Stony Brook University

Motherhood and Religious Crisis in the English Novel, 1678-1800

A Dissertation Presented

by

Nicole Garret

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Stony Brook University

December 2015

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation contributes to post-secularist histories of the long eighteenth century, its literary contexts, and the political history of women by examining the intersections of feminist and religious themes in narratives about motherhood. In literary scholarship, post-secularism asks us to reassess the importance of religious faith and religious institutions in past societies and their literature. The eighteenth century, long coterminous with Enlightenment secularism, is a particularly crucial moment for revisionist approaches to the literary history of the West. While important work has been done on the religious foundations of early feminism and the political history of motherhood, this study is the first to focus on the spiritual conflicts of mothers as part of a larger discourse of religio-political freedom. Fictions by John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Frances Sheridan, Mary Wollstonecraft, and others register anxieties about the possibilities of belief or unbelief that destabilize codes of maternal behavior within a family or a society. Reading novels as fictions, as spiritual progresses, and as sites of ontological contest between the spiritual and the secular, this dissertation explores the ways in which novels mediate between religious-feminist and paternalist codifications of motherhood. When they dramatize conflicts between various types of Christian motherhood and authoritarian forces, novels put ideologies of motherhood into dialogue with feminist tracts, spiritual autobiographies, conduct literature, sermons, and radical polemics. In the process, they illuminate the cruxes of religious debate in the Enlightenment, and, frequently, imagine radical reformations of domestic and political power structures.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my mother, mother-in-law, sister, and dearly awesome friends here and departed. It is driven by empathy with the world's mothers, especially those whose spirits struggle with agendas of containment and oppression that still operate today.

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Acknowledgments

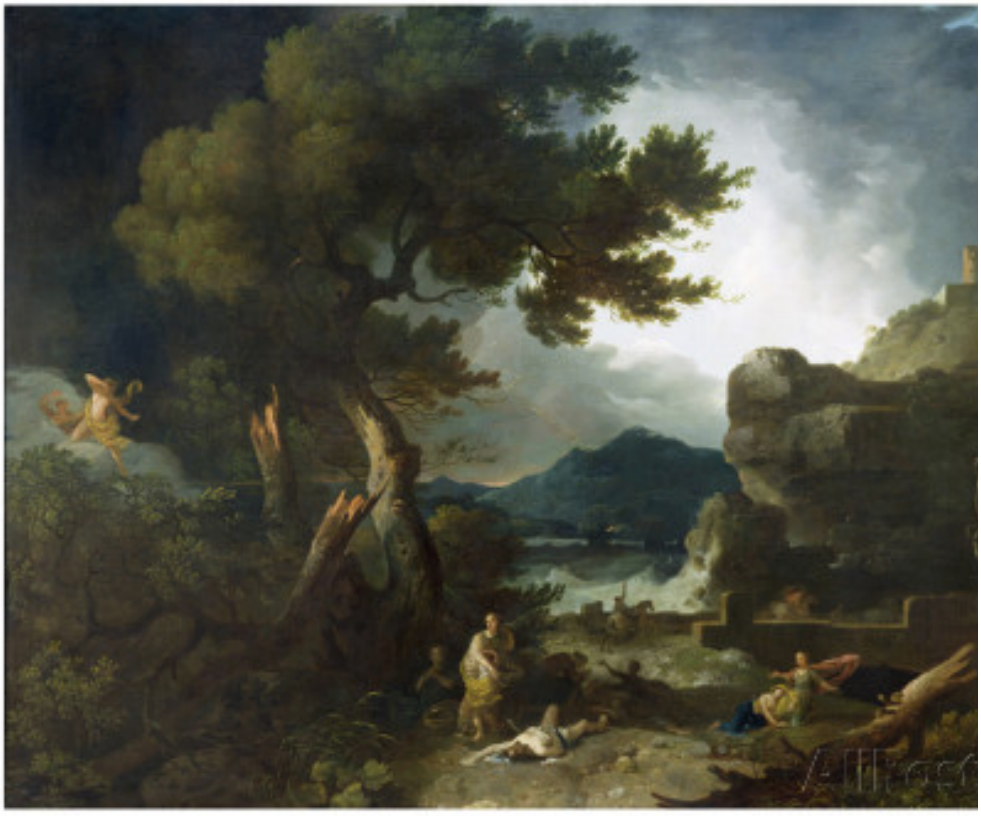
As all dissertations are a result of collaboration and intellectual generosity, there are many people without whom this work would not have been possible. In the first place, I would like to thank my advisors, Adrienne Munich and Heidi Hutner, whose mentorship through this dissertation and collaboration on publication projects has given me the confidence to pursue a difficult topic in my own voice. I would also like to thank my committee members, Douglas Pfeiffer and Robert Markley, for their close reading of the dissertation and their advice in formulating its major concepts. For its generous support of my research this year, I must thank the Office of the President at Stony Brook University for awarding me the Arts, Humanities, and Lettered Social Sciences Fellowship. I am grateful to Andrew Newman, Douglas Pfeiffer, and Celia Marshik, who worked in support of my fellowship application. I would also like to thank the faculty and staff of the departments of English and Writing, and of Stony Brook libraries. Members of the British, Canadian, and American Societies for Eighteenth-Century Studies have heard conference presentations on the greater portion of this work and offered valuable advice. I am deeply grateful to my writing group: Ula Klein, Kimberly Cox, Margaret Kennedy, Nathaniel Doherty, Brandi So, Sophia Lavin, and Aliza Atik have painstakingly analyzed and commented on the chapters of this dissertation. Finally, the support of my family for my work and for me as a mother has made this dissertation not only possible but also enormously fulfilling.

Introduction

Matriarcha: Maternity, Secularism, and Religious Feminism in Eighteenth-Century Britain

Ecce Ruinas Lugendas, jactas tot opes, tantosque dolores! Regiaque en Sola est Niobe spoliata Superstes (Elkanah Settle, *Eusebia Triumphans*, 1702).[1]

Church-Monuments foretell the changing Air;
Then *Niobe* dissolves into a Tear,
And sweats with secret grief (John Gay, Trivia lns. 1.167-69)



The Destruction of Niobe's Children (1760) by Richard Wilson (1714-1782) Yale Center for British Art.

[1] Settle, Elkanah. *Eusebia Triumphans. The Hannover Succession to the Imperial Crown of England, an Heroick poem*. London, 1702. Web. ECCO. 12 Aug. 2014. Eusebia Triumphans translates to "Piety Triumphant": "The wealth destroyed! The pain! Only royal Niobe, despoiled of her children, can stand as witness to such."

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Niobe is a noble woman spoiled by the grandeur of her position and her maternal success into a conviction in her own divinity. Having rejected her religious duty to Leto, the mother of Apollo, she watches helplessly as Apollo murders her children, and her grief transforms her into a weeping statue. Unsurprisingly, images of Niobe in painting and engraving proliferate in the neoclassical period; most, such as the one above by Richard Wilson in 1760, focus on the moment the children are murdered. Interestingly, however, poetic postfigurations of Niobe rarely emphasize her culpability, instead projecting that culpability onto the society at large. Notable among these invocations of the weeping Niobe are the many references to Queen Anne of Great Britain (whose grievous loss of eighteen potential heirs was a national tragedy) and Britannia itself (or herself). In the case of the poem by John Gay, the cause of Niobe's weeping is the dissolution of the nation into "gaudy pride" and dishonesty. The "Church-Monuments" in Gay's poem strive to articulate an irrecoverable spiritual loss while the hardened and hollowed out Niobe stands weeping, a monument to future consequences.[2]

This chapter begins by with Niobe in the British imagination as a mother who suffers the consequences of national impiety and worldliness, rather than because of a personal failing. Throughout this dissertation I argue that the dynamics of power in the eighteenth-century domestic and political spheres, and the fear that power itself had become secularized and corrupted, gave rise to discourses that legitimized maternal power. These

[2] "Thus was of old *Britannia's* City bless'd,/ E'er Pride and Luxury her Sons possess'd:/ Coaches and Chariots yet unfashion'd lay, /Nor late-invented Chairs perplex'd the Way:/ Then the proud Lady trip'd along the Town,/ And tuck'd up Petticoats secur'd her Gown,/ Her rosie Cheek with distant Visits glow'd,/ And Exercise unartful Charms bestow'd;/ But since in braided Gold her Foot is bound,/ And a long trailing Manteau sweeps the Ground,/ Her Shoe disdains the Street; the lazy Fair/ With narrow Step affects a limping Air./ Now gaudy Pride corrupts the lavish Age,/ And the Streets flame with glaring Equipage;/ The tricking Gamester insolently rides,/ With *Loves* and *Graces* on his Chariot's Sides;/ In sawcy State the griping Broker sits,/ And laughs at Honesty, and trudging Wits." John Gay, *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, (London: Bernard Lintott, 1716), 5.

discourses, with its origins in religious feminism, is one that the novel takes up as a problem of secular authority, and its potential for overreach into the spiritual duties of individuals. Because motherhood involves conflicting positions of power and subjection, narratives of maternity provide fertile soil in which to examine the clashes of secular and religious authority.

In the history of English Protestantism, female spirituality has always been inseparable from female sexuality, and especially from motherhood. The polemics of seventeenth and eighteenth-century religious feminists strengthened this tether of soul to motherhood, rather than liberated it, but they did so in a way that elevated maternal prerogatives over and against the influence of secular patriarchy. In an environment of both increasing conflict about the legitimacy of all forms of patriarchal rule, and increasing social anxieties about secularism and heterodoxy, maternity is both a locus of religious conflict and a useful lens for examining the forms such conflicts took in the Age of Enlightenment. Heterodox religious speculation inflects discourses of maternity and narratives featuring maternal subjectivities; thus fictional narratives of maternity not only participate in the dialectics of political power, as important studies have shown,[3] but also illuminate the cruxes of religious conflict in its Enlightenment context: post-reformation, post-persecution, post-toleration.

[3] See Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Bowers' study focuses on the ways in which "the connection between maternity and political legitimacy came to function much less as a challenge to patrilineal systems of power and inheritance than as a facilitator for those systems" (41) and investigates this containment of maternal power. See also Felicity Nussbaum. *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narrative* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995). Nussbaum argues that the "need to control women's reproductivity emerged in tandem with colonial exigencies" (1). Unlike Bowers, she identifies the catalyst for containment in Empire, not specifically domestic politics. Susan Greenfield and Carol Barash have published a collection in which critics describe political manipulations and codifications of the concept of maternity. See Susan Greenfield and Carol Barash: *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science, and Literature, 1650-1865* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1999).

Although my literary history begins in the 1660s, it does so with full acknowledgment that the idealization and containment of maternity as a spiritual condition begins much earlier.[4] Therefore, it is not a history that attempts to identify a watershed moment where affective, religious, or virtuous motherhood "begins." Instead, it is a historical study of a gendered discourse of piety and secularism that makes up a focal point of new media, such as the novel, the project of which is to depict realistic subjectivities in transformation. This gendered discourse of secularism (or irreligion, though they are not coterminous) and spirituality emerges as a full-time concern at the same time as early feminists such as Mary Astell and Damaris Masham begin writing in the interest of freeing women's education, and their souls, from male mediation. It is one moment in what Clifford Siskin and William Warner in their collection *This Is Enlightenment* (2010) have called "the history of mediation" (1). Arguing against the legitimacy of male intermediaries in female education, feminists, especially Astell, ascribe to husbands a categorically secular assembly of aims and outlooks.

My term for the kind of secularism with which the eighteenth-century novel is preoccupied is "discursive secularism." Charles Taylor talks about a secular outlook as being one in which the highest aim does not exceed human flourishing and mutuality. This definition assists in reading "discursive secularism"—aims, modes of behavior, desires, and vocabularies that are apart from or opposed to Christian flourishing in the afterlife, or reliance on Providence. Callum Brown introduces the term "discursive Christianity" to historicize secularism in *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001). I employ

[4] As Amanda Vickery states, though historians of the family are eager to assign a moment where the idealization of maternity begins, such idealization is nothing new: "visions of female nature had oscillated for centuries between the virtuous and the vicious […] What distinguishes the eighteenth century," she says, "is rather the overlaying of a range of secular celebrations on the ancient religious solemnizations" See *The Gentleman's Daughter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 93.

Brown's definition of "discursive Christianity" to introduce a theory of the secular character. According to Brown, discursive Christianity is "based on protocols, customs, behaviors, economic activity, dress, speech that make up a Christian identity" (12). Brown's inclusive definition of the discursive makes it possible to read Christianity in the language and behaviors of maternal figures in the novel and gets us closer to a theory of secular characterization. Characters such as Richardson's Mr. B., Inchbald's Lord Elmwood, and Wollstonecraft's Venables express aims and outlooks that are diametrically opposed to what their texts hold up as "Christian" ideals. In most cases, the novels make no distinction between secularism and a base irreligion. Secularism, and the extent to which this period and its literature can be called "secular," is therefore a significant concern of this project.

In addition to offering a brief overview of eighteenth-century religious history, this introduction identifies three moments when the concept of Christian maternity emerges and flourishes. The first is in the explication of a gendered spiritual progress in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, part II. Second, I will look at the advent of religious feminism in the later Stuart era, which relied on truisms about male secularism and instantiations of biblical matriarchy as a warrant for expanded female power. Finally, I will discuss the rise of Queen Anne as the last fully English, fully Anglican, Enlightenment monarch, and as the "nursing mother" of the Church. The following chapters in this dissertation look outward from the reign of Anne at the way eighteenth-century fiction imagines adaptive strategies for motherhood caught between the demands of discursive Christianity and discursive secularism, and, sometimes proffers radical reconceptions of domesticity. Reading novels as fictions, as spiritual progress narratives,

and as sites of ontological contest between the spiritual and the secular, this dissertation explores the ways in which novels mediate between [Christian] feminist and [secularized] patriarchalist codifications of maternity.

Importantly, these mediations often take the form of a sequel. Whether as an afterthought, a reaction, or a response to criticism, novelists revised fictions of female experience to account for motherhood. This "sequelization" of motherhood is analogous to the way that contemporary feminist theory was slow to embrace maternity as an important feminist experience, rather than as an additional means of control over female sexuality and political power.[5] Recently, the overlooking of religion as feminist experience has been rectified both in theory and in studies of the eighteenth century.[6] We have been slower, however, to incorporate religious experience into our studies of motherhood. One often finds them separate: recent trends have led to histories of motherhood or histories of female religious experience, but have not combined the two.[7] Therefore, this dissertation seeks to contribute an examination of Christian maternity that

[5] "Sequelize," as a verb appears in Betty Schellenberg's essay collection on the sequel. See Betty A. Schellenberg, "'The Measured Lines of the Copyist': Sequels, Reviews, and the Discourse of Authorship in England, 1749-1800," in Bourdeau, Debra Taylor, and Elizabeth Kraft, eds. *On Second Thought: Updating the Eighteenth-Century Text* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 25-42.

[6] In particular, Barbara Taylor's work has contributed a great deal toward our understanding of early feminism as primarily a religious movement. She writes, "to apprehend and identify with the divine, expressed in nearly all female writings of the period, was so fundamental to women's sense of ethical worth, and so far-reaching in its egalitarian implications, that it can properly be described as one of the founding impulses of feminism." See Barbara Taylor, "The Religious Foundations of Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia Johnson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 99-118.

[7] See footnote one. Sarah Apetrei and Ana M. Acosta have both studied on the extent to which religion subtends enlightenment feminist thought. Focusing on the two versions of Genesis, Acosta concludes that emphasis on the first or "utopian" genesis story was important to Mary Wollstonecraft's feminism. Apetrei discusses the ways in which the feminization of religion lent power to calls for greater female agency. See Acosta, *Reading Genesis in the Long Eighteenth Century: From Milton to Mary Shelley* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006). See also S. L. T. Apetrei, *Women, Feminism, and Religion in Early Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge UP, 2010). Neither of these studies focuses on motherhood.

is compatible with a female enlightenment, a drive toward spiritual liberation in conflict with the material conditions of male political supremacy.

I. The State of "Secularization" and Eighteenth-Century Religion

Since about 2008, Jurgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Judith Butler, Pope Benedict XVI and others have been engaged in a conversation on what Habermas has called, somewhat problematically "the post-secular." Visiting Stony Brook in 2009, Habermas stressed the importance of reevaluating the role of religion even in putatively secular societies: those that have taken a *Sonderweg*, or special path, toward secularism-- by no means a universal or worldwide phenomenon. The idea of post-secularism presupposes that the society or social unit in question is or has at some point been "secular." The *Sonderweg* of western or Anglo-American society is outside the scope of a dissertation on eighteenth-century literature; however, post-secularism as a lens on academia helps to understand the secularism that has dominated literary and cultural history, and not least of all feminist and cultural studies. Post-secularism "assumes the prior existence of secularism as a dominant social sensibility that can and should be superseded" (Robbins 56).[8] In literary criticism, post-secularism reassesses the importance of religious faith and religious institutions in past societies and their literature, but also remains mindful of the critical attitudes that made the hegemony of secularist historiography not only possible, but inevitable. These include an emphasis on philosophical history or *Philosophes*; an equation of modernity with secularity; a focus on external or institutional

[8] Bruce Robbins, "Why I Am Not a Postsecularist," *Boundary 2*, 4.1 (2013): 44-76.

studies of religion; and an ideological distaste for religion amongst the academic elite.[9] Thus, while western society may only tentatively be called post-secular, academic study, as it engages more and more with religious faith, certainly is post-secular. The "post-secular" in our disciplinary context is a state in which it is no longer possible not to engage with the role of religion and where the assumption of secularism becomes highly suspect.[10]

The past decade of literary and cultural scholarship on the Enlightenment has seen a reevaluation, if not a reaction, to the idea of secularism or secularization as a feature of eighteenth-century society. Although long seen as the beginning of modern secular society, the English Enlightenment period defies easy comprehension by any broad-brush theories of the secular, and has rather seemed to invite ad hoc definitions of

[9] For the "secular turn" in academic studies, see S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion the Myths of Modernity*. (York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2-3. See also Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 247; and Knud Haakonssen, *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1. Jonathan Sheehan points out that the emphasis on philosophical history leads to a myopia that excludes awareness of the religious climate. See Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005). Callum Brown and Charles Taylor both argue that institutional studies of religion indicate a decline in participation that does not correspond to a decline in religious feeling (Taylor 423), or "discursive Christianity." See Callum G Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 11. Taylor accuses the academic community of having a general ideological distaste for religion (427).

[10] Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, and Karl Löwith, among others, posited the idea that Enlightenment was a process by which history and eschatology were bereft of religious significance. See Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1957). Indeed, these theories of the death of religion have more bearing on the conditions of the twentieth century than they do on those of the eighteenth, but from them a number of definitions of the secular have emerged. Hans Blumenberg argues that the modern age, which begins with Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, did not merely substitute secular mirror images within religious frameworks (which is Löwith's thesis) but that it substituted secular answers for questions traditionally answered theologically. Blumenberg defines secularization as "a long-term process by which a disappearance of religious ties, attitudes to transcendence, expectations of an afterlife, ritual performances, and firmly established turns of speech is driven onward in both private and daily public life" (3). While Blumenberg conceives of a legitimacy for disenchanted or non-religious attitudes and epistemologies that can exist apart from a religious referent, his understanding of the secular maintains a removal or driving off of these attitudes to transcendence. It is what Charles Taylor refers to as a "subtraction theory," which he argues is applicable in the sense of political structure, but not in reference to "belief and unbelief as lived conditions" (*A Secular Age*, 8).

secularism that remain isolated within the borders of individual studies. On one hand, the social history of the eighteenth century reveals an intellectual climate devoted to theological inquiry, a proliferation of voluntary religious associations, religiously-inflected sociopolitical reform efforts, and paranoia over atheism and irreligion; on the other, one is struck by a deliberate and articulated retreat of religion from government, and the relative absence of the persecutions and wars of religion that plagued the previous century. The bedevilment of the secularization thesis has important ramifications for literary study: Jonathan Sheehan asks, "What would it mean for the idea of the Enlightenment for it to include religion?" ("Secularization" 1067). For one thing, it would mean that we include more religious feminists as Enlightenment philosophers, and that we can think of Christianity as a way of participating in enlightenment. Second, it means that Ian Watt's thesis of the novel as a secular form must undergo a similar reevaluation.[11]

Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* is a useful starting point for discussing the novel as secular form. Watt says that the "great difference" between Bunyan's progress and Defoe's novels is that, because of the economic concerns in the latter, religious considerations "have no such priority of status" (80).[12] Conversely, I argue that tensions

[11] In some ways, Watt's thesis is already undergoing a reevaluation. Scholars who read, for instance, *Pamela* and *Clarissa* for their religious content implicitly suggest that the idea of the novel as "secular" form is too simplistic. McKeon's is a more nuanced discussion of Protestantism as a secularizing force, in the sense that it draws attention to the divisions between secular and religious epistemologies, but it does not outwardly challenge the secularization thesis. This dissertation suggests that rather than subordinating religious concerns to the secular, the novel engages secularism as a subject matter. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel; Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[12] Tzveten Todorov shares this view of the secular as worldly—in Todorov's words, "reducing the distance between action and its end purpose" (105). Todorov's recent project has been to recover the Enlightenment from the "deflections" that mid- twentieth-century scholars have attributed to it. He maintains that its secularizing tendencies were one of its virtues. See Tzvetan Todorov, *In Defence of the Enlightenment* (London: Atlantic, 2009).

between the spirit and the world mean a great deal to Defoe's protagonists, which Watt more or less acknowledges when he writes, "the struggle between Puritanism and the tendency to secularization which was rooted in material progress" is implicit in Defoe's works (80). As the next chapter explains, Defoe's Roxana struggles with two maternal paradigms, affective and economic, and finds scriptural legitimacy for both.

Taylor, Sheehan, and others have suggested new variations of the secularization thesis that are perhaps immune to the flaws of their former, because they seem to be something else entirely. Sheehan, whose work focuses on culture, rather than intellectual history, suggests it is not a removal but a "transformation and reconstruction" of religion, signaled by "new constellations of practices and institutions" (*Bible* xi). Similarly, Taylor defines secularization in a number of ways, including (most usefully for our purposes) as a change in the conditions of belief-- as a process by which new forms of belief become conceivable (423). The eighteenth century, he says, "was the beginning of what I am calling the nova effect, the steadily widening gamut of new positions—some believing, some unbelieving, some hard to classify, which have become available options" (423). What Taylor describes is not a process of disenchantment but instead the destruction of religious naiveté. Michael McKeon locates this death of a naïve, or "tacit" religiosity in the Protestant Reformation itself, arguing that the reformation had "powerful techniques of 'explicitation,' which purified religion by separating it from the cultural matrix in which it customarily had exercised its relatively tacit sway" (34). In prioritizing freedom of *conscience*, according to McKeon, Protestantism effected religious *consciousness*, which included dissenting attitudes and religious heterodoxy. What we can glean from post-secular scholarship of the eighteenth century is a sense that the old theories that

secularist scholarship imposed are no longer, or perhaps never were, serviceable to a study of Enlightenment *culture,* if ever they were to a study of Enlightenment *philosophy*. The relative absence of religious persecution notwithstanding, Enlightenment Britons lived in a climate of continued religious controversy, and this controversy fattens the archives with homiletic repining, furnishes material for religious satire, and forms fictional plots. Secularism, as a process or a worldview, is only one of many possible religious orientations among Deism, Methodism, Anglicanism, Occasional Conformity, Quakerism, Presbyterianism, Socinianism, and Unitarianism--and many more.

If the theory of the "secularism" of the eighteenth-century was, as Charles Taylor calls it, an "unthought" (Taylor 426) brought about by the anti-religious tendencies of academia—a cry of derision many post-secularists have made—then it becomes imperative for scholars to redefine Enlightenment to include a comprehensive study of religion, and to recognize the existence of many enlightenments. As Pocock argues in *Barbarism and Religion* (1999), there were aspects of Enlightenment that had little or nothing to do with the presence of irreligious *philosophes* and that Enlightenment rationalism was a project in which many ecclesiastics participated (7). Margaret Anderson notes that nothing but the secularity of scholarship in the twentieth century can account for the idea that nineteenth century society was secular or in the process of becoming secular.[13] S. J. Barnett notes that the desire of postmodernists to locate modernity in Enlightenment secularism, and their focus on the writings of philosophes that had little impact on religious feeling has contributed to the sense of eighteenth-century Britain as secular. More vehemently, Taylor claims that the unbelief of elite

[13] Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "The Limits of Secularization: On the Problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany." *The Historical Journal* 38 no. 3 (1995): 647-670.

theorists and academics created the theory of mass secularization. Ana M. Acosta's study, *Reading Genesis in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2006) takes on the idea of enlightenment secularism by bringing light to the way thinkers rewrote and remediated the creation story. Sheehan, in *The Enlightenment Bible* (2005), argues that biblical scholarship did not effect a reduction of Christian belief and was often considered the best tool for combatting atheism (39). Others have noted that the rationalist turn of the period led to a rise in rational dissent, rather than to deism or atheism (Haakonssen 4-5). Thus recent scholarship has come to view the eighteenth-century religious history of Britain as characterized by religious heterodoxy, rather than an atheism, deism or freethinking. To these characterizations, I would like to add what I think is a useful point: that while eighteenth-century Britain was not a secular, irreligious, or even deistic society, it was a society preoccupied—at times even obsessed—with the idea of secularism, and that this preoccupation is integral to novels of maternity.

Speculations on religious heterodoxy inflect narratives of maternity, and these narratives are places where concerns about religion are dramatized. To ignore the context of religious controversy is to miss the important ways in which maternal experience is cast as spiritual conflict and the ways in which such conflict is prefigured in early feminist debates about female agency. Furthermore, through the lens of discursive Christianity and discursive secularism, and with a definition of Enlightenment society as religiously heterodox, this dissertation reads novels for secularism and religious heterodoxy as a recurring subject matter. In important ways, novels engage in a dialectics of secularization in the broad sense.[14] The novels contain a plurality of epistemologies

[14] McKeon refers to religious consciousness as secularization: "in the full sense of the term: as a sacralizing accommodation of elevated religious motives both through and to the profane experience of daily life." See

that often come into conflict, and they seek to allay the anxieties of that conflict with a variety of adaptive strategies, some of them orthodox, and some radical. They wonder, with the theologians, the preachers, and the scribblers, what will happen to a religiously heterogeneous English family, or to what extent poetical justice mimics God's creation, or what choices one should make when the Bible appears to sanction behaviors that fall outside the lines of orthodox conduct. In these interpersonal relationships, Providence, theology and personal eschatology are present, not always to the ends of consoling a presumably religious readership, but very often to stir up that consciousness of heterodoxy and uncertainty.

Charles Taylor's concept of religion as "transformative" (or transcendent) helps to identify the vocabularies and activities of discursive secularism and discursive Christianity that occur in the novel. According to Taylor, religion consists in a "transformation" which takes the believer out of or above considerations of "human flourishing." It transcends human flourishing by participating in the love or will of God, "which is a definition of love that goes way beyond any possible mutuality" (*A Secular Age*, 430). In other words, even concerns for the greater good of mankind fall short of or are distinct from the spiritual or Christian *agape*. Taylor also explains that this emphasis on worldly flourishing in commercial and moral contexts emerges in the eighteenth century (430). These terms—transformation, human flourishing—help to construct my working definitions of religion and secularism by identifying the objects and aims inherent in the language and behaviors of fictional characters. In this dissertation, discursive secularism is a set of practices and vocabularies that concern the worldly

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Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 424.

flourishing of the individual, the family, or the human race. Of course not all non-religious discourse can be attributed to discursive secularism, which insofar as it defines itself (or in many cases, as the text defines it) in opposition to the religious or spiritual always contains the religious or spiritual as its referent. As Blumenberg contends, the end result of secularization, by which he means the gradual disappearance of religion from public and private life "would mean there would be no remains of unworldliness, but at that point the term [secular] would cease to have meaning" (9).[15] The secular and the religious are part of a conceptual homology; we cannot talk of the secular outside of the context of religion. Therefore the term "discursive secularism" will always refer here to a mode that defines itself or is defined within a text in opposition to or as an alternative to spirituality.

II. Eighteenth-Century Secularism and Religious Controversy:

In the eighteenth-century, the word "secular" was used to indicate something distinct from the church. The term was used often in arguments over the Test Acts and toleration: in other words, whether Christians who did not subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles should be barred from public office. But as a lived condition, secularism was not so much known as feared-- the primary fear was national damnation,[16] but there was also

[15] Blumenberg's title, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, signals his desire to unravel an implicit correlation between modern secularism and illegitimate usurpation of the power and glory of religion, which is one of the earliest meanings of "secularized." Unlike the term "secular," a secular age does not contain religion as a 'hidden dimension of meaning" (18). Blumenberg concludes that secularism did not merely substitute secular shadows for religious substance but rather presented new answers to traditional questions (xvi). Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

[16] As I discuss below, Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724) warned that the sins of the nation would have dire consequences. An early Georgian text, *National Sins and the Causes of Them* (1715) by Joseph Acres, Vicar of Blewsbury, lists the national sins, including "Infidelity, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Rioting,

concern about the dissolution of government and loss of private property.[17] As Pocock argues, this was a "divided England" (49).[18] Whig and Tory fears about the heterodox state of religious belief differed but amounted to more or less the same apocalyptic prognostications. Concerns over how to handle religious heterodoxy surfaced during the reign of Queen Anne: Whigs and Tories, and their Protestant constituents, who had a moment of unity during the exclusion crisis and the Glorious Revolution, now returned to the subject of religious toleration and conformity. The subject was particularly pressing in the war of Spanish Succession, which threatened to disrupt the balance of power amongst confessional states by uniting France and Spain under a single ruling family. Whigs, who wanted at least to maintain the acts of toleration and the option of occasional conformity, believed that a visibly united Protestant society was important to Britain's power: faction and civil disability, they thought, played right into the hands of Louis XIV. The admonitions of printer Abigail Baldwin in 1710 are fairly typical of the Whig pro-toleration propaganda that she and her husband printed in the early eighteenth century:

> You should be aware of those who have been diligent to divide and enflame you, at a Juncture so convenient to the circumstances and Designs of France; and to sow causes of Distrust amongst you, both against the

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Fornication, false Swearing, Cursing, and Prophanation [sic] of the Lord's Day" (Acres 15). He lists the causes as Ignorance of the people, a Slothful and ignorant clergy, Slothful and negligent magistrates, and "bad examples in all orders and degrees of men" (21). Attributed to Richard Allestree is *The Ladies' Calling* which warns, "Permit all your Words and Actions to be so many Calls to Virtue and Goodness; but alas! Such Good Women are soon indeed *taken away*, and this is *so little laid to Heart* by them surviving, that there is great reason to fear that they are taken away from the Judgments yet to come upon this Sinful and Rebellious Nation" (3).

[17] See S.J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2004), 40.

[18] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion. Vol.1 (*Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

> Parliament and Ministry, at a time when *your Enemys could have no other hopes, but those of preventing you a lasting establishment of peace and liberty* (8-- italics mine).

Doubtless, Baldwin is alluding to Roman Catholics generally, and the Old Pretender specifically.[19] Such specters could be tacitly invoked with references to slavery and discord within the kingdom.[20] As fears of "popery" and tales of Marian martyrs continued to circulate, Whigs could count on gaining political traction in reducing the religious enemy to a single, hated sect. Indeed, Catholics saw Protestant sectarianism as evidence of its illegitimacy (Pocock 47), but English Protestants were at odds on whether inclusivity or conformity could answer the objection.

Whereas the language of eighteenth-century religious controversy reveals anxieties about heterodoxy, these anxieties are often localized in the figure of the atheist or free thinker, or in modes of belief that were represented by their detractors to have catastrophically atheistic tendencies. A phenomenon not uncommon to moments of religious or political controversy, print media often collapsed varieties of difference to present the reader with false choices (heaven or hell, the church or chaos, freedom or slavery, with us or against us) and varieties of the "No True Christian" fallacy. Therefore, although it is no longer possible for scholars to speak naively of a historical duality between secularism and religious faith in which the former eventually wins the

[19] The "Old Pretender" James Francis Edward Stewart was the Roman Catholic son of James II.

[20] The equation of Roman Catholicism with intellectual and political slavery in post-Reformation England was an unquestionable meme. Indeed, religious oppression/tolerance, particularly in the reign of King James, employed of a discourse of freedom and slavery. James himself used this language in his toleration acts, and it was used against him frequently. A popular sermon by Whig clergyman William Stephens (1649-1718), "A Second Deliverance from Popery and Slavery" (1714) celebrates the importance of the Hanoverian succession in preserving the land from the oppression expected from the Old Pretender, James Francis Edward Stuart, who would have been James III/VIII. Similar tracts came out throughout the century, especially after the second Jacobite Rebellion.

day, eighteenth-century literature often tendentiously confronted its readers with a sense of a forked path, rather than an open field of possibility.

Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) satirizes the response of an Anglican clergyman to religious difference within the ranks of his own church and the ways in which this open field might make manifest as a forked path. Along on Joseph's picaresque journey, Parson Abraham Adams has several confrontations with Anglicans. Initially, he meets Barnabas, a Church of England absolutist, whose ire for George Whitefield's Methodism[21] exceeds even his hatred for the freethinking work of John Toland:[22] "Whoever prints heterodox stuff ought to be hanged," Barnabas says, expressing disgust for the Methodist belief that the riches of the church are symptomatic of excessive worldliness. Adams shares his detestation of the Methodists, but not for the same reasons; Adams agrees with Whitefield about the worldliness of the church, but rejects his "doctrine against good works," which, he exclaims, must have been "coined in hell" (Book I Ch. XVII). To Adams, rejection of "good works," Christian behaviors such as charity and attendance on the sick, is tantamount to a license to behave in unchristian ways. The violent language of this first encounter is significant. Barnabas conceives any threat to orthodox procedure as socially destructive, and Adams counts the eschewal of good works as evidence that Methodist doctrine comes, not from Heaven, but from the other place, or is, at any rate, unchristian. As Adams and Andrews continue their journey,

[21] George Whitefield (1714-1770) (also Whitfield) was a famous Methodist preacher whose enthusiasm attracted the ire of many an eighteenth-century author and seems to appear in satire more frequently than John Wesley himself. See, for instance, William Hogarth's *Credulity, Superstition, and Enthusiasm* (1762).

[22] John Toland (1660-1722) was a philosopher and Freethinker of Scottish origin whose book, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1695) argued that there were no revealed divine truths that were beyond human comprehension. Attracting a furor for his irreverent religious principles, Toland vowed "never hereafter to intermeddle in any religious controversies"(qtd. in Daniel). See Stephen H. Daniel, "Toland, John (1670-1722)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, 2004. Web. 12 Aug. 2014.

often in search of charitable assistance, they encounter other members of the clergy who refuse to help. Although Adams finally finds in an irreverent, freethinking merchant, the sole example of his favored brand of Christian behavior, he becomes disenchanted by the man's irreverence for the church. While Adams' progress introduces him to many brands of Christian believers, his impulse is to divide them into "true" Christians and everyone else. The realities of heterodoxy default to the specter of "atheism"—a catch-all term for unorthodox doubt and theological difference,[23] and Fielding satirizes a condition of the "widening gamut" (Taylor 423) in which the only "true" Christian seems to be oneself.

III. Maternal Orthodoxy: What Shall *She* Do To Be Saved?

It cannot be overstated that "true Christian" maternity consisted in a precarious matrix of duties and prerogatives. As Barbara Taylor says, "being a proper Christian woman […] was a paradoxical affair" ("Foundations" 105). John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), one of the best selling and most beloved books, next to the Bible, for centuries, went a long way toward codifying a kind of Christian maternal behavior that was consistent with patriarchal power.

One of the most unsettling aspects of John Bunyan's allegory is the swiftness with which Christian abandons his family in the city of destruction. Learning that his home and family are doomed if he does not set out on a progress toward salvation, Christian tries and fails to convince his wife to leave with him. Family abandonment is an earnest of Christian's commitment to his progress, but, evidently, Bunyan received some

[23] Atheism was any kind of impiety or manifest concern for the world over the spirit. The modern sense of "atheist" as one who does not believe in a god or gods does not apply in the eighteenth century, which had far more inclusive definitions, including: "One who practically denies the existence of a God by disregard of moral obligation to Him; a godless man" (OED).

criticism for Christian's choice.[24] As Kathleen Swaim points out, revisions to the second edition reinforce the providential nature of the abandonment and foreshadow his wife's conversion, possibly in answer to reader disgust. In the revision, the figure of Charity requires an explanation of Christian's choice: "When Christian's answers precisely reformulate the advisories of *Christian Behavior*, Charity clears him" (Swaim 168). As Swaim notes, *Christian Behavior* (published 1674), a text Bunyan wrote while imprisoned in 1663, gives insight to his opinions on the spiritual responsibilities of fathers. It contains advice on family management, including how a believing husband should treat an unbelieving wife. While Christian's responses to Charity indicate ideological consistency with Bunyan's conduct book,[25] such ideology is difficult to allegorize, especially as an afterthought: Bunyan's Christian cannot both "labor seriously after a sense of her miserable state" (*Christian Behavior*) *and* take off on his own journey without his family in tow. Less so can he "instruct [his sons] as the scripture saith, […] when thou sittest in thine house when thou liest down, and when thou risest up' (Eph 6:4; Deu 6:7)" (*Christian Behavior*). To be sure, within only "some days" (*Progress* 14) of Christian's coming to an understanding of his own danger, he leaves forever, and does not take his sons with him. As the following section of this introduction contends, the gender politics of Bunyan's allegory embed maternity in a matrix of duties and prerogatives that constitute an "orthodox" codification of motherhood: the mother's

[24] Kathleen M. Swain, "Christian's 'Christian Behavior' to his Family in *Pilgrim's Progress*." *Religion and Literature* 21 (1989): 1–15.

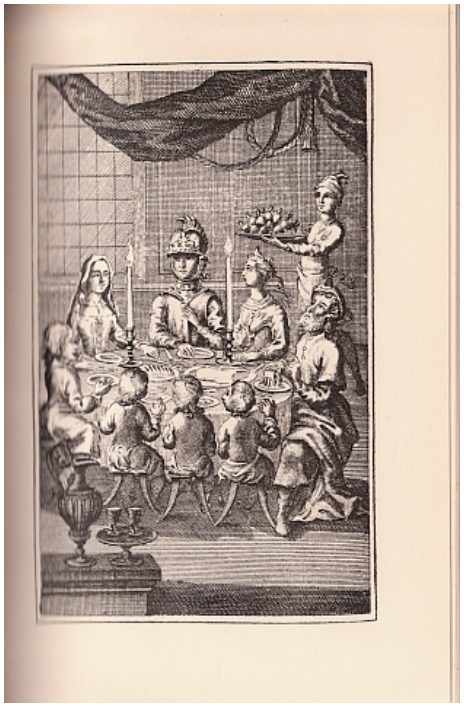
[25] Kathleen M. Swain, *Pilgrim's Progress, Puritan Progress: Discourses and Contexts* (University of Illinois Press, 1993). In *Christian Behavior*, Bunyan says, "If thy wife be unbelieving or carnal, then thou hast also a duty lying before thee, which thou art engaged to perform under a double engagement: 1. For that she lieth liable every moment to eternal damnation. 2. That she is thy wife that is in this evil case" (179). See *The Works of the Eminent Servant of Christ, John Bunyan*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J. Locken, 1832), 179.

husband is her spiritual "head" or guide, but her children are the means by which she connects to and serves the deity. This proliferation of mediating figures exposes the potential for contradictory duties that we find dramatized in later fictions.

It is a cloying theme of the sequel, which focuses on the pilgrimage of Christian's family, that Christiana, his wife, has "sinned away" her husband. The memory of his piety and her sin serves as a motivation for her journey. Thus the consequences of Christian's abandonment retroactively make it an act of charity that Charity can condone. The publication of *Part Two of the Pilgrim's Progress* (1684), therefore does even more to recover Christian's reputation than second-edition revisions. Whereas the sequel fell out of favor with Victorian readers, who by and large found it an adulterated and tedious version of the original,[26] the two parts were printed together and lavishly illustrated throughout the eighteenth century in dozens of editions.[27]

[26] Many early critics of part II ignore it altogether; James Anthony Froude mentions it only to call it "feeble." See Froude, James Anthony. "*The Pilgrim's Progress*." *Bunyan*. London: Macmillan, 1880. 150-172. According to Roger Sharrock, part one is "a testing ground for masculine heroism with little use for women and children." See Roger Sharrock, *John Bunyan: "The Pilgrim's Progress"* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), 45.

[27] Bunyan's allegory has a long history of "teaching people how to die," which I discuss in more detail in chapter three. Nonconformist women especially would look to Christiana's death scene in Beulah Land. Christiana's travels spoke to the missionary and evangelical activity of conformist women, and her relationships with Christian and Greatheart served as a model of Christian marriage. See "Mata's Hermeneutic," chapter four in Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2004).



Copper plate depicting Christiana and her entourage at the House of the Interpreter for a 1728 edition, illustrated by John Sturt (1658-1730). Christiana is left from Greatheart, and Mercy is at right.

What the two parts seem to inscribe in tandem is the idea that masculine guidance is indispensible to female salvation, but the care of children and their souls rests ultimately on the mother, and her salvation is inextricable from the duties of Christian motherhood.[28] The print above delineates this idea in a circular pattern, putting the male guide, Greatheart, at the center of the print, between the two women, who sit between him and the children. Both wifely subordination and maternal authority are necessary; neither is sufficient, yet, in the novel of domesticity, material conditions quite often make one or the other untenable. At stake in this conundrum is not only the salvation of the mother but also of the "sons"— the future of that indispensible masculine authority.

[28] Margaret Soenser Breen makes the same argument in "The Sexed Pilgrim's Progress": "Her journey is predicated not upon estrangement but rather upon her inextricability from family and social ties" (443). According to Breen, this inextricability, from her husband's guidance and her children as proxy sufferers for her sins, requires the prolonged assistance of the social world-- male authority in particular.

Bunyan's Christiana, and the Anglican theology of the Virgin Mary that I discuss below, constitute orthodox Christian motherhood: a complex imbrication of obedience and agency.

"Enter thou" Bunyan begs Christiana, "with all thy boys" to "refuse this world and do their father's will" (14). The "father" in this case is not God, who is referred to as "lord" or "king," but rather it is Christian, the dearly departed patriarch. Despite the absence of the father, the quest for salvation is also, if not mainly, an exercise in filial obedience and a means for the father to continue to participate in the spiritual health of the family, though indirectly—his wife as mediator for him to his children and he as mediator for her to God. Christiana blames herself for her husband's abdication, a result, she believes, of breaking the "loving bond" (180). "Sons, we are all undone. I have sinned away your father, and he is gone: he would have had us with him: but I would not go myself, I also have hindred [sic] you of the Life" (181). Why Christian could not journey with his sons is not entirely clear. What is clear is that part of Christiana's punishment, like a latter day Niobe, is to apprehend her children's destruction as a consequence of her own impiety. Her sin in "keeping these thy babes in their ignorance" is the analogue of Christian's "burden."[29] She is punished through her children as well as being damned herself, and nowhere in the text is this double perdition more defined than in Bunyan's modification of Christian's memorable refrain: instead of "What shall I do to be saved?" Christiana repeats, "What shall I do for my son?"

It must be noted, then, that although Christiana mediates, figuratively, Christian's spiritual duty as a patriarch, she is literally alone and solely responsible for their

[29] Readers of part one might remember that Christian's "burden" is the awareness that he is a sinner, and he is relieved of his burden at the House of the Interpreter.

condition. (Though it is not the case here, one can easily see this matrix as problematic in cases where the patriarch is present *and* inept.) Fortunately for Christiana's sons, she manages to teach them well enough to gain the approval of those she meets during her journey. Prudence, Piety, and Charity teach the boys according to their ages, testing them and acknowledging that while they are up to date on their catechism, ("thy mother has taught thee well") they must still "harken to [their] mother" (230). The lessons the women and children get during their various sojourns seem to last much longer than Christian's have done, and their dangers are less frequent because Christiana's husband has already paved her way. (For instance, she does not fall into the "pit of despond" because she knows to look out for it).

On the other hand, Christiana and her companion, Mercy, are faced with differently "sexed" crises: encounters with rapists. Involuntarily accosted, Christiana complains, "they shall have us body and soul" (196) and, once rescued, is briskly rebuked for not caring enough about her own chastity to engage a male companion. This crisis reintroduces the imperative of male guidance. Even in her widowed state, she is but a "weak woman." Greatheart, one "true of heart, tho' weak in Grace" becomes her guide and protector, and a model of masculine fortitude for her sons, though it remains certain that their catechism is the province of the maternal figure, who in turn has recourse to the wisdom of her husband, the greater pilgrim. It is necessary, then, for her to recruit both spiritual and worldly intermediaries in order to save her children.[30]

Breen rightly points out that, as Christiana's motherhood and widowhood is relatively empowered, "Mercy provides the model of female dependence" (448); her

[30] The wisdom of resorting to male agents, as we shall see in chapter three, is a feature of Frances Sheridan's fictions of single motherhood.

salvation is dependent on Christiana, who is dependent on the behavior of male figures. Nonetheless, Mercy does have to knock at the wicket gate to request admittance, and, when she begins to be courted by worldly men, asserts some agency over her future by formulating "conditions." These conditions— "to shew kindness to the poor" (232) foremost among them—are unpalatable to most of her suitors, so she marries one of Christiana's boys, now grown up. As their progress continues, Mercy's experiences as an expectant mother reinforce Bunyan's union of soul and maternal activity. At the beginning of the book, Mercy feels "in her bowels" that she must become a pilgrim. "Bowels" in this period signal physical yearning, a visceral emotional response. They are associated with Christ, but also with the womb.[31] Even as a maiden, Mercy associates salvation, and her connection to Christ, with the functions of her womb. In this context, her obsession with the "looking glass" requires some attention.

At the house of the shepherd, upon the Delectable Mountains, Christiana and her train feast with the Shepherd and his family. Mercy begins to long for the looking glass that hangs in the dining room "off of which I cannot take my mind, if therefore I have it not, I think I shall miscarry" (293). She repeats her concern again, and the shepherd grants her request. The reference to miscarriage has gotten relatively little attention from scholars, possibly because, in the seventeenth century, the term "miscarry" could mean either to die or to suffer a spontaneous abortion. Focusing on the glass, Breen has articulated the complex relationship that Bunyan's women have with Christ, with whom they can compare themselves in the abstract, but not directly: "The two-way mirror recalls the central mystery of Christianity, that Christ is both God and man, and in doing so invites the faithful to see the promise of salvation in terms of themselves" (444). The

[31] OED

Pauline hierarchy establishes a succession of intermediaries and genders access to the deity, complicating and preventing direct identification for women (445). So what does Mercy see in this mirror that is so necessary to her salvation? On one hand, her pregnant state, her full bowels and future as a protector and guide to her offspring, perhaps engender a more concrete connection to Christ, so that she can see herself in Christ or Christ within herself. In this sense, despite Bunyan's solicitude to maintain gendered hierarchies and mediations, Mercy's pregnancy connects her to god through her procreative capacity, giving the text what Susan Gubar calls "antithetical feminist subscripts" (*Critical Condition* 147). The problem of the looking glass could, however, be understood in simpler terms. Bunyan's poem, "Upon a Looking Glass" (1686) intimates the danger of being blind to one's own defects:

> In this see thou thy beauty, hast thou any,
> Or thy defects, should they be few or many.
> Thou may'st, too, here thy spots and freckles see,
> Hast thou but eyes, and what their numbers be.
> But art thou blind? There is no looking-glass
> Can show thee thy defects, thy spots, or face.
>
> *Comparison*
> Unto this Glass we may compare the Word,
> For that to man advantage doth afford,
> (Has he a Mind to know himself and State;)
> To see what will be his Eternal Fate.
> But without Eyes, alas! How can he see?
> Many that seem to look here, blind Men be.
> This is the Reason, they so often read
> Their Judgment there, and do it nothing dread.

As a mother, Mercy might "miscarry" her duty if she cannot see her faults and the visage she presents to her children, who will be always watching. As Bunyan says of Christiana at the beginning of part two, "Then she cried aloud in her sleep, Lord have Mercy upon me a Sinner; and the little children heard her" (181). Bunyan's mothers have souls tied to

family in a uniform constellation: they are responsible for the spiritual health of their children, but they must request the means and men must provide it. Newly figured Niobes, they do not experience salvation or perdition directly or singly, but through a web of connections that make motherhood an active, spiritual trial.

IV. Mariology: "*I am risen a mother in Israel*":

It is important to stop here and note that motherhood, even in the context of Bunyan's book, is not merely a matter of spiritual trial, but also of empowerment and that empowerment has an explicitly religious legitimacy. At times, Bunyan seems to capitulate to what early feminists assert: it is the religious duty of the maternal figure to have rights. In another scene, Bunyan again exalts what he would otherwise subordinate. When Christiana arrives to see the King's Highway overgrown, and the other pilgrims taking "byways' to the kingdom,[32] she insists on following the path her husband has taken: "tho' the travellers have been made in time past to walk through by-paths, it must not be so now I am risen, *now I am risen a mother in Israel*" (222). Here she invokes the song of Deborah. [33] Her expulsion of the King's Highway's lions, with the aid of Greatheart of course, and the ensuing celebration are indications that Christiana has come into her own-- as a mother, but also more broadly as a leader of other pilgrims. Her service to God is further equated with motherhood through the innkeeper, Gaius, who speaks "on behalf" or in defense of women:

[32] Defoe may well be thinking of this passage when he quips that every Christian now "takes his own byway to heaven" (qtd. in Porter 171).

[33] "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. *The inhabitants of* the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel" (Judges 5: 6-7).

> [A]s Death and the Curse came into the world by a Woman, so also did Life and Health: God sent forth this Son, made of a Woman. Yea, to shew how much those that came after did abhor the act of their Mother, this sex in the Old Testament coveted Children, if happily this or that Woman might be the Mother of the Savior of the World. (266)

Indeed, as there is no need to belabor here, the Old Testament matriarchs connect to and serve the deity through motherhood; through motherhood and with children they are rewarded. Gaius' defense, continuing with a litany of female service to Christ, sets up a system whereby maternity is coveted but the mother, Eve, is hated. The woman participates in both eternal reprobation (being mother) and salvation (accepting and performing motherhood). She participates in perpetuity with the divine plan through motherhood in hopes that she may be the mother that who is loved (Mary) instead of the mother that who is hated (Eve).

The status of that revered mother and her connection to the deity was still controversial in the eighteenth century, even after a hundred years of reformation. Mariology (or the theology of Mary) in this period has received little attention. It seems to have been enough to say that because Marian imagery shimmers with too much of Roman Catholicism, writers eschewed it in favor of references to Old Testament matriarchs, who less redolent with popish idolatry, or "safer" as Christine Peters asserts.[34] In some ways, Protestant female believers lived with the death of the mother that Luce Irigaray explores in *Sexes and Genealogies*. Women's relationship to God is cut off by religion's marginalization of the female divinity. Woman cannot be God, but exists

[34] Peters argues that Old Testament figures were "safer" but yet, because Mary was revised as a figure of motherhood, rather than chastity, she remained "venerable" after the Reformation. See *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 224-227.

forever in a role subservient to god--not one of the trinity but something entirely human and eternally separate: "This paralyzes the infinity of becoming a woman," Irigaray says. [35] By the late seventeenth century, Mary had become a sort of currency for orthodox, and finite, female behavior.

Mariology was at the center of theological controversies amongst high church Anglicans, Catholics, and Quakers--a list that is far from exclusive--throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Hilda Graeff, in her history of Mariology, the reformers' view of Mary tended to stress both her lack of importance *and* her personal sinlessness. Early debates centered on the problem of her permanent virginity, that is, whether she could maintain a hymen after giving birth. The superficial quaintness of this debate threatens to mask the fact that it had significant bearing on the carnality of Christ, who received his status as man from the humanity of his mother. Despite the importance of this question, Reformation theologians increasingly contrived reasons to despise her and erase her from religious contemplation.[36]

In the seventeenth century, High- and Broad-Church Anglicans revived interest in Mary and her personal holiness, stressing, as might be expected, her importance as a model for English mothers (Graef 329). Mark Frank (1612-1664), a Treasurer of

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[35] Irigaray focuses on Catholicism and the ways in which the subordination of the figure of Mary below the trinity prevents female association with the divine. "This paralyzes the infinity of becoming a woman," because woman cannot be god herself but in a role subservient to god, not one of the trinity but something human and eternally separate. See *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 64.

[36] See also Hilda C Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963) 329. Post-reformation divines were careful to interpret the Magnificat, or the song of Mary, as an example of her humility, rather than her holiness. Additionally, in their interpretation of Luke "Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee," they emphasized Mary's surprise at the expression "Hail" being used to one so lowly. The hermeneutics of humility were one way in which they attempted to undo Mary's elevation in Catholic dogma. Luther identified a sanction to disregard Mary in John 2:3, in a scene at Cana where Mary called for more wine and Christ refused her (Graef 285).

Pembroke College, Cambridge, whom the Puritans deprived of office, advocated an exalted place for Mary: "But I see our lord is wounded through our lady's sides…because the Romans make little less of her than a God, they make not so much of her as a good woman" (qtd. in Graeff 328). Frank's sermons were printed in 1679, at a time when contemplation of Mary was somewhat less controversial than it was during his lifetime.[37]

Like Bunyan's allegory, Anglican Mariology emphasizes affective, submissive motherhood, and unites soul and womb (or breast). Often, it renders the virgin birth an act of the highest form of charity. Through birth and maternal care, Mary avails herself of the nearest possible relationship to Christ, which allows her all contradictory female virtues at once-- virgin, mother, and spouse. Anthony Stafford (1586-1645)[38] in "The Femall [sicl Glory, or, the Life and Death of Our Blessed Lady" (1635), stresses her spousal obedience: "she […] understood that consent was not only required to be the parent of the Almighty, but the spouse also of the Holy Spirit" and her wifely duty was to "yield [Christ] up […] to […] Persecution and lastly Death on the Cross" (footnote 35). Thomas Tenison (1636-1715), in "A Sermon Concerning Doing Good to Posterity," conjures the faithful to revere Mary as a mother and provider of eternal charity, who has the special favor of God. Completing her maternal perfection is an unthreatening humility and servitude, which Anglican writers unabashedly volunteered as a model for English women. Jeremy Taylor, in *The Life of Our Blessed Lord and Savior*, also reminds us that the "desires of becoming a mother to the MESSIAH were great in all of the Daughters of

[37] Kenneth W. Stevenson, 'Frank, Mark (*bap.* 1612, *d.* 1664)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009.

