted them," meaning that wives could be forced to return to abusive husbands (Foyster 16). This restitution of conjugal rights is exactly what Munden threatens. As he tauntingly brags to Betsy in a letter:

> A wife who elopes from her husband forfeits all claim to every thing that is his, and can expect nothing from him until she returns to her obedience; but were it

[30] Olsen (1999) points out that between 1700 and 1749 only 13 divorces were granted in England; the annual number rose slightly after the mid-point of the century but there were never more than ten granted in a single year (44). The reason for this is that until the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857 divorces were technically illegal and required a special act of parliament, which was rare and expensive – and something for which only men could petition.

> otherwise, and the law were entirely on your side in this point, you might be certain, that I look upon the happiness of possessing you in too just a light to be easily brought into any agreement that would deprive me of you. (596)

Munden's language in this passage shows how he views his wife: as his property. He talks of her as a possession, and he is emboldened in this notion because he knows that the force of law in on his side.

However, Haywood shows that a little bravery and support can go a long way in terms of distancing a woman from an unhappy marriage, despite the institutional barriers she faces. Munden intends to try and scare his wife back into obedience, but the letter has the opposite effect on Betsy. The narrator explains that "this vain attempt therefore only serving to remind her of the many proofs she had received both of this ill nature and deceit towards her, instead of weakening the resolution she had taken of not living with him again, rather rendered it more strong and permanent" (596). Mr. Markland, the family attorney, goes on to advise Betsy that, though a legal separation is a long shot, Munden lacks the ability to keep Betsy under his roof. In a conversation between Munden and Markland, the latter points out that Betsy is so determined to live away from her husband that she will keep running away, and that Munden has "no way to preserve her but by confinement" (599). He goes on to warn Munden: "I appeal to your own judgement how that would look in the eyes of the world, and what occasion for complaint it would afford to all her friends, who would doubtless have a strict watch on your behavior" (599). Interestingly, Haywood uses Markland to flip social convention and surveillance from the female character, often the object of such measures in ways that are oppressive and restrictive, onto her erring husband. This is an optimistic perspective that

leaves readers – and Munden – with the impression that it is indeed possible for women to escape from oppressive situations. It takes some help, but Betsy's determination to reclaim autonomy over her life allows her friends and family members to see how miserable she has been. Refusing the role of the silent sufferer, Betsy takes her future into her own hands by leaving her husband and surrounding herself with allies, such as Markland and Lady Loveit, who respect Betsy's decisions and vow to help her distance herself from her abusive husband.

Betsy does, briefly, return to her husband's side after he falls terminally ill, which some critics see as the novel's ultimate support of patriarchal marriage structure. Todd (1989), for instance, states that the "moral message" of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* is: "that a woman's destiny is not self-contemplation and significance but contingency and marriage" (147). More recently, Thomason (2014) has put forth the argument that Haywood "endorses marriage as necessary for women, thereby tacitly endorsing the social strictures that make it necessary" (16). However, the circumstances surrounding their reunion flip the balance of power in Betsy's favor. That is, while Clarissa Harlowe extends humble mercy to her family, taking the blame for the harm they did to her, in *Betsy Thoughtless* supplication comes from the patriarch. Betsy offers no apologies to Munden, even on his deathbed, instead receiving one from him. "'I have been much to blame,' resumed he; 'I have greatly wronged you, but forgive me – if I live, I will endeavour to deserve it,'" he begs (614). Though she accepts his apologies, Betsy places conditions on this forgiveness, stipulating she will remain with him "unless your behaviour shall convince me you do not desire my stay" (615). Predicating her presence on his good behavior, Betsy controls the situation. Here, Haywood reverses the

traditional scene of female education that was so common in sentimental novels of the eighteenth century. Rather than portraying a female character who is repentant for her actions, as Clarissa Harlowe is, it is the male character who must atone for his beliefs and is punished for his unjust actions through death. Within moments of Betsy's visit, Munden is dead; shaken, Betsy retires to solitude where she can ponder "life, death, and futurity" (616). Though saddened by her late husband's miserable death, her thoughts immediately turn to her own future – one that, thanks to her resolve to live by her own system of values, will be happier. The moral education of her brothers and Lady Trusty led her into an unhappy marriage this was not the death of her autonomy and individuality. Trusting her own will and acting on these instincts reinforces the power inherent in women who refuse the prescribed submissive role dictated by society.

Conclusion

While *Clarissa*'s importance in the mid-eighteenth century cannot be denied, it is necessary to acknowledge that not all the reactions to it were positive. Writers like Charlotte Lennox and Eliza Haywood were undoubtedly influenced by Richardson's plot, but their adaptations of the forced marriage plot emphasize the damaging impacts of feminine submission and celebrate characters who reject this norm. Arabella and Betsy resist the unquestioning authority of men in their lives. Believing in their respective rights to conduct courtship and marriage on their own terms, these two characters defy social mandates and – crucially – are celebrated within the texts for doing so. Though Arabella's actions do not always make sense to those around her, she insists on her right to create and act on her own value system, refusing to marry her cousin simply because her father has mandated it, forcing Glanville to prove himself as a lover before gaining

acceptance. This unconventional love story includes a heavy dose of criticism of Samuel Richardson – a close acquaintance of Lennox's – especially through her satirical portrayal of him in the novel's penultimate chapter, where the hypocrisy of his beliefs is revealed. Haywood takes a different route in her revision of *Clarissa*, portraying with empathy the misery that befalls women who are forced into marriage and the damaging effects of a culture overly obsessed with submissive women. Additionally, Betsy's decision to leave her husband, a drastic action in the period, and Munden's apologizing to her are celebrated in the novel even though they deviate from prescribed gender relations. Betsy and Arabella provide alternative models of femininity that value a woman's right to define her own values and create her own reality.

Chapter Three

"Will there not be virtue in my resistance?": resisting tyranny in Charlotte Smith's "The Story of Henrietta" and Mary Robinson's *Angelina; A Novel*

The previous chapter examined novels by Charlotte Lennox and Eliza Haywood, two of Samuel Richardson's contemporaries who use their novels, *The Female Quixote* and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, to challenge the glorification of submissive femininity. Adapting Richardson's version of the forced marriage plot, Lennox and Haywood depict their heroines' struggles in a way that highlights the mercenary, inequitable nature of the eighteenth-century marriage market, which operates on the assumption that young women do not deserve autonomy. *The Female Quixote* and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, then, go a step beyond exposing these unfair marriage customs by celebrating heroines who define their own value systems, rather than blindly accepting the oppressive system, and who ultimately demand marriage on their own terms. They show that women have the capacity to be rational, autonomous individuals who should be trusted to make their own decisions, especially regarding marriage.

Building on chapter two, this chapter moves into the 1790s and an examination of forced marriage plots within a specific context: novels in which the tyrannical father is explicitly connected to the Caribbean slave trade. Charlotte Smith's *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800-02) and Mary Robinson's *Angelina; A Novel* (1796) introduce readers to heroines who, like Clarissa Harlowe, face forced marriages with men whom they despise. Like Lennox and Haywood, Smith and Robinson adapt Richardson's plot in a way that highlights the patriarchal economic system that dictated marriage practices toward the turn of the century. The forced marriage plots present in these novels – like *The Female*

Quixote and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* – interact with their historical moment, showing the specific ways in which British subordination of women (especially via marriage) is inextricably linked to the slave trade. While it is true that slavery was a popular analogy to describe the status of oppressed white women – a troubling practice – Smith and Robinson invoke slavery as more than a metaphor.[31] They work to reveal the complex, symbiotic, economic relationship between slavery and the patriarchal power system in place within the British Empire. In these novels the status of British women is not simply like that of West Indian slaves, but both slaves and women are oppressed because of the way the slave system allowed wealth to accumulate. Such extreme wealth created a system in which the slaver owner was viewed as all powerful and in which he commodified both Africans and women for his own benefit. Though this commodification manifested differently – the labor of the chattel slaves and the marriageability of the tyrant's daughter – Smith and Robinson expose the connections between the slave and marriage markets. Crucially, Smith and Robinson also provide directives for overturning such corruption. Rather than creating heroines whose virtue emanates from mercy, humility, or desire to sacrifice themselves for the good of their patriarchs, Smith and Robinson create strong female characters whose virtue lies in their resistance. "Henrietta's Tale" and *Angelina; a Novel* resemble what Felski (1989) refers to as feminist novels of awakening; these are novels that lead to the "discovery of female

[31] In fact, writers from opposite ends of the socio-political spectrum commonly applied "slave" to white women. For example, the socially-conservative Hannah More does so in her 1805 (semi-satirical) essay "Hints towards forming a Bill for the Abolition of the White Slave Trade, in the Cities of London and Westminster," in which she describes young women as slaves of fashionable, immoral culture, as does the more radical Mary Hays in her essay "An Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women" (1798), in which she describes the customs that have made women "slaves of man" (ii). In fact, Samuel Richardson, Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Charles Dickens, and Anthony Trollope all, at various points in their texts that are under consideration in this project, call on slavery as an analogy for the oppression of white women.

self," and are "grounded in a moral and aesthetic revulsion against the very nature of contemporary social reality, which is perceived as alienating and debased" (142-3). Felski's formulation of "moral and aesthetic revulsion" is important throughout this chapter. Responding to their contemporary moment, Smith and Robinson expose the deep-seated corruption of the Atlantic slave trade while encouraging women's right to autonomy.

The divine Man I really could not read": Smith's antidote to Richardson

Even though Samuel Richardson had been dead for 39 years by the time Smith's *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* was published, he maintained prominence in the period. Hannah More, for instance, who championed women's domestic role and was a sharp critic of proto-feminists like Smith, Wollstonecraft, and Robinson, praises Richardson's legacy in *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809). The kind patriarch Sir John explains to his protégé, Coelebs, that Richardson's female characters are ideal women: he should find a woman who emulates them. "This author," Sir John says of Richardson:

> with deeper and juster views of human nature, a truer taste for the proprieties of female character, and a more exact intuition into real life than any other writer of fabulous narrative, has given in his heroines exemplifications of elegantly cultivated minds, combined with the sober virtues of domestic economy. In no other writer of fictitious adventures has the triumph of religion and reason over the passions, and the now almost exploded doctrines of filial obedience, and the household virtues, their natural concomitants, been so successfully blended (299-300).

Even at the turn of the century there remained those who believed Richardson's female characters, including Clarissa, represented ideal femininity. More's passage dictates that women should emulate Richardsonian women and men should marry them, since these women embody all that is good in femininity: domesticity, obedience, and virtue. Richardson's fiction is also, according to More, valuable for its style in addition to its substance. That is, Richardson possessed literary skills which allowed him to better depict the inner lives of his characters, emphasizing "religion" and "reason" over "passion." As Corman (2017) explains, there was a commonly held belief in the late-eighteenth century that "after the death of Smollett in 1771, the novel went into a serious if not fatal decline" (Sabor and Schellenberg, eds. 64). Many of the novels from the end of the century, such as those by Smith and Robinson, were seen as threatening to social mores or the frivolous work of over-passionate hacks. For example, in his 1789 poem "The Unsex'd Females" Richard Polwhele derides the work of Smith, Robinson, and Wollstonecraft (whose texts appear throughout this chapter):

> See Wollstonecraft, whom no decorum checks,
> Arise, the intrepid champion of her sex;
> O'er humbled man assert the sovereign claim,
> And slight the timid blush of virgin fame. […]
> And ROBINSON to Gaul her Fancy gave,
> And trac'd the picture of a Deist's grave!
> And charming SMITH resign'd her power to please,
> Poetic feeling and poetic ease […]
> Down from the empyreal heights she sunk, betray'd

To poor Philosophy - a love-sick maid! (lines 53-56, 79-82, 123-4)

Polwhele laments that women writers have exchanged womanly art for the "poor Philosophy" of Wollstonecraft. As figure 3 shows, Polwhele was not alone in such feelings. James Gillray's 1798 "The New Morality," first printed in *Anti-Jacobin Magazine,* depicts the corruption supposedly wrought in Britain by French revolutionary ideals. Tellingly, the novels of Wollstonecraft, Smith, and Robinson spill out of the "Cornucopia of Ignorance." To men like Polwhele and Gillray, the egalitarian ideas of these women threatened the *status quo* and were thus dangerous. Anna Laetitia Barbauld echoes these claims in her 1804 volume of Richardson's letters, where she claims:

> Richardson was the man who was to introduce a new kind of moral painting…and from his own beautiful ideas he copied that sublime of virtue which charms us in his Clarissa…That kind of fictitious writing of which he has set the example, disclaims all assistance from giants or genii… we are not called on to wonder at improbable events, but to be moved by natural passions, and impressed by salutary maxims. (xx-xxi)

The virtues embodied in Richardson's characters – especially the female ones – and his style of fiction were lauded as superior to contemporary fiction. Gothic, or "passionate" literature was particularly embroiled in literary controversy. Examining literary reviews of gothic novels, Gamer (2009) concludes that, though popular with readers, critics often looked down on gothic novels, since "gothic fiction and drama were perceived as threats to political and social order" (31). For instance, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was dismissed as "composed of such rotten materials [that] we cannot account for"; one reviewer lamented of Ann Radcliffe's first published novel, *The Castles of Athlin and*

Figure 3: James Gillray's "New Morality; – or – the promis'd installment of the high-priest of the theophilanthropes, with the homage of Leviathan and his suite," 1798. The lower image is a close-up of the "Cornucopia of Ignorance," which feature copies of Mary Wollstonecraft's Maria, or: The Wrongs of Women, Charlotte Smith's The Young Philosopher, and Mary Robinson's Walsingham.

Dunbayne (1789): "[t]his kind of entertainment, however, can be little relished but by the young an uninformed mind" (Roper, ed. 125, 133). Smith's gothic novel *Marchmont* (1796) was also negatively reviewed, the reviewer claiming: "[m]ountains, woods, castellated rocks overhanging a lake, luxuriant thickets, glowing sunsets, and midnight storms, if without intermission presented to the reader, cannot but become extremely tedious" (Roper, ed. 131). Belittling the genre – and its authors – was the favored method of displacing the perceived threat to both impressionable readers and the state of British literary excellence.

Charlotte Smith, however, uses *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* to make her case that gothic writing – passionate writing, as she terms it – is superior to Richardson's version of the novel. The unnamed narrator, who wanders the countryside to soothe his broken heart, argues about literary form with a friend:

> It is easier, I believe, to write an Arabian tale, with necromancers and genii, than to collect, as Richardson does, a set of characters acting and speaking so exactly as such people so circumstanced would act and speak in real life, that we almost doubt whether the scenes and the actors are merely imaginary. It is true, that the minuteness of description, to which this powerful deception is in a great degree owing, renders some of the letters excessively tedious; but the pleasure that Richardson's writings still afford, though the manners are so changed, and taste has undergone so many revolutions, proves that his knowledge of the human heart, and his adherence to nature, have charms…" (12)

The Wanderer concedes that supernatural novels are easier to write than Richardson's brand of pain-staking realism, since authors of the former don't necessarily attend to the

same level of verisimilitude as Richardson. While aiming a jab at the length of Richardson's novels, he also admits that readers, over 50 years later, still find pleasure in reading Richardson's novels. This might have been partly due to the 1791 publication of Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, which includes many anecdotes about Johnson's favorite novelist (Richardson), and several posthumous editions of *Clarissa* that were published in the 1790s, including one published by his granddaughter in 1792 that claimed to be his final authoritative edition. Additionally, the fourteenth edition of *Pamela* was published in 1801, and in 1804 Anna Laetitia Barbauld published her extensive *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* and reprinted his novels as part of her *Novels of England* series in 1810. Though he died in 1761, Richardson cast a long literary shadow.[32]

Acknowledging Richardson's influence, Smith concurrently challenges his legacy. Framing the seemingly true-to-life nature of Richardson's novels as a "powerful deception," Smith's narrator asserts that Richardson's realism is of less artistic merit than emerging literary trends. The narrator continues:

> Yet it has been asserted that strong native genius can alone succeed in that style of writing where the horrible and supernatural predominate, and where the greatest effect is produced by a certain degree of obscurity. And it is undoubtedly true, that the rudest and wildest sketch of Salvator is more precious than the most laboured piece of the correctest Flemish master. (12)

Paraphrasing Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), the Wanderer here frames authors of gothic fiction as

[32] See the Appendix for more examples.

Figure 4: Salvator Rosa, “Landscape with Tree Trunk” (1660-1670). ARTstor.

artistically superior to authors, like Richardson, who replicate life.[33] This parallels the contemporary notion, now seen as a hallmark of Romantic-era literature, that those whose art engaged the emotions were an elevated species of artist. Famously articulating this notion in the 1800 "Preface" to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth describes the poet as a prophet-like figure who, "being possessed of more than unusual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply" on a poem (175). Both depict authors as individuals with a heightened aptitude for articulating and recording passions.[34] Invoking Salvator Rosa's art creates comparisons between *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* and Rosa's paintings, which often feature grand landscapes meant to illicit passionate emotions.[35] In painting such as his "Figure with Tree Trunk" (figure 4), there exists a sense of barrenness and solitude – precisely the conditions that the Wanderer wants to replicate on his aimless journey in order to tap into deep emotions. Recognizing the mythology crystallizing around Richardson regarding the perceived transcendence of his fiction, Smith invokes Richardson's work to show its weaknesses. In fact, in an August 1804 letter she calls him "the divine Man I really could not read," a reference to his reputation and his writing style (Stanton, ed. 650). Smith makes the case

[33] Burke argues: "The proper manner of conveying the affections of the mind from one to another is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication; and so far is a clearness of imagery from being absolutely necessary to an influence upon the passions, that they may be considerably operated upon, without presenting any image at all, by certain sounds adapted to that purpose; of which we have a sufficient proof in the acknowledged and powerful effects of instrumental music. In reality, a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever" (123). Painstaking description of reality, according to Burke, dampens the emotional appeal of a text.

[34] For more on the relationship between Smith and Wordsworth, see Labbe's *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (2011). Interestingly, Smith and Wordsworth were distantly related through marriage. In a letter from November 1791 Smith complains about Wordsworth's visiting her, describing his visit as an unwelcome intrusion that kept her from visiting other friends.

[35] Rosa was a seventeenth-century Italian painter known for his unorthodox style and passionate scenes, considered by some to be a proto-Romantic.

that Richardson's legacy is ill-deserved, and her criticisms of his work open the door to alternative styles of expressing the lived experiences of women.

The patriarch as gothic villain

Letters of a Solitary Wanderer, the epistolary novel in which "The Story of Henrietta" appears, takes women's struggles as its theme; each of the five volumes features the story of a woman who faces tyrannical patriarchal forces. The first volume is the tale of Edourarda and her cruel father Sir Mordaunt Falconberg, who marries a young, beautiful woman against her will and lets his jealousy destroy himself and his family. The second volume is about Henrietta Denbigh, the wife of the narrator's adoptive brother, who escapes from her cruel slave-owning father during a Maroon uprising in Jamaica to avoid marrying the man her father has selected for her. In the third volume readers are taken back to the sixteenth-century struggle for power between French Catholics and Protestants and hear the harrowing tale of Corisande, an ancestor of one of the narrator's friends who was thrust out into the dangerous world without protection. Finally, volumes four and five relate the narrator's adventures in helping a Hungarian man and his Irish sister-in-law who are both unfairly persecuted by their families, the former by his greedy older brother and the latter by her wastrel husband. The unfair social and familial persecution of women pervades the novel as whole, especially in terms of oppression by fathers and husbands: the novel contains six separate forced marriage storylines. As Haywood and Lennox before her, Smith calls on the plot of *Clarissa* to raise issues of female submission and obedience, yet with a very different outcome than in Richardson's novel. That is, Richardson also argues parents should not use their daughters as financial tools, yet his heroine's sense of virtue is tightly bound to prevalent discourses of

obedience and humility that ultimately support the objectification of women. Moving beyond Richardson's patriarchal ideology, Smith proves that young women possess the mental fortitude necessary to act on their own convictions. This chapter focuses on the second volume of the novel, "The Story of Henrietta," as it depicts the most extreme example of female persecution within the novel and because its heroine fights her way out of such persecution.

Of course, an important aspect of any gothic novel is the eerie gothic atmosphere, which is usually embodied in the structure of the gothic castle. As DeLamotte (1990) puts it:

> the personal concentration of the forces of violence tends also to be an embodiment of larger forces in another sense: mammoth social institutions whose power transcends that of any individual. The church, the courts, the Inquisition, and the family are such institutions. They too are often embodied architecturally: in the cathedral or convent, the prison, the dungeons of the Inquisition, or the stronghold of a tyrannical father or husband. (17)

In "The Story of Henrietta," the plantation home itself highlights, and per DeLamotte, represents, the powerful economic institutions that empower slave owners. In fact, before Henrietta reaches Jamaica, the land of her birth from which she has been estranged since infancy, stories of her father's luxury precede him. The Captain of the ship transporting Henrietta to Jamaica:

> speaks of the luxury of the table at my father's house, of the number of slaves kept solely for domestic purposes; of the quantity of wine consumed at his table, and of his consequence in the island. But why do I hear nothing of his benevolence; of

> his private friends; of his kindness to his people, and of his being beloved as well as feared? (44).

Though Maynard is Henrietta's father he is essentially a stranger to her, and the information she gleans about him from the captain greatly concerns her since it does not align with the benevolent paternalism for which she hopes. The luxury of the plantation is emphasized: its grandeur, plentiful slaves, and sumptuous meals are outward signs of Maynard's wealth and power. As Henrietta observes, however, these qualities are diametrically opposed to qualities like kindness. Though his kingdom is a Caribbean plantation, rather than a crumbling gothic castle, Maynard fits the role of a power-hungry gothic villain in that he expects total submission to his will. "[F]rom being a despot on his own estate," readers are told, "he imagined he might exercise unbounded authority over every being that belonged to him" (102). As a plantation owner Maynard possesses unfettered power over the enslaved population on his plantation; this economic power, then, is the direct cause of his feeling of authority. Drunk on power, Maynard sees everyone as his subordinates and expects submission from all. He "expressed himself like a man who would be obeyed, without any attention to the feelings or inclinations of those whom he thought he had a right to command," whether the slaves, his daughter, or other workers around the plantation (104).

Turley (2011) explains that this type of authority is related to the historical role that plantation owners played in British history. "For 200 years in British colonial territories and what became the United States the slave trade and slavery underpinned an economic, social, and racial order that projected the power of slaveholders into the centre of their respective political systems" (Clapp and Jeffrey, eds. 20). The British plantation

system brought vast amounts of wealth and goods into the British economy that, as Turley explains, put those who owned slaves and plantations into influential positions of power. Identifying this abuse of power, authors often used the gothic genre to explore Britain's hegemonic rule in the colonies. "By the 1790s," Paravisini-Gerbert (2002) explains, "Gothic writers were quick to realize that Britain's growing empire could prove a vast source of frightening 'others' who would, as replacements for the villainous Italian antiheroes in Walpole or Radcliffe, bring freshness and variety to the genre. With the inclusion of the colonial, a new sort of darkness – of race, landscape, erotic desire and despair – enters the Gothic genre" (229). While Caribbean gothic literature often relies on racist depictions of Africans, critics such as Paravisini-Gerbert and McCann (2000) explain that this genre also explores the slave trade's abuses of power. According to McCann (speaking of Australia), colonial gothic settings betray the "'repressed' of colonization: collective guilt, the memory of violence and dispossession, and the struggle for mastery in which the insecurity of the settler-colony is revealed" (399). In *Letters*, this critique of the slave trade is manifested in the violence of the plantation owner.

In addition to the ill-begotten luxury of the plantation home, Maynard's house also functions as the Caribbean equivalent of a gothic castle through its revelations about the sexual depravity of the plantation owner, since the sexual depravity of gothic villains is a key source of terror in gothic novels. For instance, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), often viewed as the inaugural British gothic novel, features Manfred's persecution of Isabella; threatening sexuality is ubiquitous among the villains of M. G. Lewis' *The Monk: A Romance* (1796); and Ann Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert, heroine of her popular *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), is under constant sexual persecution by her

stepfather Montoni, just to name a few of the genre's most popular examples. Instead of focusing his sexual predation on the narrative's heroine, Maynard's villainy manifests through his sexual abuse of enslaved women. Women on the plantation, then, are doubly enslaved: their labor is exploited as free labor, sexualized objects, and the bearers of the next generation of slaves. "By a variety of other women of every various shade, from the quadroon to the negro of the Gold coast, he had many other children, who were brought up by their mothers on his estates," readers are informed of Maynard (12). As Morgan (1991) explains, white men in the Caribbean commonly had sexual relationships with black and creole women on the islands, usually through rape or similar coercive measures. In fact, "the six or so white men living on one Jamaican estate in the early nineteenth century were twice as likely as the ninety black men there to sire a slave baby" (Bernard and Morgan 178). Furthermore, most of these children were forced into slavery despite their parentage; based on his research, Morgan estimates four out of five of these hybrid children were enslaved (178). This alarming practice, which no doubt became more important after Britain ended the slave trade in 1807, showcases the extreme depravity of slave owners; so corrupt was this system that they sexually exploited vulnerable women on their plantations and then compounded that atrocity by putting their own offspring to work, profiting off their seemingly unfettered power.

Her heroine's realization that she is surrounded by enslaved people who are in fact her half-siblings is an uncanny experience that Smith utilizes to heighten the gothic atmosphere of the island and underscore the moral corruption of slave owners. Henrietta even encounters her own uncanny double in the youngest of her half-sisters who "is nearly as fair as I am; but she has the small eye, the prominent brow, and something

particular in the form of the cheek, which is, I have understood, usual with the creoles even who have not any of the negro blood in their veins" (116).[36] This sibling, Maria, is Henrietta's enslaved double. Wolfreys (2002) posits that the gothic device of doubling "is the figure of haunting *par excellence*"; following Freud's configuration of the uncanny, he asserts that the power of the uncanny is its "ability to disturb not with something alien or strange but, instead, through the return of the all too familiar, that which we have repressed, forgotten; something, which we might describe as a secret," a reaction very present in Henrietta and Maria's encounter (15). Henrietta is disturbed, to borrow Wolfrey's term, not at the differences between her and her sister, but at their similarities. One of the secrets that this uncanny experience reveals is that Henrietta might have non-white heritage. Born in Jamaica but sent to England at a young age, Henrietta muses, "as I am a native of this island, perhaps I have the same cast of countenance without being conscious of it, and I will be woman enough to acknowledge that the supposition is not flattering" (116). Meeting this uncanny double forces Henrietta to acknowledge her proximity to the slave trade. Her own father has been exploiting enslaved people – especially women – in a multitude of ways, including sexually, without any hindrance. The economic prosperity he enjoys as a plantation owner entitles him to tyrannize over everyone in his path; Henrietta understands that she is implicated in this system, as well.

Slavery and wealth accumulation

Because the long arc of this project examines the specific role of the rise of capitalism and wealth accumulation on female characters, it is worth reflecting on the

[36] Throughout the narrative "creole" is applied to her father to indicate a (white) Englishman whose appearance and habits have become attuned to West Indian life, but in the passage above it appears to reference West African or Indigenous Caribbean heritage. In this case, Henrietta remarks that her half-sister is of mixed-race heritage, perhaps one-quarter African or mixed European and indigenous Caribbean.

relationship between slavery and capitalism, since, as Baptist (2012) articulates, "[s]tories about industrialization emphasize white immigrants and clever inventors, but they leave out cotton fields and slave labor" (17).[37] That is, there is a tendency to configure slavery and the sugar industry, conducted as it was within a mercantile economy, as separate from modern capitalism: a dark, pre-modern economy eliminated with the Industrial Revolution and rise of capitalism. However, this narrative is a false one that ignores the significant role slavery played in the emergence of capitalism in England in the nineteenth century. "[I]t would be wrong to treat the plantation system as 'capitalistic' in the same way that the British factory system of the nineteenth century was capitalistic," Mintz (1985) explains, "[y]et to detach the plantations from the emergent world economy that spawned them, or to rule out their contribution to the accumulation of capital in the world centers, would be equally mistaken" (60). Linking slavery to capitalism is not a new phenomenon. Marx (1847), for instance, insists:

> [d]irect slavery is the pivot of bourgeois industry as well as machinery, credit, &c. Without slavery you have no cotton, without cotton you cannot have modern industry. It is slavery which has given their value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created the commerce of the world, it is the commerce of the world which is the essential condition of the great industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the highest importance. (*The Poverty of Philosophy* 121)

Nineteenth-century industrialism was built upon the backs of the enslaved: slavery is not separate from capitalism but inextricably connected to it. The plantation economy,

[37] Baptist examines American slavery, but many scholars, such as Williams (1944), Mintz (1985), Tomich (1991), Beckles (1997), Carrington (2003), Harvey (2019) (just to name a few) argue, the same dynamic applies to the British West Indian context as well.

according to Williams (1944, 1994), "combined the vices of feudalism and capitalism with the virtues of neither" (13). Furthermore, Williams also notes "[t]he sugar planter ranked among the biggest capitalists of the mercantilist epoch" (85). This observation is especially pertinent to the role that that Smith's and Robinson's plantation owners play in their narratives. While sugar planters benefitted tremendously from mercantilist conditions (through the end of the eighteenth century, according to Williams), in many respects their impulse for self-enrichment represents a capitalist impulse. As the following discussion shows, profits and personal influence were, according to Smith and Robinson, the driving factor among plantation owners, much to the detriment of those they commodified for profit.

"The raging multitude": models for resisting the patriarch

In "The Story of Henrietta," it is not just female slaves who are exploited by corrupt plantation owners, but the daughter of the plantation owner, as well. Smith uses her novel to highlight the material connections in which the slave trade facilitated the commodification of all women: enslaved women and British women like Henrietta. To be clear, I do not claim that Henrietta's oppression is equivalent to that of the enslaved persons on her father's plantation; she is a white British woman from a wealthy, slave-owning family, and the enslaved people on their plantation were viewed as chattels used (and abused) for their labor. As Smith presents it, though, there are direct links between the slave industry and Henrietta's situation. In her discussion of race, femininity, and nineteenth-century novels, Meyer (1996) explores the metaphorical ways race is employed to analyze gender and oppression. "The yoking of the two terms of the recurrent metaphor, the 'white woman' and 'dark race,' produces some suggestion in the

text of the exploited or vulnerable situation of the people in the race invoked" (142). According to Meyer, authors who create obvious connections between the enslaved and women implicitly foster empathy with both groups of people. In addition to the shared parentage (and physical appearance) between Henrietta and some of the plantation's house slaves, Smith also creates a link between the enslaved – and their free descendants, the Maroons – and Henrietta through portraying the extent to which Maynard's status as a slave owner directly enables his tyranny over his daughter. The enslaved and Henrietta, all seen as commodities, are also linked in the narrative via their eventual refusal to remain powerless: rebelling against the systems of oppression they face is portrayed as their salvation.

While other gothic father figures sexually persecute the heroines (Father Ambrosio, Manfred, and Montoni again are useful examples), Maynard's persecution of his daughter manifests in viewing her as a commodity he can exchange via marriage for the benefit of his plantation. As Henrietta finds out from her late brother's slave, Amponah, her father plans a marriage between her and a local man named Sawkins, whom Maynard believes he can train to run the plantation with an equally iron fist. "Master not tell you, Miss?" Amponah queries, "dat man [Sawkins] is one day n'other to be our master…master give him you, Miss, and all this great rich estates, and pens and all" (117).[38] As in *Clarissa* and *The Female Quixote,* this contracted marriage is based on the desire of the father to control his estate. Since Maynard's son is dead, he wants to ensure that someone of whom he approves will take over his plantation. He does not want

[38] In this period "pen" could refer to either to a West-Indian estate and its grounds (more frequently spelled "penns,") or the specific locations in which the enslaved were quartered on the plantations; I suspect that Amponah is referring to the former here.

to risk his daughter marrying someone less capable of running the business or even someone with abolitionist tendencies. As Craton (1991) explains, sugar plantations were the most lucrative West Indian plantations; Jamaica was its own "mini-empire" (Bernard and Morgan, eds. 320). Those who ruled over this "mini-empire" relied on "dynastic marriages," as Craton terms them, to make beneficial alliances between plantocratic families (333). This meant that young women were often treated as pawns in the family business; marriage infused capital into a plantation or joined two abutting plantations, for example.

