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Idle Stories:

Interpolated Tales and the Anglophone Novel, 1740–1800

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

Katherine Genevieve Charles

2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION:

Idle Stories: Interpolated Tales and the Anglophone Novel, 1740–1800

by

Katherine Genevieve Charles

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Felicity A. Nussbaum, Chair

From the earliest days of the novel, people have been threatening to kick interpolated tales out of the genre. Miguel de Cervantes, Henry Fielding, and Walter Scott all vilify interpolated tales as "foreign to the purpose," "extravagant and incredible," and "tiresome and unnecessary." And yet, their novels, *Don Quixote*, *Joseph Andrews*, and *Redgauntlet,* all brim with such "idle stories." For eighteenth-century Anglophone authors writing in the wake of Cervantes, taking *Don Quixote* as exemplary of the novel form meant including interpolated tales as a constitutive part. Though such interpolated tales are everywhere in eighteenth-century English novels, their function can be hard to hold in critical focus; as a concept, they elude us. While scholars have seized on these tales as a "site for critical performance" that has yielded scores of publications, as yet, there is no full-length work on the topic. This study explores the cultural value assigned to interpolated tales in a transatlantic range of novels by Sarah and Henry

Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Sarah Scott, Frances Sheridan, Oliver Goldsmith, William Earle, Jr., and the ever-present "Anonymous."

Interpolated stories remain only loosely defined as "tales within a tale" or "twice-told tales." The tales themselves are materially present and sometimes overtly marked with titles or other paratexts, but their function is less clear. So often, interpolated tales are negatively framed: they distract, they digress, they mar. Or, in rejoinder, they delight, they beautify, they whet the appetite. I begin from the recognition that their bifurcated reception—their perseverating place in or out of the novel as a genre—constitutes a defining feature of the device. By operating as parts within the whole and as whole narratives in their own right, interpolated tales occur both in and potentially outside of the novels that contain them. This dual status translates to several registers. Interpolated tales are both inside and outside, part and whole, novelistic device and the form created by that device. Their partial assimilation makes for an awkward fit. However, it also allows these tales to mediate alternative perspectives without assimilating them fully into the primary narrative and its point of view. Set apart by an ironizable edge, interpolated tales are uniquely positioned to advance critiques of all kinds, whether of the primary narrative or of traditional ways of conceptualizing subject categories like gender, race, class, and the individual self. The switching of storytellers inherent to interpolated tales acts as a warrant for the plurality of those who are licensed to be storytellers and the completeness of subjectivity afforded to them. Thus, interpolated tales play a crucial role in the construction of subjectivity and difference as well as in the emergence of the novel. Paying attention to idle stories as awkward yet mighty forms can transfigure the way we read eighteenth-century fiction.

The dissertation of Katherine G. Charles is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2016

To my parents,

Mary Lee and Roger Charles,

who filled our house with love and love of learning,

and who made the library a second home,

and my grandparents,

Agnes and Lawrence Carr,

and Frances and Delmon Charles,

whose love, curiosity, and hard work

planted the seeds of my education some ninety years ago.

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VITA

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INTRODUCTION

And this makes me fear, that if the History of my Achievements, which they tell me is in Print, has been written by some Magician who is no Well-wisher to my Glory, he has undoubtedly deliver'd many things with partiality, misrepresented my Life, inserting a hundred Falsehoods for one Truth, and diverting himself with the relation of idle Stories, foreign to the Purpose, and unsuitable to the Continuation of a true History.

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part II, 1615[1]

Since the earliest days of the novel, people have been threatening to kick interpolated tales out of it. The history of the critical oscillation regarding the value of these tales offers a point of entry for analyzing them. How much attention do they deserve? Where do they belong? For Don Quixote, as in the epigraph to this Introduction, the unequivocal answer is, "Not in my novel." When the celebrated antihero of Cervantes's novel laments that "some Magician" has defamed "the History of [his] Achievements" by fixing them in print, he offers the results of a close reading as evidence that the text is corrupt: the unknown author has betrayed his roguery by "diverting himself with the relation of idle Stories, foreign to the Purpose, and unsuitable to the Continuation of a true History." For Quixote, interpolated tales, or "idle Stories, foreign to the Purpose," serve as markers both of formal incoherence and of falsity. While truth is allied to possessive individualism and singularity ("my Life," "one truth," "a true History"), fiction and even magic are associated with plurality and relativism ("many things with partiality," "a hundred Falsehoods," "idle Stories"). Such tales, both time-wasting and "foreign," are "unsuitable" to the winking truth claim that undergirds Cervantes's fictional narrative. Ironic as