[38] Anthony Stafford was an Anglican writer, but this work, dedicated to Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud, drew accusations of crypto-Catholicism from Puritans. See Arnold Hunt, 'Stafford, Anthony (*b.* 1586/7, *d.* in or after 1645)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Jacob"(2) and that Mary rejoiced to be the mother of that messiah so that "she might with better advantage be his Servant" (2). During the birth, he says, "the Angels were the ministers, the holy virgin was the Worshipper, and CHRIST the deity" (14), and she was rewarded with a painless birth wherein she felt merely expectation, or, in other words, the "yernings [sic] of a Mother's Bowels"(14). The worshipper's reward is motherhood, but sacrifice is required to the deity should he call for it. If they could no longer, like the matriarchs, hope to be Mary in penance for original sin, English women could strive to be like her in following a codified program of spiritual motherhood that was easily contained by gender hierarchies.[39] These put masculine authority in the position of the unquestionable, if sometimes opaque, spiritual leader. By default it made man a god in his home. Notably, Taylor does not attempt to reconcile this hierarchy with his concern that men are "insensibly becoming unchristian" (preface). Mary, in the Anglican contemplation of her, is made spiritually, and politically, orthodox: a fully human, but paradoxically pure, obedient subject.

It is interesting to note, therefore, how infrequently one finds the Virgin Mary in female characters' typological identification. This is true for fictions by men and women—Christiana, Pamela, Sidney and Roxana identify with Old Testament figures of both sexes—and Mary Astell lists the virgin as just one of many examples of maternal paragons, choosing to ruminate longest on the foresight of Rebecca in *Reflections Upon Marriage*. On one hand, it is important to note that there was some reaction against the high-Anglicans creeping their way back toward Mary. But the work of Jeremy Taylor and

[39] By this I mean the then-orthodox reading of Paul as stating that women were to be silent and submissive, that man was "the head of the woman" and his interpretation of Genesis as sanctioning male hegemony. Indeed, feminist writers pointed to Paul's more democratic expression in Galatians3 3: 27-8: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Anthony Stafford continued to be reprinted in the eighteenth century, and Mary Astell herself was a fan of Taylor's work.[40] Thomas Tenisen, who was Archbishop of Canterbury until 1715, stressed in a sermon to the William and Mary at Whitehall that the Virgin Mary deserved praise for the act of "lasting" charity that was her motherhood to Christ.[41] It is therefore possible that Astell, aiming at enlarging female power in part through motherhood, deliberately eschewed Mariology because the Anglican imagery was too restrictive, rather than because it was too popish. In the English imaginary, it seems, Mary was either submissive (as mother) or threatening (as Goddess.) At a time of elevated anti-Catholicism and concerns about the irreligion of men, she is perhaps strategically avoided.[42]

This avoidance of Mary is also a way of avoiding orthodox codifications of maternal virtue. As we shall see, much of the history of religious feminism relies on heterodox challenges to patriarchal interpretations of religious texts. British women writers of the late seventeenth century thereby engender "heterodoxy" and insubordination through motherhood-related beliefs and behaviors. Although internally complex and rife with contradictions, Bunyan's popular allegory and Anglican Mariology provide examples of orthodox belief about motherhood: that it is a spiritual condition,

[40] See Margaret Hunt, *Women and the Enlightenment* (New York: Haywood 1984), 24.

[41] Thomas Tenisen, *Concerning Doing Good to Posterity. A Sermon Preach'd Before Their Majesties at White-Hall, on February the 16th, 1689-90* (London: H. Hills, 1705).

[42] The theology of Mary also had other uses for establishing orthodox belief. Anti-Quaker polemic provides us a good example. It also accounts for the increased interest in Mary in the early eighteenth century. The former Quaker leader, George Keith, left the Society of Friends in 1691 and was ordained an Anglican Minister in 1702. Keith had argued that the Quakers had run too far afield of orthodox Christianity, engaged in high-profile battles with colonial Quakers, and thus became a useful figure to Anglicans who saw dissent a threat to the national church. To be sure, at the turn of the eighteenth century, an assent to belief in the Virgin Mary was, in many ways, a confession of Orthodoxy. Particularly for the Quakers, the affirmation of the virgin birth was a kind of shorthand that said "We are toing the line."

that women can be rewarded or punished through their children, and that they are responsible for the spiritual welfare of their children but that their responsibility is subsumable by patriarchal authority. The next two sections of this introduction explore the anxiety, present by the late seventeenth century and continuing throughout the eighteenth, that this subsuming authority had become, somewhere along the line, corrupted.

V. Religious Feminism and the Feminization of Religion, or, Much Ado about Atheism:

Religious feminism emerged in tandem with what has been called "the feminization of religion":[43] the common belief that women were more devout than men, and that they were therefore appropriately assuming more and more of the religious duties within certain overlapping "private" spheres. These spheres, to be sure, were not only the domestic, but also community and literary arenas. In addition, but not necessarily conflicting with this increased belief in superior female piety was the continued association of women with dissent, schism, and heterodoxy: "What schism ever rended the Church," quips a gentleman, "which they have not had a principal Hand in? What Error ever crept in among Christians which they have not been industrious to forward?" [44] For as many men and women as there were who argued for the superior pious sensibilities of women, there were just as many who were solicitous to depict that

[43] See Apetrei, 9. See also Emma Major, *Madame Brittania: Women, Church and Nation*, 1712-1812 (New York, Oxford, 2012), 7.

[44] *Man Superior to Woman; or, A Vindication of Man's Natural Right of Sovereign Authority over the Woman* (London: J. Robinson, 1739), 52. This pamphlet is signed "by a gentleman."

piety as a dangerous enthusiasm in need of restraint. Daniel Defoe, for instance, states that women are "extravagantly desirous" of going to heaven, belying by his use of the word "extravagant" an impulse to restrain.[45] Religious feminists such as Margaret Fell and Mary Astell usually had no choice but to resort to heterodox interpretations of biblical texts, thereby proving, in the eyes of their detractors, their schismatic tendencies. This was a double-edged sword, since orthodox interpretations supported an increasingly delinquent male ascendancy.

The purported spread of atheism signaled a national crisis—national sins and national perdition. What becomes clear, from a survey of the archives, is that, from the 1690s onward, "theological speculation and deistic tendencies were much discussed and much feared" (Langford 10), beginning with John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), which made the case for natural religions (Langford 11), such as Deism. Deism is based on reason, over "revealed religion," which is based on apprehensions of the divine. In 1691, Henry Dodwell complained that "Atheism and Irreligion […] has so lately overrun" the nation (qtd. Sheehan, *Bible* 39). In 1696, Richard Willis made a similar complaint: "Atheism and infidelity grow mightily amongst us, which is indeed a very melancholy (sic) Consideration"(qtd. 39). Earlier, Jeremy Taylor and Richard

[45] Daniel Defoe's first substantial publication, *An Essay Upon Projects* (1697) argues for a female academy along the lines of Astell's *A Serious Proposal* (1690). Women, he says, "are extravagantly desirous of going to heaven" (268). Deviating from Astell's celebration of the inherent piety of women, Defoe turns religiosity into a criticism. The word "extravagantly" indicates the threat that they are apt venture beyond sedate and calculated piety of Protestant womanhood, and therefore need to be protected from religious enthusiasm as well as the corrupting influence of men, who, with their romantic manipulations, "impertinent addresses," and general irreligion must be kept "effectually away" (269). Defoe thus counterpoints paternalist notions of the perpetual immaturity of women against concerns about the corrupting influence of men, evoking a dialectic that persists in his woman-centered fiction. Here he argues, with Astell, for a reform of women through removing male influence; if women were properly educated and cared for, he suggests, the theory of female weakness would prove "nonsense" (275); indeed, since Defoe considers such weakness a product of education rather than nature, it already is nonsense.

Allestree warned of waning religious belief. [46] *The Ladies Calling* challenged that "one may go into divers great families, and after some stay there, not able to say that the name of God was mentioned." Later, Joseph Addison lamented that "there is less appearance of religion in England than in any neighboring state of kingdom" (qtd. in Porter, 169), and Thomas Turner said "oh! May religion once more rear up her head in this wicked and impious nation" (qtd. in Porter 169). Sir Richard Blackmore, a physician, argued in an essay on atheism that the tendency toward atheism in the kingdom "where impious principles and degenerate and dissolute manners" would bring the nation to the "brink of ruin" (129). Thomas Knagg's (1660-1724) 1708 victory sermon upon the Duke of Marlborough's victory at the battle of Oudenarde (a key battle of the War of Spanish Succession) cautions the faithful to become more obedient and pious in the wake of God's mercies to them and not to suffer the nation to fall into irreligion like those of Greece and Rome. Similarly, Bishop Butler writes,

> The general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by every one, has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons [….] The influence of it is more and more wearing out the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations upon the subject; but the numbers of those who do, and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases and with their numbers their zeal. [47]

Butler is right to note that the complaints of irreligion are not confined to churchmen. To an extent, these cries from the clergy are consistent with their vocational project of guiding the flock to be more faithful, more obedient to God, and more trusting of

[46] Henry Dodwell (1641-1711) non-juror scholar and theologian; Richard Willis (1664-1734) Bishop of Winchester; Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) is a Church of Ireland bishop and theologian who had significant influence on the work of Mary Astell; Richard Allestree (1622-1681) Church of England clergyman and author of *The Whole Duty of Man* (1657) had profound impact on latitudinarianism.

[47] Joseph Butler, "A Charge Delivered to the Clergy at the Primary Visitation of the Diocese of Durham" in *The Works of Bishop Butler*, Ed. David E. White (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 62.

Providence.[48] When these cries of impiety echo amongst the lay community we take notice of a cultural anxiety over the retreat of religion. Whereas Archbishop John Tillotson could boast that English religion was the best, wisest, truest, and most reasonable religion (New and Reedy ix), one is challenged to discover, indeed, a writer of the period who did not think the faith of the English was in some sort of danger. It is easy to see how the faithful might have internalized this threat of irreligion, and how it might find its way into fiction.

But to what extent is this loss borne out by the data? Did the numbers and zeal of unbelievers increase? Recent scholarship describes deism as more a popular bugbear than a significant community, though according to Roy Porter it did manage to attract intellectuals "sickened by sectarian fanatics, Popery, and clericalism"(168). But Deists and free-thinkers remained "a minute minority" (New and Reedy xi) and no scholar has been able to demonstrate a "deist consensus" (Barnett 19). To be sure, Deists were not necessarily atheists, anyway and enthusiasm of any sort had become unfashionable (Porter 170) and the object of satire. William Hogarth, Daniel Defoe, Susanna Centlivre, and many others achieved material success by satirizing religious enthusiasts. As a reaction to enthusiasm, Anglican theologians strove to demonstrate the inherent reasonableness of Christianity, and its consistency with good living and sociability. In Latitudinarianism, "there arose a systemic and resolute identification of the religious with the social, equally compatible with liberal and with absolutist views of the political authority" (Pocock 26). As the Hanoverians succeeded to the throne, the idea of religion

[48] As S J Barnett notes, Deism was a bogeyman invoked by clerics with an agenda to present themselves as the true defenders of orthodoxy: "The Church-in-Danger cry was, however, used as a means of calling the faithful to order" (5) and agrees that it is more accurate to view enlightenment religion as heterogeneous, rather than monolithic, either in piety or in infidelity (15).

as "rational" and "as something that you wrestled with" sat comfortably with the clergy (Porter 173). Rational religion was a "weapon" against both enthusiasm and atheism (Haakonsen 18). Porter notes that the number of church services in London declined rapidly during the eighteenth century (174), but this, again, provides very little information, in any direction, about the number of professed unbelievers. It is clear, however, that there was a *belief* that belief was in decline, and believers—latitudinarians, high churchmen, Whig dissenters, and religious feminists—employed a number of strategies to restore it.

Religious feminism emerged in the late seventeenth century from many sects of Protestantism, but it universally emphasized the need for certain freedoms: intellectual freedom and the ability to speak and write on religious matters, access to educations that would lead to rational religious opinions, and greater maternal agency.[49] Apetrei's important study of religious feminism concludes that the "threat of atheism and the momentum of the Reformation of Manners […], the notorious polarization of virtue and vice began to work in women's favor" (272) as it was upended. As the late seventeenth-century English began to recover from the bawdy revels of the restoration crown and stage, and recognize with alarm a peculiarly irreligious zeitgeist, it seemed that women were still holding forth as good Protestants, "an advantage augmented by their freedom from the trappings of worldly wisdom and power" (272). Women like Astell inscribed an inverted gendered dichotomy of piety and worldliness. But she was not alone: Jeremy

[49] See also Catharine Gray, *Women Writers and Public Debate in Seventeenth-Century Britain*, (New York: Palgrave, 2007). Gray notes the importance of women dissenters and radicals in undermining the Habermasian public/private sphere dichotomy. Referring to "counterpublics,"she notes that "many of the religio-political battles of the Revolutionary period, then, were fought on the terrain of public and private" and that women were significant actors in these battles (10).

Taylor, Richard Allestree, and Bishop Burnett, to name a few, assisted in renegotiating a gendered discourse of religious piety. Whereas before the split had been between the ethereal, intellectual male, and the sensual, embodied female, it now consisted in a dichotomy between the secular or worldly and the religious or spiritually inclined. The superiority of women was, if not scripturally, empirically obvious.

One of the ways that women maintained an appearance of religious superiority was in print. Sarah Apetrei and Angelina Goreau both note an increase in women's publications, including writings in *The Athenian Mercury*.[50] The outward piety and church-management activities of Queens Mary II and Anne increased their association with the church as its head, and gave face to the metaphor of the church as mother (Major 31). Early feminists were emboldened by these figures and the indirect support of a clergy that bewailed the irreligion of the [men of the] age.[51] Astell suggests in *Reflections upon Marriage* (1700) that the legitimacy of Anne's personal reign should require a harder look at the prerogative of women in marriage and motherhood; however, in order to make her case for the reform of women's education and social standing, Astell had to establish that their current subordination is a matter of *custom*, rather than *nature* (or the will of God), and that Anne was not, therefore, aberrant. [52] In *A Serious Proposal* (1695) and the even bolder *Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell articulates a gendered discourse of secularism and religion that others had talked around, and which remained influential

[50] Apetrei, 4; See also Angelina Goreau, ed., *The Whole Duty of a Woman: Female writers in seventeenth century England* (Garden City, N.Y.: Dial Press, 1985), 68.

[51] Goreau's book argues that religion is what made women go against modesty and publish. Much of their work is religious.

[52] Mary Astell plays with the concept of nature, which in Filmer and Locke had referred both to what was revealed in the Bible and what was empirically observable. She argues that what was empirically observable is patriarchal illegitimacy and the insufficiency of male-mediated women's education. What they were seeing as "natural" was, for Astell, simply customary.

throughout the eighteenth century. Like other early feminists, Astell argues that both the perceived (intellectual) inferiority of women and the impiety of men are the result of "patriarchal mismanagement" (Malmgreen 6).

Using scriptural examples, Astell argues that the relationship of biblical women to the deity was very often forged by maternal behavior that eschewed the commands of patriarchs, and that their judgment was in many instances superior to that of men. The maternal and spiritual duty to God, in Astell's works, is of a higher order than the secular duty to husbands, which too often impedes religious duty. Taken together, Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal* and *Reflections upon Marriage* establish a gendered discourse of secularism and spirituality while offering and exemplifying an alternative to traditional male authority. Characterizing men in general as having become distinctly, or discursively secular, she dismantles their claim to mediating authority over women. In *A Serious Proposal*, she focuses on improving the spiritual condition of women, capable of the loftiest heights of piety, by preparing their understandings to receive religious truths first hand, as opposed to mediated through the "learning" of men. Similarly, *Reflections on Marriage* highlights the secular tyranny of marriage.

Astell's work has attracted critical attention because of its participation in political discourse on patriarchy and monarchical authority, for its responses to satirists who denigrated the souls of women in print, and for its early feminist critique of marriage and female education. What has not been studied in these texts are the ways in which Astell delineates discursive secularism to forge an implicit link between contractarian liberals, satirists, and husbands.[53] Rendering the mediations of men in the spiritual lives

[53] Astell receives brief attention in Bowers (195) Flint, and Perry (199). These critics talk about Astell's work in terms of its implications for conjugal relations. See Christopher Flint, *Family Fictions: Narrative*

of women illegitimate, Astell posits her female academy as a more suitable alternative; as an approximation of this academy, her texts perform a female mediation that corrects and substitutes for the way women's understandings have been heretofore presented in print culture. [54] Primarily, Astell is interested in the spiritual health of women in marriage, but her explication of women as spiritually superior also empowers mothers insofar as it expresses anxieties about the restraint that secular patriarchy puts on women's spiritual growth and activity.[55]

Astell's work pleads for women to be able to take that "step to maturity" in intellectual and spiritual matters that Kant believed would characterize the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*).[56] Astell's work is also a good example of the way that Siskin and Warner have defined Enlightenment as a moment in the history of mediation, or the ways in which media connects or separates people and information. Heretofore, her religiosity

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and Domestic Relations in Britain, 1688-1798 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 377. See also Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199.

[54] Anthony Pollock's discussion of Mary Astell explains the ways in which Astell presents women as mediated by male discursivity. According to Pollock, Astell militates against the "specularity" of women, positing instead a female discursivity. As Pollock notes, Astell asks how it is that women have come to accept and actively promote their own subjection (117) and remain invested in the appraisal of the male gaze (119). While Astell views the primary threat to women's "innocence" in the Serious Proposal as the temptation to scandalous gossip, by the time she writes the *Reflections*, what the earlier text describes as a mere inability to detect the fallacies in men's romantic rhetoric has become perhaps the most pernicious source of self-endangerment" which allows a man "discursive access" (121). Astell's strategy of de-specularizing the feminine is to "move from a specular to discursive conception of themselves" (126), derogating the ocular and specular in favor of the discursive in her vocabulary and admonitions (127). See Anthony Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[55] Andrew Lister has suggested that Astell's *Reflections* is not an outgrowth of political radicalism but a response to Locke, a retaliation against misogynist satire, and an argument for remaining single as a legitimate option: it is "a curious mixture of the progressive and the reactionary" he says, "and reminds us that feminism is often a response to misogyny" (46). I agree with his assessment, and would also add that her concern with challenging the empirical theory of subordination is motivated by her desire to expand women's religious freedom. Andrew Lister, "The Place of Mary Astell in the History of Political Thought." *History of Political Thought* 25 no. 1(2004): 44-72.

[56] See "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment." "Maturity" (or "Majority") is Kant's term for "man's release from his self-incurred tutelage."

and political conservatism, even patriarchalism, have made her an awkward fit for the Enlightenment canon. To find her a place, scholars have either minimized the devotional aspect of her feminism, or, conversely, subordinated her religious feminism to her political conservatism, and her concerted criticism of contractarian theory in general and John Locke in particular.[57] Her devotional feminism, however, which insofar as it uses Lockean educational theory to argue for women's intellectual autonomy, and makes explicit the consequences of mediated religion, makes her an important enlightenment feminist. Astell challenges patriarchal structures such as marriage and parenthood to become more equitable, compassionate and "Christian." The theory behind this challenge originates in the dismantling of the state/marriage analogy in which she follows up on and revises the work of liberal contractarians such as Hobbes and Locke. In the first of his *Two Treatises of Government* (published 1689), Locke had undermined the biblical basis for women's subordination to men in his attack on Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (published 1680), but Locke, unlike Astell, seemed to maintain that subordination on an empirical basis.

Although Astell in large part agreed with Filmer's conclusions supporting monarchical government, she was disgusted by the premises on which his theory rested--particularly Filmer's premise that contractualist claims, when extended to the microcosm of the marriage contract, are rendered absurd.[58] Filmer argues that Adam's power over

[57] Contractarians were those liberal thinkers, such as Hobbes and Locke, who advocated a theory of government based on the social contract.

[58] Patricia Springborg asserts that the principle target in each of Astell's works is John Locke, and particularly his *Two Treatises on Government* (1689). For Springborg, Astell's political conservatism and loyalty to James II infuses her response to contract theory (Springborg, *Astell*, 149). Springborg argues that as much as Astell wanted to reform marriage by reforming the paternal role she rather meant to point out the inadequacy of contract theory in both the home and the state by returning to the state/family homology.

the beasts of the land in Genesis sanctions absolute monarchy; that absolute monarchy is the only legitimate type of government in the bible; and that fathers have complete and alienable (transferrable) rights over their children, which he argues from both biblical and empirical evidence. In other words, because patriarchy appears to work splendidly on every great estate in the nation, the divine sanction must be in it. This is the orthodox interpretation of biblical gender relations based on the second version of the creation myth and the Pauline epistles that place man as the "head" of the woman. [59]

Locke's first treatise dismantles Filmer's patriarchalism on biblical grounds. In order to make his case for the supremacy of the patriarchal figure, Filmer had erased the biblical history of women who, when Locke recovers them, appear to possess an equal share of the divine sanction. Whereas Filmer contends that absolute right over children is inherent in the process of begetting, Locke argues that mothers possess an equal share in that right. If, as Filmer had written, the fourth commandment locates the source of all power in the father, then it locates an equal power in the mother (First Treatise 13); the paternal is not given any kind of precedence except once, in the binding of Eve to the desires of her husband, in which instance Locke finds reasons to contest the extent of this dominion.

While Locke gestures toward a place for women in government, he stops short of articulating one, seeming rather to acknowledge the equality of right to rule but the inequality of ability. Locke argues that there is in fact no biblical precedent sanctioning any one form of government. This extends to the government of the family, for which

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See Patricia Springborg, introduction to *Political Writings* by Mary Astell (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxix.

[59] 1 Cor. 11:3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Locke relies on the historical efficacy of the custom of male ascendency. In *Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell, finding both traditional patriarchalism and Locke's contractarianism unsatisfactory, instead indicts the integrity of contractarians who claim freedom for themselves while imposing slavery on women. Far from undermining monarchism in either microcosm or macrocosm, her works rather emphasize, on empirical grounds, men's general unfitness to rule-- their apparent lack of either divine sanction or historical efficiency-- and the faultiness of claims about the "natural" inferiority of women. Women's intellectual inferiority, where it appears, is a result of a faulty education perpetrated by male mediators, and not nature.

In Mary Astell's polemics, the concerns and activities of most men are distinctly worldly. Although she allows for the possibility that there are virtuous and religious men and husbands, the most frequent dichotomy in her works is not between good and bad men, but between men and God. (Nor is it accurate to say that in this dichotomy "man" is a universal term referring to mankind.) Women's relationship to God suffers through the intermediation of men, who themselves make "preposterous returns" on their advantages of intellectual freedom. Indeed, while Astell allows for the possibility of a pious man, the only ones she refers to directly are priests. Women, conversely, are capable of the greatest piety and wisdom when spared the conversation of men, who generally disparage religious sentiment: "[many women] countenance the piety which the men decry and are the brightest Patterns of Religion that the Age affords; 'tis my grief that all the rest of our sex do not imitate such illustrious Patterns"(Proposal 57). Here Astell sets up her empirical argument for the greater religiosity of women by gendering distaste for religion

as distinctly masculine, and piety as a pattern that women have perfected, albeit not yet managed to make universal to their sex.[60]

To Astell, men are not only themselves irreligious or anti-religious, but their mediation in the religious lives of women has serious consequences for the latter's salvation: "but why should she be blamed of setting no great value on her Soul, whose noblest Faculty, her Understanding, is render'd useless to her?" (71). Paternalist control inhibits spiritual growth in women by substituting dictated spiritual truths for those that are apprehended by one's own understanding.[61] Astell pleads for women's minds to be allowed to develop to the point where they can engage religious questions through complex deliberation.[62] She uses Locke and anti-Catholic sentiment to render illegitimate the spiritual authority of men. She says, "permit us only to understand our own duty and not to be force'd to take it upon trust from others" (81). This is phrased as a relatively humble proposal until one considers that what is meant by duty is duty to God, and that she is asking for nothing less than for men to abdicate to women their privileges in

[60] Astell's claims seem to correspond to the assessment of historians, who contend that the outward spirituality of women was discernible in their participation in institutional religion. See Diarmaid McCullough, *Christianity: the First Three Thousand Years* (New York, Penguin, 2009), 792-795; Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment* (London, Palgrave, 2005), and Dale A. Johnson, *Women in English Religion*, 1700-1925 (New York: Mellen, 1983), 4-11.

[61] Astell's reference to the understanding as the soul's "noblest faculty" is directly out of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689-90). Locke says, "The Understanding—who does not know that, as it is the most Elevated faculty of the Soul, so it is employed with a greater and more Constant Delight than any of the other." In Locke, as in Astell, the weakness of the understanding is deleterious to the soul. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett Publishing, 1996), 1.

[62] In "'Our Religion and Liberties": Mary Astell's Christian Political Polemics" Michal Michaelson, argues that, for Astell, liberty and rights, sovereignty and reason are first religious and only secondarily political paradigms (123). See also the volume that this essay appears in, Jacqueline Broad and Catherine Green, eds, *Virtue, Liberty, and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women, 1400-1800* (Springer: Dordrecht, NL, 2007).

mediating religious duty.[63] Astell's rationale thus shows the influence of Locke, who argues against the practice of accepting truths at 'second hand'; for this reason he emphasized experiential knowledge in *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). The study of abstract truths, in which the mind must be engaged to apprehend and assent to, she considers of the highest importance. Both complex understanding and affection toward Christ are necessary to guide the will to act aright; combined they are a protection against sin and apostasy.

Her concern for the deleterious effects of illegitimate spiritual mediation echoes with the anti-Catholicism that she knew would be exploited to reject her idea of a female academy. She thus implicitly embeds a rejoinder to her enemies on their own terms. The contraction of the range of women's thoughts to received opinions is equal to a contraction of their souls; it serves to "hinder them only to that particular track […] in a word, erect a Tyranny over our free born Souls"(133). Cries against tyranny, especially in religious matters, ironically echo anxieties about an absolutist Catholic Stuart monarchy that galvanized those contractarians whom Astell systematically criticizes in later works. In contrast to a mediation that contracts the understandings and the souls of women, Astell's *Serious Proposal* and her proposed academy exemplify alternative, female mediations that seek to extend the understandings, agency and influence of women, and therefore expand the general participation of both women and men in spiritual life. [64]

[63] The phrase "take it upon trust" is also used in a similar context in Locke's *Essay*. "It is to them [thy own thoughts], if they are thy own, that I refer myself; but if they are taken upon trust from others, it is no great matter what they are; they are not following truth but some meaner consideration (1)

[64] "It will go a great deal towards reclaiming the Men […] She has many opportunities of giving such a Form and Season to the tender mind of the child, as will shew its good effects thro' all the stages of his life" (106).

In *Reflections upon Marriage* she connects the political disloyalty of men with their unchristian behavior and infidelity to women they profess to love.[65] Marriage to such a man is a "hard fate" for a woman who "puts herself entirely in his powers; nay even the very desires of her heart according to some learned Casuists"(6). Like the "whissling [sic] Wits" who scoff at the clergy and "rally at everything tho' ever so sacred, and rail at women commonly in very good company" (61), their abuse of women stems from a lack of religiosity. But Astell, as she thoroughly secularizes men, does not stop at egregious abuses of patriarchal privilege; she also exposes secularism as a lifestyle that impacts every level of patriarchal government. In public affairs, they aim at grandeur and status; Astell describes men as masters of that worldly existence: "What is it they cannot do? They make Worlds and ruin them, form Systems of universal nature and dispute eternally about them" (61). Here we have a delineation of discursive secularism in less condemnatory terms than Astell has used previously, which helps us to identify its presence in narratives where the patriarchal figure is not merely shallow or selfish; it is secular in outlook, thereby making his will contrary to the duties of Christian motherhood.

Astell's biblical examples seem to emphasize what we have already seen in Bunyan's story of Christiana: maternity is part of a system of spiritual rewards and punishments, participation in providential schemes and inextricable from the salvation of the mother. In elevating examples of biblical matriarchs over the misogynist orthodox interpretation of the Pauline epistles, Astell capitalizes on the subversive potential of

[65] Astell was opposed to the ousting of James II, and this incident is one of the causes of her depicting men as unfaithful subjects who make unfaithful rulers. See Patricia Springborg, "Mary Astell and John Locke" in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature* 1650-1740 , Ed. Steven J. Zwicker (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 283.

contractualist hermeneutics. In her preface to the revised edition, she tears a foundational rift between wifely and spiritual duty: "Because God made all Things for Himself, and a Rational Mind is too noble a Being to be Made for the sake and Service of any Creature […] The Service she at any time becomes oblig'd to pay to a Man, is only a Business by the Bye. Just as it might be any man's Duty to keep Hogs" (11). Whereas most mothers were reluctant to jettison filial obedience as a religious principle, Astell's arguments, insofar as they touch on maternity, at least critique a triangulation of religious duties that becomes unmanageable when husbands and fathers are wayward in theirs.

Reflections on Marriage contains several pages of interpretations of biblical motherhood wherein men defer to or are found wanting against the wisdom of women. As scholars have noted, Astell uses these examples to show that men cannot have learned the subjection of women from scripture.[66] It is needless to discuss each of Astell's biblical examples, but one in particular, the case of the old testament mother figure, emerges frequently at moments of maternal crisis in eighteenth-century novels. The condition of manly tyranny over the maternal agency of women dominates narratives of maternity after Astell, and the biblical mother becomes the paradigm for women placing God above husband (or the discursive secularism of men in general) by following their own judgment. Astell for example interprets Rebecca's trick on Isaac and preference for Jacob as evidence of her superior judgment: "The Character of Isaac, tho' one of the most blameless Men taken notice of in the Old Testament, must give place to Rebecca's, whose Affections are more Reasonably placed than his, her favorite Son being the same who was God's Favourite" (23). Indeed, even Jacob, she says, trembles at the demand of

[66] Michaelson, 125. Catherine Quinsey also points out that Mary Astell based her feminism on a "rereading of biblical tradition." See Catherine Quinsey, introduction to *Under the Veil: Feminism and Spirituality in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 1.

his resolute mother who flouts paternal inheritance norms to elevate God's favored son, Jacob.

Astell also invokes New Testament figures: "And if it is a greater Blessing to hear the word of God and keep it, who are more considerable for their assiduity in this than the female disciples of our Lord?" (27). She says the Virgin Mary "received the greatest honour that human nature is capable of" (27). As I have noted above, this is Astell's brief reference to The Virgin. Just one of many New Testament women, the Virgin in Astell's estimation is noted as an example of divine sanction of female agency, not as a model for conduct. Astell's invocations of biblical figures serve as powerful evidence of a superior duty to God of which their relationship to their children is the chief means of fulfillment, and against which duty to husbands is at best secondary.

Whereas Astell's work is the most complete theorization of the discursive secularity of men of her age, and its impact on women's education and salvation, she was far from alone. The Quaker Margaret Fell, in *Women's Speaking Justified* (1666), constructed male mediating authority in opposition to divine will and, similarly, stripped them of the divine sanction: "And as God the Father made no such difference in the first creation, nor never since between the male and the female […] so also his son, Christ Jesus, confirms the same thing" (qtd. Goreau 114). She reminds her readers of the story of Judith, where men were shamed for their attempts to silence women: "So you are far from the minds of the elders of Israel, who praised God for a woman's speaking" (119). Many women, like Astell, emphasized the importance of improving female education as a way of reforming the nation. Bathsua Makin advises women to "attempt higher things" so that men will be "ashamed to claim sovereignty over such as are more wise and virtuous

than themselves" (25). The way to reestablish the piety of men, and restore order, according to early feminists, was for women to take the spiritual reins for themselves.

We know from Astell's preface to the revised edition of *Reflections* that she was accused of inciting rebellion and insubordination, a typical charge against heterodoxy of religious opinion. She effectively defuses claims about her unorthodoxy, however, by drawing a relationship between popish or priestly tyranny and the tyranny of men—who likewise attempt to constrain access to religious opinion and speculation in order to wield political control. As she says, "Scripture is not always on their side who make parade of it" (Preface). Instead of admonishing her interpretations, her detractors attempted to argue that the scriptures are not "interessed [sic]" in the matter any more than they are in the Copernican system. Her reprinting such commentary served to further her claims about the profane and irreligious nature of men, who were "nonplussed" by her arguments and therefore attempted to discredit her on secular grounds, playing directly into her hands.[67] In the final analysis, Astell's legacy consists in the segregation, or at least constellation, of spiritual and filial duty. She also makes explicit scriptural contradictions, provoking anxieties about what precisely these duties are. Astell's "hermeneutics of suspicion" is unambiguously heterodox (Michaelson 126). Proving the bible a legitimizing source for subversion and rebellion, as well as for obedience and gendered hierarchy, Astell's exegesis establishes maternity as a matter of religious controversy.

[67] As William Kolbrenner and Michal Michaelson point out, these attacks were relatively few and Astell's secularizing of her enemies may therefore have been preemptive. While Astell never opened her female academy, she did raise ten thousand pounds and eventually opened a charity school (7). She was ridiculed by Gilbert Burnett, but that might have been because of her High-Church enthusiasm (10). See William Kolbrener, and Michal Michelson, *Mary Astell Reason, Gender, Faith*, (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). I have not been able to discover the identity of the detractors she quotes in her preface

VI. Our Nursing Mother: The Promise of Queen Anne:

In *Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell's paean to Queen Anne summarizes the feminist potential inherent in a queen whose hereditary right and ecclesiastical dominion is a matter of national survival:[68]

> To the Women's tracing a new Path to Honor, in which none shall walk but such as scorn to Cringe in order to Rise, and who are proof both against giving and receiving flattery! In a word, to those Halcyon, or if you will Millenium [sic] Days, in which the Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, and the Tyrannous Domination which Nature never meant, shall no longer render useless if not hurtful, the industry and Understanding of half Mankind. (31)

Anne is a Tory feminist's dream and a nightmare. Astell notes that she is the Stuart dynasty and dedicated to the national church, in a marriage by all accounts equitable, but the fact that Anne is childless is omitted. The paean amounts to a vague Utopian hope. Neither Anne, nor her predecessor, Mary, had any surviving issue.

To many, Anne's reign signaled the potential beginning of an age of piety, or "a millennium age." However, as Toni Bowers explains, Anne had eighteen pregnancies and, after the death of her longest-surviving son, The Duke of Gloucester, the Stuart line was without a protestant heir: "Her mere existence threatened to establish forms of authority outside, and potentially in opposition to, patriarchal systems of inheritance"

[68] Apetrei also notes the political "imperative to defend Anne's dynastic right" (11).

(Bowers 73).[69] Part of the "transgressive paradox" (73) that Bowers describes is the fact that Anne was able to establish forms of motherhood that exist in potential opposition to paternal authority. Whereas the spirtualization of Anne's political power, and her childlessness, dampened her political potency, it gave the divine sanction to the feminization of religion and legitimized female spiritual agency. The promise of Anne as spiritual mother in an age of moral reform empowered enlightenment feminism insofar as it located within a female figure the promise of restoring religiosity to an age paranoid about its decline. For some, Marlborough's the military success in the War of the Spanish Succession, during the first few months of Anne's reign portended the design of providence to restore righteousness under female rule. Another paean summarizes this hope:

> Your Months contain the Wonders of an Age:
> Sure Heave'n's in haste to do those Things by you,
> Which FAITH and REVELATION have in View
> […] Heav'n still your CAUSE defend,
> Protest your Person, Send you long to Reign,
> Till Righteousness and Peace unite again;
> And till that Kingdom come, for which we Pray,
> Wherein on Earth Men shall Heav'n's Will obey." [70]

The anonymous writer depicts Anne's reign as signaling not only a year of wonders "Anno Mirabili" but also a millenarian, matriarchal utopia.

Early in her reign, Anne was reluctant to take on church controversy directly, but, as I note above, those controversies revived after the Glorious Revolution, with Whigs warning that schism paranoia could embolden enemies abroad, and Tories seizing on dissent as the cause of the decline of religion. The reputation of dissenters for

[69] Bowers argues that these threats led to an even more determined program of patriarchal containment of maternal autonomy by codifying maternal virtue in a way that excludes maternal "difference" (20).
[70] Anonymous. *Anna in Anno Mirabili; or the Wonderful Year of 1702: A Rehearsal* (London, B. Bragg, 1702).

"enthusiasm" fueled anxieties about disestablishment and memories of the interregnum, which, like the Reformation, brought about significant social upheaval including loss of property. Anne herself believed that the Whig ascendency during the reign of William and Mary was a threat to the church. She told Sarah Churchill in 1704: "As to my saying that the Church was in some danger during the late reign, I cannot alter my opinion: for though there was no violent thing done, everybody that will speak impartially must own that everything was leaning toward the Whigs, and whenever that is, I shall think the Church beginning to be in danger" (qtd. in Somerset 201). The Church, of course, is the Church of England, the hegemony of which was in large part the justification for Anne's succession.

As the Tories fashioned themselves "the Church Party" (Somerset 191), it was they who raised the cry of "The Church in Danger." Their fears were centered on the dissolution of the established church. For one, the status of the queen as head of the church was integral to her legitimacy as a divinely appointed monarch, instead of, according to liberal rhetoric, elective. Anne's power rested in the fact that she was both a Stuart and a Protestant, the latter condition legitimizing the revolution that put her and Mary II ahead of their Catholic father and brother. Anne's first speech to Parliament and her coronation, which Toni Bowers details extensively, stressed her status as the savior of the Church of England and its "nursing mother." [71] This is a term that divines often

[71] Bowers writes at length about the coronation sermon for Queen Anne coming from Isaiah 49: 23. The text reads: "Kings shall by thy nursing-fathers and their Queens thy nursing-mothers" but, Bowers argues, in the larger context of Isaiah, "the relationships are between a mother, her child, and God; there is no human paternal figure present" (55). Bowers concludes that this is a deliberate eschewal of maternity and the chapter's concern with female reproduction, which has the effect of separating Anne's political and spiritual roles. Interestingly, the Isaiah verse further supports my argument that motherhood is a spiritual condition and that children are the means by which mothers participate with the divine. Tammi Schneider's exegesis of Genesis details the forms in which Old Testament mothers become guardians of the divine

applied to the church itself. It is important to understand that nursing—maternity—was a religious activity.[72] Divines such as Jeremy Taylor had argued that maternal breastfeeding is divinely mandated as a form of charity; proponents of nursing argued that it was indeed a matter of both education and nutrition, and that an infant could imbibe character traits and morals from the breast of its mother or wet nurse.[73] Anne's status as "nursing mother" to her people carries with it all of these inflections: Anne as Church, Anne as wetnurse, Anne as teacher.

Anne was a devout member of the Anglican Church (as her sister had also been) and feared the religious unorthodoxy of the Whigs, and expressed concerns about the abuse of "occasional conformity." Occasional conformity meant that one could take communion in the Church of England once a year and be exempt from the disabilities imposed upon dissenters and non-conformists. This was a way around the Test Act and many dissenters openly practiced it. Tory polemics often seized on this loophole, for their political importance hinged on the sense of the church in crisis (Langford 11). Whereas Mary II indicated, by her choice of bishops, that she was comfortable with occasional conformity (Miller, *Stuarts* 226).[74] Anne was not, and appeared to support Tory attempts to legislate it out of existence. The Occasional Conformity Act of 1711 forbade dissenters

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promise, and rewarded with children. See Tammi J. Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis* (Ada Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008).

[72] I discuss this more fully in chapter two of this dissertation.

[73] In "Of Nursing Children, in Imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mother," in *The Life of Our Blessed Savior* (rpt. 1703) Charles Taylor says that nursing one's own infants "is among those things which God hath separated from the common instincts of nature, and made properly to be laws, by the mixtures of justice and charity. For it is part of that education which mothers, as a duty, owe to their children." See Jeremy Taylor, *Antiquitates Christianæ: Or, the History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus: As Also the Lives, Acts and Martyrdoms of His Apostles […]* (London: J. Leake, 1703). Astell warns about nurses who "with their Milk […] transfuse their Vices, and form in the Child such evil Habits as will not easily be eradicated" (*A Serious Proposal* 61).

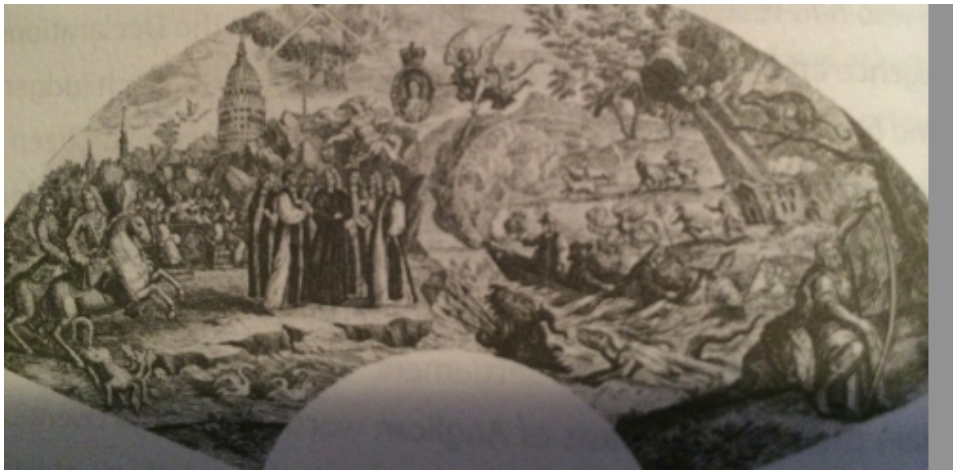
[74] Miller, John. *The Stuarts* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

from taking Anglican Communion, and the 1714 Schism Act forbade them from keeping schools (Haakonsen 23). For many, Anne was the only thing keeping the Church and state together (Miller 244-6).

Before the Schism Acts, Anne's support for "the church party" was not sufficiently absolute, and she found herself at the center of a controversy begun by Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724). In a series of inflammatory High-Church sermons, the popular Oxford preacher virulently defended the church against schism. Like earlier High Churchmen, Sacheverell saw toleration as coterminous with schism. Thomas Bennett (1673-1728), for instance, had attempted to establish dissent as a damnable sin in 1702. Sacheverell argued that Church and State are in the greatest danger when either is undermined "through the foundation of the other" ("A Political Union," Oxford, 1702). He said, "It is high time for the people look about themselves and to guard against the approaching danger" (44). He was brought up on charges of sedition for a sermon given at Oxford on the fifth of November 1709, "The Perils of False Brethren," in which he attacked the Whigs (especially Sidney Godolphin) for their support of toleration. In this sermon he invited an unflattering comparison of Anne to Elizabeth I, exaggerating Elizabeth's suppression of the Puritans.[75] Elizabeth knew, he said, the danger they could and did one day present to the nation (35). Very little of the Guy Fawkes Day sermon was devoted to the usual anti-Catholicism; most of it consisted of attacks against Whigs who wave off schism as a "bugbear" and speak disingenuously of union, comprehension, and toleration (16). He compared the gunpowder plot to the regicide of Charles I, attempting to sow mistrust for Protestant nonconformists. The furiously reprinted sermon,

[75] See also Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible* (29-31). Anne's celebrants consistently depicted her as a reborn Elizabeth, a comparison suggested by the fact that she ruled as a sole monarch. Sacheverell here admonishes her for not being enough like Elizabeth I, but he manipulates some of the details of her reign.

Godolphin's indictment of Sacheverell, and the light sentence the preacher received in March of 1710, had the effect of making him a Tory hero and a walking martyr. (See below a design for a fan, depicting Sacheverell with the Marian Martyrs and Anne, confined within a medallion, hovering as a spectator above the dynamic victory below.) The cry of "The Church in Danger" resounded, and an intolerant Tory ascendency held forth during what Jonathan Swift later called 'the four last years of the queen" (Pocock 18).



The figure at left is a design for a fan, depicting Sacheverell with the Marian martyrs. In Langford, *Eighteenth Century Britain* (1984)

In addition to attacking the enemies of the established Church, Sacheverell also made reference to a growing concern amongst Britons of many religious orientations about a decline in religious belief in general:

> What Reason have we to think, but that the National Sins are Ripen'd up to a full Maturity, to call down Vengeance from Providence on a Church and Kingdom, thus Debauch'd in it's [sic] Principles, and corrupted in it's [sic] Manners, and instead of the True Faith, Discipline, and Worship, given over to all Licentiousness both in Opinion, and Practice, to all Sensuality, Hypocrisy, Lewdness, and Atheism? And now are We under no Danger in these Deplorable circumstances? (37)

Once again, English religion was supposedly in a precarious state, and not only from error, but also from general impiety and worldliness. Often the two were conflated as they are above. True faith, error, and unbelief were not always distinctly constellated.

The promise of Queen Anne to a nation was that she would spearhead a reform of morals that would save the church or halt the decline in religious piety that seemed too palpably real to writers of the period. To religious feminists, Anne was a legitimate ruler with the sanction to speak and lead on spiritual matters, which was the prerogative most desired. As Bowers rightly argues, Anne's promise to feminists was in the fact that this spiritual power was not aberrant but consistent with the feminization of religious feeling and religious piety. However, whereas one can point to demonstrable reforms during the reign of Queen Anne—for instance, in fiction and drama a shift toward moral and sentimental literature—the sense of religious decline and patriarchal corruption continued throughout the century. The novels of Frances Sheridan in particular reveal a melancholy dissatisfaction about the undelivered promises of the female monarch. Whereas Mary Astell's work transformed the discourse of religious experience and raised questions about the mediating authority of men, Queen Anne's reign lent legitimacy to the spiritual authority of the religious woman. It also, however, emblazoned images of suffering motherhood, of modern Niobes, as emblems of national disenchantment.

VII. Marginalized Maternity and the Sequelization of Motherhood:

It should not be at all surprising that religious controversy over women's spiritual agency has gotten less attention from historians of religion than, for instance, the controversy over "good works" and *sola fide*, or transubstantiation. There were no wars

fought over it and few tractarian battles waged in its name. Those writers who did approach it generally did so as part of the discourse of "conduct literature" focused mainly on women and domestic matters. In non-fiction, therefore, we can hardly help but see the discursive field of what we might call "maternal religious controversy" as a program of containment and constraint. It has been a long and difficult process for critics and historians to recognize the subversive or radical potential of women's religious writing, and the influence it had on novels about motherhood.

In 1986, Gail Malmgreen called on feminist historians not to ignore religion or "we will have forfeited our understanding of the mental universe of no doubt a substantial majority of women who were believers" (6). Very recently, feminist historians have begun to tap into that mental universe. Emma Major's *Madame Britannia: Women, Church and Nation, 1712-1812*, (2012) discusses the "new resonance" that women's religious participation had during the enlightenment. Major focuses on the figure of Britannia and her association with the church, and the way women could function as Britannias—patriotic, virtuous, and publically active—in a society that seemed plagued with evils. Sarah Apetrei's *Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England* (2010) is an exhaustive study of feminist writings of the period that subtends this study of motherhood by explaining the ways in which religion could have a liberating, rather than constraining, consequence for women's writing and participation in the public sphere.

As Toni Bowers argues, in *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture,* 1680-1760 (1996), Augustan writing about motherhood reflects a desire to constrain and delimit maternity, excluding maternal difference. Her book also celebrates

"the incompleteness that always bedevils a process of cultural containment" (25). Bowers is perhaps the only critic who has to some degree prioritized the role of religion in motherhood: her book discusses manipulations of scripture in religious iconography in the reign of Queen Anne and their relation to codifications of "virtuous" and "monstrous" motherhood. By contrast, this dissertation focuses on those bedeviling factors that defied containment of maternity, and on the consequences of heterodox speculation and the gendering of religious piety. To put it another way, my dissertation focuses on the conditions of motherhood in an age confronted with the specters of heterodoxy and irreligion, and the spiritual crises of fictional mothers. I do not categorize the mothers in this study according to Augustan norms of "good" (virtuous) and "bad" (monstrous) mothers; instead I discuss their negotiations with competing standards that are often irresolvable within their fictional worlds. I read them as spiritual pilgrims rather than as behavioral paradigms. This is not to say that the Augustan categories, which other critics have maintained in their analyses, are not appropriate to histories of maternity; to be sure, they are fundamental for understanding the spiritual crises, even though they are too rigid to express fully the fluidity and variety of Christian motherhood.

Nonetheless, some review of the recent literature on motherhood is helpful here. Felicity Nussbaum's 1995 study of maternity, sexuality and empire discusses the sexual aspects of maternity and the ways in which "women were encouraged to adjust to a domestic life suitable with the pursuit of Empire" (24). Empire provides a useful discourse for upending the political subjugation of women: the discourse of tyranny and slavery (Nussbaum 12). Religious controversy, I would argue, shares this vocabulary, often associating paternalist, clerical, or intellectual mediation with popish tyranny.

Importantly, Nussbaum also notes the importance of separating maternity from sexuality to study motherhood (24). Ruth Perry's *Novel Relations* (2004) also focuses on the policing of sexuality and the privileging of the conjugal over the consanguineal relationship that occurred in the eighteenth century. Sexuality, sexual containment of women, and the imperatives of patriarchal inheritance often dominate studies of maternity to the extent that sexuality or biological motherhood often eclipse the psychological and spiritual experience of motherhood.[76]

Conversely, Susan C. Greenfield's work focuses on the cultural anxiety about motherhood that is legible in narratives about maternal absence. Greenfield's *Mothering Daughters* (2002) is a psychoanalytic study of the cultural idealization of full-time maternity (15) and its psychological effect on readers, orphans, widowers, and fathers who refuse to acknowledge their progeny. These studies emerge from a rich and variegated discourse of maternity available in the archives: Britons of the period wrote a great deal about maternity, childbirth, breastfeeding, childrearing, and marriage, and they often wrote about these topics in the language of religious duty. Despite this cultural preoccupation with maternity, as Marilyn Francus points out, "literary narratives marginalized or displaced mothers" (7), and conduct books marginalized them by "refusing to acknowledge maternity as a distinct aspect of female experience" (12), separate from sexuality or marriage: "evidently, envisioning a [virtuous] domestic mother was not difficult in eighteenth-century Britain, but imagining her as a protagonist with a

[76] Rebecca Kukla's study traces the demand for surveillance and governance of the pregnant body, an "untrustworthy entity" (11). Tracing the writings and correspondence of the English aristocracy of the eighteenth century, Judith Schneid Lewis notes the "dual transformations" that occurred in the eighteenth century: toward companionate marriage and male control over childbearing, midwifery, and pregnancy. See Rebecca Kukla, *Mass Hysteria: Medicine, Culture, and Mother's Bodies* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). See also Judith Schneid Lewis, *In the Family Way: Childbearing in the British Aristocracy, 1760-1860* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1986).

narrative was (8), therefore narratives of maternity often feature "monstrous" mothers. This phenomenon in some ways limits the range of my study: as monstrous mothers and absent mothers have been very thoroughly studied of late, the subjectivities of "virtuous" mothers, or mothers who are more difficult to categorize-- or are simply muddling along as best they can-- constitute a small sampling of eighteenth-century literature, but still require examination. It is also imperative to return to some of these "monstrous" or failed mothers, such as Defoe's *Roxana*, and investigate the ways in which they attempt to embody Christian paradigms.

As Francus points out, eighteenth-century authors marginalized maternal subjectivity in a number of ways. In this study, I focus on the sequelization of motherhood as both a marginalization (from the main narrative) and a means of recovery. The maternal experience of female protagonists often appears in the form of a sequel (Bunyan, Richardson), a conclusion (Sheridan, Inchbald), or a spurious continuation (Defoe's *Roxana*). Sequels function as reinforcements or recuperations of the fictional heroine's "virtue." What sequelization suggests, in broad terms, is the potential for a woman to rise or fall, spiritually and morally, through maternity: that a mother might redeem her sin by following her saintly husband's example; that a prostitute might be saved through connection to innate maternal longings; that a pious wife can convert her atheist husband and regain control over her maternity; or that a passive and distressed wife might be vindicated by maternal success. In other words, sequelization has profound spiritual significance despite being an afterthought, usually in response to criticism or threats of piracy.

Sequelization, anxieties of restraint, and conflicts between maternal and wifely duty characterize narratives of maternity whether they are written by men or women, or, in the case of Defoe's *Roxana*, are a product of anonymous and hack collaborators of both sexes. For these reasons, this study does not confine itself to female novelists and is more or less balanced in presenting male- and female-authored texts. I can find no reason to say that male writers deal with the conflicts of Christian maternity in a consistently distinct way from female writers. The fictional conflicts are consistent and consistently irresolvable, and when there is a resolution, it is tentative or superficial. By and large, the spiritual crises are a matter of Christian maternity in conflict with secular patriarchy or a multiplicity of competing religious principles. Whereas writers like Richardson might seek to recover the status quo of male spiritual and political hegemony, they are still cognizant of the crises that constitute their characters' spiritual progresses, as real-life testaments to those crises are ubiquitous in print.

In "Notorious Signs, Feminist Criticism, and Literary Tradition" (1985), Adrienne Munich cautions feminist critics against limiting themselves to female-authored texts, even in studies of motherhood or female experience: "instead of viewing the criticism of male-authored texts as a mere act of interpreting works by the 'other,' feminist criticism can consider how this two-sexed culture has produced gendered polarities which inform all its writings" (244). [77] Whereas male-authored texts, under feminist investigation, make female experience legible, female-authored texts inform and are informed by the lenses of their male counterparts. I adopt Munich's concept of a "two sexed culture" in which all literary texts contain "subversive knowledge of the gendered arena of their

[77] In Gayle Green and Coppélia Kahn, eds., *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, (London; New York: Methuen, 1985).

production" (244) to argue for the appropriateness of studying all works that attempt to present a maternal subjectivity in religious crisis. Often, realization of this "two sexed culture" makes manifest in reactions, revisions, and sequels. Susan Gubar's "Feminist Misogyny: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Paradox of 'It Takes One to Know One'" (1994) makes a similar claim about the extent of discursive overlap between feminist and misogynist texts, and the degree to which misogynist texts can have "antithetical feminist subscripts" (147).[78] If one can read misogyny in the writings of Astell, Montagu, or Wollstonecraft, one can just as easily detect subversive feminist discourses in texts by Bunyan, Defoe and Richardson.