As in *Clarissa* and *The Female Quixote,* the forced marriage in "The Story of Henrietta" stems from a father's desire to control his estate. Maynard possesses a "strange resolution to *raise* a dependent to the rank of his son-in-law; to make the fortune of a man in humble life wholly dependent on, and owing every thing [*sic*] to him" (116, italics in original). This description parallels James Harlowe's dream of "*raising a family*" to financial and political prominence (Richardson 1:77, italics in original). While the Harlowes attempt to concentrate their family's wealth into James, here Smith indicates that Maynard wants to raise Sawkins out of poverty, creating a debt of gratitude and molding Sawkins into the ideal subordinate. As Henrietta explains, her father is "always accustomed to command, and to look on those about him rather as machines who were to move only at his nod, than as beings who had wills and inclinations of their own, a man of equal or even of affluent or independent fortune would not on these terms become a part of his family" (118). Maynard sees people as "machines": tools for his enrichment rather than autonomous beings. Exchanging his daughter in marriage for an heir in his own image will, Maynard postulates, provide his mini empire with security. As

Amponah succinctly describes him, Sawkins "is poor man, bad man, cruel man" who possesses the building blocks of an ideal plantation owner (117). When Henrietta attempts an open dialogue with Maynard about the impending marriage, she "was forbidden all reply; and ordered not to remonstrate, but to prepare to obey"; Maynard even threatens her life, warning: "any opposition will be fatal to yourself" (118-9). The extreme wealth that the slave trade gives Maynard – and its concomitant power – allows extensive latitude over the lives of those in his world, including a sense of entitlement over the marriage of his daughter.

While the links between Clarissa Harlowe and Henrietta are unmistakable, Smith rewrites Richardson's heroine in a way that allows her to break out of the victim position. While Boulokus (1991) categorizes "The Story of Henrietta" as "one of many late century adaptations of the basic *Clarissa* plot," the differences between the two are just as significant as the similarities (88). Defined by her embodiment of prescribed feminine virtues such as mercy, humility, and deference to her *paterfamilias,* Clarissa – though firm in her rejection of Solmes – ultimately embraces the victim-blaming attitude perpetuated by her society. Henrietta, however, realizing the unjust treatment to which she's subjected, shirks such oppressive formations of femininity in favor of her own definition of femininity. Her character portrays a remarkable amount of growth throughout the narrative. For example, when she first meets her (eventual) husband, Denbigh, he is clearly smitten but vents frustration over her highly impressionable "feeble mind" as Henrietta lets her companion, Mrs. Apthorp, convince her that "a young woman should have no will of her own" (45). Her determination not to marry Sawkins, however, awakens in her a "discovery of female self," to borrow Felski's phrase,

cementing *Letter*'s role as a feminist novel of awakening (142). "[I]n that moment," she writes to Denbigh, "I solemnly repeated a vow to Heaven, that never should my hand be given in marriage but to you. Having thus called upon all that is held sacred to witness my unalterable resolution, I felt my courage renewed" (68-9). Henrietta here recognizes her right to self-determination; isolated from any allies, she also realizes that she must act on her convictions to save herself from a miserable fate. "The more I reflect on the destiny [Maynard] proposes for me, the more impossible I find it to reduce my mind to submission," she insists (77). Memorialized by Richardson for her ultimate submission to her father, Clarissa's reward is only to be found in heaven; the novel denies her a chance to create happiness for herself on earth. Henrietta, however, takes matters into her own hands, running away from her father's home during a Maroon rebellion. Smith creates in Henrietta a character who acts on her values, but, importantly, this value system is one she creates for herself instead of absorbing from her society. "I acted on those principles of duty towards my father, and of reverence for the opinion of the world, which every body [*sic*] around me had taught me," and she insists it is better "that a woman should acquire fixed principles, and upon them act with decision; and that there is nothing else that can prevent that wavering imbecility which makes us the sport of every accident, and often ridiculous as well as wretched" (73-4). Acquiescing to the culture of feminine submission turns women into victims, according to Henrietta; defining and defending her own sense of virtue – one that is not tethered to obedience – justifies Henrietta's rebellion.

It is no coincidence that Henrietta's rebellion against her father occurs during a Maroon and slave rebellion; published in the aftermath of several historical West Indian

uprisings, "The Story of Henrietta" has ties to the Second Maroon War (Jamaica, 1795-6), the Haitian Revolution (Saint Domingue, 1791-1804), and other Maroon and slave rebellions that took place in the Caribbean world. Reading Henrietta's rebellion against her father alongside these rebellions underscores the narrative's larger message about slavery: that deposing tyrants – by violence if necessary – is the only path to freedom. The freedom of the enslaved and the political rights of Maroons (communities of escaped slaves and their descendants that lived in the mountains of Jamaica) were of great concern for the plantocracy, as they relied on slave labor and the cooperation of the Maroons. During the decade of the 1730s and again in the 1790s, British colonizers fought a highly-publicized battle against Jamaican Maroons over land rights (among other issues).[39] Ogborn (2011) explains the hefty media coverage of these clashes in the metropole: "the Second Maroon War was both a colonial war fought in the cockpit country of Jamaica, and a war of words fought out across the Atlantic geography of Britain's empire…a paper war" (204). Many popular books on the subject were printed in this period, including Bryan Edward's influential *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1793), which went through five successive editions and was translated into Spanish, French, German, and Dutch. This text spawned a huge flurry of responses, including Robert Charles Dallas' popular *The History of the Maroons* (1803).[40] Additionally, most local newspapers regularly featured articles by special West Indian correspondents or picked up stories from the colonial papers. These became especially popular during the Second Maroon war as local magistrates in Jamaica

[39] For more, see Zips, *Black Rebels: African-Caribbean Freedom Fighters in Jamaica* (1999).
[40] Interestingly, R. C. Dallas is the father is E. S. Dallas, editor of the 1868 edition of *Clarissa* discussed in chapter five.

and their supporters in Parliament tried to justify the war by vilifying the Maroons. As one July 1796 story put it, the Maroons were "banditti who had entered into a most dangerous and ungrateful rebellion" ("The Maroon War"). Those who supported the slave trade and British commercial interests in the West Indies were eager to suppress the Maroons as quickly – and with as much force – as possible to maintain sugar production on the island.

The connection between literature of the 1790s and the violence of the revolutions that took place in the West Indies (not to mention other uprisings in France, Ireland, America, and Gordon Riots) is an important one, and one that can decode Smith's stance toward slavery in "The Story of Henrietta." As scholars like Haywood (2006, 2-3) and Keach (2004, 123) have explored, the 1790s was a violent era. As Keach puts it, authors as diverse as Mary Wollstonecraft and Percy Shelley (among others) "predicate the inevitable and necessary violence of revolution on the prior existence of an oppressive ruling-class power that is doubly arbitrary. The power that 'the higher orders of society' wield over the weak and the poor is both tyrannical and capricious, absolute and irrational" and can only be overturned by violence (122). The oppression wrought by influential men like Maynard, that is, requires a violent overturning. This is precisely the dynamic at play in "The Story of Henrietta"; Henrietta notes that the Maroon community "is frequently increased by fugitive negroes, and is lately become so formidable, that means have been devised wholly to extirpate and destroy them; which is, perhaps, very politic, but I can hardly think it just" (92).[41] That is, the planters are so threatened by the

[41] The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that "politic" can mean: "Of an action or thing: judicious, expedient, sensible; skillfully contrived," though an archaic use of the world (that also fits Henrietta's meaning) is: "Of or relating to a constitutional state, as opposed to a despotic one; constitutional" ("politic").

number of free Afro-Caribbeans on the island that they plan to eradicate the population. A driving force behind this extermination, Maynard is known "to be particularly obnoxious to them" (92). Given the context and contemporary usages of the word "politic," Henrietta is saying that, though violence against slaves was legal, such bloody antagonism is unfair. Maynard "had indulged his vindictive temper in great and unjustifiable severities towards the people upon all his estates; severities which served only to irritate the minds even of those who had till then most faithfully adhered to him" (148). It is Maynard's violence and his unjustified severity with his slaves that turns them against him – he brings their violence upon himself. These are not African "savages" revolting against their kindly white overseers out of spite or greed, as plantocratic interests framed the conflict, but desperate slaves refusing their master's violence.

Violence as a justified form of retributive justice against tyrants is a theme that appears elsewhere in Smith's *oeuvre*, indicating Smith's sustained belief in the idea. For instance, in her 1793 poem *The Emigrants* (1793) the speaker warns:

> …if oppress'd too long,
> The raging multitude, to madness stung,
> Will turn on their oppressors; and, no more
> By sounding titles and parading forms
> Bound like tame victims, will redress themselves! (1.333-37).

The speaker explains that most of the French population – urban and rural poor – were pushed to a breaking point by their "oppressors," wealthy aristocrats and the Catholic Church, who disenfranchised the poor and took advantage of workers. In other words, the wealthy and aristocratic classes brought the violence of revolution on themselves. This is

also a warning to the elites of British society that this same pattern might repeat itself in England if the status quo doesn't change. As Andrews (2008) paraphrases the poem: "Britain must either reform or find itself embroiled in a bloody chaos" (22). This violence, however, is not necessarily bad. Andrews puts forth that "war, the poem concludes, has a cleansing effect which, though violent, is nevertheless of benefit" (23). Readers are left with the notion that revolution and insurrection are necessary reactions to tyranny. When applied to "The Story of Henrietta" this allows readers to see that, as Henrietta is morally justified in disobeying her father and taking open action against him by running away, so too are the Maroons and slaves justified in rebelling against their oppressive master. Furthermore, the fact that the unjust ruler in both cases is the same person highlights the intricate ways in which the institution of slavery and the oppressive ways in which marriages were contracted for young women, both driven by economic, selfish greed, are connected to and enable each other.

Smith's fiction and poetry enact Mary Wollstonecraft's call to "root out those deleterious plants, which poison the better half of human happiness," as she argues in her 1794 *Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution and the Effect it Has Produced in Europe* (71). Like Smith, Wollstonecraft defends the French revolution long after most of her initially enthusiastic peers tempered their support in the wake of the September massacres of 1792. Without specifically condoning the Terror, she makes a clear argument about violence: the wealthy and powerful classes of French society brought the revolution against themselves. Violence, to Wollstonecraft, is a sometimes-necessary tool:

> If the degeneracy of the higher orders of society be such, that no remedy less fraught with horrour [*sic*] can effect a radical cure; and if enjoying the fruits of usurpation, they domineer over the weak, and check by all the means in their power every humane effort, to draw man out of the state of degradation, into which the inequality of fortune has sunk him; the people are justified in having recourse to coercion, to repel coercion. (70)

Wollstonecraft explains that there are situations in which the "higher orders of society," meaning those in positions of power, degrade society by taking advantage of those without wealth or influence. The elite created a world in which the lower classes have no legal or democratic methods by which to contest the unfair treatment they suffer. In these cases, according to Wollstonecraft, violent uprisings are the only available option. She goes on to state that "[f]or civilization hitherto, by producing the inequality of conditions, which makes wealth more desirable than either talents or virtue, has so weakened all the organs of the body-politic…The rich have for ages tyrannized over the poor… How, in. fact, can we expect to see men live together like brothers, when we only see master and servant in society?" (71). The inequalities underlying the French Revolution, Wollstonecraft explains, exist in England, as well. As in Smith's "The Emigrants," the distinct threat of violence against the oppressive classes is relayed.

Smith explores these same themes in *Letters,* utilizing George Maynard, Henrietta's uncle (her father's brother), to further engage with issues of inequality, cruelty, and slavery. George's lengthy back story shows readers how capitalism and slave owning turn Maynard into a monster. As a child Maynard "had been used to exercise the caprices of a very bad temper on half a dozen African boys and girls," and, drunk with

that power, often turned to physically beating his younger brother to satiate his lust for power (150). Though a small episode in the larger narrative, this concretizes the link between the feelings of power that comes from owning other humans. That is, young Maynard's freedom to beat enslaved children translates, in his mind, to a power over everyone he encounters. As a child Maynard beats George so badly that George is sent away from his abusive brother. Once separated from his plantocratic family he learns about empathy. "[N]o longer fearing for my *life*," George explains, "I began to find that I had a *soul*; at least that I had feelings and affections worthy of aspiring to rank above the ferocious animals to whom I had hitherto been subjected" (150, italics in original). The "ferocious animals" are his slave-owning family members; Smith flips the typical racist analogy of black slaves and animals so that it is the white slave owners who are the animals. "These men, whom we call savages," George says of the enslaved and Maroons, "have neither the blindness nor the ingratitude of the polished Europeans; and they will not injure him who has been, as far as his power extended, their benefactor" (185). Seeing a human side to these figures that contemporary accounts so often denied, George advocates that they are, in fact, more humane than "polished Europeans" who see other humans as commodities.

"The Story of Henrietta" and slavery: a complicated tale

While George applies common eighteenth-century descriptions of Africans as savages to tyrannous European men, it is also crucial to address the extent to which "The Story of Henrietta" indulges in racist depictions of enslaved Africans to heighten the terror of her Caribbean gothic setting. As Paravisini-Gerbert (2002) puts it, "the terrors of the heroine's situation are exacerbated by her atavistic fears of Jamaica's African-derived

magicoreligious practice of Obeah and the possibility of sexual attack by black males" (229). Gombay drums and eerie chanting haunt Henrietta: "the hideous phantasies of these poor uninformed savages assault my spirits with a sort of dread," she writes (97). Common racist stereotypes fill the narrative. For instance, attempts to instruct her half-sister Maria are futile due to Maria's natural simplicity and love of finery: "I cannot," according to Henrietta, "make her comprehend the simplest instruction, and our lesson generally ends in her begging of me some ribbon, feather, or other trifling ornament" (58-9). Another example is found in Amponah, whose initial kindness to Henrietta is revealed to be tinged with self-interest; he helps her escape from her father but demands sexual favors when they are alone in the jungle. So misplaced is Henrietta's trust in Amponah that Boulokus (2007) says Henrietta "make[s] Amponah her Lovelace" (98). Furthermore, the Maroons she encounters are blood-thirsty, animalistic, and especially sexually attracted to white women.

Such depictions likely stem from the sources that Smith consulted when researching Jamaica such as Edward Long's deeply racist *The History of Jamaica* (1774).[42] Smith accepts his depictions of African slaves and their West-Indian born descendants – especially men – as potentially threatening and lascivious, heightening the terrors that Henrietta experiences. Whatever her source material, however, Smith's utilization of these racist stereotypes begs the question: to what degree does this narrative (or Smith personally) support the plight of the enslaved and Maroons if it perpetuates these stereotypes? This question is a major point of contention among critics. Craciun (2005), for instance, notes that while Smith portrays "an obvious discomfort" with West

[42] Smith asked her associate James Upton Tripp for a copy of this in March 1793 (Stanton, ed. 114).

Indian slavery, she ultimately "did not take an abolitionist stance when exploring the slave plantations that her protagonists encounter, instead portraying slavery as morally ambiguous" (40). On the one hand, this seems a sound argument. In addition to the racist stereotypes of black and Creole people within the novel, there is one point in the narrative in which Henrietta declares her father "has been used to purchase slaves and feels no repugnance in selling his daughter to the most dreadful of all slavery" (121). The marriage that her father contracts is certainly cruel and deeply embedded in notions of male authority over women, but it does not compare with the experiences of chattel slaves: it is decidedly not "the most dreadful of all slavery." Historical documents and penal codes reveal the brutally violent treatment that displaced Africans and their descendants suffered. Reading Henrietta's statement uncritically is as fallacious as it is irresponsible.

On the other hand, however, other critics do not dismiss the narrative's abolitionism so quickly. Fry (2002-3), for example, takes a more nuanced approach. "A republican in all issues," she explains, "Smith opposed slavery. But despite her philosophical opposition to the institution, she reveals the same racial prejudice shared by many others committed to the abolition movement" (45). It is not just Smith who utilizes racist stereotypes in her treatment of black characters; racist understandings of racial hierarchies were embedded in the abolition movement itself. This recognition, that the abolition movement was racist, I argue, is key in understanding the complex stance that Smith takes on slavery in "The Story of Henrietta." That is, ideologies from this period were often racist and abolitionist conterminously; just because an individual or organization advocated for the freedom of the enslaved that does not mean black persons

were considered equal to white Europeans. Midgley (1998) states: "despite assertions of international and cross-race sisterhood" that comparing white women and black slaves created, "these comparisons tended to work against any notion of full equality. In both cases British social and cultural superiority is stressed, but there was a shift to a more racialised – a more racist – conception of the basis of this superiority" (164-5). As paradoxical as it may seem, late-eighteenth century discourses on slavery were often simultaneously racist and abolitionist. In *An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, in Behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies* (1823), for instance William Wilberforce claims slavery keeps the enslaved "below the level of human beings" and "so much below the level of the human species" (10,14). Furthermore, Wilberforce asserts that the lack of Christianity among the enslaved "is the most serious of all the vices of the West-Indian system"; Africans and their descendants, Wilberforce believes, live in "worse than Pagan darkness and depravity," a "condition of ignorance and degradation" (19).[43] Abolitionists such as Wilberforce ultimately blame the plantation system and evils of the slave trade for placing and keeping the enslaved in a degraded state, but the key here is that they did believe the enslaved to be morally and intellectually inferior to white Europeans. Overlooking this fact does a disservice to the history of the enslaved and their descendants, whose path to freedom is more complicated than late-eighteenth-century abolitionists admit. Despite links fostered between Henrietta and the enslaved via their shared revolution, Smith's narrative inevitably supports larger theories of racial

[43] Wilberforce also perpetuates the myths of the ignorant absentee plantation owner who is unaware of the cruelties on his plantation and that the African "constitution" is better "suited" to hot climes of the West Indies (4,8).

hierarchies that were so prominent in her period, both in pro-slavery accounts like Long's and in female-driven abolitionist groups.[44]

Boulukos (2007) describes Smith's attitudes toward abolition in "The Story of Henrietta" as "discouraging" (87). Arguing that Smith thought the political climate in Jamaica and the nature of the slaves were too depraved to admit of any real social progress, "[b]rutalization," by which he means a position of extreme subjection, "can produce enlightenment in whites, but only serves to confirm the inherent brutality of Africans" (102). That is, he argues that in "The Story of Henrietta" white characters like Henrietta experience enlightenment and can excise tyranny from their lives, but black characters, due to their primitive natures, are incapable of such self-enlightenment. There is undeniably a truth to this point: the racist stereotypes Smith employs in her depictions of black characters prevent them from possessing any individuality, and thus character development, as they are to a large degree character types rather than subjects. However, acknowledging that a text can advocate for the end of slavery and perpetuate racist ideologies – as the larger abolition movement did – allows for a more nuanced reading of "The Story of Henrietta."

For instance, I agree with Boulokus that there is a "discouraging" aspect to Smith's narrative, but I contend that this sense of discouragement stems from Smith's own pessimism toward political change. Smith possessed first-hand knowledge of the slave trade. While the struggles wrought by her husband are well known and commented

[44] J. Rosenthal (2018) makes a similar claim in her analysis of Eliza Fenwick's letters to Mary Hays, which reveal a pro-slavery attitude that is at odds with the ideas of universal liberty in her fiction. "By examining Fenwick's unusual transition from an English radical feminist to a Caribbean slaveowner, I demonstrate that white women's resistance to gender inequality—in the form of writing and everyday acts—not only was sometimes unaccompanied by an opposition to racial inequality, but could in fact work to reinforce racial oppression and exploitation" (48).

on (Benjamin habitually cheated, ran up debts, took financial advantage of everyone around him, and was violent toward Charlotte on at least one occasion), what is less discussed are the ways in which the Smith family's Barbadian sugar plantations caused problems.[45] Charlotte's father-in-law, Richard Smith, made a fortune from holdings in East and West Indian properties, including sugar plantations in Barbados, which his wastrel son Benjamin took over upon his father's death. Smith's letters reveal that these plantations were a source of anxiety and highlight her revulsion toward the immorality of West Indian plantation management practices. After her separation from Benjamin she dealt with the estate's agents by herself; she was often frustrated by these encounters, finding the agents condescending. Additionally, she was aware that someone in Barbados was embezzling money from the plantations but was unable to pinpoint the source. Shortly before her death she referred to "Barbados traders" as "Men who are notorious for their total want of honesty and who do not even affect the semblance of it" (Stanton, ed. 738). Additionally, she blamed the Smith plantations for the death of her son Charles, who died there while looking into the plantation's mismanagement. In fact, in 1804 Smith suggested that her son was murdered by someone on the plantation, writing of Charles' dealings with a local agent in Barbados that: "of His death, the wretch took advantage, & such is my opinion from long & fatal experience of the people in Barbados that I should not be surprised if his death had been hasten'd" (Stanton, ed. 604). So low was Smith's opinion of the men who ran the British West Indian sugar industry that she believed them capable murder or foul play for financial gain. It is no wonder, then, that in

[45] For more on her biography see Loraine Fletcher's *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (1998).

her fiction such men are represented as the worst examples of corrupt and immoral power.

It should be noted that Charlotte Smith benefitted economically from the Smith plantations despite her resentment. It is also somewhat stunning to read the letters in which she bluntly discusses the monetary value of enslaved persons on their plantation; in one letter from 1800 she discusses selling

> a Man worth (as per valuation of 1798) 70£ called Kit James, a young Woman called Catharina, stated to be worth £100, and a Woman called Sarah or Sareey worth £80. The three other Girls or Women were of inferior value, and one Slave named Bennah, tho stated in the Managers Account to be a Man, was a very old Woman worth nothing; her death therefore & that of the old Men is rather a relief than a disadvantage to the Estate. (Stanton, ed. 404)

If the economic exchange of human beings was not jarring enough, the last sentence, in which Smith describes the death of an elderly person as a "relief" is especially shocking.

It is difficult to grasp how she can express such radical opinions in her fiction yet also have dealings with a sugar plantation. How do readers come to terms with this? Was Smith pandering to abolitionist sympathies in her literature for commercial success? Did Smith believe in abolitionism in the abstract but not apply this belief to her personal life? I suspect that Smith likely wanted nothing to do with the plantations; they were a link to her detested estranged husband, their revenue became entangled in a messy court case surrounding Richard Smith's will, they were wildly mismanaged by agents Smith abhorred, and – as she saw it – were responsible for her son's death.[46] Her letters show a

[46] It is a commonly held belief that the court case surrounding Richard Smith's will was the inspiration for *Jarndyce V. Jarndyce* in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-3).

disgust with the whole system and a constant desire to sell it for fast cash. Beyond this, though, I again refer to the racist nature of the abolition movement itself, which often consisted in a dual belief in the freedom and inferiority of the enslaved. "There were, of course, some enlightened individuals who embraced human equality, but these were the exception, not the rule," Quirk (2011) explains, "[i]t would be one thing to be in favor of better treatment, and another thing to be committed to universal equality. Millions of Britons repeatedly signed anti-slavery petitions, but few considered African slaves their equals" (43). In "The Story of Henrietta" Smith portrays black characters as intellectually and (frequently) morally inferior, yet the narrative still contains an argument for their freedom alongside a condemnation of the tyrannous system that encourages men like Maynard to value individual economic gain above all else. Both this narrative and Smith's personal dealings with the slave trade shape it as a system that blights all in its path. As George states, "[m]isery…is, indeed, the certain concomitant of slavery. It follows with undeviating step the tyrant who imposes, and the slave who endures the fetters" (138). However, it is also a system with immense political weight supporting it. As George's failed attempts to free their family's slaves shows, those in power will stay there unless extreme measures remove them. The "maxims of policy which the tyranny of custom has established" dictate, according to George, "that the strong may trample on the weak" (287-8). George's political reforms were destined to fail, leaving the more drastic revolutions enacted by the Maroons and enslaved as the only path forward. In "The Story of Henrietta" unauthorized rebellion, as opposed to institutional changes, emerge as the only possibility for escaping unjust oppression. As Henrietta is justified in her refusal to obey her father's command that she marry Sawkins and in her decision to run away to

escape his tyranny, so too are the slaves and Maroons vindicated for escaping Maynard and for deposing the figurehead of the plantation system. In this sense, "The Story of Henrietta" can be read as a pro-abolition text, but one in which emancipation (from slavery and from tyrannical family ties) is initiated by the subjects themselves rather than through any institutional assistance.

Fighting against the "proud Lords of Traffic": Mary Robinson's *Angelina*

Smith is not the only writer from the 1790s who adapts *Clarissa*'s plot to explore the ways in which the slave trade enables the subordination of both enslaved and British women. Mary Robinson's novel *Angelina; A Novel* explores these same connections but does so in a way that breaks free from the racism of "The Story of Henrietta," acknowledging the humanity of the enslaved. Given her formidable stage career and her notorious affairs with famous men like the Prince of Wales and Charles James Fox, Robinson's personal life is often of greater interest than her writing. However, Robinson saw herself as a poet and novelist on-par with the best of her day; critics have been slowly moving toward recognizing her literary accomplishments, primarily in terms of her poems, but more recently her novels, as well.[47] Robinson was an out-spoken advocate for women's rights who boldly depicted the sometimes-horrific realities that many poor, outcast women faced.

Angelina; A Novel draws the reader's attention to the way women were used as pawns in the pursuit of wealth and power. The epistolary novel begins with the Lovelace-like Lord Acreland lamenting the fact that his aristocratic family has fallen on hard times. He writes to his friend Sir Fairford that his situation is a common one; he is confident that

[47] For instance, Airey (2016), Brewer (2010), Craciun (2002), Fay (2006), Russo (2012, 2013), and Setzer (2017) all analyze Robinson's novels.

he will find a "wealthy upstart" on the watch for "needy nobility" with whom he can trade his title and associations for an influx of capital to save his estate (1:3). Chapter one of this project analyzes the ways in which the emergent middle class – merchants like the Harlowe family – were amassing enough wealth to buy considerable socio-political influence. The Harlowes want to buy a peerage for James, since they recognize that a title is a steppingstone to power. The inverse circumstance applies to Lord Acreland: he has an ancestral title and estate but is running out of capital to maintain them. Rich upstarts like Sir Edward, an absentee plantation owner and tyrannical father, present an opportunity for an influx of cash through marriage. Lord Acreland delineates his plan with startling candor, treating the economic exchange of women as quotidian occurrence. As Stone and Stone (1984) usefully point out this was a phenomenon that occurred throughout the eighteenth century. Quoting Defoe's *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728), they quote: "'the rising tradesmen swells into the gentry, and the declining gentry sinks into trade.' [Defoe] pictured how, on the one hand, an immensely wealthy merchant 'marries his daughter to a gentlemen of the first quality, perhaps a coronet'" due to the need for liquid assets (Stone and Stone 19). Or, as Lord Acreland puts it: "we constantly behold young women of little birth, and great fortune, as indelicately exposed to sale, as our horses or our hounds" (3-4). Once again, women are commodified as objects of exchange between men: conduits for the transfer of wealth and influence. Sir Edward's daughter Sophia, the young woman on whom Acreland sets his sights, is young, beautiful, and – crucially – extremely wealthy. Recently knighted, Sir Edward is "eager in the pursuit of more substantial honors" and sees Sophia as his opportunity for gaining these (4). As Sir Edward puts it, "All's fair in the way of business…we buy honour, and

they have little to sell, therefore the commodity is rare and demands a good price: coronets are often on sale in the city" (2:122). Baldly referring to his daughter as "the commodity," it is obvious that Sir Edward has no respect for her. Anything done is the name of business is, to him, justified: Sophia is nothing but a pawn in their business deal.

Like Henrietta, Sophia refuses this commodification, proving herself a strong-willed heroine. She feels "horror and disgust" toward her father's attempt to sell her off to the highest bidder and toward her intended husband (1:6). It is easy to see how this forced marriage plot mirrors Clarissa's situation, but Robinson makes it clear that Sophia's virtue lies in her resistance to her father and in her determination to make her own decisions. In a letter to a friend she declares: "My father has the free disposal of my fortune; but my mind is still unshackled. I may be driven from his house; – stung by his reproaches, condemned by the world; but will there not be virtue in my resistance?" (1:21). Sophia recognizes that many in her social sphere will condemn her perceived disobedience, but she knows running away from her father's estate is the only option that will allow her to enact her own values. Resisting the patriarch is not a sign of disobedience but a marker of bravely privileging one's own values.

Sir Edward's gothic consumption

Angelina; A Novel contains many gothic motifs that hark back to earlier gothic novels, like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) – crumbling castles, ghostly visions, haunted churches – that foster an eerie atmosphere. However, like Smith, Robinson reveals the true gothic terror of the novel to be the villainous father, identified though his relentless persecution of his daughter. After Sophia escapes from her father's estate, he pursues her across the countryside, doggedly hunting her. Like a true gothic

villain, his pursuit is threatening to Sophia's life and freedom. At one point he jumps out of a carriage, exclaiming: "[h]ave I caught you?" while grabbing Sophia at gunpoint (2:139). The novel even contains a dramatic chase scene: "I thought I should expire!" Sophia insists when her father finally catches her (2:197). Like many a gothic heroine before her, Sophia "is made a prisoner" in the tower of a rural Abbey by her tyrannous father (2:237).

A specific aspect of Sir Edward's characterization as a gothic monster comes from connections forged between him and a cannibal: his sinister fixation on consumption is emphasized. Sir Edward is a "blustering, rude, disagreeable, money-breeding savage" who "understands nothing but eating" (1:71,74). He "mistakes profusion for hospitality, and magnificence for taste: his attention fatigues, his conversation disgusts" and he "guzzles [wine] from morning to night" (1:147, 149). In his own words, Sir Edward claims: "[l]ife is not life, my Lord, without good eating and drinking," as if his appetite were just an innocent indulgence (1:147-8). When read in connection to the gothic cannibal, however, Sir Edward's appetite takes on a more sinister cast. Cannibal violation "evokes torture and murder, rape and incest – often in folklore involving the victimization of the most innocent, of children, boys, and young women," according to Malchow (1996 43). Or, as Brantlinger (2011) puts it, the British "treat[ed] cannibalism as the nadir of savagery, the complete antithesis of civilization" (66). Such descriptions aptly apply to Sir Edward. For instance, after finding Sophia at the home of some friends, he barges in on the women. Wildly drunk, he declares: "here you are, my tasty ones," while insisting "a city lady wouldn't deny a body a harmless kiss – I'm not going to eat you" (2:266). These demands for kisses and threats to eat the

women are made especially sinister since Sir Edward is also holding a gun and has locked the women in the room with him, promising to shoot anyone who tries to leave. While there is certainly humor in the scene (an absurd feathered headdress worn by one of the more obnoxious characters catches fire as she dives behind a couch, and readers are eventually clued into the fact that the gun is not loaded), the bottom line is that Sir Edward, with his creepy threats to eat the women, feels he is entitled to hold them at gunpoint and demand kisses. Speaking of Robinson's poetry, Pascoe (2000) argues: "Robinson juxtaposes tales of abjection with humorous tales, but the humor is of a dark variety" that exposes abuses of power (55). This same dynamic applies to *Angelina; A Novel*, as well. While readers perhaps are not concerned Sir Edward is actually going to eat the women, his threats liken him to a cannibal, underscoring the threat he poses.