[1] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de La Mancha* (London: Peter Motteux, 1719), 75. This translation, "by several hands," was the most widely read by eighteenth-century English speakers until the middle of the century, when Charles Jarvis and Tobias Smollett published their renderings, in 1742 and 1755.

this scrap of literary criticism may be, it plainly assigns interpolated tales a negative aesthetic and moral evaluation for their interruption of individual truth with improbability, uselessness, and multiplicity.[2]

But *Don Quixote,* in keeping with the critical back-and-forth that interpolated tales elicit, contains evidence that both contradicts and corroborates its hero's dismissal of "idle stories." The obverse side of the argument deems interpolated tales to be a positive feature of novels, productive of diversion, beauty, and polyvocality. Despite the hero Quixote's derision, the text *Quixote* includes many short interpolated tales and three long ones: "The Curious Impertinent," "The Captive's Tale," and "The Famous Adventure of the Duenna Dolorida."[3] The novel's fictional translator defends these interpolations as sites of aesthetic pleasure, for reader and author alike. He boasts that the beauties of his inset tales may one day be favored with a separate publication history. "To go on, mind, hand, pen always restricted to writing upon one single subject, and speaking through the mouths of a few characters, was intolerable drudgery," which the translator relieves by inserting "the device of novels" whose "elegance and art of composition… would be very manifest were they published by themselves and not as mere adjuncts to the crazes of Don Quixote or the simplicities of Sancho."[4]

This study explores the cultural value ascribed to the interpolated tales that populate eighteenth-century Anglophone novels, a debate whose terms were set a century earlier by

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[2] This Introduction was written during a Clark Dissertation Fellowship thanks to the generous support of UCLA's Center for 17th- & 18th-Century Studies.

[3] English translation of the titles vary. In Cervantes's original Spanish, they are "El curioso impertinente" (261, 659), "El capitán cautivo" (326, 672), and "La aventura de la segunda Dueña Dolorida" (329). Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, ed. Enrique Suárez Figaredo (Barcelona: Fesca-Endesa, 2004).

[4] Ibid., Chapter 44, 849.

Cervantes and his romance-addled knight. Interpolated tales abound in early novels, but their sheer numbers and the perseverating debate around whether they belong in novels in the first place can make it difficult to hold these tales in critical focus. We see them everywhere, but what is their function? One thing they do exceptionally well is travel. Cervantes's "idle Stories" more than bear out their fictional translator's cantankerous prediction by flourishing in an array of media, genres, and languages. In English, the height of this flourishing was the long eighteenth century, when a dazzling proliferation of afterlives reimagined the tales, most frequently as plays, including Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Cardenio* (1613), Aphra Behn's *Amorous Prince, or The Curious Husband* (1684), Nicholas Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (1702, 1703), Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood* (1727), and Susanna Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers* (1794).[5] Writing in the wake of Cervantes, eighteenth-century British novelists including Henry Fielding, Charlotte Lennox, and Tobias Smollett accepted and reiterated interpolated tales as a conventional part of the novel, though the critic Fielding cudgeled the form that he perpetuated as an author. Readers, too, including the likes of John Cleland, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Elizabeth Montagu, and Thomas Gray, all declared themselves in writing to be fans of interpolated tales, sometimes preferring them to the novels that contained them.[6] Meanwhile, scholars since the eighteenth century have seized on the interpolated tales of Cervantes and of his

[5] Other examples include John Fletcher's *Coxcomb* (1609) and John Crowne's *The Married Beau; or, The Curious Impertinent* (1694).

[6] John Cleland, *The Monthly Review,* March 1751, iv, 355–364. Also reprinted by Lionel Kelly in *Tobias Smollett: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2005), 44–48; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lady Bute, 16 February 1752, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967): 3:9; Elizabeth Montagu, *Elizabeth Montagu, Queen of the Bluestockings, Her Correspondence from 1720 to 1761*, ed. Emily J. Climenson, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1906) 2:2; Thomas Gray to Horace Walpole, 3 March 1751, in *Letters of Thomas Gray*, ed. Duncan C. Tovey, vol. 1 (London: G. Bell, 1900–1912), 212.

disciples, but particularly of Henry Fielding, as a "site for critical performance" that has yielded dozens of publications, most of them focusing on a single author.[7] All three of these iterations prove that interpolated tales can function, "not as mere adjuncts" but as productive narratives across many contexts. This project, then, investigates a body of evidence that has been accumulating since the earliest days of the novel.