VIII. Chapter Breakdown: A Survey of Fictional Spiritual Autobiographies of Enlightenment Mothers.

The following chapters analyze novels that feature mothers as central characters. Here, the focus is primarily on the spiritual journey of the maternal figures and the way that her relationship to her children affects or symbolizes her spiritual health. The mothers in this dissertation are confronted with conflicting religious (mainly biblical) paradigms and with the discursive secularism of their husbands and other male authority figures. In most cases, the heterodoxy of these mothers—their vagrancy from the orthodox expectations of Christian motherhood as humble and subordinate—is articulated in typological terms. Mothers embody, enact, or perform motherhood as postfigurations of biblical characters whose examples provide a predictive plot structure. Defoe explores maternal religious heterodoxy; Richardson and Fielding explore atheism;

[78] Printed in Susan Gubar, *Critical Condition: Feminism at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

Sheridan laments the lost potential of Anne's reign; Wollstonecraft and Inchbald both look at the results of an impious patriarchy and experiment with heterodox or atheist solutions.

Chapter one focuses on Defoe's *Roxana*, or *The Fortunate Mistress* (1724) and attempts to theorize a relationship between the novel's inconclusive ending and her heterodox interpretations of biblical motherhood that fracture her fictional spiritual autobiography. *Roxana*'s typology has yet to be thoroughly studied. I argue that because Roxana vacillates between biblical examples of what Tony Bowers has termed "affective" and "economic" motherhood, she is unable, finally, to confess her sins, or even to understand fully where she has sinned. This loss of self-awareness is signaled by the breakdown of narrative structure, where Roxana's voice is gradually subsumed by the testimony of other characters. Finally, this chapter explains how hack writers under the direction of Elizabeth Applebee stage a moral recovery of Roxana's maternal virtue, and save her soul, having her eventually choose the Augustan orthodoxy of affective motherhood.

Chapter two examines Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751). In my study of *Pamela* (1740) as spiritual autobiography, I emphasize the importance of Mr. B's conversion in theorizing a relationship between the two parts of the novel. Because Pamela's husband, or "reward" is a secular character, whose desires conflict with her religious maternal duty, both Pamela and Mr. B must transform in order to maintain the orthodox status of wifely submission. I argue that Pamela abandons the mimesis of martyrdom that she performs in part one to enact a mimesis of wifely subjection which has the effect of converting her husband. Whereas *Pamela* dramatizes

the command of 1 Peter 3: 1-2 ("Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear"), Fielding's Amelia proves ineffective in converting her husband. Fielding, in imagining a woman of superior piety, does not give her the power of conversion, which he reserves for a doctor of divinity.

Chapter three focuses on the work of Frances Sheridan and her recovery of the single mother from derogation as an inept or corrupting influence in novels such as *The London Jilt*. Frances Sheridan's work is replete with paternal figures that are either wholly secular, wholly corrupt, or wholly absent. Indeed, it seems difficult for her to imagine a pious father figure who is not also disempowered by circumstance. As mothers, Lady Bidulph and Sidney from *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1760/1767) are confronted with the necessity of fulfilling both maternal and paternal roles without sacrificing the feminine virtue to which they aspire. Sidney Bidulph is thoroughly lacking in both "will" and "worldly wisdom" but manages, by establishing a sort of cult of love amongst her children and manipulating an assembly of male agents, to guide their actions while still appearing submissive and angelic. Frances Sheridan's novels have been particularly restrained by the good mother/bad mother dichotomy that characterizes both eighteenth-century discourse of the novel and recent criticism. Yet, as texts about widowed mothers and grandmothers, they challenge readers to reassess this dichotomy and the gendered domestic structure. As they struggle to maintain the symbols of domestic virtuosity of mothers in *Sidney Bidulph* work within the terms of a decidedly female-centric morality that is grounded in assumptions of the spiritual superiority of

women. This chapter includes a discussion of Lockean theory of child development and the conduct tradition as it relates to parenthood, and makes a comparative study of Sheridan's prose and plays and the work of Samuel Richardson. It also traces changes in the innovation and legitimation of female testimonies or mediations in Richardson and, especially, Sheridan's novels and plays. Finally, this chapter argues that Sidney is transformed not by motherhood, but by single motherhood—a powerful apotheotic moment in which she assumes full and unmediated responsibility. This chapter will also include a discussion of Sheridan's novel as a novel of providence and its stance viz. debates about poetic justice.

The fourth and final chapter returns to the figure of Niobe to discuss the ways in which the sentimental figure of the suffering mother is linked to political radicalism. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Mary* (1788) and her unfinished *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) and two novels by Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story* (1791) and *Nature and Art* (1796). *A Simple Story* involves a series of conversions of the domestic authority figure, Dorriforth, later Lord Elmwood. As Dorriforth transforms from guardian to lover to husband, he also becomes more clearly secularized and appears, at the end, a usurper of unmerited authority rather than a man seen to be "uniting moral virtues to those of religion and pious faith to native honor." In this chapter, I argue that the years that intervene between the marriage of Ms. Milner and Lord Elmwood and Lady Elmwood's death serve to fictionalize a historical shift in which we see patriarchal authority emptied of its spiritual and transformational role. *Nature and Art* presupposes this spiritually bereft nature of authority and places it in direct opposition to both the temporal and the spiritual flourishing of the young mother, Agnes. The secular figures that damn Agnes to

maternal failure do so in the vestments of religious authority. Inchbald's novels thus bring this study to a fitting conclusion by presenting historical and material conditions of motherhood that are not confined to the domestic, instead persecuting maternity within a social condition that has ruptured its own divergent societal bubbles and become fully secular. Mary Wollstonecraft takes up this concern through metaphors of architecture, limning a prison-like structure of patriarchal society, from which the spiritual and moral have been evicted.

Chapter Two

Defoe, Typology, and the Mother's Religious Crisis

"I knew nothing what it was to be a Mother but the Pains" (Haywood, *The British Recluse,* 1722)

I. Introduction: Typology and Maternal Orthodoxy:

A section of Eliza Haywood's *The British Recluse* (1722) is rather awkwardly embedded in the 1740 reprint and continuation of Defoe's *The Fortunate Mistress,* or *Roxana,* as a story Roxana tells to the reader. The protagonist of Haywood's novel, Cleomira, laments the death of her stillborn baby, whom she conceived with a jilting lover: "I knew nothing what it is to be a mother but the pains" (349). This expression of abortive motherhood, and the Haywood plagiarism in general, lends Roxana, as its proxy, a certain feminine pathos. It reforms her, in other words, as a mother figure by teaching her the familiar sentimental lexicon. Roxana's 1740 recovery speaks to larger concerns of the novel's critics: as scholars have noted, Defoe's Roxana seems not to feel much, and her story seems not to end; unlike that of Moll Flanders, Roxana's estrangement from her children is not purely geographical but also emotional. *Roxana* is motherhood made strange: an unfamiliar concept emerging from particular economic realities as a series of conflicts that defy resolution in any of the discourses or possibilities that Defoe posits as counterpoints to sentimentality and affect.

This chapter examines what critics have identified as the incompleteness of Roxana's fictional autobiography by reading her motherhood as a source of spiritual conflict and the most important signifier in her personal eschatology. Roxana's typological identifications serve to constellate ideologies of chastity and sentiment and other models of maternal care, each of which is subtended by a kind of Christian

discourse. Neglecting some of these models and embracing others, Roxana is both cognizant of sin and also unable to articulate and atone for it. This is a moral problem she cannot compensate for and to which she cannot adapt. Defoe's non-conclusion is not the literary failure it has often seemed to be,[79] but a literary technique. He transforms his motif of maternal conflict into a confusing structure of proliferating narrative voices and predictive uncertainties, reinforcing the strange unwieldiness of new maternal realities as they touch against old, redemptive paradigms of female conduct, or typological identification.

Defoe's novels fictionalize the struggles and contradictions of motherhood for women who are simultaneously excluded from participation in society and integral to its functioning, and whose traditional mediators have become corrupt or abandoned them. Out of the abstractions of several competing discourses, the novels help to invent some of

[79] George Starr has argued that the uncertainty at the end of the novel is a result of Roxana's final "hardening into sin," that she dies unrepentant, and that Defoe has taken her story as far as he can without providing a third person to finish her story and describe her final degeneracy. See G. A. Starr, *Defoe & Spiritual Autobiography,* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965). Maximillian Novak discusses Roxana as a "sink of wickedness," claiming, "it is no surprise that this 'queen of whores' is Defoe's least attractive protagonist"; see Maximillian E. Novak, "Crime and Punishment in Defoe's 'Roxana.'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 65 no. 3 (July 1, 1966): 458. And Spiro Peterson argues that Roxana is "led easily into the world of sin and finally into ruin by the eldest daughter" because her "fool" husband, the Brewer, fails to protect her; see Peterson, Spiro. "Defoe's *Roxana* and Its Eighteenth-Century Sequels: A Critical and Bibliographical Study" (Harvard, 1953), 170-1. Allison Conway asserts that Protestantism imposes an unbearable burden on Roxana in the way that it makes individuals responsible for their own spiritual health. See Alison Conway, "Defoe's Protestant Whore," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35 no. 2 (2002): 221. These critics see prostitution and maternal failure as byproducts of Roxana's overall spiritual deterioration, and, therefore, they tend to subscribe to traditionalist notions of maternity as relatively timeless and stable, which Roxana herself also seems to do. I argue conversely that not only the material but spiritual requirements of motherhood are unstable. These critics, however, aptly reaffirm the incompatibility of maternity in any one form with unstable conditions. As Greenfield notes, the more that maternity seems to define womanhood in *Roxana*, the more it comes into conflict with the other roles and values. See Susan C. Greenfield *Mothering Daughters Novels and the Politics of Family Romance: Frances Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 25. Rather than read this conflict as psychological, as Greenfield does, or as economic, as Bowers does, I read it as spiritual, where the power of these discourses resists their being subsumed by Roxana's desire for salvation. In that sense, Roxana experiences a crisis of secularism wherein her spiritual health comes into conflict with secular discourses like that of chastity and economic survival which impose upon the process of revealing and ameliorating the state of her soul.

the prevailing themes of enlightenment maternity narratives. Defoe's image of the hapless prostitute-mother quite literally brings the spirituality into dialogue with economics, conducting otherwise marginalized voices into public discourse, and mediating between conventional ideas of maternity and the particularity of the individual mothers for whom these ideas are unsatisfying or unworkable. This conundrum is a direct confrontation of old and new, spiritual and secular, inveterate tradition and evolving social conditions, which necessitate the intervention of new mediations of and within literary forms. It consists in the failure of any one discourse to encapsulate it once embedded within particular material conditions. This chapter argues that the maternal activities of Defoe's protagonist strays beyond their discursive boundaries and what the novels ultimately communicate is the spiritual crisis of the mother that these discourses simultaneously evoke and confound. Critics have examined Roxana either as a mother or as a tormented spirit, but not yet theorized the relationship between the two conditions. Looking at material or economic conditions as they conflict with various maternal ideals that have express spiritual significance, my reading brings to the fore questions of faith and spirituality, and the ways in which Defoe's narrative refuses to confine them to the single virtue of chastity.

In *The Fortunate Mistress*, maternity as a spiritual condition has implications beyond Roxana's occasional repining for her lost virtue; Defoe's novel uses biblical examples to identify a crisis specific to the maternal individual. This reading helps us to make sense of the problematic ending of *Roxana* by emphasizing the irreconcilability of competing discourses and maternal roles, the inexorable double-binds that plague maternity and render it a spiritual affliction. Typology in *Roxana* locates spiritual crisis in

maternity even that the protagonist understands reductively as a breach of chastity. Roxana's typological identifications underscore the existence of female virtue that is unrelated to chastity, and explicitly maternal. Unraveled from chastity and affect, the conditions of Roxana's motherhood ask the question: can we punish or reward her if we know not what she did? [80]

There is a consensus in recent scholarship that motherhood or maternal care cannot be understood outside of the particular conditions in which the maternal activities take place. In the past, these conditions have been understood as historical, political, economic, and cultural and linguistic. This study, which starts by locating a spiritual crisis at the center of Enlightenment discourse on maternity, seeks to interject a discussion of the spiritual conditions of maternity. Eighteenth-century novels about motherhood expose conflicts between ancient and emergent ideas about maternal affect, maternal spirituality, and maternal economy, which, when taken out of the abstractions of political and social theory and explored in fiction, produce irreconcilable anxieties. This chapter focuses on Defoe's mother-narrators and the triangulation of secular and spiritual discourses that frustrate Augustan maternal norms and narrative techniques, giving rise to a new norm of maternal conflict and generic or discursive collapse. Because Moll's ultimate repentance seems to assuage her maternal failure, it allows critics to read her reuniting with her son at the end of the novel as a reward or at least an indication of redemption.[1] By contrast, Roxana's ostensible lack of contrition seems to damn her. Both

[80] Recently, critics Toni Bowers and Susan Greenfield have begun to reframe the discussion of prostitution in Defoe as a matter of early modern intolerance to maternal difference. Yet these studies, as they recognize the failure is inherently one of Augustan motherhood to tolerate maternal difference, still separate maternal figures into successes and failures, and seem to assert the preeminence of Augustan ideals within Defoe's texts I argue that because causality collapses, as does didacticism and the resolvability of the narrative, success and failure are less helpful categories than spiritual health in understanding what is at stake in *Roxana*.

Moll and Roxana estrange themselves from their children as a way of hiding their pasts or achieving their present wants. But the conditions and characters of Roxana's children, her maternal sensibilities and affections, her contrivances for their subsistence, are never a matter of a past accessible by repentance only, but are rather actively conscripted in struggles with her spiritual and worldly needs. Motherhood is thus an active and continuing spiritual affliction in *Roxana*, and therefore it will receive the most sustained consideration here.

The major critical studies of motherhood and the novel of domesticity in the eighteenth century show not only that "the rise of the novel roughly corresponds to an interest in full-time maternity" (Greenfield 15) but also that the concerns over the power dynamics of marriage and maternity were dominant in its themes and structures. Susan Greenfield's book, *Mothering Daughters*, and the essays in her edited collection, *Inventing Maternity*, discuss the ways in which modern maternity embroils women in the economic and political circumstances of her historical moment in ways that often hinder her efficacy. In *Politicizing Motherhood*, Tony Bowers argues that negotiations of both maternity and political power tended to tether the former more closely to male authority. While these studies continue to dominate critical discussion of maternity in the eighteenth-century novel, they do not engage with spiritual discourse, typology, or secularism directly, choosing to emphasize instead the political and psychological effects of public discourse on maternity.

A close analysis of discursive conflicts between typology, religion, and material conditions in the novel not only frees this study from the good mother/bad mother dichotomy that has dominated discourse about motherhood since the eighteenth century,

it also links the study of motherhood to the history of enlightenment, which emerges from it as a prolonged negotiation between spiritual and secular existence in which the fictional mothers point to a need for greater maternal autonomy and integration in social and economic systems of power. Typology, in the strict sense is "God's design of history wherein Old Testament personages and events are recognized as types, recapitulated and fulfilled in Christ and his Church—pertains only to sacred scripture" (Hollander 80). [81] Typology is both a mode of interpretation and of representation.[82] As a method of interpretation, it assumes a connection between the past, present, and future that is not causal, but future-driven. The past and the future are connected in time by the promise of fulfillment through a repeated figure. The New Testament is said to be the antitype or fulfillment of the Old Testament;[83] death is the fulfillment or antitype of birth, and, rebirth into eternal life is the "antitype of antitypes."[84] The prophetic impulse was vigorously alive in the eighteenth-century[85] and the Bible functioned as a predictive tool: "many believed in the predictive connections between biblical times and their own."[86] Therefore, when Roxana agrees to live with her jeweler lover as his "Rachel" or take care of Amy's baby, as Rachel would care for Bilhah's, she is participating in an interpretive practice that seems to legitimize her polygamy. As I will discuss, Roxana becomes subject to the heterodox religious speculations of her lover-husbands, which confuse her

[81] Robert Hollander, "Typology and Secular Literature: Some Medieval Problems and Examples" in Earl Roy Miner, ed., *Literary Uses of Typology: from the late Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 3-19.

[82] Paul J Korshin, *Typologies in England, 1650-1820* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 4.
[83] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 80.

[84] Ibid, 138.

[85] Ibid, 3

[86] Ibid.

comprehension of her own spiritual condition. Reading typology in *Roxana* reveals the ways in which biblical models come into conflict with the religious dictate of female chastity. Roxana therefore does not only struggle with affective or sentimental motherhood pitted against economic need, but also with conflicting religious principles.

II. Defoe, Mediation, and the Problems of Female Spirituality:

Clifford Siskin and William Warner's collection, *This Is Enlightenment*, posits a definition of the Enlightenment as "an event in the history of mediation" (1) characterized by the rise of new genres, formats, infrastructures, and associational practices.[87] In addition to communications that we call "media," the definition of mediation includes anything that intervenes, enables, supplements, intermediates, or stands between.[88] Michael McKeon emphasizes these often-antithetical meanings of "media" to argue that the novel serves to mediate between the sensory experiences of one person and that of another. [89] In important ways, fictional narrators like those in the novels of Defoe, Richardson, and Sheridan function as alternative mediations to those of husbands or fathers who traditionally mediate between women and the public sphere; novels function as alternatives to that mediating authority, legitimizing the mother's individual perspectives and communicating their religious constructions of maternity to the public. In addition to these mediations, which conduct maternal interiority into public

[87] See Clifford Siskin and William Warner, eds, *This Is Enlightenment* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago P, 2010), 14-15.

[88] Ibid, 3.

[89] See Michael McKeon, "Mediation as Primal Word: The Arts, the Sciences, and the Origins of the Aesthetic" in *This Is Enlightenment,* eds., Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 62.

discourse, novels also serve as mediators of competing discourses and the material conditions in which they are fictionalized.

Daniel Defoe's first substantial publication, *An Essay Upon Projects* (1697) argues for a female academy along the lines of Astell's *A Serious Proposal* (1690).[90] Women, he says, "are extravagantly desirous of going to heaven" (268). Deviating from Astell's celebration of the inherent piety of women, Defoe turns religiosity into a criticism. The word "extravagantly" indicates the threat that they are apt to venture beyond sedate and calculated piety of Protestant womanhood, and therefore need to be protected from religious enthusiasm[91] as well as the corrupting influence of men who, with their romantic manipulations, "impertinent addresses," and general irreligion must be kept "effectually away" (269). Defoe thus counterpoints paternalist notions of the perpetual immaturity of women against concerns about the corrupting influence of men, evoking a dialectic that persists in his woman-centered fiction.

In the absence of a religiously oriented female academy, novels and the popular press intervene at this moment to function as necessary alternatives. Defoe provides a heuristic for this function in one of his last non-fiction works, *Conjugal Lewdness, Or, A treatise on the use and abuse of the marriage bed* (1727). *Conjugal Lewdness*

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[90] Daniel Defoe, *Essays upon Several Projects: Or, Effectual Ways for Advancing the Interest of the Nation. Wherein Are Plainly Laid Down. The Means by Which the Subjects in General May Be Eased and Enriched; the Poor Relieved, and Trade Encreased in the Most Material Branches of It, Viz. in Constituting Seamen to Theirs and the Nations Advantage for Encouragement of Merchants and Merchandizing; for Relief of the Poor of Friendly Societies; for Discouraging Vice, and Encouraging Vertue; the Usefulness; of Banks and Assurances; to Prevent Bankrupts; with the Surest Way to Recover Bad Debts; and Many Other Considerable Things, Profitable and Conducing to the Great Advantage of the Nation in General*, (London: Printed for Thomas Ballard, at the Rising Sun in Little Britain, 1702). A reading of Mary Astell's major works and her gendered discourse of spirituality appears in the introduction to this dissertation where it sets the framework for a discussion of discursive secularism and discursive Christianity in the later novels.

[91] This function of Defoe's academy makes a passing gesture at eschewing the monastic implications of Astell's proposal.

summarizes the themes of a writer preoccupied with marriage, female agency, patriarchal duty, and economic responsibility. Lewdness within marriage, Defoe explains, is largely a problem of authority wherein the patriarch fails to provide for the economic and spiritual subsistence of his family either because of incompetence or, most egregiously, as a result of his own viciousness. The theme of matrimonial failure is present in so many of Defoe's works, that it has been thoroughly studied.[92] More to the point is the way that Defoe posits his indictment as a necessary and appropriate mediation, both between the sinner and the sin, and as an agent for the clergy—an alternative to those "learned and reverend ministers"(17) who cannot defile their pulpits with talk of indecency even at the risk of allowing it to go unchecked:

> The learned and reverend ministers, the good, the Pious, who would reprove them, are forced to content themselves to sit still, and pray for them….they cannot foul their solemn Discourses with the Crimes which they have to Combat with; the Pulpit is sacred to the venerable office of a Preacher of go GOD's Word; and the Gravity of the Place, a decent Regard to the Work, and especially to the Assembly, forbids them polluting their Mouths with the filthy Behavior of the those they see Cause to reprove; and this makes many a lewd and vitious Wretch go unexposed, at least as he deserves; and many a scandalous Crime, as well and the rich and powerful Criminals, go unreproved. The Auxiliary Press therefore must come in to supply the Deficiency; they may read, I hope, what they could not hear; nor am I afraid of the Faces of Men, that, eminent in Wickedness, Flagrant in Lewdness, and abominable in Tongue, as well as Practice […]. (17-18).[93]

Defoe recognizes that references to indecency in his own book put him at risk of being indecent himself, not unlike the way his narrators, Roxana and Moll Flanders, risk the

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[92] See Spiro Peterson, *Defoe's Roxana and Its Eighteenth-Century Sequels: a Critical and Bibliographical Study*, (Thesis: Harvard 1953) and "The Matrimonial Theme in Defoe's *Roxana"* (*PMLA* 70 no.1 March 1955): 166-191.

[93] Daniel Defoe, *Conjugal Lewdness Or, Matrimonial Whoredom* (London: Printed for T. Warner, at the Black Boy in Pater-Noster-Row, 1727).

appearance of celebrating their sin as they confess their spiritual experiences. The methodological problem of contamination, or of communicating the wrong thing to the right people, is characteristic of Defoe's prefaces. In *Conjugal Lewdness*, The risk of contamination extends from the society to the pulpit and needs to be contained and neutralized, ironically, through the proliferation of printed works, which in turn risk their own contamination. Still, the "auxiliary Press" has a duty to make up the "deficiency" (18). This intervention is more acceptable for the press than for the clergy, is in fact a primary duty of the former, and altogether less risky because of its medium. The duty of the press to function as a mediator is two-fold; it is both to intervene between the sinner and the sin, and to enact a punishment by exposing the sinners in their own hearts.[94] Where a public solution is incompatible with decency and religion, Defoe looks to interiority as a place of improvement.

Traditional readings of Defoe's *The Fortunate Mistress* (1724), which we have come to call *Roxana,*[95] have concluded that the book pits maternity against prostitution and prostitution against spiritual health. Recently, critics, such as Toni Bowers and Susan Greenfield, began to reframe the discussion of prostitution in Defoe as a matter of early modern intolerance to maternal "difference."[96] Yet these studies, as they recognize the failure is inherently one of Augustan motherhood to tolerate maternal difference, still separate maternal figures into successes and failures, and seem to assert the preeminence

[94] It was a common solution to punish lewdness by exposing it, publicly or otherwise. See for instance Dunton, John. *The Shortest-Way with Whores and Rogues: Or, a New Project for Reformation*. London, 1703.

[95] This appellation was first included in the title in the 1740 Applebee edition, and put at front in a 1742 printing of the novel.

[96] See for instance Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters,* 26. Difference refers to the particularity of material conditions for maternity and unique responses to them.

of Augustan ideals within Defoe's texts.[97] Similarly, readings of Roxana's spiritual condition generally conclude that Roxana is irredeemably wicked. George Starr has argued that the uncertainty at the end of the novel is a result of Roxana's final "hardening into sin," that she dies unrepentant, and that Defoe has taken her story as far as he can without providing a third person to finish her story and describe her final degeneracy. Maximillian Novak discusses Roxana as a "sink of wickedness," saying, "it is no surprise that this 'queen of whores' is Defoe's least attractive protagonist" (458) and Spiro Peterson argues that Roxana is "led easily into the world of sin and finally into ruin by the eldest daughter" (170-1) because her "fool" husband, the Brewer, fails to protect her. Allison Conway asserts that Protestantism imposes an unbearable burden on Roxana in the way that it makes individuals responsible for their own spiritual health (221). These critiques see prostitution and maternal failure as byproducts of Roxana's overall spiritual deterioration and, therefore, they tend to subscribe to traditionalist notions of maternity as relatively timeless and stable, which Roxana herself also seems to do. As Greenfield notes, the more that maternity seems to define womanhood in *Roxana*, the more it comes into conflict with the other roles and values (25). Rather than read this conflict as psychological, as Greenfield and Richetti do, or as economic, as Bowers does, I read it as spiritual, where the power of these discourses resists their being subsumed by Roxana's desire for salvation. In that sense, Roxana experiences a crisis wherein her spiritual health becomes conflicted by competing religious discourses including chastity and economic support for her children.

[97] Greenfield asserts that there are inevitable barriers to maternity (23), thus suggesting that what Roxana experiences is not properly "maternity"; Bowers concludes that Defoe's novels reinforce Augustan norms (100). My study agrees in large part with Nicholas Seager, who says that Defoe avoided "domesticating the heroine within emergent ideology of marriage and maternity." See Nicholas Seager, "The 1740 Roxana: Defoe, Haywood, Richardson, and Domestic Fiction" (*Philological Quarterly* 88 no.1 Spring 2009): 110.

In *The Politics of Motherhood* (1996), Bowers points out that critics of Defoe's novels tend to embrace a naturalized idea of motherhood that Defoe actually complicates by bringing it into competition with material conditions. Even though his characters pay lip service to this "maternal mythology" (100), Defoe's novels posit a dialectic between maternal "economy" and maternal "affect," making maternity less a universal than a particularized condition, dependent on economic and social position and historical circumstances.[98] Bowers does not consider the spiritual economies of *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, only the financial ones, and therefore her study does not define their struggles in the same way that I do here, even as it focuses on the "economic individualism" of the eighteenth century that has been recognized as a condition of modern literature since Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* in 1957. Bowers argues that maternity in their circumstances is not only a psychic but also "social and material trauma"(100). I would add that their circumstances present a spiritual trauma as well, a rewarding concept in a reading of texts steeped in the language of typology and the ethos of spiritual autobiography. Spiritual conflict is equally affected by impersonal economic conditions as it is by the emerging discourse on maternal domesticity; both of these factors at moments bolster and undermine the mother's religious obligations and spiritual connections to her children.

III. *Roxana* as Narrative of Spiritual Progress:

What is easily lost in reading *Roxana* are the ways in which the text signals that she is a figure of sympathy who, despite the peculiarity of her circumstance, has claims to

[98] See also Susan Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters*, where she argues that prostitution and maternity are incompatible: "without [a sense of maternal] difference, there are no grounds for their interaction" (26).

a universality of experience that legitimizes her memoir as a type of spiritual autobiography: a struggle with the devil, throughout which she embodies various biblical types.[99] Indeed even Roxana's problem of economic marginalization as spiritual crisis resonates with canonical spiritual narratives; John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* (1666) makes use of the same worldly struggle to signify spiritual conflict. But while Bunyan's economic metaphors are allegorized to become a language of spiritual crisis, Roxana's financial problems actually produce that crisis rather than represent it. One way of constructing Roxana as a sympathetic figure is in Roxana's familial connection to the French Huguenots, which posits her as a figure of sympathy as a persecuted flock under the tyranny of Louis XIV.[100] Defoe makes further use of the anti-Catholicism of the age when he shows Roxana, a "Protestant whore,"(71) in France without recourse to spiritual guidance.[101] Additionally, Defoe emphasizes that the one aspect of Roxana's story which the "writer" of her memoir can verify as absolutely real is the abandonment of Roxana and her children by her first husband, the Brewer: "The *Writer* says, He was particularly acquainted with this Lady's First Husband, the Brewer, and with his Father; and knows that first Part of the Story to be Truth" (Preface, original emphasis). As critics have

[99] Critics who recognize Roxana as a victim of societal conditions that affect her maternal agency nevertheless view her either as unsympathetic because of the way she chooses to negotiate these conditions. Novak says, for instance, that this "queen of whores" is Defoe's least attractive protagonist (458) because "she is not shown undergoing a repentance which includes both a love of God and a detestation of her crimes." See Maximillian Novak, "Crime and Punishment in Defoe's *Roxana"* (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 65 no.3, 1966): 459.

[100] See note 2 to Daniel Defoe, *Roxana*, Melissa Mowry, ed. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009). See also Alison Margaret Conway, *The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narrative and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). Allison Conway argues in "Defoe's Protestant Whore" that Defoe connects his heroine to Nell Gwyn, who also referred to herself as a "Protestant whore" and who united Protestants through anti-Catholic sentiments. See Alison Conway, "Defoe's Protestant Whore" (*Eighteenth Century Studies* 35 no.2 Winter 2002): 215-233.

[101] Conway, "Defoe's Protestant Whore," 215.

pointed out, Defoe reserved his most pointed satire for the "fool husband"[102] of which the Brewer is a perfect specimen: "If you have any Regard to your future Happiness," Roxana warns her female readers, "any view of living comfortably with a husband; any Hope of preserving your Fortunes, or restoring them after a disaster; Never, Ladies, marry a Fool" (8). Roxana's husband is not only stupid but also "positive and obstinate," incapable of presiding over his inheritance of a successful brewery, a spendthrift and, ultimately, a jilt. He leaves his wife with neither the financial nor moral wherewithal to care for their five children. The fact that we can be sure of the truth of this episode, if nothing else in this narrative, goes a long way toward rendering Roxana a sympathetic figure of suffering motherhood.

Roxana is a figure of sympathy at least until she chooses maternal economy over maternal affect. Augustan codes might have rewarded with their sympathy the figure of a mother forced to watch her children starve, resigned to providence and the will of God, but not one who takes matters into her own hands. Without the domestic patriarch, Roxana cannot keep body and soul together; she cannot keep herself alive and maintain the feminine virtue that she seems to accept as integral to her spiritual welfare.[103] The conflict between economy and affect produces a spiritual crisis and is one of the ways in which Defoe indicates the complex relationship between motherhood and salvation. Throughout *Roxana*, maternity itself is a kind of devil: a snare, a trial, *and* a

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[102] See for instance Spiro Peterson, "The Matrimonial Theme in Defoe's *Roxana*" (*PMLA* 70.1, Mar. 1955) 169-171. Peterson writes, "Roxana's first husband is one of Solomon's Fools, who despise wisdom and instruction; in terms of the enlightenment, he represents a major divergence from the norm of rationalism" (169), and possesses some of the traits of Defoe's idle tradesman in *The Compleat English Tradesman* (1724), 171.

[103] Roxana says, "Hitherto I had not only preserv'd the Virtue itself, but the virtuous Inclination and Resolution… for, without question, a Woman ought rather to die than to prostitute her Virtue and Honour, let the Temptation be what it will" (29).

punishment,[104] not only because it is simply incompatible with prostitution but also because it is inextricably linked both to the worldly and spiritual condition of the maternal figure, and Roxana lacks terms to negotiate between them. Like the protagonists of later novels, which I discuss in the next few chapters, Roxana is adept at using agents to conduct her business in arenas from which she is excluded, but she fails to find a means to reconcile her economic and maternal choices to her spiritual journey, in effect to know where she has failed so that she can repent for it.

Early in the novel, Roxana capitulates to Augustan codes of motherhood, passivity and sentimentality,[105] and embodies biblical figures of suffering and maternal (or at least parental) trauma. Typology in *Roxana* has gone largely without examination despite its signaling of the generic affiliations of the text as fictional spiritual autobiography, and even though Roxana's identification with biblical types has direct reference to her spiritual condition. These types, which have the character of being both historical and timeless, both dynamic adumbrations of maternal experience and historically real,[106] emblematize the tension between universal and historically contingent models of maternity, as they do in the later novels. But in *Roxana*, they are also

[104] Maternity and labor was absolutely deadly for mothers and children. Roxana survives all of her pregnancies without danger to herself, but Defoe acknowledges this deadliness, having Roxana project it onto one of the caretakers of her lying in: "I did not like this Old Woman at all; she look'd so like a Spy upon me, or, (as sometimes I was frighted to imagine) like one set privately to dispatch me out of the World, as might best suit with the Circumstance of my lying in." (77).

[105] Bowers says "Augustan maternal rhetoric granted the status of "natural" or "virtuous" maternity only to women who submitted to the developing code of domestic womanhood, abdicating both public intercourse and autonomous subjectivity" (98). Conduct literature of the period, following Locke's essays on education and human understanding, normalizes maternal indulgence and sentimentality as opposed to unsentimental reason and economic rationalism that characterized paternal interventions in childrearing.

[106] Eric Auerbach, "Figura" (1944) in *Scenes from the Drama of Western Literature* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1984), 29, 59.

constitutive of a discourse[107] of maternity that fails to determine a workable scheme of salvation.

Oscillations in the text between economic need and affective impulse render uncertain whether it is not maternal love itself, instead of poverty, which ensnares Roxana in the devil's trap. Finding herself destitute, she sits "in rags and dirt" with her neighbors around her "like Job's three comforters"(17) and obsesses about the prospect of watching her children starve. Thus, she is a figure of suffering innocence. But unlike in the story of Job, causality collapses as Roxana experiences both trial and punishment together: her children are still there, presenting her with the prospect of future, exacerbated suffering. The narrator signals in a number of ways that this is the moment of Roxana's trial, the beginning of her battle with "the devil of poverty"(201) and that she, unlike Job, ultimately fails her trial. She envisions the impending apocalypse in her reference in the following paragraph to the "pitiful women of Jerusalem" (18) who are forced to eat their children.[108] This reference also signals the collapse of causality, as she has not yet done anything to deserve punishment, yet she is punished and she will sin. Job's bereavement over his children is a test of faith, to see if he will reject God. Roxana believes that for a woman, "faithlessness" is confined to sexual impurity: "a Woman ought rather to die, than to prostitute her Virtue and Honour, let the Temptation be what it

[107] The word "discourse" appears throughout *Roxana* in several its traditional meanings, and usually two at once. It means a conversation upon a subject, "mutual intercourse of language" (Johnson), or an exposition of causes and consequences in which the moral or material stakes are considered as a function of the understanding and its "faculty of reasoning" (OED). In Roxana, "discourse" carries a different meaning than "talk" or "conversation"; The product of "discourse" is often discomfort, for Roxana, for her husband, or for one of her lovers. It is often a thing to be avoided as leading to uncomfortable or interminable reflection. Therefore I use it here in both ways, as thought that constructs and constrains maternal possibility as well as one that deals with problems of causal determination, guilt and innocence.

[108] The book of Lamentations depicts the destruction of Jerusalem, personified as an abandoned woman or widow who has become "unclean" and is therefore punished. Lamentations 4:10 mourns the pitiful mothers who are forced to eat their children: "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people."

will" (29), but it is not clear that her sexual rather than her maternal condition has a greater impact on Roxana's spiritual struggle. Together with her references to biblical matriarchs, this scene questions the possibility of a female Job by highlighting the conflict between traditional notions of female piety as chastity and the maternal affect on one hand, and economic maternal duties that biblical motherhood legitimizes on the other. Roxana fails to repent effectively for "abandoning" her children to become a serial polygamist, because to do so she must also express regret for not letting them starve. Looking back, she attempts to repent her lack of maternal affect and justify her maternal economy, rendering an ambivalent confession: "But the Misery of my own Circumstances hardn'd my Heart against my own Flesh and Blood; and when I consider'd they must inevitably be Starv'd, and I too, if I continued to keep them about me, I began to be reconcil'd to parting with them…" (19). She understands her choice to spare their lives as an abdication of maternal duty, rather than a part of it. Repentance eludes her, therefore, and this crisis of repentance contributes to its sense of inconclusivity and despair. Later, Roxana experiences a similar crisis, this time brought on by maternal affect, but this initial maternal crisis haunts the novel, the image of starving children rising up whenever Roxana feels herself becoming economically vulnerable.

Orthodox discourses of female virtue, even that of typological identification, disintegrate as Roxana wanders outside of the abstractions of maternity, spirituality, and womanhood. In turn, what has been read as an artistic "failure" of her fictional autobiography is a failure of that form and its prescriptions to contain her world. One of the main conflicts for Roxana is that the economic survival of her children seems to have

as much effect on her spiritual health as does her feminine and maternal virtue. Because of her economic situation, she cannot both remain virtuous and provide for her children, and she cannot both indulge in maternal affect and maintain the economic status that benefits her children, since prostitution, or serial polygamy, depends on and demands her estrangement from them. Although Roxana's maternal activity is characterized by a greater emphasis on economy, she oscillates between accepting her role as provider and repenting her lack of maternal sentiment and her hardening into adultery. Defoe frequently this tension between schemes or discourses of salvation, into a single expression. The most important example of this is also a reference to Roxana's strongest typological affiliation, and deserves closer inspection than it has yet received.

Roxana's first fall from virtue is a variation on the biblical story of Jacob, Leah, Rachel and Bilah. Her landlord, the Jeweler, is a married man with an estranged wife; he waits until Roxana's children are safely out of the way before he propositions her. He convinces Roxana that his wife unfairly denies him "the pleasures as well as the convenience of a woman" and he draws up legal documents that make official their cohabitation.[109] Roxana is frequently taken in by the specious discursive secularism of remarkable men, and becomes increasingly dedicated to ideals of economic stability, pleasure, and social ascendancy. In the case of the Jeweler, Roxana and her maid, Amy, seize upon Rachel as a biblical model to legitimize polygamy: he contrives worldly legitimacy while they look to religious precedent. Amy says, "look ye, madam […] if you won't consent, tell him you will do as Rachel did to Jacob, when she could have no

[109] Preoccupation with the disasters of polygamy is common in texts written before the reforms of Hardwicke's Marriage Act. Instituted in 1754, it banned clandestine marriage out of concern for the growing prevalence of polygamy as well as the evasion of the right of parental veto. Between the 1690s and 1753, several parliamentary bills to regulate nuptials and prevent clandestine marriages failed on the floor.

children—put her maid to bed with him" (39). Amy offers herself in the position of handmaid to Roxana's already-married mock-husband, constructing a typology that informs the two women's interactions for the rest of the novel. In addition to legitimizing polygamy, typology enacts a system in which women are rewarded or punished through their maternity. In *Conjugal Lewdness*, Defoe uses the marriages of Jacob as an example of why polygamy is an unworkable system for marital happiness,[110] but I do not think that his comment detracts from the point here, which is that these figures indicate the connection of (economic) maternity to spiritual health in a way that is distinct from marital or sexual virtue. [111]

When Amy, acting as Bilah to Roxana's Rachael, becomes pregnant, Roxana says, "Dear […] when Rachael put her Handmaid to-Bed with Jacob, she took the Children as her own; don't be uneasie, I'll take the child as my own [….] For, it was all my Fault; did not I drag your Cloaths off your Back and put you to-Bed to him"(48). Roxana comforts Amy by embracing her role as matriarch, but what precisely that means is that she will provide for the financial needs of the child: "the Charge, the Expence, the Travel &c" (49). These needs define maternal activity for Roxana even as she regrets her other maternal failures.[112] This kind of alienable maternal care is as emblematic of Old

[110] According to Defoe, "the effect of a Plurality of wives having always been Family-Strife" (*Conjugal Lewdness* 24), fighting wives including Sarah and Hagar, Leah and Rachel, Hannah and Penninah tend to domestic upheaval. Defoe says the most eminent of the patriarchs like Abraham, except in the case of Hagar, had but one wife. He includes Isaac (Rebecca) Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and several others. "The grosser use of women came in with David"(24).

[111] C. R. Kropf, "Theme and Structure in Defoe's *Roxana*." (*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 12.3 1972): 467–480. This article claims that the plot of *Roxana* is "an elaboration of the story of Hagar and Rachel" (467). This odd conflation of two bible stories leads him to make a claim that Amy is representative of a tradition of evil handmaidens in literature, first identified by St. Paul.

[112] Bowers explains that this maternal economy, "making provision" for one's children is "a precise and legally operative term," which "implicitly argues for her own innocence of their fates" (114).

Testament matriarchy as the reference to Job is of afflicted innocence. At the same time as this passage expresses a commitment to sexual misconduct of prostituting herself and others, it also indicates a commitment to the ideal of maternal economy *as a religious mandate*. Roxana's maternal economy comes in several forms: alienating her responsibility as provider, as when she sends her children to her husband's relations for support; assuming financial responsibility for Amy's children and her own illegitimate brood; and seeking out and providing fortunes for her legitimate children once she becomes wealthy and enlarging those fortunes as her affection for those children increases. [113]

While affect came to characterize Augustan motherhood as distinct from the paternal role of economic provider, biblical motherhood significantly expanded the scope of maternal agency, and, in the case of *Roxana,* it provides a place for maternal economy.[114] The Old Testament God punishes and rewards mothers through or with children, making an explicit connection with maternal agency that is not confined to the affective impulses that enshrined female domesticity. These figures were the basis for polemics by women like Astell who refuted bible-based arguments of female subjection by making reference to the biblical matriarchs. Yet, although such arguments enlarged

[113] C. R. Kropf, "Theme and Structure in Defoe's Roxana" (*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 12.3 1972): 467–480. This article claims that the plot of *Roxana* is "an elaboration of the story of Hagar and Rachel" (467). This odd conflation of two bible stories leads him to make a claim that Amy is representative of a tradition of evil handmaidens in literature, first identified by St. Paul.

[114] Toni Bowers makes a similar point in her discussion of Isaiah 49:23, which she argues provides for an expansion of maternal prerogative that "forges a direct link between maternity, inherited legitimacy, and public authority" but that its implications for a political maternal voice are circumscribed in its application in Queen Anne's Coronation (53-55). She also points out, as I do, that biblical motherhood often reinforces a system by which parents are rewarded through the birth of children (54). She does not, however, discuss biblical motherhood in relation to *Roxana*.

maternal agency, they often pointed to maternal affect as the source of female preeminence in child rearing:

> The Character of Isaac, tho' one of the most blameless Men taken notice of in the Old Testament, must give place to Rebecca's, whose Affections are more Reasonably placed than his, her Favourite Son being the same who was God's Favourite [….] You must at least grant that she paid greater deference to the Divine Revelation, and for this Reason at least, had a Right to oppose her Husband's Design. (Astell, *Reflections* 23)

Rebecca is a loaded choice here because, although vilified by some eighteenth-century divines as the figure of a deceptive woman,[115] she is justified by both her maternal affections and their conformity to God's choice. Old Testament matriarchs were generally more appropriate role models for Augustan women, since New Testament figures carried the stigma of Catholic reverence for the Virgin Mary. Old Testament matriarchs are doubly appropriate for Roxana because the reigning matriarch of the New Testament, Mary, is a figure of maternal suffering and maternal affection.[116] Defoe's invocation of Rachel's story inscribes a less definitive form of maternal "care" which Roxana reads in economic terms.

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[115] For the eighteenth-century conception of Rebecca as the loving mother and architect of deception, see William Alexander, *The History of Women* (1779) and Luis Ellies du Pin, *A Compendious History of the Church* (1713) In the *Book of Common Prayer*, Rebecca and Isaac are a models of conjugal happiness. See also, "To My Honored Kinsman, John Driden," in Dryden, *Fables Ancient and Modern* (1713 ed): "The first-begotten had his Father's Share; but you, like *Jacob* are *Rebecca's* Heir" (117). Charles Brent's *Essay Concerning the Nature of Guilt and of Lying* (1702) notes that Rebecca's "intrigue to supplant Esau" is retribution for his lie upon bringing her to Gerar, but one which her "frail and tender mind might justify after seeing her righteous Lord would have recourse to it" (130). He says "then as for the Plot of Jacob and Rebekah, there was in the management of that so much deliberate deceit and lying, that 'tis in vain to think of colouring or sweetning [sic] away the guilt of it, by any favorable interpretation" (133). It is impossible to say whether this condemnation of Rebecca is a direct response to Astell, but these references signal that Rebecca is an object of contention in bible-based polemics at this moment.

[116] Christine Peters explains that Old Testament figures were generally "safer" but that after the Reformation Mary remained an exemplar of maternal affect. See Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, (New York: Cambridge, 2003) 208-224. In *Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700), Astell introduces Mary as a figure of maternal affect who is rewarded in bearing God's son.

Sadly, the insufficiency of maternal economy in a world that privileges maternal affect becomes woefully apparent at the end of the novel, when Roxana's eldest daughter Susan arrives, precipitating the ultimate crisis of affect and economy that leads to Roxana's desperate "crime"(330). As critics have suggested, Susan embodies the social denunciation of maternal heterodoxy, individuality or "difference."[117] Conversely, her maid Amy is perhaps the greatest proponent of Roxana's heterodox maternal scheme. The conflict between Amy and Susan, both of whom Roxana wishes to "keep," externalizes the maternal conflict. Although Roxana's maternal economy is effective in the sense that it allows her children to survive (unlike, perhaps, many of Moll's children) and to lead more virtuous and uncomplicated lives than their mother, Susan vehemently rejects mere economy and repeated warnings to stay away, and indulges in a violent and irrepressible pining for maternal affection. By the end of the novel, Roxana's doubles (Amy and Susan) break free of Roxana and her ability to control them. Amy acts on Roxana's desire to remain rich, independent, and anonymous, and although she acts independently, Roxana takes responsibility for whatever "the jade" does. Susan gets ever closer to a mother-daughter reunion that would cement the exposure and financial ruin of her mother. Both associated with her own flesh,[118] they each could be said to represent one half of Roxana's conflict between economy and affect, a conflict which plunges her into spiritual torment.

[117] Allison Conway argues, "Susan believes that maternity exists as an inalienable fact rather than as a fiction created by habit and time" ("Protestant Whore," 229). Toni Bowers notes that Susan insists on interpreting her mother's financial care of her as evidence of an emotional connection that Roxana struggles to "abort" (*Politics*, 117).

[118] Roxana says Amy is "as faithful to me as the skin to my back" (25); Susan insists that she is Roxana's "own Flesh and Blood" and will not be kept from her mother (308).

Roxana's first encounter with her daughter is a powerful example of the importance of motherhood for her soul, but it still resists confinement within a single discourse:

> I cannot but take notice here, that notwithstanding there was a secret horror upon my mind, and I was ready to sink when I came close to her, to salute her; yet it was a secret inconceivable pleasure to me when I kiss'd her, to know that I kiss'd my own child [...] no pen can describe […] the strange impression which this thing made upon my spirit. (277)

Roxana cannot describe this "strange impression." Are these the first pangs of maternal affection? Is it the conflict between fear of exposure and longing for embrace? Probably not: horror is a sentiment distinct from the impression generated by the knowledge that she has kissed her own child. All that is reinforced here is the impression of this event on her soul, and the integral role children play in the spiritual health of their mother. Questions of Roxana's spiritual health are confounded in a complex expression of undefined impact. Here Defoe signals, with reference to the limitations of the pen, the insufficiency of any of the maternal discourses to express, even partially, the spiritual condition of maternity; those default discourses of materialism and affect weigh down the spiritual. Although Roxana's chosen maternal role ties her too closely to material conditions, it does not altogether preclude its transcendent effects.

The appearance of Susan signals the crisis that indefinitely postpones repentance. This crisis of affect is too easily read as a crisis of self-preservation, but only if we ignore her protests. Over fifty, and having come to the end of her tolerance for serial polygamy, Roxana wishes for a way to reunite with her children: "I cou'd by no means think of ever letting the Children know what kind of Creature they ow'd their being to, or giving them Occasion to upbraid their mother with her scandalous life" (205). Facing her children

requires either that she hide her past, a choice that ultimately conflicts with her own desire for a narrative-driven redemption, or that she reveal her past and deal with repercussions that could well preclude the performance of her affective impulses. She worries that her son will find himself "infinitely obliged" to her and at the same time "oblig'ed, if he was a man of virtue, to hate his Mother" (204). Roxana makes similar reflections upon bearing a son to the German Prince; believing herself unworthy of owning them, she is forced to content herself with the knowledge that they have become worthy of their father. Her hesitancy is thus not exclusively a matter of self-preservation nor solely of protecting her children from crises potentiated by having a prostitute for a mother: Roxana resolves not to reveal herself to Susan because of the "inexpressible Difficulty" (205) presented by the fact that Susan knows her as the lady Roxana, and in revealing herself as Susan's mother, Roxana risks not only being upbraided herself, but also appearing to legitimize her way of life and glorify prostitution.

IV. Poetic Justice vs. Indeterminacy as Literary Technique:

Roxana's references to "inexpressible difficulty" and what "no pen can describe" are preliminaries to what critics have identified as the "dark turn" in an ostensibly light-hearted picaresque. The dark turn has been variously attributed to an acknowledgment of maternal failure, to generic collapse or a kind of failure in Defoe's narrative experiment, and to Susan's hijacking of the narrative.[119] Indeed, Susan does make a significant imposition on the narrative. Susan tells a version of Roxana's story to the ship's captain

[119] For generic collapse, see Maximilian Novak, who says that the theme and the form of the novel had "challenged [Defoe] too far" ("Crime and Punishment" 465) and George Starr who claims that Defoe "can't supply the catastrophe because of the constraints of his first person narrator" (*Spiritual Autobiography* 182); for Susan's hijacking, see Conway, "Protestant Whore," 228.

and his lady as Roxana sits by; it is Susan who reveals elements of Roxana's past to her mother's Quaker landlord.[120] Indeed, Susan is not the only one to hijack the story. Following the kiss of Susan, alternative narratives proliferate, including relations by the Quaker woman who is more aware of Amy and Susan's activities than Roxana herself; some by Amy; more by Susan herself; and even a stripped-down dialog in dramatic form, devoid of commentary from the narrator who has heretofore been so forthcoming and expressive. Roxana recedes both from her friends and the reader and begins to intimate what cannot be said, what she cares not to communicate, what she "may in time relate more particularly" but never does, what she has "not the time to take notice of," and what she did not or does not know. Roxana's reticence indicates the failure of any of her default maternal discourses to mediate experience, especially after the transformational experience of embracing Susan. She cannot resort to the rhetoric of economic determinism, her "Amazonian" feminism, or maternal affect. She is simply unable to explain. Additionally, although the Quaker must have by degrees become aware of most of the "particulars" of Roxana's maternal crisis, Roxana refuses to confess it to her friend: "you must not understand me as if I let my Friend the Quaker into any Part of the Secret History of my former Life" (326). With the kiss of Susan and the opportunity for an actual confession to the Quaker or to her children, the conflicts in Roxana's confession become palpable: words become real, and her avoidance of the fictive opportunities for confession conflicts with the desire for repentance served by the spiritual autobiography. Those who know her story (Amy), those who can speak of it (Susan), and those to whom she might tell it (the Quaker) dominate a narrative that now resorts to unadorned linearity

[120] As Bowers points out, it becomes "impossible for [the] mother to control the effects of her own story" (103).

as Defoe has his narrator recede from her own story. Roxana has trouble talking, so others begin to talk of her, and Roxana begins making suppositions on the critical event—what really happens to Susan— placing herself in the position of one who reads her own story for clues to her own guilt or innocence, a position the reader shares with her. [121]

Unadorned linearity and a proliferation of voices is a potentially fruitful way to mediate between already competing ways of seeing and explaining action. Rather than collapsing the complexities of her maternal crisis into one of the entrenched discourses that marginalize his main character, Defoe refuses to impose the kind of finality expected from didactic fiction by eschewing the details of Roxana's misery:

> The Blast of Heaven seem'd to follow the Injury done the poor Girl by us both; and I was brought so low again, that my Repentance seem'd to be only the consequence of my Misery, as my Misery was of my Crime. (310)

Roxana seems to conclude that Amy has in fact murdered Susan, but she remains unsure as to her guilt except insofar as she senses a "blast of heaven," which is a sensation she refers to more than once in relation to Susan's reappearance. We never learn the particularities of her misery or whether her repentance is sincere. Thus, at the conclusion of Defoe's fictionalization of maternal experience, words fail to express worlds and the concrete dissolves into an abstraction; she is miserable and punished, but for what and in what sense? Though Roxana exits a suffering and dubiously sincere penitent, such an

[121] See also Jesse M. Molesworth, "'A Dreadful Course of Calamities': Roxana's Ending Reconsidered." *ELH* 74 no.2 (2007): 493–508. Molesworth contends, "by the end of the novel, Roxana no longer trusts us" (496). This lack of trust has serious implications for the efficacy of her confession. Roxana expresses a similar inability to own or verify details of her early life, resorting to what "friends" tell her about herself and her parents. Roxana is only able to own her own narrative in between the two polar experiences of marriage and an old age marked by guilt.

ending actually provides for the possibility of legitimate maternal differences by declining to specify either causes or consequences.

The indeterminacy that critics have read as indicative of a failed spiritual autobiography is perhaps instead symptomatic of the inability of any one discourse or genre to encapsulate Roxana's maternal or spiritual condition. The novels I discuss in the following chapters find spiritual discourse more serviceable, partly because of the relative safety of their domestic settings. *Roxana*, however, is an early example of the ways that novels mediate between conflicting aims and discourses. In rendering the maternal experience in concrete fictional worlds, they mediate between secular and spiritual discourses, and between the spiritual condition of maternity and the discursive secularism of the external world. They reveal that these discourses both confound maternal experience and marginalize maternal voices, taking that internal complexity and projecting it outward.

V. Continuations of Roxana: Mediation and Reformation:

Mid-twentieth-century critics were ambivalent about the original ending of *Roxana*. At best, they tended to want to explain it away as a problem of generic or discursive conflict rather than, as I argue, a solution to such a conflict. George Starr in 1965 speculated that Defoe meant to portray a woman hardening into sin and finally to "consign her to the devil" (165). Unlike Moll, whose progress is toward redemption, Roxana eschews certain marks of conversion narratives. Her perspective does not include an awareness of first causes, of the work of God or Providence in her life. Roxana's God is an angry deity, threatening her with "blasts of heaven" and her devils are distinctly

secularized temptations of poverty and vanity, consistent with Defoe's theory of demonic meddling in the modern world, but seemingly without its supernatural underpinnings.[122] For Starr, Roxana's impenitence at the end poses irreconcilable generic barriers to a fitting conclusion: Roxana's narrative is in the first person, which is typical of conversion narratives, but since it lacks the signs of a convert's epistemology, the text cannot end. Roxana does not "survive" her spiritual crisis—she does not live to tell the story. [123] Maximillian Novak makes a similar apology for the "weak" ending, saying that Defoe had exhausted his theme and by ending abruptly resisted boring his readers with the details of Roxana's misery (Novak, "Crime" 465). The general consensus of Defoe's ending as "weak" was strong enough that Robert Hume's 1970 essay, "The Conclusion of Defoe's *Roxana*; Fiasco or Tour De Force" endeavored to endorse the ending as "artistically defensible" (Hume 475). Hume says that *Roxana* "only superficially resembles *Moll Flanders,*" that unlike the latter novel *Roxana* is not episodic.[124] The ending, Hume claims, is not incomplete because "Roxana is already in what any good Puritan would consider an excellent Hell" (490). Most recently, Jesse Molesworth has concluded that the ending is fitting for a novel about failed relationships, which

[122] See Rodney M. Bain, *Defoe and the Supernatural* (University of Georgia Press, 1969).