The version of cannibalism portrayed through Sir Edward, however, is unusual in that, typically, contemporary depictions of cannibalism villainized black or brown subjects (often of African descent), not white Europeans. As Malchow (1996) points out, cannibals were commonplace in late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century gothic fiction and were typically aligned with racialized depictions of an exotic, dark other. He argues: "perhaps the single most emotive aspect of the monstrous non-European, the construction of the black savage that most closely relates to the gothic unnatural, is his presumed cannibal impulse" (41). In Cynric R. Williams' *Hamel, the Obeah Man* (1827), a classic Caribbean gothic novel set against the backdrop of unrest in colonial Jamaica, for example, a white missionary who stumbles upon an Obeah ritual is attacked by a cannibal whose teeth have been sharpened "as to make them resemble those of a cat, and render them narrow and sharp as needles" (125). "He gnashed these in the face of his

shuddering suppliant; and his brawny arm was already raised to strike" before Hamel spares the missionary but makes him drink blood with them (125).[48] Drinking blood, a common indicator of cannibalism, appears in literature claiming to be non-fiction, as well. The enslaved persons planning an uprising on a plantation in Jamaica, according to M. G. Lewis' *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1834), were known to "assist it with all the usual accompanying ceremonies of drinking human blood, eating earth from graves, &c." (225). Such depictions, Malchow also explains, were constructed by the pro-slavery lobby to dehumanize Africans and justify their enslavement (41). Even when cannibalism is not explicitly mentioned, the inhumanity of Africans and their enslaved descendants was emphasized. For instance, Bryan Edward's *A History, Civil and Commercial, of the British West Indies* (1793) describes rebels in Saint Domingue as "savage people, habituated to the barbarities of Africa…[who] fall on the unsuspecting planters, like so many famished tigers thirsting for human blood. Revolt, conflagration, and massacre, everywhere mark their progress" (67). Animality and cannibalistic qualities are emphasized, much like in the fictional accounts. In Long's popular *History of Jamaica* (1774) – the same volume Charlotte Smith consulted while writing "The Story of Henrietta" – he describes slaves as:

> void of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science. They have no plan or system of morality among them. Their barbarity to their children debases their nature even below that of brutes. They have no moral sensations; no taste but for women; gormandizing, and drinking to excess; no

[48] Cannibalistic descriptions of villains extended well into the nineteenth century; Heathcliff has "sharp cannibal teeth" in *Wuthering Heights* (154). In *Dracula* (1897) Stoker seems to borrow from popular depictions of cannibals in his description of Dracula's "very red lips and sharp-looking teeth, as white as ivory" (40-41).

> wish but to be idle. Their children, from their tenderest years, are suffered to deliver themselves up to all that nature suggests to them. (353)

The barbarous, immoral, vice-ridden nature of Africans, according to Long's racist account, makes them less than human: simple-minded, dangerous, and in need of a firm (white) ruling hand.[49] In *Angelina; A Novel*, however, it is the slave owner – not the enslaved – who is the inhumane, cannibalistic monster. Obsessed with his social status rather than intellectual or moral refinement, a constant glutton, womanizer, and tyrannous father, Sir Edward fits Long's account of barbarity in every aspect. While Long refers to Africans, Robinson shows the monstrous brutality of slave owners.

While the connection between Sir Edward and cannibalism is palpable, his real power is derived not from eating humans, but from a more metaphorical type of human consumption: slavery. As Gikandi (2011) explains, "institutions of high culture in the English eighteenth century were enabled by money made in West Indian plantations" (149).[50] Williams (1944,1994) points out that absentee slave owners could buy their way into local government and Parliamentary positions from which they were able to influence policy to their own benefit (92-3). Sophia's lover Belmont sums up this cycle:

> The plodding citizen is educated in the laborious art of traffic; he passes the day in pursuit of riches; he dreams of profit and of loss. If fortune smiles upon his toils, his next hope is the aggrandizement of his name, by an alliance with some illustrious family. He then fancies himself ennobled; and in every society arrogates to himself something of superior distinction: talks of his daughter's

[49] The Long family were, according to Williams (1944, 1994) among the wealthiest absentee plantation owners in England; they obviously had a political interest in perpetuating these stereotypes (89).
[50] As Lawson and Phillips (1984) point out, Burke describes the money made by the East India Trading Company in much the same light, casting Nabobs them as villains in his attacks on Warren Hastings (237).

consequence, or his son's nobility; lives in a sort of second rate magnificence. (1:67)

What *Angelina; A Novel* shows is the way in which, despite the geographical and social distances that appeared to exist between colonial plantations and English drawing rooms, there were close connections between the slave trade, polite society, and institutions like Parliament that empowered absentee plantation owners. Sir Edward is a tyrannous monster, but it is his society that enables him; his vast fortune, ill-begotten by the enslavement of humans, allows him to buy acceptance into influential circles.

As in "The Story of Henrietta," *Angelina; A Novel* draws a direct line from the slave trade to the oppression of women in the metropole. Lady Watkins lashes out at Sir Edward and exclaims that she admires Sophia's running away from home to escape the forced marriage, noting that it shows an "independent spirit" (240). Lady Watkins means this as a compliment, but Sir Edward's reaction to his daughter's independence is telling. "Independence is the stalking horse for all sorts of absurdities," he exclaims, "I should like to know what would come of my plantations if such doctrines are encouraged… Hav'n't I made a fortune by slavery! and I warrant independence had nothing to do in the profits of *black* traffic" (240, italics in original). In Sir Edward, Robinson pushes beyond the metaphorical linking of slaves and British women. Rather, Sir Edward's comments enable a conversation about the material connection between the slave industry and the forced marriages of young women. Both are done solely for profit and involve reducing whole groups of people to commodities.

In *Angelina; A Novel* it is the slave owners – like Sir Edward – who are monstrous, animalistic – even cannibalistic – beasts who only care about wealth and

power. Lady Watkins expresses a wish that men with "black hearts," like Sir Edward, would be exposed to the public and sent to Africa, where: "they would then behold the miseries they deride; they would then confess, that the poor negro can feel the scourge – can faint in the burning rays of noon – can hope, can fear – can shrink from torture and sigh for liberty as well as the European" (2:240). She humanizes enslaved persons, highlighting the miseries that men like Sir Edward perpetuate. She refers to both the physical "torture" they endure, the emotional trauma of the slave experience, and their innate desire for liberty. Humanizing African slaves and their descendants in this way counters dehumanizing rhetoric that anti-abolitionists (like Long) so often called upon to support slavery.

Passages such as those quoted above, in which slavery and a greed for wealth and power drive the subjection of those who are without money and influence, echo many passages of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which Wollstonecraft laments the systemic oppression wrought by the wealthiest members of British society. "[F]rom the respect paid to property flow, as from a poisoned fountain, most of the evils and vices which render this world such a dreary scene to the contemplative mind," she explains, [f]or it is in the most polished society that noisome reptiles and venomous serpents lurk under the rank herbage" (221). Estate building is construed as a fundamental source of moral delinquency in British society; throughout *Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft links it to chattel slavery, to society's turning women into objects of male pleasure rather than thinking beings, and to the oppression of the English poor more widely. She argues that "one kind of despotism supports another"; tyranny of different forms, whether of white women or slaves, for instance, is

inextricably linked to estate building, such as Sir Edward and Maynard attempt (232). Independence, then, is the key to counteracting these structures, since independence is "the grand blessing of life, the basis of every virtue," and the key to social reform (65). That is, in *Rights of Woman* Wollstonecraft argues that "the most perfect education" is "to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent. In fact, it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason" (86). Wollstonecraft, like Robinson and Smith, argues that virtue is derived from self-constituted values, rather than through blindly accepting prescribed definitions of femininity which tethered virtue to submission. Robinson was an avowed admirer of Wollstonecraft, writing in *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Insubordination* (1799, published under the pseudonym Anne Francis Randall) that England will need "a legion of Wollstonecrafts to undermine the poisons of prejudice and malevolence" that women face (41). This reference serves as a useful reminder that the women writing forced marriage novels in the late eighteenth century are connected to each other, as well as to Richardson's earlier version of the plot that they are writing against. These novels stand out in that they move beyond simply relating the status of white British women to slaves but show how those two vectors of oppression share a common cause and are intricately interwoven with each other.

Setzer (2017), one of the few critics who analyzes *Angelina* at length, draws similar conclusions about slavery's function in the novel, writing:

> Robinson's Sophia…repeatedly expresses her aversion to being 'bartered like a slave.' The analogy, in her case, carries a particular force because her tyrannical father is also a "black trader" and the proud owner of plantations and slaves in the

> West Indies …As Sophia's Aunt Juliana observes, there is not simply an analogy between Sir Edward's attitudes toward his slaves and his daughter but a causal connection. (61)

Setzer's commentary on the "causal connection" between slavery and Sir Edward's tyranny is apt, yet – I argue – can be pushed further, especially when the novel is read alongside "The Story of Henrietta." While Sophia and Henrietta break from Clarissa's model of submission, taking their futures into their own hands through their decisions to run away from their father's oppressive homes (as opposed to Clarissa, who only leaves when Lovelace tricks her), the happiness of both heroines is facilitated by turbulence on the plantations. As discussed above, Maynard's slaves band together with Maroons, killing Maynard in retribution for his cruel treatment of them. After capturing and imprisoning his daughter in their home, Sir Edward receives word of "losses of considerable consequence, news of the most unpleasant nature" from the West Indies that "require[s] his immediate attention" (2:310). Readers are not privileged with the exact nature of this "unpleasant" news, but from Sophia's reaction the situation is clearly dire: Sir Edward faces financial ruin.

Given the publication date of *Angelina; A Novel*, 1796, I argue that readers are meant to associate this disturbance with a slave or Maroon uprising; the Haitian rebellion was in full swing in 1796, which was also the culmination of the Second Maroon War in Jamaica. Furthermore, Sir Edward's last name – Clarendon – also provides a link to slave rebellions. Clarendon is a county in Jamaica where one of the first major (British) slave rebellions took place; hundreds of slaves rose up against oppression in 1690. Though this took place over 100 years before the publication of *Angelina*, it was commonly cited in

the many historical (or quasi-historical) accounts of Jamaican history that became so popular during the later eighteenth century. Long, for instance, emphasizes the brutality and violence of the slaves and the swift, firm response of the British.[51] Robinson's use of the surname "Clarendon" and the general popular interest in West Indian rebellions and uprisings in the 1790s, should clue readers in to the fact that some sort of violent uprising took place on Sir Edward's plantation.

Ultimately, Sir Edward does not lose as much of his fortune as he initially believed (or, presumably, his plantation) but for the remainder of the novel he is a completely different man. He transforms from a cannibal-like gothic villain into a chastised, passive background figure. "His manner," Sophia remarks, "was less violent, his voice less harsh, his countenance seemed to lose much of its austerity" (2:249). Meekness becomes the new hallmark of this previously tyrannical villain as Sophia descends from the gothic tower in which he imprisoned her and she marries her beloved Belmont, a marriage Sir Edward forbade before the West Indian disaster. Until this point Sir Edward has been a constant source of violence and terror but when his plantation and profits suffer a loss, so does his authority over Sophia. Meekness, in *Angelina,* emanates from the patriarch, not the daughter. Read in this light, the disaster on his plantation, though unspecified in the text, is coded as a rebellion or revolution that is a source of retribution for Sir Edward's violent tyranny. Violence, Craciun (2002) argues, is in fact a significant theme across Robinson's work. She asserts that Robinson "rewrite[s] the

[51] Characterizing the black inhabitants of Clarendon by their "aversion to husbandry, and the martial ferocity of their disposition," Long claims the enslaved on a plantation owned by a man named Sutton killed the overseer and his family and fought British forces before they were so overpowered they "threw down their arms, and begged for mercy; the rest were afterwards either slain, or taken prisoners; the ringleaders of the conspiracy hanged," mirroring in some ways the violent ending of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave* (446). He shapes the white colonists as clearly wronged and superior to the black rebels.

seduction plot from *Clarissa* onwards, insisting that women enlarge their understanding of honor and take up arms to actively defend it and themselves" (52). Extending this argument further, I argue that *Angelina; A Novel* shows that violence is an effective tool for overcoming evil. Although the "violence" done to Sir Edward happens offstage, so to speak, and he isn't subjected to the same bodily violence as Maynard, the theme is still present. After the pitfalls in the West Indies, Sir Edward is a quiet, chastised man.

Robinson and the slave trade

Robinson's views on the slave trade appear elsewhere in her body of writing in ways that support reading Sophia's resistance against her father alongside resistance to the slave trade. Ferguson (1992) notes that "Mary Darby Robinson regularly published attacks on the institution [of slavery] throughout the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s until her death in 1800" (175). For instance, her poem "The Negro Girl," first published in her 1800 collection *Lyrical Tales*, tells the story of a pair of African lovers, Zelma and Draco, who are so distraught at Draco's being captured into slavery that they both commit suicide. "The Negro Girl" is typical of abolitionist poems of its day that sought to demonize English slavers. Calling on rhetoric similar to Josiah Wedgewood's famed "am I not a man and a brother" slogan, the speaker exclaims: "Whate'er their TINTS may be, their SOULS are still the same" (line 54). Much late-eighteenth-century discourse promoted viewing black persons as less human than white Europeans (even abolitionist theories, as seen above). Robinson's poem, however, presents a different argument: that black Africans have souls and inner lives just as developed as those of white Europeans, a fact that even Charlotte Smith did not cede. Furthermore, Robinson shows her knowledge of the sexual exploitation female slaves faced. "Torn from my Mother's aching breast,/

My Tyrant sought my love" (lines 67-8). Though Zelma is kept as a sexual slave she hopes to return to her beloved Draco, even if it means death. She waits for an opportunity to escape and acts when she has the chance. "ZELMA, and Love contriv'd, to break the Tyrant's chain" (line 84). She is too late to meet Draco but feels triumphant in her escape from her enslaver. In another abolition poem Robinson also focuses on the possibility of liberty and freedom. "The African" (1798) ends with the stanza:

> OH LIBERTY! From thee the suppliant claims
> The meed of retribution! Thy Pure flame
> Wou'd light the sense opake [*sic*], and warm the spring
> Of boundless ectacy [*sic*]: while Nature's laws,
> So violated, plead immortal tongu'd,
> For her dark-fated children! Lead them forth
> From bondage infamous! Bid Reason own
> The dignities of MAN, whate'er his clime,
> Estate, or colour. And, O sacred TRUTH!
> Tell the proud Lords of Traffic, that the breast
> Thrice ebon-tinted, owns a crimson tide
> As pure, – as clear, as Europe's son's can boast. (lines 24-35)

This poem resonates with the warning that Charlotte Smith presents in *The Emigrants*. That is, the speaker addresses that slaves "meed," or deserve, retribution for the wrongs they have faced, which makes "The African" about slave rebellions as much as it as about abolition. Truth, reason, and liberty are all on the side of the enslaved, who are justified in their desire for freedom and vengeance over their oppressors. Though this poem was

published two years after *Angelina*, reading across Robinson's body of work helps scholars gain a fuller picture of the institutions that she wrote against in *Angelina; A Novel* and provide additional support for reading Sir Edward's chastisement after the event at his West Indian properties as retributive violence against him for his sins.

Angelina; A Novel ends with a letter from Sophia to her friend Mrs. Delmore that serves as a denouement. Sharing her plan to retreat from England to the Welsh countryside with her new husband, Sophia ruminates on her hopes for the future in verse:

> And now, my friend, to peaceful scenes I'll fly,
> As the poor swallow seeks a milder sky;
> Long on the mercy of the tempest cast,
> The genial season soothes my soul at last! […]
> I'll seek the hermit PEACE! With him to stray,
> While modest twilight weeps retiring day […]
> While conscious virtue prompts sublime repose,
> And on his pallet rude, his weary eyelids close!
> OH! Solitary SAGE! To Heaven allied!
> From Greatness banish'd, and estrang'd from Pride. (343)

Sophia presents the halcyon atmosphere of the rustic Welsh countryside as an antidote to the suffering caused by her corrupt, tyrannical father and the greedy society that enables him. She aligns the hermit and his lifestyle – the lifestyle she will emulate – as one of peace, wisdom, and virtuous contentment. Robinson makes it clear, however, that virtue already resides in Sophia and that this virtue is directly related to her resistance against her father's violence. In *Angelina; A Novel* Robinson makes explicit connections between

the slave trade and the ways that British women are commodified to re-inscribe the wealth and power needed to maintain a plantation. Importantly, the sense of selfhood that Sophia has is a strong, independent one; Sophia "was marked as a victim; her resistance was dictated by truth, and consistent with reason; she had to choose between a single act of disobedience, and the degradation of falsehood, perjury, meanness, sordid, legal prostitution" (2:331). Like Charlotte Smith, Robinson works to redefine virtue, concluding that young women must have the freedom to define what virtue means to them and must be empowered to act on this sense of virtue.

Conclusion

Recognizing the potency of chattel slavery as a metaphor for the subjection of white British women Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson push the connection further than their peers in their explorations of the real-world connections between the two. That is, their writings show that there are specific material links between chattel slavery and the patriarchal structures of their period. Adapting the plot of *Clarissa*, Smith and Robinson transport the struggle between a tyrannous father, who believes in his right to force his daughter into an unwanted marriage, into their own historical moment to expose the extreme degree to which young women were commodified for economic gain. These same powerful men, portrayed in the novels as classic gothic villains, are shown to be the same men profiting off the Atlantic slave trade, a fact which is closely tethered to the cruelty as father. The sense of authority that these men derive from the slave trade provides them with a sense of power over everyone under their control: the enslaved and their daughters. In addition to their shared oppressor, these narratives suggest a shared emancipation: the rebellions of the enslaved and (and Marooned, in the case is "The

Story of Henrietta") depose the tyrants, ending their persecution of those under their power. Though Smith's "The Story of Henrietta" perpetuates racist stereotypes of black persons, mirroring the racist assumptions that pepper the abolitionist movement, Robinson advocates for seeing the shared humanity between black and white alike. In both cases, however, the right to fight against tyranny – by violence, if necessary – is supported and celebrated.

INTERCHAPTER

"YOUNG LADIES THAT HAVE NO MONEY ARE TO BE PITIED": JANE AUSTEN AND THE FORCED MARRIAGE PLOT

While the previous chapters focused on eighteenth-century novels that dramatize the impacts of wealth accumulation on the family unit, the following chapters move ahead to the nineteenth century, when industrial capitalism took hold in Britain. As these later chapters show, the forced marriage plot and engagement with *Clarissa* remained common literary methods of critiquing the ways economic systems commodified women. To help bridge this temporal jump, I would like to briefly turn to the novels of Jane Austen, since she is such an important figure to scholars of both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature. As the publication dates of her novels straddle both centuries, naturally their content and contexts do as well, making her a useful figure in transitioning this project from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Austen's novels, eapecially her early work *Lady Susan* (c. 1794, published 1871) and final (unfinished) novel *Sanditon,* bridge novelistic depictions of tyrannical parents (such as are present in chapter three) and the oppressive impact of social and economic coercion that are analyzed in chapter four. One key difference, and the reason Austen is discussed in this Interchapter, rather than a full chapter, is that these marriages are not *quid pro quo* financial arrangements in the same way as the other forced marriage under consideration. That is, in the other chapters, fathers (and, in a few instances, mothers or stand-in guardians) plan to force their daughters into unwanted marriages that are explicitly framed as business deals; both male participants in the exchange benefit while the daughters in question, configured as a financial pawn, lose. Nevertheless, Austen's

incorporation of Samuel Richardson's themes and plot structures are important to mention in this project, even though she excises some of the financial predatoriness exhibited by the Harlowes.

Frequently in Austen's novels, it is women (often, but not always, mothers), who pressure young women into marriages with little regard for the young woman's wishes. So worried about her family's economic situation is *Pride and Prejudice*'s (1813) Mrs. Bennet that she insists Lizzy accept Mr. Collins' proposal despite the clear incompatibility between the two. To Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Collins represents financial stability: a prospect she sees as too good for Lizzy to reject, especially considering the Bennet family's financial precarity. The novel's famous opening line, "[i]t is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife," seems filtered through Mrs. Bennet's consciousness as she hunts for wealthy husbands for her daughters (3). Though readers lack deep insight into Anne de Bourgh, her intended marriage to Darcy also likely has an element of force behind it, since, in Lady Catherine's words: "[t]he engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy, they have been intended for each other. It was the favourite wish of his mother, as well as of hers. While in their cradles, we planned the union" (242). The de Bourgh family clearly favors endogamous marriage to keep the family prestige (and of course, the titles and estates) within their clan. Another memorable mother who demands a marriage from her daughter is the titular character of *Lady Susan.* "A most accomplished Coquette" herself, Lady Susan attempts to force her timid daughter Frederica into marriage with foolish Sir James despite Frederica's extreme antipathy to the union (195). "I could not answer it to myself to force Frederica into a marriage from

which her heart revolted," she claims, "and instead of adopting so harsh a measure, merely propose to make it her choice by rendering her thoroughly uncomfortable until she does accept him" (200). Like the Marquis in *The Female Quixote*, Lady Susan attempts a justification of her actions, claiming that she is not forcing Frederica's hand even though her language reveals that is precisely what she is doing. In a later letter to Mrs. Johnson, Lady Susan writes more explicitly: "she *shall* be punished, she *shall* have him" when Frederica expresses dissent (italics in original, 212). Lady Susan is eager to rid herself of her daughter, whom she describes as "born to be the torment of [her] life" (192). Profiting financially from Frederica's marriage is not her motivation; rather, she wants to be rid of the burden of caring for her daughter, but her cruelty and tyranny echo those of Mr. Harlowe. As her language above reflects, Lady Susan wants a compliant daughter and is angered by Frederica's circumvention of her authority. Like Mr. Harlowe, Lady Susan's sense of authority is insulted. Happily for Frederica, however, *Lady Susan* provides an alternative outlet besides death for the abused daughter as Frederica is taken in by her kindly Aunt and Uncle Vernon, saved from her mother's tyrannical clutches.

Of course, mothers are not the only Austenian characters who inflict tyranny on their daughters regarding the subject of marriage. For instance, though not a gothic villain in the sense Catherine Moreland originally suspects, General Tilney's obsession with wealth and consequent brutality in expelling her from his home in *Northanger Abbey* (completed c. 1803, published 1817) causes Catherine to conclude: "in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty" (183). Another pertinent example is found

in *Mansfield Park* (1814), when Sir Thomas Bertram pressures Fanny Price to accept Henry Crawford's proposal. When Fanny rejects Crawford, a darker, more forceful side of Sir Thomas surfaces: "I had thought you particularly free from willfulness of temper, self-conceit, and every tendency to that independence of spirit which prevails so much in modern days, even in young women," he berates her, "and which in young women is offensive and disgusting beyond all common offence" (293). Until this point Fanny has dutifully enacted the wishes of her Aunt and Uncle, playing her role of dependent relation well: putting up with the whims of Lady Bertram and the caprices of Mrs. Norris uncomplainingly. On the point of a marriage with Crawford, however, Fanny draws the line, much to the surprise of her Uncle. Though less overtly violent than Maynard in Smith's "The Story of Henrietta" or Robinson's *Angelina; A Novel*'s Sir Edward, there still exists in Sir Thomas a paternalistic power reminiscent of these earlier tyrants that connects him to *Clarissa* and eighteenth-century forced marriage novels written in reaction to that novel. Like Lady Susan, Sir Thomas does not pressure this marriage in order to benefit financially himself, but it does represent his patriarchal understanding of femininity – he expects compliance. Perhaps, like Sir Edward Clarendon, he actively replicates the authority he wields over his slaves in his household.[52] Sir Thomas' manifestation of coercive "new-style patriarchy," sending Fanny back to her parents' home to inculcate in her a sense of appreciation for the life he and Crawford can provide, is almost successful before news of Maria and Crawford's affair breaks and the Bertrams realize Fanny's reservations were warranted (Kowaleski-Wallace 10). Fanny represents a progression from timid Frederica in terms of her belief in her right to dictate her own

[52] Marsh (2020) makes this argument in "Changes of Air: The Somerset Case and Mansfield Park's Imperial Plots."

future. Bullied by her mother, Frederica is afraid to defy Lady Susan while Fanny stands up for herself, asserting: "I think it ought not to be set down as certain that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself" (306). This defiance provides another connection between Austen and the authors who rewrote *Clarissa*, invested as they are in the depiction of female autonomy.

Though incomplete and still in an early draft when she died, Austen's *Sandition* provides a final example of an authoritative parent figure (this time an Aunt) whose strict rules about marrying for wealth lend the novel an air of Richardsonian forced marriage. Lady Denham says of her nephew: "Yes, yes, he is very well to look at – and it is to be hoped that some lady of large fortune will think so – for Sir Edward *must* marry for Money" (324, italics in original). Though Lady Denham is wealthy enough to provide for them, she insists Sir Edward and Esther must support themselves; for young men and women of their class this meant marriage. "And Miss Esther must marry somebody of fortune too – She must get a rich husband. Ah! young Ladies that have no Money are to be pitied," she laments (325). Young ladies – and gentlemen – of the crumbling nobility, Austen shows, found themselves in a situation like Lord Acreland's in *Angelina; A Novel*: skint from generations of supporting an estate without income and in need of a spouse who brings an infusion of liquid capital. Interestingly, Lady Denham's attitude toward her niece and nephew's marriages betray a link to attitudes on wealth explored in greater detail in the upcoming chapters of this project; she believes that it is up to Sir Edward and Esther to provide for themselves. "I am not the Woman to help any body blindfold…I do not think I was ever over-reached in my Life," she boasts (325). Proponents of post-industrial capitalism discursively linked wealth (and work) with

worth, seeking to instill in individuals a sense that working hard and obtaining wealth made one virtuous; that working hard for one's money, rather than being given it, was the moral way to live. While most of those discourses focused on labor – rather than on mercenary marriages – the capitalist ethos is present in Lady Denham's insistence that the next generation of her family must provide for themselves. Lady Denham has wealthy West Indian Miss Lambe in mind for Sir Edward – her name likely a nod to her intended role as a sacrificial lamb upon the alter of marriage – but Sir Edward has other plans. "His fancy had been early caught by all the impassioned, and most exceptionable parts of Richardson's [novels]…so far as Man's determined pursuit of Woman in defiance of every opposition of feeling and convenience is concerned" (327). His "great object in life was to be seductive…He felt that he was formed to be a dangerous Man – quite in the line of the Lovelaces" (328). Sir Edward models his behavior on the characters he reads about in novels in a way that marks him as humorous – poking fun at him for fancying himself a caviler of a bygone age – while also indicating his disinclination to comply with his Aunt's plan. It is pertinent to note that Austen was intimately familiar with Richardson's novels, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) a particular favorite that the Austen family dramatized in their home.[53] Without knowing the ending Austen planned for *Sanditon* it is impossible to say how the potential matches would have been resolved, whether true forced marriages occur or the characters resist these mercenary matches, but it clearly evidences Austen's sustained interest in matters of coerced marriage and the influence of money in romance.

[53] While Brian Southam claims in *Jane Austen's 'Sir Charles Grandison'* (1980) that Jane is the primary author of the Austen family's theatrical version of Richardson's novel, other scholars contest this claim given its significant departures from Austen's style (preferring to accept the story told by Austen's ancestors that Ann Austen wrote it). For more, see Doody's review (1983) of Southam's edition of the play.

Chapter Four

"Selling a girl": Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Stone, and Post-Industrial Patriarchy

This chapter examines several novels, Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9) and *Dombey and Son* (1846-8) and Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* (1842), that provide insights into the ways in which England's precarious post-industrial capitalist boom of the 1830s and 40s fostered an environment that encouraged the use and abuse of women in the name of financial gain. As the following chapter explains, post-industrial capitalism created an environment in which a man's worth was tethered to his income; mid-nineteenth century discourses often linked a hearty work ethic to virtue and thus to ideal masculinity. This glorification of work then segued into a glorification of wealth. It is no coincidence that this period also saw the rise of speculation and joint-stock corporations: practices that encouraged the rapid accumulation of wealth outside of typical labor/wage exchange (though very much enabled by it). Adapting the plot of *Clarissa* to their historical moment, Dickens and Stone dramatize the impact of wealth glorification on the family dynamic, especially father/daughter dynamics. The same practices that enabled popular get-rich-quick schemes were applied to women as a method of gaining wealth rapidly. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Dombey and Son*, and *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*, forced marriage plots are utilized in order to critique these mercenary economic practices through a celebration of female characters who refuse commodification.

Wealth and Victorian masculinity

Increased urbanization, manufacturing, and deregulation were hallmarks of Victorian post-industrial capitalism. With this came specific notions about the

relationship between wealth, work, and the individual, resulting in the yoking of self-worth, labor, and wealth. For instance, in his 1859 guide *Self-Help; with Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance*, Samuel Smiles weaves a narrative of personal and national glory through hard work. "Biographies of great, but especially of good men, are nevertheless most instructive and useful, as helps, guides, and incentives to others," he claims, "[s]ome of the best are almost equivalent to gospels – teaching high living, high thinking, and energetic action for their own and the world's good" (27). Though he takes famous capitalists as his subjects, these examples are meant to be aspirational for the average British worker, as: "[o]ne of the most strongly marked features of the English people is their spirit of industry, standing out prominent and distinct in their past history, and as strikingly characteristic of them now as at any former period" (48). Hard work is a cornerstone of British masculinity, according to Smiles; those who buy into this ideology are therefore acting morally and for the good of their nation.[54] Smiles' advice is grounded in Christian morality and the mythology of the Protestant work ethic, but it is also highly capitalist. Here, as elsewhere in the period, the two are intertwined; the glorification of work slips into a glorification of wealth. For instance, Smiles praises Richard Arkwright, "the founder in England of the modern factory system," for "unquestionably prov[ing] a source of immense wealth to individuals and to the nation" (58). Similarly, much attention is paid to Sir Robert Peel's grandfather, a humble yeoman who revolutionized calico printing and, with his son, rose in rank and wealth during the industrial revolution. The Peels are presented as an example of the political and economic payoffs that accompany hard work. He quotes the former Prime Minister on his father: "[m]y father

[54] For instance, Smiles claims: "[h]onorable industry travels the same road with duty; and Providence has closely linked both with happiness" (49).

may be truly said to have been the founder of our family; and he so accurately appreciated the importance of commercial wealth in a national point of view**,** that he was often heard to say that the gains to individuals were small compared with the national gains arising from trade" (60). Generating wealth glorifies the nation; those who earned this wealth are configured as national heroes. Furthermore, Peel directly links his father's role as *paterfamilias* with his economic ingenuity, a connection that masks the mercenary nature of wealth accumulation; Peel Sr.'s positive impact on the British economy is likened to a benevolent father, caring for his brood (rather than enriching himself). As Hobsbawm (1975) puts it, post-industrial capitalism venerated the myth of the self-made man, whose "wealth was not due to economic banditry but, as it were, to the generosity with which society rewarded its benefactors" (174). Wealth was glorified, its mythos presented in such a manner as to suggest it should be the goal of all men.

Smiles is not the only conduct-guide author who perpetuated such connections between material gain and personal worthiness. In *Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life* (1847), for instance, Timothy Shay complains of young men who "seem to have forgotten that man has a destiny beyond the attainment of mere wealth" (8). However, he devotes several chapters of his guide to this very topic. Like Smiles, Shay shares anecdotes of successful men who came from humble beginnings. One such example is a man who, "[b]y living thus economically, he was able to lay by a hundred dollars during the first year [of his marriage], and the same for two or three years longer. Then a good opportunity offered for going into business, which was embraced. Some ten years since that period have elapsed, and he has just retired with a snug little competence of forty or fifty thousand" (31). Implicit in this description, contrasted as it is with the

story of a spendthrift, is the virtue in saving. The allusion to the man's marital status further aligns pecuniary responsibility with the *paterfamilias*; the implication is that he not only made this fortune for himself, but for his family's security. Davidoff and Hall (1987, 2003) describe the image of fatherhood that was idealized in the nineteenth century as: "responsible bread-winners whose manhood was legitimated through their ability to secure the needs of their dependents" (17). This is reflected in Shay's account as he repeatedly glorifies men who save money and amass wealth. Represented as attainable for every man, this pattern represented an increasingly important aspect of masculinity. Tosh (2005) sees this as indicative of the shift in masculinity in post-industrial Britain, when masculinity became tied to "the dual commitment to work and home so characteristic of modern industrial society" (331). Though the home is typically considered the woman's domain in studies of the nineteenth century, Tosh argues that the home was an important aspect of masculinity too, in the sense that it was a man's responsibility to provide the family's economic means of survival. Accordingly, "[t]his exclusive male responsibility for the family income led to the characteristically Victorian valorization of work as both moral duty and personal fulfillment," such as is present in the Smiles and Shay (332). However, what Tosh points out – that is important for this chapter – is that Victorian ideas of masculinity sometimes became "a camouflage for moneymaking and self-advancement" (333). "In fact," he continues, "manliness had much more to do with one's standing in the sight of men than with one's standing with the Almighty" (335). The age's virulent capitalism – its emphasis on innovation and wealth accumulation at any cost – thus shaped the definition of masculinity.