I begin with Cervantes, a seventeenth-century Spaniard, because many English authors consciously adopted *Don Quixote* as their exemplar for novel form, and perhaps less consciously, for interpolated tales as a constitutive part of that form. I do not mean, however, to crown Cervantes as the inventor of the interpolated tale, which I consider an elemental form with roots in oral storytelling, the classical novel, Biblical parables, *The Arabian Nights*, and the courtly romances both mocked and imitated by Cervantes. Nonetheless, Cervantes played a critical role in shaping how eighteenth-century authors and audiences conceptualized both the modern novel and the interpolated tales that populated it. As J. A. G. Ardila and others have shown, *Quixote* served as "the gold standard of the novel" in English throughout the century.[8] Hester Thrale Piozzi deemed it "a sort of common property, a universal classic, equally tasted by the court and the cottage," while Samuel Johnson ranked it as a "book of entertainment" second only to *The*

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[7] Jeffrey Williams uses this phrase to describe the "disproportionate" attention scholars have paid to Fielding's interpolated tales, specifically in *Joseph Andrews*. Jeffrey Williams, "The Narrative Circle: The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews,*" *Studies in the Novel* 30 (1998): 473–488. There has been a massive amount of scholarship on the interpolated tales in Cervantes and Fielding, including some comparisons of the two authors.

[8] Ardila singles out the apogee of Cervantes's transhistorical influence on English literature: "During the eighteenth century, Cervantes's influence on English literature was pre-eminent, to an extent that remains beyond compare." J. A. G. Ardila, *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain* (London: Legenda, 2009), 10. See also John Skinner, "*Don Quixote* in 18th-Century England: A Study in Reader Response," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 7.1 (1987): 45–57.

Iliad, whose Book X is a grotesque interpolated tale of debated authorship.[9] Ranging from openly admiring adventures like *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767) to the dozen explicitly quixotic novels published after *The Female Quixote* (1752),[10] many of these English *Quixotes* replicated the original's "idle Stories" and continued to debate their literary status in similar aesthetic terms: interpolated tales are attacked as false, inartistic, and single-minded, or defended as artful, diverting, and diversifying.

Early novel critics, too, began to develop a language of critique keyed to the contentious discourse that surrounded interpolated tales. Again, they replicate the pro/con argument we have seen in *Don Quixote*. In the case of author-critics like Henry Fielding and Walter Scott, they criticize Cervantes for his interpolated tales and then include their own—which is, of course, a move they learned from Cervantes, great critic, defender, and author of interpolated tales. Despite taking Cervantes as his acknowledged model, Fielding singled out his tales for particular censure, dismissing them as "extravagant and incredible," "near to the Romances he ridicules."[11] In turn, Francis Coventry attacked Fielding's tales as disfiguring "Freckles" that mar the otherwise "Fair Complexions" of his plots, and tasks them as breaching "the Rule of *Horace*" that he and Fielding both consider foundational to what we might now call fictionality: "The

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[9] Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, L.L.D. during the last twenty years of his life* (London, 1786), 281. Daniel Mendelsohn, "Battle Lines: A Slimmer, Faster Iliad," *The New Yorker* (November 7 2011). http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/11/07/battle-lines-daniel-mendelsohn. Accessed 15 April 2016.

[10] At least a dozen books with variants on *The [Modern, City, Country, Amicable, Benevolent, Infernal, or Political,* respectively*] Quixote* were published between 1752 and 1820. Ardila, 12.

[11] Henry Fielding, *Covent-Garden Journal*, 281.

Life-Wrought Tale should ne'er advance/A line that savours of Romance."[12] By 1785, Richard Cumberland argued that Cervantes's "episodical stories" disqualify *Quixote* as a novel, instead rendering it "of a middle species" between romance and novel.[13] By 1834, Walter Scott lauded Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) while excoriating its lengthy interpolation, Lady Vane's "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality," which he dismissed as once popular but "now regarded as a tiresome and unnecessary excrescence upon the main story." Scott explicitly blamed Cervantes as the originator of the form that he defined pejoratively as "a separate tale, thrust into the work, with which it has no sort of connexion, in the manner introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage and Fielding."[14] Nonetheless, Scott himself included such interpolations in *The Antiquary* (1816) and *Redgauntlet* (1824), whose "Wandering Willie's Tale" is among Scott's most anthologized pieces of writing.[15]