[123] See George Starr, "He carries her tragedy as far as possible; he cannot supply the catastrophe because of the constraints of his first person narrator who neither survives like Moll nor has others fill in for him, like [Bunyan's] Badman" (182). Yet Starr's references to Roxana's unrepentant death are precipitous, since there is really no way to know the direction she takes after the story ends.

[124] Hume notes several other critics who argue the weakness of Defoe's endings on much the same grounds as Novak and Starr. Robert D. Hume, "The Conclusion of Defoe's Roxana: Fiasco or Tour de Force?" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3, no. 4 (July 1, 1970): 475–90.

ultimately ends with the failed relationship between the narrator and the readers she no longer trusts.[125]

Speculation on Defoe's motives is a luxury peculiar to contemporary critics. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the versions of *Roxana* that readers could avail themselves of almost certainly included continuations, which usually replaced Defoe's original ending in addition to lengthening the narrative. Editions from 1740, 1745, 1750, 1755, and 1765 included continuations and Francis Noble and Thomas Lowndes' 1775 printing of the novel is almost a complete rewrite.[126] These editions fall into two categories, "redemptive" and "punitive," with punitive versions largely prevailing. The 1740 Applebee continuation, which this chapter takes up, is a redemptive continuation.

Although "good Puritans" of the early eighteenth century might have recognized a righteous finality in Defoe's ending, it is uncertain whether the general reading public of the 1740s, when the first sequel appears, would have been satisfied with its indeterminacy. Starr's point about the ending being unsatisfactory even in the context of that Puritan religious tradition is useful in understanding potential responses to the text's original indeterminacy. While uncertainty about final redemption or "election" is characteristic of first person narratives such as Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* (1666), Roxana lacks Bunyan's penitent perspective. But we cannot say that she is certainly damned merely because she has not yet converted, or turned toward God, at the time of

[125] See Molesworth, "Dreadful Course," 496.

[126] See P. N. Furbanks, and W. R. Owens, "The 'Lost' Continuation of Defoe's *Roxana*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 9.3, (1997): 305. See also Nicholas Seager, "Prudence and Plagiarism in the 1740 Continuation of Defoe's *Roxana*," *Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 10 no. 4 (December 2009): 357.

relating her story. Furthermore, the interest in deathbed narratives in fiction and nonfiction of the period indicates a desire for certainty about the final condition of the subject in order to extract from the life the most valuable didactic materials.[127] Moreover, Defoe's 1724 novel appears at a moment when the debate over the function of "poetical justice" in didactic literature was still furiously raging; by the 1740s, the debate seemed to settle into something resembling a consensus that poetic justice, in some form or another, was *de rigueur* for didactic fiction. An article in *The Spectator* (vol 40, 1711) is at the center of this debate. In it, Addison argues that the dispensation of rewards and punishments according to the virtuousness or viciousness of characters is a "ridiculous" chimera that has corrupted modern criticism and which does not exist in classical narratives.[128] *The Spectator* essauy sparked several direct rebuttals.[129] *The Tatler* (no 82, 1709) is even less generous, claiming that he who demands conformity to poetic justice is "a weak Creature whose passions cannot follow the Dictates of his Understanding" (207).

A debate amongst poets and scholars of literature extended through the century, interrogating the character of poetic justice in ancient and modern texts and its compatibility with ideas of divine providence and predestination. Samuel Richardson and

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[127] For the popularity of deathbed narratives as testimonies to the strength of belief in the seventeenth century, see Catie Gill, *Women In The Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community: A Literary Study Of Political Identities, 1650-1700* (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 3. For a discussion of deathbed narratives in the Methodist tradition in the eighteenth century, see David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006) 67. These studies indicate the extensive interest in death scenes, as do texts like *Clarissa* and *Sidney Bidulph* which depict deathbed scenes to emphasize their respective heroines' ultimate salvation.

[128] "We find that Good and Evil happen alike to all Men on this side the Grave; and as the principal Design of Tragedy is to raise Commiseration and Terror in the Minds of the Audience, we shall defeat this great End, if we always make Virtue and Innocence happy and successful." This editorial was printed in six editions of *The Spectator* by 1724 and 12 by 1740.

[129] See *Oldisworth's Poetical Index to their Iliad* 1743; an unsigned editorial from *Spectator* 548 (1729), and John Dennis, *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* (1712). There is more discussion of the debate over poetic justice in chapter four of this dissertation.

Frances Sheridan would later advocate a "Christian" form of poetic justice that left the job of rewarding and punishing to divine agency, but included strong hints as to the ultimate health of their characters' souls. The debate over poetic justice in the first half of the century was mostly focused on whether it was necessary to reward virtuous characters, but it also raised questions as to what extent it is necessary that punishment be meted out to vicious characters before the close of a narrative. Another editorial in *The Spectator* (548, 1729) advocates the use of poetic justice for rewarding good characters, but not bad because "the worst of men […] can have no claim or Pretence [sic] to happiness" (294), therefore poetic justice is not a license to dwell upon their agonies. Roxana's potential to satisfy the expectation of poetic justice is, at least, like the final state of her soul, uncertain.

The proliferation of what scholars call "spurious continuations"[130] to *Roxana* thus indicates, to some extent, the possibility that mid-century readers and printers found Defoe's ending unsatisfactory, but it is certainly not the only explanation. Spiro Peterson suggests that Defoe himself wrote in cues for the direction sequels could take, perhaps aware of the profitability of continuations, and intending to write one himself.[131] Indeed, beginning with Defoe, printers became aware of this opportunity for easy profits, spurring authors to compose their own sequels in order to maintain artistic and financial

[130] Natasha Simonova argues that although scholars still use this term uncritically, it plays into the agendas of author's like Richardson, whose idea of 'authenticity' served their own proprietary interests. See Natasha Simonova, *Early Modern Authorship and Prose Continuation: Adaptation and Ownership from Sidney to Richardson* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 13.

[131] Peterson suggests that the abrupt introduction of the younger daughter towards the end of the novel is an invitation for continuations. See Spiro Peterson, *Defoe's Roxana and Its Eighteenth-century Sequels : a Critical and Bibliographical Study*, 1953 (17). Maximilian Novak's recent article argues that this "article of faith" rests on perhaps more solid evidence than Furbank and Owens suggest. See Maximillian Novak, "Daniel Defoe and *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal:* An Attempt at Re-Attribution," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45 no. 4 (2012): 585–608.

agency. Elizabeth Applebee, who published the first continuation of *Roxana* in 1740, was a London printer whose husband started *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*. Until very recently, scholars accepted that Defoe composed a large portion of the journal between 1720 and 1726, especially the popular criminal biographies. Many believed that under Applebee's name, Defoe even entered Newgate and attended executions with exclusive access to the condemned. These stories, based in large part on supposition and the work of William Lee, whose 1869 study, *Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings* attributed to Defoe a vast amount of nonfiction prose from Applebee's and elsewhere. The authenticity of these attributions has been a subject of contention since 1997, when Furbank and Owens called the attributions of *Applebee's* content to Defoe "an article of faith" amongst Defoe scholars.[132] At any rate, it is extremely likely that Defoe wrote at least some of *Applebee's* content during those years, and that Applebee and his wife, Elizabeth, knew that Defoe's works had great money-generating potential.

Elizabeth Applebee's continuation was printed on broadsides and sold as a series of "numbers." Subscribers received six leaves at a time regardless of where the text broke off.[133] Elizabeth Applebee's edition extends Defoe's novel by about one hundred and fifty pages, most of which contain plagiarized material from several sources. Elizabeth Applebee took over the printing business after John Applebee's death around 1750, [134]

[132] See P. N. Furbank, and W. R. Owens, "The Myth of Defoe as 'Applebee's Man'." *The Review of English Studies* 48 no.19 (May 1, 1997): 204.

[133] See Nicholas Seager, "Prudence and Plagiarism in the 1740 Continuation of Defoe's *Roxana*" *Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 10 no.4 (December 2009): 358.

[134] Henry Robert Plomer et al., *Dictionaries of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1557-1755* (London: The Bibliographical Society: 1977), 1725.

but presided over what one critic calls "feminized fictions"[135] while her husband was alive. Nicholas Seager notes that this first continuation is "arguably the most unjustly neglected" ("Prudence," 358). This is possibly because of the extensive plagiarism, but also because of the original content. It includes approximately sixty pages of material from Eliza Haywood's *The British Recluse* (1722). This material begins right after Defoe's story ends. One critic suggests that this is simply a placeholder while the hack writer produces more of the text,[136] though indeed the hack writer produced relatively little that was original. For Defoe scholars, what new material was produced failed to rise to the expectations of realist prose. Spiro Peterson's dismissal of it in 1953 is reflective of an intellectual climate in which women's writing and the subgenres women dominated carried relatively little prestige: "the lavish prose anticipates the unrestrained manner of less talented writers who, later in the century, introduced 'feeling' into the novel" (111). Peterson dedicates a chapter to this text because of his interest in its matrimonial themes, but contends that the "one truly significant sequel" is the punitive, more masculine version of 1745. For this study, I am less concerned with the aesthetic quality of Elizabeth Applebee's sequel as I am with it as a feminine mediation that reforms the protagonist and Defoe's text itself in order to redeem her and reward her with affective motherhood. "Masculine" interventions either rewrite the text, or impose a secular male authority (a husband) that ultimately judges and condemns Roxana's maternal choices, but Applebee's continuation prints a woman's voice onto the pages of *Roxana*, and re-centers the story on motherhood (not marriage or prostitution) and maternal affect and, in

[135] Nicolas Seager, "The 1740 *Roxana*: Defoe, Haywood, Richardson, and Domestic Fiction," *Philological Quarterly* 88, (2009): 106.

[136] Ibid.

its own way, on spirituality. If Defoe's Roxana is primarily a story about maternal agency, then Applebee's is in many ways its most faithful sequel.

Nicholas Seager has dedicated three articles to identifying and critiquing the various plagiarized sections, which I will point out in the following summary of the 1740 sequel. The original ending is excised and the narrator launches into a narrative that she refers to as "the story of Belinda," but which is really the story of Cleomira, whom Belinda meets at a boarding house. This material is taken from a redacted version of the beginning of Haywood's *The British Recluse* (1722). Applebee's Roxana tells us that Belinda has been figured in some marital problems between Roxana and her husband, the Dutch merchant, but as that part of the story is never told, nor even mentioned again, we can only speculate on the relevance of "the affair of Belinda." The Haywood text picks up at the moment when Belinda hears that there is a beautiful recluse who lives upstairs, takes all of her meals alone and never leaves her apartment. Belinda asks to meet her, emphasizing that she, too, has endured great distress and wishes to retire from the world. Both women, generally virtuous young women of great beauty (typical Haywood heroines), are immediately drawn to each other. Cleomira tells with great sensibility the story of her seduction by the rake, Lysander, who promises to marry her but leaves her pregnant and unable to return home. Several letters between Lysander and Cleomira are included, showing him becoming increasingly cruel and her becoming increasingly emotionally unstable. She finally gives birth to a stillborn baby. Cleomira then sends Lysander a suicide letter and drinks poison. How she is saved from self-destruction is never revealed[137].

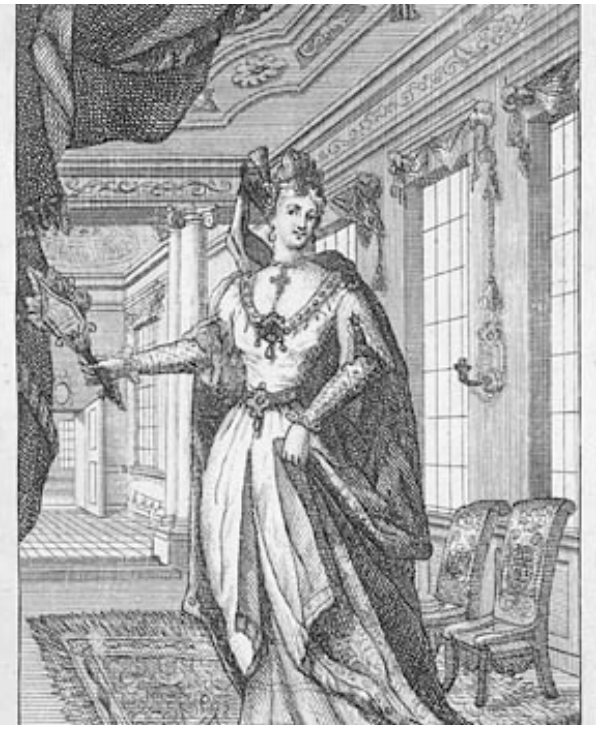
[137] I have chosen to include a summary of the Applebee text because it is difficult to access and therefore not frequently read.

Here the Haywood plagiarism breaks off and we join Roxana in Brussels, where she receives a letter from the Quaker landlord, who now has a name-- Ruth Love. The haste of the production of this new material shows in the many glaring printer errors and misspellings throughout. Ruth notes that she has several pieces of information to relate to Roxana concerning her youngest daughter and Amy, but does not explain what they are. Roxana, now approaching sixty years of age, starts to feel the temptation of retirement from the beau monde, but at the same time wishes to wear and dance in the Turkish dress again. She is not consoled or entertained by balls and assemblies, but contrives to go out one last time without her husband. She meets the German prince, with whom she spent many years as his mistress, and gets the chance to see her son by him, whom she loves him much better than the son she had with the Dutch merchant. The prince has now thoroughly reformed, and he encourages her to do the same and to look to marriage as a source of comfort and peaceful living. She realizes that her attendance at the ball was "folly" and is punished by the strong feelings she has for her son, which she cannot act on. Returning to her husband, she dons the Turkish habit one last time in public, and is nearly exposed by a man who once desired her but whom she rejected. She becomes reconciled to Amy after Amy prostitutes herself to keep the man quiet. Roxana resolves to abandon public life. She makes several references to her past "lewd actions"(385) and seems to repent.

Ruth Love writes to Roxana telling her that Roxana's youngest daughter and the Quaker's son wish to marry; Quaker rules for marriage require certifications from parents or guardians and it has come to the attention of many that the girl might have a parent living. Amy manages to bring the wedding off without Roxana's acknowledgment of her

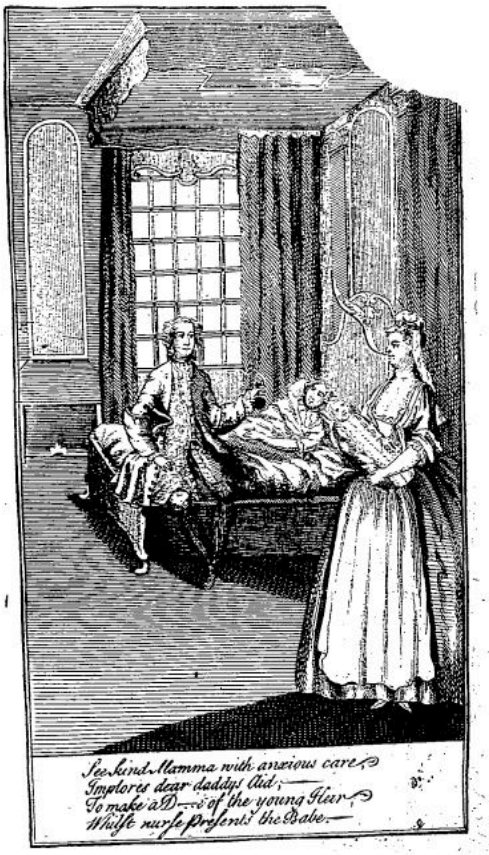
daughter. The Dutch merchant dies and Roxana begins "to make some preparations for a future state"(394); she takes delight in reading, in plain, Quaker dress, and in country living, but still desires to see her children and reveal herself as their mother, though not with any acknowledgment of her past life. Here a poem, "Sweets of a Retired Life," is inserted into the narrative. She befriends her children, but does not reveal her relation to them yet. As she observes them, she notes that they are nothing like their parents, and this comforts her (and seems to justify her maternal choices as well): The Quaker's son is one hundred times the patriarch that the Brewer was, and Roxana's son is a diligent and prosperous merchant. All signs point to the spiritual and material success of Roxana's living children. This original material makes up about forty sheets. What follows is a succession of advice letters from Roxana to her son, which comes from William de Britaine's *Humane Prudence*, which was in its thirteenth edition by 1739. In between these letters, the hack writer or writers depict Roxana planning an elaborate reveal. She acknowledges her son and he helps her reveal herself to her daughter. The continuation ends with Roxana enjoying "the sweet consolation of her children" and "her soul resigned to the Mercy of him who gave it, [Roxana] dying in charity with all the world" (441).

The 1740 Roxana, the first of the spurious sequels, uniquely emphasizes Roxana's maternity rather than her conjugality or "matrimonial whoredom." This emphasis materializes in the choice of a frontispiece, which is very different from the original illustration and seemingly unconnected to any scene in *Roxana* or in the material contributed by the hack writer.



Frontispiece to Defoe's *The Fortunate Mistress; or, A History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de Beleau, Afterwards Call'd The Countess of Wintselsheim in Germany* (1724).

The original illustration depicts Roxana in the Turkish costume in the performance that brought her the name Roxana that brands her and by which she has become known to her readers. Roxana stands proudly in an Anglicized version of Turkish garb. The illustration thus emphasizes her whoredom and her celebrity, both of which contribute to her spiritual and maternal struggles but do not fully define them. Indeed it advertises the book as a light-hearted tale of exotic travel, economic individualism, and self-presentation, themes that ironically destabilize at the end of the novel. The image, a smiling beauty proudly centered in a scene of luxury intimates nothing of this ultimate instability. By contrast, the frontispiece to the Applebee sequel emphasizes both maternity and instability, signaling that the main concern of this text is Roxana's maternity, not her whoredom or, like future sequels, her potential to be part of a functional marriage.



Frontispiece to the 1740 (Applebee) edition of *The Fortunate Mistress*. "See kind Mamma with anxious care/ Implores dear daddys Aid--/ to make a D-- of the young Heir/ Whilst nurse presents the Babe."

The mother, nearly buried in the background and difficult to see, lies in a bed, the father sitting at her feet, with a nurse in the foreground holding a rather stiff-looking newborn. The triangulation of adults surrounding the infant indicates an instability that arises from multiple parental agents. The caption furthers this sense of instability and adds a corrupting influence: "See kind mamma with anxious care/ implores dear daddy's aid--/ to make a D-- of the young heir/ whilst nurse presents the babe." Here the descriptors-- "kind mama," "anxious care," and "dear daddy"-- contradict the conspiracy to "make a devil of" the child. The caption further signals the complicity of the father and the nurse in the predicted maternal failure: Dear Daddy's influence is required to complete the production of devils, and the nurse facilitates, but the Mamma is ultimately responsible

for initiating it. She is enclosed, buried in blankets, silenced, hidden from sight, yet also central as the primary parental agent. In fact, we cannot "see kind Mamma with anxious care" because we can hardly see her at all. If nothing else, the image signals the novel's maternal themes and the difficulties of either censuring or exculpating the mother figure; the image complicates the assignation of blame, signaling the competing anxieties of this mother and her mandate to "care" which Defoe's novel conducts out of obscurity.

Perhaps recognizing that the instability of Defoe's text is a source of anxiety for readers who crave poetic justice, Applebee's continuation sets out to reform it in several key ways. First, it appends a conclusion in which Roxana is redeemed enough to be rewarded with her children, making it compliant with poetical justice. It further justifies her abandonment by emphasizing the material and spiritual success of her remaining children, none of whom are any the worse for being orphans or bastards. Second, by imposing Haywood's voice and style on the text, it allows Roxana to enact a verbal performance of sensibility, reforming her into a compassionate and affective maternal figure. These changes in Roxana's character, verbal, behavioral, and spiritual, redeem the narrative from its inconclusivity and reverse its "dark turn." They constitute a female mediation of Defoe's novel; this continuation is not simply feminized but female-centric in its eschewal of male authority as unnecessary to reconciling the tensions between Defoe's text and the aesthetic and maternal ideals of the 1740s: domestication, sentimentality, self-abnegation.[138]

[138] *In Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Nancy Armstrong describes the shift in values that contributed to the construction of Pamela as a feminine ideal, at once domesticated and "a body of language and emotion." See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6.

Only Nicholas Seager and Spiro Peterson have studied the 1740 continuation extensively. Peterson is interested in the sequel for its continuation of the "matrimonial theme" which finds expression in Roxana's advice to her son (which Seager discovered fifty years later to be a plagiarism of the pseudonymous "William de Britain"). Peterson also takes interest in its Quaker themes, referring to the 1740 continuation as "Applebee's Quaker Sequel."[139] The Quaker themes of Applebee's continuation, insofar as they surround the marriage of her youngest daughter in the Quaker tradition, are useful in a study of matrimony. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, they clarify that Roxana's path to redemption is achieved through enlarging her understanding and her sensibility, not through the admonitions of husbands or their proxies. Even though the German prince encourages Roxana to seek virtue and solace in marriage, she pursues it through study, retirement, and finally reconciliation with her children. The Quaker themes of this continuation provide a discourse and a starting point from which Roxana constructs a spiritual identity, although that identity is decidedly not Quakerism.

Nicholas Seager has published three articles that each deal with a different piece of plagiarized material in the Applebee continuation. He argues that the inclusion of Haywood indicates an appropriation of Defoe's fiction into the Richardsonian tradition, one which belies the assumption that Defoe and Haywood were as stylistically polarized in the eighteenth century as they have become to literary history. Seager argues that the ending of *Roxana* (1724) might have seemed abrupt to his readers in the context of his other novels, which tend to have more definitive endings than *Roxana*'s.[140] Also, as I do, he argues that Defoe "purposely avoided" entrenching *Roxana* in Augustan ideals of

[139] See Peterson's dissertation, "Defoe's Roxana and its Eighteenth-Century Sequels*"* (Harvard, 1953).
[140] See Nicolas Seager, "1740", 107

maternity and domesticity.[141] I diverge from Seager's reading in my estimate of the extent to which the 1740 *Roxana* succeeds in domesticating its protagonist as a corrective to Defoe's text. While the text does "shore up" or correct some of the "subversive elements" in Defoe's and Haywood's texts (Seager, 1740 119) it allows both Defoe's spiritual legitimation of economic maternity and maternal autonomy to stand, subversively, as an alternative to the mediation of husbands. That this is the first continuation and therefore not a direct response to punitive continuations that rely on a male judge to punish Roxana is not necessarily important here; Applebee's hack writer takes one of Roxana's fears—that she will be exposed to her husband and punished with the loss of her economic security—and defuses it by having him die unaware of her past and leaving her to herself and a self-imposed recovery from sin rather than imposing some paternalist-inflicted ordeal. Compared to later sequels, it is indeed subversive.

After reforming her manners and her emotions, Applebee's text continues Roxana's redemption by giving her room to compose a series of advices to her children on the subject of marriage and household management, acquiring for her a role in generational prosperity, which is consistent with the biblical model of the original text. It does not look to marriage as an answer to a social problem, maternal instability, produced by bad marriage. In fact, it muddies the waters by importing controversies about Quaker marriages. It allows Roxana to have it all, as it were, to pass on a financial and educational maternal inheritance to her children, and to deserve their affection without sacrificing economic agency.

[141] Ibid, 110. As Seager says, he is at odds with Toni Bowers in this assessment because Bowers concludes that *Roxana* ultimately reinscribes Augustan ideals.

In important ways, Defoe's protagonist is "domesticated" by the inclusion of *The British Recluse*. The latter introduces the consequential theme of retirement from public life. In Haywood's novel, Cleomira transforms, through suffering, from one whose greatest horror is absence from London to one who can only survive in seclusion. Retelling her story to Belinda, she recalls her dismay as her mother "entirely throwing off the Fine Lady, began to practice the meer [sic] Country Gentlewoman"(309). Cleomira's efforts to return to public life throw her in the path of Lysander, and lead to her suffering. In relating this part of Cleomira's story of reclusiveness, Applebee's *Roxana* affirms its importance and the protagonist takes its directives by retreating into the country, finding delight in reading classics and contemplating religious duty. Her performance of this story, and her attaching it, however loosely, onto her own, effects a reformation of manners in the same way that her performance of sentimentality effects a reformation of language and emotions. Thus Haywood's text serves as a (female) mediation by which Applebee's sequel conducts new values and solutions into Defoe's story.

As Peterson indicates, or rather complains, the hack writer transforms the realist prose-style of Defoe, which is decidedly sparse and unsentimental, into the language of "feeling" (111). This is accomplished in part through Haywood's language, which gives expression to sensibilities that Defoe's protagonist cannot or will not express. Haywood's Belinda and Cleomira communicate their solidarity with each other through their tears, sighs, and, sometimes, rage, expressed as the effect of opposing forces: "To add to my affliction, I was with Child, and every Motion of the unborn Innocent encreas'd at once my Tenderness and Grief. — 'Tis not in Thought to form any just Notion of what I felt" (338). Significantly, it is not in "thought" that she can communicate her feeling; it is not

within the realm of circumscribed rationalist discourse to express, but she can express it: in words and motions that her listener, Belinda, reads and understands enough to assert that she has experienced an equal affliction. As Nancy Armstrong demonstrates, eighteenth-century literature worked to define subjectivity and emotions as female domains and to define women in terms of their emotional natures. Such empathy and female solidarity as we see in the Haywood plagiarism is missing from Defoe's *Roxana* where Roxana's relationships to other women depend on either mutual corrupting influence and status inequality, as in the case of Amy; untruthfulness, as in the case of the Quaker; or moral inferiority, as in the case of the German Princess.[142] Roxana's reformation is constituted, in part, by a concern for mutuality and empathy in relationships that make her a more suitable Augustan mother. No longer the center of her own world, Roxana in retirement becomes a woman defined by interpersonal relationships.

Haywood's text also manages to give expression to one of the central cruxes of Roxana's maternal distress through the words of Cleomira. Having suffered the cruel jilt by Lysander, she is so emotionally affected as to have even her physical capacity for maternity compromised: "The horrors of my mind had such an Influence over my Body, that it was impossible I should bring a living Child into the World […] the Grief-killed Infant never saw the Light, and I knew nothing what it was to be a Mother but the Pains" (349). This statement resonates with the theme of patriarchal failure with which I begin this chapter. In addition, it expresses Roxana's maternal experience of having known "nothing what it is to be a mother but the pains." Roxana's maternal experience is pain

[142] Roxana never meets the wife of her prince, but she does make several comparisons between herself and that princess in which she describes herself as inferior.

and conflict, fear of death and watching her children starve, fear of rejection—but not satisfaction of mutual compassion that she at intervals seems to long for but never gets until, of course, Applebee's sequel gives it to her.

Arguably, it is Applebee's sequel, not Defoe's inconclusive novel, which reinscribes Augustan maternal norms. While Roxana pays lip service to the values of affective, submissive motherhood, Defoe's story shows these values to be in conflict with economic survival. Furthermore, the novel elucidates a conflict between the all-encompassing female virtue of chastity and a mother's (similarly religious) duty to provide for the bodily needs of children. Women writers had already begun to outline the distinction between male appraisals of female virtue and women's total spiritual wellbeing.[143] Defoe's elucidations of such conflicts, the legacy of religious feminism, set *Roxana* apart from *Moll Flanders*, and indicate that the novel is meant to do more than just hold up a mirror to sinners. The following chapters of this dissertation continue to discuss the ways in which the values of maternal sentimentality and conjugal obedience are shown to conflict with the maternal duties to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of the child. But whereas Roxana's maternal activity is embedded in a world where the secular values of economic gain hinder her spiritual progress, later novels stage head-on conflicts with the embodiments of secularism or irreligion: husbands and other male authority figures.

[143] Writers such as Damaris Masham criticized this confinement of female virtue and duty within chastity as a paradigm that elevates the desires of men over the souls of women: "as if the praise of Men outght to be the Supreme Object of their Desires, and the great Motive with them to Vertue. A Term which when apply'd to Women, is rarely designed, by some People, to signifie anything but the single Vertue of Chastity." See Lady Damaris Cudworth Masham, *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Vertuous or Christian Life* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1705).

Chapter Three

Pamela on the Woodpile: Crisis and Conversion

"But what great matter is it, if thou that art dust and nothing, submit thy self to a man for God, when I the Almighty, the most High, who created all things of nothing, humbly submitted my self unto man for thee? I became the lowest and most abject of all, that thou mightiest overcome thy pride with my humility. Thou dust, learn to obey." (*Imitation of Christ*, Book III.13) [144]

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2, KJV)

Until recently, critics have dismissed the continuation of *Pamela* as a book that Samuel Richardson did not want to write. Part sequel, part conduct manual, and laden with Pamela's advices and commentaries, *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (1741) (hereafter *Pamela II*) has confounded and disappointed those who read it for the story. We have only recently acknowledged the importance of *Pamela II* as a continuation in dialog with a literary environment wherein the meaning of *Pamela* was supposed to have wide-ranging consequences for the novel form, for class relations, and for male heirs and servant girls throughout England.[145] As the narrative crux of *Pamela II*, the breastfeeding

[144] *The Christian's pattern: or, a treatise of the imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin of Thomas à Kempis. Compared with the original, and corrected throughout, by John Wesley* (London, 1735), 152-153.

[145] Ian Watt refers to *Pamela* II as an "ill-advised continuation" (*Rise* 149). Margaret Anne Doody argues that Richardson did not have anything new to say in *Pamela* II, but "he had much to gainsay"(*Natural Passion* 76). Betty Schellenberg writes that there is no conflict in part two apart from establishing Pamela's fitness for the status to which she has been raised. See *The Conversational Circle: Re-reading the English Novel, 1740-1775* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 37. Patricia Spacks writes, in reference to part one, that Richardson finds "relatively little substance in the heroine's verbalizations once she has dwindled into a wife." See Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*

conflict has garnered the most critical attention: Mr. B., dismissing his wife's insistent desires to nurse her own baby, initiates a conflict of wills that threatens the annulment of their marriage. Scholars have rightly noted that Richardson's paragon is caught up in discordance between marital and maternal duty; additionally, they argue that it is ultimately the former that wins out over the latter. This chapter departs from earlier readings by arguing that the resolution of the breastfeeding conflict is not brought about by Pamela's resignation to marital duty as the superior virtue, but rather through her ability to perform Christian piety in a variety of ways. Converting the critical gaze through the lens of spiritual progress, this reading suggests that the central conflict of *Pamela II* is between the believing wife and the unbelieving husband, and that this conflict is resolved in the essential plot point: Mr. B's conversion.

In *Pamela*, the character of Mr. B descends in aristocratic dignity in order to try and reward Pamela's virtue with aristocratic marriage. In *Pamela II*, the married Pamela struggles with an analogous descent from her "exalted condition" into meekness and deference in religious matters so that she may bring about the conversion of her husband. Mr. B's prohibition against Pamela's maternal breastfeeding is an important antecedent to the threatened dissolution of their marriage. Scholars of eighteenth-century maternity have explored this prohibition as an example of the fundamental dissonance between the roles of wife and mother, as a reinforcement of the supreme value of wifely subordination, and as an example of discord between Pamela's middle-class values and B's aristocratic ones. In contrast, I explore Mr. B's prohibition against breastfeeding as the dramatic externalization of a conflict between discursive secularism and discursive

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(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 99. Toni Bowers suggests it is the absence of a linear structure in *Pamela* II that lead to this "critical contempt" ("A Point of Conscience," 262).

Christianity, which is resolved in the essential plot point: Mr. B's religious conversion. Richardson's breastfeeding conflict, seen from the angle of religious conversion, serves as warning about the dangers of an impious husband. Pamela does make a profound case for the importance of breastfeeding, but, in this reading, her acquiescence to her husband's demands is more indicative of a marital problem than it is of wifely success. Pamela, in order to function as a Christ figure, must first cease to function as a mother, but her return to maternal autonomy depends entirely on her performance of this basic sacrifice of maternal prerogative.[146]

To understand the significance of the breastfeeding conflict, it is necessary to read *Pamela II* as a sequel; that is, with regard to its multifaceted relationships to the original text-- as revision, as interpretive guide, *and* as a continuation in confrontation with spurious imitators.[147] This chapter examines the ways in which the sequel militates against interpretive excesses, and corrects *Pamela*'s implicit vagrancies from Richardson's stated purpose "to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the youth of both sexes" (Preface to *Pamela*). *Pamela II* is part of Richardson's project to reclaim the novel as spiritual progress and to reform his protagonist's husband who is, at the end

[146] This basic sacrifice is a symbolic matricide. In *Sexes and Genealogies,* Irigaray explains the ways that women, as mothers, are excluded from the manifestations of the Christian faith. Unable to realize their gender subjectivity in an infinite God, they are connected to the earth and subordinated to the law of the father. The trinity, indeed, includes no female Gods. Additionally, the maternal function is usurped and ruled by religious or domestic fatherhood, an "asymmetrical" (131) authority of mother and father, inaugurated by an initial and universal matricide. As a critique of gendered discourse, rather than a feminist critique of the novel, this chapter will not read *Pamela* through Irigaray's theory, and instead identifies places where frissons of this eternal conflict emerge in Richardson's depiction of mother-father power struggles.

[147] Anthony Pollock notes the importance of studying Richardson's sequel, which was packaged with the first volumes until the end of the eighteenth century. See Anthony Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere.* (New York: Routledge, 2009) p. 142. Donald Ball, while stating that *Pamela II* is "not a novel at all" but rather "a narrative conduct book" argues that it is important to Richardson's development as a novelist (334). See Donald Ball, " 'Pamela II:' A Primary Link in Richardson's Development as a Novelist" (*Modern Philology*, 65.4, May 1968).

of part one, an ambivalent, earthly "reward," ill-befitting the spiritual nature of the heroine's trial. Richardson recalibrates Pamela's religious performance, dispensing with the tropes of martyrdom that characterize part one and elaborating on the concept of *Imitatio* or imitation of Christ. In *Pamela II*, the heroine's ability to typify subjection, and exhibit signs of grace that are distinct from virgin purity, not only leads to the conversion of her husband, but also dissolves her own over-righteousness and sanitizes her religious discourse. As the sequel encompasses religious virtue in terms of charity rather than chastity, Pamela's character comes to embody the ideals of the *Imitation of Christ*: "I became the lowest and most abject of all, that though mightest overcome thy pride with my humility. Thou dust, learn to obey!"[148] As a result of her successful negotiation of Christian paradigms, Pamela's maternal agency is restored. Therefore, Pamela's apparent capitulation to the domestic order is not a matter of containment, but rather of a conversion tactic. In this chapter, I will contrast Pamela's spiritual agency to with that of Fielding's Amelia, who is unable to control patriarchal appraisals of her words and deeds.

The sensation and ensuing controversy over *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) forced Richardson to vigilance in order to maintain creative control over his heroine, her afterlife, and the interpretation of her readers and judges.[149] Appraisals, critiques, translations, illustrations, parodies, spurious continuations, wax figures, adaptations, and

[148] *Imitation of Christ,* Book III.13. All references come from John Wesley's translation of 1735. See note 143.

[149] There was no precedent for this mass appropriation, and British copyright law was ill equipped to deal with it. Richardson's novel and the ensuing commercial piracy, according to James R. Alexander, "became a benchmark for how the new novel form would be treated under law and equity after passage of the Statute of Anne, England's first copyright law." Richardson's attempts to enjoin copyright protection helped shaped the debate around artistic property in the eighteenth century, but the Statute of Anne was not replaced until the mid nineteenth century. See James R. Alexander, "Richardson and Copyright," SSRN: *Social Science Research Network*, June 29, 2011.

Pamela-themed merchandise supervened its publication with such a flurry, that one need only glance at the chronology printed in Keymer and Sabor's *The Pamela Controversy* to see the frequency of public exploitations of *Pamela*'s fame.[150] As much as the parodies such as Fielding's anonymous *Shamela* (1741) and Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (1741) threatened to undermine Pamela's truth claims about her innocence and motivations, Richardson's decision to write a continuation seems to have been more directly motivated by the publication in 1741 of *Pamela in High Life* (1741), a spurious continuation written by John Kelly, and by John Carwitham's illustrations to *The Life of Pamela* (1741), another spurious revision and continuation. While John Kelly's sequel was not the only one to continue Pamela's adventures into her married state, it was popular and its producers went to great length to present it as authentic. According to Keymer and Sabor, there was a "large-scale newspaper advertising" (59) campaign wherein Kelly's continuation claimed to be printed on the same letter as *Pamela I* and encouraged readers to have it bound with the Richardson's novel (54-55). [151] Richardson, furthermore, apparently saw the Kelly continuation as a subversive misinterpretation, saying, "I saw my whole purpose inverted." Kelly had essentially neglected the novel's religious themes. [152]

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[150] Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, eds. *The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Richardson's* Pamela, *1740-1750* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001). The first volume includes a timeline.

[151] See Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[152] Keymer and Sabor suggest that Kelly's continuation reinscribed aristocratic ideas of virtue that Richardson's book rejected (*Marketplace* 78). They also suggest that Carwitham's illustrations exploited the voyeuristic appeal of *Pamela* as pornography, which was of course a common criticism of the novel (*Marketplace* 148). According to Keymer and Sabor, "Kelly pointedly recuperates the novel for the ideology of rank it had seemed to erode, and severely attenuates Richardson's case for the spiritual equality of servant and princess" (78).

Because Richardson's plans for the frontispiece for the second edition had fallen through, Carwitham's illustrations remained the unofficial portraits of Pamela.[153] Clearly, Richardson could not leave *Pamela* uncontinued or unillustrated for very long if he wanted to maintain creative control. Both Richardson's sequel and the authorized illustrations are extensions of Richardson's narrative, punctuated with scriptural language and iconography to emphasize the didactic purpose of the novel to "cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes" (preface). Religious progress and conversion move the plot of Pamela, part II, and the heroine's concern for her family's salvation—as opposed to her own chastity—is much more difficult to turn to non-religious ends.

To begin my reading of *Pamela*, I call attention to one of the engravings in Richardson's first illustrated edition of *Pamela*, which was published in May of 1742 with engravings by Francis Hayman and Hubert-François Gravelot. The second edition of 1741, despite Richardson's promises that it would contain illustrations from the celebrity artist William Hogarth, was not illustrated, probably because of an argument about Hogarth's visual interpretations.[154] There is little question that Richardson worked

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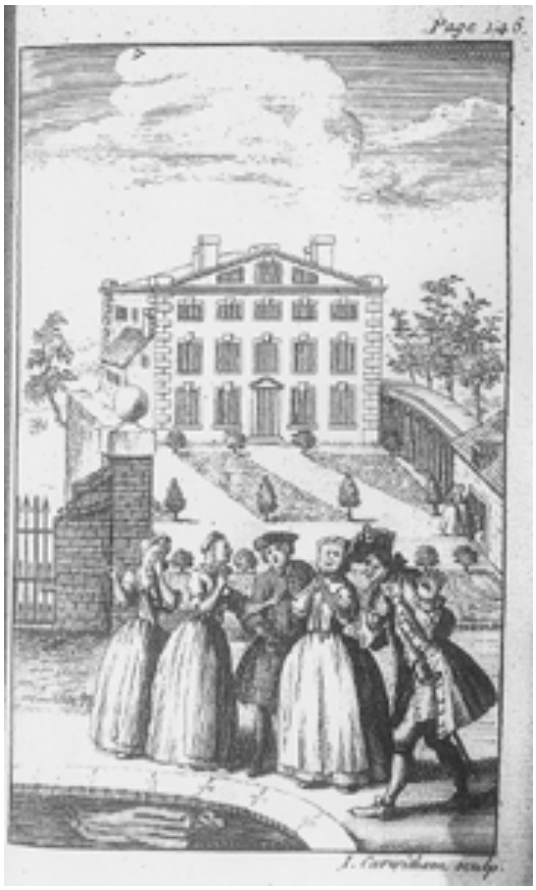
[153] Lynn Shepherd argues that Richardson was "certainly disturbed" (67) by the Carwitham illustrations and deeply concerned about the influence of engravings on reader interpretations (74). She also notes a significant uptick in books published with frontispieces or copperplate illustrations in the 1730s (59), and that Richardson was aware of the tendency of readers to resort to the "cuts" as an interpretive tools (63). See Lynn Shepherd, *Clarissa's Painters: Portraiture, Illustration, and Representation in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (New York: Oxford, 2009).

[154] There is much speculation on the reasons for the severing of this business relationship. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* notes that Hogarth came to visit Richardson after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46. Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson* (London: J Richardson and Co., 1823).

Richardson simply says, in the preface to the second edition, that the Hogarth prints, "having fallen very short of the Spirit of the Passages they were intended to represent, the Proprietors were advised to lay them aside." He notes that one of the prints was completed, but it has not survived. Ronald Paulson speculates that Richardson might have found them "insufficiently spiritual" (qtd in Keymer and Sabor, *Marketplace*,

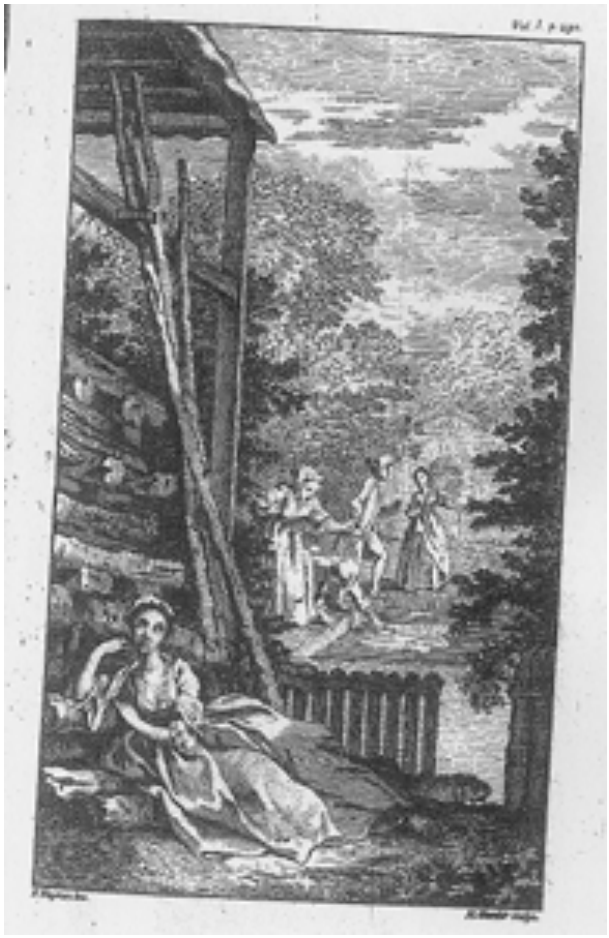
closely with Gravelot and Hayman in order to control the interpretation of *Pamela*, sometimes choosing to revise a previous illustration and sometimes choosing new subjects, and hoping to limit—but managing in many cases to expand—the range of possible interpretations.[155] Of particular interest is Hayman's image of "Pamela in the Woodhouse," a revision of Carwitham's illustration of the search for Pamela after her supposed suicide.



John Carwitham, illustration for *The Life of Pamela*, (London: C. Whitefield, 1741), 146.

154) and several critics suggest that he might have seen Pamela "with the eyes of a Fielding" (Keymer and Sabor, *Marketplace* 159). Others, such as Lynn Shepherd and T. C. Duncan Eaves suggest that Hogarth's method might have served to expand the range of interpretive possibility, rather than provide reader-response cues or limitations (Shepherd 67).

[155] According to Keymer and Sabor, Richardson chose the subject matter for the engravings for Hayman and Gravelot (*Controversy* Vol.2 xxxvi). Eaves points out that he also chose the subject matter for the planned Hogarth illustrations. See T.C. Duncan Eaves, "Graphic Illustrations of the Novels of Samuel Richardson, 1740-1810," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14.4, (1951), 350.



Francis Hayman, illustration for *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, Sixth Edition, (London: Osborn, 1742).

Whereas Carwitham foregrounds the search party and Pamela's dress floating in the pond, Hayman depicts Pamela in contemplative dishabille, lying exhaustedly against the woodpile with one arm supporting her head. It is neither an interior scene of the woodhouse, nor of the search party, but rather the image of Pamela as if on the pyre, with its menacing enormity dwarfing her small body as she lies undressed and paralyzed as if about to be burnt at the stake. On the corresponding pages, Pamela's words signal a sort of religious epiphany, acknowledging at once her martyrdom and her spiritual struggle to trust Providence. Deciding against suicide, she prays, "God can touch [Mr. B's] heart in an instant, and if this should not be done, I will put an end to my life by other means"

(288).[156] In this passage, she rehearses the familiar pattern of doubt, despair, and submission to providential design that is typical of spiritual autobiography and hagiography. After the woodpile, she is beaten, first by Nan and then by Mrs. Jewkes, another reminder that her tortures are not purely mental or spiritual, but also bodily. As a revision of Carwitham, the image of Pamela on the woodpile and its familiar iconography reorients the reader to Richardson's religious design, and amplifies the novel's spiritual significance. Furthermore, the image of Pamela on the pyre resonates with the repeated martyrdom of Richardson's paragon by the forces who distrust female piety or Pamela's brand of Christian feminism.

The woodpile and the prayer also speak to a discourse of martyrdom that infuses Pamela's letters. The martyr paradigm pits spiritual truth against abuse of the body by authoritarian, secular, or illegitimate religious forces; it is a useful discourse for a pious servant girl whose virginity is under siege. Servant girls, in *Pamela*'s time, had perhaps no more accessible language for asserting spiritual truth. In *Pamela II*, when the narrative focuses on marriage, Pamela defaults to an equally compelling, and equally canonical, discourse of submission and meekness. As a married woman, her body is contractually removed from her own care; she no longer has to protect her own virginity with religion. But in motherhood, when Pamela desires to breastfeed her infant, the dialectic between principled resistance and obedience resurfaces as the central conflict and her body is the

[156] *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded, in A Series of Familiar Letters from a Beautiful Young Damsel to Her Parents,* Sixth Edition (London: J. Osborne and John Rivington, 1742). Keymer and Sabor's *Pamela in the Marketplace* lists some of the critical responses to the official illustrations by Hayman and Gravelot. Steven A Raynie notes that Richardson "failed to see that any illustration might further problematize the determination of Pamela's meaning" (78) and reads the Hayman and Gravelot plates as emphasizing on social mobility (79); they depict her as though acting on a theatrical state (80). These themes emerge from the pictures as incorrect interpretation (78). See Steven A. Raynie, "Hayman and Gravelot's Anti-Pamela Designs for Richardson's Octavo Edition of *Pamela* I and II" (*Eighteenth-Century Life,* 23 no. 3 1999): 77-93.

field of action. Whereas in part one this conflict is resolved in the secular arrangement of marriage, in part two it is resolved in the distinctly religious conversion of the hero, Mr. B, and Pamela's performance of "chaste conversation coupled with fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2). In resolving these conflicts, Richardson mirrors discursive Christianity and discursive secularism in a very precise way, as matters of status and orientation as well as of language, showing them to be in a sort of eternal conflict; embodied by his newlywed couple, this conflict precludes happiness in marriage.

Pamela has been a central text in studies of the novel, particularly important as an exemplar in support of the thesis that the eighteenth-century novel emerges as a secular form. These secularization theses suggest that *Pamela* is a secular novel, either because it conscripts religious themes and structures for a distinctly secular purpose, or because it transmits religious teachings in an extra-ecclesiastical mode. I do not mean to survey the range of variety in the secularization thesis in this chapter; instead, I ask to what extent a novel can be called secular or secularized if it explicitly posits a dialectical relationship between secular and spiritual authorities within it. In other words, can a novel be secular if secularism is, to a significant degree, its subject matter? Pamela does not support the conception of the eighteenth century as a period of secularization, or function as a secular form, because it contains secular themes. This is especially important when one considers that its secular themes are routinely subordinated, in a variety of ways, to its religious purpose.

The conflict between discursive secularism and discursive Christianity, embodied by husband and wife respectively, inaugurates Pamela's maternal spiritual crisis. Mr. B's prohibition threatens the eternal salvation of both parties in the marriage contract, and, as

we shall see, imperils their children as well. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* Nancy Armstrong argues that the language of contractualism demands a reconciliation of both parties, who thereby cannot remain adversaries; to transform one party to the contract is to transform both parties, as well as the very arrangement itself.[157] As we shall see, the brand of conjugal mutuality in *Pamela* is one that depends on the Christianity of both parties and on their *willingness* to transform or be transformed. Pamela evens the balance of marital power through a kind of agency that appears to be no agency at all, a mimesis that completes or fulfills, in the typological sense, the secular descent of Mr. B in part one, and provokes in response his descent and submission to her "in all things." This mirroring, a heuristic for the emergent domestic value of conjugal mutuality,[158] is the basis for theorizing a relationship between the two parts of the novel.

As I note above, critical analysis of *Pamela* II has focused on the implications of the breastfeeding conflict, and critics largely conclude that Richardson subordinates maternal prerogative to wifely duty.[159] While I agree that *Pamela II* demonstrates "virtuous motherhood under trial"[160] and transfers the site of gender conflict from virginity to maternal breastfeeding, it is the extent to which this crisis is resolved through

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[157] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford, 1987), 31,111.

[158] Several studies have presented marriage as transforming from a model of paternity to one of mutuality. See Belinda Roberts Peters, *Marriage in Seventeenth-Century English Political Thought* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). See also Christine Roulston, *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010). See also Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

[159] In *The Politics of Motherhood*, Toni Bowers argues that in the contest between patriarchal authority and maternal duty, *Pamela II* chooses the former, but that the book also succeeds in establishing Pamela's arguments for maternal breastfeeding as more reasonable than her husband's arguments against the practice. This crisis of conscience, Bowers argues, is resolved in Pamela's subordination, suggesting that Richardson contains the potential subversiveness of the elements of conduct literature that give independent value to maternal behaviors.

[160] Bowers, *Politicizing* 154.

submission that needs further examination. I argue that the crisis of breastfeeding continues after submission and through the rest of the sequel as Pamela realizes, and laments, that she does in fact have a will that is sometimes at loggerheads with that of her contractual superior. Submission perpetuates the conflict between her realization of and participation in Christian motherhood, but it also constitutes the sacrifice upon which she can be identified as a Christ figure. Because Pamela's will is grounded in a zealous biblical Christianity, it becomes necessary that Mr. B.'s will become hers, rather than the opposite, if she is to follow the example of biblical motherhood and the dictates of theologically-inflected conduct literature. In *Pamela*, there seems to be no way to live as a Christian if one's spouse does not conform.[161] Her fulfillment of wifely duty and motherhood depends on a performance that embodies a variety of Christian paradigms at different points in the narrative, and negotiates various idealizations of motherhood and matrimony.[162]

Studies of maternal breastfeeding in *Pamela* acknowledge the crisis of conscience, yet not the solution to it, which I argue is centered on discursive Christianity. It is perhaps easier to see Pamela as reconciled to her secular duty under patriarchy—as subordinate wife and constant breeder—if we ignore what is perhaps the most important

[161] Bonnie Latimer also says what is at issue here is whether abdication of will leads to happiness in marriage (83). See Bonnie Latimer, *Making Gender, Culture, and the Self in the Fiction of Samuel Richardson: The Novel Individual* (Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013). As Rebecca Davies has argued, physical maternity seems to "prevent her becoming the maternal paragon of didactic literature" (392), but what solidifies Pamela's status as a *Christian* paragon is actually her embodiment of the believing wife who converts her husband through "chaste conversation coupled with fear" (4:393).

[162] Schellenberg says that Pamela's performance of motherhood in part II is "paradoxically strengthened by a feminist subtext which is developed in part II not as a subversive but rather an adaptive strategy" (40). Christine Roulston notes that Pamela, in her concern for her appearance, is aware of the performative nature of "the authentic self." See Christine Roulston, *Virtue, Gender, and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (University Press of Florida, 1998), 12. Davies also notes that Pamela seems to acknowledge that motherhood is performative and not biological. See Rebecca S. Davies, "The Maternal Contradiction: Representing the Fictional Mother in Richardson's *Pamela II* (1741)" *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no.3 (2010): 390.

question of *Pamela II*: Mr. B.'s conversion to Christianity. It is not a wonder that this is often the case, since the lens through which we tend to view *Pamela* is one that privileges a narrative of secularization in the eighteenth century that allowed the emergent literary forms to take on a legitimate moral role apart from religious institutions. Inaugurating the secularization thesis, Ian Watt famously argues that *Pamela* embraced a middle-class code of secularized Puritanism (137). Most recently, critics have read *Pamela* as an embodiment of Latitudinarianism, a dominant theoretical strain of orthodox Anglicanism that claims religious ideals are compatible with worldly self-interest, and that self-interest can actually strengthen religious faith.[163] Carol Stewart, for instance, identifies *Pamela* as one of the first novels that used latitudinarian ideas about the compatibility of self-interest and virtue to legitimize the novel form, and that this is "an episode in the history of secularization"(2).[164] Bonnie Latimer argues that Pamela embodies latitudinarian ideals, though not always straightforwardly and that latitudinarianism "crystalizes into a literalizing understanding of religion as an investment towards gaining the good things of

[163] According to Bonnie Latimer, Latitudinarian rhetoric "crystalizes into a literalizing understanding of religion as an investment towards gaining the good things of this world" (115). Pamela's relationship to Latitudinarianism is an important nuancing of the secularization thesis. Latimer sees Richardson's heroines, Pamela and Clarissa, as embodying Latitudinarian positions, though not straightforwardly: "Clarissa and Pamela invoke the assumptions of devotional literature to imply the inadequacy of men who attempt to control them" (142) thus discovering a kind of feminism in this discourse and echoing Tillotson's indictment of the neglectful master (143).