The emphasis on wealth attainment was reflected in legislation as well as social ideologies with the legalization of joint-stock corporations. Joint-stock corporations, companies owned by groups rather than individuals, experienced a boom in England during the 1830s and 40s. Though some scholars distinguish joint-stock companies from capitalism, since they involve investing in ideas rather than commodities, many consider this style of business a particular facet of capitalism, since most of these corporations were linked to products that, upon completion, would aid in capitalist ventures (railroads, metal mining, products that would be sold on the open market). Additionally, speculation contributed to the capitalist ethos of the period; individuals wanted to make money and, often enabled by the wages they earned, used that money to buy shares for future profits. Marx (1887), for instance, defines speculation as part of capitalism, arguing that for every "capitalist upstart…avarice, and desire to get rich, are the ruling passions. But the progress of capitalist production not only creates a world of delights," he warns, "it lays open, in speculation and the credit system, a thousand sources of sudden enrichment" that tempt aspiring capitalists to augment their wealth (*Capital* 605).

Joint-stock corporations enjoyed privileges that added to their allure and controversy; they "had an existence distinct from their members: they could sue and be sued in the courts, own property, and lived on after their founders had died," and were in some cases granted the rights to monopoly in their respective fields (Taylor 3). Even before the advent of limited liability in 1855 (about which more will be said in the next chapter), joint-stock corporations established protections for individual board members that were not available to private partnerships. These factors lead to public scrutiny of

and, in some cases, animosity toward joint-stock groups. As early as 1776 Adam Smith wrote of corporations that:

> being the managers rather of other people's money than of their own, it cannot be well expected, that they should watch over it with the same anxious vigilance with which the partners in a private copartnery frequently watch over their own…Negligence and profusion, therefore, must always prevail, more or less, in the management of the affairs of such a company. (259)

There existed the notion that shareholders preyed on naïve investors, taking their money for self-enrichment while neglecting the claimed goals of the project. This belief was ubiquitous in the popular press in the 1830s and 40s, as well. An anonymous reporter for *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* variously described the London Stock Exchange as a "temple of vice," and "gambling house, in which the cards are played for the victim by the victimizer," while speculators, are depicted as "the vampires of the stock market" ("Stock Exchange No. 1" 577-80). There was growing animosity toward joint-stock corporations as the public suspected such businesses existed solely to lure in unwary investors and disappear with their hard-earned money, yet their grand promises of large returns lured in thousands of investors who hoped to amass personal wealth.

Ralph Nickleby, the Capitalist

Critics have been slow to engage in extended analysis of *Nicholas Nickleby*; long suffering from a reputation of being, in Lucas' (1970) words, an "incoherent muddle" of hastily-sketched incidents and flat characters, only recently has the novel been given the attention it deserves (55). For several critics, the most compelling aspect of this novel is its deep-seated critique of mercenary post-industrial capitalism. Childers (1996) posits it

is “a novel fundamentally shaped by the activity of commerce; it is a novel about doing business” (49). That Dickens intended several of his novels, including *Nicholas Nickleby*, as “reflections of the evolution of that [capitalist] system, and as attempts to shape and influence, if not the system itself, at least public opinion about the system and the actions of those who participated in finance” is Jarvie’s (2005) central claim (1-2). Gilmore (2013) sees the novel as ushering Nicholas through a “three-part structure” that exposes him to different forms of capitalism: the exploitative form utilized by Squeers; the theatre as a preferable but disappearing “alternative economic system”; and, finally, to Nicholas’ finding a way to mediate these various forms of capitalism via his relationship with the Cheeryble brothers (87). These examinations provide useful insights into capitalism’s importance to the novel. However, what each of these accounts ignores is the role of women within this paradigm, particularly in terms of the commodification of women as economic pawns. In the first chapter of this project, I cited Gayle Rubin’s argument that, in a patriarchal society, there exists a “systematic social apparatus which takes of females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products” for the use of men (158). This chapter explores that same phenomenon in a post-industrial capitalist society where the link between women and raw products for the use of men becomes literal. In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844) Marx articulates this helpfully in when he states: “[m]oney is the *pimp* between man’s need and the object”; “[t]he extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money’s properties are my properties and essential powers” (136, 137, italics in original). Money inscribes those who possess it (and the means of production) with excess of power over those who lack it. Marx’s pimp analogy is meant to underscore the nefarious nature of what an excess of money can

produce, yet it also speaks – if inadvertently – to the sexualizing nature of capitalism when it comes to how women fit into the system.

The exploitative nature of the period's economic activity is apparent from the beginning of the novel when Nicholas Nickleby Sr. loses everything in an ill-advised speculation where "four hundred nobodies [are] ruined" and "four stockbrokers took villa residences at Florence" with the spoils of their scam (20). Crushed by this loss, Mr. Nickleby takes to his bed, goes insane, and dies, precipitating Ralph Nickleby's entrance into his late brother's family. Through Ralph, the novel explores the manifold ways post-industrial capitalism, especially joint-stock companies, allows its agents to take advantage of women and corrupt the family unit. Obsessed with "money-getting," Ralph's emotional ties to his family are explicitly severed by his mania for wealth, "for gold conjures up a mist about a man more destructive of all his old senses and lulling to his feelings than the fumes of charcoal," according to the narrator: money corrupts healthy family relationships (20). Sometimes misidentified as a miser like Ebenezer Scrooge, Ralph in fact engages in another business in addition to his usury that further villainizes him: speculation. Ralph is a founding member of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company, and it is through his role as a speculator that Ralph gains power over others. As the novel opens, Ralph and his business partner Mr. Bonney scheme to raise five million pounds by selling 500,000 ten-pound shares for their scam corporation. "'And when they are at a premium,' said Mr. Ralph Nickleby, smiling," as the two discuss their business model, "'[w]hen they are, you know what to do with them as well as any man alive, and how to back quietly out at the right time,' said Mr. Bonney, slapping the capitalist familiarly on the

shoulder" (25). The Improved Hot Muffin Company is a scam that solicits relatively inexpensive shares from stockholders before dissolving, allowing Ralph and Bonney to pocket the investments. Embodying corruption and greed, Ralph and Bonney's jovial attitude toward their plans to steal from their investors underscores their own moral depravity in addition the larger social corruption wrought by speculation. In *Nicholas Nickleby* Ralph, "the capitalist," is posited as a representation of the vilest extension of capitalism: mercenary speculation.

Nicholas Nickleby expounds on the prevalent anxiety about joint-stock corporations and illustrates the extent to which already-powerful men could bend capitalist principles to their own benefit at the expensive of others. Ralph grows up listening to stories of his father's timely inheritance and the comforts that followed this newfound wealth. From this story, Ralph "deduced the often-repeated tale the two great morals that riches are the only true source of happiness and power, and that it is lawful and just to compass their acquisition by all means short of felony" (18-19). While there is certainly a suggestion that Ralph is, on the one hand, of a lesser moral fiber than his brother, there is, on the other hand, the notion that Ralph is caught up in the existing social belief that "there was nothing like money": wealth acquisition at all costs is tolerated (19). As Bowen (1996) explains, in *Nicholas Nickleby*: "[w]e are presented with capitalist and entrepreneurial activity in its purest, most speculative and exploitative form…Ralph is not a hoarder of loot, counting his pots of gold in squalor (as later Gride will do), but an entirely contemporary figure, a master-manipulator of the new complexities of publicity, monopoly, and speculation" (158-9). Ralph understands the market, manipulating it into profit and power for himself. In fact, he even cons Members

of Parliament. Before the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1844, it was necessary for companies seeking incorporation to petition Parliament, which Ralph and Bonney do successfully; the two are cheered out of the House of Commons after their incorporation pitch.[55] The spirit of self-enrichment, high in this prosperous post-industrial period, is appropriated to enable the consolidation of wealth in Britain. As Dickens shows, with a consolidation of wealth also comes oppressive social structure that take advantage of those excluded from prosperity.

Nicholas Nickleby demonstrates the ways in which women are particularly vulnerable within this economy; Ralph embodies the collusion between patriarchal attitudes toward women and mercenary wealth accumulation as he deploys his niece Kate, unbeknownst to her, in a scheme that mirrors the conditions of prostitution, enacting Marx's wealth/pimp analogy. Ralph, already scamming wealthy, impressionable Lord Frederick Verisopht, sees in Kate an opportunity to further this scheme. Upon the death of a family member Verisopht will inherit a fortune; Verisopht owes a large portion of this inheritance to Ralph, who wants the debt to grow as large as possible before collecting his pelf. Kate, Ralph believes, "will keep the boy to me, while there is money to be made. Selling a girl – throwing her in the way of temptation, and insult, and coarse speech. Nearly two thousand pounds profit from it already though. Pshaw! Match-making mothers do the same thing every day" (329). Ralph sees everyone he encounters in terms of the potential profit they generate; he does this on an individual scale with his clients, more prolifically through The Improved Hot Muffin Company's investors, and with his niece. Since Kate has no money he can extort, Ralph follows in the footsteps of the

[55] The 1844 Joint Stock Companies Act made the process of incorporation easier (and removed the necessity to petition Parliament).

Harlowe family and "sells" her body – her beauty – in order to further his own economic ends, creating in himself a pimp and in Kate a commodified object, rather than an autonomous human, that raises an analogy of prostitution.

The pimp/prostitute dynamic is central to Dickens' portrayal of mercenary financial markets, highlighting the extent to which they victimize women. The analogy is enacted at Ralph's disastrous dinner party, further illuminating the dastardly ways Ralph corrupts his relationship with Kate for profit-mongering. First, Verisopht remarks that Kate's presence "would almost warrant the addition of an extra two and a half per cent" interest on his debts (232). Openly haggling over Kate's monetary value, the men configure her as an object for sale; they are so accustomed to the purchasing power of their money they assume there are no limits to what they can buy, especially since Ralph parades Kate in front of them like an object on display at an auction – or a brothel. Later, Ralph's crony Sir Mulberry Hawk, who is angry at Ralph for stopping him from sexually assaulting Kate, asks: "[d]o you mean to tell me that your pretty niece was not brought here as a decoy for that drunken boy downstairs?... Do you mean to say that if he had found his way up here instead of me, you wouldn't have been a little more blind, and a little more deaf, and little less flourishing than you have been?" (238). Ralph's admittance to this allegation proves he brought Kate to dinner to set up a romantic – perhaps sexual – encounter between Frederick and the unsuspecting Kate. This, Ralph claims, is just a "matter of business," but readers see Ralph's nefarious plan as something much more sinister (238). Taking advantage of his role as the new Nickleby *paterfamilias,* Ralph uses Kate as a commodity exchangeable at his leisure. The language of "selling" her that Ralph and the narrator adopt draw connections between his greed-

driven treatment of her and prostitution, which in turn underscores the unique ways women were victimized by the period's capitalist ethos. As the novel's resident unscrupulous "capitalist," Ralph is enabled to treat everyone he encounters in terms of the potential capital they can generate (*Nicholas Nickleby* 25).

In addition to "selling" Kate to his cronies for profit, Ralph's sending Kate to work at Madame Mantalini's dress shop bolsters the novel's connections between contemporary misuse of women and prostitution (329). According to Marx (1887), British post-industrial capitalism relied on the labor of women (and children, though this was restricted by the 1833 Factory Act), since it was deemed appropriate to pay them less than male workers (*Capital* 391-2). Women needleworkers faced staggeringly low wages for massive workloads and inhumane conditions; Kate's encounter with the world of needleworking exposes this abuse. Dickens dramatizes the plight of needleworking women through Kate's journey to her first day of work. "It was with a heavy heart, and many sad forebodings which no effort could banish, that Kate Nickleby," explains the narrator, "on the morning appointed for the commencement of her engagement with Madame Mantalini, left the city when its clocks yet wanted a quarter of an hour of eight, and threaded her way alone, amid the noise and bustle of the streets, towards the West of London" (203). Though wary of the job, Kate understands her family's grim financial situation requires her to work, and thus she is forced out into the unsavory streets of London. The narrator continues:

> At this early hour, many sickly girls, whose business, like that of the poor worm, is to produce with patient toil the finery that bedecks the thoughtless and luxurious, traverse our streets, making towards the scene of their daily labour, and

> catching, as if by stealth, in their hurried walk, the only gasp of wholesome air and glimpse of sunlight which cheers their monotonous existence during the long train of hours that make a working day. As she drew nigh to the more fashionable quarter of the town, Kate marked many of this class as they passed by, hurrying like herself to their painful occupation, and saw, in their unhealthy looks and feeble gait, but too clear an evidence that her misgivings were not wholly groundless. (203-4)

The narrator focuses on the physical weakness and bodily illness of these women who, like Kate, sew for a living. As Harris (2014) notes, the 1830s and 40s saw awakening interest in the exploitation of needleworkers; journalistic exposés and art depicting the physically inhumane conditions and extremely low wages that needleworkers faced "became something of a *cause celebre*," (n.pg.). Elucidating the awful working conditions which many seamstresses faced, Harriet Martineau's 1839 book review for *The London and Westminster Review* describes the commonality of "three days and two nights of incessant sewing," and the usage of stimulants like green tea to keep them working in hot, hazardous conditions. "[T]heir eyes are dim, their skin burns, their hands tremble, their voices are hysterical," yet, since their paltry wages are withheld until the end of the season, they must persist, despite the obvious toll on their physical and mental health (418). Dickens engages with such depictions in the scene above. Kate's "forebodings" are justified, considering the bleak images of other seamstresses that she faces. The narrator compares them to worms; they are "sickly," "unhealthy," and appear to materialize from the city itself. Furthermore, their fragile, unhealthy demeaners are related directly to their oppressive working conditions; this early morning air is the only

fresh air they will breathe all day, while their "feeble gait" hints at the malnutrition they face from their poor wages. Implicit in this passage is culpability of the "wealthy and thoughtless" who benefit from the miserably labor conditions these workers face.

Broken-spirited women walking the streets of London alone in the dusky hours recalls another sort of working women: prostitutes. Harris (2014), Cluckie (2008), and Walkowitz (1982) note that needleworking and prostitution were often linked in the Victorian mind. Both were poor-paying last resorts for women with few economic opportunities available.[56] By sending Kate to work as a seamstress, *Nicholas Nickleby* excavates the economic and social conditions that create the link between needlework and prostitution; Kate's time there is filled with objectifying experiences that relay the hazards faced by women in the workplace. Although some critics, such as Ganz (1976), read the Mantalinis as humorous characters, their dress and manners have more nefarious connotations. Huguet (2006) implies that the type of flashy garb that the Mantalinis wear – and that their shop produces – is linked to the type of cheap, gaudy dress that prostitutes wore according to Victorian stereotypes, indicating their association with prostitution, an especially unsettling prospect given Mantalini's constant leering at Kate and known womanizing.[57] This is not to say that Kate Nickleby is a prostitute; neither her sense of morality nor her chastity is compromised, despite the attempts by Ralph and Hawk. However, the situations into which Ralph places her – his attempts to sell her to

[56] Additionally, some in the medical and governmental communities also looked to raise awareness. William Tate, a surgeon, Michael Ryan, a physician, and James Beard Talbot, the Secretary of the London Society for the Protection of Young Female and Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution are just a few who studied the causes of prostitution and put forth explicit links between low wages in needlework and prostitution.

[57] For instance, Amelia, the prostitute in Thomas Hardy's poem "The Ruined Maid" (1866) wears "such fair garments" that include "gay bracelets and bright feathers three," fine "little gloves," and a "fine sweeping gown" (635-6). In the early chapters of *Oliver Twist*, Nancy is "gaily, not to say gorgeously attired, in a red gown, green boots, and yellow curl-papers" (101).

Verisopht and her introduction to the world of needleworking – orient her narrative arc around discourses of prostitution that proliferated in the nineteenth century. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, prostitution represents not (only) the literal prostitution of women, but also the institutions and social structures that allowed women to be used as economic pawns in the pursuit of wealth.

Dickens, Richardson, and the novel

Dickens used the novel form to expose the institutional and cultural forces that siphoned women into prostitution (and other taboo jobs, like needleworking) and to garner empathy, rather than disdain, for these women. This, in fact, raises some points of similarity between Dickens and Richardson. Dickens' relationship to Richardson was complicated: he recognized a debt of homage to Richardson but also diverged from the late author in important ways. To Dickens, novels presented the unique potential to expose the horrific conditions in which London's poor lived, and through this exposure instill a sense of empathy for the poor, fostering benevolence and social change. While many critics have characterized Dickens' fiction as grounded in the sentimental tradition, satire, or even melodrama, Dickens believed his novels were moored to true-to-life representation of nineteenth-century England.[58] For instance, in his Preface to the third edition of *Oliver Twist* (1841), Dickens explains:

> It appeared to me, that to draw a knot of such associates in crime as really do exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the

[58] For example, see Welsh, "Satire and History: The City of Dickens" (1968); Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (1987), Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (1999); John, *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture* (2001); Rem, *Dickens, Melodrama, and the Parodic Imagination* (2003); Schlicke, "Melodrama in Dickens' Writing" (2011); Purton, *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition: Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Lamb* (2012); and Timothy Gilmore "Not too Cheery: Dickens' Critique of Capital in *Nicholas Nickleby*" (2013).

> squalid poverty of their lives, to show them as they really are…to do this, would be to attempt a something which was greatly needed, and which would therefore be a great service to society. (457)

Dickens is responding to critics who labelled *Oliver Twist* unbelievable and unsavory, who did not believe that a prostitute like Nancy could be capable of empathy and thought that sex workers should not be portrayed positively in fiction.[59] In his Preface, however, Dickens asserts that his cast of characters is inspired by – drawn directly from – real life and champions the pressing need to expose readers to bleak scenes. Doing so, Dickens argues, will help bridge the growing empathy gap between the rich and poor. Wealthy and middle-class readers, according to Dickens, adopt superficial notions of superiority to artificially distance themselves from the poor; he rails against genteel readers who prefer literary criminals "in delicate disguise," and insists that novels should force readers to grapple with uncomfortable – but realistic – circumstances (*Oliver Twist* 458).

Furthermore, Dickens calls on eighteenth-century writers like Richardson to justify his own depictions of the poor. In the same Preface to *Oliver Twist*, Dickens identifies "Fielding, De Foe [*sic*], Goldsmith, Smollett, Richardson, and Mackenzie" as literary pioneers for introducing characters from humble walks of life into the drawing rooms of polite readers (459). The reference to Richardson is, of course, of special interest to this project; Richardson is an author whose work Dickens was familiar with and to whom, as is discussed below, Dickens was often compared by his peers. Several of Dickens' novels, especially *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Dombey and Son*, engage with the

[59] William Thackeray was one of the most acerbic reviewers of *Oliver Twist*; he publicly attacked the novel in print several times, including one review for *Fraser's Magazine* in 1840 which takes on Nancy's characterization (Collins, ed. 45).

forced marriage plot that Richardson popularized, and – as Dickens himself writes – the poor, criminal, and downtrodden characters who populate his novels are inspired by eighteenth-century novels like Richardson's. Dickens' close friend and biographer, John Forster, draws an extended comparison between Richardson and Dickens in a review of *Nicholas Nickleby* for the *Examiner* based on their use of serialization and the popular appeal of their characters. According to Forster, however, Dickens surpasses the popularity of Richardson because "[h]e seizes the eager attention of his readers by the strong power of reality" rather than through sentimental hyperbole (Collins, ed. 47-8).

More recent critics have established a connection between Dickens' and Richardson's literary style, as well. Purton (2012) argues: "Dickens values Richardson not for his sentimental heroines but for his ability to show the darker side of society – presumably the pimps and prostitutes who also inhabit Clarissa" (29). Purton characterizes Dickens' novels as sentimental, but it is important to underscore that Dickens did not see himself as a sentimental author, but rather one who was closer to what would today be called a Realist. His defense of *Oliver Twist*, for instance, underscores his commitment to portraying lower-class characters as he saw them in real life, and his well-known frequenting of London's worst neighborhoods stands as a testament to his first-hand observations of the poor and destitute.[60] As his contemporary George Henry Lewes put it, Dickens "painted the life he knew, the life everyone knew; for if the scenes and manners were unlike those we were familiar with, the feelings and

[60] He often took time out of vacations and book tours to visit poor neighborhoods. When he was in New York in 1842 he wrote that he: "went into every brothel, thieves' house, murdering hovel, sailors' dancing-place, and abode of villainy, both black and white, in town" (*The Letters of Charles Dickens* 78). While in Paris in 1847 frequented: "hospitals, prisons, dead-houses, operas, theatres, concert-rooms, burial grounds, palaces, and wine shops" (200).

motives, the joys and griefs, the mistakes and efforts of the actors were universal, and therefore universally intelligible" (Ford and Laurait 62-3). Dickens imbues his novels with pathos for characters whose victimization by their contemporary economic climate necessitates hard choices. As Nancy explains to Rose in *Oliver Twist*:

> 'I am the infamous creature you have heard of, that lives among thieves, and that never from the first moment I can recollect my eyes and senses opening to London streets have known any better life, or kinder words than they have given me…Thank Heaven upon your knees, dear lady,' cried the girl, 'that you had friends to care for and keep you in your childhood, and that you were never in the midst of cold and hunger, and riot and drunkenness…as I have been from my cradle' (333-4).

Nancy is a prostitute who consorts with criminals but that is not the only aspect of her characterization; she has many admirable qualities, including a deep sense of kindness toward Oliver, for whom she ultimately gives her life. Furthermore, this passage betrays the unfairness of life for those born poor. Rose was born into a loving, stable family while Nancy was not, and this single difference determined the trajectories of their lives. This was an era of deep interest in the lives of prostitutes, but many involved in such conversations aimed to

Figure 5, The Great Social Evil. The Victorian Web

criminalize prostitutes and construed them as shallow, weak women who loved vice and money, rather than victims of circumstance. John Leech's 1857 cartoon "The Great Social Evil" (in *Punch*), for instance, depicts the prostitute in outlandishly ostentatious garb (see figure 4). Nancy explicitly complicates this paradigm, as does the specter of prostitution that runs through *Nicholas Nickleby*, where readers are exposed to the harsh economic realities that forced women into hazardous working conditions. The serialization of *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* overlapped for a year; in this light it is perhaps unsurprising that the literal prostitution Dickens explored in the former influenced his depictions of Victorian society in the latter.[61]

Nicholas Nickleby's forced marriages

Of course, beyond his portrayal of low-status characters and claims of depicting life as it was, another point of convergence between Dickens and Richardson is their utilization of the forced marriage plot, which Dickens employs across several characters to underscore the ubiquity with which women were commodified into exchangeable objects. Kate is not the only woman in the novel who is almost forced into a relationship with an undeserving man for her patriarch's material benefit; the marriage with Arthur Gride into which Madeline Bray is nearly forced emphasizes the multiple ways women were used as pawns in the greed-driven financial schemes of corrupt capitalists. As the narrator explains, Madeline is "devoted to the support and maintenance, and was a slave to every wish, of her only parent, who had no other friend on earth" (582). Bray, a bad-tempered invalid, is dependent on his daughter's care and the small income she derives from selling paintings. He has also contracted large debts to Gride and Ralph, who

[61] Oliver Twist was serialized from February 1837 to April 1839; Nicholas Nickleby appeared between April 1838 and October 1839

collaborate on a repayment scheme; Ralph will convince Bray to force his daughter to marry Gride in exchange for a reprieve of some of his debts. In exchange for his role as middleman, Ralph gets a fee and rights to the fortune Madeline inherits upon her father's death.[62] Bray's acquiescence is a given, since he loves Madeline "with the utmost affection of which he was capable," which is to say not very much, "yet he loved himself a great deal better" (582). Shirking his fatherly duties to provide for and protect his daughter, Bray's desire for material comfort outweighs his scruples about giving his daughter to the elderly money lender.

Madeline loves Nicholas, but economic and care-giving responsibilities pressure her to accept Gride's proposal. "There are no words which can express, nothing which can be compared," the narrator states, "the perfect pallor, the clear transparent cold ghastly whiteness" of Madeline's complexion leading up to her wedding day. "Something of wildness and restlessness there was in the dark eye" (654). The desperation in her countenance is palpable, compared as she is to both a scared animal and a ghost. According to Jarvie (2005), this passage reflects the psychological damage that capitalism, as practiced by Ralph and Gride, inflicts onto children (24). While I agree with his assessment of capitalism's traumatizing nature, Jarvie reads Madeline and Kate as children alongside the boys whose parents Wrackford Squeers takes advantage of at his school: a misleading analysis. Rather, they are grown women whose role in the mercenary capitalism of Gride and Ralph is based on their marriageability; infantilizing them as Jarvie does overlooks the complexity of their characterizations.

[62] The fortune does not come from Bray but from Madeline's (deceased) mother's side of the family, who want to keep the inheritance out of Bray's hands.

Kate and Madeline are not naïve children; both are fully aware of the implications of their respective situations and make what they believe to be the best decisions based on their dismal circumstances. Nicholas, for example, assumes that Madeline is ignorant. "You are betrayed, sold for money – for gold, whose every coin is rusted with tears, if not red with the blood of ruined men, who have fallen desperately by their own mad hands," he pleads, assuming she does not grasp the reality of her situation (657). Madeline, however, is perfectly cognizant of her father's plan. "I am impelled to this course by no one," she insists, "but follow it of my own free will" (658). She admits: "I do *not* love this gentleman; the difference between our ages, tastes, and habits forbids it. This he knows, and knowing, still offers me his hand. By accepting it, and by that step alone, I can release my father who is dying in this place, prolong his life" (658-9, italics in original). Though she sells paintings, these do not bring in enough income to sustain their household, her father's debts, and his medical bills; they need money and Madeline does not see any other option for obtaining it. Bray is near death, and removing him to more comfortable, nourishing circumstances seems to be his only hope of recovery. How can Madeline turn down an offer that will provide this? In this sense, Madeline is akin to the ghostly needleworkers who trudge to their miserable, low-paying, unhealthy jobs every morning; they are women trying to navigate a capitalist society which would rather commodify women rather than create viable economic opportunities for them.

While Madeline finds herself trapped in a figurative corner, left with no other option but marriage to a corrupt, odious, money lender, Kate stands up against unjust patriarchal authority while navigating the challenges of poverty that she and her family face. From her early interactions with Ralph, Kate realizes he is not the sort of man to

whom one wants to become indebted, telling Madame La Creevy that she "would rather die" than be in his debt, as "[a] dependence on him…would embitter my whole life" (122-3). Accustomed to getting his way, Ralph "can talk, and urge, and press a point…as no man can" (584). In Kate, however, Ralph finds an evenly matched adversary who does not trust him, even as Mrs. Nickleby and Nicholas are gullibly hopeful he will bring a positive presence into their lives. Notably, Kate's importance in the novel has largely been ignored or downplayed by critics since Dickens' own time. Both Richard Ford in *Quarterly Review* (1839) and an anonymous reviewer for *Fraser's Magazine* (1840) dismiss Kate as a lifeless, flat character (Collins 83, 88). More recently, Schor (2000) has argued that Kate's most significant role in the plot is her silence. "Kate's chief 'value' in the novel (as character and as plot device) is her silent work in the marriage plot. She is the subject of her mother's and everyone else's fantasies in the novel," Schor contends, and adds that Kate's plot arc "suggests that the world of patriarchal exchange is every bit as deadly to women" (44). Schor's argument that Kate highlights the dangers of patriarchal exchange is apt, but I challenge her notion that Kate's character is marked by her silence. Kate speaks up against Ralph early and often, consistently providing the novel's most blistering critiques of his methods. Unlike Clarissa, who enacts conduct-guide virtues such as mercy, submission, and a willingness to blame herself for the wrongs done to her by her father, Kate is vocal in her condemnation of Ralph and firm in her resolve to break out of her role as his victim. For example, after Lords Hawk and Frederick harass her at Mrs. Wititterly's house, Kate recognizes that Ralph has purposefully placed her within their grasp and chastises him for this. "If they were no friends of yours, and you knew what they were, –, the more shame on you, uncle, for

bringing me among them…if you did it – as I now believe you did – knowing them well, it was most dastardly and cruel" (355). Demeaning as Hawk's and Verisopht's treatment of her is, it is Ralph's role as enabler that most angers Kate. "[C]ome what may, *I will not*, as I am your brother's child, bear these insults longer," she declares (355, italics in original). Resisting the role into which Ralph forces her, Kate cuts ties with him:

> I am to be the scorn of my own sex, and the toy of the other; justly condemned by all women of right feeling, and despised by all honest and honourable men; sunken in my own esteem, and degraded in every eye that looks upon me. No, not if I work my fingers to the bone, not if I am driven to the roughest and hardest labour…I will hide myself from [Verisopht and Hawk] and you, and, striving to support my mother by hard service, I will live, at least, in peace, and trust God to help me. (357)

Rather than characterizing Kate by silence, as Schor does, Kate's verbal sparring should be viewed as an important component of her characterization. Hawk's and Verisopht's repeated attacks against her, first in Ralph's home and then in Mrs. Wititterly's, are the direct fault of Ralph, and Kate does not hesitate to confront him, creating in her a character who openly rebels against the unjust authority with which money imbues Ralph.

Ralph's mercenary business practices provide the novel with a critique of the extreme measures some took in this post-industrial era to achieve maximum wealth. As the novel shows, however, the business models of men like Ralph, Bonney, and Gride proliferate, but they are not the only methods of conducting business. Dickens contrasts Ralph's practices and fate – his desperate suicide – with the happier endings of the

protagonists, especially Kate, Frank, Madeline, Nicholas, Tim Linkinwater, and Madame La Creevey. Interestingly, Dickens briefly imperils the happy endings of the former two couples before allowing their marriages to pass. The young people fear that the Cheeryble brothers will enforce their wish for their heir Frank to marry Madeline, their ward, and unite their fortunes under the Cheeryble house of business. This anxiety, however, is shown to be misplaced. "How dare you think, Frank," brother Charles inquires, "that we would have you marry for money, when youth, beauty, and every aimable virtue and excellence, were to be had for love" in Kate (758). The brothers value the autonomous decisions of their loved ones far more than they do money, and – as Charles expresses – discourage sacrificing happiness for profit margins; they are ideal father figures. Though the details of the Cheeryble brothers' textile business are unclear (readers are told far less about their business than about Ralph's speculations) they obviously represent alternative philosophies on business and family than are found in Ralph. Patton (2001) argues that the brothers Cheeryble prove "relationships of affection and loyalty that bind a family together stand over against the financial dealings that characterize business" (29). "To the Cheerybles," according to Jarvie (2005) "human kind (or at least 'deserving' humankind) is their brother, and through them the novel asserts that one may choose to oppose the tide of financial capitalism" (3). Indeed, their business is a partnership, not a joint-stock corporation, perhaps an indication of their moral fortitude, since partnerships were considered the more honest form of business. Thompson (1969) points out that they "have gained their money through hard work and upright business practices," not through defrauding unwary investors (227). As they respect their clients, so too do they respect the wishes of Frank and their young friends. *Nicholas Nickleby*, then, is not necessarily

anti-capitalist, but is against the mercenary, destructive practices – such as speculation and greedy wealth accumulation – that were increasingly popular in the early Victorian period. As O'Gorman (2011) puts it, "[p]ossessed of a strong conception of individual responsibilities, [Dickens] hoped to change the attitudes and expectations – and hearts – of operatives and employers" (276). As Dickens himself explains in the Preface to the 1848 Cheap Edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*, the brothers are based on real people (likely the Grant brothers), and "their liberal charity, their singleness of heart, their noble nature, and their unbounded benevolence, are no creations of the Author's brain; but are prompting every day (and oftenest by stealth) some munificent and generous deed" (8).[63] *Nicholas Nickleby*, then, is not a complete disavowal of capitalism, but against those, like Ralph, who engage in a deeply corrupted, selfish version that commodifies women and utilizes them as its tools. As Dickens depicts Kate's rebellion against Ralph's mercenary style of capitalism, so too are readers encouraged to disavow Ralph and the larger social structures for which he stands.