To date, the interpolated tale remains definitionally indistinct. Despite the near ubiquity of interpolated tales in early novels, the form remains loosely defined as a "tale within a tale" or "twice-told tale." One of my first steps toward this project was to formulate a neutral definition of the term. So often interpolated tales were negatively framed: they distract, they digress, they mar. Or, conversely, they delight, they beautify, they whet the appetite. In response, I began to

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[12] Originally published anonymously in 1751, this pamphlet has now been attributed to Francis Coventry, best known as author of *The History of Pompey the Little; or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751). "An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding: with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism," in *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood (London and New York: Routledge,1995), 269.

[13] Richard Cumberland, 78 from *The Observer*, 27, 1785, in *Novel and Romance: A Documentary Record 1700–1800*, ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 249.

[14] Walter Scott, *Prose Works* vol. 3, *Biographical Memoirs of Eminent Novelists and Other Distinguished Persons,* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834), 132.

[15] Many thanks to Ian Duncan for alerting me to Scott's tales.

work from a simple definition of interpolated tales as intact stories within a central narrative that bear their own narrator, time, and space. It was thinking about the plenitude and diversity of afterlives, what interpolated tales can do outside of the novels that originally contain them, that allowed me to recognize me how interpolated tales inhabit a dual status that complicates their basic definition.

Interpolated tales, by operating as parts within the whole and as whole narratives in their own right, reside both in and potentially outside of the novels that contain them. Once we recognize how an interpolated tale's dual status as part and whole allows it to move outside of its novel, we can see how that dual status affects its function within that novel. Their positioning as in, but not necessarily only in, makes for an awkward fit. Hence it was not a problem but a feature of the interpolated tale that it would conjure up both condemnation and approval from authors, readers, and critics. Those oscillating responses to the interpolated tale and its partial assimilation as a novelistic device indicated something fundamental and anomalous about the form of the interpolated tale, which functions both as a device and as the form produced by that device. The interpolated tale is a paradoxical device that contains or can contain all of the other devices: plot, character, dialogue, and even devices that we associate with novelistic scale, like chapters and paratexts. The interpolated tale, as device and form, is thus meaningfully difficult to bring into focus because it conjures the same stuff of fiction that structures all novels. This paradox of the device is the first part of my definition of the interpolated tale.

The second part of my definition turns to the consequence this dual formal status holds for the construction of subjectivity. By definition, interpolated tales bear their own narrator. Thereby, they mediate alternative perspectives, but without assimilating them fully into the

primary narrative and its point of view. In this, interpolated tales might almost seem to resemble the spawning of another novel, from within the novel. As a result, the switching of storytellers inherent to interpolated tales acts as a warrant for the plurality of those who are licensed to be storytellers and the completeness of subjectivity afforded to them. By granting control to an assemblage of autonomous storytellers, interpolated tales make visible their crucial role in the construction of difference.

We can now also understand why, after centuries of use and decades of criticism, this project is the first full-length work to offer a critical survey of how interpolated tales operate in English during "the rise of the novel."[16] When, at conferences and in conversation, I have mentioned this curious gap in the scholarship, the response has been consistently incredulous, "Really?," or nonplussed, "[Pause.] I've never thought about interpolated tales." For the former, interpolated tales seemed right under their nose, always or almost glimpsed out of the corner of their eye; perhaps they were aware of or even participated in the critical shuttlecock I described at the beginning of this Introduction. But for the latter, these tales were the nose on their face: someone else needed to hold up a mirror for them to be seen, or to seem worth the seeing. Despite the morass of articles about the interpolated tales of Fielding or Cervantes, there is something about the interpolated tale as a concept that had eluded us. As I have begun to explain, I believe that the formal status of interpolated tales, as both part and whole, as a novelistic device and a form capable of exerting all novelistic devices, not only explains their wavering reception and critical treatment but also constitutes their paradoxical nature as devices

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[16] Very few books address interpolated tales as their object of inquiry. Those that do take a comparative literature approach. David Quint, *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of Don Quixote* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Leigh Gidal Hafrey, "Parabola: the interpolated tale as parable in Diderot, Goethe, and Dostoevsky" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1978).