[164] Carol Stewart argues that Latitudinarianism is an important step in the secularization of narrative that legitimizes the novel's claims towards respectability and begins more or less with *Pamela* (3). Methodism and Latitudinarianism, according to Stewart, and the controversy between them are an important subtext in the novel. Methodists attacked Tillotson's Latitudinarian sermons and Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man*, which emphasized moral and virtuous behavior as Christian activity over devotion (Stewart 30-31). In turn, writers like Fielding attacked what they saw as over-righteousness in Richardson's fiction, connecting Pamela to Whitfield's sermons in *Shamela*: See Thomas Lockwood on *Shamela* in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry Fielding,* ed. Claude Julien Rawson (Cambridge: New York, 2007), 43. Lockwood notes that part of *Shamela* aims to "expose the self-serving doctrine of religious observance over moral duty" that Fielding sees in Methodism (43).

this world" (115).[165] By the end of *Pamela II*, as James Fortuna points out, there is "but one thing wanting," and that is that B become "more than moral, a religious man" (9). Taken as a whole, these studies complicate generalizations about Richardson's *Pamela* as "secular" or "Puritan," which have more to do with a diachronic theory of the novel or of secularization than they do with understanding Richardson's fictions of maternity and matrimony and their discontents. In reorienting the text toward religious principles, Richardson seems to privilege the maternal prerogative, even as his heroine appears to abandon it. Following the narrative to its end, we can see that Pamela is not rewarded for her submission to patriarchal authority; if we cannot say she is punished in the sickness of her baby and the (presumed) infidelity of her husband, we certainly cannot call it a reward. She is, rather later, rewarded for a meekness that passively reveals to her husband the superiority of her own judgment. [166]

Defining secularism and religious conflict in a number of ways, studies of religion in *Pamela* ask us to take the novel's religious and biblical themes on their own terms, rather than importing into our reading the creed of a particular denomination. While

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[165] This is a nuancing of the secularization thesis that James Fortuna critiques at length in his study of Providence in the novel. In arguing that *Pamela* is based on a "providential scheme," Fortuna indicates that there is little evidence that Samuel Richardson's characters identified with anything other than orthodox Anglicanism, not Puritanism or even Methodism, thus challenging Watt's thesis that *Pamela* is secularized Puritanism. Fortuna argues that Methodists, when they appear in Richardson's fiction, are presented as "overdoers" (5). Richardson, as Fortuna notes, insists on a distinction between secular morality and the Christian religion (7), which is part of the thesis of this chapter. Furthermore, "Any underscoring of the presence of a religious ethic in a novel carries the subsequent necessity for specifically assessing, in context, the total implications of that ethic—beyond, I hasten to add, a charge that ultimately it should be taken as evidence of pandering to the benighted tastes of a putatively secular reading public" (9). Furthermore, he says that Richardson insists on a distinction between secular morality and the Christian religion (9). See James Fortuna, *"The Unsearchable Wisdom of God:" A Study of Providence in Richardson's Pamela* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980).

[166] Pamela-as-passive in this context refers to one through whom God or the supreme power works, and who gives up her title to activity in order to achieve the same ends she might through active endeavor. I will discuss passivity in greater detail in the next chapter.

Fortuna argues that Richardson imagines Pamela in a state of trial,[167] based on the theology of Christian testing, John B. Pierce and J. Paul Hunter draw attention to Pamela's revision of Psalm 137 as an indication of the fluid nature of Pamela's spiritual relationship to her tormenter, Mr. B. Both Fortuna and Pierce present a reading of *Pamela* as a spiritual autobiography that is deeply invested in typology and the paradigmatic Christian pilgrimage through life, with a view toward otherworldliness and salvation. In the readings that follow, I emphasize Pamela's spiritual journey as it comes into conflict with the ambivalent worldly "reward" she has won through her characteristic piety. Pamela in her married state must mediate or bring about her own salvation and her husband's. The three sections of this reading, Pamela's Mind, Pamela's Body, and Pamela's Soul correspond roughly to the conflict, the battle ground, and the means of resolution. In each section, I engage a variety of Christian paradigms: martyrdom, typology, "natural motherhood" and Christomemesis as they emerge as languages for Pamela's maternal and marital conflict. Pamela's mind is reflected in her use of Christian discourse as it conflicts with the fashionable, worldly secularism of patriarchal authority. Pamela's body is a form of martyrdom, heroism of the body, wherein she testifies religious truth at the expense of physical comfort. Pamela's soul is a sacrifice of the maternal body in order to engage with the (masculine) paradigm of the Christ figure in order, paradoxically, to reclaim her maternal prerogative through the conversion of her husband. As I will show, Pamela, as the believing wife of the unbelieving husband, mediates her own salvation by bringing about his. Additionally, I look at the way

[167] Fortuna points out that Richardson's printing of *The Christian Magazine* makes reference to life as "a state of trial" (qtd. in Fortuna 47).

responses to *Pamela* in the literary and visual arts revise, re-mediate, or re-victimize the paragon to legitimize alternative (often androcentric) perspectives.

I. Pamela's Mind

Central to the *Pamela* controversy is the question of whether Pamela's letters are an honest representation of her mind. "Pamelist" letters to the editor that were printed with the second edition, for instance, praise the book as if it were Pamela herself, pious, ingenuously charming, naturally beautiful: "Little book, charming Pamela! Face the World and never doubt of finding Friends and Admirers" (ix). They judge her as if she were real, astonished that she could have resisted Mr. B.'s temptations, but this does not seem to render the book unrealistic in the letter-writers' eyes: they are proud of her. Such readings accept Pamela's naïve insistence on an equivalency between her letters and the truth of her mind, and Richardson's authority in mediating the servant girl's voice. As Nancy Armstrong argues, Pamela has become a body of words, desirable now for her power to mediate male desire through her writing.[168] It is notable, then, that the word "understanding," the common term for moral and intellectual thought and judgment, appears very infrequently. The novel's eschewal of this term embraced by John Locke, Lady Damaris Masham, and Mary Astell could suggest a resistance to attributing Pamela's resistance to intellectual power, suggesting it is instead religious purity that emboldens her. Although we are told that Pamela has been educated as a gentlewoman, the term "understanding" is used only in reference to her in her married state, and only once. Its absence in the text indicates that Pamela's mind is something less cultivated,

[168] Armstrong argues that desire in *Pamela* transfers from her body to her words, and that the pleasure she offers Mr. B. becomes the pleasure of her text: "That this is the Pamela Mr. B. eventually desires calls into question the whole notion of sexuality" (*Desire* 6).

less gentile, or less class-based than "understanding" connotes. To speak of Pamela's mind, then, is to engage something more akin to her perspective, to how and what she sees.[169] This perspective and its lens (discursive Christianity) deserve some attention here, for indeed it is Pamela's lens and her judgment of Mr. B. that is at the heart of the interpretive crisis that prompted Richardson's sequel.

Anti-Pamelist responses in the early 1740s register a number of anxieties that critics have already noted: anxieties about marriage between social classes, about *Pamela*'s pornographic or voyeuristic potential, and, importantly, about the possibility that Pamela is a deceitful wench, gold-digging her way to aristocratic marriage. A deeper anxiety, which underlies this discourse and which Pamelist and Anti-Pamelist texts seem to have in common, is the fear of Pamela's perspective—the vision and judgment of the pious, blameless female servant. Responses to *Pamela* throw into high relief the extent to which Richardson seemed successfully to mediate a female perspective: there seems to be such a gap produced, such a loss of androcentric reality that almost all of Richardson's (male) responders hurry to fill it in, even when they like the book. Their responses coopt the text in order to speculate on what is best for the young sons of the kingdom. Laudatory reviews, such as that in the *History of the Works of the Learned* (1740), focus on the way Mr. B. comes to deserve his "prize"—he is rewarded for *his* virtue. Fielding's *Shamela* (1741) laments that *Pamela* has the potential to degrade or humiliate young men, and therefore needs to be militated against with a damning revision of Richardson's text, supposedly brought to light by members of the clergy. Fielding's revision manages

[169] In *Novel Beginnings*, Spacks categorizes Pamela as a "Novel of Consciousness": Richardson's religious allusions demonstrate "the degree to which a psychological matrix embeds the heroine's pious thoughts" and that there is a "naturalization of the religious" in *Pamela* (98). "The possibility that Pamela does not completely know herself becomes manifest; the story we read includes stories never verbalized—includes, at any rate, multifarious possibilities of interpretation" (101).

to indict Pamela's behavior as well as mitigate the agency of servant girls: "if the Master is not a Fool, they will be debauched by him; and if he is a Fool, they will marry him. Neither of which, I apprehend, my good Friend, we desire should be the case of our *Sons*" (*Shamela*, 6).[170] As Tassie Gwilliam points out, Fielding amplifies much of the criticisms that the unregenerate Mr. B. uses to attack Pamela's narrative.[171] Similarly, the anonymous *Pamela Censured* (1741) warns that young gentlemen will be "tempted to rehearse some of the same scenes with some Pamela" of their own (23). The writer seems to reject, perhaps as a result of the claustrophobic subjectivity of Pamela's letters, Richardson's claim that his novel teaches virtue to both sexes, contending rather that the "Scenes of Love" and "lewd ideas" will ignite desire. Interestingly, the androcentric perspective is what produces the lewdness, making *Pamela Censured* a guidebook in reading *Pamela* as pornography, if it is not a work of pornography itself. Focusing on male sexual desire, *Pamela Censured* ignores Pamela's-- and Richardson's-- judicious criticisms of Mr. B.'s behavior, and is thereby able to construct an obscene subtext.

The epistolary novel leaves Mr. B.'s voice out, almost entirely, recording only his monstrous behavior and threats. What seems to be lost to *Pamela*'s reviewers, or what they strive to recover, is the moral of *Mr. B.'s* story, his mistakes, trials, and what he manages to overcome, and the reviewers read this loss as a flaw, or an opportunity for interpolation. A major part of Pamela's perspective, then, is a markedly gyno-centric subjectivity that insists on her own moral and spiritual welfare above all other concerns..

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[170] Emphasis mine. Henry Fielding, *An Apology for the life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews. In which the many notorious falshoods and misreprsentations [sic] of a book called Pamela, are exposed and refuted*, By Mr. Conny Keyber (London: A Dodd, 1741).

[171] See Tassie Gwilliam, *Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993) p. 21. Gwilliam argues that Richardson was on a quest to understand women and, to a lesser extent, understand masculinity (5). She also notes that Fielding's attacks echo those made by Mr. B. in part I (21).

Richardson's formal privileging of Pamela's voice render's the male character's perspective at best secondary and also leads to its illegibility.[172] This illegibility expands the range of interpretive possibility for those who do not accept the equivalence between girl and book. In a sense, *Pamela II* rectifies this claustrophobia, though its method of doing so validates Pamela's truth claims. It contains long sections of speech from Mr. B. that both detail his psychological journey, and confirm the truth of her narrative.

Another important lens through which Pamela views her world is the discourse of martyrdom. Pamela's discursive Christianity, insofar as it comes into conflict with Mr. B's discursive secularism, marks the gyno-centric perspective as decidedly religious. Martyrdom is one kind of religious hermeneutics that Pamela has internalized. According to John R. Knott, English Protestant martyr stories emphasize resistance to authority by speaking "boldly" for religious truth in examinations for heresy.[173] Throughout John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563), a major theme is the insistence on scriptural truth in the face of a secular or illegitimate religious authority.[174] Foxe's "Protestant plainness" prefigures that of *Pamela*, whose protagonist adamantly opposes commands that are "contrary to that first duty which shall ever be the principle of [her] life" (1:36), religious duty in general, and in particular that of chastity. Pamela is as defiant in response to

[172] Donald Ball notes that Richardson comes closer to multiple characterization in *Pamela* II, but does not show his full capabilities until *Clarissa* (1747). See Donald L. Ball. *Samuel Richardson's Theory of Fiction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 204. Alex Townsend explains that Richardson uses polyphony in order to participate as a voice in the text, though not as the only voice. See Alex Townsend, *Autonomous Voices: An Exploration of Polyphony in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford, England: Peter Lang, 2003).

[173] See John Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature*, 1563-1695 (New York: Cambridge, 1993), 7-8.

[174] While Foxe's book was not affordable or accessible to a large eighteenth-century audience, its iconography and "bastardized" collections of its martyrology were printed frequently. See Eirwen Nicholson, "Eighteenth-Century Foxe: Evidence for the Impact of *Acts and Monuments* in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century" in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Vermont: Scolar Press, 1997), 149.

persecution as she is humble in the face of kindness. Upon Mr. B's examination of her, and the "faults" she lays at his door, she responds to his threats to harm her or turn her away: "I will not promise to forebear the strongest expressions that my distressed mind shall suggest to me; nor shall your angriest frowns deter me, when my honesty is in question" (1: 353).[175] When it becomes clear that Mr. B. will have her sent home for her defiance, a trick to get her to his Lincolnshire estate, she invokes the paradigm of martyrdom more directly: "I have heard of a good bishop that was to be burnt for his religion: and he tried how he could bear it by putting his fingers into the lighted candle. So I, t'other day, tried if I could not scour a pewter plate" (1:119).[176] After contravening Mr. B.'s commands, Pamela is prepares for a painful retribution. We might recall her reference to Protestant executions in contemplating the Hayman plate discussed above. Hayman's plate reinforces the fact that Pamela contemplates her position as martyrdom. The plate does not simply re-read *Pamela* as in some ways a story of martyrdom; instead it validates the heroine's established perspective.

Indeed, the precise physical threat of Pamela's martyrdom tends to change; sometimes it is the intended rape, sometimes banishment, sometimes suicide, but, importantly, it is always bodily. She is frequently beaten or threatened with physical violence for speaking the truth. As Knott says, "the role of martyr […] demanded that one thwart the aims of this elaborate process [inquisition and execution] by resisting all

[175] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded. In a Series of Familiar Letters from a Beautiful Young Damsel to Her Parents The Third and Fourth Volumes, By the Editor of the Two First.* 4 vols. (London: S. Richardson, J. Osborn, and J Rivington, 1742.)

[176] The washing of one's hands in the flames is a common trope in British martyrdom stories. The first supposed to do this was John Rogers, and the beginning of the Marian persecutions, though Rogers was not a bishop but rather a pastor, biblical scholar and printer of the Matthew Bible. Cranmer also famously burnt his right hand first as a show of defiance to Mary Tudor and penitence for having momentarily recanted his Protestantism (Knott 11)

of the challenges of the examiners and […] proving one's faith by suffering patiently the torments inflicted on the body […] to win a symbolic victory" (13). Pamela's examiners torment her with physical abuse, questions, temptations, and threats of bodily harm, or conditions, such as a return to hard labor, which she associates with physical pain and, perhaps ironically, with scalding or burning. Pamela is also betrayed by a fellow servant, Robert, who delivers her to Lincolnshire. She expects that her imprisonment will lead to her rape or suicide. Robert's betrayal of her to Mr. B. is equivalent to committing the abuse himself. She says in reply to his apology, "I never saw an execution but once, and then the hangman asked the poor creature's pardon, and wipes his mouth, as you do, and pleaded his duty, and then calmly tucked up the criminal. But I am no criminal" (1:175). Pamela's distressed innocence, and her continuance of her journal of captivity as a testimony of her persecution, resonates strongly with the tradition of Protestant martyrdom. Pamela's journal, her attempt to control the narrative of her imprisonment, establishes her symbolic victory, for these writings mediate her truth to her tormenter and to the reading public.

In "The Problem of Secular Heroinism," Cynthia Griffin Wolf points out that the language of Christianity seems to have been more conducive to expressing the moral and psychological depth of fictional heroines: "Authors who shared with their audience a genuine belief in the hereafter and the individual's moral commitment to salvation had been able to render their women heroically" (35).[177] The heroism for which Pamela's reviewers praised her was her staunch commitment to what she understands as religious principles: chastity, filial piety, and, in part II, maternal care. Pamela's relationship to the

[177] Wolff also notes that Richardson's Clarissa "refuses to allow her identity to be reduced to terms which are mere secular conveniences" (36). See Cynthia Griffin Wolff, "The Problem of Eighteenth-Century Secular Heroinism" *Modern Language Studies* 4, no. 2 (1974) 35-42.

demands of female chastity is less complicated than Roxana's. Her religious duties do not conflict with it or with each other until part II, at which point the conflict is between wifely duty and the spiritual responsibilities commensurate with motherhood. Even Pamela's parents would rather see her "covered with rags" (1:7), or perhaps worse, than see her prostitute herself. In part one, chastity, as the primary female virtue, encompasses all religious duty uncomplicatedly, and the semantic field of chastity makes up a language for Pamela's moral and spiritual self-awareness. Part of the reason Mr. B.'s remonstrance lacks force is because he dismisses the psychological depth of her convictions and embraces a competing ideology.[178] This competing ideology, discursive secularism, is steeped in his own worldly flourishing, and its morality is restricted to what is fashionable, serviceable, or appropriate to his station.

Throughout part I, Pamela puzzles over the carelessness of young men for the God who sees all and wonders at their ability to conscript anyone or anything to gain their "abominable ends" (1:338). In his turn, Mr. B. calls her his "pretty preacher" (1:105) and teasingly offers to turn her into his curate. Critics have noted that Mr. B.'s definitions for concepts such as "offer", "contract", "honour", "care", "harm", and "justice" are consistently at odds with hers.[179] His honor offers hers no protection; it simply requires that he offer to pay her for sex before raping her. Similarly, his offering of "terms" of kept status to Pamela is a litany of the good things of this world: money, property, the elevation and financial security of her family, fashionable introduction into

[178] As Nancy Armstrong argues, "the dialogues between them take on a dialectical force" (117) wherein "Pamela seizes power of surveillance and historiography, the power of the gaze, as her own" (124). Part of this dialectic is Christian-secular, and part of this gaze looks through the lens of discursive Christianity.

[179] See Terry Castle, "P/B: Pamela as Sexual Fiction," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 22 no.3 (1982),: 469-489, 484.

the *beau monde*, and access to the person and fortune of a rich gentleman. Yet these terms offered do not allow for free consent; whether Pamela agrees or not, she is already in his power. Mr. B.'s perspective renders honorable conduct a concept that applies exclusively to his reputation and his upper-class prerogative. Parson Williams' desire to rescue her from her rapist is an important contrast to Mr. B.'s emphasis on worldly flourishing: Pamela says, "in helping me out of my present distress, you perform all the acts of religion in one"(1:202).[180] To her shock she learns that Mr. B.'s concept of his own honor is the way of the world: "it was too common and fashionable a case to be withstood" (1:220). Fearing that her escape could lead to accusations of stealing, she complains, "he is a justice himself; such a Justice, deliver me from!" (1:90). Mr. B., as a justice of the peace, embodies this worldly justice that allows the rape of a servant girl because it is fashionable. Later, after their marriage, he cautions her to hide her religious zeal, demoting it to an ornament to her loveliness rather than a crucial part of her relationship to God, and to the world. Mr. B.'s actions are not simply and not always immoral, but rather dialectically opposed to the principle of divine justice with which the book begins, both in its title, and its nod to "God in whose graciousness we have so often experienced at a pinch" (1). Whereas in *Pamela I* the principle characters are speaking different languages, in part II, Mr. B. tries to marginalize Pamela's Christianity to a quiet corner of activity within the domestic sphere.

Although Mr. B. embodies discursive secularism in the text, he functions as the agent of her trial; he is also her reward. As James Fortuna argues, *Pamela* is written on a providential structure and deeply entrenched in the ideology of Christian "testing." Each

[180] As I explain below, according to Jeremy Taylor, an instinct or impulse that is joined with the force of Christian duty—charity, love, or justice, for instance—becomes a devotional act. Taylor's arguments for maternal breastfeeding employ this reasoning.

of Pamela's trials not only proves the mettle of her virtue, but also reemphasizes the importance of providential design, strengthens her faith, and mitigates her pride and self-reliance. Pamela and her parents often refer to this state of trial as a blessing: "what blessed things are trials and temptations, when we have the strength to resist and subdue them" (1:47). The redemptive benefits of this testing are dramatized in her suicide contemplation, when she engages in a dialogue with herself that closely mimics passages of *The Imitation of Christ*: Pamela asks herself, "and wilt thou, to avoid thy sufferings, be the guilty aggressor? And because wicked men persecute thee, wilt thou fly in the face of the almighty and distrust his grace and goodness?" (1:289). The language of divine admonition here, at the moment of despair, is another recognizable trope of devotional literature, but Richardson's emphasis on personal humility resonates especially strongly with the theme of the *Imitation*. *The Imitation of Christ* (ca. 1427), attributed to Thomas à Kempis, is a dialogue between Christ and a believer, in which the latter is taught to humble herself, trust God, and serve others. *The Imitation* went through several editions just before 1740, including several translations by George Stanhope, and John Wesley. Stanhope's translation from 1704 went through more than ten editions by 1740, and Wesley produced both an unabridged and an abridged version. Throughout the seventeenth century, a large number of English and French and Latin editions were printed. Part of the appeal, as it was with *Pamela*, was the text's simplicity and its ability to articulate crises in faith. The following example from chapter three of Wesley's translation highlights the *Imitation*'s simplicity and its emphasis on humility through passivity:

> Christian: Shall I speak unto my Lord, who am dust and ashes?
> If I esteem better of my self behold thou standest against me and

my iniquities bear true witness against me [….]
Christ: […] Refer therefore all things *unto* me, for I am *He* that have given all. (141-2).

Wesley praised the text for its simplicity that "greatly resembles the holy scripture." In comparison, the dialogic structure of Pamela's epiphany indicates her entrenchment in a discourse in which God speaks through a believer at moments of extreme difficulty or despair. Pamela sees herself and everyone else as participants in a providential scheme, but, as with most pilgrims, one of her most important struggles is whether she can submit to it.

Pamela's discursive Christianity also is manifest in her frequent references to the Bible as a didactic or predictive source. As I discuss in the next section, Pamela's desire to breastfeed comes from her understanding of it as a religious duty legitimized by the biblical examples which populate theological and moral tracts on maternal breastfeeding. Pamela uses typology as a way to understand her place in a "predictive structure" (Korshin 187), such as in her rewriting of Psalm 138. As John B. Pierce and Michael Austin point out, Pamela's revision of Psalm 138 points to shifts in the way she understands her relationship to her tormenter.[181] To foresee how Mr. B.'s advances will end, she rehearses the story in 2 Samuel of Amnon and Tamar: "Thus we read in Holy Writ, that wicked Amnon, when he had ruined poor Tamar, hated her more than he ever

[181] Austin argues that Richardson's adaptation and subsequent use of psalm 138 conceptualize Lincolnshire as a type of Babylon. Babylon itself is typologically ambiguous, and its revision hints at a struggle to define her relationship to Mr. B.: "Richardson must convince his readers that Mr. B. actually deserves to marry the pure maiden whom he kidnapped and attempted to rape. It is therefore necessary to the progression of the story that Pamela's initial interpretation of her Lincolnshire captivity not be allowed to stand without reinterpretation into a different narrative frame" (508). See Michael Austin, "Lincolnshire Babylon: Competing Typologies in Pamela's 137th Psalm," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 12, no. 4 (2000): 501–14. See also John B Pierce, "Pamela's Textual Authority," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 7, no. 2 (1995): 131–46.

loved her" (1:79).[182] In her turn, Pamela's writings are "accorded the status of scripture by the other characters" (Austin 507), including Mr. B., who admits in part II that his "bible dipping" with his mother in Pamela's journal begins his obsession with her and her mind. In the end, Pamela's journal becomes a type or postfiguration of the Bible, and as Michael McKeon says has "become so canonical that Mr. B. can allude to its minor details as though to a scripture which they and we hold in common" (*Origins* 15). In this "world of Homiletic morality" [183] Pamela behaves and sounds very much like a pretty preacher, finding religious analogies for her moral dilemmas with an ease that suggests a Christian mindfulness, a deep psychological and epistemological investment in religious discourse.

II Pamela's Body

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Chastity is the religious virtue for Pamela that in part I encompasses all religious duties, and serves as the value that allows her to make her principled resistance to patriarchal authority. Mr. B.'s assault on Pamela's chastity signals a forfeiture of his rights over her in the moral world of the novel-- if not in Mr. B.'s opinion, certainly in terms of divine law. These rights are reinstated only in marriage. Thus, as I have discussed, Richardson subordinates the male perspective partly as a consequence of its

[182] Amnan rapes his sister in 2 Samuel 13:14, and immediately after begins to hate her and shuts her out of doors.

[183] See Clinton Bond, "Representing Reality: Strategies of Realism in the Early English Novel" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 6.2 (1994): 121-140, 121.

failure to be compelling when pitted against female virtue and spiritual health. But in his somewhat myopic focus on Pamela's chastity, Richardson risks reducing his heroine to an object of male desire in the process of celebrating her virtue. As Lady Damaris Masham warns in *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Vertuous or Christian Life* (1705), mistaken notions of female virtue are too rarely meant "to signifie anything but the single Vertue of Chastity" and tend to neglect the understanding, which "is commonly very little thought of in reference to one whole sex" who receive too little religious instruction beyond chastity.[184] To a respectable degree, Richardson prevents confining Pamela's virtue exclusively to chastity by demonstrating her thorough knowledge of her "catechism" and emphasizing her principled elegance and bravery in the face of illegitimate force. Still, this virtue is entirely in the service of chastity, and, by way of demonstrating that Pamela does fully deserve her exalted condition and reputation, Richardson widens her performance to the spectrum of female virtues which are not so easily reconciled with each other: charity, filial piety, maternal virtue, devotional study. Most especially, the focus of Pamela's discursive Christianity shifts in part II from chastity to charity. This section focuses on Pamela in her married state, when her crises, if less entertaining than the courtship story, become more complex.

The narrative of *Pamela* II, consists mostly of Pamela's letters to Lady Davers and a friend, Miss Darnford, detailing her relationship with Mr. B. and her activities within the domestic sphere, including the adoption of Mr. B.'s illegitimate daughter, Miss Goodwin, and Pamela's ruminations on Miss Goodwin's mother, Sally Godfrey. Pamela's activities are centered on childrearing and local charity, and the principle

[184] Lady Damaris Masham, *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Vertuous or Christian Life* (London: A and J Churchil, 1705), 21

conflicts are Pamela's thwarted intentions to nurse her own baby, and Mr. B.'s romantic friendship with a countess, for whose sake he considers embroiling Pamela in a polygamous love triangle. Pamela's depression over her husband's supposed infidelity, and baby Billy's bout with smallpox widen the rift between husband and wife until Pamela condescends to let him send her away and live with the countess, provided that he allow her to raise baby Billy apart from him. Seeing her submission and maternal passion, Mr. B. relents and promises to let Pamela guide him in all things, eventually becoming "more than a moral, a religious gentleman" (4:390). Added to these letters are Pamela's reflections on a number of moral and educational matters. At the end, Richardson tells us that they both go on to live Christian lives and produce a quiver full of children.[185]

What Damaris Masham calls "The Christian life,"[186] I call discursive Christianity. It goes beyond beliefs, affiliations, or opinions; it is performative, epistemological, and affective. Discursive Christianity depends on paradigms of thought and speech that are derived from a transcendental conception of human existence; it determines how one feels and what one fears; it is, to be sure, also commensurate with the latitudinarian proposition that Christian living has worldly benefits. Most importantly, however, it requires active participation— activities such as devotional study, solicitude for the spiritual welfare of friends and neighbors, cleanliness and chastity of the body and mind, and performance of the religious duty of charity. Hinging his own salvation on Pamela's

[185] We learn that he joined with Pamela "in every pious wish of her heart" (4:469) and participated fully in her charities, and she "made him the father of seven children" (4:470).

[186] Early- and mid-eighteenth century titles that deal with the subject of living as a Christian are, expectably, in the hundreds. Lady Damaris Masham's *Occasional Thoughts* (1705) is just one of many conduct tracts for women on the manner of leading "a Christian life."

discursive Christianity, Mr. B. says, "Thus shall I find some of my own bad actions atoned for by your exemplary goodness, and God will bless me for your sake" (2:39). In Part II, Pamela's eager charity brings new virtue and wholesomeness to aristocratic prosperity, purifies its blood and revivifies its decayed paternalism. Yet it is incomplete without that sacrifice of the body that she managed to postpone in part I.

Pamela's notion of charity is integral to her desire to breastfeed her own child, which would be a performance of her Christian piety. Although *Pamela* appears before maternal breastfeeding begins to be pressed as an obligation upon the upper classes,[187] there is a body of medical and theological texts that Richardson might have drawn from in establishing it as an unshakable religious duty.[188] Exemplary among these are Mary Astell's comments in *A Serious Proposal* (1694) and Jeremy Taylor's in *The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus* (1649), which Astell knew and admired.[189] In a section entitled "Of Nursing Children, in Imitation of The Blessed Mother," Taylor

[187] As Bowers points out, upper class mothers were not pressured to breastfeed in the seventeenth century, although writers like Richard Allestree and James Nelson saw the failure to nurse as a kind of neglect (159-161). According to Bonnie Latimer, breastfeeding began to receive serious medical attention in the 1730s and 1740s (81). Lois Chaber points out that Pamela's breastfeeding discourse is both fashionable and grounded in theological and medical theory. The Pro-nursing movement had its origins in theological, not medical, grounds in the seventeenth century. The emphasis on maternal breastfeeding, she claims, began with the Calvinists before 1660 and then with non-Calvinists after 1660 (205). See Lois Chaber, "'This Affecting Subject': An 'Interested' Reading of Breastfeeding in Two novels by Samuel Richardson," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 8.2 (1996): 193-250.

[188] Along with Nelson and Allestree, Mary Astell, Jeremy Taylor, the Marquess of Halifax, William Cadogen, the *Ladies Library,* and many others levy pointed criticism at mothers who do not attempt to nurse their own infants. See Toni Bowers, "A Point of Conscience: Breastfeeding and Maternal Authority in Pamela, Part 2" in *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science, and Literature 1650-1865*, eds. Susan C. Greenfield and Carol Barash (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 138-158.

[189] According to Ruth Perry, Mary Astell knew passages of Taylor by heart (24). See Ruth Perry, *Women and the Enlightenment,* ed. Margaret Hunt (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1984), 24. Jeremy Taylor was a Church of Ireland bishop and religious writer (ODNB) whose ideas, according to John D. Schaeffer, helped to lay the groundwork for Anglican latitudinarianism. See John D Schaeffer. "Tropical Latitude: Prophecy, Orality, and the Rhetoric of Tolerance in Jeremy Taylor's *The Liberty of Prophesying*," *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 454–470. Quotations here are taken from Jeremy Taylor, "of Nursing Children, In Imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mother" in *The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus* ca. 1649. Rpt 1928 (*Project Canterbury*. Anglicanhistory.org. Web. 3 Sept 2013).

reasons that the Bible imposes maternal breastfeeding as a religious duty under the obligation of charity, and in the examples of biblical mothers if not by direct injunction: "And in this particular, the good women of old gave one of their instances. The greatest personages nursed their own children, did the work of mothers [….]." Foremost among these biblical mothers is Mary, the mother of Christ. Post-reformation reverence for Mary focused almost exclusively on her as an example of maternal care and affect; downplaying her virginity, Protestants instead emphasized her acceptance of the maternal burden, which included living through her son's death, and her breastfeeding.[190]

According to Taylor, as a natural use the "two exuberant fontinels, which, 'like two roes that are twins, feed among the lilies,'"[191] breastfeeding is an act of charity, a maternal virtue sometimes at odds with the sexual functions of the breast. Those functions, tied to male sexual gratification are "no laws" because they do not include a Christian virtue to elevate them above mere instinct. Taylor implicitly connects the sexual use of breasts to masturbation, which he alludes to as a counterpoint to the natural impulse of maternal breastfeeding, the latter being elevated by the aims of charity. According to the tract, an instinct or impulse emerges as a religious duty when it is combined with the dictates of charity: "until [instincts] mingle with justice, or charity, or

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[190] Christine Peters notes that Mary's significance changed in *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 227. Patricia Crawford argues that the devaluation of Mary also lowered the cultural estimation of maternity (47). Devotional literature, however, like Taylor's, did posit Mary as a maternal mother, one among many in the old and new testaments. One of the most touching examples of this kind of reverence is a 1601 poem called, "Song of Mary The Mother Of Christ":
My cross is always mixed with sweet,
Who always might adore my Saviors feete,
Embrace my God, my loving infant kisse.
And give him sucke, who gives the Angels foode,
And turn my milke into my Saviors bloud. (qtd. in Peters 230)

[191] Taylor quotes Song of Solomon 7:2-3: "Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins."

some instance of religion and obedience, they are no laws; the others that are so mingled, being raised to duty and religion." Consequently, Taylor spares no terms of abuse for mothers who refuse this religious duty: "it is but half a mother to bring forth children, and not to nourish them; and it is some kind of abortion, or an exposing of the infant, which in the reputation of all wise nations, is infamous and uncharitable."[192] Taylor criticizes the use of nurses as an act that exposes the infant to diseases of the body or the mind, warning of children returned to their parents "crooked, consumptive, half starved, and unclean" and exposed to "peevishness, to lust, to drunkenness, to pride, to low and base demeanours, to stubbornness." In Corinthians 7:14, scripture warns against ungodly marriages as productive of "unclean" children, and this concern, perhaps, leads Pamela to speculate on whether the nurse's constitution predisposed baby Billy to smallpox: "I fear the nurse's constitution is too hale and too rich for the dear baby—had I been permitted…"(4:252). She cuts herself off here, perhaps signaling the inexpressibility of her maternal pain, or resisting the desire to murmur against Providence. This uncleanness to which Taylor and the scripture refer is a result, in nature, of introducing non-maternal milk to an infant; in *Pamela* II, uncleanness is the result of the patriarch's denial of Pamela's religious duty. Mr. B. prevents not only Pamela's adherence to her religious duty, but also her participation in Christianity *as a mother*, that is, in a uniquely female way that is not tied either to chastity or obedience.

Like Taylor's essay, an earlier tract on maternal breastfeeding by Jane Sharp in *The Midwives Handbook* (1671) calls the refusal to breastfeed a "weakness" attributable

[192] *The Ladies Library* also condemns this crime against nature: It is a thing against Nature… For a Mother to bring forth a Child, and presently to cast it from her; to nourish in her Womb with her own Blood, I know not what, which she saw not, and not Nurse with her milk, that, which she seeth already living, a Man, and imploring the duties of a mother" (qtd. in Bowers, *Politicizing* 160).

to a lack of love for the infant, which changeth the natural disposition of the child" (353). Astell states a similar point in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1695):

> To introduce poor Children into the World, and neglect to fence them against the temptations of it, and so leave them expos'd to temporal and eternal miseries, is a wickedness for which I want a Name; 'tis beneath Brutality; the Beasts are better natur'd for they take care of their off-spring, till they are capable of caring for themselves. And if Mothers had a due regard to their Posterity, how Great soever they are, they would not think themselves too Good to perform what Nature requires, not thro' Pride and Delicacy remit the poor little ones to the care of a foster Parent. Or, if necessity inforce them to dispute another to perform *their* Duty, they wou'd be as choice at least in the Manners and Inclinations, as they are in the complections of their Nurses, lest with their Milk they transfuse their Vices, and form in the Child such evil habits as will not easily be eradicated. (*A Serious Proposal to The Ladies* 61)

Astell argues that the abdication of maternal responsibility imperils the immortal soul of offspring. Additionally, her condemnation of mothers who refuse to breastfeed resonates with the concerns of discursive Christianity insofar as the context of her remarks is a tract on the improper religious education of women; general female corruption, pride, and improper delicacy are products of male-controlled education that degrades women's souls and produces vicious mothers. Taken together, tracts on maternal breastfeeding seem to regard breastfeeding as a kind of early moral education as well as a matter of nutrition.[193]

Pamela is caught between two competing claims on her behavior as a mother and her duties as a Christian: filial piety and maternal virtue. In the balance between these hang the immortal souls of Pamela, her husband, and her children. Until her "smart debate" with Mr. B. on the subject of breastfeeding, Pamela's subjection has been too easy. Her husband has willed nothing in which she could not see absolute value; as she

[193] Patricia Springborg's note on this section suggests that Astell's belief that infants ingest vices from their midwives seems to conflict with her educational theory, which subscribes to Locke's belief in the child as a tabula rasa. I argue instead that breastfeeding functions as a kind of early education in itself.

writes to Lady Davers, "but you know how generously your brother treats me on all occasions" (4:32). Pamela fails if she does not make a difficult sacrifice, rendering marital virtue a zero-sum game. Unfortunately, in this instance, the compromise of her will is the compromise of a divine injunction: "for if it be the natural duty of a mother, it is a divine duty; and how can a husband have the power to discharge a divine duty?" (4:34) Pamela speculates that the sin of neglecting maternal duty will fall upon her husband, and "a good wife would be much concerned at this" (4:35); on the other hand, she recalls the admonition of Paul, "who suffers not women to teach, nor usurp authority over the man" (3:410), which seems to check her contradiction of her husband, even in the name of virtue. Mr. B.'s prohibition undermines Pamela's Christian activity: her solicitude for her husband's soul, her performance of her maternal duty of charity, and her calm subordination to her husband's will.

Taylor's differentiation between religious "laws," like maternal breastfeeding, and "no laws" like masturbation, highlights the question of who owns the maternal body—whether God, child, or husband. Taylor's definition of law combines nature (sexual desire) with duty (filial obedience) making Pamela's acquiescence to Mr. B.'s sexual desires permissible, but not his desires themselves: his "instinctual" desire to enjoy her body exclusively is "no law" because it is not also in furtherance of a religious dictate. Pamela's concern, therefore, is not simply that she has lost power to perform her religious duty, but that the reasons Mr. B. gives for preventing her, subvert the laws of charity. In this relationship, the irreligion of the husband is opposed to the wife's Christian duty, and renders their child "unclean," leading to his disease.

Mr. B.'s "dispensation," as he calls it, constitutes an illegitimate usurpation of divine prerogative in a number of ways. First, his object is the preservation of her body and his own gratification in that body: "I can by no means consent to sacrifice [your personal graces] to the carelessness into which I have seen very nice ladies sink" (4:38), referring possibly to the changes that the breast may undergo in breastfeeding, or to the violence that fatigue might do to her beauty. Second, his language alludes to a distinct appropriation of the prerogatives of the God of Genesis in dispensing maternal privileges.[194] Finally, Mr. B.'s objection to Pamela's biblical rationale for maternal breastfeeding aligns him with the aims of secularization and therefore undermines his authority in interpreting religious significance:[195] Pamela argues in favor of maternal breastfeeding, "for this be the custom of all the good wives we read of in Scripture" (4:34), but Mr. B. rejoins, "if you tell me of Sarah's, or Leah's, or Rachel's, or Rebecca's nursing their children, I can answer […] that when our modern ladies shall follow such examples in every thing, their plea ought to be allowed in this" (4:36). Mr. B. is at odds with the reigning theological positions on maternal breastfeeding and falsely equates it with activities such as retrieving water from wells and tending flocks, which do not by themselves present any religious obligation. He also argues that as some biblical children nursed by their mothers had afterwards committed murders, maternal nursing is no guard

[194] Robert Erickson makes a similar point about Lovelace in *Clarissa* who assumes "for himself the patriarchal role of the old testament God who presides over female fertility." Robert Erickson, "Clarissa and Scripture," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 2.1 (1989), 47. This is secondary to the original usurpation inaugurated, according to Irigaray, by the "tragedy, an exclusion, a sacrifice, an opening in the space-time of nature" that removes the female-as-mother from participation in the infinite of spirituality or subjectivity (133).

[195] As Latimer notes, Mr. B. also belies a misunderstanding of the medical facts of breastfeeding, arguing that the infant can receive first milk from a wet-nurse, which, if he means colostrum, is not possible (81). Toni Bowers notes that Richardson undercuts efforts to contain political and religious authority of women by presenting Pamela's arguments for maternal breastfeeding as more convincing than Mr. B.'s arguments against it (*Politicizing* 171).

against immorality.[196] His hererodox speculations support a secular agenda, and Pamela distrusts his analysis: "He pretends to answer me from scripture, but I have some doubts of his exposition" (4:33). After her long relation of Mr. B.'s arguments against breastfeeding, which include a number of self-serving desires for availing himself unimpeded to her mind and body, Pamela remains mistrustful of her husband's ability to think outside of secular conveniences:

> Alas! My dear Mr. B. was never yet thought so entirely fit up to fill up the Character of a Casuistical Divine, as that one may absolutely rely upon his Decision in these serious Points; And you know we must all stand or fall by our own Judgments (4:44).

Until the question of maternal breastfeeding arises, his secularism is a secondary concern to his acquiescence in her performance of other religious obligations. Now the crucial question is to what extent his lack of theological knowledge and Christian feeling--always acknowledged between them as Pamela's exclusive realm—invalidates his authority or excuses her obedience, and it seems to do neither. Instead, Mr. B.'s venturing into this territory at this moment signals the importance of his conversion and reeducation. Culminating in baby Billy's illness, the crisis of Mr. B.'s secularism generates the spiritual urgency and psychological complexity of part II, for Mr. B. is now a sinking ship to which Pamela and her children are eternally fastened.

The maternal breastfeeding debate presents a new battle of wills that is fought over Pamela's body, but Pamela expresses her suffering, the site of her pain, as exclusively psychological. Whereas in part I the threats are almost always bodily, in part II, Pamela's fears of swollen breasts and attendant fevers are subordinate to her spiritual

[196] Mr. B. says, "As to the matter of sordid natures—We read that there were among Jacob's twelve Sons, bad as well as good Natures, tho' born of, and nursed by, the same Mothers; Reuben particularly committed an unpardonable Crime" (4:36).

tortures and her creeping regrets about marriage. Her body is the site of spiritual pain as a result of diminished agency and self-ownership. She says, to Miss Darnford, "can you ever have thought, my dear, that husbands have dispensing power over their wives, which kings are not allowed over the laws?"[197] And she asks her correspondent if she would willingly marry, knowing what Pamela has told her about the authority of husbands. Pamela's marriage, far from being a real reward, has the potential to be a spiritual disease, an exposure to "temporal and eternal miseries" (Astell, *Serious* 61), which she had escaped in part I. Thus the reintroduction of Pamela's body through the complicated relationship between Christian maternity and Christian wifedom expands the paragon's sphere of action in ways that threaten to undermine her "exalted" status.[198] Will Pamela be a maternal paragon or a marital one? Can she be a Christian paragon without finding a way to reconcile the two? The following section, Pamela's soul, explains some of the ways that Richardson deals with the problem of the paragon, and how his sequel mirrors the crisis and solution of part I.

III. Pamela's Soul.

Is there not, my Pamela, a text, 'That the unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife, while he beholds her chaste conversation coupled with fear?'

I need not tell you, my dear Mr B---, that there is, nor where it is.

---

[197] The sixth edition amplifies the political resonance of this comment: "he sets up a dispensing Power, in short, altho' he knows, that that Doctrine once cost a Prince his Crown" (4:39-40). Richardson's revision here, alluding more directly to the turmoil of Stuart rule, emphasizes the unsustainable nature of a power dynamic that conflicts with religious duty or conscience, even on the domestic level. Of course, Pamela's comments resonate with Astell's reflections upon marriage. See chapter one of this dissertation.

[198] Chaber notes that Mr. B. takes over the arrangements for Pamela's confinement, and that Lady Davers takes on the mother's prerogative by choosing names for Pamela's children. Biblical mothers, such as the ones Mr. B. mentions, named their own children. Furthermore, Mr. B.'s arrangements, for a doctor instead of a midwife and an expensive lying-in, allow him to begin his liaison with the countess (202).

(Pamela II, 1741, volume 4, page 393)

At the end of *Pamela II*, Mr. B. quotes 1 Peter 3:2. The verse, coming to his mind at Tunbridge where he has once chased and lost Sally Godfrey, has the effect of reminding him of the limitations of his worldview and his own power:

> I see so much reason to doubt my own strength, which I had built, and, as I thought, securely, on *moral* foundations, that I must look out for a *better* guide to conduct me, than the proud word honour can be, in the general acceptation of it among us lively young gentlemen. (4:393)

This is the scene of Mr. B.'s conversion—a turn towards God and away from discursive secularism, which "depended too much on [his] own strength" (4:394). This emphasis on personal strength and worldly flourishing, then, continues to be rhetorically opposed to Pamela's passivity and dependence on the Christian God of providence for strength. Pamela weeps until she sobs in apprehending the "*heavenly* prospect" of meeting her husband in the after life, and how it compounds the "*earthly* blessings" (4: 395) he has already bestowed. Pamela's "chaste conversation coupled with fear"—in other words, her unobtrusive and exemplary faith--is the key to Mr. B.'s conversion experience. But it is late in coming, partly because of Mr. B.'s self-reliance and self-wisdom, but also because Pamela, in her exalted condition, struggles to exemplify that meekness demanded from 1 Peter 3:2. Her resistance to telling him "that there is, nor where it is" signals an important change in Pamela, a descent to a status of humility in spiritual matters that mirrors her husband's descent in part I. She descends, through a performance of sublimating the maternal body, and returns, with more meekness than ever, to "chaste conversation," and in converting her husband to heavenly prospects, she is able to return, body and spirit, to Christian maternity.

The language of descent and disgrace characterizes the discourse surrounding Mr. B and his actions and pervades Part I. From the beginning, Pamela expresses anxiety over the effect of her trial on the honor and reputation of her master. She says, hoping he has honorable intentions toward her, "for I am sure that my Master would not demean himself so, as to think upon such a poor girl as I" (1:12); and she acknowledges "no lady would look upon him if he should so disgrace himself" (1:16). When it becomes clear that his intentions are dishonorable, she says, "it is more my concern than my pride, to see such a gentleman so demean himself"(1:81). Stooping in petticoats, he dresses as the servant maid, Nan, in order to take Pamela by surprise in her bed, an action that is degrading to both his aristocratic dignity and his manhood. Of his jealousy of Parson Williams he says, "But how poorly I do descend, to be anxious about such a Menial as he" (1:218). His spying demeans him, his offer of "terms" to Pamela demeans him, and is an act to which his dignity "will not let me descend all at once" (1:133). She immediately begins to pray and he says, "None of your Beads to me, Pamela […] thou art a perfect Nun, I think" (1:133). Illustrations of Pamela and Mr. B. together seem implicitly to reinforce this discourse of descent and exaltation by positioning Pamela above her tormenter. For instance, the 1785 image of their reconciliation is in the style of a *pietà*, depicting a haloed Pamela smiling downward at her lover.

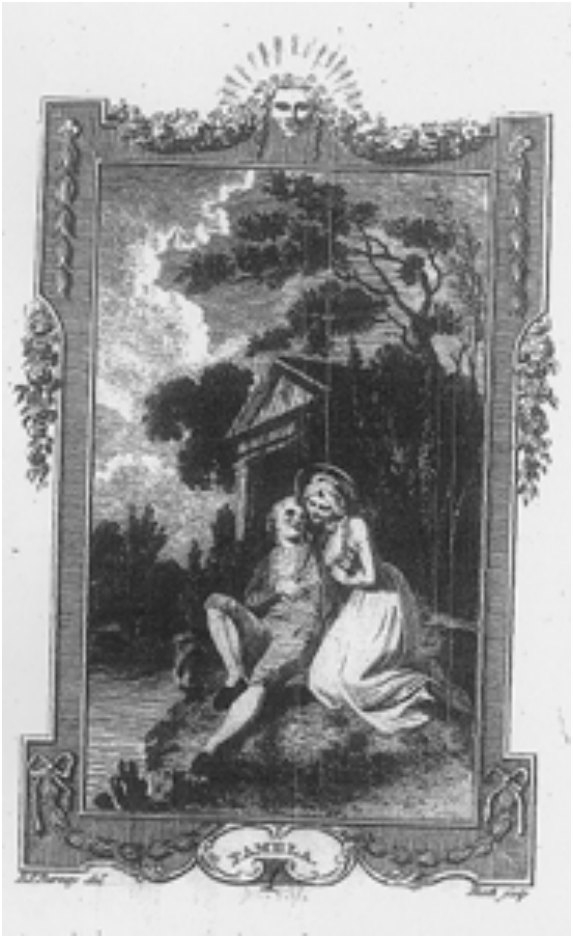
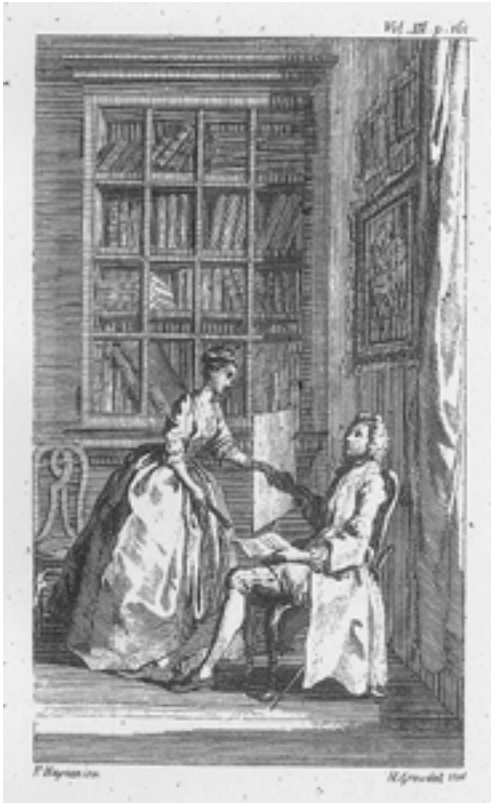
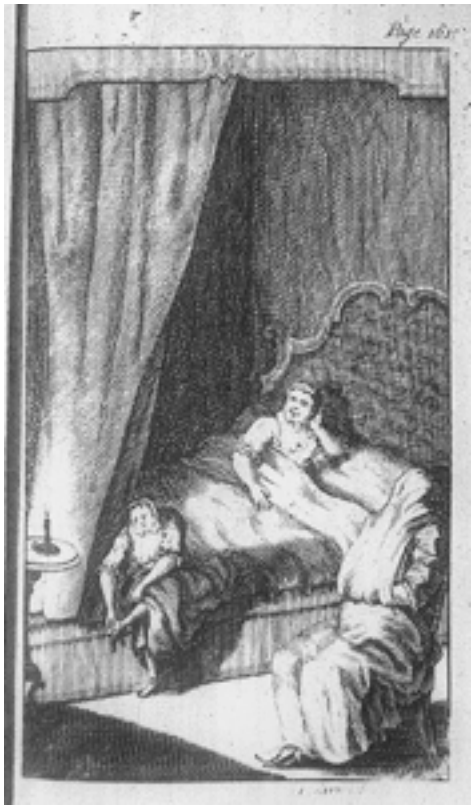


Illustration from *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, by Samuel Richardson (London: Harrison, 1785).



Right image: Francis Hayman, illustration for *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, Sixth Edition, (London: Osborn, 1742).

In other images, he is trying to pull her down by the hand, as in Hayman's illustration of Mr. B. reading her letters after their marriage. Carwitham's image of Mr. B. in Pamela's bedroom shows him covered by a blanket and sitting below the bedside of Pamela who, alone on the tall bed, overlooks him and Mrs. Jewkes.



John Carwitham, illustration for *The Life of Pamela*, (London: C. Whitefield, 1741),

Illustrators of the novel take Mr. B.'s forfeiture of self-respect as a significant thematic. In the novel, those with an appreciation for aristocratic dignity and the moral rectitude it demands seem to be cognizant of Mr. B.'s pursuit as an ignoble descent. Pamela wonders, "what meanness will not Lucifer make his votaries stoop to, to gain their abominable ends!" (1:338). She reads him as a primary actor in her spiritual trial. As an agent of Lucifer, Mr. B's descent is an inversion of the sacrifice of Christ, and as secular sacrifice, adulterated with selfish desires, its rewards are necessarily imperfect. It is important that our analysis of Christian paradigms in *Pamela* not end with Pamela's martyrdom or her worldly rewards for Christian piety. As she worries how "he should not be afraid of the all seeing eye, from which even that base, plotting Heart of his, in its most secret Motions, could not be hid" (1:196), the reader is led to distrust or at least

question the validity of discursive secularism and the stability of a strength built "securely, on *moral* foundations."

Though we can see Pamela's "virtue rewarded" at the end of the novel, it is rewarded in those same secular terms by which Mr. B. understands status and value; the reward is an uncomfortable fit for the spiritual nature of her trial. As the implied opposite of Mr. B's disgrace, the concept of Christomemesis allows us to see how Mr. B.'s secularism has transcendent significance for Pamela. In part II, he argues, in order to defend his stooping to marry her, "a man raises a woman, or pulls her down, depending on his position. A woman cannot raise a man *in the world but in spirit*" (italics mine). This speech indicates that what Mr. B. offers in descent or exaltation is in the realm of secular flourishing, and it also works to gender spirituality as a realm in which women have particular power. Thus Mr. B.'s Christomemesis is one of the world--where men can raise their wives, as opposed to the spirit, where women can raise their husbands and seem to have exclusive power. Mr. B. thus expects throughout *Pamela* that his wife's religiosity is sufficient to effect his salvation. As I will argue below, this is more than a situation of "spheres"—one religious and domestic and one secular and public—but of the polarization of husband and wife and their interests, and Richardson's novel makes it an unsustainable model for marriage. The privileging of patriarchal authority means that it is always already encroaching on the spiritual. Richardson's novel resists complicity with "the suppression of this miniwar between living beings" that begins with the primordial sacrifice of the mother (Irigaray 137) even as he provides his heroine with "an adaptive strategy" (Schellenberg 40).

As I have discussed, in part I, Mr. B. functions as a device to test Pamela's virtue—and her faith-- and bring about her reward. He is also though perhaps secondarily a character with a complex psychology and a spiritual crisis of his own. This complex psychology seems to become more apparent in part II, partly because the novel becomes more polyphonic:[199] Richardson injects more of Mr. B.'s voice and more of his narrative in order, in large part, to corroborate Pamela's story and answer anti-Pamelist attacks: when Mr. B states that Pamela truly is as wise, pious, and honest as she presents herself, and responsible for his conversion, he undermines the belief that Pamela is deceptive and corrupting. In part II, Richardson is also experimenting with polyphony for its own sake and working on a method he perfected in *Clarissa* (1748). Finally, and perhaps most significantly for my purposes, Richardson's analysis of conjugal relations highlights the importance of both parties; in other words, it takes more than a virtuous female to make a good marriage, particularly if one aims beyond domestic tranquility. That the crux of its plot is a religious as well as a domestic crisis indicates its uneasy relationship with secularism as a literary or cultural value. A good marriage, in *Pamela II*, is a matter of eternal salvation.