Dombey, Son, and Daughters

Dickens re-engages with many of the same themes of *Nicholas Nickleby* in his later novel *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), using the forced marriage plot to expose the disadvantaged position women faced within the existent economic system. These are, of course, also themes present in *Clarissa*; putting the two novels in conversation with each other helps tease out the complex nuances of the Dombey family relationships. In *Dombey and Son*, Dickens disperses Clarissa's narrative arc – her devotion to her uncaring father and her sexual fall – among several of the novel's female protagonists:

[63] The Grant brother were Manchester textile manufacturers "known to be both economically successful and demonstrably humane," according to Jarvie (2005, 32).

Florence, Edith, and Alice. However, their storylines are punctured by moments in which they follow Kate Nickleby's footsteps and speak out against the social and economic structures that collude to oppress them.

Comparisons between *Dombey and Son* and *Clarissa* have existed from Dickens' own lifetime. For example, Francis Jacox's 1866 essay "About Instinctive Likes and Dislikes" in *New Monthly Magazine* points out the two are rooted in the theme of virtue. Walter Crotch's 1919 *The Secret of Dickens* traces Richardson's lineage extensively in Dickens, including his Clarissa-like heroines. More recently, Zwinger (1991) compares the father/daughter dynamics within the two novels and reads Florence as an iteration of Clarissa, and Purton (2012) shows the Clarissa-like sentimental tradition underlying Florence's characterization. Kaplan's *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (1987) reads Dickens as the inheritor of Richardson's sentimentalism, while Fisher (1997) and Schor (2000) both connect Edith's and Florence's suffering to Clarissa's.

Additionally, Dickens was directly exposed to *Clarissa*'s plot while writing *Dombey and Son*. He saw a critically acclaimed stage adaptation of *Clarissa* in Paris, and his letters reveal that he was especially moved by the performance of Rose Chéri, the actress who played Clarissa. In a letter to his friend Lady Blessington (24 January 1847), he writes of his struggles to finish the fifth number of *Dombey and Son* and of his approval of the play. "A most charming, intelligent, modest, affecting piece of acting it is," he writes, "with a death superior to anything I ever saw on the stage, except Macready's Lear" (*The Letters of Charles Dickens* 3:90). Four days later he was still ruminating over the play. He wrote to another friend, Reverend Edward Tagart:

"'Clarissa Harlowe' is still the rage. There are some things in it rather calculated to astonish the ghost of Richardson, but Clarissa is very admirably played, and dies better than the original to my thinking; but Richardson is no great favorite of mine" (*The Letters of Charles Dickens* 1:201). While downplaying admiration for Richardson's prose style, the letters reveal his affinity for the stage adaptation – particularly Clarissa's death scene.

Dickens' fixation on Clarissa's death is noteworthy in that the fifth number of *Dombey and Son* – the volume Dickens was struggling to finish when he saw the play – includes the decline and death of Paul Dombey. Paul's pathos-filled death was likely influenced by Clarissa's saintly death ("Mama is like you, Floy, I know her by the face…The light is shining about the head is shining on me as I go!"), but the end of the fifth number also brings the discordant relationship between Clarissa-like Florence and her emotionally-hardened father into sharper focus (253). It is, after all, the end of chapter 16 when Miss Tox laments: "'[d]ear me, dear me! To think,' said Miss Tox, bursting out afresh that night, as if her heart was broken, 'that Dombey and Son should be a Daughter after all!'" (253). Dombey's disappointment over his lack of a male heir returns in full force, now augmented by his resentment of Florence's close relationship with now-deceased Paul. Dombey is another father whose obsession with economic and social success mars his relationship with his family. He has already achieved financial success; like Mr. Harlowe, it is social standing and an illustrious legacy that he wants. While Paul is alive so is Dombey's hope for these, but he sees his daughter as "merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested – a bad Boy – nothing more" (13). As Dombey puts it: "Girls…have nothing to do with Dombey and Son" (153). Unlike Mr. Harlowe and the other fathers examined in this project, Dombey sees so little value in

daughters (versus sons) that he shuns his Florence instead of using her as an economic tool.

Though Dickens clearly admired the stage version of Richardson's heroine, his later iteration of Clarissa Harlowe departs from Richardson's depiction of femininity, which praises Clarissa's willingness to scapegoat her father's wrongs. Dombey's physical abuse awakens Florence to the emotional abuse she has long suffered at his hands, compelling her condemnation of his actions. "[I]n his frenzy, he lifted up his cruel arm and struck her, crosswise, with that heaviness, that she tottered on the marble floor" (721). This moment is a turning point for Florence. She sees her father for what he is, rather than the idealized image for which she yearned:

> She did not sink down at his feet; she did not shut out the sight of him with her trembling hands; she did not weep; she did not utter one word of reproach. But she looked at him, and a cry of desolation issued from her heart. For as she looked, she saw him murdering that fond idea to which she had held in spite of him. She saw his cruelty, neglect, and hatred, dominant above it, and stamping down. She saw she had no father on earth, and ran out, orphaned, from his house. (721)

This moment of physical abuse is the turning point for Florence to see that "cruelty, neglect, and hatred" are the driving forces of Dombey's nature. The narrator describes this as "murdering," heightening the atrocity of Dombey's actions. Furthermore, the passage emphasizes Florence's calm, if heartbroken, reaction to her epiphany; it is not a moment of wild passion or hysterical tears. Rather, Florence realizes she deserves better than her father's abuse. The narrator's indication that she is "orphaned" speaks to her

disavowal of him, which flips the paradigm present in Clarissa, where Mr. Harlowe curses – and disowns – Clarissa after she is tricked away from his home. Here, Florence, who for so long has been desperate to please Dombey, recognizes the futility of her actions and removes herself from her father's toxic home.

Florence's escape from her father's home, triumph though it is, presents her with the challenge of navigating the city on her own. "Somewhere, anywhere, to hide her head! somewhere, anywhere, for refuge, never more to look upon the place from which she fled!" (722). In a daze Florence makes her way to Sol Gill's shop, where Captain Cuttle welcomes her into his home. Grieving the disappearance of Sol and the (misreported) drowning of Walter as Florence comes to terms with her new reality, the two form an extra-familial care network; Captain Cuttle cooks and cares for Florence while she comforts him in his time of loss. This friendship between the two represents an alternative family dynamic – chosen family – that provides support to Florence during her time of need. "[E]ven as her tears made prismatic colors in the light she gazed at, so, through her new and heavy grief, she already saw a rainbow forming in the far-off sky," according to the narrator, "[a] wandering princess and a good monster in a story-book might have sat by the fire-side, and talked as Captain Cuttle and poor Florence thought – and not have looked very much unlike them" (740). In *Clarissa,* the heroine is effectively abandoned, lamenting: "[i]s it not a sad thing, as beloved as I thought myself so lately by every one, that now I have not one person to plead for me, to stand by me, or who would afford me refuge, where I to be under the necessity of seeking for it" (2:37-8). Florence, however, has in Captain Cuttle a support system in her time of need that prevents her from desperate measures. As will be discussed in more detail below, Dickens and Stone

both employ friendships as methods for helping women escape oppressive (or in Florence's case, abusive) situations; characters like Cuttle possess the empathy and bravery to help women in seemingly compromised situations. Indeed, Dickens' work with Urania Cottage suggests he was aware of the material and emotional support women trying to escape bad circumstances deserved.[64]

By the end of the novel, Dombey repents of his ways and learns to reorient the relationship between money and family, appreciating the latter above the former. Some of Dickens' contemporaries found Dombey's eventual repentance unlikely; so much so that Dickens felt the need to address Dombey's change of heart in the Preface to the Cheap Edition of 1858. "Mr. Dombey undergoes no violent change, either in this book, or in life. A sense of his injustice is within him all along…Internal shame and external circumstances may bring the contest to the surface in a week, or a day; but it had been a contest for years" (949). According to Dickens, Dombey did not experience an overnight transformation but struggled for years before reforming. Schor (2000) posits that Florence's embracing Dombey at the end of the novel is rooted in her realization that she has failed to love her father enough: "her realization of how much she loves her child has demonstrated anew to Florence how much she should have loved her father, and not how much he should have loved her" (65). Such a reading, however, overlooks the degree to which Dombey must repent to earn his forgiveness. Dombey's transformation into doting grandfather includes some key concessions on his part that flip the balance of power in Florence's favor. Dombey hits rock bottom; because the firm Dombey and Son was a

[64] For more on Dickens' benevolent but complicated relationship with Urania Cottage, see Bodenheimer's *Knowing Dickens* (2007 136). While Furneaux (2009) describes a kinship present among patrons and inhabitants of the house, Bodenheimer describes the lack of freedom experienced by the residents (23).

partnership, not a joint-stock company, Dombey's personal assets are seized when Carker embezzles company funds and the business fails. Dombey and Son was the primary love of Dombey's life and the locus of his authority. Like Mary Robinson's Sir Edward, once his financial success is undercut Dombey is left metaphorically impotent. As the narrator puts it, "[h]e was fallen never to be raised up anymore," even contemplating suicide, Ralph's chosen method of escaping his sense of shame in *Nicholas Nickleby* (904). In the end, it is Dombey, not Florence or Edith, who is "fallen," a term typically reserved for women. Dombey further humbles himself by begging Florence for forgiveness: "[o]h my God, forgive me, for I need it very much!" he begs while showing a "docile submission to her" that is new in him (911). Losing the sources from which he formally derived his authority, Dombey becomes "docile" and submissive to others. In the very end, he is not a Mr. Harlowe, blaming everyone else for his sins, but accepts the culpability and can thus turn into the father Florence deserves. Notably, the novel ends with Dombey's kissing Little Florence and stroking her hair – loving gestures indicating his newfound appreciation of family. Dombey's having to lose everything in order to appreciate family over business serves as a lesson for readers: the intangible value of personal connections is more important than economic gains.

Dickens' mercenary mothers

While Dombey's business dealings impact his relationship with his daughter, it is not he – the powerful capitalist figure – who sells his daughter for profit, but the mothers Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Brown. These mercenary mothers highlight several important components of the forced marriage plot and mid-century England. First, they prove that men were not alone in commodifying women; mothers enacted this ideology as well,

which serves as a testament to its pervasiveness. The actions of Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Brown also speak to the lack of prospects available to women. That is, neither these women nor their daughters have plentiful job opportunities, so they must forage ways to make the capitalist system work for them. For these mothers this takes the form of commodifying their daughters to fulfill the desires of men. Edith and Alice initially buy into their mothers' respective schemes, since, as the novel shows, they are indoctrinated into this ideology at early ages, yet readers are encouraged to empathize with them, especially as they speak up against the victimization of women. Like Kate Nickleby, Edith and Alice operate as mouthpieces for the novel's critique of the unjust treatment of women by Victorian-era economic practices.

Understanding Edith as an empathetic – even heroic – figure begins with her mother. Mrs. Skewton raised her daughter to be compliant and value money more than love. Edith explains that she was "taught to scheme and plot when children play; and married in my youth – an old age of design – to one for whom I had no feeling but indifference" (432). As a widow with no income, Mrs. Skewton seeks to fund a genteel lifestyle for herself and sees her beautiful daughter as her opportunity. Edith is perfectly cognizant of her mother's designs and increasingly resents these as the novel progresses, marking her self-realization of the immoral, mercenary ideology she actualizes. Like Kate Nickleby, Edith resents the efforts of her mother and Dombey to commodify her. During a confrontation with her mother, Edith remonstrates:

> …there is no slave in the market: there is no horse in a fair: so shown and offered and examined and paraded, Mother, as I have been, for ten shameful years…Have I been made the bye-word of all kinds of men? Have fools, have profligates, have

> boys, have dotards, dangled after me, and one by one rejected me, and fallen off, because you were too plain with all your cunning: yes, and too true, with all those false pretenses: until we have almost come to be notorious. (432)

Hyperbolic as Edith's comparisons of herself to slaves and horses are, they nevertheless reify the connection to mercenary, immoral, capitalist markets where, with enough money, anything is for sale. Mrs. Skewton understands the desirability of single, beautiful young women and realizes the economic opportunity this presents. Referencing this phenomenon in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844), Marx, ventriloquizing a capitalist, writes: "I am ugly, but I can buy for myself the most *beautiful* of women. Therefore I am not *ugly*, for the effect of *ugliness* – its deterrent power – is nullified by money" (138, italics in original). Possessing wealth provides power, including buying the companionship of women. The passage above suggests there is little distinction between parents who sell their daughters to wealthy husbands and Madams or Pimps who prostitute women: the same ideology Ralph Nickleby uses to justify his treatment of Kate. "The license of look and touch," Edith asks rhetorically, 'have I submitted to it, in half the places of resort upon the map of England? Have a been hawked and vended here and there, until the last grain of self-respect is dead within me, and I loathe myself?" (432). Edith highlights the sale of her material body, like a horse, slave, and – though not explicitly spoken – a prostitute. As Marx and Engels further explain in *The Communist Manifesto* (1844), "exploitation of children by their parents" is a characteristic of capitalism, "all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor" (227). They liken this family dynamic to prostitution: precisely the analogy Edith draws (228). Her self-

loathing and lack of self-respect are later coupled with additional self-descriptions such as “fallen” and “degraded,” echoing Victorian descriptions of prostitutes (433). In a later disagreement, Edith tells her mother she sees herself in the “faded likeness of my sex [that] has wandered past outside,” most likely a more direct comparison of herself to prostitutes and an additional reminder of the many ways women were commodified (473).

Though exasperated by her mother’s mistreatment, it is Edith’s marriage that pushes her past her breaking point; the struggle that ensues between Edith and Dombey reveals her to be a complex, independent woman capable of breaking free from the cycle of oppression. Dombey sees in Edith a proud beauty and believes making her subservient to him will enlarge his pride. He “imagined that the proud character of his second wife would have… exalted his greatness. He had pictured himself haughtier than ever, with Edith’s haughtiness subservient to his” (609). In the terms of Marx and Engels, Dombey sees Edith as “an instrument of production”; the bourgeois, they postulate, see women as objects to be exploited for their own ends, or “private” prostitution (*The Communist Manifesto* 227, 228). Or, as Hobsbawm (1975) puts it, “the bourgeois was not merely an independent, a man to whom no one (save the state or God) gave orders, but one who gave orders himself…the monopoly of command – in his house, in his business, in his factory – was crucial to his self-definition” (288). Dombey’s very sense of self-identity is tied to his economic superiority: fashioning himself as a master, he expects all in his realm to submit, including his wife. This expectation, as Davidoff and Hall (1987, 2003) explain, was rooted in nineteenth-century ideology of the home as refuge for the working patriarch. “If a man’s ability to support and order his family and household lay at the

heart of masculinity, then a woman's femininity was best expressed in her dependence," they explain, "[d]ependence was at the core of the evangelical Christian view of womanhood, and the new female subject, constructed in real religious terms, was the godly wife and mother" whose identity – and happiness – were inextricably tied to subservience (114). It is a role that Dombey expects from Edith; her subservience, he thinks, will enhance the opinions others hold of him, and thus raise his public and private status. Edith, however, has no intention of blindly playing this prescribed role. "I will be exhibited to no one, as the refractory slave you purchased… If I kept my marriage day, I would keep it as a day of shame," she exclaims before tossing away her costly jewels – the symbol of Dombey's oppression – and walks out of his home forever (712). She suggests the two live separate lives together under Dombey's roof, to see if friendship can grow between them, but Dombey has no interest in such an arrangement, as it configures her as his equal, not an object for his use. In removing herself from this situation, Edith asserts her personal subjectivity over the Dombey's objectification. Interestingly, Dickens initially planned for Edith to elope with Carker but changed his mind before publication. The result of this revision alters Edith's trajectory from a fallen, disgraced adulteress to a strong, independent woman who breaks herself out the cycle of oppression inflicted by her mother and husband.

Edith's role as heroine, rather than victim or adulteress, is underscored at the end of the novel when Edith and Florence are reunited several years after Edith's departure from the Dombey household. During this meeting, Florence obsessively begs Edith to ask for Dombey's forgiveness. "If you would have me ask his pardon, I will do it, Mama. I am almost sure he will grant it now, if I ask him. May Heaven grant it to you, too, and

comfort you! … I am sure you wish that I should ask him for his forgiveness. I am sure you do" (935-6). Florence insists on obtaining a message of apology for her father, which Edith calmly but firmly forbids, explaining that the only crime she's "guilty" of is "a blind and passionate resentment, of which I do not, cannot, will not, even now, repent" (937). Unlike Clarissa, Edith refuses to apologize for wrongs she didn't commit. "I do not repent of what I have done," she explains, "for if it were to do again to-morrow, I should do it…But that being a changed man, he knows, now, it would never be. Tell him I wish it never had been" (939). While admitting her marriage to Dombey was a mistake, she remains steadfastly unapologetic for her refusal to submit to his degrading notion of wifely duty or for leaving him. The narrative frame in this chapter portrays her as strong, confident, and even triumphant. Edith is not an embodiment of conventional Victorian womanhood, as Hager (2010) puts it, Edith is "a Dickensian heroine who looks more like a New Woman than an Angel in the House" (91). She is something much more complex and in the end is much more content for following her own will over her tyrannical husband's.

Critical interpretation of Edith is divided. Some align her with traditional fallen woman characters, emphasizing Edith's shirking of her wifely duties. For example, Lubitz (1994) claims: "Edith is never forgiven for her actions and must remain alone for the rest of her life" (88). This, however, is a mischaracterization of Edith's situation, as Edith expressly does not want forgiveness since she has not done anything to necessitate it; more sinned against than sinning, Edith chooses to remain alone. Surridge (2005) argues that the novel "excludes and vilifies Edith" (47) Similarly, Miller (2008) sees Edith as a symbol of shame. "As we have seen in Dombey," he argues, "shame brings

isolation with it, the construction of barriers" (188). Such critics posit that Edith's remaining aloof from the Dombey family is a symbol of her desolation; since she is not restored to a traditional family unit, she is fallen.

However, other critics read Dickens' non-traditional women in a more nuanced fashion that highlights the subversion of patriarchal norms in his novels. Ayres (1998) posits that Dickens "modifies and subverts" the dominant "ideology of womanhood" throughout his novels (2). In terms of *Dombey and Son*'s ideology of femininity, Hager (2010) argues that "Dickens plots the resolution of Edith's story as a triumph of good over evil, that…has an appropriate and reassuring ending" (32). Furthermore, she points to the fact that Edith is travelling to Italy with her cousin Feenix as a sign that Edith will rise from her unhappy past and have a better life abroad given the highly symbolic nature of Feenix's name (phoenix) (97). Indeed, this alliance with Feenix includes a concession on his part that Edith was gravely wronged by their family. "[F]eeling besides that our family had been a little to blame in not paying more attention to her, and that we are a careless family—and also that my aunt, though a devilish lively woman, had perhaps not been the very best of mothers," he explains:

> I took the liberty of seeking her in France, and offering her such protection as a man very much out at elbows could offer. Upon which occasion, my lovely and accomplished relative did me the honour to express that she believed I was, in my way, a devilish good sort of fellow; and that therefore she put herself under my protection. Which in point of fact I understood to be a kind thing on the part of my lovely and accomplished relative, as I am getting extremely shaky, and have derived great comfort from her solicitude. (937-8)

In his customarily loquacious manner, Feenix describes the newfound friendship between the two, mirroring the relationship between Captain Cuttle and Florence that is so important to those two characters. The redemptive friendships in the novel (Florence and Cuttle, Feenix and Edith, and Alice and Harriet Carker) are mutually beneficial, indicative of what Ledger (2010) describes as Dickens' rejection of paternalism and the value he places on "the solidarity of the poor" (129). Arguing that after *A Christmas Carol* (1843), in which Scrooge – a patriarchal figure – swoops to the rescue of the downtrodden, Dickens moves away from this model of narrative closure, instead ending many of his tales with narratives in which underprivileged characters create their own communities. A similar dynamic is at work in *Dombey and Son.* Edith and Feenix's earlier relationship can be described as superficial, at best. However, when Edith is in trouble – alone in France after leaving Dombey and scorning Carker – Feenix seeks her out and proposes an arrangement in which they will care for each other; he derives as much benefit from their newfound relationship as she does. After a lifetime of objectification and abuse, first by her mother and then Dombey, this friendship with her cousin provides an alternative path to fulfillment that frees Edith from the pressures of mercenary attitudes toward women.

As Dickens' work with Angela Burdett Coutts at their Urania Cottage demonstrates, he believed that women who deviated from the narrow definition of proper femininity dictated by nineteenth-century society were (or had the ability to become) essentially moral women with a right to re-enter society: that their life circumstances precipitated their crimes. For example, in his 1853 essay "Home for Homeless Women," Dickens describes helping a young prostitute (who was likely raped by her stepfather)

establish herself as a successful community member and happy wife in Australia, exhibiting the extent to which prostitution did not need to define a woman's life. A similar message is present in Alice Marwood; though hardened and bitter when she's first introduced, readers see that her mother's lack of support causes fall: "[t]here was a child called Alice Marwood," Alice narrates, "born among poverty and neglect, and nursed in it. Nobody taught her, nobody stepped forward to help her, nobody cared for her" (530). Alice's description of her rough childhood resembles Nancy's description of her own childhood, among the "alley and gutter" (*Oliver Twist* 334). This context helps readers understand and empathize with characters like Nancy and Alice. Neither is innately bad but adapts to survive in the harsh worlds into which they were born. Indeed, Alice's sentimentalized death scene rivals that of Paul Dombey and Clarissa Harlowe; she explains how her poverty made her feel bitter toward the world, but "[t]hat is all past" as she listens to Harriet Carker read the Bible and peacefully slips into death (891). The suffering into which Alice was born caused misery, but her holy death scene reminds readers that, as a victim of circumstance, she is not defined by her life of crime. Additionally, Dickens' work with real-life women criminals and ex-prostitutes also serves as a cue that he did not write characters like Alice, Nancy, or Edith in a vacuum, but undoubtedly infused elements of his Urania House-experiences into his fiction, which he insisted was grounded in experience. Dickens diffuses elements of *Clarissa*'s plot throughout *Dombey and Son*: Edith's mercenary parent who forces her into marriage; young Florence's devotion to her uncaring father; and Alice's sentimentalized death scene all echo Clarissa Harlowe's plights, yet Dickens deviates from *Clarissa*'s plot in key ways, underscoring the oppressive nature of contemporary society while celebrating

Edith, Florence, and Alice for their respective refusals to remain complacent within the oppressive system .

The Cotton Lord's Coercion

Though Elizabeth Stone has largely fallen through the cracks of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary criticism, putting her novel *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* in conversation with *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Dombey and Son* underscores the extent to which Victorian novelists were concerned with the impact of capitalism on family structure, especially in relation to the limitations it placed on women's autonomy. Additionally, the similarities between *William Langshawe* and *Clarissa* are striking. Edith Langshawe is a beloved and dutiful daughter whose first real clash with her parents comes when her father contracts a marriage to a man Edith finds morally repulsive. William Langshawe is a successful textile manufacturer and, generally, a kind father, but his status as a captain of industry clouds his judgement. He and John Balshawe Sr., a fellow cotton lord, agree to the following terms: John Balshawe Jr., will marry Edith, obtaining her 100,000-pound inheritance in exchange for creating a new business partnership with unthinkable potential. The plot is complicated further when Langshawe makes a bad speculation that can only be remedied through this marriage, which makes Edith's role as dutiful daughter additionally fraught. The conflicts that ensue firmly place *William Langshawe* within the forced marriage plot tradition in ways that highlight the patriarchal undergirding of Victorian discourse of female submissiveness.

In her novel, Stone shows the obsession with wealth that is endemic among Manchester's elite. William Langshawe climbs the social ladder from poor laborer to ultra-wealthy factory owner; he is proud of his capitalist success story and fixates on

expanding his textile empire. Readers learn from the very beginning of the novel that one of his primary concerns in life is who will inherit his company and fortune, since any money that his daughter Edith has will transfer to her husband upon marriage. Langshawe tells Edith she will inherit a fortune "provided – *pro-vid-ed* you marry to please me" (1:18, italics in original). Obsessed with his textile empire, Langshawe's views on Edith's marriage stem from his fixation. "Show me a young man with his business in his fingers, a clear head, a calculating mind, and industrious, frugal, hardworking habits," he instructs Edith, "there's solidity in such a character as that – and on such a one, if he had not a guinea in his purse nor a second coat to his back, I would not look askance" (1:19). Like Charlotte Smith's Maynard, Langshawe's priority in any potential marriage of is daughter is making sure that her husband is worthy of inheriting his fortune and his business. This marriage, it is clear, is simply a business decision for Langshawe.

Though there are few scholarly engagements with Stone, the scholars who have examined *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* tend to emphasize Stone's sharp insights on life in Manchester. Mitchell's *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Stone (2011) calls this the first novel about industrial Manchester written by a resident, hinting at the unique insights that Stone's work provides. Bodenheimer (1988) makes a similar argument about Stone's novel, claiming that Stone's portrayal of Manchester life is more nuanced than earlier social reform texts. However, Bodenheimer emphasizes the novel's limits, arguing that the novel waivers uneasily between "social satire and highly conventional imitations of the sentimental novel" (72). Alternatively, Kestner (1983) emphasizes the social justice present in *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*. Around this period, Kestner notes, the findings of Parliament's investigative committees became

available to and consumed by the public, many of which exposed inhumane working conditions. These accounts provided inspiration for writers like Stone, whose novels include representations of the working classes derived from these reports. Indeed, at several points the narrator of *William Langshawe* addresses the reader directly with claims of the novel's reality, and Stone also includes occasional footnotes to indicate real events she is fictionalizing. Stone stove to "combine uniqueness with factuality in the portrayal of workers' lives" "in both the operative and managerial classes" (78). Like Dickens, Stone created fiction inspired by real-life occurrences, creating relatable subjects meant to foster empathy and legislative change.

Bodenheimer's criticism of *William Langshawe*'s "sentimental" plot is an oversimplification that ignores Stone's criticisms of – and alternatives to – the greed found in her contemporary capitalist society. In the novel, Langshawe prioritizes finding an ideal son-in-law for himself over allowing Edith to marry a kind and worthy man; in his single-mindedness he overlooks the manners and habits of Frank, Edith's chosen lover, and John, her betrothed. Frank, who comes from a wealthy textile family himself, is kind, intellectual, and loves Edith for herself, rather than her family's fortune. However, Langshawe believes that Frank's liberal arts education disqualifies him for a life of business. John Balshawe Jr. was raised by a man with the same values as Langshawe and who presents a business opportunity. Langshawe's eagerness to marry Edith to John blinds him to the fact that John is a Lovelacean rake, "a low-lived libertine, carrying, in the indulgence of his brutal pleasures, shame and sorrow to the lowly hearths of those to whom his father was bound by every tie of decency and morality to protect and cherish" (1:124). Contributing to the myth of the self-made man was the notion that a

capitalist played a benevolent fatherly role to his workers. John – and his father – shirk this duty, John through his sexual exploitation of the women workers and Mr. Balshawe by permitting John's behavior.[65] As Marx remarks (1844), possessing money eclipses the undesirable qualities of those who have it: "[m]oney, besides, saves me the trouble of dishonest: I am therefore presumed honest. I am *stupid,* but money is the *real mind* of all things" (138, italics in original). This is precisely the dynamic between Langshawe and John; because of the Balshawe's extensive resources, Langshawe is (perhaps willingly) blind to the dark character flaws of his intended son-in-law. "Too often," Stone's narrator adds, "is this the case with the half-fledged sons of these secluded petty princes, who carry on a wasting warfare upon the morality and domestic comfort of their petty localities" (1:124-5). John's debauchery is indicative of personal and social shortcomings: wasting money on base pleasures and abusing many women along the way. Nancy is one such woman; she is a beautiful, poor factory worker whom John seduces with promises of marriage and wealth, impregnates, then subsequently abandons for Edith (who happens to be Nancy's cousin). The passage above suggests that Nancy is not John's first victim, but that he repeatedly takes advantage of his father's employees without consequences. Furthermore, the narrator emphasizes that John is not an isolated case, that the sons of "secluded petty princes," such as Balshawe often feel entitled to act with reckless immorality; the privileged social positions gained by their families' rapid economic ascent lead to moral delinquency at the cost of naïve young women like Nancy.

[65] As Hobsbawm (1975) puts it, in "company towns" such as the Manchester of *William Langshawe*, "the fate of men and women depended on the fortunes and goodwill of a single master, behind whom stood the force of law and state power, which regarded his authority as necessary and beneficial" (251).

In addition to Langshawe's concerns over the legacy of his hard-earned business and the Lovelace-like qualities of Edith's intended husband, there are political undertones to the match that provide additional resonances with *Clarissa* and further highlight the corruption of capitalism. When Langshawe and Balshawe initially scheme to bring their businesses together via the marriage of Edith and John, Langshawe does not need money, but greedily hordes it to bolster his pride and the future of his business. The narrator explains of Langshawe and Balshawe that: "[t]heir whole souls were wrapped up in mercantile speculation; and while they were indeed of an age to require relaxation, and had in reality no earthly motive for extraordinary exertion, since they yearly laid aside a much larger sum than they spent, did still toil day after day as regularly, as elaborately, as if they really had to earn their daily food (1:128). Eager to consolidate their considerable resources and secure their respective futures, the merchants seek a monopoly over other Manchester textile producers. This Balshawe/Langshawe alliance is also coveted by Langshawe for its political implications. The Balshawes are upwardly mobile in a way that even ultra-wealthy Langshawe is not; Balshawe Sr., has been able to turn the profits from his mill into a Parliamentary seat which will, they all presume, eventually belong to John. Langshawe's intended son-in-law (and the future inheritor of his mills) will have political power to bolster his own interests. The greed and self-interest in this deal is palpable; Langshawe is eager to sacrifice his daughter for his own financial benefit.

As desperately as Langshawe desires an alignment with the Balshawes, he does not think of such a marriage as forced. The narrative, however, reveals the coercive methods by which young women could be forced into marriages. "Not that [Langshawe] had the slightest idea then of coercing the affections of his gentle girl," the narrator

explains, “but the projected match, had so many advantages every way, that if, as he did not suffer himself to doubt, the young man was an agreeable one, it was more than likely that Edith would without repugnance accommodate herself to his wishes” (1:126). Desiring to maintain the façade of a kindly, supportive father, Langshawe does not resort to the desperate tactics of the Harlowe clan, but his assumptions that she will “accommodate herself to his wishes” betrays his belief in a daughter’s natural subservience to her father. Their early discussions about John are clouded by deceit; Langshawe pretends that the marriage was Balshawe’s idea and that it is a hypothetical idea rather than a finalized deal (both false statements); Langshawe insists he just wants Edith to humor John and let him court her before she turns him down when in fact the compact between the two businessmen is complete.