that flicker. And yet, as a device that confusingly can resemble nothing so much as the production of another novel (as their excerpting, re-publishing afterlives cues), the form also reorients readers toward a plural perspective that enables the representation of alternate subjectivities. As devices that allow both internal and external auditors to hear a view different from that of the main narrator, interpolated tales provide eighteenth-century fiction with a mechanism for policing and critiquing the social categories that came to distinguish between self and other. Thus, I bound the scope of my project by focusing on interpolated tales that offer alternative ways of conceptualizing gender, race, class, and the individual subject. To that same end, my methodological approach combines narratology, media studies, affect theory, and a brand of new historicism that pays particular heed to representations of women and foreign others. I chase the flicker of interpolated tales across a constellation of eighteenth-century Anglophone novels by Sarah and Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Sarah Scott, Frances Sheridan, Susanna Rowson, William Earle, and the ever-present "Anonymous."

Interpolated tales make a bid for our attention, but how do they stake their right to be heard? How much attention should we pay to these tales? And what audience constitutes the "we" in these questions? Early English novels offer a cacophony of possible answers. This project offers not a rule of thumb for apportioning attention, but an argument for why interpolated tales matter and a methodology for how to approach them. To do so, I draw on both eighteenth-century and modern theories of narrative form and affect. I recuperate attention as affect, or a passion, as conceived of by early modern and eighteenth-century thinkers like

Charles Le Brun and Johann Kaspar Lavater.[17] Some modicum of attention is required for reading to evoke emotions like sympathy and disgust, and they work to direct and redistribute attention. To analyze how formal structures transfer our attention, I take inspiration from Gérard Genette, whose narratological strategies are foundational to this project. I pay particular heed to what I term the edge, or threshold, that marks the transition between the primary narrative and interpolated tale.[18] Formally, textually, and narratively constructed, these moments when attention is transferred from one to the other carry crucial information about how tales distinguish themselves and how comfortably or awkwardly they sit within the novels that contain them.

By mediating alternative points of view and reorganizing attention, interpolated tales perform work that is crucial to the representation of difference and to the recognition of the varieties of personhood.[19] The formal boundary between tale and novel also represents the social boundary between subjects, between the primary narrator and the tale-teller. Point of view, after all, is the literary device and orientation whose content gives readers access to alterity and its subjectivities, or at least to the representation of them. In *The Narrative Act: Point of View in*

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[17] Charles Le Brun, *The Expression of the Passions*, in *The Expression of the Passions: the Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conference sur l'expression générale et particulière*, trans. Jennifer Montagu (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 129. Figure 149 gives a set face, with "attention" as its labeled "passion," or emotion. Johann Kaspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy; for the Promotion of the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind.* Trans. Thomas Holcroft, 3 vols. (London, 1789), 240. George Brewer, *The Juvenile Lavater* (London, 1812).

[18] Though translated into English as "paratexts," Genette preferred the French word for thresholds, *seuils*. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Genette used these terms to describe the variety of liminal markers that mediate the relation between book and reader.

[19] Foucault and D. A. Miller remind us that the collection of such stories can also be used not to recognize personhood, but to exert "surveillance and control." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 198; D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

Prose Fiction, Susan Lanser declares that point of view is always positioned, and therefore cannot be regarded as benign or neutral.[20] While Lanser focuses on authorial point of view, I apply her findings to the range of fictional points of view that develop when characters within the text become storytellers. Interpolated tales, which by definition install a new narrator, voice a point of view that departs from the principal narrative. Who speaks, for whom, to whom? Asking these questions restructures point of view as a contested category. Without articulating solutions, interpolated tales suggest that readers' attention should be distributed across a plurality of voices, even if this redistribution remains unequal. From this plural perspective, every character and reader holds the potential to act as a tale-teller.

While charting the variety of subjects given voice by interpolated tales, I am suggesting that there is a recurrent connection between gender and genre. Many female authors compose interpolated tales and the language of critique directed against these tales is often gendered female. Coventry's comparison of Fielding's tales to "Freckles" that mar the otherwise "Fair Complexions" of his novels and Morris Golden's dismissal of Frances Sheridan's tale as "a mere meaningless good story" or "padding" both render the tales' failure of form as a feminine attribute, whether of marred beauty, decorativeness, anatomical flabbiness, or fashionable excess.[21] If, as Nancy Armstrong and Catherine Gallagher suggest, eighteenth-century women were the first modern subjects and the novel emerged as a genre for telling the stories of female

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[20] Susan Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5.