Indeed, to read *Pamela II* as a narrative about domestic unhappiness is to undermine the straightforward poetic justice that the original subtitle alludes to: "Virtue Rewarded." If the consequence of Pamela's trial is marriage to Mr. B, and Mr. B. is a humiliated gentleman without religious conviction, with adulterous tendencies and intolerance for not getting his way (all of which we learn throughout part II), how can we call him a reward? If Richardson ever meant for Mr. B. to be Pamela's reward, it is

[199] See Donald Ball (204). See also Alex Townsend, *Autonomous Voices: An Exploration of Polyphony in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford, England; New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 10-11.

possible that he revised this idea afterward, or that, in problematizing that reward in part II, he was able to make her more deserving of it in its transformed state, that is, more deserving of a rich, *Christian* husband. Richardson's idea of poetic justice, what he called a "religious plan" for poetical justice was dependent on establishing the eternal salvation of good characters, at least by the time he wrote Clarissa. In his postscript to *Clarissa*, he writes,

> [the present age] seems to expect from the poets and dramatic writers (that is to say, from the authors of works of invention) that they should make it one of their principal rules, to propagate another sort of dispensation, under the name of *poetical justice*, than that with which God by Revelations teaches us he has thought fit to exercise mankind; whom, placing here only in a state of *probation*,[200] he hath so intermingled good and evil as to necessitate them to look forward for a more equal distribution of both.
>
> The history, or rather the dramatic narrative of Clarissa, is formed on this religious plan; and is therefore well justified in deferring to extricate suffering virtue till it meets with the completion of its reward (1495).[201]

Under this religious plan, Pamela can be read as being in a continual process of deserving or learning to deserve or secure her reward in the afterlife. Poetical justice of the non-religious kind, as Richardson says, is of another kind of dispensation, an alternate plan separate from the probative scheme of divine testing. This modification from "virtue rewarded" to a scheme of heavenly reward represents an important discrepancy between the two books of *Pamela* as well as between *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. We can see the second novel as compensatory both in its answer to its critics who mistrust her virtue and to inherent anxieties surrounding her reward. Pamela's marriage to Mr. B is an

[200] Italics original.

[201] Samuel Richardson, Postscript to *Clarissa*, ed. Angus Ross (New York: Penguin, 1985), 1494-1499

"intermingled good and evil" but as a continuing trial it is a condition that threatens destruction to Pamela's soul from within (through her own pride) and without (through her husband's prohibitions). Far from arguing that Richardson "solves" the theological problems with his reward system, I argue that in mirroring Mr. B.'s descent in part I with Pamela's Christomemesis in part II, he makes it more difficult to read either one as a secular novel but instead as a narratives of the crisis of secular authority.

Mr. B.'s reliance on Pamela's charitable activities borders on idolatry because it substitutes *eros*, his romantic love of her, for *agape*, participation in the love of God through Christian activity, such as charity.[202] Believing that she can "raise" him, a passive object, in spirit as he raised her in class status, he claims, "I delight in every instance of her piety and virtue […] whatever redounds to the credit of my Pamela redounds in part to my own" (3:257). Throughout part II, Mr. B. is given room to testify about his experience with Pamela, from the time his mother first entreated him to take care of her, to his expectation that he would one day be as pious as she is. Thus *Pamela II* re-centers the narrative on his spiritual journey as a man, instead of a literary-providential device, if only to emphasize the shift in his role in Pamela's new arrangement of spiritual tests. Mr. B's participation in Pamela's discursive Christianity is minimal. He asks that she be frugal in her charities, and, more importantly, shelter him from the graver aspects of religious activity. She performs the household charitable duties, prays for the clergy daily, conducts a weekly Bible study for the servants and family (which Mr. B. does not attend) and teaches catechism to the poor children of the village. She wishes "he would be pleased to accompany [her] to the divine office" (3:252). But Mr. B. cautions her

[202] Allison Searle makes a similar argument about Rochester in Jane Eyre in "An Idolatrous Imagination? Biblical Theology and Romanticism in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*," *Christianity and Literature* 56, no.1 (Autumn 2006): np.

"never to be over serious to him, so as to cast a gloom, as he said, over our innocent enjoyments" (3:287). Calling her his "pretty preacher" silences her immediately: "I never dare urge matters farther when he calls me by that name" (3:287). Although he exempts himself from these activities, she hopes her efforts will "raise him up new friends to the honest hearts that rely upon him" (3:425), turning every act into a conjugal duty that reflects well on both of them. Mr. B. intends that these activities will have a salutary effect on his soul as well as his reputation.

Mr. B. cannot imitate Pamela's virtue, but he can "be an admirer of it" if it does not exceed his limits, "and that is some little something" (3:174). His strict separation of spiritual concerns from those of patriarchal authority and marital tenderness resonates with the growing association at this time of women and religiosity. Women, as I discuss in chapter I, were understood to participate with more vigor in discursive Christianity. According to Diarmaid McCulloch, as men seemed to withdraw from spiritual life, women approached it in large numbers, to the extent that, like Pamela, they become responsible for the moral spiritual education of the home. By the early eighteenth century, an increasing number of women joined voluntary congregations and societies (792) which were beginning to contain more women than men. Patricia Crawford also notes the "feminisation of religion" as a theme in conduct literature in the late seventeenth century (204) and their disproportionate representation in non-conformist churches (206), which were subject to the generalized condemnation of zeal or religious "enthusiasm."[203] As Dale Johnson argues, this shift in the presumed religiosity of women

[203] Crawford suggests that one condition that made this shift possible is that religious controversy was no longer at the center of English politics, meaning women could participate more meaningfully in theological concerns without encroaching on the decidedly male sphere of national politics (206). See Carol Crawford, *Women and Religion 1500-1720* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

did not alter their social subordination: "even though they could be honored as their equals, even their superiors, in religious faith. An additional wall had been built in the 'separate sphere' for women, which because of its religious foundation was hard to tear down" (13). These religious foundations, which Mary Astell critiques, seem to depend for their success on a sense of Christian charity in the patriarch that is at least equal to his subordinates. After the reformation, the father and husband emerged, theoretically, as the pastor and spiritual leader of the home, leading prayers and ministering to his family.[204] But masculine authority, as we have seen, had an increasingly secular tenor. Therefore, patriarchs could cite a religious reason for maintaining legal and domestic ascendency over their wives and daughters, even though, like Mr. B., they admitted their own inferiority in Christian activity. They could be at once inferior to their wives in religious matters and superior *because of religious duty*, putting the pious woman, such as Pamela, in a position of spiritual conflict when secular authority clashed with that duty. Pamela's final ascension to spiritual supremacy is achieved through a kind of disembodiment through association with the figure of Christ.

Samuel Torshell's *The Womans Glorie* (1650) speaks to the greater Christian zeal of women as an universal fact supported by scripture, and attempts to reconcile it with biblical justifications for the subordination of women. His solution is to conform to the rule of 1 Peter: that a woman with an impious spouse is an instrument for his conversion, through "sweeteness and holinesse of conversation."[205] He alleges that men have never been greater in piety than women, who "have somewhat the greater advantage in regard

[204] Mr. B. is therefore abdicating his spiritual duty but not his domestic prerogatives. This contradiction continues to destabilize patriarchal authority in maternity narratives throughout the century.

[205] Samuel Torshell, *The Womans Glorie a Treatise, Asserting the Due Honour of That Sexe, and Directing Wherein That Honour Consists* (London : Printed by G.M. for John Bellamie, 1645), 92.

that their affections are ordinarily more lively and stirring" (88-89). Torshell, encourages women to win the conversion of their mates with chaste conversation, modesty, meekness, and avoidance of teaching or preaching, concluding that "women must privately and familiarly exhort others" to Christian activity (359). Women do indeed have much to teach their husbands about the Christian life, but they are circumscribed in their activities, just as Pamela is restricted in the display of her Christian zeal.

The charge of over-righteousness is one that Richardson seems to have answered in more than one way. One of the jokes in Fielding's *Shamela* (1740) is that Shamela reads the writings of George Whitfield as a tutorial for feigning religious piety. Shamela understands Methodist and anti-Methodist controversy on a very superficial level, as does Parson Williams if her summary of his sermon, "Be Not Righteous Overmuch," is trustworthy. From this sermon she concludes that anyone who talks about "vartue" or morality are "the wickedest of all persons" and that all one need to do is go to church and sing psalms in order to be a true Christian (253).[206] Here she is drawing a distinction between the language and the activities of Christianity, settling on a straightforward relationship between moral discourse and wickedness. Her aim is to avoid the appearance of hypocrisy and of worldliness. Shamela's portable library—devotional literature by the Methodist George Whitefield, and his latitudinarian counterpart, Richard Allestree, as well as romances and pornography—are a syllabus for deception and seduction,

[206] Parodying Pamela's particularity over the items in her "bundles," Fielding's Shamela lists the following possessions: "Mrs. *Jewkes* went in with me, and helped me to pack up my little All, which was soon done; being no more than two Day-Caps, two Night-Caps, five Shifts, one Sham, a Hoop, a Quilted-Petticoat, two Flannel-Petticoats, two pair of Stockings, one odd one, a pair of lac'd Shoes, a short flowered Apron, a lac'd Neck-Handkerchief, one Clog, and almost another, and some few Books: as, *A full Answer to a plain and true Account*, &c. *The Whole Duty of Man*, with only the Duty to one's Neighbour, torn out. The Third Volume of the *Atalantis*. *Venus in the Cloyster: Or, the Nun in her Smock. God's Dealings with Mr. Whitefield. Orfus and Eurydice.* Some Sermon-Books; and two or three Plays, with their Titles, and Part of the first Act torn off" (36-37).

reflecting Fielding's association of Methodists with hypocrisy, but also noting the reductiveness with which this controversy is apt to be treated by those who aim solely at appearances. Shamela is wise enough to avail herself of books on either side of this controversy within the Anglican Church,[207] which Fielding imports into the *Pamela* controversy.[208] Like the Puritans and Quakers before them, Methodists in eighteenth-century literature were satirized for religious zeal, and in turn criticized theologians such as Tillotson and Allestree, for excessive worldliness.[209] As Fortuna points out, even Richardson's Methodists are as "overdoers" (5). Latitudinarianism emphasized "moral duty" and behavior, activity over the outward show of religiosity. Fielding, like others of Richardson's critics, emphasizes Ecclesiastes 7:16 –"be not righteous overmuch"—as a further allusion to the folly of Methodism. Shamela, and in Fielding's antipamelist assessment, Pamela herself, toe the line between overdoing and underdoing cleverly enough to convince their respective squires of their religious purity. Aside from Fielding's parody, Richardson's Pamela had to answer other charges of over-righteousness. In his introduction to the second edition, Richardson lists objections to the style of his book, including "That if the sacred name [God] were seldomer repeated it would be better; for that the wise man's advice is, *Be not righteous overmuch*" (Preface). Pamela's references to God have the potential to signal over-righteousness to her readers, bringing them discomfort and undermining her credibility. In *Pamela* II, her censure of

[207] Methodism started as a movement within the Anglican Church. John Wesley, its founder, never considered himself anything other than an orthodox Anglican.

[208] Keymer and Sabor argue that Fielding uses "the currency of this text [*Pamela*] as a critique of Methodism" (li)

[209] Stewart says they criticized these writers for emphasizing moral and virtuous behavior over devotion. Whitefield criticized John Tillotson's sermons and Richard Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Man* in his letters (30). Writers such as Joseph Trapp, Church of England clergyman and writer, retaliated. See Trapp's "The Nature, Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous Overmuch" (as cited in Stewart 31).

the neighboring baronet, Sir Simon Darnford, sparks a warning from her husband that seems to echo concerns of Richardson's more critical readers: "let not the purity of your own mind, in breach of your charity, to make you too rigorous a censurer of other's actions" (3:165). Pamela's reconciliation to her status as a Christian paragon seems to require, to some degree, a tempering of her righteousness lest the conversion of her husband, and edification of her readers, be too precarious. Misunderstood by critics, and her symbolic victory derogated, Pamela's Christianity gets another attempt at establishing its integrity in Richardson's sequel.

The interpretation of over-righteousness in Pamela's discursive Christianity is a matter of concern because it affects her ability to mediate or bring about the aims of Richardson's novel—to inculcate the principles of religion—and the aims of the heroine—to convert her husband. Richardson has deployed a female teacher, a "pretty preacher,"[210] whose prerogative to serve as an example and guide must be closely circumscribed within the traditional female role, here understood as "chaste conversation coupled with fear" of God, and of her legal superior. In her "exalted condition," (and in motherhood) Pamela risks over-righteousness and self-satisfaction more than she did as a member of the servant class, which means she must descend, mirroring the descent of her husband in part I. Pamela's Christomemesis in part II differs from the discourse of Martyrdom in part I in several key ways. Whereas to perform martyrdom is to withstand tortures in order to testify to religious or personal truth, Christomemesis is a gesture that reveals that truth through a voluntary submission and humiliation of oneself; while martyrdom depends on boldly speaking out, Christomemesis works conversion through

[210] Crawford points out that one of the early features of Methodism was the presence of women preachers (208).

submission and compliance. As the *Imitation* says, "*I became the lowest and most abject of all, that thou mightiest overcome thy* pride *with my* humility. *Thou* dust*, learn to obey."* Like Christ, the imitator overcomes pride, recognizes her abject condition, and does not balk at subjection, not only to religious law but also to other humans. When it happens, Pamela's memesis is a descent that teaches and exalts through humility and weakness. It is, indeed, the only method of "teaching" appropriate to her station as a subordinate and a wife, yet after living as the paragon of virtue and piety, it is a difficult role for her to play.

As I have suggested, Pamela's submission to her husband before the breastfeeding conflict, however steadfast, lacks merit. Yet even before that conflict, Richardson introduces anxieties about her "first duties" and the possibility of them coming into conflict: her will is her husband's, but her first duty is to the "Supreme Benefactor, the First Mover and cause of all his own Happiness, of my Happiness, and that of my dear, my ever dear Parents"(3:5-6), foreshadowing that the "will" may come in conflict with the "duty." Pamela says she is poor "in everything but will—and that will wholly his" (3:5), a condition which makes her happy, for she has no conflict. She understands, and he admits, that Mr. B is an unusually obstinate patriarch and "expected from me more humility, more submission, that he thought would be paid him by a lady equally born" (3:85). Like the typical conduct-book husband, Mr. B expects to be "*borne* with (*comply'd* with, he meant) even when in the wrong" (3:89), but he expects more than compliance from Pamela. Pamela's submissive and compliant temperament underwhelms, since it is already expected that she will be a paragon. What is necessary to exceed expectations is for her to comply with the impossible: she must agree, in a sense,

no longer to be a wife in order to become the perfect wife, just as she must agree no longer to be a (nursing) mother in order to recover her maternal prerogative.

At the end of the main narrative of *Pamela* II, the couple is estranged. Pamela's concern for Billy's illness, her growing unhappiness with domestic tyranny, and jealousy of the Countess has made her sullen, to the growing "disgust" of her husband. As he spends more and more time away with the countess, Mr. B. becomes enamored of the possibility of a bigamous arrangement with the two women. He is validated by the overwhelming argument in conduct literature that the wife is responsible for marital infidelity through a lack of complaisance or feminine charms.[211] He even goes as far as to introduce his (supposed, by Pamela) mistress to baby Billy in the presence of Pamela, who is forced to watch as the countess enacts a performance of maternity as part of her courtship of Mr. B.. After being confronted with her aristocratic replacement, Pamela becomes fully resigned to providence and offers to abdicate her marital rights. She declares, "only divine grace can touch your heart" and promises to live apart, yet remain available to him:

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[211] Conduct literature paradoxically attests to the subordination of women and their power over their husbands—their ultimately responsibility for marital happiness and their husband's behavior. In particular, it warns against sadness and suspicion. In *The Ladies New Years Gift* (1688), the Marquess of Halifax states, "you have it in your power, not only to free yourselves, but to subdue your Masters, and without violence throw both their *Natural* and *Legal Authority* at your feet" (470). Richardson's *Familiar Letters* (1741) include a letter from a mother to a daughter who is suspicious of her husband's fidelity: "Shew him, that such creatures shall not outdo you in an obliging behavior, and sweetness of temper; and that let him fly off from his duty, if he will, you will persevere in yours" (283). The mother follows this up after surmising that the son-in-law is innocent, saying, "take care, my Betsey, that you don't, by the violence of your passions, precipitate him on the course you dread, and that you alienate not, by unjust suspicion, his affections from you; for then perhaps he will be ready indeed to place them somewhere else" (484). Sarah Pennington's *An Unfortunate Mother's advice to her Absent Daughter* (1761) makes the point that being attached to an irreligious man makes the duties of the wife more perilous: "That being united to a man of Irreligious Principles makes it impossible to discharge a great Part of the proper Duty of a Wife" (510). John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy* (1774) attests to the power of women over men, even in their politically and domestically subordinate situation: "The power of a fine woman over the hearts of men, of men of the finest parts, is even beyond what she conceives" (522). This effectively bolsters the idea of her responsibility for his behavior. See Appendix A in Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph,* ed. Heidi Hutner and Nicole Garret (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2011).

> I will never take your Name into my Lips, nor suffer any other in my Hearing, but with Reverence and Gratitude, for the Good I and mine *have* reap'd at your Hands; nor will I wish to be freed from my Obligations to you, except you shall chuse to be divorced from me; and if so, I will give your Wishes all the Forwardness I honourably can, with regard to my own Character and yours, and that of your beloved Baby.
>
> But you must give me something worth living for along with you; your Billy and mine!—Unless it is your Desire to kill me quite; and then 'tis done, and nothing will standing in your happy Countess's Way, if you tear from my arms my *second* earthly good, after I am deprived of You, my *first*.
>
> I will there [in Kent], Sir, dedicate all my time to my first Duties; happier far, than once I could have hoped to be! And if, by any Accident, any Misunderstanding between you, you should part by Consent, and you will have it so, my Heart will be ever yours, and my Hopes shall be resumed of being an Instrument still for your future good. (4:209-10)

Pamela's conversation is chaste in its avoidance of the too obvious themes of bigamy and adultery, in the way she promises to be careful of his reputation and hers in the future, and in her attribution of a break between the lovers to "accident or misunderstanding" instead of what a perhaps more self-righteous person would call the just consequence of infidelity. This conversation is mingled with the fear of loss, wholly under his control, of baby Billy and therefore her life. She indicates further potential for conflict between "first duties" to Billy's reputation and legitimacy and the grounds on which Mr. B might ask for divorce.[212] It is impossible to say, however, that Mr. B. is moved by any knowledge of a persistent conflict, brought on by his discursive secularism, which threatens the moral, spiritual and economic prosperity of his son; there is no evidence in the text that Mr. B is moved by anything other than "divine grace" whose symbol, we might say, is Pamela's "chaste conversation coupled with fear." Mr. B. immediately relents, promising to "implicitly give up myself to all your Dictates; for what you *say*, and what you *do*,

[212] Pamela intimates that Mr. B. might require her to damage her reputation in order to make his case for divorce against her, for instance by claiming that they were never married or that she was unfaithful. Such proceeding could render Billy illegitimate. We see this conflict elaborated on later in novels such as Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline* (1788)

must be ever right" (4:214). Pamela's humiliation and subordination is an object lesson for her husband, after which he learns to be less self-reliant, less "self-wise" (*Imitation*) than he has been. Like that of Sally Godfrey, whose persistent penitence makes Pamela love her and meditate on the edifying effects of her condition, Pamela's humiliation helps reveal to Mr. B the insufficiency of his discursive secularism and obstinate patriarchal authority.

Following this scene, *Pamela* II consists of Pamela's reflections on John Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," filtering the androcentric and masculinist treatise[213] through the maternal and gynocentric perspective in a final reinforcement of the validity of that perspective. Her conversation, in eschewing the discourse of chastity, becomes more chaste; her humility, having now more to fear than her own purity, deepens. Richardson thus answers the concerns of his critics, mediating the female perspective with polyphonic inclusiveness, and moderating Pamela's righteousness in a way that does not diminish her discursive Christianity, but rather increases its potency. While Pamela's transformation indeed makes her a more perfect model of female subjection according to the standards of conduct literature that serves male desire, it is the way she not only gains power—a reward for her virtue—but *deserves* power that suggests a feminist subtext grounded in Christianity.

It is her descent—from the ecstatic praise of the household and neighborhood—to humiliation and the disgust of her husband, that constitutes Pamela's wifely success, not her compliance with the breastfeeding prohibition. Whereas she is ultimately rewarded

[213] Richard Barney notes that Masham, Astell, and Drake were familiar with the androcentrism of Locke's treatise. Chapter one of this dissertation explores Astell's assessment of the androcentrism of Lockean theory. See Richard Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 24.

for the former, the latter compounds her misery, even as it symbolically allows her to engage in a more androgynous Christomemesis. The breastfeeding conflict indicates that this novel is not easy to characterize as secular. It is not simply a book about marital happiness demonstrated through religiously-inflected language of conversion or submission; it is about the way in which the spiritual health of Pamela's children, and her heavenly reward hinge on the Christian conversion of her husband. Like the spiritual autobiography, *Pamela* is a novel about the progress of the soul through a world whose language and habits are often diametrically opposed to the language and activities set forth in devotional literature and Christian mythology. *Pamela* II makes an important contribution to its precursor's meaning in widening the sphere of Pamela's activity—from that of the domestic servant to that of the mother who is in some ways both servant and master, subordinate in the secular world and superior in her relationship to a higher authority. Richardson's novel expands the conflict between the secular and the spiritual necessarily brought about when those states are gendered and the genders set in a hierarchy.. Fielding, as I discuss in the final section of this chapter, creates an ineffectual paragon in Amelia precisely because he resists the possibilities that superior piety provides for greater female agency.

Fielding's Paragon: *Amelia* (1751)

In Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791), James Boswell records Samuel Johnson's pithy assessment of Richardson and Fielding as novelists:

> In comparing these two writers, [Johnson] used this expression: "that there was as great a difference between them as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate." This was a short and a figurative

> statement of his distinction between drawing characters of nature and characters only of manners, but I cannot help being of opinion, that the neat watches of Fielding are as well constructed as the large clocks of Richardson, and that his dial plates are brighter.[214]

As this quotation indicates, Johnson and Boswell here participate in a conversation through which the novelists have become polarized or constellated as exemplary of particular kinds of greatness. We can infer that Johnson is referring to the psychological depth of Richardson's character, to their singular subjectivities as they come into contact with the external world, whereas Fielding can only see the externalities. Boswell shifts the focus, or moves the goal posts a little, imagining both writers as creators of clocks, whereas Johnson was talking about the difference mediating interiority and making or reproducing something that resembles it. For Boswell, Fielding is the master watchmaker. Whatever one might think about their relative merits as novelists, Richardson and Fielding, almost immediately, came to be understood as artistic rivals. Their works were, in the eighteenth century, in a complex dialogue with one another—thematically, stylistically, and generically—whether or not the author signaled his participation in that dialogue directly, as in the case of *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*.

That dialogue, and the consequences of novelistic difference, is nowhere more apparent than in a comparison of Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751) with its precursor *Pamela*. Like Pamela's in part I, Amelia's primary activity is to protect her body from predatory males. Amelia also experiences certain anxieties related to being wed to a man who is "little better than an atheist" (vol. II; 267).[215] Furthermore, Fielding intends his book to serve a moral, if not explicitly didactic purpose: it is "sincerely

[214] Boswell, James, and John Wilson Crocker. *Boswell's Life of Johnson: Including Their Tour to the Hebrides*, (London: John Murray, 1853), 190.

[215] Henry Fielding, *Amelia* (J. Smith: Dublin, 1752).

designed to promote the Cause of Virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring Evils, as well public as private, which at present infest the Country" (Dedication). The fictional world Amelia inhabits also appears to be in dire need of a model of virtue to guide them, but in this Amelia fails where Pamela has been successful; the last section of this chapter explores the significance of that failure for the concept of the pious maternal figure.

As I mention above, one of the most commonly notes anxieties of what Keymer and Sabor call "the *Pamela* controversy" is the mistrust of the female perspective, of the marginalized "other" voice, which Richardson mediates successfully enough to shock some critics into a reactionary androcentrism. Fielding's *Shamela* directly undermines not only this perspective, but also the idea that a woman—or at least a social-climbing servant girl—could display such superior piety as to transform a rake into a husband. Indeed, it was the reputation of Pamela— perhaps the faith in the possibility of a Pamela—with which Fielding seems most concerned. Fielding's Oliver and Tickletext scheme to publish the "true" narrative of Richardson's heroine as "a serviceable act of Justice to the World," breaking the spell of the paragon/servant girl (55). In this short text, Fielding systematically derogates her language, her intelligence, her perspective, and her claims to piety, and aligns her with a family of criminals and his satirical view of Methodism.

Fielding's *Amelia* begins after the marriage of the eponymous heroine to Captain Booth.[216] As a marriageable girl, the beautiful Amelia lost her nose[217] in a carriage

[216] Peter Sabor notes that in writing *Amelia*, Fielding was moving into Richardson's territory. Updating Virgil's Aeneid, Fielding upgrades the novel by ensconcing it in a classical heritage; however, he indulges in details about food and clothing, "exactly the type of Richardsonian meanness which he derided in *Shamela"* (100). Spenser agrees that in Amelia, Fielding engaged in a complex dialogue with Richardson's

accident, an event that diminishes her pool of suitors. Booth loves her despite her missing nose. When the novel begins, Booth is arrested while trying to break up a street fight, and meets Miss Matthews, who has also been arrested on suspicion of murder, and they spend a night together, talking, drinking, and copulating. After Booth's release, Miss Matthews' victim recovers and she continues to pursue Booth and threatens to expose him. This affair eventually leads him to reveal his circumstances to other officers who use the information either to satisfy their desire for Miss Matthews or for Booth's wife, Amelia. In the meantime, Amelia, whose sister has stolen her inheritance, struggles to maintain the family and household in London while her husband is with his regiment at Gibraltar and then, later, imprisoned for debt. A noble Lord befriends her, but she learns from a Miss Bennett, who has been ruined by him, that he has the same intentions for Amelia. Amelia's role is to avoid these advances and protect her husband from himself.

Amelia is a comprehensive and more serious reconsideration of Richardson's paragon and his engagement with the paradigm of the spiritually superior female. Many elements of Pamela's central conflict are maintained. *Amelia* depicts the way that the morals of a post-lapsian external world corrupt not only the secular husband, but also the pious mother, though she is confined to domestic spaces. Amelia also has an "atheist" husband who converts at the end of the novel. As Patricia Howell Michaelson argues, external immorality and the infidelity of her husband invade and distort marital

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paragons, Pamela and Clarissa (125). See these essays in Claude Julien Rawson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Henry Fielding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[217] Amelia's nose is "beat all to pieces"(I.i.63). Brian McCrea notes that this has the effect of putting Amelia within reach of Booth. Furthermore, he reads it as a product of "the disjunction between Fielding's satiric sense of the flaws of the British social order and his hesitation to attack that order see Brian McCrea, "Politics and Narrative Technique in Fielding's *Amelia*" *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 13, no.3 (1983): 137.

arrangements and this invasion puts Amelia's religious duty (chastity) at risk.[218] Additionally, Amelia seems to inspire others with at least a momentary appreciation for piety. But this inspiration is superficial and fleeting. One possible reason for Amelia's limited influence on others consists in Fielding's complete evasion of the heroine's subjectivity, preferring instead the shining dial plate of affect mediated through the male gaze. The choice not to imagine her interiority, which the male characters share with Fielding, is a choice not to imagine her possibility. Fielding also tends to import another consciousness through which to filter our understanding of her by describing her frequently as the object of a gaze. For instance, Fielding quotes Edmund Waller's "My Charmer": "sweetness, truth and every grace / Which time and use are wont to teach, / The eye may in a moment reach, / And read distinctly on her face." In other words, one can dispense with the experiences of living through time by accessing the look on the woman's face and being taught by it. These lines are emblematic of Fielding's conception of the paragon: the ability of men to use the woman to learn or grow is substituted for her actual interiority. Fielding is so many times removed from the consciousness of his heroine that one wonders what she has done to scare him so much.

Although Amelia is portrayed as a muse or an icon who tends to inspire virtue and wisdom in her beholders, her effect on the world around her is very limited. Fielding blunts her exemplary power as much as he damages the nose on her face. Although we are aware that she "never let a day pass without instructing her children in some lesson of religion and morality," Dr. Harrison quips that her son seems to resemble his father more than his mother in moral orientation: "I should have rather thought he had learnt of

[218] Patricia Howell Michaelson, "*The Wrongs of Woman* and Feminist *Amelia*," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 21, no.3 (1991): 250-261.

his father […] for he seems a good soldier-like Christian, and professes to hate his enemies with a very good grace." Here we see the comedic talent that the watchmaker is known for, but the joke is on Amelia, his paragon, and the idea of the domestic angel and "pretty preacher" in general, who may possess superior piety, but not that piety does not equate to power.

Amelia's fault is an inability to communicate psychological conflict and interiority, something at which Richardson's character excel. Pamela succeeds in her aim of protecting her virtue and converting her husband precisely *because* she manages to communicate her interiority in ways that are credible and imitable. Richardson's fictional world in *Pamela* is still more optimistically imagined than Fielding's in *Amelia*. Pamela's testimony under persecution effectively sets up a wall of words between her and her would-be rapist that Mr. B. is unable to overcome. Amelia, by contrast, cannot at a most basic level express what is in her heart, firstly because revealing her conflict—that she is being seduced and propositioned by associates of her husband—would encourage her husband to take his life in his hands by dueling, and also because other characters are unable to read her. Dr. Harrison, obviously the moral voice and mediating perspective of the novel, says, "Whenever you act like a wise woman…you will force me to think you so" (vol. 2, 156), indicating that Amelia has misused the control she has over his responses to her and his assessment of her interior wisdom, and leaving the reader uncertain as to whether her choices are in fact wise. We know the reasons for her actions, circumscribed as she is, but they are not supported, as in *Pamela*, by a comprehensive analysis of her self and her duties.

Furthermore, Amelia does almost nothing alone, instead resorting to working through agents. In her primary conflict, avoiding the machinations of the great Lord to seduce her, Amelia deploys an agent, Miss Bennett, to wear her disguise to the masquerade ball and satisfy the lord's demands in her stead. In her secondary conflict, the atheism and insufficient morality of her husband, Dr. Harrison functions as the agent of Booth's conversion. When Amelia tries to impress him with some religious thought, he "immediately turned the discourse to some other subject [….] as a divine philosopher he did not hold her in a very respectable light" (vol. 2, 267-268). Booth's conversion is a product of his conversations with Dr. Harrison. As a challenge to superior female piety, novel interposes a consistent infantilization of the religious woman, at once allowing for her perfection and undermining her influence. Booth's rejection of her conversation has less to do with how she discusses Christianity than it does with the subject matter in general. The wife as teacher is as absurd as the woman as divine philosopher and, again, Amelia, the paragon, is material for comedy. In short, her chaste conversation is ineffectual. In fact, after Booth's infidelity, her superior virtue, if it does anything at all, depresses his spirits further. Amelia is as powerless in the domestic sphere as she is in the public. Amelia's ineffectiveness as a divine philosopher is similar to that of Clarissa, who manages to convert only in death. But Clarissa is not made material for satire.

Fielding's heroine cannot be both effective and innocent. As Wolff points out, in Amelia Fielding conflates two meanings of "innocence," the first being an innocence of crime and the second being a kind of naiveté. She is "the embodiment of perfect goodness" but that image is static, rather than a living, breathing person who can create change, and do so with more than the bare, superficial image of purity. Indeed, Fielding

imagined a world that was hostile to virtue;[219] characters "are attracted by […] goodness but do not change as a result of it" (Wolff, "Fielding's" 38).

Dr. Harrison, well entrenched in the worldliness of men and thereby less innocent than Amelia, notes the problem of a public-sphere secularism that marginalizes discursive Christianity. One of the examples of discursive secularism in this novel is dueling, which Harrison chides as "to disobey the express commands of his Maker, in compliance with a custom established by a set of blockheads" (Vol. 2). He laments this kind of impiety at the beginning of the novel, saying that the "most paltry matters" and "childish gewgaws" are treated with "utmost earnestness, but,

> The grand and weighty affair of immorality is postponed and disregarded, nor even brought into the least competition with our affairs here. If one of my cloth should begin a discourse of heaven in the scenes of business or pleasure […] would he not presently acquire the name of a mad parson? (vol. 1, 162)

The discourse that marginalizes Amelia also marginalizes the duty of the clergyman, but not the man himself. Not bound by the restrictive social role of women, the divine philosopher is in a better position to effect real change, even if only on an individual level, and his wisdom makes him safe from corrupting influence. By contrast, Amelia is vulnerable; although she embodies the Christian mindfulness that Dr. Harrison says is sorely missing, she is no Pamela. She fails to convert her husband and instead is nearly ruined herself when he embroils her in a malicious and predatory social world. In this world it is the divine philosopher, not the virtuous woman, who can make change.

[219] As Woolf aruges, Fielding's fictional worlds are "usually indifferent to virtue if not openly inimical to it" (38). She sees this as a motif in his early novels: the good characters are attractive to others, but are unable to influence them or change the world around them. See Cynthia Griffin Wolff, "Fielding's *Amelia*: Private Virtue and Public Good," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 10.1 (Spring 1968): 37-55.

Dr. Harrison successfully mediates Booth's conversion because he is able to reconcile it to Booth's discursive secularism. Prior to this conversation, Booth cannot bring himself to understand a code of conduct or a relation to the world that transcends honor and the principles of self-love. Self-love, as opposed to divine love and providential design, according to Booth, is the guide for all behavior. He explains his objection to Christianity after his conversion begins: "I never was a rash disbeliever; my chief doubt was founded on this—that, as men appeared to me to act entirely from their passions, their actions could have neither merit nor demerit" (). Booth believes that men act on their passions, and cannot act on religious principles. Harrison convinces Booth that the Christianity embraces the noblest passions, and that religion is "most true which applies immediately to the passions, hope and fear," and, consequently, what Booth has come to think of as a barrier to Christianity, passions, are actually in its service. After Booth's conversion, Amelia's family fortune is restored and the family lives happily ever after in the country. Her contribution to their marital happiness does not consist in spiritual kinship, but in her domesticity and wealth.

Importantly, Fielding's engagement with the concept of female spiritual supremacy in *Amelia* also indicates that secularism is a phenomenon that does not describe this novel *per se*, but rather makes up part of its subject. Fielding refers to this kind of worldliness as "atheism," but it is consistent with the discursive secularism of Mr. B. For the patriarch, the concerns of worldly flourishing, and "honor," are opposed to Christian flourishing: obeying the laws, customs, and virtuous conduct set forth in Christian discourse. Fielding's solution to this problem is gendered: Dr. Harrison (and

presumably the converted Booth) can reconcile discursive secularism with an active participation in Christian faith through a latitudinarian belief that religion is a vehicle for worldly flourishing. But for Amelia, her feminine virtue *qua* innocence cannot be compatible with worldly activity: chaste conversation or no, the paragon cannot teach. Fielding's response to *Pamela* is a sort of spiritual disempowerment of the martyr or the Christ figure that merely preserves its now-disenchanted iconography.

Both of these novels demonstrate that the conversion of the patriarchal figure is crucial to the mother's spiritual welfare and, by extension, that of her children. The "cause of virtue" (Fielding) or the "principles of virtue" (Richardson) depend on ameliorating the atheism of the patriarchal figure, whose discursive secularism does not only material but also spiritual harm to his family. By extension, if one understands the nuclear family as an analogy for the nation or a barometer for national prosperity, they point to an important social problem in the imbalanced authority of the patriarch. Although the two novelists have differing positions on extent to which a mother can derive a kind of feminism, or at least legitimate agency, out of Christian discourse, they both attempt to compensate for a loss of pious patriarchal authority, posing its restoration as an answer to moral ills. In the following chapters, the consequences of gendered realms of the spiritual and secular become increasingly tragic. The following chapter investigates, through the example of Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761), the crisis of domestic authority when the patriarch is completely corrupt or completely absent and there is no possibility of restoration. Sidney Bidulph, who perhaps like Fielding sees religious piety as incommensurate with personal agency, tries with little success

to navigate the role of the paragon-as-single-mother in Frances Sheridan's tragic sentimental masterpiece.

Chapter Four

"Strange and Ludicrous" Questions: Rattling Orthodoxies in *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1760) and Its *Conclusion* (1767)

I. Introduction: Paragons in Time and Space

Most of what we know about the popular novelist and playwright Frances Sheridan comes from a biography written by her granddaughter and a few letters collected by her cousin, Samuel Whyte, in his *Miscellanea Nova* (1800). As we learn from these sources, Frances was born to an English mother, Anastasia Whyte, who died when Frances was a baby. Her father, Phillip Chamberlaine, was an Anglo-Irish clergyman who believed that female education was superfluous and dangerous. Under the tutelage of her brothers, Frances secretly learned Latin and several other collegiate subjects, and wrote an epistolary novel at age sixteen on paper meant for housekeeping accounts. As her father slipped into dementia, the Chamberlaine boys exposed their little sister to the theatre, where she saw the young Thomas Sheridan at Smock Alley. After her father died, she met and married Sheridan, having five children. The marriage was by all accounts happy and loving, but the family suffered financial problems. Sheridan's novels and plays helped keep them afloat after the Sheridans left Dublin for London, but debts forced them to flee to Blois, France, where Frances died of a number of ailments that afflicted her simultaneously. Her novels were reprinted and praised throughout the nineteenth century.[220]

[220] Alicia LeFanu, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan: With Remarks Upon a Late Life of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan* (G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824).

Alicia LeFanu's biography, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan* (1824), depicts her grandmother as a paragon of domestic virtue, one who has more in common with her heroine, Sidney Bidulph, than with the writing men and acting women who made up her professional circle, and who was known for "uniting to uncommon powers of conversation every domestic virtue that most distinguishes a woman" (2). Sheridan's cotemporaries also praised her in just such terms of domestic excellence: James Boswell remembers that "Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man"[221] (259). *Public Characters of 1799-1800* records that she was "no less respected for her domestic virtues than admired for her literary attainments" (20). Boswell and Johnson agreed that her novel, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, and its *Conclusion*, contain excellent morals that they wished to see believed and imitated, particularly with regard to the main character's "pious resignation to death" (Lustig 534).[222] The matriarch of one of the most prolific literary families in Britain and Ireland, Frances Sheridan had the reputation of the model literary woman, uniting creative and procreative excellence to domestic virtue, and spinning pious and excellent morals fit for consumption and imitation. [223]

A biographer of Sheridan is therefore surprised by the very different ideas of her given in the final analyses of her recent critics, who argue that rather than exemplifying

[221] James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (New York: Henry Frowde, 1904).
[222] See Irma S. Lustig, "Boswell's Literary Criticism in the *Life of Johnson*" *SEL* 6.3, (1966): 534. *Public Characters* also notes its "merit of combining the purest morality with the most powerful interest" (20).

[223] Married to scholar and Smock Alley Theatre actor/ manager Thomas Sheridan, Frances had at least five well-known "writing descendents": Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Alicia Sheridan LeFanu, Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, Bestey Sheridan LeFanu, and Alicia LeFanu, the granddaughter biographer. See Heidi Hutner, Introduction to *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, by Frances Sheridan (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2011), 17.

excellent morals and pious doctrines, *Memoirs* and its sequel only destabilize them.[224] Perhaps because of her superficial conventionality, Sheridan has remained a relatively obscure subject throughout the feminist recovery project. As Jean Marsden argues, recovery has tended to focus on women whose work seems to resonate with contemporary feminist concerns about political agency and gendered social constructions.[225] These are questions that Sheridan's earliest appraisers seemed to foreclose, and the novels themselves seem too religious, too sentimental, too exclusively focused on the domestic activities of a heroine who resigned herself never to have a will of her own. That half-hearted conservatism that allowed *Memoirs* to be one of the most popular books of the later eighteenth century forces us to ask whether an alternative reading is wishful thinking. *Memoirs* does feature a decidedly gyno-centric morality that attempts to hold men to the same rigid standards of sexual morality that men impose upon women, but Sheridan's plot consistently challenges its wisdom and, alongside it, orders of traditional wisdom typically found in conduct books. Sheridan departs from her mentor, Samuel Richardson, by choosing to expose the inconsistencies of conduct literature, rather than attempt to improve and adapt it. [226]

Expanding on Betty Schellenberg's advice that we read LeFanu's biography "against the grain" (564), I argue that Sheridan's suffering heroine was a clever means of subversion in the eighteenth century for the same reasons that she is so disconcerting now: it is hard to tell on what level her challenges are meant to register. As Schellenberg

[224] I will hereafter use "*Memoirs"* to refer to the first book and "*Conclusion"* to refer to the sequel.
[225] Jean Marsden, "Beyond Recovery: Feminism and the Future of Eighteenth-Century Literary Studies," *Feminist Studies*, 28, no.3 (2002): 659.

[226] Richardson, having read Sheridan's juvenilia, *Eugenia and Adelaide,* encouraged her to write a novel. *Sidney Bidulph* was the result of his encouragement.

suggests, ignoring the novel's political and feminist subtexts "project[s] Sheridan's desire for modesty and obscurity onto her" (563). Schellenberg reads LeFanu's biography for a Sheridan who regularly practiced insubordination to her oppressive clerical father, and stole moments away from the nursery to pen a novel that participated in debates over the theatre and the Scottish Enlightenment.[227] This is the Frances Sheridan of "The Owls," a poem she published anonymously, but brazenly, in defense of her future husband--a political statement inextricable from its sentimental origins.[228]

In this chapter, I concentrate on the Frances Sheridan who wrote sermons and refused to be frustrated by the "strange and ludicrous question" she received from a disabled boy to whom she had undertaken to teach his catechism (Lefanu 6).[229] Reading her heroine in time and space--as a figure who is caught between the static and timeless values of what Patricia Meyer Spacks calls "female orthodoxies" ("Oscillations" 510)[230] and the untidiness of life--this chapter examines the ways in which Sheridan's novels raise questions that might have seemed ludicrous to her characters and those who (mainly) loved them. Sheridan applied a rather freethinking theological mind to questions of marriage, poetic justice, and filial piety. Her deathbed sermons, with which her

[227] See Betsey Schellenberg, "Frances Sheridan Reads John Home: Placing Sidney Bidulph in the Republic of Letters," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 13.4, 2001: 561-577.

[228] "The Owls" was a poem defending Thomas Sheridan (1719-88) for his role in the Cato affair. Sheridan was a leading actor and manager at the Theatre Royal, Smock Alley, Dublin. His refusal to play the role of Cato because of a missing costume led to a press battle with Theophilus Cibber. Frances Chamberlaine's poem appears in a pamphlet called *Cibber and Sheridan.* Frances essentially accuses Thomas' detractors of being jealous of Thomas.

[229] LeFanu does not tell us the question, and I have been unable to find it out. According to LeFanu, the boy was coming along well in his studies, despite what Frances' brothers had expected. His question raised a good amount of hilarity, and they encouraged Frances to give up her tutoring of him, but she refused to do so.

[230] Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Oscillations of Sensibility," *New Literary History* 25, no.3 (1994): 505-520.

characters attempt to impress audiences with a their own hermeneutics, raised these "ludicrous questions" to the level of heterodox speculation.

With what *The Critical Review* of 1766 recognized as a "dramatic genius," Sheridan stages a drama about mothers and grandmothers set early in the reign of Queen Anne. This chapter also discusses the ways in which Sheridan's single mothers navigate female and male parental roles, and the extent of their power and responsibility in a culture that endorses strong gendered divisions in public and private life. With the unfulfilled promises of the female monarch as a backdrop, Sheridan's novels bring to the fore issues of inheritance and tradition, while her plot undermines the possibility of a functional maternal figure who is also a pious and feminine "paragon." In the end, Sidney maintains her status as a paragon and avoids the failures of the other mother figures but only by cutting short her maternal activity and becoming a ceremonial figure in ways that resonate with the political containment of the British queen.

II: Strange and Ludicrous Questions

As I note above, the critical consensus around Sheridan's novels is that they question values of obedience, passivity, and stoicism billed to young women in the tradition of conduct literature as their primary source of "power."[231] Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that *Memoirs* raises more questions than it answers about "female orthodoxies" ("Oscillations" 510) and that Sidney's unflinching obedience to her mother appears to result "mainly in unhappiness" (509). Similarly, Carol Ann Stewart argues that

[231] Ruth S. Perry seems to stand apart from this consensus, calling *Memoirs* a "monument to self abnegation" (*Novel Relations* 403) and "masochistic obedience." See Ruth Perry, "Clarissa's Daughters, or the History of Innocence Betrayed: How Women Writers Rewrote Richardson," *Women's Writing* 1, no.1 (January 1, 1994): 5-24, 17.

by troubling standards of worthiness, Sheridan shows that self-abnegation is not in the public or private interest (102). Katherine Binhammer reads Sheridan's subversiveness, and the uncertainty of passivity to bring about happiness, in the misery of Sidney (95). Anna M. Fitzer argues that Sheridan exploits "ambiguities" of conventional characterizations (paragon and whore). B.G. McCarthy and Mary Anne Schofield also note Sheridan's penchant for "mixed characters," Schofield also arguing "loss and sorrow have ambivalent causes" (332). Sidney's obedience, passivity, and self-denial not only fail to bring about her own happiness, but also have radiating effects that result in the unhappiness of others. On the one hand, these effects confirm the analysis of Sidney's correspondent, Cecilia B., "that neither prudence, nor foresight, nor even the best disposition that the human heart is capable of, are of themselves sufficient to defend us against the inevitable ills that sometimes are allotted even, even to the best" (*Memoirs* 49).[232] On the other hand, even Cecilia's framing argument against poetic justice is also challenged in the text, and, as the commentary of another character, by no means a reliable guide.

The language of destabilization, questioning, ambivalence, and uncertainty that inflects the critics' vocabulary is particularly apt for understanding novels by a playwright who, while she had not written a full-length play before the publication of *Memoirs*, was deeply invested in the financial and social status and artistic freedom of the British theatre. Additionally, LeFanu's term "ludicrous" contains now-obsolete meanings that denote a sort of theatricality, or "sportive performance" (OED), a sense of serious concepts set to a drama or put in "play." In its more derisive use, "ludicrous" often

[232] Citations of the novels are from the Broadview editions.

appears as a charge against heterodox religious speculation that lowers or profanes religious doctrine by subjecting it to silly challenges.[233] While these definitions are most likely not part of LeFanu's meaning, "strange and ludicrous questions" provides a useful lens for examining the ways in which Sheridan the playwright and amateur divine stages "a life lived around a moral problem" (Schofield 332). [234] Sheridan places her paragon amidst circumstances that orthodox conduct should but does not remedy. Whereas conduct books prescribe exact adherence to parents and elder friends, who "understand better than you, what was proper for you" (Richardson, *Familiar Letters* LIII),[235] Sidney's friends consistently do not understand her or the world better than she does. As a lover, Sidney develops attachments based on gratitude, yet that gratitude is divided between two men.[236] Whereas marriage advice to women with straying husbands is to remain cheerful and obedient, so that "He will see what a goodness he injures, and will be softened by your softness" (Letter LIV), this advice backfires for Sidney; her husband abandons her, and their reconciliation comes about as a result of her admirer Falkland's "knight errantry" (214). The echoes of conduct literature resound in Sidney and her

[233] "Ludicrous, Adj." *OED Online*. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Web. 27 Mar. 2015. See also, for instance, Richard Allestree, *The Government of the Tongue* (1675?); Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1695); Isaac Barrow, *Several Sermons Against Evil Speaking* (1678); and Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (1736).

[234] LeFanu most likely uses "ludicrous" in the current sense of inciting laughter or "ridiculous" (OED).

[235] Samuel Richardson, *Familiar Letters Written To and For Particular Friends on the Most Important Occasions* (London: Rivington, Osborne, and Leake, 1741). See also George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, *The Ladies New-Year's Gift: or Advice to a Daughter*, 2nd ed. (London: Gillyflower and Partridge, 1688). Halifax gives very similar advice to his daughters, encouraging them to "subdue [their] masters [husbands] without violence" and telling them, "You have more strength in your *Looks*, than we have in our *Laws*; and more power by your *Tears*, than we have by our *Arguments*."

[236] See John Gregory's marriage advice: "That love is not to begin on your part, but is entirely to be the consequence of our attachment to you" in John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London and Edinburgh: Strahan, Cadell, and Creech, 1774).

mother's discourse, but they do so within a plot structure that turns into questions the moral imperatives both external and internal to the text.

Marriage and Filial Piety:

In *Memoirs*, Miss Sidney Bidulph becomes engaged to her first suitor, Orlando Faulkland, upon the recommendation of her brother and the approval of her widowed mother. While Sidney is recovering from a fever, Lady Bidulph discovers that Faulkland has left a former lover pregnant, and calls off the match. Faulkland's indiscretion is too reminiscent of the event that ended Lady Bidulph's own first engagement. On advice from Lady Grimston, Lady Bidulph marries her daughter hastily to a Mr. Arnold, an apparently sedate and studious gentleman who is secretly carrying on an affair with a widow, Mrs. Gerrarde. Mrs. Gerrarde is also the aunt of Miss Burchell, with whom Faulkland had his brief sexual encounter. Mrs. Gerrarde uses her influence over Mr. Arnold to incite his jealousy and suspicion of Sidney and Faulkland, and Sidney is run from her home and denied access to her two daughters. Although he is still in love with Sidney, Faulkland reunites the Arnolds by eloping with Mrs. Gerrarde and tricking her into writing a letter that confesses her deception. Mr. Arnold is a faithful husband for a very brief time, and then dies from a riding accident, and his estate is lost in a legal battle. Now impoverished, Sidney watches her mother die, and is refused help from her brother, who is angry that she still refuses to marry Faulkland. Faulkland, at Sidney's request, marries Mrs. Burchell, after which Sidney learns that Burchell is a "sly rake in petticoats" (396). At this point in the novel, Ned Warner, a cousin of the Bidulphs, returns a wealthy man from the colonies, and lavishes riches upon his virtuous cousin, Sidney, after testing

her generosity by posing to her as a poor relation.[237] It seems that virtue is rewarded until, at the end of the novel, Faulkland returns, believing he has accidentally killed his wife and her lover, and asks for Sidney's hand again. Fearing what he might resort to if he is refused, Sidney accepts him, and they marry. But before they can elope to Holland, it is revealed that Mrs. Faulkland is unharmed, and Faulkland dies from apparent suicide.

Sheridan's novel is epistolary in form, and most of the letters, especially those by Sidney's brother Sir George, hold Lady Bidulph to be thoroughly culpable for the misery that is inflicted upon Sidney and Faulkland. Indeed, Lady Bidulph is not only responsible for Sidney's terrible match with Mr. Arnold, but also chooses to ignore Faulkland's explanation for his behavior, refusing even to read part of a letter that contains it. Holding Faulkland to the same rigorous standards of chastity to which women are bound, Lady Bidulph will not allow for any mitigation or explanation to reach her or her daughter's ears. As John C. Traver suggests, *Memoirs* seems to indict the flawed judgment of maternal figures, and the gynocentric morality they attempt to impose by holding Faulkland to the same strict standards of chastity to which women are held.[238] Sir George's judgments, and Faulkland's desires, seem more conformable to mid-century laws and morals; however, the historical setting of the book—and one might go as far as to call *Memoirs* historical fiction—extends this commentary, or set of questions beyond one "despotic" (85) maternal figure, to an entire generation of women, of whom Frances Sheridan's grandmothers were a part.

[237] Readers of R. B. Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777) will remember that the playwright adopted this trick, with some variation, in order to test the respective virtue of the two Surface brothers.
[238] See John C. Traver, "The Inconclusive Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph: Problems of Poetic Justice, Closure, and Gender," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20, no.1 (2007).

The novel opens at around 1704, for Sheridan over fifty years in the past, at a moment that seemed to indicate a potential for expanded political power for women. Queen Anne has taken the throne, a moral reformer like her sister and predecessor, Mary II, and a sole woman ruler of England. Mary and Anne were part of the first generation of Enlightenment women, with Mary Astell and Damaris Masham, who called for reform in manners and religion.[239] Seizing power as queens and polemicists, their activity signaled the possibility for women's political agency. Astell argued that improvements in women's education would "go a great deal towards reclaiming the men" if they would "study to engage men in the love of true Piety and Goodness" (*Serious* 106, 123). The reform of male manners is a chief aim in Astell's reform of female education. She saw the reign of Anne as a beacon of "halcyon days" of "Women's tracing a new Path to Honor" to end the "Tyrannous Domination which Nature never meant" (*Reflections* 31). Masham, like Astell, thought that improved female education would necessarily reflect in the morality of men. Mary and Anne participated in this reform of manners, in particular through their influence over the Church of England. However, hoped-for improvements in women's education and political agency did not materialize after the reign of Anne. As Toni Bowers argues, beliefs about motherhood and mothering practices worked to remove mothers from public life at the same time that Queen Anne was cultivating her

[239] Patricia Springborg notes Mary Astell's argument for a "reform of morals and manners that would remove the tyranny from which women suffered." See Mary Astell, *Astell: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxix. Anne herself was "a strong supporter of moral reform": See Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006) 133. For Queens Mary and Anne and the reform of manners see James Anderson Winn, *Queen Anne: Patroness of Arts* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 178-181, and Aparna Gollapudi, *Moral Reform in Comedy and Culture, 1696–1747* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 7. These women were all born in the same decade of the mid-seventeenth century.

maternal image. She was increasingly domesticated as her role became more symbolic; practical governmental authority was in the hands of powerful men, such as the Duke of Marlborough. These renegotiations of motherhood and monarchical power meant that "the reductive code of maternal excellence […] was inaugurated during Queen Anne's reign" (89). Female power thus became coterminous with maternal excellence as Anne's political power became contained as domestic, ceremonial, and religious in ways that set her above or beside the business of politics.[240]

Sheridan dates Lady Bidulph and Lady Grimston, the two autocratic maternal figures of the novel, as precise contemporaries with Mary II and Anne, and writers such as Astell and Masham. The dowagers are childhood companions, likely born sometime in the 1660s.[241] The novel's date contextualizes her maternal figures in an age of feminist and moral reform, but, as a retrospective, highlights their limitations. As widows and autocratic mothers, Ladies Bidulph and Grimston are elevated to a position of parental power in which their decisions are beyond negotiation, yet their education and experience, as the novel indicates, is not sufficient for their level of authority: they both pretend to "know the world well" (117), and, according to Lady Bidulph, Lady Grimston "knows more of the world than any one in [Lady Bidulph's] acquaintance" (95-96). As Sidney quips, however, "it must be of the old world, for lady Grimston has not been ten miles from her seat these thirty years" (96). Similarly, Sidney refers to Lady Bidulph as a "dear literal woman"(63), someone without the ability to discern the nuances in

[240] Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760* (New York: Cambridge, 1996).