William Langshawe depicts the hardships wrought by the glorification of wealth accumulation in the nineteenth century on the daughters of such influential fathers. Like Clarissa, Edith vacillates between her respect for her father and her repugnance toward serving as an exchangeable commodity. Though she dutifully agreed to banish Frank from her life, she is conscious of John’s reckless nature and of her father’s ulterior motives. “And was it for this,” Edith muses, “for a mercenary bargain with the son of a vulgar, profligate man – himself I fancy by no means immaculate – was it for this that such a man as Mr. [Frank] Walmsley was to be treated with scorn…?” (1:214). Edith initially remains strong in her resolve to refuse John, but when her father loses a considerable sum of money on a bad speculation the situation becomes much graver. Langshawe levels with Edith, explaining Balshawe promised his son a large cash payout upon his marriage with Edith, which Langshawe thinks John will use to bail out his

father-in-law.[66] Edith sees the situation for what it is: her father's selling her off to regain his lost capital. "I suppose he would make a bill of parcels of me, as he would of a bale of goods" (2:8). Being treated as an object for sale is demeaning to Edith, and she initially refuses to participate in such a transaction. She calmly and confidently tells her father: "I will work for you, beg for you, starve for you; but I will not marry John Balshawe," asserting her right to marry by choice (2:9).

It must be noted that Langshawe's losses from his speculation are not as severe as he initially claims. In fact, he admits to Edith that his personal wealth would suffer a severe blow, but neither his mills nor the family welfare is at stake. "There will be no 'starving' in the case," he explains, "[w]e shall still have enough to support us in respectability, but I shall lose the high place which for nearly forty years I have toiled and striven unweariedly to attain; and instead of taking my place fearlessly among my fellows on 'Change, I shall slink aside to do what little trafficking I may have, lest I should hear the great ones whisper at me" (2:12). Langshawe relishes his role as a self-made man; he is proud of the wealth he has accumulated, and this wealth – thanks in part, no doubt, to the way wealth accumulation was glorified in the Victorian period – is inextricably tied to his sense of self. Losing this sense of pride devastates him. The Langshawes have enough to live comfortably, but Langshawe simply cannot face the embarrassing consequences of his ill-advised speculation. As Mrs. Langshawe explains: "[y]our father's weak point is his standing in trade," she tells Edith, "[f]or mere personal bereavement he does not care a pin; but if he were to lose the high position he has acquired, as a successful cotton

[66] John later learns of Langshaw's expectation of a loan from him upon his marriage to Edith and does not plan to give it to him. The narrator tells readers that, once married, John thinks "he should bring [Edith's] proud notions down a peg" (2:25). He does not intend to be a kind husband or helpful to Langshawe.

merchant, whose exertions have raised himself to eminence – Edith, he could not bear it" (2:39). Ultimately, the necessity of the marriage rests on Langshawe's sense of pride, not financial want. Most Manchester textile mills were private companies, not corporations, which relied on the good reputations of their owners (Taylor 22). Therefore, Langshawe's speculation brings with it the possibility of losing clients who heard of his bad investment. Moreover, the press was often unsympathetic to victims of speculations. Dishonest speculators were vilified, but those who fell for their schemes were sometimes labelled naïve or stupid. Literary representations of this will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter, but in connection to *William Langshawe* it is pertinent that the shame (and stupidity) of falling for a bad speculation could mar Langshawe's legacy, especially among his colleagues, leaving Langshawe more concerned about his reputation than his daughter's happiness. As Mr. Ainsley, Frank's uncle, muses: "Mr. Langshawe loves his daughter more dearly, I doubt not, than any earthly thing – save his money. Frank, you cannot form an idea how that man's heart is wrapt up in his ledger; he lives on figures by day, he dreams of pounds, shillings, and pence by night" (1:72). Incapable of detaching his private life from his business, Langshawe lets his hubris infect his familial relations.

Though Edith ultimately consents to marry John, the way in which her acceptance is depicted makes it clear that this marriage is forced. The family dynamic operating in the novel mirrors contemporary socio-economic forces that actively shaped young women into submissive entities commodified for their economic exchangeability. Though Langshawe claims he will not force Edith to marry John, he exerts extreme coercion tactics. For instance, in response to her declaration that she would rather starve than

marry John, he asserts, “with regard to the matter of starving, since that is the gentle term you choose to select, remember that you will not starve alone. Be this reverse [in fortune] as it may, more or less severe, your mother must share it with you” (2:9). He capitalizes on her close relationship with her mother, guilting her into acquiescing through his insistence that she is responsible for her mother’s wellbeing. Shaping himself as a martyr, Langshawe also tells Edith he hopes he dies rather than face disgrace. While he does not explicitly threaten suicide, the possibility hangs in the air during this conversation. This marriage, according to Langshawe, is not just about Edith’s wishes, but about the survival of her parents, as well.

The conditions of capitalism are replicated within the domestic space as women are taught to view themselves as exchangeable commodities; Edith’s giving in to her father’s demand is based on the same economic and social ideologies that precipitated the actions of Madeline Bray and Edith Dombey. Their decisions are primarily financial ones; each is in a situation where she and close family members need money and see marriage as the only method of obtaining it. In each of these cases, parents desire access to capital and the socio-economic climate in which they live readily accepts fashioning daughters into “simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor,” to again quote Marx and Engels on capitalism’s impact on the family unit (*The Manifesto of the Communist Party* 227). Furthermore, Edith’s genteel education primes her for this sacrifice. As a member of a wealthy family with aspirations above their working-class roots, Edith received a finishing-school education. Such educations were deeply steeped in notions of feminine duty and self-sacrifice. Blumberg (2013) succinctly explains: “the frequent assimilation of duty to sacrifice was a hallmark of Victorian moral thought”

(23). In *William Langshawe*, Stone dramatizes the degree to which young women are taught the virtue of self-sacrifice to facilitate the self-interest of men like Langshawe:

> Mr. Langshawe abided strictly by the promise he had made his daughter; he did not urge or press his wishes on her in any way, direct or indirect; he did not allude to the subject at all. Nay, it almost appeared that he might have urged a like forbearance on his wife, so silent was she on the subject; but this forbearance was the very way to win the heart and soul of Edith. (2:33)

He refrains from actively pressuring or threatening her as he trusts her sense of duty and self-sacrifice to her parents will outweigh her aversion to John. In chapter two of this project I invoked Kowaleski-Wallace's (1991) concept "new-style patriarchy," in which patriarchal agents utilized methods beyond brute force to govern young women, especially through inciting feelings of "guilt and obligation" as methods of control (110). The Langshawes also invoke "new-style patriarchy" by instilling in Edith a sense of her obligation to rescue her father from shame; the novel explicitly articulates this type of pressured acquiescence as a forced marriage.

Edith's parents are not the only forces working to instill in her a sense self-sacrifice; "new-style patriarchy" relied on conduct guides and religious instruction to prime young women for compliance. Sarah Stickney Ellis' *The Women of England, their social duties, and domestic habits* (1838) provides a useful example. To Ellis, the British home was crucially important in an age where the British Empire was expanding colonial and trade borders. As Davidoff and Hall explain (1978, 2003), conduct-guide authors such as Ellis shaped the domestic space as an antidote to the turbulent world and believed that it was of national importance for women to soothe the men in their lives who were in

direct contact with the troubled world outside the home (180). Ellis beatifies eighteenth-century women, whose "sphere of action was at their own firesides, and the world in which they moved was one where pleasure of the highest, purest order, naturally and necessarily arises out of acts of duty faithfully performed" (19). Though Clarissa Harlowe is not specifically named, throughout the text Ellis elevates Clarissa-like characters who embody a young woman's moral duty to put others before herself. She notes that, generally speaking, "where the duty is most irksome, the moral responsibility is precisely the same, as where it is most pleasing" (221). That is, if a young woman is disinclined to perform a specific duty it is still her responsibility to do so. Ellis continues to define womanhood through self-sacrifice in *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (1842), which presents a rosy, sentimental look at Victorian parenthood; parents, especially fathers, are lovable, hard-working figures to be honored and unbegrudgingly obeyed. The "object of a daughter is to soothe the weary spirit of a father when he returns home from the office or the counting-house, where he has been toiling for her maintenance," she claims in her guide (61). Victorian life was so deeply impacted by the rise of capitalism – the importance of labor – that even young ladies' conduct guides consider their impacts on the home. Fathers, according to Ellis, work relentlessly to support their daughters. In return, it is the duty of daughters to please and obey their fathers, even when it pains them to do so.

This deference mirrors the homage often paid to self-made men like Langshawe on a smaller scale. An important component of capitalist identity was the ability to command those around you: both at home and at work (Hobsbawm 288). A component of feminine duty, then, according to Ellis, is acquiescing to the father's authority:

respecting his role as the master of the house which is derived from his status as breadwinner. Chapter three of this project analyzed Mary Robinson's *Angelina; A Novel*, in which absentee-plantation owner Sir Edward claims "while [he] can command more money than [his] neighbors" he can treat his daughter as cruelly as he wants without fear of judgement, since "tis money that makes the mare go" (2:121). Indeed, a family acquaintance remarks: "[y]oung women have no right to judge for themselves; we, who have experience, ought to be consulted on every occasion…Sir Edward Clarendon, after having toiled so many years, had unquestionably a right to dispose of his own" (2:189). It is not just Sir Edward's role as *pater familias* that endows his authority over Sophia, but his money and years of hard work that, according to social custom, demands obedience. This dynamic was not abandoned with the dawn of the nineteenth century, but one that prospered under post-industrial capitalism.

The importance of friendships

Edith's reluctant agreement to marry John demonstrates the coercive power that parents could wield over their daughters using popular notions of feminine self-sacrifice. *William Langshawe*, however, also shows the redemptive power that friendships present in overturning such oppressive discourses. While much work has been done on the importance of female friendships in the Victorian period, less has been said on non-romantic friendships that exist between the sexes. Scholars such as Vicinus (2004) and Marcus (2007) have established that in the nineteenth-century novel, female friendships contained the potential to subvert gender hierarchies. Edith's female companions, however, fail her in *William Langshawe*. Even the kindly spinster Mrs. Haller, who knows Edith's aversion to John and the financial problems spurring the marriage, is

reluctant to warn Edith against what she knows will be a miserable marriage. It is Edith's friendship with the hermit Bladow that proves most beneficial. Friendships between men and women could prove controversial in the Victorian period. Deresiewicz (2007) explains that friendships between men and women were not always socially acceptable, or even possible. In addition to the threat of scandal mongering that could arise from young women spending extended periods of time with a man, cross-sex friendships presume intellectual and social equality between the sexes, which was unthinkable to many in the nineteenth century: "mental companionship, freedom of choice, equality, and mutual respect" were the foundations of friendship (59). While some misogynistically held that these could not exist between men and women, those who held more egalitarian understandings of gender embraced such friendships. The friendship that exists between Bladow and Edith models selfless friendship in opposition to the selfish paternalism of her family and shows the benefits that society can reap when men treat women as equals.

Bladow is the only one who actively discourages Edith from engaging herself to John; disavowing the materialism and obsession with profit-margins of Langshawe, Bladow instead favors fostering meaningful relationships with his fellow man – and woman. According to Bladow, there is a simple explanation for the world's strife:

> 'what induces to crime? and what leads to misery? – Money. What makes a man overreach his neighbour? – Money. What tempts him to murder a fellow-creature? – Money. What shuts his heart to affection, and his ears to every cry of virtue and honour? – Money. What makes a father sacrifice his child at the altar? – Money – money – money' (2:185).

The love of money and its concomitant power corrupt those who obsess over it, such as Langshawe, in extraordinary ways. According to Bladow, money causes the blind self-interest that leads men into a gamut of crimes, including the "sacrifice" of a beloved daughter. The double meaning of "altar" in Bladow's speech connects the marriage altar to a sacrificial altar at which Edith's life will be forfeited for the sake of her father's avarice. Edith tries convincing him that she has consented of her own free will, but Bladow knows the truth. "She may have consented," he muses, "she may have consented, certainly; but has she been fairly and openly dealt by? – I doubt – I doubt" (2:191). Bladow recognizes the ease with which her parents can take advantage of her loving, trusting nature and wants Edith to live her life on her own terms. Dramatically disrupting Edith's wedding, with pregnant Nancy in tow, Bladow exposes John's profligacy and saves Edith from certain misery. Her father tells John, "I would rather, now, lay my daughter in her coffin than give her to you," upon hearing Nancy's tale, but thankfully Bladow's selfless love for Edith allows her to avoid Clarissa's fate (2:202). Bladow's actions provide a teachable moment to Langshawe, who reconfigures his priorities. "Mr. Langshawe did not shut his heart to this lesson; he felt truly and earnestly, that house and land were as nothing to him compared with the happiness of his only daughter" (2:270). With ties to the Balshawes severed, Langshawe must sell his opulent home and possessions, yet the family becomes happier in their new modest lifestyle. Langshawe regains his fortune through hard work and help from Frank's uncle but does not forget the lessons that Bladow imparted in him. Like Dombey, Langshawe ends the novel a changed man who sees his daughter as a feeling individual rather than a pawn in his capitalist ambition, showing readers the extent to which change within the economic

system is possible if only the mercenary ways in which titans of capitalism fashion young women into exchangeable economic commodities, stripping them of their autonomy, is rectified.

Conclusion

These novels by Stone and Dickens expose the complex ways in which social, economic, and familial pressures collude to force even resistant women into unwanted marriages. The heroically disobedient characters featured in *Nicholas Nickleby, Dombey and Son,* and *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* face different struggles, but all are rooted in the systemic commodification of women wrought by the period's obsession with wealth accumulation. In *Nicholas Nickleby,* for instance, readers are exposed to the hardships faced by working women as the novel hints at the precarious slide into prostitution precipitated by steep competition among workers and insufficient wages. These practices are replicated within the domestic space and corrupt the family structure through Ralph and Bray's commodification of Kate and Madeline, which is eventually offset by the benevolent practices of the Cheeryble brothers. Prostitution and capitalism's potential infection of the family unit are exacerbated in *Dombey in Son* not just by men, the traditional figures of patriarchal authority, but also by mothers who lack means of supporting themselves and prostitute their daughters as sexual commodities. *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord* returns to the paradigm of the wealthy, influential father who wants to sell his daughter to augment his standing in the world, and it is a humble – if unlikely – friend who turns the tide against the father's mercenary habits and restores peace to the family unit. While each of these novels closely engages with the themes and

plot of *Clarissa*, they provide alternative configurations of femininity that celebrate and empathize with women who assert their own wills.

Chapter Five

"Of course I have to think of myself": Trollope's Heroines and the Gambling Economy

The previous chapter took the rise of post-industrial capitalism as its topic, focusing specifically on Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Dombey and Son* alongside less-studied Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe, The Cotton Lord* as examples of the social inequalities – especially to women – wrought by the capitalist ethos, with its glorification of wealth accumulation and the power invested in self-made men. An important aspect of this system was the continued reliance of women as exchangeable commodities, used and abused for the profit of men. This final chapter examines this dynamic in the later decades of the nineteenth century, when speculation and corporations gained even more socio-economic power. As is detailed below, several acts of Parliament, such as the Limited Liability Act of 1855 and the Joint-Stock Companies Act of 1856 strengthened the power of corporations, expanding access to speculation. At the same time, Great Britain was rocked by a series of financial crises resulting in instability. This boom and bust cycle lead to the pervasive use of gambling as a metaphor for financial speculation. The author under consideration, Anthony Trollope, shows how this economic precarity facilitated the continued abusive commodification of women as a means of wealth transfer between men. The novels considered in this chapter, primarily *The Way We Live Now* (1874-5) with observations on *The Three Clerks* (1857), *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite* (1871), *The Prime Minister* (1876), and *The Duke's Children* (1880), dramatize the link between speculation and forced marriages in which women are exchanged as financial commodities. Though these novels

were written more than a century after the publication of *Clarissa* (1748), in them Trollope engages with Richardson via his use of the forced marriage plot to highlight the degree to which seemingly archaic eighteenth-century patriarchal ideologies of land, money, and women persisted in late-nineteenth century Britain. While *Sir Harry* and *The Prime Minister* portray the continued victimization of women, in *The Way We Live Now* Trollope goes a step further, portraying a heroine, Marie Melmotte, who breaks free from the cycle of financially motivated oppression.

Richardson and Trollope

Samuel Richardson retained cultural relevancy well into the Victorian period. Throughout the fifties, sixties, and seventies Samuel Richardson and his texts are referenced constantly in periodicals such as *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, *Athenaeum*, and *Blackwood's Edinburg Magazine*, especially as a reference point in book reviews. For instance, an October 23, 1869 article in *All the Year Round* about eighteenth-century poet Elizabeth Carter claims Richardson did Carter the honor of including some of her verses in *Clarissa*, calling Richardson "the true primate of the female world" ("An Unsubjected Woman"499).[67] The following May, another essay in *All the Year Round* (14 May, 1870) about Samuel Johnson remarked that Johnson's essays in *The Rambler* "are very dull," except for one which Richardson guest-wrote ("Dr. Johnson – From A Scottish Point of View" 564). Margaret Oliphant's essay "The Condition of Women" appeared in *Blackwood's* in February 1858, calling on young women to look to Clarissa Harlowe as a role model. Contrasting contemporary women

[67] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "primate" here likely refers to a high-ranking individual: "[a] person who is first in rank or importance; a chief, a head, a leader. Now rare." Additionally, it should be noted that, while Richardson did include some of Carter's poetry in *Clarissa*, he neither quoted the work nor gave credit to the author.

with eighteenth-century women (whom Oliphant claims are more virtuous), Oliphant laments: "[f]or our own part, we can only say, let us have back Pamela, and Clarissa, and the Spectator. If our young people are to be instructed in the social vices, by way of establishing their own morality, let Richardson once more be the support of virtue" (151). In March 1862 and September 1863 Edward Bulwer Lytton wrote two essays in that same journal reflecting on Richardson's literary genius. Not all the references are so flattering; on July 8, 1865 the *Athenaeum* referred to *Clarissa* as the "dullest" thing England ever exported to France ("The History of Playing Cards" 853). These are, to be sure, just a few examples from decades of print journalism, but they represent the numerous – if minor – references to Richardson that were made in the later Victorian period, providing evidence of his continued cultural relevance and readerly familiarity with a novel written over one-hundred years earlier.

Another notable contribution to Victorian Richardsonia is E. S. Dallas' 1868 abridgement of *Clarissa*, in which Dallas praises *Clarissa* as a literary masterpiece while contending that England underwent a transformation in the period since the novel's publication, especially regarding the treatment of women. "The sort of oppression to which Clarissa was subject, and which drove her to her doom, is now impossible in English families," Dallas claims in his Preface:

> The treatment which Clarissa dreaded when she was to be taken to the solitary moated mansion of her tyrannical uncle, where cries for help could not be heard, and whence escape would have been impossible, there to be forcibly married, 'sensible or insensible,' to a suitor whom she loathed, would in the present day be

> incredible. No parents, however determined, would venture on such a step; and no daughter, in her wits, would fear its fulfilment. (xxxv)

The forced marriage plot of *Clarissa*, Dallas claims, may have reflected the reality of eighteenth-century women, but he considers such customs obsolete. This change is rooted in the evolution of parent/daughter relations: strict parental authority has relaxed and instead an appreciation of young women as individuals predominates.

This new edition of *Clarissa* caught the attention of Trollope, who went on to write a harsh review that criticizes the original novel and the claims Dallas makes in the Preface. Trollope claims: "Mr. Dallas means to assert that there is the strongest possible evidence which can be given by the admiration of contemporaries and by the judgment of critics that *Clarissa* is the greatest of novels," a notion with which Trollope takes issue (163). Conceding that Richardson is considered a "great writer," Trollope argues that Dallas' edition, which abridged the original eight-volume novel down to three volumes is "a better novel than it was left by Richardson," but ultimately claims *Clarissa* is a flawed piece of literature that is "as impossible as it is cumbersome," given its immense length and the excruciating level of detail in the letters (165, 166).

Apart from these formal quibbles, however, Trollope also provides substantial criticisms of the novel's representation of female characters. Admitting that readers may find "their feelings are harrowed by the sufferings of the heroine," yet "[t]hroughout the story there is no one to love or even to like, save only Clarissa" (167, 171). Trollope takes particular issue with Anna Howe's characterization, arguing: "Anna Howe herself is detestable. She has a respectable lover, whom she marries at last, and in respect of whom her letters are full of the most absurd abuse. She relates to her friend all her ill-treatment

of this lover, down to the very words she uses. Yet not once does she profess affection for him. And yet she marries him" (168). The blame for her unlikability, according to Trollope, resides in Richardson's "stiff, ungainly, puritanical idea as to women," his belief:

> that a woman till she is married should be ashamed ever to own that she loves. We may be told that such was the idea among well brought-up women of the time; but we venture to assert that the poetry, plays, and tales of the day tell us that this was not so, and that women then, if less demonstrative, and therefore less natural than now, were still known to speak their minds. Richardson desired to teach virtue as he saw it; and, in doing so, has repudiated all human nature, as is done by so many who, in these days, endeavour to teach us virtue in godly but false little books, about godly but false little people. (167)

That is, Richardson's definition of femininity is to blame for Anna's flaws as a literary character. As Trollope reads Anna, her verbal abuse of Hickman stems from Richardson's belief that women should not show affection for men before marriage: that eighteenth-century women did not "speak their minds," as Trollope puts it. Such a depiction adheres to "stiff, ungainly, puritanical" notions of femininity that Trollope resents in Richardson and Dallas, advocating instead for literary depictions of women that break free from overly-determined moralizing, since women – in the 1740s and in the 1870s – did indeed "speak their minds" and had their own free wills. Richardson's version of femininity is, to Trollope, against "human nature"; it is a hollow ideal that should not be perpetuated in literature. Trollope's self-professed goal as a novelist contrasts with his representation of Richardson's. "I have always desired to 'hew out

some lump of the earth,' and to make men and women walk upon it just as they do walk here among us," he writes in his *Autobiography* (1883), "with not more of excellence, nor with exaggerated baseness – so that my readers might recognize human beings like to themselves, and not feel themselves to be carried away among gods or demons" (131-2). While Richardson, according to Trollope, unrealistically distorted reality to make "Puritanical" moral points, Trollope's self-professed goal involves portraying life as it is lived, rather than a moralizing version of it.

Trollope's Mr. Harlowes

In addition to his critiques of Richardson's depictions of femininity, Trollope's corpus challenges Dallas' claim that their contemporary society was less domineering over the marriages of women: forced, pressured, or forbidden romances populate Trollope's novels. In fact, he directly opposes Dallas' claim in novels like *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite*, *The Prime Minister*, and *The Duke's Children*, in which fathers are directly involved in the marriages of their daughters for economic reasons reminiscent of the struggles dramatized in *Clarissa*. Despite Dallas' claims of a progressed society, Sir Harry, Abel Wharton, and the Duke of Omnium show that, even in the 1870s, patriarchal ideologies of land and femininity persisted, especially among the upper classes, who sought to consolidate power and assets within their own clans; keeping their ranks "impregnable" from outsiders, as the Duchess of Omnium remarks (*The Prime Minister* 585). In Trollope's novels of the 1870s, speculation – a form of gambling – is portrayed as antithetical to British social progress, since it aligns the landed gentry with the wealthy bourgeoisie: further consolidating wealth and power among those who already hold the largest share of these. Calling on links between eighteenth-century

attitudes toward both land and women, *The Way We Live Now* shows the extent to which the "progress" of late nineteenth-century Britain was mired in eighteenth century ideologies. Though the daughters of these novels are not "taken to…solitary moated mansions," as Dallas describes of eighteenth-century forced marriages, the fathers struggle between respecting their daughters' rights to self-determination and their desires to use their daughters to advance their own socio-economic interests, each eager to close ranks against interfering, lower-class outsiders.

Sir Harry, for example, looks to solidify his family legacy in a time when the landed gentry was on the wane. "It was not his ambition to see his daughter a duchess," the narrator explains:

> He wanted no name, or place, or dominion for any Hotspur greater or higher or more noble than those which the Hotspurs claimed and could maintain for themselves. To have Humblethwaite and Scarrowby lost amidst the vast appanages and domains of some titled family, whose gorgeous glories were new and paltry in comparison with the mellow honours of his own house, would to him have been a ruin to all his hopes. (48)

Sir Harry desires a very specific type of husband for Emily; one who will be an effective manager of Emily's fortune and who does not possess a title or estates that will eclipse his own. While Sir Harry is not a social climber in the way that Augustus Melmotte (considered below) is, his ideas surrounding his daughter's future husband are rooted in class anxiety that stem from similar sources. That is, both the Sir Harrys and the Melmottes of the world place immense value in titles and land; the difference between the two reside in the fact that bourgeoisie Melmotte wants to obtain the status conferred

by a title while Sir Harry wants to prevent men like Melmotte from this goal. Balking at the notion of having to rely on "new" money to support his estates (as Sir Acreland must in *Angelina; A Novel*), Sir Harry wants his estates to remain independent. Viewing Emily – his only child – as "the transmitter of all the great things that fortune had given him; she, in whose hands were to lie the glories of Humblethwaite and Scarrowby," Sir Harry believes it is Emily's role to transmit Humblethwaite and Scarrowby to the next generation of Hotspurs (50). Though he will eventually try to force innocuous Lord Alfred on Emily, the novel's conflict derives from his allowing Emily to court her second cousin George, since George, though a profligate gambler, will inherit the Hotspur title. "He knew that Cousin George was no fitting husband for his girl, that he was a man to whom he would not have thought of giving her, had her happiness been his only object," the narrator explains, "yet he vacillated, and allowed Cousin George to come to the house, only because Cousin George must become, on his death, the head of the Hotspurs" (51-2). When the full extent of George's profligacy comes to light and Sir Harry forbids the marriage he almost gives in to Emily's protestations: "[h]e almost believed that his girl should be left to herself, as are other girls. But the thing was of such moment that he could not save himself from having it always before his eyes" (47). Despite E. S. Dallas' claim that in the late nineteenth century fathers relinquished control over their daughters' marriages, *Sir Harry* showcases the difficulty with which even loving fathers divest control over their daughters' marriages in the name of estate consolidation.

This dynamic is repeated in *The Prime Minister* and *The Duke's Children*. Abel Wharton, for example, initially discourages Emily's relationship with Lopez on the grounds of Lopez's profession, which lacks gentlemanliness. "I have the greatest respect

in the world for mercantile enterprise, and have had as much to do as most men with mercantile questions. But I ain't sure that I wish to marry my daughter in the City," Wharton tells Lopez, "[o]f course it's all prejudice. I won't deny that on general subjects I can give as much latitude as any man; but when one's own hearth is attacked – " he trails off, configuring Lopez's suit as a violation on his domestic life (*The Prime Minister* 28-9). Speculators, to Wharton, make up a lower class of businessmen that Wharton associates with gamblers: they are tainted with dishonesty in Wharton's perspective. This, in addition to Lopez's lack of respectable family, concern Wharton, yet he "felt that he would be a tyrant if he refused" the marriage, allowing Emily to get her way (40). Similarly offended by Mary's infatuation with penniless Frank Tregear, the Duke insists: "[w]hether I may be wrong or right I think it to be for the good of our country, for the good of our order, for the good of our individual families, that we should support each other by marriage" (*The Duke's Children* 449). Though less tyrannical than Mr. Harlowe, these men exemplify the extent to which fathers – even kind, loving ones – viewed their daughters as economic tools "to transmit," in Sir Harry's term, their estates properly to the next generation of male caretaker. It is no coincidence that the Duke tells Silverbridge to read *Clarissa* when the two clash over the latter's desire to marry the American Isabel Boncassen instead of titled Lady Mabel Grex; an archaic sense of obedience owed to the *paterfamilias* is strong in the Duke, and the reference to Richardson's novel suggests that *Clarissa* is the apotheosis of this code (*The Duke's Children* 436).

In addition to the specter of fatherly demands over the marriages of their children, another link between these novels and their Richardsonian predecessor is the extent to which the actions of men are used to judge the women with whom they associate, much

like the Harlowes condemn Clarissa for actions committed by Lovelace. Dallas wrote of a world that was more permissive – less oppressive – regarding the marriage choices of young women, but Trollope shows that was not the case. George Hotspur is "so foul in the estimation of Sir Harry that it was a stain to be in his presence," and Sir Harry sees his daughter's devotion to this blackguard as contamination (215). "You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled. And the stain of this pitch was so very black!" he worries (217). Later, musing on Emily's changed, unhappy appearance: "but better that for them all than that she should be contaminated by the touch of a thing so vile as this cousin. She was pure as snow, clear as a star, lovely as the opening rosebud. As she was, let her go to her grave, — if it need be so" (290). As Denenholz Morse (2013) points out, Sir Harry is in one sense concerned about possible venereal infection, but in a more general sense he also tethers his judgement of her character with her choice in lover (74). Pushing his fear of contamination even further, the Duke reflects:

> He had told himself that any such marriage as spoken of was out of the question. He believed that the matter might be so represented to his girl as to make her feel that it was out of the question…Though he should have to take her away into some further corner of the world, he would stamp it out. But she, when this foolish passion of hers should have been thus stamped out, could never be the pure, the bright, the unsullied, unspoiled thing, of the possession of which he had thought so much. Now…she would be the girl who had condescended to love young Tregear. (49)

Disapproval of Tregear transforms into judgement of Mary for loving him; the Duke sees her purity as fundamentally spoiled by her association of Tregear. While there is, of

course, the added sting from Glencora's secret approval of the relationship and, as Denenholz Morse (1987) explains, the painful memories of Brugo Fitzgerald that Tregear resurrects, his attitude derives from his "fixed ideas about propriety for women, and these notions center, uncomfortably for the modern reader, around ownership" (120, 122). While the novels condemn such attitudes as outdated and unfair, they also underscore their pervasiveness via the extent to which Emily Wharton and Emily Hotspur internalize ideologies of victim-blaming and shame for their associations with unscrupulous men. After Lopez's suicide, Emily tells Arthur: "'I am disgraced and shamed. I have lain among the pots till I am foul and blackened. Take your arms away. They shall not be defiled,' she said as she sprang to her feet. 'You shall not have the thing that he has left'" (568). Concerningly, Wharton seems to agree with her, as the following exchange between the Arthur and Wharton portrays:

> 'She feels herself degraded by his degradation. If it be possible we must save her from that.'
>
> 'She did degrade herself.'
>
> 'Not as she means it. She is not degraded in my eyes.'
>
> 'Why should she not take the only means in her power of rescuing herself and rescuing us all from the evil that she did? She owes it to you, to me, and to her brother…There is no room left,' said Mr. Wharton angrily, 'for soft sentimentality. Well; -- she must take her bed as she makes it. It is very hard on me, I know. Considering what she used to be, it is marvellous [*sic*] to me that she should have so little idea left of doing her duty to others.' (569)

While Arthur encourages compassion, Wharton, in his vitriol, blames Emily for crimes committed by her husband of which she was totally ignorant. Reminiscent of Mr. Harlowe's condemnation of Clarissa, Wharton feels he – along with Everett and Arthur, the other men with connections to Emily – is the real victim, to whom Emily owes restitution.[68] The language of degradation and shame father and daughter harken back to Clarissa Harlowe's self-incrimination over problems caused by her family. Though Emily Wharton is eventually convinced she still deserves happiness, Emily Hotspur goes so far as to will herself into an early grave for her shame, as Tracey (1978) puts it (113). "She would simply confess to [Sir Harry] that he had been right," she thinks, "and then beg of him to pardon her the trouble she had caused him" (296). She has, as Vlasopolos (2009) puts it, "internalize[d] the Law of the Father to a fanatical degree," in a patriarchal society that "grind[s] up promising young women" (Marwick, Denenholz Morse, and Gagnier, eds. 221). These novels show that the culture of victim blaming, couched as it is in rhetoric of shame, degradation, and shirking of womanly obedience, persists, despite that over a century passed since *Clarissa*'s publication.

The way we invest now

My brief readings of father/daughter relationships in *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite*, *The Prime Minister*, and *The Duke's Children* exemplify the degree to which fathers still involved themselves in the marriages of their daughters in ways reminiscent of patriarchal control methods Dallas claimed were relics of the previous century. These novels do not precisely follow Richardson's forced marriage plot – the fathers mildly attempt to get their daughters to marry men of their choosing, Lord Alfred,

[68] For example, Harlowe declares "[h]e will never own [Clarissa], nor forgive [her]; and he grieves he has such a daughter in the world" (7:39).