[21] Padding, for instance, is an overly-determined word that connotes both anatomical flabbiness and the fashionable padding that Georgian-era ladies of quality wore to mimic pregnancy. Coventry, 269. Morris Golden, "Sidney Bidulph" and "The Vicar of Wakefield," *Modern Language Studies* 9.2 (Spring 1979): 33–35, 33. Henry Fielding, *Covent-Garden Journal*, 281. Homer Goldberg, "The Interpolated Stories in *Joseph Andrews* or 'The History of the World in General' Satirically Revised," *Modern Philology* 63.4 (May 1966): 295–310, 295.

Nobodies, then interpolated tales can provide a point of inquiry for dissecting exactly how the novel affords plural models of self-making and, particularly, of gendered self-making.[22] Time and again, interpolated tales provide the ground for women writers and fictional characters to negotiate the competing demands of private character and public reputation, a negotiation haunted by the persistent belief captured by Pope's "Epistle to a Lady": "Nothing so true as what you once let fall,/Most Women have no Characters at all."[23] For many women, real and fictional, one way of rejecting this charge is to seize on the breach between tale and its context as an ironic slippage to be worked in the articulation of their own status as subjects. Both self-conscious and stylized, this gendered self-making is alert to audience and the problems of its own literary construction. Attending to the slippages of interpolated tale form reveals that the speakers of "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" and "The History of Leonora" observe their social world and themselves with a "double-consciousness" that we have most often associated with race, but that these eighteenth-century women experience as the result of their sex.[24]

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[22] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

[23] Alexander Pope, "Epistle II. To a Lady. Of the Characters of Women," *Epistles to Several Persons (Moral Essays)*, ed. F. W. Bateson, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt, vol. 3.2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 45, lines 1–2.

[24] W. E. B. Du Bois coined the term "double consciousness" in "Strivings of the Negro People," an article for *The Atlantic Monthly* (August 1897) that he later included in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Frances Beale, Shulamith Firestone, and other feminist critics have applied the term to describe the position of women in patriarchal societies.

I: Interpolated Tales: "A Critical Survey"

In concluding "The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews* Again," Douglas Brooks issued a rallying cry followed by a forecast premised on the significance of the form: "We are still awaiting a critical survey of the interpolated-episode device; but when such a survey is written, I suspect that Fielding will be named as one of its most subtle handlers."[25] Since *Modern Philology* published Brooks's article in 1968, his call has remained unheeded, despite dozens of articles published in the context of one major literary work or author—most often Cervantes, Charles Dickens, and Henry Fielding, as Brooks predicted. Many of these articles participate in a virtuous cycle of critical debate. A first wave of scholars concludes that the tales are merely a form of bad art, leaving the second wave to reassess the tales as good art by reading them in a new context or with a new methodology, while a third wave argues that the tales are bad art but thematically justified. Jeffrey Williams notes how a small subset of tales, like "The History of Leonora" and "History of Two Friends" from *Joseph Andrews*, occupy the lion's share of this debate: "There are sometimes events in or features of novels that, although somewhat anomalous or irrelevant to the normally constituted action, seem to draw disproportionate amounts of critical attention."[26] As I have been arguing, the relative paucity of articles that address the interpolated tale across authors is an effect of its wavering status as a formal device and the form created by that device. I gladly contribute to the "disproportionate" attention paid to "The History of

[25] Douglas Brooks, "The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews* Again," *Modern Philology*, 65.3 (February 1968), 208–213, 213.

[26] Williams, 473.

Leonora," but also expand my inquiries to include tales that have been disproportionately overlooked and to seek connections across authors, subgenres of the novel, and occasionally, across media.

Another symptom of the evasiveness of interpolated tales as a concept is the clouded linguistic origin of the term, which further complicates the task of writing a critical survey. The verb "interpolate" was in common use by the eighteenth century, most often in reference to texts. Edward Phillips's *New World of Words* (1706) defined "interpolate" as "(properly to bring old things to a new form), to new vamp,...to alter or falsify an Original."[27] Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) participated in the familiar shuffle between pro and con by assigning the verb form two definitions caught between pejorative and positive valuations. The first invokes a spatial register and the second a temporal one: "to foist anything into a place to which it does not belong" and "to renew; to begin again; to carry on with intermissions."[28] The exact phrase "interpolated tale" has been in consistent circulation since at least 1838, when it appeared in Thomas Keightley's *Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy*.[29] A general consensus seems to accept the working definition of the interpolated tale as a "twice-told tale" or "tale within a tale." Variants of "interpolated tale" populate hundreds of scholarly journals and monographs, though

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[27] Edward Phillips, *The New World of Words*, *or Universal English Dictionary,* 6th ed. (London, 1706), 369.