[241] Although Sidney jokes that the two are "old ladies" and that Lady Grimston dresses like a lady of "Charles the First's court" (96), such a history would make her seventy years old, and it is unlikely that Lady Bidulph is that age, since Sidney is only nineteen.

characters such as Faulkand's and Arnold's-- nuances that her daughter can see plainly. Lady Bidulph's judgments are, in George's words, "as absolute as that of an Eastern Monarch" (121), but she is too often wrong. As mothers, these matriarchs are still too confined to the domestic space, and domestic pursuits, to make good use of their zeal for reform.

Perhaps as a consequence of their undaunted self-assurance and power over their daughters, both mothers are "tyrants" and "despotic," although Lady Bidulph is comparatively more benign. Whereas Lady Bidulph has inherited her power, Lady Grimston usurps it from a living husband, who dies shortly afterwards. Sidney's unflinching filial duty to her mother precludes any overtly punitive decrees, but Lady Grimston's daughter, Mrs. Vere, who disobeys her mother but remains in obedience to her father in her choice of a husband, experiences emotional and financial abandonment at the hands of her mother, who continues to make Mrs. Vere suffer even in her widowhood. Mrs. Vere's tragic loss of her father, her husband, and her being "brought to bed of a dead female child" is one of the most affecting sentimental episodes in the novel, and it is linked to the unforgiving vindictiveness of Lady Grimston.[242]

The nature of the autocratic parent who is also the domesticated and disempowered parent raises important questions about the morality of filial duty as it is enshrined in conduct literature. Do these parents truly know the world better? Are their judgments with regard to choosing a husband to be trusted? Old chestnuts of conduct literature seem to assume the presence of a male parent, but Sidney has only a mother and a young brother. Indeed, there is no exemplary father figure to be found anywhere in the

[242] Lady Grimston refuses to see her pregnant, widowed daughter, which causes a decline in Mrs. Vere's health.

Sidney Bidulph novels. As I discuss later, Sheridan's *Conclusion* answers the questions that *Memoirs* raises by teaching the single mother the limits of her agency from within her still largely symbolic role in the family. Sidney is never directly responsible for any harm that comes to her children. Conversely, Lady Bidulph's judgment is frankly indicted, by Sidney's brother, Sir George, and, in the *Conclusion*, when Sidney herself, who promises to her daughters never to impose her will on them the way Lady Bidulph had done to her.

In the Sidney Bidulph novels, the parental prerogative arises in every case as an issue with respect to marriage, and in this way Sheridan is participating in debates about the legal status of marriage and parental influence that are rather more recent than the setting of her book. Lord Hardwicke's "Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage" introduced 1753 and enacted 1754, which put an end to spousals and necessitated church weddings, brought marriage contracts out of the private sphere of personal obligations and promises, making it a necessarily public ceremony.[243] According to David Lemmings, the purpose of the bill was to prevent clandestine marriages and bigamy.[244] Appealing to the desire of parents to preserve their fortunes through marriage, it signaled "the continuing patriarchal and materialist instincts" of the upper classes (Lemmings 343). Before 1754, private ceremonies before witnesses and vows followed

[243] Spousals are weddings or betrothals that take place outside of the established church, often with no witnesses present. See T.G.A. Nelson, "Doing Things With Words: Another Look at Marriage Rites in Renaissance Drama and Fiction" *Studies in Philology* 95, no.4 (Fall 1998): 351. Interestingly, LeFanu notes that Frances Sheridan was related to Lord Hardwicke by her brother's marriage to one of Hardwicke's relatives (LeFanu 3).

[244] David Lemmings, "Marriage and the Law in the Eighteenth Century: Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753," *The Historical Journal* 39.02 (1996): 339–360. *Cambridge Journals Online*. Web. See also Vivien Jones, who says that a major motivation was to prevent premarital sex by increasing the consequences for women. Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 81.

by cohabitation were legally binding; after 1754, the only legally binding arrangement was the church wedding, preceded by the reading of the banns; clandestine marriages were null and void, unless they took place in Scotland (Stone 32).[245] Sheridan's novels, set before the marriage act, but written afterwards, experiment with a number of marriage situations, and reflect uncertainty with regard to whether any of them is ideal for economic security or domestic felicity.

As Eve Tavor Bannet explains, mid-century women had varied reactions to the debate over Hardwicke's marriage bill. After the marriage act, women who yielded to sexual advances because of a promise of marriage had no recourse, and many of those who had been living as wives were no longer legally wives (234). Proponents of the law argued that it would be a deterrent against premarital sex (240). Some women, whom Bannet refers to as "feminists," argued that the marriage act simply took away the legal consequence of a marriage promise, supplying a license for immorality. Those whom Bannet calls "matriarchs" argued that it empowered wives, and prevented bigamous husbands from slipping out from under them their children, homes and financial security (242).[246] Bannet is correct in her assessment that *Memoirs* raises questions about the impact of Hardwicke's marriage act on women, but it is important to recall the historical setting of the novel. Therefore, while I agree that it is likely that Lady Bidulph would take what she calls the "feminist" view of Hardwicke, that the promise of marriage should have legal consequences, I do not agree that her dispute with Sir George over whether Sidney should marry Faulkland is "about a generational difference of opinion"

[245] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

[246] Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Marriage Act of 1753: 'A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no.3 (1997): 233–254..

(245), but is, rather, a difference in their moral perspectives. As it appears in this pre-Hardwicke novel, the primary legal and moral question is whether Faulkland offered marriage to Miss Burchell before going to bed with her. Yet this is precisely the question that Lady Bidulph refuses to learn the answer to. As scholars have suggested, Lady Bidulph seems to assume that a promise had been made, and that Miss Burchell's "youth" was "seduced" (68) because she insists on an absolute equivalence between Faulkland's indiscretion and that of Lady Bidulph's first suitor who, "having formerly been engaged to a young lady by the most solemn vows […] forgot them all on seeing me" (68). Lady Bidulph's first engagement is severed because of this earlier promise. As a result, Sidney tells Cecilia:

> You may recollect, my dear, that my mother, tho' strictly nice in every particular, has a sort of partiality to her own sex, and where there is the least room for it, throws the whole of the blame upon the man's side; who, from her own early prepossessions, she is always inclined to think are deceivers of women. (85)

We later learn that Faulkland is "no breaker of promises" (92) but Lady Bidulph reads Faulkland's letter only partly, and delays interviewing Burchell until after Sidney is safely married. Burchell's "shame and sorrow" (82) warrants Faulkland's "justice"—an equitable distribution of consequences for man and woman. Thus Lady Bidulph's moral code is of a feminist variety, asserting a moral equivalence in the sexual behavior of men and women, an equivalence that is at odds with the morality of Hardwicke's marriage law.[247]

Sidney agrees with her mother that Faulkland's "injury" of Miss Burchell confers an obligation to marry her; she also speculates on what calamities might have attended

[247] As Bannet points out, proponents of the law claimed that "women's inability to support their offspring was 'the natural origin of the superior disgrace which attends a breach of chastity in women rather than in men'" (240). Lady Bidulph does not believe in this superior disgrace.

her near-marriage to Faulkland in a pre-Hardwicke state: "had I married Faulkland [….] Who knows but he might have returned to his neglected mistress" (119).[248] As Mary Ann Schofield suggests, Sidney and her mother feel a "sense of sisterhood" (335) with the fallen woman. They forge an empathetic connection, which in turn prevents them from becoming complicit in Burchell's supposed suffering by marrying Sidney to Faulkland. Seeing conflicts between the mistress and the wife from both sides, Sheridan tacitly suggests that the marriage act is an ambivalent solution to the problems it purported to address. The *Conclusion* complicates the issue of clandestine marriages more incisively with its doubling of Dorothea (Sidney's eldest daughter) and Theodora, the jilted wife of Sir Edward Audley. Sir Edward arranges a clandestine marriage with Theodora for the purpose of having sex with her. The wedding is complete with bribable witnesses and a servant disguised as clergy—a legal marriage in pre-Hardwicke days, provided the witnesses will attest honestly to the couple's vows. Later, Audley abducts Dorothea, hoping to extort or trick her into marriage, and consummation, in order to get his hands on the independent fortune she has inherited from Ned Warner. Because of the loose laws governing marriage before the 1754 law, Theodora is ultimately able to claim her title as Lady Audley and her "virtue" is rewarded.[249] There are no laws to protect Dorothea and her fortune, however, and she only narrowly escapes her capture with the help of Theodora. Whereas Hardwicke might have helped an innocent victim in Dorothea's case, the one-size-fits-all approach is far from a comprehensive solution.

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[248] Katherine Binhammer argues that the novel insists "on the rights of woman seduced" by making Sidney sympathetic to Burchell (84); however, it is unclear, as Gerard Barker notes, whether Sidney would have agreed to marry Faulkland even knowing the whole truth. See Gerard Barker, *Grandison's Heirs: The Paragon's Progress in the Late Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 60.

[249] Sidney promises her, "Your virtue shall not be unrewarded *here*, no more than it will be hereafter" (*Conclusion* 262).

Sheridan, in both of these novels, engages the question of clandestine marriage, and the very public debates and commentaries that made their way into the private, domestic realm. In this way, her work does, as Schellenberg argues, take on a decidedly public, political character. It also works to nuance the public sphere/private sphere dichotomy that scholars have suggested fails to express adequately the position of women in Enlightenment society.[250] It is not only Mr. Arnold's philandering that threatens Sidney's financial security, but also the Chancery court, when it decides to believe the legitimacy of the widow Arnold's child, and reward the entire Arnold estate to her.[251] It is unlikely that the widow Arnold has given birth to a legitimate child, as she was separated from Mr. Arnold's brother at the time of conception; the deception seems to have been orchestrated by her lover, the brother of Mrs. Gerrarde, and Mrs. Gerrarde herself. Mrs. Gerrarde therefore uses both public and private means to deprive Sidney of her livelihood and her lovers.[252] Sheridan's domestic novel does not confine itself to the domestic, because domesticity persists as a matter of public debate and public interference. But it does show that the confinement of mothers to the domestic creates difficulties when they, as widows, become single parents.

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[250] See for instance "Charlotte Sussman, Women's Private Reading and Political Action, 1639-1848" in Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith, eds. *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830* (New York: Cambridge, 2002). And Diane E. Boyd and Marta Kvande. *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private*. (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2008). Schellenberg also discusses the public character of Sheridan's sequel in To Renew Their Former Acquaintance: Print, Gender, and some eighteenth-century sequels" in Paul Vincent Budra, and Betty A Schellenberg. *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*. (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

[251] The "widow Arnold" in this novel is the name of Sidney's sister-in-law.

[252] Cheryl Nixon's essay, "Order in the Family Court: Maternal Disruption in *Roxana* and *Maria*," makes a convincing argument for the great extent to which the court system eroded boundaries between the public and private spheres. See this essay and others in Diane E. Boyd and Marta Kvande. *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private*. (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 2008).

III. Poetic Justice:

An awareness of the expansiveness of that world outside of the domestic, its penetrating interference, makes up part of Sheridan's challenge to the literary value of poetic justice. In other words, when webs of connection are exposed, the consequences of one's conduct—orthodox, virtuous, or neither —are less predictable, and less likely to correspond to intentions. Consequently, in 1761, the effusive praise of Sheridan's reviewers was measured because of doubts about the novel's didactic quality. These reviews seem to take as its moral the opinions of Cecilia, who presents Sidney's story as evidence that "inevitable ills are sometimes allotted even to the best" (49). The novel begins with a conversation about the lack of poetic justice in John Home's *Douglas* (1756).[253] Before the editor acquires Cecilia's cache of letters, the party read *Douglas* for their amusement. A "visitor lady" complains that the moral is discouraging, and that the hero of Douglas "ought to have been rewarded" (44). This prompts Cecilia to talk about her friend Sidney, whose "real life" contains "too many melancholy precedents" against the truth of poetic justice:

> [W]e are disappointed in the catastrophe of a fable, if everybody concerned in it be not disposed of according to that judge we have set up in our own breast…. When then are we to conclude that God does not estimate things as we do? (44-45)

In this opening scene, Cecilia and the "visitor lady" represent opposing sides of a debate, whether imitation of life or the encouragement of virtuous conduct should be the aim of literature. The *Monthly Review* asserts that it is the latter, taking the side of the visitor, saying that although the novel may be "a true picture of human life," it is "by no means

[253] *Douglas: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, by John Home (1722-1808), playwright and Church of Scotland minister. The play, a pathetic tragedy, sparked controversy within the Scottish Church and among theatre people—Thomas Sheridan praised it, but Garrick disliked it.

calculated to encourage and promote virtue" (266). [254] *The London Magazine* registers, but refuses to accept, Cecilia's moral, choosing instead to believe that Sidney's misfortunes "arose from want of knowledge of the world, from a too easy credulity, from innocence that suspects not, and not from the allotment of heaven!" (168).[255] Therefore, like recent critics, even the earliest reviews of Sidney Bidulph noted a subversive quality, but only parenthetically; they chose to revise or disregard it, focusing instead on its artistic beauty, or its resemblance to the works of Samuel Richardson.

Sheridan's fictional discussion of *Douglas* participates in a debate about poetic justice and didactic literature that raged throughout the eighteenth century, from Addison's indictment of it as a "chimerical method" in *The Tatler* (1709) to Clara Reeve's dialogic defense of it in *The Progress of Romance* (1785).[256] Cecilia and Richardson express a position that has affinities with Addison's in *The Spectator* no. 40 (1711), which got perhaps the most negative critical attention. Addison writes: "This Error they have been led into by a ridiculous Doctrine in modern Criticism, that they are obliged to an equal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, and an impartial Execution of poetical Justice."[257] His language ("equal distribution") is revived in Richardson and Sheridan, and his reference to doctrine, an orthodox teaching that he finds anathema, echoed in the defense of that practice in *The Monthly Review*. John Dennis appears to

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[254] *The Monthly Review* 24 (1761): 260-266. As John C. Traver points out, *The Monthly Review* also attacked the tragedy of Douglas "for want of a moral" ("Inconclusive" 41).

[255] *The London Magazine* 30 (1761): 168.

[256] Whereas the section on *Sidney Bidulph* concludes with her agreeable opinion that different subjects may be useful to different dispositions, Euphrania argues that "the books of a gloomy tendency do much harm in this country, and especially to young minds." Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners; With Remarks on the Good and Bad Effects of it, on them Respectively; In a course of Evening Conversations*, vol. 2 (Colchester: Keymer, 1785).

[257] *The Spectator* no. 40 (1711) was reissued and reprinted throughout the century.

have been prompted by no. 40 to write in his *Letters of Criticism to the Spectator*: Dr. Norris's Narrative depicts him reading that number of *The Spectator*, tearing out the section on poetic justice, and tossing it into the street (185).[258] John C. Traver and Betty Schellenberg both argue that Home's tragedy is a starting point for Sheridan's attack on poetic justice, an attack which, Traver argues, Sheridan continues into the sequel by reasserting the impermanence of human judgments (36). Schellenberg identifies an implicitly political argument, in which, by siding with Home against his detractors, such as Samuel Johnson, on questions of literary patronage and poetic justice (569).[259]

Indeed, as Cecilia's opening speech indicates, the questions of poetic justice have implications that extend beyond artistic debates. She seems to side with Richardson in arguing that the popular affinity for poetic justice is at odds with religious truth. In his defense of *Clarissa* (1748) from those who accused him of punishing virtue, Richardson defines this opposition: "principle rules, to propagate another sort of dispensation, under the name of poetical justice, than that with which God by Revelations teaches us he has thought fit to exercise mankind" (1495).[260] *Clarissa*, he contends, is "formed on a religious plan" wherein God "hath so intermingled good and evil as to necessitate them to

[258] "Dr. Norris' Narrative" is in John Arbuthnot et. al, *A Supplement to Swift's Works* (Edinburgh: Hamilton and Balfour, 1753): 185. In his letters of criticism, Dennis argues rather convincingly that because we cannot know empirically men's crimes, "and it is for the most part by their passions that men offend" (44), there is no reason to believe that a form of poetic justice does not occur in nature (43-45).

[259] As Schellenberg explains, George III patronized John Home, and Johnson and Thomas Sheridan parted ways over their respective pensions. Therefore, she concludes, Frances Sheridan's approval of Home is a way of siding with her husband against Johnson in professional debates about the theatre. In this way, Sheridan's professional identity is again difficult to distinguish easily from domestic pursuits. Betty A. Schellenberg, "Frances Sheridan Reads John Home: Placing Sidney Bidulph in the Republic of Letters," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 13, no.4, (2001): 567-69.

[260] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady*, ed. Angus Ross (New York, N.Y., U.S.A: Penguin Classics, 1986).

look forward for a more equal distribution of both" (1495). Cecilia's argument in favor of *Douglas* is almost an exact restatement of Richardson's "religious plan":

> [C]onsider the evils which befall us, as equally temporary, and no more dispensed by the great ruler of all things for punishments, than the others are for rewards; and by thus estimating both, to look forward for an equal distribution of justice, to that place only, where (let our station be what it will) our lot is to be unchangeable. (45)

Both Richardson and Cecilia posit a religious form of poetic justice that hinges upon their insistence, or their faith, that their heroines are rewarded in heaven, a place of "equal" or fair distribution of divine justice that does not exist on earth.

On the other hand, it is important to understand the subtle differences between Cecilia's "religious plan" and Richardson's: Cecilia's contains subtle hints of a dissenting theology that more dramatically undermines the wisdom and the aims of conduct literature. Whereas Richardson's heroine, if we have faith, receives a reward in the hereafter for virtue or good conduct in the present, Cecilia resorts to a dispensation that does not rely on conduct. To begin with, she gives virtuous conduct a peculiarly worldly character when she associates Sidney's "goodness" with her quotes of Ecclesiastes 9:11: "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (49). Second, she refers to a place where "our lot is to be unchangeable," hinting at the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination, the idea that God has already distinguished the saved from the damned. *The Monthly Review* provides an indication of how Cecilia's determinism was interpreted when they deride the "too popular doctrine of predestination" implicit in her discourse.

Sheridan's subtle in-character modifications on Richardson's statement, therefore, engage not only artistic debates, but also the same theological conflicts that Fielding treats satirically in Joseph Andrews. As I discuss in the introduction to this dissertation,

theologians within and without the established church were divided over the doctrines of free grace, election or predestination, and "good works." John Wesley and George Whitefield differed over predestination, with Whitefield following the Calvinist position. Wesley's belief in free grace, or the possibility of salvation for all regardless of conduct, divided him from those who saw social value in the inculcation of good works doctrine. Predestination, like the rejection of good works, precludes the importance of conduct even with regard to salvation or the afterlife. If we are not to rest Sheridan's meaning within Calvinist theology, there are two possible ways to understand Cecilia's contentions: the first is that the fated events that Sidney and Cecilia refer to throughout the text have little to do with the doctrine of election, but still remove Sidney's agency over worldly events. The second is that Cecilia's interpretation of events is not meant to be Sheridan's, or ours, but to represent yet another position that Sheridan's narrative tests. This second reading is perhaps bolstered by the fact that Cecilia's editorializing voice is entirely erased in the *Conclusion*. Indeed, Sheridan cuts short her analysis at the end of *Memoirs*, and, terminating her ideological control entirely, leaves the reader to "make reflections for themselves" at the end of *Conclusion*. As a literary device, editorializing itself is first exaggerated, then attenuated, then silenced, along with any sure sense of a controlling agent.

IV. Death Bed Pulpits:

Another way in which Sheridan destabilizes Cecilia's religious themes is in presenting narrative events that suggest opposite or alternative interpretations. There is potential for the reader to choose, like the *London Magazine* (and Sir George) to indict Sidney's

choices, rather than Providence, with which she credits with her vicissitudes of fortune. Likewise, there is ample room to read poetic justice in *Memoirs*, if not also in its *Conclusion*. The first two of three death-bed sermons I will discuss work to undermine the anti-poetic justice position that Cecilia's ideology seems to impose on the text. In her fiction, Sheridan participates in a version of *ars moriendi* to make exemplary use of what Lisa Shaver calls "death bed pulpits": depictions of the art of dying well wherein "believers demonstrated their faith by approaching their deaths unafraid" (25) and ministering to their friends and family.[261] John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress,* part II, also inscribed the ideal scene of death in Christiana's crossing over the river and imparting her spiritual advice to her sons and daughters in law.[262] Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying* (1651), which remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, was a conduct book for "preparing ourselves and others respectively for a blessed death, and the remedies against the Evils and Temptations Incident to a State of Sickness."[263] In a time where deaths were often long, painful processes with little if any remedies for relief, those with the endurance for calm religious contemplation were "blessed." Such a blessed state gives their deathbed sermons a peculiar magnitude.

[261] Shaver discusses deathbed pulpits in the nineteenth century, but her point that they were part of a "long-standing tradition of Protestant and Catholic hagiography" (25) is well taken. See Lisa Shaver, "Women's Deathbed Pulpits: From Quiet Congregants to Iconic Ministers," *Rhetoric Review* 27, no.1, (2008): 20-37.

[262] For the ways in which women internalized Christiana's progress as 'a book to live and die upon' see Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress*, (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2004). Christiana at her moment of death says "come wet; come dry, I long to be gone" (187), wet and dry being a metaphor for painful or easy deaths. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, From This World to That Which Is to Come* in Two Parts, Complete (London: J. Clarke, 1728).

[263] The quote is the subtitle from the 1796 edition: Jeremiah Taylor, *Holy Dying, in which are Described The Means and Instruments preparing ourselves and others respectively for a blessed death, and the remedies against the Evils and Temptations Incident to a State of Sickness* (Blackburn, J Hemingway, King Street, 1796).

Lady Bidulph's death scene is wrought in this tradition and should therefore be given more consideration as an expression of a worldview "in play" in *Memoirs*. As Traver notes, Lady Bidulph believes in poetic justice; in other words, she believes that Sidney's virtue will be rewarded in this life.[264] She wants for her daughter material comfort and a restored reputation, two things Sidney has lost because of her disastrous marriage to Mr. Arnold. She says "Bring up your children in the principles I have taught you, and God will take care of them; for I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread" (345).[265] Sidney, indeed, achieves both. Her children are taken care of, and Sidney's fortune is restored many times over by the arrival of Ned Warner and his West Indian money. As a result of her virtue and "principle," she receives the entirety of Warner's bounty, and her daughters receive independent fortunes. To be sure, Sidney does not see fortune as enough to restore happiness, but within the system of poetic justice in which Lady Bidulph has faith, Sheridan's story delivers. The fact that she does not end up with Faulkland does not, in itself, constitute a lack of poetic justice, unless we consider Faulkland to be a just reward by "that judge we have set up in our own breast" (*Memoirs* 45).

Sidney's reputation, too, recovers good fame both within the text and as a result of its fictional dissemination, in which her friends' testimonies to Sidney's perfections become readable, and Sidney's performance becomes public. In the first of Sheridan's deathbed sermons, it is Mr. Arnold who is dying, but Sidney who is preaching.[266] At this

[264] Traver says, Lady Bidulph, Sidney's mother, is perhaps the most vocal supporter of "justice" in Sidney Bidulphand may be seen as representing the urge to instantiate poetic justice in the real world (47).

[265] This is a recital of Psalm 37:25.

[266] This scene happens first chronologically, but I have chosen to discuss it second because of the light in which Lady Bidulph's death puts it.

point, Sidney's letters have temporarily stopped, and Patty Main is continuing the correspondence to Cecilia. Marta Kvande argues convincingly that Patty's letters "indicate a relinquishing of control, but also point toward Sidney's public power, enacting her transformation into a public figure by describing her performances" (166).[267] Not only do we get Patty's praise of Sidney, but in Arnold's deathbed scene, Patty's brother, the doctor Mr. Main, assumes epistolary duties and describes Sidney's ministering to her comatose husband:

> Never did I see true devotion before; the fervor of her looks and the tone of her voice was such, you would have thought she beheld her creator with her bodily eyes. For my part, I looked on her with such reverence, that she appeared to me like an angel interceding for us poor mortal sinners. (*Memoirs* 302)

Everyone weeps in this scene except for Sidney. The voices in Sheridan's fiction invariably praise Sidney's performance. There is no doubt permitted that the heroine demonstrates great faith and fortitude in the face of her widowhood. She takes over both clerical responsibility and the role of exemplary faithful in her husband's stead. By the end of *Memoirs*, Lady Bidulph's prognostications seem to ring true. As a widow, Sidney is rewarded for her devotion with material wealth and reputation for her devotion. She simply does not *also* get her man.

V: Apotheosis of the Single Mother

[267] See Marta Kvande, "Frances Burney and Frances Sheridan: Epistolary Fiction and the Public Sphere," in *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth Century Women Transforming Public and Private,* eds. Diane E. Boyd and Marta Kvande (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008): 159-189.

Arnold's deathbed scene constitutes Sidney's apotheosis. As the most moving scene in the *Memoirs*-- the point where the narrative slows to accommodate a number of voices, and the validation of Sidney's self-conscious religious and filial piety-- it has gotten surprisingly little attention. [268] With her husband's death, Sidney moves from subjection to a position of relative empowerment—over her children, over her own hand, and, shortly after, over a large fortune. Her empowerment is also, or perhaps mainly, spiritual. Earlier in the narrative, Sidney must labor to maintain her fortitude, resist murmuring, and hold back tears; now quiet stoicism and a religious otherworldliness characterize all of her actions. Assuming the role of "interceding angel" and true devotee that Sheridan inscribes, she now looks forward to the day when she can "die the death of the righteous" (345) in imitation of her mother, and this outlook seriously limits her maternal agency. Sheridan's elevation of Sidney to a religious figure seems to correspond to Mary Wollstonecraft's opinion that widowhood, making a mother "anxious to provide for [her children] affection gives a sacred, heroic caste to her maternal duties" (*Vindication* 58).[269] But Sidney's maternal duties are decidedly otherworldly, especially once her fortune is restored. The next section of this chapter discusses the *Conclusion* (1767), and in particular the strategies that Sheridan teaches her heroine to avoid the pitfalls of the mother figures in *Memoirs*. These strategies, insofar as they are directed at upholding conventional maternal ideals, actually function to contain within her transformative role as sacred object one who might otherwise be a remarkably empowered maternal figure.

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[268] There is evidence of approval for her tormented passivity in Eighteenth-Century reviews. Smollet, for instance, describes Sidney as "unaffected--simple, artless, unpretending" (in LeFanu 118).

[269] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (Dublin: J. Stockdale for James Moore, 1793).

Conclusion, while still an epistolary novel, employs a greater number of diarists, including villainous rakes, treacherous young ladies, and letters by Sidney's old friend Cecilia. This proliferation of voices prevents any one perspective from dominating the narrative, but as a follow-up to *Memoirs*, *Conclusion* makes Sidney's perspective conspicuously rare. *Conclusion* picks up at Woodberry, in Oxfordshire, when Sidney's daughters, Dorothea and Cecilia, are approaching marrying age. The young son of Miss Burchell and Orlando Faulkland is now an orphan, and lives with Sidney as an adopted child. His name is Orlando Falkland, and he has just begun at Oxford.[270] There is talk of sending the young ladies to London, in order to finish their education. *Conclusion* opens at the moment when the Woodbury children are just about to fly the nest for the first time, an ideal moment for assessing the quality of their upbringing and the nature of their emerging characters. It is therefore a novel about parenting, about different forms of inheritance, and the education of children.

A critique of women's education emerges in the mistakes of the autocratic mothers in part one. The ubiquity of the widow figure who has unmarried children raises questions about the father/mother separation of powers and duties that characterizes most conduct literature about parenthood. Motherhood is synonymous with indulgence and affect, which fathers are exhorted to moderate with discipline. In *Thoughts Concerning Education*, John Locke warns that mothers in the nursery are too empowered to impress their children with bad habits and asks fathers to intervene lest their "children's

[270] Sheridan changes the spelling of the surname for *Conclusion*.

constitutions are spoiled […] by cockering and tenderness" (3).[271] Readers of *Clarissa* might remember that Lovelace blames his wickedness on a too-indulgent mother. Although it was widely believed that thousands were ruined by maternal love and permissiveness, indulgence and affect was simultaneously regarded as the natural state of mothers.[272] Therefore the "unnatural mother" is one, like Lady Grimston, who can resist spoiling her children with affection and indulgence. By assuming the natural paternal role, Lady Grimston and Lady Bidulph expose themselves to charges of unfeminine tyranny. The single mothers are caught between Scylla and Charybdis-- between a paternal role they are not prepared for and a maternal role that, left unchecked, is dangerous. The opinion that mothers are only too liable to excess in maternal affection has origins in the same gendered understanding of women's feeling that characterizes them as more religious, and more prone to excesses of religion, or, as John Gregory has put it, "more susceptible to feelings of devotion."[273] Not unlike religious feeling, this maternal impulse to indulgence is both disparaged and naturalized.

Sidney avoids the mistakes of her mother and Lady Grimston by adopting as her defining traits the naturalized feminine characteristics of religious enthusiasm and maternal indulgence: "advice from a mother was always considered by me as a command; yet I do not desire you to regard it in so severe a light" (120), she tells her daughters. Sidney asserts the ideology of maternal "nature," and embodies the feminine paragon so thoroughly, that she is beyond reproach. In order to maintain a level of

[271] See John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1693) and the Anonymous *The Common Errors in the Education of Children* (London: M. Cooper, 1744). *The Common Errors* is a conduct book for parents, heavily reliant on Locke's text.

[272] Lawrence Stone, *Family*, 277.

[273] John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (London and Edinburgh: Strahan, Cadell, and Creech, 1774).

worldly control, Sidney employs male agents to do what she cannot do without breaking the illusion of passive indulgence: assert authority. For Orlando's education, she employs Mr. Price. To coerce her daughters into proper marriages, she uses the help of Sir George and his wife, Lady Sarah: "I am under a promise to both my children never to urge their acceptance of a man whom they did not like, but my punctilio does not bind you. You are therefore at liberty to use every means (absolute force excepted)…"(127). This injunction, extending to every one of her friends and relations, allows Sidney to extend her will as far as any father could do. Furthermore, as I discuss below, Sidney's "indulgence" of her daughters fosters a sense of gratitude that compels their obedience.

Sidney as single mother therefore posits an interesting counterpoint to the "tyrant" mothers in *Memoirs*. Her methods have more in common with Sheridan's other maternal heroine, Lady Medway in *The Discovery* (1763). *The Discovery* is Sheridan's first play, which had a successful run at Drury Lane starring her husband Thomas Sheridan and David Garrick. In the play, Lady Medway exercises subtle power from within the domestic realm by employing agents, and thereby maintaining her reputation for discretion and obedience. Whilst her husband is attempting to forge mercenary matches for his children, and debauch a young newlywed, Lady Flutter, Lady Medway provides friendship to her children, solves Lady Flutter's marriage problems and arranges the reformation of her own rakish lord. *The Discovery* validates the advice literature by fulfilling its predictions: the unfaithful husband does convert because of the virtuous obedience of his wife; Lady Flutter does achieve happiness with her new husband by learning to yield to his desires. But at the same time, there is an important lesson that

Lady Medway teaches: an awareness that domestic bliss is a performance, a rehearsal of idealized gender roles that do not necessarily hold forth in time and space.

Sidney's performance of single motherhood is flawless, but there is some doubt about whether her performance makes any difference at all. Sheridan undermines themes of parental authority by introducing a nature/nurture debate that raises questions about the extent to which inherited characteristics dictate the behavior of adult children. Each of Woodberry children possesses traits inherited from both parents, and these traits battle for constructive dominance in their "characters." Dorothea, the favorite of her father, has a sullen disposition, but a heart too easily engaged. She falls in love with her "brother" Orlando on the suggestion of Sophia Audley, and like Mr. Arnold to Mrs. Gerrarde, cannot resist an attachment to him. Cecilia has her mother's sweetness of temper, but is obstinate when it comes to giving her hand in marriage. Sir Edward Audley's description of Orlando puts the battle between nature and nurture into high relief:

> I have studied Falkland minutely since I have been acquainted with him, and find he is of a very mixed character. The father and the mother pretty equally blended in his composition; but I hope the latter may predominate, else that even under my prudent guidance he may sneak out of the world without doing anything worthy of remembrance. (830)

Orlando, like Dorothea, has an equal mixture of the "virtuous" and "vicious" parent, and Audley hopes the bad will predominate so that he may exploit Orlando in order to marry one of the Arnold sisters' fortunes. Throughout *Conclusion*, Falkland struggles in choosing to act on the moral education he received from Mr. Price, or to follow the selfish designing character of Miss Burchell, or to indulge in the "knight errantry" of Mr. Faulkland. While we learn that Miss Audley's education was "ill calculated to inspire her with the principles of virtue" (300), Falkland's good education exerts uncertain influence.

The common refrain in conduct literature to be careful of contracting intimate acquaintances also rings true in this novel.[274] The Audleys are successful antagonists precisely because they are able to insinuate themselves into the hearts of the Woodberry children. In the guise of friends, they suggest possibilities for action that may not have arisen otherwise, but their power has its limits in the nature of the children's inherited character. In Sheridan's *Conclusion*, just when it seems that inheritance will have the greatest formative effect, there appears an argument for education; when education seems to make the most difference, the influence of peers emerges as another primary cause. Thus the sequel is, as Traver says, a corrective to the original by making it impossible to determine causality (36).

Finally, Sidney does succeed in controlling the behavior of her children, though it is arguably too little too late. At the end of *Conclusion*, it is revealed that Orlando was involved in Audley's abduction of Dorothea, and that he had proposed marriage to both Arnold sisters. Sidney takes to her bed with her last illness and Dorothea and Orlando, having been engaged by a solemn promise, determine never to break their oath, and marry. Sidney's last desires are for her daughters to forgive Orlando, and for Cecilia to marry the young Lord V., the virtuous son of her long-time friend, Lady V. With this final deathbed sermon, Sidney solidifies the heretofore unsteady obedience of her children, serves as an example of piety and forgiveness to her family, and outshines her mother's exemplary death. The scene takes up several pages, in which she laments her

[274] Richardson's *Familiar Letters* includes a letter warning "against a sudden intimacy or friendship with a short acquaintance"; John Gregory says, "a happy choice of friends will be of the utmost consequence to you" and "if you have a friend to pour your heart to, be sure of her honor and secrecy." The importance of one's choice of friends is one area of the conduct tradition that Sheridan's novels do uphold. See John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters By the Late Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh* (London: Printed for W. Strahan; T. Cadell, 1774).

losses and expresses a wish for death: "they love me not wisely who would wish to see my days prolonged. This is a fit season for departure, when I look upon the summons to quit life as a greater blessing than any which could now be bestowed upon me in it" (289). No amount of threatening or prodding could make Cecilia agree to marry Lord V before her mother's death, but in death she grants this last wish, and, calling out "I come!" (294). Sidney expires calmly. Following her death, Orlando, too, undergoes a dramatic conversion:

> Mr. Falkland stood motionless at the bed's-feet, his eyes fixed in mute sorrow on the lifeless corse of her, who had been more than a mother to him; for her whose days he shortened…. The suddenness of her departure… had amazed and terrified him. He beheld her some time in silence; then bursting into a passion of grief, little short of a frenzy, he smote his breast, and tearing his fine curled hair out by the roots (296).

The result of Falkland's grief is the promise of a virtuous and useful life, which we learn he finds in the army. The gratitude with which Sidney's indulgence inspires her children imposes a lifelong control upon their behavior, but only through her martyr-like death. It is a disappointing moment for those looking for an answer to the questions that Sheridan's novels raise about maternal agency and filial obedience, but it is a fitting conclusion to a tale that ceaselessly challenges the orthodoxies of the discourses in which it participates.

VI: Conclusion: Directions and Indirections

These contradicting theories of causality, theological speculations, and conflicting aesthetic principles challenge the very idea of the maternal paragon. Sheridan's novel ends with a thoroughly "perfect" figure, one who embodies maternal and domestic

ideology, but who consequently cannot function. The paragon, a ceremonial figurehead, cannot rule, and holds power only in exemplarity, a poor substitute indeed.[275] Sidney's power is static, that of a saint, and does not exert influence in her lifetime, and like Queen Anne, who fashioned her royal persona as a model maternal affect, religious piety, and domestic excellence. They have both "kept their garments white" (Bunyan 187), but only at the expense of asserting any lasting power for future generations of women. It is hard not to see this as Sheridan's "feminist message": female "perfections," with which her own biography is inundated, are instruments of containment.

Frances Sheridan's novels go a long way indeed toward complicating the boundaries between public and private. As historical novels, they ask us to think about the influence that past generations of women have over the power structures of the present. They engage public debates over marriage, morality, and aesthetics, from within the domestic or sentimental looking outward, exposing the intersections of ostensibly disparate spheres. But it achieves this complexity through what Patricia Meyer Spacks calls "a mode of indirection": "claiming so little [she] is difficult to attack; implying so much […] she is difficult to refute" (*Female Imagination* 26).[276] While Sheridan draws attention to female orthodoxies, even seeming to celebrate them, she dislocates them, like Lady Medway, tacitly, without disrupting the beauty of the images they perpetrate. If there is a way that this woman writer improves upon Richardson's novels, it is in this indirection and irony she cultivated because she was a woman. Frances Sheridan's novel engineers a mode of women's feminist writing that Teresa DeLauretis describes in

[275] Spacks says that Sidney's goodness is her "claim to power," but what that power achieves or, so circumscribed, can achieve, is less clear. See Spacks, "Oscillations," 509.

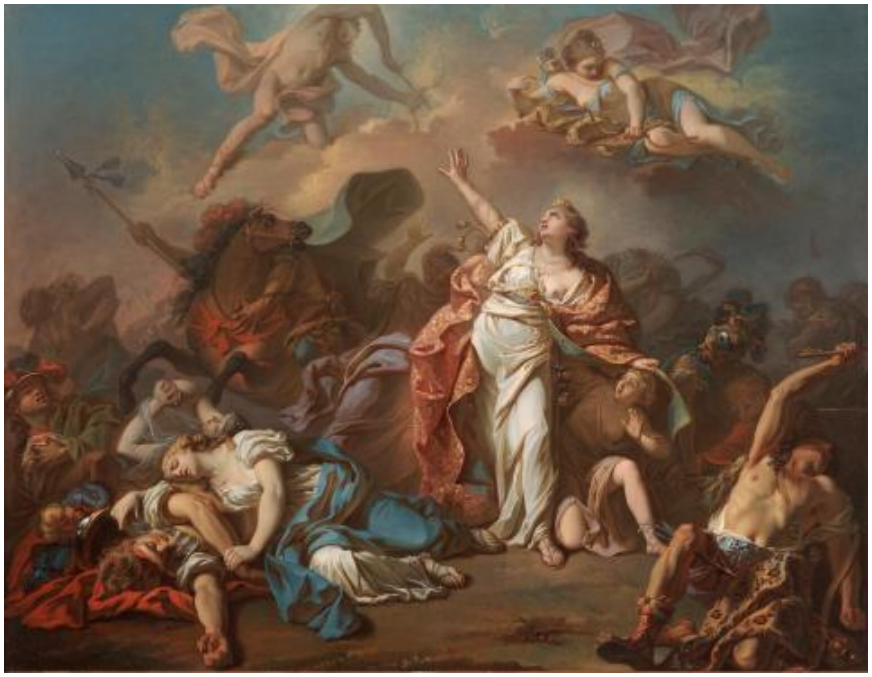
[276] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1972).

Figures of Resistance: "it is to speak at once the language of men and the silence of women, or better, to pursue strategies of discourse that will speak the silence of women in, through, against, over, under and across the language of men" (243).[277] Sheridan seems to pursue these strategies, speaking through, against, or across not only the language of men, but the values, failures, and impositions of the past and the present, and pointing, albeit subtly, to the silence of women.

[277] Teresa Delauretis. *Figures of Resistance*: *Essays in Feminist Theory* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

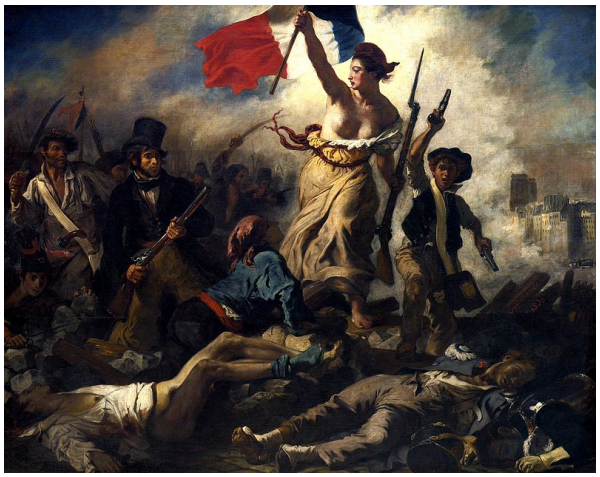
Chapter Five

Modern Niobes: Maternity, Radicalism, and Feminist Revolt at End of Century



Jacques-Louis David, *Apollo and Diana Attacking the Children of Niobe* (1772). Dallas Art Museum.

Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading The People* (1830). Louvre-Lens.



In this final chapter, my dissertation returns to the figure of Niobe to explore the ways in which the sentimental object—"all tears"[278]—becomes evocative of radical or revolutionary feelings in women's novels at the end of the eighteenth century. Richard Wilson's 1760 Niobe was a radical mixing of traditionally discrete genres of history and landscape painting. Even more can be said of Jacque-Louis David's 1772 Niobe, at first glance a relatively conventional picture designed for the French Academie Royale's Prix de Rome (DMA).[279] David's subject prefigures his mature neoclassical style, which differs from his Niobe in its clean lines, saturated colors, and stark backgrounds. In the painting above, Niobe shields her youngest daughter as her other children fall dead around her. The casualties of Latona's rage here seem to swell beyond Niobe's fourteen children, and, as the figures fade into the background, hints of additional victims, some in modern dress, and a massacre expanded through generations, begin to emerge. As I describe in chapter one, abuse of the mother has wider social consequences. An instructive comparison to David's painting is Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading The People* (1830). David's Niobe appears to provide a template for Delacroix's Liberty. The two figures in the foreground, slightly right of center, stand in the exact same position, but Liberty holds a flag in defiance where Niobe's hand is raised in a helpless gesture of protection. Liberty holds a bayonetted rifle, and rather encourages than shields the boy at right. Where Niobe stands among the dead bodies of her children, Liberty guides an army

[278] This quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* 3:2 is a commonplace in eighteenth-century references to Niobe.

[279] Information on Wilson from Yale Center for British Art, "Nobleness and Grandeur: Forging Historical Landscape in Britain, 1760-1850" http://britishart.yale.edu. The facts of David's competition for the Prix di Rome are from The Dallas Art Museum, http://DMA.org/collection.

of robust and very much alive revolutionaries through the slaughter. Victimization has transformed itself into revolt.

Delacroix's translation of maternal pain into revolutionary sentiment is exemplary of the ways in which Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Inchbald, the "English Jacobins," forged associations between the status of mothers and the position of the lower classes, social outcasts, and dissenters in England. Linking motherhood, dissent, and class warfare, these authors invoke modern Niobes to inspire us to respond with radical sentiments. In their novels, social and religious crises are localized in the bosom of the mother—whether affectionate, desperate, unfeeling, dissipated, or conflicted—who is of all individuals especially oppressed by existing structures of power. As Christopher Flint explains in *Novel Relations*, the family/state analogy reemerges in public debate around the time of the French Revolution (290). For Wollstonecraft, marriage is a paradigmatic structure of patriarchal abuse; her novels, like Defoe's *Roxana*, show that rational piety, independent thought, and enhanced sensibility are incompatible with marriage and, in many cases, a woman's economic survival. Inchbald, like Sheridan, raises "ludicrous questions" that challenge the integrity and legitimacy of patriarchal figures in church and state. Both authors, like Richardson, present entirely unreformed and profane or secular patriarchal figures who control every aspect of women's lives. These novelists also experiment with form: *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) is an allegorical history of woman; *A Simple Story* (1791) defies closure and also presents an allegorical fall of patriarchy from benign caretakers to malignant tyrants. This chapter argues that the novels present maternal crisis as the source of radical sentiments that indict the political structure of society, and its orthodox religious values. In every case, Wollstonecraft and Inchbald

encourage their readers to engage their sentiments, with their reason, and to desire radical reconstructions. Not unlike the paintings of Wilson and David, maternal crisis encourages a telescoping view, moving outward and forward, calling for radical rebirth of manners, laws, and artistic forms.

I. *Mary: A Fiction* (1788): Education and Feminist Revolt:

As critics have noted, there is an apparent contradiction between Mary Wollstonecraft's critique of sensibility, or romanticism, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and its use in her fiction. *Mary* (1788) and *The Wrongs of Woman* (1792) abound with the language of sensibility that *Vindication* explicitly rejects for itself and derides as infantilizing.[280] As an explanation, Harriet Guest believes that Wollstonecraft's adoption of the language of sensibility marks a change in the way women's writing appropriated and transformed it in the 1780s and 1790s (290). Furthermore, she suggests that Wollstonecraft adopted sensibility as a way to express interiority (292).[281] Others, such as Janet Todd, read a stark difference between the sensibility that Wollstonecraft's novels teach and the sensibility that her vindication derides. Reading *Wrongs* as a fictional sequel to *Vindication*, Todd argues that the novel contrasts sensibility moderated by reason with the "cultivated sensibility" that women are educated into that makes them

[280] Wollstonecraft famously says, "My own sex will excuse me [….] Dismissing then those pretty feminine phrases, which the men condescendingly use to soften our slavish dependence, and despising that weak elegancy of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel" (7). Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. Third Edition (London: J. Johnson, 1796).

[281] Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism: 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

into romantics, wholly dependent on men for fulfillment (Todd 17).[282] Wollstonecraft calls this dependency an "ignoble desire" (*Vindication 73*). Claudia Johnson argues that the "Romantic expectations" that Wollstonecraft's writing assails are not the ones it "ultimately indulges" (193).[283] We can see this distinction, for instance, in the contrast between the romantic expectations of Wollstonecraft's protagonists and the ones their mothers exemplify. Nathalie Zimpfer argues that the sensibility and romanticism of Wollstonecraft's fiction is an alliance of "feeling and reflection" (319).[284] The mechanism for this alliance is Christianity, which alone "can afford just principles to govern the wayward feelings and impulses of the heart" (*Mary* 51).

Four years before *Vindication*, in *Mary: A Fiction*, Wollstonecraft sketched a "woman who has thinking powers displayed" (advertisement to *Mary*) and who exemplified the union of reason and sensibility that Wollstonecraft's novels present as the origins of feminist revolt. Zimpfer rightly points out that with regard to the question of the language of sensibility there is no significant change in the way it functions for Wollstonecraft's fiction before and after *Vindication*. Indeed, *Mary* and *Wrongs* both present their revolutionaries as alternatives to the caricatures of sensibility—the maternal figure languishing over a novel whilst her husband and son philander and spoil the family fortune, and then dying early of unspecified ailments. This is the figure of a woman who can "endure" a typical marriage, and whom Wollstonecraft "despise[s], or rather call[s]

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[282] Janet Todd, "Reason and Sensibility in Mary Wollstonecraft's 'The Wrongs of Woman," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 5.3, 1980, 17–20. In *Vindication*, Wollstonecraft says men appreciate these women for their slavery, but they are wholly alienated from intellectual life (143).

[283] Claudia Johnson, "Mary Wollstonecraft's Novels," *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia Johnson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 189-208.

[284] Nathalie Zimpfer, "The Novel as the Art of Secular Scripture: Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminist Gospel." *Theology and Literature in the Age of Johnson: Resisting Secularism.* eds. Melvyn New and Gerard Reedy (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 311-332.

her an ordinary woman" (Preface to *Wrongs* 67). Such despicable, ordinary women facilitate marital tyranny with their "cultivated sensibility." By contrast, Wollstonecraft's women cannot endure such a marriage, precisely because of their modulated, rational sensibility, and because of that which is explicit in *Mary* and implicit in *Wrongs*: religious passions.

Perhaps because of its emphasis on religious passions, *Mary* has gotten significantly less attention than *Vindication* and *Wrongs* have received.[285] Postsecularist critique of Wollstonecraft's polemic has re-centered critical attention on the importance of rational Christianity to Wollstonecraft's feminism, and indicated that her novels are the best place to look for an articulation of her religious principles. Wollstonecraft was a reviewer of theological works, participated in a number of denominational services, and was influenced by Unitarian thinking, even though she was not a member of the church. Through this self-led education, Wollstonecraft's religious sentiments evolved from orthodox Anglicanism into a heterodox and deeply personal version of Christianity (Taylor 100-101).[286] Dissent, and "enlightened Christianity" generally, played a significant role in the development of a feminist ethic. Emphasizing the inner light of the believer and the need for unmediated communion with the deity, Christianity inevitably led to a demand for women's intellectual and political freedom, a prerequisite for them to develop and act upon their rational apprehension of the divine. According to Zimpfer, dissenting philosophies played a role in the development of Wollstonecraft's feminism:

[285] Zimpfer suggests that *Mary* has been ignored because it is more difficult to treat as a fictionalized *Vindication* (313).

[286] Barbara Taylor, "The Religious Foundations of Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*. ed. Claudia Johnson (Cambridge, UK ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press), 99-118.

Unitarianism providing the claim that women were "as rational as men" and Puritanism emphasizing the inherent "democracy of God" (313), which contributed to Wollstonecraft's refutation of all manner of authoritarianism (Taylor 111). Thus a relationship with God founded on reason and an expansive understanding of theologies make up the foundation of Wollstonecraft's feminism and are, according to Barbara Taylor, also the foundational principles of feminism itself.[287]

The education of Mary in Wollstonecraft's first novel in many ways emulates the education of her creator. Initially neglected and despised, Mary begins by cultivating her sensibility, particularly through empathetic connection with animals and the poor, and experiences religious passion in contemplation of the sublime in nature. Learning through books to temper her passions with reason, and gaining knowledge of theology from varied sources, Mary ends by committing herself to charity and religion as a way to cope with the injustices of the world. Thus Mary "offers women consolation through religious sublimation" (Jones 100) in a similar way to Wollstonecraft's didactic work of the same year, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1788).[288] *Mary* is a work of didactic literature in its own right, describing the development of a pure and capacious intellect and active piety; however, it also underscores the fundamental incompatibility between women's reason and survival within existing social structures. Mary is, therefore, not a trove of strategic adaptations to this life, like *Pamela*, but rather an early version of

[287] As Taylor puts it, "This affirmation of women's capacity to apprehend and identify with the divine, expressed in nearly all female writings of the period, was so fundamental to women's sense of ethical worth, and so far-reaching in its egalitarian implications, that it can properly be described as one of the founding impulses of feminism" (106-107).

[288] For a discussion of religious sublimation in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, and a comparison to Astell, see Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1990).

Wrongs, which depicts the constraints on female excellence and their ill effects. Mary, unable to find fulfillment on earth, models excellence in waiting to die.

As I note above, Mary develops a unique religious sensibility, first through personal meditation on nature, and later through reading books "addressed to the understanding" (V; 15). Her parents did not indoctrinate her with any religious beliefs; Mary's mother's religious feeling seems to be as languid and fading as the woman herself, and Mary's father is "depraved" and "thoughtless" of his immortal soul (VI;19). Wollstonecraft explains that Mary "learned to think" because of this neglect, suggesting that, had her parents been more solicitous about her education, they might have achieved the opposite result. The natural turn of Mary's mind is toward "devotional sentiments" that are inspired by the "sublime ideas" that "filled her young mind" (II; 8). In describing the early formation of Mary's mind, Wollstonecraft repeats that Mary's "passions," receive strength through meditation and are not yet tempered by reason. Out of concern for her mother's illness, her father's irreligion and death, and her friend Ann's numerous afflictions, Mary is frenzied with sensibility and religious enthusiasm. A self-led religious education, subsequent to the development of her sensibilities, teaches her to modulate her passions and direct them to worthy ends. Henry, who is the male *nonpareil* of the tale, and Mary's ailing lover, is also "a pious man, his rational religious sentiments received warmth from his sensibility" (XIII; 29). The novel thus posits a union of rational religion and sensibility as the ideal.

Importantly, Mary's more formal (book) scholarship refines her education through nature, and this sequence of development is integral to her feminist consciousness. She never becomes used to obedience, and therefore revolts against

expressions of it. For instance, she attempts to ask her estranged husband for permission to embark on a tour of the continent with Ann, but "her heart revolted" (VIII; 29). Conformity to married life becomes impossible for Mary. She equates it with slavery: when asked how she will survive without her husband, she says "I will work… do anything rather than be a slave" (46). Her husband, to whom she was married during the crisis of her mother's illness, is as dissipated and irreligious as Mary's father; whilst she studies religion and charity, he studies dissipation. She knows even without trying that "he is not the man formed for me to love" (XVIII; 37). Her sentiments, formed "in solitude [….] are indelible and nothing can efface them but death—No, not death itself" (XVIII; 38). Mary is anything but the amenable, passive object that Wollstonecraft detests, the one that conforms to marriage and learns to "model her soul to the frailties of her companion" (*Vindication* 62-63).

Mary's sensibilities preclude happiness in marriage and in any of the traditional female activities to which she is confined. She comprehends virtuous love as an eternal connection to her equal, Henry, who is "the man formed for [her] to love." The loves speak to each other in the formal, archaic language of Puritans and Quakers, a language of religious witnessing that also suggests their spiritual transcendence and status as outsiders. Henry's illness also provides an outlet for Mary's sympathies, engaging all of her parts: empathy, charity, and transcendent participation in divine love. After nursing him in his final illness, she and Henry get married, so to speak, in Heaven: "She wished to receive the sacrament with him, as a bond of union which was to extend beyond the grave" (58). Following this ceremony, Wollstonecraft refers to Mary's legal husband in

italics, suggesting that Mary has transcended to a new spiritual existence where such terms are empty.

Her "marriage" to Henry is otherworldly, existing in a place wholly removed from the social injustices that preclude marital happiness and spiritual fulfillment for women; in the last words of the novel, she looks forward instead to "a place where there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage" (62). As Gary Kelly says, "marriage here is less a particular condition than a symbol for the entire system of degradation, oppression, and exploitation of women" (xvii).[289] But Mary's feminist consciousness, though it seeks entirely to transcend earthly connections and oppressive structures, is still bound by them. Mary copes with her continued existence by dedicating herself to the service of God, and "established manufactories, threw the estate into small farms […] visited the sick, supported the old, educated the young" (XXX; 61). Despite such industry, Wollstonecraft laments that there was a "void that even benevolence and religion could not fill" (XXXI; 61). Christian charity, therefore, fails to achieve fulfillment for a "woman who has thinking powers" despite the reductive prescriptions of didactic fiction and conduct books that reduce women's virtue to charity, chastity, and obedience.