Arthur Fletcher, and Lord Popplecourt, respectively, but the young women effectively (in the latter two cases, anyway) lobby for their right to marry men of their own choosing. The disasters that ensue, characterized by the language of contamination is reminiscent of Clarissa's treatment, as well. However, a conversation of these novels would not be complete without a discussion of the young men in question, as well, which serves as a primer for the argument below on *The Way We Live Now*. Ferdinand Lopez and George Hotspur embody the extent to which later-century economic activity, especially speculation, relied on women as sources of wealth. Though Emily Wharton and Emily Hotspur are not exchanged for wealth in the same way that Marie Melmotte is, these examples show the extent to which eighteenth-century notions of women as exchangeable commodities were still present in the nineteenth century.

First, however, some historical background to contextualize these arguments. The waning years of the nineteenth century saw several financial crises that lead to a sense of insecurity and increasingly riskier methods of wealth accumulation. For instance, a panic that begin in America in 1857 spread to Britain later that year (and eventually throughout the globe) caused the failure of several high-profile banks (Shakinovsky "The 1857 Financial Crisis"). In 1866 the bank Overnd, Gurney, and Co. collapsed in spectacular fashion, setting off a ripple effect resulting in the failure of (reportedly) over 200 companies that banked with them, unemployment, and a dip in wages (Robb 71). Following the failure of a major American railway, numerous banks failed across America and Europe, resulting in Britain's Panic of 1873 and a sustained global depression (Denenholz Morse "The Way He Thought Then").

The sense of risk present in the financial sector was augmented by sustained speculative investing. In fact, the Limited Liability Act of 1855 and the Joint-Stock Companies Act of 1856 increased speculation in the mid-to-late century. While the 1844 Joint Stock Companies Act made incorporation easier (as discussed in the previous chapter), according to Poovey (2003) it also laid out "stringent rules for doing so," meaning that incorporation was a complex process (16). The Limited Liability Act of 1855, meant to encourage more corporations to form, extended limited liability to companies with more than 25 shareholders, so shareholders were only liable for the amount they invested in the company (as opposed to private partnerships, in which personal assets could be seized in the case of the company's failure). Conceived of for similar purposes, the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856 (which repealed the 1844 Act) eliminated some of the regulations of the earlier act and streamlined the process by which any group of seven or more persons (previously a group of 25) could create a limited liability corporation while lessening the amount of government oversight over existing corporations. This act also stipulated the only requirement for incorporation was a memorandum of association signed by shareholders – the need for Parliamentary approval was eliminated. These Acts caused an explosion of limited liability corporations in the later decades of the nineteenth century. As Poovey (2003) explains, "between 1844 and 1856, 966 companies had registered with the Registry Office, but, after the repeal of the 1844 Act, applications mushroomed, with nearly twenty-five hundred companies forming between 1856 and 1862 and an additional four thousand companies incorporating between 1862 and 1868" (17). Incorporation was easier than it had ever

been in British history, and hundreds of thousands of Brits – across the social spectrum – invested in these businesses.

The meteoric rise in joint-stock companies was aided by the rhetoric of nineteenth century political economists and Christian reformers alike, due to the belief that investing paved the way for social progress and equality. According to nineteenth-century economist Leone Levi, due to "[t]he rapid increase in population, and in wealth of the middle and industrious classes within the last half century," measures were needed to help the growing middle class invest the money they earned, "render[ing] it more necessary that corresponding reforms in the law should take place both to improve their condition and contentment, and to give additional facilities to investments of the capital which their industry and enterprise were constantly creating and augmenting" (333). In the Preface to *The History of British Commerce: And of the Economic Progress of the British Nation, 1763-1870* (1872), Levi calls the politicians who championed for limited liability (and other economic legislation) "noble champions of progress to whose labour, skill, and wisdom the nation is indebted, must prove for ever [*sic*] valuable" (viii). The economic system in Britain was configured as ever improving; since the working and middle classes were able to save more money, Levi reasons, measures should exist to help them expand this wealth even more. As Loftus (2009) puts it, social and political reformers alike saw limited liability "as a panacea that could further plans for working class improvement" through opening new avenues of income (83).

While such boosters believed the expansion of incorporation represented a potential for social good, the Acts themselves brought mixed results; easing regulations rendered fraud easier. Taylor (2006) explains: "[t]he enormous popularity of new

schemes created a climate in which overly-hopeful projects could be easily promoted, and even more harmful, in which fraudsters could set up companies with a view to pickpocketing subscribers' deposit money and fleeing," making the machinations of speculators like Ralph Nickleby and Melmotte even easier (144).[69] Given the risk, gambling became a common metaphor for stock market speculation; in some cases, the terms became interchangeable. T. Wagner (2010) elucidates:

> The distinction between speculation and investment, moreover, importantly involved a triangulation with a third form of pecuniary transactions: gambling. Within economic discourse and its absorption by popular culture, then and now, investment could operate as a term for a secure monetary transaction, whereas financial speculation constituted by definition a form of risk taking. (8)

Eager as individuals were to invest, potential investors were cognizant of the risk. Speculation, like gambling, inspired hope of a large payout yet also included the risk of losing one's investment. John Ashton's 1899 *The History of Gambling in England* claims:

> *Gambling*, as distinguished from *Gaming*, or playing, I take to mean an indulgence in those games, or exercises, in which *chance* assumes a more important character; and my object is to draw attention to the fact, that the *money motive* increases, as chance predominates over skill. It is taken up as a quicker road to wealth than by pursuing honest industry, and everyone engaged in it, be it

[69] Poovey (2003) describes some of the specific methods fraudsters utilized: "[p]romoters issued misleading or even blatantly false advertisements for new companies: 'rigged' the market by buying up, then reselling, the inflated shares, appointed 'guinea-pig' directors (so called because they received a guinea for attending a board meeting); manufactured 'dummy' investors to make up the requisite signatories; and decorated the prospectus's cover sheet with the name of 'front-sheeters' (prominent men who might – or might not – have agreed to serve as the company's directors)" (18).

> dabbling on the Stock Exchange, Betting on Horse Racing, or otherwise, hopes to win, for it is clear that if he knew he should lose, no fool would embark in it. The direct appropriation of other people's property to one's own use, is, undoubtedly, the more simple, but it has the disadvantage of being both vulgar and dangerous; so we either appropriate our neighbour's [*sic*] goods, or he does ours, by gambling with him, for it is certain that if one gains, the other loses. (2, italics in original)

The terms "gambling" and "speculation" are interchangeable, associated as they are with chance over skill and the dishonest exchange of large sums of money or property. The disdainful tone is palpable; Ashton notes unskilled fools gamble away their money – whether at the horse track or the stock market – and through there is a winner there is also always a loser. The Duke echoes this language when he lectures Gerald: "[b]ut to think that [money] may be got by gambling, to hope to live after that fashion, to sit down with your fingers almost in your neighbor's pockets…that I say is to have left far, far behind you, all nobility, all gentleness, all manhood!" (*The Duke's Children* 413-14). Gamblers are configured as morally unscrupulous and lazy individuals who prefer an easy, albeit risky, path to wealth that is comparable to theft.

J. Wagner (2010) argues that gambling rose as a literary metaphor in the Victorian period, since: "[t]he doubt and uncertainty of the changes occurring within the Victorian period are reflected in the literature of the time through gambling references (95). More specifically, Jeffrey (1999) posits that Victorian novels "stigmatize gambling, chance, and associated 'bad' sources of value (playing the stock market, debt or bankruptcy, foul

play, for instance) with the figure of play" (8).[70] George Hotspur, for example, is vilified for his gambling:

> [t]o gamble and lose money had come to him quite naturally at a very early age. There had now come upon him an idea that he might turn the tables, that in all gambling transactions someone must win, and that as he had lost much, so possibly might he now win more. He had not quite yet reached that point in his education at which the gambler learns that the ready way to win much is to win unfairly; – not quite yet, but he was near it. (55)

As his serious gambling debts pile up, George realizes that marrying Emily will provide him with an influx of liquid capital and a respected father-in-law to ease his problems. As he boldly tells Sir Harry when asked how he plans to pay these debts: "[w]ell— if I marry Emily, I suppose that — you will pay it" (113). George resembles Alaric Tudor from Trollope's earlier novel *The Three Clerks* (1857); as the narrator of that novel explains of gamblers and speculators, their "object," obtaining wealth, "is good, but the means of attaining it — the path to the object — ah! there is the slip. Expediency is the dangerous wind by which so many of us have wrecked our little boats" (*The Three Clerks* 314). In *The Three Clerks* and *Sir Harry,* attempts to raise large sums of money quickly leads to serious problems, as "[t]he man who is ever looking after money, is fitting company only for the devils, of whom, indeed, he is already one" (*The Three Clerks* 319). Another such devil is, of course, Lopez, who "was not an honest man or a good man," the narrator explains,

[70] Wagner and Jeffrey examine the depiction of gambling in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876, Wagner), *Middlemarch* (1871-2), and Trollope's *The Duke's Children* (Jeffrey), other novelistic employments of gambling are found in: Hardy's *A Laodicen* (1880-81) and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854) and *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847), just to name a few.

> He was a self-seeking, intriguing adventurer, who did not know honesty from dishonesty when he saw them together…For to himself, to his own thinking, that which we call cheating was not dishonesty. To his thinking there was something bold, grand, picturesque, and almost beautiful in the battle which such a one as himself must wage with the world before he could make his way up in it. He would not pick a pocket, or turn a false card, or, as he thought, forge a name. That which he did, and desired to do, took with him the name of speculation (*The Prime Minister* 187).

Lopez's desire for wealth has altered his moral compass; he romanticizes wealth and, like Alaric, reshapes his definition of morality to facilitate obtaining riches at any cost. Speculation, to Lopez, is noble and the pursuit of it an adventure, one in which traditional rules of morality do not apply. As he tells his business partner Sexty Parker, who urges "steady business" over risky speculation, "'[i]t depends upon whether a man wants to make a small income or a large fortune….I own that I am not satisfied with the former,' continued Lopez, 'and that I go in for the fortune'" (105-6). Speculators – gamblers – like Lopez, George, and Alaric so desperately desire wealth that they shed any moral scruples regarding the means of obtaining it. They are what T. Wagner (2010) calls "stock market villains," "plotting villain[s] associated with instability, indeterminacy, and a foreignness registers in class or ethnic terms that might perhaps all too easily suggest a desirable expulsion from domestic confines" (15).[71] Notably, all three men also commit fraud, the former two forging signatures on financial documents and the latter embezzling a fortune.

[71] T. Wagner's examination of this character type in Trollope's fiction is applied to Melmotte, but as this project shows, stock market villains are profuse in Trollope's corpus.

Through these characters, Trollope depicts the devastating impacts of fortune-hunting: the slippery slope between gambling (especially via speculation) and moral corruption.

Gambling, speculating, and *The Way We Live Now*

The issues at the heart of the novels discussed above – class tension, wealth accumulation, and the challenges wrought by speculation through the figure of the gambler – also take center stage of Trollope's 1875 *The Way We Live Now*, particularly in terms of how these issues impact women. *The Way We Live Now* is, among other things, a forced marriage plot novel in which the novel's primary villain, Augustus Melmotte, tries to capitalize on his daughter's marriageability to benefit financially. Marie, often overlooked among Trollope scholars or branded a cheat like her father, triumphs in her rebellion against him. Parallels with Clarissa Harlowe present in the previously-discussed Trollope novels highlight the victimization of nineteenth-century women by the glorification of speculation; in *The Way We Live Now* Trollope's utilization of the forced marriage plot goes further in villainizing the use of women as modes of wealth transfer and in celebrating women who rebel against this habit.

The Way We Live Now is often defined by its relationship to modernity. Anderson (2007) argues that its characters "barometrically exhibit the pressure of the conditions of modernity more generally represented in the novel, and always through what appears as an irreducible psychological mediation"; Denenholz Morse articulates it "represents an England in which fraud of all kinds—financial, literary, erotic—is pervasive, a result (at least in part) of the swift changes and ensuing instability of modern life" (512; "The Way He Thought Then"). Shifting social values are certainly on display in *The Way We Live Now*, perhaps no more so than in the novel's most obvious villain, Augustus Melmotte,

and his speculative financial practices. While, on the one hand, he is rumored to be the wealthiest man in London: the holder of a "fathomless, bottomless, endless" fortune, on the other hand there is a serious, if subdued sense of doubt over the veracity of this rumor (21).

> It was said that he had made a railway across Russia, that he provisioned the Southern army in the American civil war, that he had supplied Austria with arms, and had at one time bought up all the iron in England. He could make or mar any company by buying or selling stock, and could make money dear or cheap as he pleased, – but it was also said that he was regarded in Paris as the most gigantic swindler that had ever lived. (30)

Rumors abound surrounding Melmotte's supposed fortune, many of which – if true – represent less-than-flattering representations of this character: profiting off the pro-slavery American south, aiding the oppressive Austrian Empire quash revolutions, and massive swindling in Paris are not marks of strong moral fiber. However, what is crucial about Melmotte is the extent to which his criminality is supported by the British public who eagerly latch on to stock-market barons promising wealth in return for public investment. To be sure, Trollope leaves no question that Melmotte is a criminal who hoodwinks others to augment his personal wealth. As Reed (1984) puts it, "Melmotte is the chief model of the unscrupulous speculator in this novel," yet Trollope shows that he has been enabled by late Victorian Britons' taste for capitalism, as he "loads much of the blame on a gullible and even conspiring public" (188).[72] Reflecting on his representation of Melmotte, Trollope wrote: "[i]f dishonesty can live in a gorgeous palace, with pictures

[72] Van (2005, pp. 78) and T. Wagner (2010, pp. 164) echo this argument.

on all its walls, and gems in all its cupboards, with marble and ivory in all its corners, and can give Apician dinners, and get into Parliament, and deal in millions, then dishonesty is not disgraceful, and the man dishonest after such a fashion is not a low scoundrel" (*Autobiography* 317-18). Morals, according to Trollope, have changed to justify the public's obsession with wealth. The public (and Parliament, through the expansion of limited liability) facilitate Melmotte's dishonesty, creating a society in which what has previously been considered dishonest, such as mass fraud, is permissible if undertaken in the name of wealth accumulation.

As a July 1861 *Times* article shows, this was not itself a novel perspective. "The demon of gambling will always have his votaries, his priests, and his victims," the article claims,

> Some bold and unscrupulous adventurer emerges from utter obscurity, and exhibits a lure to sudden wealth. The whole world flocks around him, and the fools of every class cast themselves at his feet… The adventurer becomes a god. All the baser portion of mankind crawl on their bellies before him, and abuse themselves for gold…Yet all these people must know he is but a fraud and a sham…They are all tacitly accomplices in every fraud by which the imposture is kept afloat. ("The demon of gambling")

Nineteenth-century glorification of wealth engendered aspirations of wealth across class lines. These aspiring self-made men and women, according to the passage above, embrace – at their own peril – any promise of sudden wealth, especially via speculations. So enamored with these speculation gods were the populace that they overlooked their obvious fraudulent nature, making them culpable in the proliferation of such risky

endeavors. The characters in *The Way We Live Now*, for instance, willingly disregard Melmotte's questionable past and instead are seduced by the success he represents, hoping that associating with him will augment their own wealth and influence.

Melmotte's role as a speculator is obviously grounded in the specific socio-economic practices, especially speculation, of the late nineteenth century, but what is often overlooked about Melmotte are the many ways in which his rise to fame and fortune, precarious as it is, is grounded in eighteenth-century patriarchal attitudes toward women and land. As Loftus (2002) points out, contemporary discussions of the 1855-56 corporate Acts were couched in rhetoric of progress these were viewed as Acts that would enhance British markets and enable increased industrialization (93). This rhetoric of progress is precisely what Dallas calls upon in the Introduction to his 1868 edition of *Clarissa*; though speaking about the treatment of women, rather than economic progress, these assertions all stem from the belief that British society was becoming increasingly fairer and more advanced than it was in pervious eras: that it was better. However, Trollope disavows the language of progress through his depiction of the ways in which gambling and speculation impacted women. Famously citing the "commercial profligacy of the age" as his inspiration for *The Way We Live Now*, Trollope muses:

> Whether the world does or does not become more wicked as years go on, is a question which probably has disturbed the minds of thinkers since the world began to think. That men have become less cruel, less violent, less selfish, less brutal, there can be no doubt; but have they become less honest? If so, can a world, retrograding from day to day in honesty, be considered to be in a state of progress? (*Autobiography* 316)

While his contemporaries often conceived of their society in terms of its progress, Trollope sees devolution, especially in terms of honesty. Many critics read this pronouncement as evidence of Trollope's disillusion with modernity and overlook the novel's relationship to the past. However, in his novels Trollope looks back to eighteenth-century life and literature, namely Richardson's *Clarissa,* showing the degree to which gambling culture cultivated women as financial assets.

Augustus Melmotte: new money, old patriarchy

One of the ways in which Trollope shows the prevalence with which outdated ideologies are practiced in modernizing England is via the tyrannical father/daughter relationship that exists between Melmotte and his daughter Marie. Often overlooked by critics, Marie has received little sustained attention; those who do analyze Marie often characterize her as an extension of her father. T. Wagner (2010), for instance, posits: "[t]he speculator's daughter thus embodies the worst outgrowth of his cosmopolitan identity as well as of his exploitation of various commercial practices," arguing that Marie's emigration to America is "exile" (167). She views Marie's plan to claim the money her father left in her name and run away with Felix as theft analogous to Melmotte's defrauding his shareholders, and casts Marie and Fisker's move to America as a strategy to continue scamming investors in California. Similarly, Tracey (1978) writes Marie Melmotte off as a "sullen and rebellious" character who "robs" her father and "denies him money that he placed in her name," an extreme underestimation (and misreading) of her character (163-4). Hughes and Lund (1991) concede Marie "is a character who over the course of the novel's publication developed from reliance on others to a new independence," but argue her independence is overly-conditioned upon

unreliable men: “yet her strength was devoted to alliances first with Felix Carbury, seen by all except his doting mother as without redeeming social value, and later to Hamilton Fisker, a brash and unpredictable American. Thus, Marie moved forward only to regress” (180). These critics only judge Marie based on the men in her life instead of reading her as an autonomous character.

Marie’s father fails to see her autonomy, as well, instead utilizing her as a commodity to augment his own wealth and standing. “If my daughter marries to please me,” Melmotte warns Felix Carbury, “I shall give her money, no doubt. How much is neither here nor there. If she marries to please herself, without considering me, I shan’t give her a farthing” (179). To Melmotte, Marie represents an economic bargaining chip he can utilize for his own greedy purposes: the same ideology of fatherhood to which James Harlowe ascribes. Both Harlowe and Melmotte desire to “*rais[e] a family*,” as the Harlowes articulate, from mere wealth to social and political prestige (Richardson 1:77, italics in original). While Harlowe believes he can catapult his son to a peerage by aligning the Solmes and Harlowe estates via marriage, Melmotte believes his still-precarious social position will be strengthened through the Nidderdale family status. “He did in his heart,” the narrator explains,

> believe that could he be known to all the world as the father-in-law of the eldest son of the Marquis of Auld Reekie he would become, not really free of the law, but almost safe from its fangs in regard to such an affair as this. He thought he could so use the family with which he would be connected as to force from it protection which he would need. (549)

Though, as the critics above have discussed, Melmotte in many respects represents the moral dilemma wrought by modern culture, the preceding passage shows his own belief system is rooted in much older notions of fatherhood and land. That is, he sees Marie as an economic tool, rather than a woman who deserves to create her own future, and he also firmly believes in the status of the ancient Nidderdale family line; with Nidderdale as a son-in-law, Melmotte believes he will gain a mantle of legitimacy to his newfound wealth. While many historians and literary critics focus on the fissure that erupted between the landed gentry and capitalist interests in the post-industrial world, *The Way We Live Now* emphasizes the collusion between their two conducted in the name of wealth accumulation. As Marx (1848) articulates, "the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society" (*The Communist Manifesto* 214).[73] Despite their differences, material connections exist between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. While Marx posits that "the feudal relations of property, became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces" and thus "had to be burst asunder," what Trollope depicts is not a "burst[ing]" of aristocratic from bourgeoisie interests but a collusion between these seemingly disparate entities (214). While there certainly was, as Franklin (1994) describes, an erasure of class distinctions that "eased upward social mobility for the middle classes by replacing aristocratic status boundaries with financial, educational or meritocratic standards of gentlemanliness," Trollope's novels, including *The Way We Live Now* complicate this paradigm by showing the reliance between the aristocratic and

[73] Another example is found in Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1872), in which he distinguishes the "Gospel of Mammon," the obsession with making money, with "the Gospel of Dilettantism," which he defines as: "[a]n idle, game-preserving and even corn-lawing Aristocracy," characterized by their unwillingness to work (129). Both bear false prophets, but Carlyle is clear that they are distinct from each other.

capitalist classes, keeping eighteenth-century ideology active, despite claims made by men such as Dallas that Britain had progressed beyond such archaic ideas – particularly the commodification of women (901). In the novels discussed above, the gambling men aspire to this sort of class mobility but face skepticism from those who already posses they status they desire. In *The Way We Live Now*, however, the gambling men are met with acceptance. Both Melmotte and his literary predecessor Harlowe believe that forcing their daughters into marriages with men of less-than-admirable moral and intellectual capacities (speaking of Solmes and Nidderdale respectively) will procure a sense of security on their futures.

The Way We Live Now depicts a symbiotic relationship between the landed aristocracy and new money: the bourgeoisie desire status and those with status desire cash. As Lord Nidderdale puts it, Marie represents the "prospect of endless money" (429). Enticed by the fortune Marie is rumored to inherit, Nidderdale is drawn to her as a mechanism for augmenting his own family's dwindling income. Part of her attraction is that she fits easily into the idea of matrimony instilled in him by his class. "It had been an understood thing, since he had commenced life, that he was to marry an heiress. In such families as his when such results had been achieved," the narrator comments, remarking on the Nidderdale's precarious financial status, "it is generally understood that matters shall be put right by an heiress. It has become an institution, like primogeniture, and is almost as serviceable for maintaining the proper order of things. Rank squanders money; trade makes it; – and then trade purchases rank by re-gilding its splendor" (428). Marrying wealth as a method of preserving aristocratic lines is, to families like the Nidderdales, an "institution" they rely on for survival, underscoring the close connection

between modern forms of financial transactions – capitalism, speculation, gambling – and older forms of wealth such as landed interests. This passage directly echoes the reliance of Robinson's Lord Acreland on the "blessed consolation" "where rank holds out the temptation; ambition grasps at the shadow, we enjoy the substance; in other words, we sell what is of little use to us, and obtain for our bargain that which will purchase all the gratifications this world can afford" (*Angelina; A Novel* 2-3). The practices Robinson criticized in 1796 are, according to Trollope, still happening in Britain in the 1870s; women are still viewed as financial tools exchangeable between men.

Like George Hotspur and Lopez, Felix's financial situation leads him to look for a wife as an economic tool. The conversation that ensues after Felix begs twenty pounds from Lady Carbury is especially revealing. "What is it for, Felix?" Lady Carbury asks:

> 'Well; – to tell the truth, to carry on the game for the nonce till something is settled. A fellow can't live without some money in his pocket. I do with as little as most fellows. I pay for nothing that I can help. I even get my hair cut on credit, and as long as it was possible I had a brougham, to save cabs.'
>
> 'What is to be the end of it, Felix?'
>
> 'I never could see the end of anything, mother. I never could nurse a horse when the hounds were going well in order to be in at the finish. I never could pass a dish that I liked in favour of those that were to follow. What's the use?' The young man did not say 'carpe diem,' but that was the philosophy which he intended to preach. (23)

So desperate is Felix for cash that he begs his mother for twenty pounds he knows she cannot afford to share. Fully aware of their dwindling savings, still Felix feels entitled to

luxuries simply because they are fashionable, relying on the expanding system of credit to enable this expenditure. Furthermore, this conversation explicitly links his attitude toward money with his mercenary philosophy toward women. Felix feels no emotional or romantic attachment to Marie, but he recognizes that "[i]t was now his business to marry an heiress. He was well aware that it was so, and was quite prepared to face his destiny (21). He comes to see his prospective engagement with Marie as "a risky sort of game," underscoring the extent to which he approaches her as any other gamble (24). The modern age may have led to deep financial trouble for numerous men, but, Trollope shows, their methods of rectifying their economic troubles are rooted in an eighteenth-century concept: the sale of young women in marriage.

Trollope's outspoken women

In *The Way We Live Now*, Trollope's literary goals manifest via his female characters like Marie, who – though faced with situations mirroring Clarissa's – find ways to resist patriarchal oppression. Rather than portraying her struggle in black/white, good/evil terms, Trollope shows that women sometimes had to make unladylike decisions to ensure their freedom. For instance, Marie – as readers first meet her, at least – is a reasonably compliant daughter who willingly obeys her father's commands. To the first betrothal her father contracts with Nidderdale, Marie submits easily, childishly willing to follow her father's commands. When the financial dealings of that intended marriage fall through and Marie subsequently falls in love with Felix Carbury, she is awakened to a sense of her own desires and – notably – her willingness to act for herself to achieve the fruition of those desires:

> As days went on she ceased to be a child, and her courage grew within her. She became conscious of an identity of her own, which feeling was produced in great part by the contempt which accompanied her increasing familiarity with grand people and grand names and grand things. She was no longer afraid of saying No to the Nidderdales on account of any awe of them personally. (191)

Following the path of the other heroines examined at length in this study, Marie comes into an awareness that, as a woman, she has a right and ability to stand up for herself. Marie carves out her own sense of identity independent of the submissive one her father – and society – prescript. Furthermore, her burgeoning sense of independence is constructed as result of her romantic feelings for Felix, certainly, and also from her increased interactions with British upper-class society; her father is enchanted by the status and wealth of this class, hoping to join it himself, but Marie is repulsed by them, indicating her distance from her father and from the shallow lifestyle of British aristocrats. She is neither an extension of her father nor of the society that enables his mercenary behavior but fashions her own identity despite them.

Though Melmotte regards Marie "as an absolutely passive instrument," she is aware of the large emergency fund her father has put in her name in case of financial trouble, which she plans to use to fund her life with Felix (223). "When we were in France papa thought it wise to settle a lot of money on me. I don't know how much, but I suppose it was enough to live on if other things went wrong," she explains in a letter to Felix (222-23). Though their plan to elope is wildly mismanaged and Felix is too drunk to make their ship to America, this episode nevertheless hardens Marie's resolve to create her own future, rather than submit to the life her father designs for her. While Clarissa

Harlowe's contrition involves willing her estate to her father – submitting to the Harlowe family plan to raise James – Marie stands up to her father, refusing to give Melmotte the money. This refusal is double-faceted: rooted in her desire to have the money herself and to enact vengeance upon her father for preventing her marriage to Felix who, rake that he was, Marie truly loved. Marie understands what her father assumed her incapable of grasping: the money in her name is legally hers. The narrator explains:

> When Marie Melmotte assured Felix Carbury that her father had already endowed her with a large fortune which could not be taken from her without her own consent, she spoke no more than the truth…Marie's memory and also her intelligence had been strong beyond her father's anticipation. He was deriving a considerable income from a large sum of money he had invested in her name, and had got her to execute a power of attorney enabling him to draw this income on her behalf. (547)

Melmotte thinks he hoodwinked Marie, believing "his control over his daughter would be perfect and free from danger," but he underestimates her mental acuity (578). Marie knows the money is legally hers and that if she marries Nidderdale without signing it over to her father the money will be lost to him forever. "But I know that it did become mine, – legally," she argues with Melmotte, to which he retorts: "[b]y a quibble of the law, – yes; but not so as to give you any right to it. I always draw the income" (579). Her response betrays her unwillingness to oblige his plan: "[b]ut I could stop that, papa, and – if I were ever married, of course, it would be stopped" (579). She deftly maneuvers the situation thus that it positions her father between a rock and a hard place, so to speak. If he forces her marriage with Nidderdale he will obtain the respectable alliance he so

desperately wants for himself but will also lose the money he has settled on Marie. If he releases her from the engagement, he will lose the Nidderdale alliance but retain control over Marie's money. Marie's previous conversations with Nidderdale ensure her that, as a husband, he will not make many demands on Marie and will likely give in to her wishes, so she has put herself in an ideal bargaining position: both options punish her father. Amidst a system that commodifies women as objects exchangeable between men, Marie finds a loophole that empowers her.

Marie's anger and vengeance code her as a young woman who defied Victorian gender norms but not one who should be read as a villain. In *Daughters of England* (1845), Sarah Stickney Ellis rails against "self-gratification" and "female selfishness," especially where money is concerned, while also counseling young women against spending too much of their parents' hard-earned money (190). Asserting: "I believe there is nothing in the usages of society more fatal to the interests of mankind, to the spiritual progress of individuals, or to the general well-being of the human soul, than laxity of principle as regards our pecuniary dealings with each other," continuing that "no one can act in strict accordance with the principles of integrity, until they have learned to practise economy. By economy, I do not mean simply the art of saving money, but the nobler science of employing it for the best purposes, and in its just proportions" (202-3). Disputes over money are unacceptable; women should learn household economy and avoid economic entanglements. She does claim that appropriating a sum for one's self that was intended for another use is the nadir of financial behaviors. "[T]his would be a species of dishonesty, which, if once admitted as a principle of conduct, would be liable to terminate in the most fearful and disastrous consequences" (206). In *The Way We Live*

Now, Marie defies polite society's guidelines regarding women's financial mores and also common notions on the obedience that young women owe to their fathers. Rather than condemn Marie for this behavior, Trollope emphasizes her humanity and her right to assert her will. In 1868, E. S. Dallas was still praising Richardson's depiction of virtuous femininity, claiming:

> Clarissa is the most resplendent heroine in the whole wide circuit of romance. In the delineation of this stainless creature…who walks alone in her saintly majesty, a sinless Margaret, the one perfect image on which the mind can repose amid the grotesque and loath some demons of the witches' Sabbath, Richardson has achieved a miracle of beauty unapproached by any writer before or since his time ("Introduction" 34).

Trollope, however, creates a different type of heroine in Marie. "No novel is anything, for the purposes either of comedy or tragedy, unless the reader can sympathize with the characters whose names he finds upon the pages," Trollope argues, "[l]et an author so tell his tale as to touch his reader's heart and draw his tears, and he has, so far, done his work well. Truth let there be – truth of description, truth of character, human truth to men and women" (*Autobiography* 206). Though both authors claimed to represent life as it really existed, for Trollope that meant a more sympathetic portrayal of characters that reflect the complexity of life, not its idealizations.

Fighting back

The Way We Live Now presents multiple female characters who, like Marie, make difficult, sometimes taboo, decisions but are portrayed with empathy, rather than judgement. While Clarissa Harlowe believes: "[t]o do evil, that good may come of it, is

forbidden," Trollope's women defy the dictates of patriarchal duty by their attempts to overcome the victimhood in which they have been placed (2:252). One such complex character is Georgiana Longestaffe, whose near engagement to Brehgert, the "fat Jew, old enough to be [her] father," as her father describes him, sparks a family controversy (493). Brehgert presents Georgiana with an opportunity to marry into a wealthy, secure household; she fears this is her only chance given her father's decision to remain in the country to avoid expense London living, physically removing Georgiana from opportunities to meet eligible men. Arguing with Dolly, she complains: "[a] man is so different. You can go just where you please, and do what you like. And if you're short on money, people will give you credit. And you can live by yourself and all that sort of thing" (194). She points out the stark double-standard of her brother's argument; Dolly believes the Melmottes are unsuitable company for Georgiana, even though he hypocritically serves on Melmotte's board of directors for the railway and her father is in the midst of a business deal with him. Generations of unscrupulous spending by the Longestaffe patriarchs – and Dolly's gambling habits – have put their family in financial straits. Staying in the city with the Melmottes, Georgiana thinks, will allow her to engage herself to Brehgert and, in turn, find the financial security her family cannot provide. Dolly, Georgiana argues, simply does not understand the struggles that social conventions bring to women's lives. When Dolly claims he "shouldn't mind" being "shut up at Caversham all season," Georgiana retorts:

> 'You have got a property of your own. Your fortune is made for you. What is to become of me?'
>
> 'You mean about marrying?'