[28] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language,* vol. 1 (London, 1755), 1115. Like Phillips, Johnson gave entries for "interpolate," "interpolation," and "interpolator."

[29] Thomas Keightley, *The Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy*, 2nd ed. (London, 1838), 109. The term seems to have originated in the context of ancient languages. Shortly thereafter, it appeared in a *Classical Dictionary.* Charles Anthon, *A Classical Dictionary: containing an account of the principal proper names mentioned in ancient authors ... Together with an account of coins, weights and measures, etc* (New York, 1841), 1394.

many reference works omit the term[30] and narratologists subsume it into the broader umbrella term "embedding."[31] Running an Ngram search of Googlebooks reveals that "interpolated tale" has been in frequent use throughout the twentieth century, with occurrences of the phrase escalating in the century's first decade and then booming since the late 1940s.[32]

Despite the wide circulation of the term "interpolated tale," not a few critics express their dissatisfaction with that phrasing by coining alternatives that better suit what the reader-response school might term their "horizons of expectation."[33] Each critic's preferred term foregrounds different characteristics: "stories-within" (J. Paul Hunter), "digressive romance" and "digressive lifestory" (Michael McKeon), "interpolated-episode device" (Douglas Brooks), and "story-

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[30] There is a surprising paucity of attention paid to interpolated tales by guides to rhetoric and literary devices. M. H. Abrams does not include the term in his comprehensive *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999). *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* includes "interpolation," but its narrow definition emphasizes its etymological roots in spurious textual additions: "A passage inserted into a text by some later writer, usually without the authority of the original author; or the act of introducing such additional material." *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3 ed., ed. Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[31] Though narratologists subsume both interpolated tales and frame tales into the broader umbrella term of "embedding," their definition obtains: "the literary device of the 'story within a story,' the structure by which a character in a narrative text becomes the narrator of a second narrative text framed by the first one." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), s.v. "embedding," 134.

[32] The results of the Ngram search: http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=interpolated+tale&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=

[33] Hans Robert Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," trans. Elizabeth Benzinger, in *New Literary History* 2.1: A Symposium on Literary History (Autumn 1970): 7–37; Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980).

telling events" (Yael Halevi-Wise).[34] George Haggerty has it both ways by arguing that the term "interpolated tale" suits *Tom Jones,* but fails *Amelia,* for which he suggests "personal history."[35] What is perhaps most remarkable is how little agreement exists among these critics in what they find objectionable about the term "interpolated tale" and what their own terms seek to remedy. For Hunter, "stories-within" seeks to shift the balance of power away from the main plot interrupted by the tale, and instead to articulate a more peaceful coexistence. Alternatively, McKeon plays up the putatively interruptive temporal character of the interpolated tale with his choice of "digressive," a word he freights as an antonym to progress and thus party to romance, idealism, and conservatism. Excluding tales that seem "straightforward," Halevi-Wise cherrypicks examples of "story-telling events" that privilege character interiority, singularity, and plot relevance over character flatness, formulaic delivery, and plot irrelevance. Making a similar deduction, Haggerty negatively defines interpolated tales as *not* "direct and essential in the narrative itself." Temporality, interiority versus surface, and plot coherence are the concepts at stake in these debates over how to rephrase "the interpolated tale." My own project accepts "the interpolated tale" in its most catholic sense, and in fact, prefers the plural, "interpolated tales." The form's ability to inhabit oppositional positions—at peace with the main narrative or

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[34] J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 47. Michael McKeon. *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 279. Douglas Brooks, "The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews* Again," 213. Yael Halevi-Wise, *Interactive Fictions: Scenes of Storytelling in the Novel* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 4. Halevi-Wise excludes a wide swath of interpolated tales: "Embedded storytelling scenes prefaced by the simple pronouncement that Character So and So will tell a story, followed by a straightforward presentation of his or her tale and sealed by a formulaic statement about the audience's delight in a story well told, are not interactive fictions."

[35] George Haggerty. "Fielding's Novel of Atonement, Confessional Form in *Amelia*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 8.3 (April 1996), 387. Haggerty describes the non-interpolated tales of Amelia as "long passages of personal history [that]…are not interpolated but play a direct and essential role in the narrative itself."

threatening to it, advancing subjectivity or flatness, direct and essential or not—inspires the scrutiny of this project and dictates the span of novels that I will treat.