Religious piety moderates and legitimizes Mary's reigning passions, but those passions originate in, or are provoked by, images of mothers suffering or the maternal failure that is often inextricable from that suffering. Wollstonecraft emphasizes that Mary's self-education is a consequence of parental neglect; furthermore, Mary's passions are "called forth" by her mother's illness, Ann's misfortunes, and "her own unsettled mind" (11). Early memories of maternal "failure," modern Niobes, have generated the

[289] See Gary Kelly, Introduction to *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman* (Oxford, UK: Oxford World Classics, 2007). All further citations to Wollstonecraft's novels are from this text.

passions that these scenes "call forth": Mary is affected by scenes of torment and death of people and animals, including a "poor wretch" who was forced to leave her sick child to go out to work, and who shortly after stabbed herself. Urban environments seem to amplify the wrongs of woman. As Mary approaches London after Ann's death, she finds a woman dying inside a filthy house, with her children crying for food. In this instance, her charity is returned with abuse, and Mary begins to lose the charitable sympathies that the contemplation with the divine in nature has afforded her. This critique of the inhumanity of urban environments is a characteristic of Wollstonecraft's fiction: in *Wrongs*, Jemima also loses her sense of humanity in London, where the socially sanctioned abuses of women, and especially mothers, multiply. Combined with rational Christian sensibility, these abuses of the mother are the origins of radicalism; without Christianity to "govern the wayward feelings," they produce a detestable inhumanity.

Mary's feminist consciousness is for her undoubtedly a double-edged sword. It makes her aware of the failures of social structures to accommodate women as complete persons, and make effective use of their talents. It also renders her an outsider, and terminally unhappy. What Wollstonecraft presents in *Mary*, and later in *Wrongs*, is a choice between a short, brutal struggle as a complete person, survival as misanthrope, and gradual fading away as an ineffectual and immature romantic woman. None of these states is compatible with the variety of motherhood that Wollstonecraft idealizes in her writing, and finds nowhere. The Niobe, on the other hand, is ubiquitous.

II. *A Simple Story* (1791): Conversion and Secular Patriarchy:

Like Wollstonecraft's *Mary: A Fiction*, Elizabeth Inchbald's first novel is a novel about women's education, the "wrongs of woman," and feminist revolt. It ends, as Terry Castle points out, with the words "'A Proper Education,' set off in the text like a strange, incomprehensible charm" (293).[290] Like *Mary*, it is experimental in form. It is not, however, the bildungsromantic story of a rising feminist consciousness; instead, it vaguely juxtaposes two women, mother and daughter, whose educations have been neglected and who embody opposite feminine stereotypes. (The mother is the coquette possessing unregulated passions; the daughter is the passive, virtuous victim.) Inchbald's two-part fiction is in some ways an anti-sequel. Rather than satisfying readers' desire for closure and for continuance, it offers neither. It completes the marriage plot, but precludes a traditional sequel by hurrying us through seventeen years in a few sentences. It guarantees that the second half is a completely different story, lacking the fictional personalities developed in the first.[291] It refuses to end but not to start over, and thereby emphasizes a cycle, or a sense of perpetuity. Mysterious, experimental, Roman Catholic, the novel has yet never been out of print.[292] Inchbald's formal experimentation has profound effects on the way we read it: rather than elaborating on the ill effects of one woman's "improper education," it directs scrutiny away from woman and toward paternal authority figures and *their* failures.

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[290] Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

[291] Jo Alyson Parker rightly states that the novel "violates our notions of textual closure [...] Characters undergo a sea change, acting in unfamiliar ways that require an unprecedented amount of authorial excuse-making" (256). See Jo Alyson Parker, "Complicating *A Simple Story*: Inchbald's Two Versions of Female Power" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no.3 1997, 255-270. Parker also recognizes that Miss Milner and her daughter Matilda embody opposite female stereotypes (256).

[292] Ben P. Robertson, *Elizabeth Inchbald's Reputation: A Publishing and Reception History* (London: Pickering and Chatto 2013), 125.

With Inchbald's radicalism as a backdrop, critics of *A Simple Story* have come to a variety of conclusions about the ways in which it is subversive, feminist, or transgressive. Terry Castle argues for a "specifically feminist dimension" to the novel, and calls it "a rhapsody of transgression, in which masculine authority is insistently demystified, female aspiration rewarded" (294). Jo Alyson Parker argues similarly that the text rewards both female defiance and female obedience with the selfsame object, Dorriforth (247). Catherine Craft-Fairchild's reading is less optimistic, seeing instead "balked female desire" and "intense rendering of female suffering" that does not reward feminist aspiration but rather is subversive in the ways it critiques masculine authority (77).[293] George Haggerty argues that the text only "plays at resistance" by confining resistance to acting on desire; accordingly it depicts both "paternalistic control" and "female abjection" (660).[294] Amy Garnai argues that Inchbald "repeatedly articulated those concerns which were thrust into the forefront of public consciousness by the French Revolution [….] hierarchical social structures, tyrannical patriarchy, and institutional injustice" (124).[295] Inchbald's status as a religious outsider (a Roman Catholic) and her reputation as a political radical informs these critiques, I think rightly, and triggers feminist readings. Inchbald knew her environment to be oppressive, and her fiction establishes a "binary of power and abjection" (Garnai 137) that reveals inter-generational consequences of the subordinate status of women, non-conformists, and the poor.

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[293] Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

[294] George E. Haggerty, "Female Abjection in Inchbald's *A Simple Story*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 36, no. 3 (1996): 655–671.

[295] Amy Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings in the 1790s: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Elizabeth Inchbald* (Basingstoke, England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Inchbald's fiction therefore does not focus on female vice or maternal failure but rather presents them as symptomatic of societal dysfunction. In this section, I argue that Dorriforth's transformation from humble "secular" priest to Lord Elmwood—from a benign paternal figure to implacable tyrant—is at its core an allegory of male authority, one which critiques that authority as corrupt, selfish, and illegitimate because of its increasing secularism.

Before coming under Dorriforth's guardianship, Miss Milner receives an education at a Protestant boarding school; she learns the "accomplishments" that Wollstonecraft refers to dismissively, but no moral or religious education, nor does she develop the "thinking powers" that Mary acquires through neglect. Miss Milner's father does not concern himself with the flaws in his daughter's education until on his deathbed he laments that she has "nothing to prepare her for an hour like this I now experience" (61). He therefore trusts her education onto his friend, Dorriforth:

> Dorriforth is the only person I know, who, uniting every moral virtue to those of religion, and native honour to pious faith; will protect without controuling, instruct without tyrannizing, comfort without flattering, and perhaps make good by choice rather than by constraint. (61)

Dorriforth possesses, according to Mr. Milner, all of the qualities of a virtuous paterfamilias. Of course, the narrative that follows reveals in short order that Dorriforth fails to live up to every one of these characteristics, despite his relative moral excellence at the outset of the story. Importantly, all that is explicitly revealed about Miss Milner's education is that it has been insufficient, and that her father has neglected it until his final hour. He hopes that this paragon of faith will supply the void left by paternal neglect. As a result, Miss Milner schemes, entertains an arguably inappropriate passion for her

celibate guardian, and is unfaithful to her husband during his long absence. When the narrator complains of Milner's lack of "a proper education" at the end of the novel, it is difficult to know how to take it; unlike *Mary*, *A Simple Story* does not make explicit what a proper education is or what it might have changed. Would it have made her less susceptible to improper attachments, or more patient of isolation in marriage? Might it have satisfied her father's objectives and therefore kept her away from Dorriforth altogether? This indeterminacy bedevils our attempts to categorize Milner's faults and focuses analysis on paternal deficiency.

Inchbald's novel also confronts institutional oppression of religious minorities by placing the Protestant Miss Milner in a Roman Catholic household, where her desires and values are anathema to those who have power over her as guardians, judges, and chaperones. Through this domestic reversal of the Protestant religious hegemony in England, Inchbald generates sympathy for the non-conformist. As Barbara Judson argues, the novel "alludes playfully" (599) to Britain's violations of Christian freedom.[296] Catholic disabilities in England began to be relaxed in 1778 with the Papist Act; this act, which relieved disabilities of inheritance, prosecution of priests, and penalties for keeping a school, also resulted directly in the Gordon Riots.[297] Anti-Catholic vitriol was therefore

[296] According to Judson, the novel alludes to the ways in which "Britain has perverted Christianity because it has failed to grasp that a culture of liberty is essential to Christianity" (599). See Barbara Judson, "The Psychology of Satan: Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story,*" *ELH* 76, no.3 (Fall 2009): 599-624. Anna Lott argues that Miss Milner's loss of honor is "inevitable, given the system of governance that Dorriforth (who later becomes Lord Elmwood) creates and maintains" (36). See Anna Lott, Introduction to *A Simple Story* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2006), 10-46.

[297] This was the first Catholic Relief Act, which Lord George Gordon tried to have repealed in 1780. His polemics roused "much anti-Catholic feeling" (Bloy) and incited riots. The riots resulted in nearly three hundred dead and the destruction of one hundred Roman Catholic buildings. See Marje Bloy, "The Gordon Riots" (*Victorian Web* 30 August 2003). Bridget Keegan's article provides further historical context for the status of Roman Catholics in England. Lord Elmwood and Sanford's training and spiritual exercises resonate with Jesuit programs, but Elmwood's drastic conversion indicates he has failed to internalize them. Keegan also discusses Henry Benedict Stuart, the Duke of York, and last of the Stuart line and also a

common and not difficult to foment. Inchbald is careful not to demonize Catholics in the process of generating sympathy for Miss Milner's minority status. In her sympathetic depiction of a family of Roman Catholics, Inchbald alludes to the unfairness of laws against nonconformists, but does not render her Catholics tyrannical. Sandford is rather more of an annoyance to Miss Milner, an equal whom she often gets the best of. Only Lord Elmwood in the second volume deserves the name tyrant, and his tyranny emerges from his ascent to power, and his transformation from a Catholic priest to a member of the English nobility.

Inchbald's novel opens with a description of Dorriforth that presents him as embodying the spiritual values of both Catholics and Protestants:

> Dorriforth […] was by education, and the solemn vows of his order, a Catholic priest—but nicely discriminating between the philosophical and the superstitious part of that character, and adopting the former only, he possessed qualities not unworthy the first professors of Christianity—every virtue which was his vocation to preach, it was his care to practise; nor was he in the class of those of the religious, who, by secluding himself from the temptations of the world, fly the merit they might have in reforming mankind. (I;59).

Besides eschewing the monastic and "superstitious" facets of Roman Catholicism, Dorriforth lives in London, amongst other Catholics, and dwells "in his own prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance" (I:59). In short, all that seems to set him apart from a religious paragon, such as Richardson's Charles Grandison, is his vow of celibacy. He is a "secular priest": one who is not part of a monastic order. Nevertheless, Dorriforth's virtue is secure for just so much time as he is without more than advisory power over

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Catholic priest, known popularly as Cardinal York. His story is quite relevant to an aspect of Inchbald's plot—namely, Dorriforth's release from his priestly vows" (692). See Bridget Keegan, "'Bred a Jesuit:' *A Simple Story* and Late Eighteenth-Century English Catholic Culture" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, no.4 (December 2008): 687-706.

women. (His relationship to Miss Woodly and Mrs. Horton functions on mutual respect, and their habit of regarding his priestly status with awe.) But his goodness is entirely conditional; there are "in his nature shades of evil" (VIII 85). Dorriforth refuses to see his orphaned nephew, inflicting upon the child the residue of a grudge he holds against his dead sister for marrying without his consent. In this we see the outline of a tyrannical nature, triggered by women who do not implicitly obey him, and his wrath extends to their helpless offspring. The narrative thus undermines the reputation it gives Dorriforth at the outset: humble and powerless, he is not immune from the corruptions of power; such temptations are still out of reach.[298]

As Anna Lott points out, Dorriforth's "despotism […] progresses inexorably throughout the novel" (36). And indeed it does so in proportion to the level of power he possesses over women. When Dorriforth becomes Lord Elmwood, he receives a papal release from his vows, and becomes engaged to Miss Milner. Their engagement sets off a power struggle as both try to make sense of their changing relationship to one another. Miss Milner refuses to submit to him, for as a lover he has no authority. She complains "but under that title [Lord Elmwood] he has been barbarous; under the first [Dorriforth] he was all friendship and tenderness" (XIII 108). The patriarchal relationship to its subject is confused and fraught. Elmwood perceives his authority to be gaining ground, whereas Milner wishes to take advantage of her temporary status as his equal, no doubt too aware of what her future "change of condition" entails. The patriarch is unable to articulate his role clearly. To end this power struggle, Sandford puts it "out of their power

[298] Keegan argues similarly that Dorriforth fails to learn "avoidance is not detachment" (702) and thus fails to embody a central teaching of Jesuit spirituality. She also says that he is "unquestionably the story's hero" (690). While I do not call him the story's hero, I agree that Inchbald epmphasizes his role in the lives of her heroines.

to part" and marries them—in effect, he puts it out of Miss Milner's power to struggle any longer. He believes, as he says, "it is for the welfare of you both to become man and wife" and to "constrain her by such ties from offending you, she shall not *dare* to violate" (XII; 218). Sandford here articulates marriage as an arrangement for the coverture of the woman, and the comfort of the man. Here, coverture is not in furtherance of legal procedures such as estate management; coverture is, instead, the goal itself.[299] Sandford aims to put Miss Milner in a state of perpetual anxiety over her husband's desires, and solidify Elmwood's control's supremacy over hers. Inchbald's description of the marriage ceremony that follows explores Elmwood's change in status as a sort of descent, from a spiritual authority to a worldly one:

> When the ring was wanting, lord Elmwood supplied it with one from his own hand, but throughout all the rest of the ceremony, appeared lost in zealous devotion to heaven.—Yet, no sooner was it finished; than his thoughts seemed to descend to this world.—He embraced his bride with all the transport of the fondest, happiest bridegroom, and in raptures called her by the endearing name of "wife." (XII; 219)

As Inchbald's set-off text highlights, Elmwood converts to a secular state of mind. The novel does not differentiate this new state from "evil," or at least from destruction. The ring he has given her was the one he wore in mourning over the death of the late Lord Elmwood. The mourning ring signifies a change in status for Miss Milner and an ontological change in Dorriforth/Elmwood; the novel mourns not just her loss of autonomy, but also his loss of soul, and thus his legitimacy as a patriarch. Benign paternalism dies at this wedding and leaves behind a "hard-hearted tyrant […] an example of implacable rigour and injustice" (222).

[299] As Catherine Craft-Fairchild notes, Sandford and Lord Elmwood try to reform Miss Milner into an object rather than a subject, what Luce Irigaray calls "the female speculum," or "an object that reflects the validity of patriarchal control" (91).

As volume one did on the subject of education, volume two of *A Simple Story* directs scrutiny away from Lady Elmwood's failures and offences and toward the deficiencies of the patriarch. It goes without saying that, by making the husband responsible for marital happiness, Inchbald stages a major departure from earlier domestic fiction and conduct literature.[300] The structure of the text—in two parts, with a seventeen-year gap—underscores the marriage as the cause of Dorriforth/Elmood's transformation. Only outlining the emotional and moral conflicts of their marriage, it does not allow us to draw conclusions about its failure from the marriage itself; it leaves us instead with a bare sequence of events, a few hints from the narrator, and the dramatic staging of the wedding scene. In volume two, Lord Elmwood banishes his unfaithful wife to a "dreary hearth" (II; 226) on the borders of Scotland, disowns his daughter, Matilda, and even manages to frighten Sandford into silence. Elmwood's outbursts and contortions of passion during and after the wedding scene are reminiscent of Milton's Satan in Book Four of *Paradise Lost*.[301] He torments his estranged wife with "the anguish, of those parents, who behold their offspring visited with the punishment due only to themselves" (225). Because of Elmwood's unjust extension of his resentment to his daughter, his "unnatural" execution of patriarchal authority, the "no longer virtuous" (I: 221) Lady

[300] Richardson's texts, and other literature in the conduct tradition, emphasize the wife's implicit power over the husband through her complaisance and sweetness of temper, which seems to be a panacea against all marital ills. See for example Halifax, who says, "This [inequality in marriage] looks a little uncourtly at the first appearance; but upon examination it will be found, that *Nature* is so far from being unjust to you, that she is partial on your side: She hath made you such large *Amends* by other Advantages, for the seeming *Injustice* of the first Distribution, that the Right of Complaining is come over to our Sex; you have it in your power not only to free your selves, but to subdue your Masters, and without violence throw both their *Natural* and *Legal Authority* at your Feet." See also Richardson's Familiar Letters: "let him fly off from *his* duty, if he will, you will persevere in *yours*. This conduct will, if *not immediately*, in *time*, flash conviction in his face." Both reprinted in Frances Sheridan, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2011) Appendix A.

[301] "Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face/Thrice chang'd with pale, ire, envie and despair,/Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betraid/Him counterfet, if any eye beheld./For heav'nly mindes from such distempers foule/Are ever cleer" (*Paradise Lost* IV. 114-19).

Elmwood is rendered a sympathetic figure, a modern Niobe because her pain is visited upon her daughter, and doubled by reflection.

In Inchbald's fiction, poverty is a punishment inflicted by the powerful. Elmwood appropriates and subsumes the maternal inheritance (for Miss Milner had been an heiress). Rushbrook, rather than Matilda, is set to benefit, although both children stand in a relation that entitles them to paternal love and protection from Lord Elmwood. In the end, Matilda reclaims her father because she is a passive, victimized heroine. They reunite because he saves her from Lord Margrave, who has kidnapped her from under his roof. Only passive victimhood, abjection, and sympathetic suffering seem to move him—that is, he allows it to become visible. In this sense Inchbald, like Wollstonecraft in *Mary*, is signaling the importance sentimental portrayals in converting abusive patriarchs to conscientious father figures. Like the morally bankrupt characters in *Nature and Art*, Dorriforth/Elmwood's "evil" has consisted in turning away from the suffering of women and children. Matilda's passive suffering does (re)convert Elmwood, but although the text seems to suggest, with its final lament for Miss Milner's education, that Matilda has achieved a more proper feminine character, the text destabilizes this moral as well. It leaves the reader to "surmise" whether Matilda's passivity will bring her happiness in marriage to Rushbrook, who—it suggests—will become Lord Elmwood in his own time.

There is no formula, Inchbald suggests, for moving power through suffering alone. Power is blind to the needs of anything but itself. Like Wollstonecraft's, Inchbald's first novel makes visible female suffering through motherhood, but leaves figures of authority perpetually blind to maternal suffering. As I will discuss in the next section, their later fiction maintains this theme, and develops more innovative modes of

explication. *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) and *Nature and Art* (1799) galvanize sympathy in suffering motherhood, and then force readers to experience the victimization of these mothers' offspring. Depicting the oppression of women as a wrong inherited by generations, these writers critique the family/state relationship and set it free from its confinement within analogy. Maternal suffering does not just reflect the political, but is itself political.

III. Maternal Bosom/Radical Sentiments: *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) and *Nature and Art* (1799):

Whereas *A Simple Story* contains an allegorical "fall of patriarchy" from benign institution to evil despotism, *The Wrongs of Woman* presents as "a history of woman, rather than of an individual" (67). Maria, the protagonist, embodies the "sentiments" but the events she recounts are not unique; indeed, they are a pattern repeated in the experience of every woman in the text. The "misery and oppression peculiar to women" is made visible in maternal suffering, which is multiplied in the suffering of children. These injustices "arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (67). Her characters' complaints often glide seamlessly from "matrimonial despotism" or domestic tyranny to the impartial allotment of property and justice. Thus the text refuses to be confined to separate spheres in its critique of British society at the end of the century.[302]

[302] Wollstonecraft's fiction epitomizes Anne Mellor's thesis that women participated fully in the "discursive public sphere and in the formation of public opinion in Britain. Mellor concludes, "the assumption that there existed a clear distinction in historical practice between the realm of the public, exclusively male activities and a realm of private, exclusively female activities is […] erroneous. At the very least, the conception of a hegemonic 'domestic ideology'… must be fundamentally revised to include women's active role in the discursive public sphere" (7). See Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000). Cheryl Nixon reads *Roxana* and *Wrongs* as examples of the involvement of women in the court of Chancery. Although women's access to property and parental influenced declined in the eighteenth century

Even though Wollstonecraft died before she could finish it, the novel is still perhaps the best example we have of Wollstonecraft's commitment to shattering generic and discursive forms.[303] Distinctions between sensibility and reason, public and private, universal and particular break down in the novel's assault on the legitimacy of patriarchy.

Scholars have already identified the centrality of maternal suffering, sentiment and radical politics in Wollstonecraft's work. Charlotte Sussman notes that, in the radical writings in British literary culture, the female body—and thus the maternal body—often functioned as a "sentimental register for affect" (149).[304] Marilyn Francus, putting *Wrongs* in the tradition of "Infanticidal narratives" (77) contends that they reflect a reluctance to ascribe infanticidal impulses to mothers and thus deflect the responsibility onto husbands.[305] These studies suggest that Wollstonecraft was working within a literary milieu wherein maternal suffering was a well-established sentimental device. Tuned-in readers could comprehend the wrongs of woman, then, even if citizens were often blind to it. Wollstonecraft enshrines this compassion for her Niobes in political discourse, and implores readers to become sensitized to the sentimental devices that render her political ideas a matter of both the reason and sensibility. In this way, *Wrongs*, like *Vindication*,

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(224), women were at the center of court proceedings: "the contested cultural position of the mother encompasses contested legal power" (224). She argues that Roxana and Maria "rebel against traditional definitions of motherhood by engaging in extreme, even criminal actions" (227). See Cheryl Nixon, "Order in the Family Court; Maternal Disruption in Roxana and Maria," in Diana E. Boyde and Marta Kvande, *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private* (New Jersey Associated University Presses, 2008).

[303] Claudia Johnson notes that critics rarely mention Wollstonecraft's contribution to the genre because her novels are probably "dizzying to audiences whose generic expectations are more straightforward" (189).

[304] See Charlotte Sussman, "Women's Private Reading and Political Action, 1639-1838" in *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830*. eds. Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge, 2002).

[305] Marilyn Francus, *Monstrous Motherhood: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

engages both men and women from separate discursive fields, and directs them to middle ground. The empty patriarchal structures, which enclose women and children without protecting them, require razing, and more equitable arrangements put in their place.

Wrongs begins by limning the decadence of patriarchal structures and their depressive effect on the lives and the souls of women:

> She approached the small grated window of her chamber, and for a considerable time only regarded the blue expanse; though it commanded a view of a desolate garden, and of part of a huge pile of buildings, that, after having been suffered, for half a century, to fall to decay, had undergone some clumsy repairs, merely to render it habitable. The ivy had been torn off the turrets, and the stones not wanted to patch up the breaches of time, and exclude the warring elements, left in heaps in the disordered court. (I; 70)

The madhouse, a "mansion of despair," which stands for the containment and enslavement of women, is a decadent pile. [306] It is habitable, but not sufficient for warmth or comfort, or the raising of a family. Wollstonecraft stresses that the mansion is not only ancient, but also poorly kept up. The ruin alludes to the Gothic tradition and its theme of corrupt patriarchs.[307] The mansion has been at war (with man, or nature, or both) and patched up just enough to exclude or confine. As it does in *Vindication*, ivy, torn (an image of violence) from the turrets, symbolizes attachment, trust, and dependency. Rousseau and John Gregory had idealized this dependency as a model for matrimony, but Wollstonecraft called it letting "the blind lead the blind" (*Vindication* 40). If, as male

[306] Zimpfer argues that the prison, the "mansion of despair" is a metonymy: "was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?"' (qtd. 315).

[307] Critics have noted this as a play on the Gothic tradition. Christopher Flint says, "Gothic Literature is perhaps most famous for its historical transfiguration of eighteenth-century family relations into objects of terror and melancholy" (253). Wollstonecraft's Gothic indicates that women's physical and spiritual needs are not accommodated by these ancient, and decaying social structures. Claudia Johnson calls this opening scene "an extended, one-upping allusion to Radcliffean gothic" (200).

writers maintained, woman was "the graceful ivy, clasping the oak that supported it" (*Vindication* 40), in *Wrongs*, the oak is an artificial and poorly maintained structure, and the ivy has been ripped away.

Contemplation of this structure has a depressive effect on Maria, as it does on Mary, but it is important to note that while *Wrongs* makes several references to female virtue, soul and spirit, it lacks any explicit references to religion or Christianity. Maria does not have at her disposal the pressure valve of religious devotion, though she acknowledges its lack in the inhabitants of the mansion, lamenting "the most terrific of ruins, that of the human soul" (II; 76). When Maria's gaze descends from "the blue expanse" to the "desolate garden" it remains grounded, an earthbound consciousness like Jemima's, focused on worldly survival. Rather than teach characters in *Wrongs* to find "consolation through religious sublimation" (Jones 100), Wollstonecraft mires them in romantic ambitions, legal problems, and daily struggles for survival. Maria's descending gaze indicates that secularism, or irreligion, is a subject matter in this ostensibly "secular" novel.[308] Wollstonecraft's feminism is anything but secular; as I discuss above, it emerges, like Astell's, from the belief that the fault in women's education and lack of political agency make manifest in their separation from God. This "history of woman" thus begins with the inexorable secularization of the female consciousness as the original, primary "wrong."

The Wrongs of Woman contains the experiences of two women, Maria and Jemima, which also contain stories of other women who have suffered under the "partial

[308] Watt says that the "great difference" between Bunyan's progress and Defoe's novels is that, because of the economic concerns in the latter, religious considerations "have no such priority of status" (80). The rising concern with economic individualism, according to Watt, made religious or spiritual transformations secondary matters. Wollstonecraft's transition from the overtly religious *Mary* to the economically and politically-minded *Wrongs* would seem to exemplify this subordination of the religious.

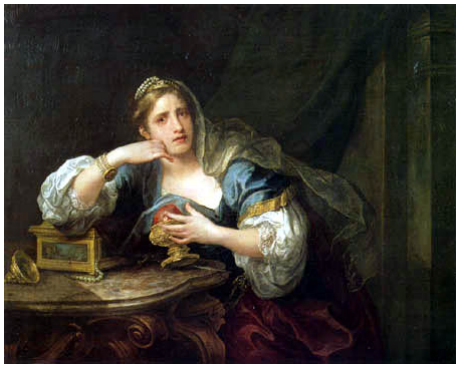
laws and customs of society" (Preface; 67). Contained within Maria's story is the suffering of her infant daughter, whom her husband starves in order to remove her as an obstacle to Maria's personal inheritance. When the novel opens, Maria is pining for her missing daughter. Not yet aware of the child's death, she is "tortured by maternal apprehensions" that the child is missing her mother's milk, which she would offer "with a mother's tenderness, a mother's self-denial" (I; 69). Like Roxana's, Maria's experience of motherhood is "nothing…but the pains" (Haywood), the child's having been torn from her shortly after birth. Maria briefly nursed her own child; her memory of that experience is integral to her conceptualization of motherhood as giving: she wishes to give her milk, and, when that is not possible, to write, to give advice into which her soul "flows." Motherhood is intimately linked to breastfeeding. Patriarchal abuse precludes maternal giving, and maternal inheritance. The murder of the child is the most extreme obstruction of maternal inheritance. If the father kills his child to acquire money, it destabilizes the justification for paternal control over estates: to manage the transfer of money and property through the family. *Wrongs* depicts estate management as a hollow pretense for female oppression. Referring to the status of daughters, Maria says, "After closing, with filial piety, a father's eyes, they are chased from the paternal roof, to make room for the first-born son, who is to carry the empty family-name down to posterity" (XVIII; 120). The son is possessor of an "empty family-name" while the daughters (and perhaps the mother, too) are full of filial piety. The system of inheritance that devalues daughters inhibits the paternal duty to provide for them, but upholds their duty to obey. By contrast, maternal giving is subject to no such arbitrary rules, except when usurped by a husband.

Wrongs thus offers motherhood as a more natural, or complete form of parental giving, which should be unmediated. But in *Wrongs*, maternity is unfailingly subject to violence. Within Maria's story is an anecdote about a woman who is forced to be married to a man she does not love, and "loses her senses" during her first lying in. The apprehension of motherhood brings issues of domestic tyranny to the fore. Jemima tells of a former lover who turned his pregnant mistress away in order to live with Jemima, who saw the woman pulled from a basin after drowning herself. Jemima herself had been denied her mother's affection; her mother dies uncared for because unmarried, and Jemima grows up "without the grand support of life, a mother's affection" (V; 95). As a result, she means to keep a pregnancy that resulted from brutal, repeated rape, but she is coerced into drinking an abortifacient. As in *Mary*, the "wrongs of woman" are localized in the bosom of the suffering mother. Wollstonecraft's fiction idealizes maternity as an indispensable and natural counter to the ills of patriarchal society, but the chief ill of that society is that it does not allow that kind of motherhood to exist.

Maria's and Jemima's maternal experiences, and contemplation of the status of women, inspire them with radical sentiments that expand to the whole of society. As Maria reads Henry Darnford's remarks on the "enslaved status of the laboring majority" we learn that such concerns are "perfectly in unison with [her] mode of thinking" (II; 78). Similarly, Jemima complains of her inability to support herself because of the limitations on women's work, says, "that every person willing to work may find employment? It is the vague assertion, I believe, of insensible indolence, when it relates to men; but, with respect to women, I am sure of its fallacy" (V: 102). When "the dogs of law [are] let loose on her" (XVII; 170), Maria expresses in full the radical response to structures of

oppression to which women are subject. This is the final chapter that Wollstonecraft completed before her death. Maria describes submitting to "the rigid laws which enslave women" and obeying her husband, who was a slovenly drunk and, among other abuses, attempted to sell her sexual attention for a five hundred pound loan. Maria submits to a divorce but wants to keep her money out of her husband's hands; the judge, appraising this as an attempt to enrich Maria's lover, rejects it. The text ends with the judge defending the laws and traditions governing marriage as "good for the whole," an assertion that Wollstonecraft's work subverts at every opportunity.

Maria and Jemima have, as critics have noted, very different responses to their abuse. Jemima becomes misanthropic, and until she meets Maria, hardens her heart against sensibility, or empathy. Indeed, empathy is the chief emotion upon which Wollstonecraft's fiction operates. As Janet Todd says, although Maria seems to be the voice of sensibility, and lauds "active sensibility," this is not Wollstonecraft's message, which Todd finds in the plot of the novel (18). Instead, Jemima's ability to moderate her reason with a newly discovered sense of empathy reflects the novel's ideal. By throwing herself into a passionate affair with Henry Darnford, Maria stunts her intellectual growth, and also becomes subject to the "dogs of law" in the Court of Chancery. Even in its fragmentary state, the novel leaves hints as to the unproductive nature of Maria's romanticism. Inspired to dream by Darnford's handwriting on a book in the mad house, Maria puts away a "book on the powers of the human mind" (78)—one of those texts directed at the understanding, which her predecessor Mary studies—and seeks out John Dryden's "Guiscardo and Sigismunda" (1701), a story about a fatal romance that Dryden had reworked from *The Decameron*.



William Hogarth, *Sigismunda Mourning Over The Heart of Guiscardo,* 1759, The Tate Museum, Britain

In the fable, Sigismunda marries Guiscard against the wishes of her father, Prince Tancred. The forbidden love results in Guiscard's execution, and Sigismunda's suicide. Learning of the death of her daughter, Maria invests herself instead in romantic hopes. This foreshadowing confirms all the "hints" at a conclusion that Godwin printed with *Wrongs*: most of them involved another pregnancy, loss, and suicide. In the most discursive hint, Maria takes an overdose of Laudanum to "escape from the hell of disappointment" in which Darnford left her. Jemima comes to her rescue, with Maria's daughter, who is in this version miraculously alive. Johnson says that, in this ending, "Maria turns to Jemima not to take the father's place but to double the mothers" (206), but she admits that "the fragmented and experimental nature of the novel cannot fully tell this story" (207). Jemima's heroic transformation from misanthrope to empathetic mother figure saves Maria's daughter and Maria herself, ending "the conflict" (177) that the childless, loverless Maria would have ended in suicide. Jemima's empathy not only allows her to maintain humanity in the face of her own traumatic losses; it also makes Jemima the novel's unlikely hero.

Without any of the sketched endings Wollstonecraft left behind, however, Maria seems most like that of David's Niobe reimagined as Delacroix's Liberty. She translates

her victimization, her anger, and her desire for fulfilling romantic love into an attack on oppressive social structures from within the walls of the court. Wollstonecraft's fragment, therefore, tells the full story of Niobe's radical transformation.

Nature and Art (1799), like *Wrongs*, looks at the ways in which the "partial laws and customs of society" (Wrongs 67) affect men and women at all class levels. *Nature and Art* treats of the wrongs done to outsiders, such as the freethinking young Henry, brought up with good principles, but no dogmatic religion, on a remote island where he and his father were spared execution only because his father could play the violin. Henry represents the moral center of the novel, allowing plenty of room for Inchbald's ironic commentary on his (comically ineffective) re-education into polite society. Henry cannot comprehend the difference between a war and a massacre, or why the starving masses do not simply take food from the rich. To be sure, he asks "ludicrous questions." The attempts of his uncle, a dean and later a Bishop, to indoctrinate Henry into approving of systems of oppression confirm the dean as an illegitimate spiritual leader. As Ros Ballaster says, *Nature and Art* offers a "critique of the tyrannous nature of landed wealth and the church" (346).[309] Young Henry is the voice of this social criticism. The ecclesiastical system has an explicit class bias that, according to Susan Staves, Inchbald is one of the few writers of her period to condemn (124).[310] While writing *Nature and Art*, she told Godwin, "I have Newgate before my eyes" (qtd. in Garnai 122). Amy Garnai argues rightly that Inchbald's novels, and *Nature and Art* particularly, "repeatedly articulate those concerns which were thrust into the forefront of public consciousness by

[309] Ros Ballaster, "Contexts, Intertexts, Metatexts: Eighteenth-Century Prose by Women," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 11, no.3 (1999): 347-358.

[310] Susan Staves, "British Seduced Maidens," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14, no.2 (1980): 109–134

the French Revolution and the struggle for domestic reform: hierarchical social structures, tyrannical patriarchy and institutional injustice" (124). Furthermore, unlike Wollstonecraft, Defoe, and others, Inchbald does not shy away from depicting infanticide as the conscious choice of a mother, even as she explores the conditions that over-determine that choice. And while in Wollstonecraft's novels abuse of the mother often leads to suicide or self-harm, in *Nature and Art*, the corrupt patriarch literally murders the central maternal figure.

Inchbald's novel is arguably more radical, more subversive to social power structures, than the other novels this dissertation examines. It does not teach its characters to adapt neatly to their oppression, or to make a virtue of self-annihilation, or, like *Wrongs*, to idealize a motherhood that can't exist. Perhaps only *Roxana* is as brash in engaging our sympathy for a complicatedly fallen woman of the lower classes who tries to kill her newborn. But even Defoe did not go as far in indicting the church and state for his protagonist's crimes.

As compelling as young Henry's radical sentiments may be, this chapter focuses on the story of Hannah Primrose, renamed Agnes in later editions. In chapter twenty-one, Inchbald tells the reader, "if the passions which rage in the bosom of the inferior class of human kind are beneath your sympathy, throw aside this little history, for Rebecca Rymer and Hannah Primrose are its heroines" (XXI; 80). Hannah, seduced by young William and left pregnant, is a cottager's daughter; Rebecca is the youngest and least attractive daughter of the parish curate, and she helps care for Hannah's infant when Henry finds the child exposed in the woods. At first, Rebecca abjures the yet-unknown

mother of this infant as cruel. Henry, on the other hand, recognizes that there are fates worse than death:

> Oh, Rebecca, perhaps, had she possessed a home of her own, she would have given it the best place in it—had she possessed money, she would have dressed it with the nicest care—or if she had been accustomed to disgrace, she would have gloried in calling it hers. (XXV; 95)

Earlier, Henry mistakenly assumed that the hanging of thieves was an act of compassion to keep them from starving to death. His rationalization of Hannah's "cruelty" follows from his belief that infant exposure is an act of charity necessitated by social constructions: property, money, and female virtue. Shortly after this scene, Rebecca experiences for herself the treatment afforded to unwed mothers. The baby is found where Rebecca and Henry have hidden it, in the abbey adjacent their house. Suggestively, this is where a baby might have been sent before the dissolution of the abbeys and the implementation of the woefully inadequate "parish system." Rebecca's father, the cleric, wants her and the baby removed, and to prosecute the father, whom he believes is Henry. He says his daughter's soul is now "lost to virtue, to religion" (104). The cleric understands female worth only in terms of chastity, and abdicates both his religious and his filial duty. When it is discovered that the baby is a foundling, the cleric and the dean want to find and imprison the mother, but Henry thinks the father is more deserving: "the poor woman abandoned only one; the man, in all likelihood, had forsaken *two*" (XXVIII; 106).

Henry's commentary repeatedly highlights the failure of powerful figures to live up to their purported roles in society. The gentry—represented by the family of the dean, the bishop, and the aristocratic Benthams—hold themselves as the moral compass,

superiors in virtue as well as in rank, but they are hypocrites. Lady Bentham persecutes peasant women for violations of chastity, forcing them to do public penance, but delights in the mischief her friends get into while in London. The dean wishes to try his wife's libelers, those who claim she cheats at cards, in ecclesiastical courts. The text abounds with examples of their hypocritical and worldly natures.

It is therefore no surprise that the dean's son, William, is unable to see the humanity of the lower classes even enough to recognize his own former lover when she stands before him in court. The peasantry are objects upon which the gentry can exercise their lust, anger, and self-righteous puritanism. Hannah/Agnes does manage to claim her child, but she is able to support him only through prostitution and theft. She is eventually brought before her former lover, William, who has become a magistrate. William sentences her to death without recognizing her. Inchbald emphasizes that William does not recognize the mother of his child, although he has thought about her all of his life:

> [t]his forgetfulness did not proceed from the want of memory for Hannah—in every peevish or heavy hour he passed with his wife, he was sure to think of her—yet it was self-love, rather than love of her, that gave rise to these thoughts. (XLI; 138).

Inherent in the relationships between classes is a failure of the powerful to recognize the full humanity of those upon which they exercise power. William's comprehension of Hannah/Agnes as an object for his pleasure and comfort renders her unrecognizable when she appears, alternatively, as an object upon which to exercise his authority. William does not know he has sentenced Hannah/Agnes to death until he receives a letter asking him to care for their son. At this point it is too late: the son has died grieving for his mother. William perhaps learns to see that the maiden, the mother, and the prostitute have equal

humanity, are indeed the same person. For the first time in his life, he feels "remorse" (140). This recognition of the mutual humanity of men and women, upper and lower classes, is the aim of the novel. Inchbald triggers this awareness through her Hannah, her Niobe. Abuse of the sentimental figure of the victimized mother has generational consequences, and challenges the rationalization behind structures of power. These structures ultimately do not protect children, transfer property, or maintain social harmony.

Conclusion:

In all four of the novels discussed in this chapter, radicalism and motherhood are intimately linked. Mary's sensibility, raised by images of suffering mothers, makes her compliance with the system of domestic tyranny impossible; *A Simple Story* also examines the ways in which domestic and secular authority is corrupt. *The Wrongs of Woman* and *Nature and Art* incorporate motherhood into an emerging philosophy of class struggle and the inherent equality of humans. Dissent, religious heterodoxy, or the practice of articulating "ludicrous questions" are also linked to these philosophies. Wollstonecraft was a non-denominational dissenter whose unorthodox beliefs drew her away from the established church, and Inchbald was a Roman Catholic who understood the problems with religious intolerance and Anglican supremacy. Like radicalism, religious heterodoxy in these novels emerges from a sense of profound unfairness, and forms the background for theories of motherhood and maternal autonomy. The novels discussed in this chapter, rather than looking to orthodox religious ideals to legitimize

maternal behavior, challenge orthodoxy as unproductive and begin to sketch, alongside their radical plans, a new theology of the mother.

Epilogue

Motherhood: The Sequel?

"Bookes are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a violl the purest effficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them… a good Booke is the pretious life-bloud of the master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life" (John Milton, *Areopagitica*, 1644)

"The experience of motherhood was eventually to radicalize me" (Adrienne Rich, "Split at the Root," 1982)

Examining the intersections of religious controversy, feminism, and motherhood as cultural and political institution, this dissertation highlights several areas of inquiry currently at the vanguard of eighteenth-century studies. To begin with, the readings contained in the foregoing chapters have bearing on the extent to which the eighteenth century can be understood as a period of secularization, and in what sense its major novels can be called "secular." Secularism, "new secularism" and "post-secular" criticism now appear in the headlines of major journals and conference programs. The eighteenth-century, long coterminous with enlightenment and secularism, is a particularly crucial moment for revisionist approaches to the religious history of the West.

More than fifty years after Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), scholars have challenged or enhanced much of Watt's theory, but his concept of the novel as a secular genre remains a viable starting place for much scholarship. Silently (in its eschewal of religious themes) or more overtly (in its reframing of "secularism" as "latitudinarianism"

or "disenchantment") studies of the early English novel are still dominated by the secularization thesis. This dissertation contributes to the conversation by emphasizing the difference between a novel's "dominant frame"—the ordering of its world—and its subject matter. Christine Roulston's study of marriage narratives offers a useful language for this distinction. Secularism in the novels I discuss is not, as Watt suggests, a subordination of spiritual or religious epistemologies to more individualized economic or political concerns; rather, I argue, secularism is "the object of representation."[311] It is a subject matter, and a source of anxiety, which is usually indistinguishable from heterodoxy and unbelief. The novel is a stage upon which these anxieties can be put in play, often without resolving themselves. Its foregrounding of religious conflict makes the novel a medium of secularism or heterodoxy insofar as it renders these conflicts explicit.

Narratives of maternity highlight secularism as an object of representation because, as scholars have shown, motherhood is fundamentally conflicted by biological, economic, political, and spiritual exigencies. Historians of the family, obstetrics, law and politics, and psychoanalytic critics have approached these conflicts from within their discrete fields of inquiry. Religious history, while it has informed histories of women and feminism of late, has not been explored as a factor in constructing maternal behavior. To be sure, religio-political controversy has occasionally made an appearance in political histories of motherhood, such as those by Toni Bowers and Marilyn Francus. But my

[311] According to Christine Roulston, in literary texts, the subject of marriage is subordinate to adultery and courtship as the "object of representation"; it is instead, a "dominant frame"(1). Courtship and adultery are objects of representation, or subject matters, rather than a narrative frame that determines a beginning and end, bases of concern and limits of speculation. See Christine Roulston, *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 1.

study is the first of its kind to focus on the spiritual conflict of fictional mothers and their adaptations to or revolts against the constraints that produce spiritual conflict. My aim has been to underscore the religious aspect of maternal crisis as a major object of representation in narratives of maternity. I expect that future versions of this project will engage in more detail with the religious, political, and judicial history of the long eighteenth century as well as nonfiction accounts, letters and diaries. Such enhancements will deepen the context in which we see Christian maternity in conflict with secular forces or social structures, and enrich our understanding of the ways in which novels render illegitimate those external constraints on maternal agency.

Maternal suffering-- the modern Niobe -- has become a central trope in this dissertation and indicates the importance of the discourse of sensibility to narratives of maternity. Although my project does not aim at a teleological history of motherhood, or secularism, certain trends are discernible. In the process of uncovering typologies, tropes, origins and adaptations, this dissertation uncovered a move away from adaptation to prevailing discourses of female conduct, and toward narrative innovation, formal inventiveness and revolutionary sentiments. With just a few canonical texts studied at length, arguments about trends are impossible to make here. These few novels do, however, allow me to hypothesize about the ways in which radicalism—an uprooting, or a return to roots, with the aim of fundamental reconstruction—is tied to maternal constraints or an awareness of maternal suffering. English Mariology, which now makes up only a small part of this project, is the locus of a primary, radical departure that begins in the seventeenth century. Early English feminists remediate Mary as a figure who

brings Christ "the word made flesh" rather than Christ "the child."[312] Uprooting orthodox configurations that confine women's religious activity to maternity, early English feminists construe the Virgin as a source of discursive power—an exemplary woman in the same line with empowered first-testament women. This reconstructive process seems to erase Mary from feminist discourse, but I believe we can discover her embedded in the rhetoric of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women demanding to be heard. To be sure, a study of modern Niobes in English literary culture cannot be complete without a study of the Virgin Mary and her fugitive retreats. [313]

With all these gestures and aspirations in mind, it was not easy to settle on a final word for a project on motherhood. But, for a project with endless fields of inquiry and innumerable next steps, the subject of sequels seemed especially appropriate. Most of the chapters in this dissertation deal at some length with a sequel or continuation. Often the sequel itself is the stage of maternal action. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Defoe's *Roxana* (with its proliferating continuations), Richardson's *Pamela* (continued by its author and others) and Sheridan's *Sidney Bidulph*, maternal activity is enlarged upon in or confined exclusively to the sequel. As I note in the introduction, marriage and parenthood are frequent subjects of what Betty Schellenberg calls "sequelization" ("Measured Lines," 29). But what is the relationship between the sequel and parenthood?

[312] John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

[313] Extremely little has been done on the Virgin Mary in eighteenth-century literature. There is a little more in seventeenth-century studies, when the Virgin was still in the process of "disappearing." See for instance Gary Waller, *The Virgin Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Popular Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Waller last chapters deal with "traces" of the Virgin after the reformation. Scholars have also dealt with Elizabeth I's self-fashioning as a Virgin Mary figure.

If as Christine Roulston says, marriage is a rare subject matter for the early novel, why does it engage the *sequelizing* impulse?

Some discussion of recent work on the sequel suggests that the conditions of eighteenth-century publication may have been such that stimulated proprietary and protectionist motivations analogous to, and often articulated in terms of, biological parenthood. Budra and Schellenberg's 1998 volume on the sequel sets out to "nuance" some of the common critical assumptions about sequels: that original text and its "charisma" were always the source of the sequel, that this charisma "generates audience desire for reproduction," and that the sequel always fails to live up to its original (5-6). Terry Castle makes a similar argument when she laments that writing about *Pamela* II runs the "danger-- of having no reader. The novel itself has had few" (*Masquerade* 131). Budra and Schellenberg's collection engages with a number of motivations for sequels having to do with the conditions of their production, including the nascent institution of critical review, and the frequency of unauthorized continuations and parodies. Often characters or plots are "rehabilitated to absorb critique" (9) and "used to place change in high relief rather than smooth it over (14). In her essay in this collection, Schellenberg highlights the economic drivers behind sequels, and the ways in which the "renewed acquaintance model," exemplified by the work of Sarah Fielding and Frances Sheridan, disguises those drivers. As I discuss in chapter three, Richardson's correspondence indicates that his sequel to *Pamela* emerged from a desire to assert authorial control, to enable or fulfill the "author function" as Foucault calls it.[314] David Brewer's *The Afterlife*

[314] According to Foucault, the author's name "permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others." See Michel Foucault, "What is an Author" in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al, (New

of a Character (2005) focuses on the readerly impulse to continue narratives, to give characters afterlives through what he calls "imaginative expansion" (2). Readers who engage in this expansion, whether in print or in manuscript form, are "cottagers on the land of the author, using common property" (13) that was not subject to strict authorial/owner control (22). Brewer argues that *Pamela*'s "social canonicity" is partly a result of the "mass appropriation" (123), which Richardson wrestled with in his own sequel.[315] Another collection edited by Bourdeau and Kraft (2007) looks at the sequel as well as other related textual practices (revisions, parodies, adaptations) to discuss the resistance to closure in the eighteenth century and the process by which the cultural appraisal of sequels changed over time.[316] Taking a wide view of reader and author practices, these studies provide a context in which to understand the competing forces that coalesce within an eighteenth-century sequel.

Sequelization, then, is not always a matter of charisma or market demands; it is often a creative impulse that responds to other authorial desires. In her essay in Bourdeau and Kraft's collection, Betty Schellenberg argues that there was increasing partnership between authors and critics to render unauthorized sequels illegitimate.[317] Schellenberg's

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York: The New Press, 1998), 210-211. Richardson's sequel attempts to clarify the true *Pamela* and allow his readers to differentiate it from "spurious" continuations.

[315] See David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

[316] They conclude that the continuation is related to the author function in that "the readerly drive to continue and expand is a version of the writerly resistance to conclude and close, and both are tied to the notion of individuality." See Debra Taylor Bourdeau, and Elizabeth Kraft. *On Second Thought: Updating the Eighteenth-Century Text* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007),12.

[317] Schellenberg notes that critics early in the century take a "relaxed approach" with regard to assessment of sequels and imitations: "This relaxed approach, which locates new publications in relation to familiar earlier texts, while evaluating on the basis of entertainment afforded, moral value, and style more than by the criterion of originality, differs from the evident need of early print sequel authors to assert the legitimacy of their sequels" (31). Conversely, John Cleland's review of a spurious Tom Jones sequel asserts the preeminence of the original author over sequelizing imitators" (32); the Cleland review marks a point

use of the term "illegitimate" is apt, for, as critics have noted, tropes of parenthood and maternal labor appear frequently in complaints about unauthorized continuations and adaptations.[318] Schellenberg notes that both Bunyan and Richardson railed against false sequels, Bunyan comparing them to children whose features do not match his own, and Richardson associating unauthorized sequels with rape (31). These invasions, like book reviewers' critical assaults on literary progeny, are a common motivation for author-penned sequels. Natasha Simonova's 2015 study of prose continuations, quoting from Milton's *Aereopagitica*, discusses the "paternity trope," a form of branding texts by original authors, as opposed to unauthorized sequels, as repositories of the author's true "spirit" (22). In other cases, metaphors of paternity and maternity mix, the author functioning as both father and mother-- impregnating and laboring to bring about a legitimate textual heir that contains the living spirit of the author (21-22).

Studies of sequels, whether they focus on author functions or the literary marketplace, note, and sometimes take for granted, a discourse of literary production that depends on parental analogies. The illegitimate heir, the impregnable text, the "children," vulnerable to adoption, ravishment, or abuse—these concepts make up a language of parental crisis. The crisis is brought on by the experience of having one's "spirit" disembodied and subject to the vicissitudes of the world and its markets, schemes and polemics. Does meditation on the instability of literary production generate sympathy for parental crisis, or inspire parenthood plots?

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that Schellenberg identifies as a rise of "the rhetoric of inimitability"(35). See Betty A. Schellenberg, "'The Measured Lines of the Copyist': Sequels, Reviews, and the Discourse of Authorship in England, 1749-1800," in Debra Taylor Bourdeau, and Elizabeth Kraft, eds., *On Second Thought: Updating the Eighteenth-Century Text* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 25-42.

[318] See also Natasha Simonova, *Early Modern Authorship and Prose Continuations: Adaptation and Ownership from Sidney to Richardson* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 21.

Indeed, if it does, the mother is a likely embodiment for the anxieties and sympathies of authorship in the eighteenth century. Whereas fathers had virtual ownership over their children in this period, motherhood is a convoluted web of responsibilities seldom attended by political or legal authority. Like Virgin Marys and Niobes, eighteenth-century mothers must create and then abandon their children—to fathers, to Providence, or to the marketplace, often carrying responsibility for them, without much control over their afterlives. As authors and critics use tropes of parenthood to articulate authorial ownership, their proprietary struggles reflexively construct maternal conflict-- or, rather, construct maternity as conflict. Maternal conflict is therefore not simply a sequel to domestic novels, but a sequel to the experience of authorship.

Analogies and sequels of parenthood are radical activities, attempts to connect to something primary, inherent, or fundamental, to legitimize a claim or bewail an alienation. The meaning of radical comes from the Latin *radicalis*—"relating to or forming the root" (OED). Adrienne Rich's "Split at the Root," quoted in the epigraph above, is popularly cited for its poignant discussion of identities "split at the root" or irreconcilable, a celebration, in a sense, of the irreducibility of the self. But Rich also describes concisely all of the radicalizing effects of motherhood:

> The experience of motherhood was eventually to radicalize me; but before that I was encountering the institution of motherhood most directly in a Jewish cultural version; and I felt *rebellious*, *moody*, *defensive*, unable to sort out what was Jewish from what was simply motherhood, or female destiny.[319]

This is an eloquent description of motherhood as doubly radicalizing: initiating a return to roots and fundamental connections, as well as instigating feelings of rebellion. In *Of*

[319] Italics mine.

Woman Born, Rich frequently makes reference to "radical" changes to structures of childcare, valuation of maternal work, and patriarchal attitudes about mothers' emotions and impulses. Her book is an unearthing of these structures and attitudes as well as a call for reform.

When authors experience authorship as a creation or birthing of "progeny" (Milton), they resist confining that progeny to the demands of the marketplace and instead make, or allow their characters to make, radical gestures. Richardson gives his mother-heroine de facto status as head of household, and then indulges in a long, difficult, and boring anti-novel that few people since the mid-eighteenth century want to read. Sheridan systematically destabilizes every maxim and moral imperative touching upon her mother-heroine's memoirs, and then, in her sequel, even deconstructs her own formal conceits. Wollstonecraft and Inchbald, in their second novels, give voice to shockingly radical political sentiments that are amplified by the sympathy they produce for mother-victims.

It is not surprising that parenthood, or an analogical discourse of parenthood, should inspire a return to roots, and the sense of rights and responsibilities fundamental to human beings who create other human beings (or texts). But it does suggest quite a bit about why narratives of maternity focus on conflicts regarding the "potencie of life" or "soule" (Milton) and, consequently, why they are typically innovative when they take that focus. Narratives of maternity frequently feature spiritual crises, religious oppression, "soul tortures," and conversions.[320] I want to suggest that these similarities exist not only because motherhood is linked to discourses, like the religious, that define

[320] This is John Richetti's term for Roxana's spiritual crisis. He writes, "Roxana's subversive notions are derided in her soul tortures." See John Richetti, *Daniel Defoe* (Boston: University of Pennsylvania, 1987), 109.

and appraise it, but also because procreation and immortality are radically connected to each other, and to human creativity. Inherent in maternal fictions, then, is a radicalizing discourse that challenges consumer demands and prevailing wisdom. Its radicalism is subtended by a reformer's sense of spiritual autonomy, the logic of parental authority, and a mother's aspiration for procreative freedom.

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