> ‘I mean altogether,’ said the poor girl… ‘Of course I have to think of myself.’ (194)

Dolly’s flippancy contrasts with Georgiana’s desperation: England is a harsh place for a woman of her class background without any money or prospects. Georgiana internalizes the “institution,” as Nidderdale puts it, of marrying for money: a dynamic that does not apply exclusively to men (428). However, for women – such as Georgiana – this “institution” is not simply a method of restoring cash to ancestral estates, but a necessity for her future maintenance. Her argument with Dolly points out that a man in her situation would have other options: credit, inheritances, family estates, and (though Dolly might not like to consider it) employment. Shelter and food are assured to Dolly, but Georgiana is worried about her future “altogether” given her lack of security.[74]

To Georgiana, Brehgert represents the possibility of a desirable future: “[o]n three things she would be determined, – that she would not be poor, that she would not be banished from London, and she would not be an old maid” (455). In other words, Georgiana will fend for herself, even if this means making difficult decisions. This need for women to fight back against their circumstances is articulated by Winifred Hurtle, who proclaims:

> when a woman has no one to help her, is she to bear everything without turning upon those who ill-use her? Shall a woman be flayed alive because it is unfeminine in her to fight for her own skin? What is the good of being – feminine,

[74] Lady Mabel Grex echoes this sentiment in *The Duke’s Children* when she complains to Silverbridge: “[women] are dreadfully restricted. If you like champagne you can have a bucketful. I am obliged to pretend that I only want very little. You can bet thousands. I must confine myself to gloves. You can flirt with any woman you please. I must wait till somebody comes, -- and put up with it if nobody does…I want to pick and choose” (229).

> as you call it? Have you asked yourself that? That men may be attracted, I should say. But if a woman finds that men only take advantage of her assumed weakness, shall she not throw it off? If she be treated as prey, shall she not fight as a beast of prey? (388)

The very condition of womanhood, characterized by submissiveness and weakness, predisposes women to victimization. As Marwick (1997) puts it, "Mrs. Hurtle, with no-one to protect her, realised she had to look after herself. When a drunken man tried to rape her, she shot him. When her first husband tried to force her to have sexual intercourse, she threatened to shoot herself. When she was defrauded of her property, she pursued the perpetrators and recovered her fortune" (73). Rather than suffer and be still, Mrs. Hurtle fights back against her aggressors, following Georgiana's philosophy that "[O]f course" she must "think of [her]self," since no one else will safeguard her best interests (194). What Mrs. Hurtle, Georgiana, and Maire want is the right to stand up for themselves in a world where justice for women is severely lacking. "No wonder that female characters, controlled, dispossessed, and disposed of, and faced, in addition, with the threat of harassment and assault," Rydygier Smith notes, "are represented in this novel as anxious, querulous, and resentful. Certainly, they do not passively acquiesce to the intolerable demands of men who believe they have the right to exploit women" (23). The mercenary world in which these characters exist necessitate decisive action on the part of women to enable their survival.

Of all the women characters in the novel who endure physical and emotional abuse at the hands of the patriarchy, Marie's is given in greatest detail. On numerous occasions Marie declares her resolve to stand up to her father, even if he "were to beat me

into a mummy" (216). Such language is not hyperbolic, as Melmotte violently lashes out several times throughout the novel, whether grabbing her arm and painfully dragging her across the room or more severe infractions, such as during her refusal to sign her money over to him:

> Marie astounded him, not merely by showing him that she understood a great deal more of the transaction than he had thought – but also by a positive refusal to sign anything at all…He did not know whether to approach her with threats, with entreaties, or with blows. Before the interview was over he had tried all three…And at last he took her by both arms and shook her violently. But Marie was quite firm. (550)

Melmotte's resorting to violence betrays his sense of desperation, but Marie is stronger – emotionally and physically – than he imagined. Furthermore, Melmotte's violence against Marie is not just an impulsive outgrowth of his anger, but something he "longed" to perpetrate, yoking male violence against women to a desire for power that has deeper, more sinister roots than reactive anger. "*The Way We Live Now* can be used to demonstrate how masculinist structures, which rely on the oppression of women, are facilitated not only by epistemic violence as feminists have cogently argued, but also by means of battery and assault," as Rydygier Smith (1996) states (16-17). Melmotte, that is, uses violence as an extension of his perceived authority. Desperately feeding her lies he believes will make her more amenable to his wishes, Melmotte's efforts, however, are futile. Marie "did not believe a word that he said to her. How could she believe him? He had taught her to regard him as her natural enemy, making her aware that is was is purpose to use her as a chattel for his own advantage" (581). Amidst all his risky

financial speculations, his most ill-advised gamble is assuming Marie's ignorance and compliance. Any credit, so to speak, that he has with Marie is gone; fully aware of his mercenary usage of her as an object of sale, Marie prioritizes her right to create her own sense of self – her own future – over her father's selfish plan for her.

The Futurity of the American Frontier

"On the 3rd of September," the narrator of *The Way We Live Now* declares, "Madame Melmotte, Marie, Mrs. Hurtle, Hamilton K. Fisker, and Herr Croll left Liverpool for New York; and the three ladies were determined that they never would revisit a country of which their reminiscences certainly were not happy" (740). While Herr Croll and Madame Melmotte settle on the East coast, the fortunes of Marie, Fisker, and Mrs. Hurtle lie West. Some critics see Marie and Fisker's banishment as exile akin to Melmotte's suicide or Felix's being sent to the continent. T. Wanger (2010) concludes: "Miss Melmotte eventually returns to America, importing money made out of European scams," while Sutherland (1982) relates Marie's financial decisions akin to Dolly Longestaffe and Felix Carbury's profligacy (167; ix). However, when analyzed alongside contemporary American property laws, Trollope's decision to send Marie to America informs a much more empathetic reading of her that supports her role as one of the novels heroines. England is specifically labeled a land of oppression for the women in the quote above, whereas "America is certainly the country for women, – and especially California" (739). Axiomatic differences between the two locations represent differing attitudes toward business, progress, and – importantly – women's rights.

Van (2005) considers Trollope's portrayal of America and speculation in a more nuanced manner, arguing that Trollope viewed the ubiquity of British speculation as "a

cultural crisis about value," which he solves by "imagin[ing] a spatial and temporal relocation of the speculative to the frontier. This move allows him to preserve the integrity of English culture while instantiating a logic of transatlantic relations wherein England can play both innocent victim and power player in a world experiencing the rapid emergence of global capitalism" (94-5). That is, speculation is not inherently immoral, but rather better suited to the American frontier, which lacks the deep cultural and literary history that in Britain is imperiled by the speculative economy's redefinition of value. In fact, those she categorizes as the American characters, Fisker, Mrs. Hurtle, and Marie, are independent characters full of "self-worth, and dignity" who are, unlike many of the novel's characters, actually likeable (93). However, what Van overestimates is "Trollope's longing for an England uncorrupted, an old-fashioned England" (92). In fact, as Rajan (2015) has argued, Trollope critiques staid British traditions, such as the attachment to land and titles within the novel. "Trollope inserts Melmotte's desire for the legitimacy of land and 'real property' into his narrative not simply to gesture nostalgically to a firmer basis for wealth and the values of civic humanism associated with the landowning gentleman," she argues, "but also to make vivid to the reader the hypocrisy of maintaining these values in an age of modernity. Melmotte exemplifies this hypocritical shuttling between the old and new values systems that is pervasive among the novel's English characters" (294). Trollope is not looking back nostalgically at the way the English lived then, but condemning the ways that outdated notions of land, and I'd add, patriarchy, are clung to in the emergent modern age. In *The Way We Live Now*, America is portrayed as an escape from the confines of such archaic ideologies; it is the land of the future.

Throughout his 1862 *North America,* Trollope categorizes America, especially the American West, as a land of prosperity and success. "The most successful child that ever yet has gone off from a successful parent and taken its own path into the world, is without doubt the nation of the United States," he lauds (127). While, on the one hand, the parent/child relationship emphasizes the connections between the two countries, it also, on the other hand, signifies the differences. A young child is dependent on parents, but a child who has "gone off" is independent. This child's independence is characterized by an ethos of success:

> [t]here is very much in the mode of life adopted by the settlers in these [Western] regions which creates admiration. The people are all intelligent. They are energetic and speculative, conceiving grand ideas, and carrying them out almost with the rapidity of magic. A suspension bridge half a mile long is erected, while in England we should be fastening together a few planks for a foot passage. Progress, mental as well as material, is the demand of the people generally. (224)

The speculations he depicts in his novels that take place in Britain are intentionally fraudulent, but, as this passage suggests, in America the "grand" speculations come to fruition – and with rapidity. America, to Trollope, is defined by progress; real progress, not the false progress cheered on by men like Dallas. Besides a strong work ethic, an ability to follow through on grand plans and to continually better both one's self and one's country abound in America, as opposed to England, where a rustic foot bridge is settled for over an engineering marvel.

In an oft-quoted passage, Trollope continues:

> All this is very grand; – but then there is a terrible drawback. One hears on every side of intelligence, but one hears also on every side of dishonesty…It seems to be the recognized rule of commerce in the Far West that men shall go into the world's markets prepared to cheat and to be cheated. It may be said that as long as this is acknowledged and understood on all sides, no harm will be done. It is equally fair for all. When I was a child there used to be certain games at which it was agreed in beginning either that there should be cheating or that there should not. It may be said that out there in the western States, men agree to play the cheating game; and that the cheating game has more of interest in it than the other…this selling of things which do not exist, and buying of goods for which no price is ever to be given, is an institution which is much honoured in the West. We call it swindling; – and so do they. But it seemed to me that in the western States the word hardly seemed to leave the same impress on the mind that it does elsewhere. (224-5)

The code of ethic present in America, especially on the frontier, differs from that in 1870s England. Though there is cheating, it is of a different nature than the fraud in British speculation, since in America the cheating is openly acknowledged. This openness, then, changes the nature of American speculation as compared to British speculation, which attempts to retain the façade of honor. Cheating is rampant among Beargarden members, for example, who pretend they will eventually settle their IOUs: an impossibility, as the reader knows, given the endemic lack of cash. There remains a desperate attempt to maintain the gilt of aristocrats, though all are penniless scoundrels. Melmotte's fraud is similar, stemming as it does from forgery and ending in his suicide.

One might also recall the smoke and mirrors with which he conducts the board of the South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway Company, keeping his board members in the dark while pocketing their investments.

Inversely, speculation exists in America, but in a manner that is more open than in England, as America's priority, Trollope makes clear throughout *North America*, is national progress – not just personal enrichment. That is, in America speculation is a legitimate part of making progress: of raising capital, advancing civilization, and building suspension bridges that span a half mile, whereas in Britain speculation is a means of advancing one's own interests. America evidences a different code of ethics, but it is a code of ethics nonetheless, unlike the self-serving fraud seen in British speculation. In his *Autobiography*, Trollope wrote: "the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergy man, and must have his own system of ethics. If he, can do this efficiently, if he can make virtue alluring and vice ugly, while he charms his readers instead of wearying them" then the novelist is successful (200). Notably, Trollope calls on authors to curate their own code of ethics, rather than adopting a universal, moralizing code. The author, then, should strive to share these ethics with his readers by making "vice ugly" and "virtue alluring"; applying this logic to *The Way We Live Now*, it is easy to see that the ugly, vice-ridden characters are those who attempt to use modern methods of money-making to uphold or yoke themselves to an outdated model of society, while the characters who embody virtue are those who carve out their own code of ethics, removing themselves from the oppressive, stagnant forces of England for the modern, progressive, future-oriented space of America.

Interestingly, Trollope refers to his mother Fanny's failed foray into American commerce as a "speculation," writing: "she built a bazaar, and I fancy lost all the money which may have been embarked in that speculation. It could not have been much, and I think that others also must have suffered. But she looked about her, at her American cousins, and resolved to write a book about them" (*An Autobiography* 20). The failed speculations of his fiction often set off a disastrous chain of events, but Fanny's "speculation," conducted in America, is simply shrugged off as she moves on to her next (successful) endeavor. Fanny's writing also highlights the "equality" indicative of the American business ethic. In her 1832 *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, which is highly disdainful of American culture, she describes a laborer she meets:

> I have no doubt that every sun that sets sees him a richer man than when it rose. He hopes to make his son a lawyer; and I have little doubt that he will live to see him sit in Congress. When this time arrives, the wood-cutter's son will rank with any other member of Congress, not of courtesy, but of right: and the idea that his origin is a disadvantage, will never occur to the imagination of the most exalted of his fellow-citizens. This is the only feature in American society that I recognise as indicative of the equality they profess. Any man's son may become the equal of any other man's son. (168)

Though in some ways distressed by this class mobility ("familiarity [between classes], untempered by any shadow of respect, which is assumed by the grossest and the lowest in their intercourse with the highest and most refined. This is a positive evil, and, I think, more than balances its advantages," she claims), the fact remains that even as harsh a critic of America as Fanny Trollope differentiated between American and British

methods of business, characterizing the former by vigorous motivation, action, and equality (168).

While useful in differentiating American speculation from British, the American spirit of progress is also useful in coming to terms with Marie's role as a rebellious heroine, since the role of women in the American economy differed from that in Britain. America, for instance, provided more protections for women as property owners, expanding women's access to their own financial security, rather than forcing them to look to men for financial security, as Georgianna Longestaffe laments. In his examination of British and American investment practices in the nineteenth century, Robb (2009) states, women had more economic freedom, which "might be attributable to less rigid gender roles in the States, though it could also be due to a more libertarian and freebooting American economic system" (Henry and Schmidtt, eds. 122). Women were treated as individuals capable of managing their own assets, rather than simply as conduits for wealth between men. For instance, states began passing laws as early as 1839 (continuing through the 1850s) that allowed all non-enslaved women – single and married – to own, retain, and manage their own property. In fact, historians define the western United States as especially liberal in the treatment of women's property, ensuring equality took precedence over maintaining patriarchal control of assets. Article XI, section 14 of The Constitution of California of 1849 (the document drawn in preparation for California's 1850 statehood) states explicitly: "[a]ll property, both real and personal, of the wife, owned or claimed by her before marriage, and that acquired afterward by gift, devise, or descent, shall be her separate property; and laws shall be passed more clearly defining the rights of the wife in relation as well to her separate property, as to that held

in common with her husband" ("Married Women's Property Laws"). Additionally, Khan (2005) notes that in 1872 – following Great Britain's failure to protect married women's property rights – California passed additional measures to protect women's rights to inherit and maintain property, earnings, and the right to conduct business independently (168).

Passed in England in 1870, the Married Woman's Property Act provided working women with better rights to wages earned, but, as Wynne (2010) observes, was "wholly inadequate in protecting women's rights to retain the property they brought to a marriage… The law continued to be based on the notion that women were irresponsible beings" who required their husbands to manage their assets (24). Furthermore, "[t]here was a belief that middle-class and upper-class women did not need the law to be changed because their husbands were gentlemen' and thus unlikely to be violent and abusive," a notion shown to be false in *The Way We Live Now,* given the systemic abuse of women (24). Trollope, Denenholz Morse (2013) notes, campaigned for women's property rights and was extremely disappointed by the limitations of the 1870 Act (42). Unlike England, California supported a women's right not just to own and inherit property, but to make her own decisions in financial matters, and it is for these very reasons that Marie decides to make it her future home.[75] She aspires to a life like that of American Isabel Boncassen, who: "hardly seemed to be under the control of the father. She went alone where she liked; talked to those she liked; and did what she liked. Some of the young ladies of the

[75] Claybaugh (in Dever and Nile, eds. 2010) offers a different perspective on American/British relations, focusing on the connections Trollope draws rather than the fissures. She argues Trollope: "offers an unusually rich account of the relations between the two nations, emphasizing that the former colony stood poised to become a partner in imperialism. In the process, he describes an Anglo-American alliance held together by the ties of business, politics, and love" (211). However, a reading of *The Way We Live Now* centered on the female characters, specifically Marie, suggests the distinctions between American and British property laws are crucial to Trollope's portrayal of America.

day thought there was a good deal to be said in favor of the freedom which she enjoyed" (*The Duke's Children* 200). When it comes to marriage, "[m]y father has nothing to do with it," she tells Dolly Longstaffe, "and I don't know what settlements mean. We never think anything of settlements in our country. If two young people love each other they go and get married" (303). Strikingly different from British attitudes toward feminine propriety and marriage as depicted in *The Way We Live Now,* America is configured as much more equitable in its treatment of women.

Furthermore, though some scholars have tethered Marie's future to the speculations of Fisker (as T. Wagner does), the narrative is clear that Marie will make her own way in California, highlighting the extent to which she values her newfound independence. The American West is the ideal place for Marie to create her own future, obsessed as it is with progress, but she is careful to make informed decisions toward safeguarding her independence within that future. "Marie had now been wooed so often that she felt the importance of the step which was suggested to her," the narrator explains in reference to her prospective marriage with Fisker, "the romance of the thing was a good deal worn, and the material view of matrimony had also been damaged in her sight" (452). Furthermore:

> She had over a hundred thousand pounds of her own, and, feeling conscious of her own power in regard to her own money, knowing that she could do as she pleased with her wealth, she began to look out into life seriously…She had opinions of women's rights, – especially in regard to money…She had contrived to learn that, in the United States, a married women has greater power over her own money than in England, and this information acted strongly in Fisker's

> favour. On consideration of the whole subject she was inclined to think that she would do better in the world as Mrs. Fisker than as Marie Melmotte, – if she could see her way clearly in the matter of her own money. (738)

Trollope codes Marie's financial savvy as empowered and wise, especially when read alongside his other writings on America. Fighting against becoming Melmotte's "chattel" sparks a new chapter for Marie; America provides the perfect backdrop to escape her unhappy past in a place that affords women economic security (*The Way We Live Now* 581). What Marie wants is a new identity, divorced from the oppression she faced as Melmotte's daughter ("she would do better in the world as Mrs. Fisker than as Marie Melmotte"), yet she ensures that she will remain economically independent in her new life as Mrs. Fisker. "I'll tell you how it must be, then," she tells Fisker, "[y]ou may consider yourself engaged to me…But if I find when I get to San Francisco anything to induce me to change my mind, I shall change it. I like you very well, but I'm not going to take a leap in the dark, and I'm not going to marry a pig in a poke" (740). This phrase, "pig in a poke," refers, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains, to buying something without properly inspecting it, similar, one might say, to speculating. That is, Marie will not marry Fisker without investigating all the ramifications of that union – she will not treat her marriage like a gamble. Furthermore, her firm tone indicates her resolve to advocate for herself; she holds the bargaining chips and is no longer shy of making her own demands. Conrad (1980) argues that in Victorian novels, America functions as a locus of rebirth for British expats: "Europe equips you with a hereditary, natal self. America allows you to invent a self better adjusted to the individual you have become since outgrowing the imposition of birth" (5). Furthermore, he argues that to Trollope,

"America has altered time. Instead of incorporating the present into a retentive, protective past, it cancels the past (by seceding from the ancestral corruption of European history) and hustles the unworthy present into the promised future" (44). Shirking obsession with ancestry and aristocracy, America is future-oriented rather than stuck in the past, which allows for greater expression of individuality. That is, America enables characters like Marie to fully realize Van Dam's (2016) markers of modernity, "free will and individual agency," to an extent that is impossible for her in England, a land that despite its emerging modernity was still mired in archaic patriarchal mindsets about women and money (2).

Conclusion

Six years after criticizing Richardson's portrayal of femininity in *Clarissa*, Trollope rewrote his own version of a forced marriage plot that updates the financial underpinnings of Clarissa's persecution to heighten the relevance to his own society, rewriting the fate of his heroine to show how adherence to social and financial manifestations of eighteenth-century patriarchalism persist. Additionally, *The Way We Live Now* follows a heroine who, like the other female protagonists of this dissertation, is awakened to her subordinate position and enacts change; freeing herself from the oppressive strictures imposed upon her by her tyrannical father and the society that supports him. Marie Melmotte transforms from an obedient girl to a woman insistent upon making her own future, reclaiming her position as the subject – rather than object – of her own life even though doing so required great risk on her part. Like Georgiana and Mrs. Hurtle, some of these decisions were risky, controversial decisions (such as disobeying her father and standing up for right to the money he put in her name), but they

underscore Trollope's dedication to writing complex female characters female characters. Despite E. S. Dallas' 1868 claim that his culture had surpassed the eighteenth century in terms of its fair treatment of women, especially regarding mercenary marriage practices, Trollope shows how misguided Dallas' claim is. In many of his novels Trollope portrays the extent to which outdated patriarchal ideologies collude with modern financial practices, such as speculation, turning young women economic tools for the use of men. However, in *The Way We Live Now* Trollope also features women who are empowered to fight back against these practices.

Coda

"I do not repent": Heroic Disobedience Beyond 1880

The preceding pages have explored the ways in which women are victimized by patriarchal power structures and – importantly – the ways in which women circumvent these boundaries to create futures free from tyranny. While most of the subjects of this dissertation are, of course, literary creations, these characters did not exist in a vacuum but were created by authors who distilled the issues of their contemporary moments into fiction. They created characters like Sophia Clarendon, Kate Nickleby, and Marie Melmotte, to name just a few, who put their own happiness before the financial goals of their fathers despite the judgement women often faced when they refused to enact submissive femininity. These characters (along with the others examined in this study), created in the image of Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe, gain for themselves what Richardson could not imagine for Clarissa: happy earthy endings.

One final forced marriage plot novel that I would like to mention is Mona Caird's 1889 *The Wing of Azrael*, in which the tragic heroine, Viola Sedley, is sacrificed to a cruel, unloving man in order to pay her father's significant gambling debts. Caird minces no words when it comes to elucidating the sacrificial nature of femininity at the end of the nineteenth century.

> [T]he girl, beloved as she was, must always be prepared to make sacrifices for her brothers. In order that they should have a college education and every social advantage, Viola had to go almost without education at all; to afford them means to amuse themselves stylishly, their sister must be stinted of every opportunity

> and every pleasure. The child of course accepted this without question; her whole training dictated subordination of self. (6)

Raised by a mother who teaches her to "[e]ndure bravely, and in silence; that is the woman's part, my daughter," Viola believes in the ideology of submissive femininity as espoused by the conduct-guide authors discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation (75). Philogamus, Allestree, and Wilkes – along with Richardson in *Clarissa* – glorified women who were submissive, dutiful, silent, and merciful with the aim of creating women who would obey their patriarchs rather than question their powerlessness. Though those conduct guides were written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Carid's novel shows the deep grip their oppressive ideologies maintained over late-nineteenth-century England and the active role parents took in shaping subservient daughters. Harry, the young man whom Viola loves, explains:

> 'You and they are not on equal terms; they can coerce you. Their power over you is despotic; and to resist such power all methods are justifiable.'
>
> 'Oh! you cannot mean what you say! I have always been taught that the will of parents is sacred, and that no blessing can come to a child who acts in opposition to their wishes.'
>
> 'Taught by whom?' Harry inquired; 'by your parents.' (153)

This exchange encapsulates the ease with which Viola's parents have indoctrinated her into the cult of feminine submissiveness. Until she has Harry's help, she does not realize the insidious nature of her upbringing. Her awakening to this injustice reveals the psychological damage she endures. "What was she? What did she know? What had she seen? What could she do? To all this there was only one answer: Nothing. Books had

been forbidden her; human society had been cut off from her; scarcely had she been beyond the gates of her home" (79). Mocking her offer to work for a living rather than marry Philip Dendraith, her father taunts "[e]verything is open to you; you have only to choose. And you know so much, don't you? You are so learned and capable, so well able to force your way in the world. Oh pray! don't think of marrying; a far more brilliant and congenial career lies before you" (79). He, along with ultra-submissive Mrs. Sedley, have purposefully formed Viola into a young woman whose only prospect is marriage, which – according to the dictates of her father – must be an economically prosperous one.

Backed into a figurative corner, Viola marries Philip. However, his constant verbal and emotional abuse (and the threat of marital rape that hangs over the relationship) push her to rebel. With the help of Harry and her ally Sibella, Viola attempts to run away but is thwarted by Philip. The confrontation between husband and wife turns violent; when Philip is on the cusp of raping Viola she fatally stabs him, later declaring "I do not repent" of the murder (348). As in the novels discussed in chapter three, violence is the only option left to the heroine and is clearly defined as necessary retribution for the wrongs done to her by her husband, family, and society.

While, in some respects, *The Wing of Azrael* is very much a product of late-century New Women fiction, there are many ways in which it reaches back to the eighteenth century (through its engagement with the forced marriage plot and archaic conduct-guide discourse), there are also – alarmingly – a number of ways in which Caird's novel bears resemblance to our contemporary moment. Paraphrasing the Book of Leviticus, Sibella observes: "Woman is the scapegoat of society. Upon her head are piled all the iniquities and the transgressions and the sins of the children of Israel, for an

atonement; and then 'by the hand of a fit man' – as the Scriptures have it – she is driven forth into the wilderness" (242). In the novel, this obviously applies to Viola, who is forsaken by many of her loved ones after Philip's death even though the murder was the result of extreme emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. It is also the exact dynamic that Chanel Miller pinpoints in in her 2019 memoir *Know My Name*, which details her rape and the barriers to justice that she faced in the ensuing years. As if sexual violence were not traumatizing enough, Miller's memoir emphasizes the extreme degree to which she, at the time known only by the pseudonym "Emily Doe," was both blamed and shamed for a crime committed by someone else and the lengths taken by social and legal outlets to protect the true perpetrator: Brock Turner. As Kate Harding explains in *Asking For It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture – and What We Can Do About It* (2015), stories like Miller's are alarmingly common; stories in which women are victimized by male violence and then blamed for their own victimhood while every excuse imaginable is deployed to pardon the men involved. Harding analyzes cases like the Steubenville gang rape case, in which members of a high school football team gang raped an unconscious classmate, stripping her naked and taking numerous photos of her body and their actions which they shared widely among friends. "Despite photographic and video evidence of a sixteen-year-old girl being assaulted multiple times over several hours, few witnesses would come forward – although many took to social media to shame the drunk, passed-out-girl for being a 'slut'…the victim was harassed, and her family received death threats," some going so far as to claim she made the claims up to ruin the football team's season (21).

Harding also quotes a May 2014 *Time* op-ed by Matthew Kaiser, a criminal defense lawyer, who wrote: "[w]hen my son goes to college, I want him not to risk his future whenever he has sex after a party. And, based on the cases I've seen, I'm more concerned for my son than my daughter" (quoted in Harding 21). Though found guilty of three felony assault charges, Brock Turner was sentenced to just six months of jail time (serving just three) of the six-year term prosecutors suggested: a sentence so lenient that the judge, Aaron Persky was later recalled. The perpetrators of the Steubenville case received more stringent sentences, but the court case uncovered the extent adults, including school officials, took in attempts to cover up the case. The message these examples send it clear: the freedom of the men and boys involved is more important than fair treatment of women. There are many disturbing elements to these examples, but the angle that I would like to dwell on (and that provide connections to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels discussed here) is the extent to which, in these cases and so many more, male agency is privileged over that of the women they harm. That is, the women involved in these cases are shamed and blamed, made scapegoats for wrongs committed by others, while the futures of the men involved are safeguarded.

Though rape is not the primary focus of this project, these examples of rape culture (along with Viola's defending herself against rape in Caird's novel) underscore the persistence with which the autonomy and subjectivity of women have been sacrificed for male privilege. That is, for many coaches, teachers, and parents in Steubenville, Ohio it was more important that the young men involved in the gang rape be allowed to finish their football season than it was for the young woman to get justice; Judge Aaron Persky was more concerned about the "adverse collateral consequences on the defendant's life"

than he was about justice for Miller; for Viola Sedley, her family and many of her so-called friends believed it was more important for her to enact the role of submissive daughter and wife than it was for her to be happy (Miller 234).

In *Know My Name*, as in *The Wing of Azrael*, a recurring theme is the emotional trauma caused by this type of behavior; "no amount of preparation could protect me from the erasure of self, the unbecoming," Miller writes (159). While, of course, she is talking about the aftermath of rape, not the process of being commodified into an exchangeable object, it is clear that her situation is the result of generations of privileging the male right to power and autonomy over a woman's, a system which is predicated on stripping a sense of self from women and replacing it with prescribed notions of femininity emphasizing supplication and a willingness to be subsumed by masculine outlets of power.

What Miller's memoir also offers is a message of hope for moving forward. "[O]ver the span of our lives we may not see everything we want corrected, but still we fight. I was awakening to the excruciatingly long process of substantive change, how huge and imbedded systems are, how impossible they are to dismantle, how tiny I was" (303). The coterminous desire to fight for change and frustration with its slow pace is palpable across the novels considered in this project; toward the end of the nineteenth century Trollope was criticizing E.S. Dallas' claims of advances in women's rights, while his novels dramatize the obvious similarities between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century attitudes toward women as exchangeable commodities. *Know My Name* shares with *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *The Female Quixote*, *Angelina; A Novel*, *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Dombey and Son*, *William Langshawe, the Cotton*

Lord, and *The Way We Live Now* a belief in the power women possess to enact change. "The barricades that held us down will not work anymore," she writes, "And when the silence and shame are gone, there will be nothing to stop us" (327). For Miller, this means telling her story and using her unique voice to advocate for others who face similar challenges. For the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists considered in this project, the fight was about giving empathetic novelistic representation to women who, like Miller, failed to enact the submissive roles prescribed to them. These heroines provide alternative models of femininity tied, not to submission, but to self-determination.

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Appendix: Partial Publication History of *Clarissa*

The following list represents various editions and iterations of *Clarissa* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While this does not necessarily encompass *Clarissa*'s complete publication history (especially considering the number of pirated and cheap editions that are lost to archives), it does give a full image of the novel's sustained relevance.

- 1747-8: first edition of *Clarissa* printed by Richardson
- 1749: (June) – second edition
- 1751: third edition, included revisions that heightened Lovelace's depravity
- 1751: *Letters and Passages Restored from the Original Manuscripts of the History of*
- *Clarissa* – separate volume (published by Richardson) containing the added material to the third edition of *Clarissa*
- 1755: *A collection of the moral and instructive sentiments, maxims, cautions, and reflexions* [*sic*], *contained in the histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* by Richardson
- 1759: fourth edition of *Clarissa*, last one printed by Richardson during his lifetime, only minor changes made
- (1761 – Richardson dies, letters suggest he was working on further revisions to *Clarissa*)
- 1764: first posthumous edition of *Clarissa*
- 1774: J. & F. Rivington and Co., London
- 1784: Harrison and Co, London
- 1792: Chas Jones, Worchester

- 1792: B. Law and Son, London (published in collaboration with Richardson's daughter Anne as containing the "last correction by the author")
- 1804: *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, author of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison…and observations on his writings*, edited with an introduction by Anna Letitia Barbauld, London
- 1811: Carpenter and Miller, London
- 1813: Wallis, London
- 1815: Bartlett and Newman, Oxford
- 1820: *Clarissa* published in Anna Letitia Barbauld's *The British Novelists* series, London
- 1824: Hurst, Robinson, and Co, London
- 1846: Clarissa Harlowe, a Tragic Drama in three acts (Thomas Hailes Lacy) – performed 28 August at Princess's Theatre, London
- 1868: E. F. Dallas' popular abridged version, inspired by wave of interest in *Clarissa* in France.
- 1868: A Mrs. Marriet Ward, London (a second popular abridgement), reprinted in 1890
- 1883: Henry Sotheran and Co, London
- 1889: Theatrical version by W. G. Wills, Theatre Royal, Birmingham
- 1890: Theatrical version by Robert Buchanan, Vaudeville Theatre, London
- 1902: Chapman and Hall, London