Fielding and Coventry both excoriated interpolated tales as akin to romance, and this alleged relation troubles the twentieth-century scholars who chronicle the “rise of the novel.” Ian Watt deems interpolated tales “excrescences,” narrative surplus that does not jibe with the formal realism and bourgeois subject formation that he privileges in the novel form.[36] John Richetti banishes Henry Fielding from his account of early fiction on the grounds that Fielding’s ironic inclusion of romance forms transmogrifies his texts into “anti-novels.”[37] This line of reasoning, like Richard Cumberland’s criticism of *Quixote*, treats interpolated tales as a romance feature whose inclusion signals, “This is not a novel.” Michael McKeon, too, identifies Fielding as a flashpoint for novel theory because his novels incorporate so many romance features, including interpolated tales, which McKeon refers to as “digressive romance” and “digressive lifestory.”[38] Pushing against Watt’s teleological argument that the novel emerges from the rejection of romance, McKeon argues that the novel emerges out of an ongoing dialectic with romance, rather than a historical break away from it. My interpretation of interpolated tales can be read as evidence for McKeon’s thesis. As a mediating form within the novel, these tales allow

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[36] Ian Watt, *Rise of the Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), 268.

[37] John Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700–1739* (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1969), 1. In the text’s very first footnote, Richetti excludes Fielding and makes a defense: “I exclude Fielding...because of his massive irony. Fielding’s first two novels are really anti-novels in that their almost pervasive sense of parody makes them implicitly critical of the ‘naive’ realism by which Defoe and Richardson seek to induce a psychological participation which must be identified as the defining quality of the specifically modern novel” (1).

[38] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740*, 279. McKeon conceives of the novel as a genre that gains “its unrivaled power both to formulate, and to explain, a set of problems of categorical instability,” especially generic and social categories (20).

for the partial assimilation of alternate narratives, which can encode any genre, including romance. Thus, by embedding intact romance forms inside the novel, interpolated tales offer one mechanism for effecting the dialectical relation of novel and romance.

The seven pages of *Before Novels* that J. Paul Hunter dedicates to "stories-within" remain, in my opinion, the most thoroughgoing analysis of interpolated tales we have. Of the "rise of the novel" scholars, Hunter offers the most neutral and balanced account. However begrudging and almost pietistic his tone, he is willing to accept the bounty of evidence that interpolated tales, for all of their awkwardness, are a historical feature of the novel: "But whether or not they can be pardoned or justified formally, stories-within plainly are a feature of eighteenth-century novels, a feature that was at the time common and readily accepted." Nonetheless, Hunter eventually recapitulates an anti-romance discourse familiar since Fielding and Coventry. He goes on to brand a subset of interpolated tales "romantic" and thus insufficiently dedicated to realism and individual consciousness: "These tales are patently not at home in the novel's world, and they stand out sharply... these tales do not deal in subjectivity or introspection very deeply."[39] Leaving the problems he has associated with interpolated tales unanalyzed, Hunter elects not to speculate on what effects the "not at home" tales might have and in what alternatives to "subjectivity and introspection" they might traffic.

My interest picks up where Hunter leaves off. I take the "not at home" status of interpolated tales, their frequent refusal of realism, the awkward way they "stand out sharply," and their alternative formations of subjectivity as the object of my inquiry. What other conceptions of narrative, theories of mind, and reading practices do these tales promote? In *The*

[39] J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*, 47, 326.

Dialogic Imagination, Mikhail Bakhtin theorizes the novel as a force within a literary system that exposes the arbitrary limits of that system, creating a dialogue between texts that the system either admits as literary or excludes.[40] In one reading, interpolated tales would seem to fit into Bakhtin's definition as the non-literary material that novels incorporate but that the literary system resist, with that resistance taking place in the form of anti-tale critical discourses we have just seen. What counts as literary or non-literary remains of central concern in this debate. I, however, shift my focus toward the formal problems associated with the tales' flickering formal status and their mediation of point of view. Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia reminds us how novels aggregate a multiplicity of voices. Interpolated tales, then, we might argue, are devices that enable heteroglossia, and leave it at that. I find it more intriguing to examine how interpolated tales differentiate themselves from other heteroglossic devices, like free indirect discourse and dialogue, by refusing any more than partial assimilation into the novel. The tales' unassimilated point of view and their ability to stand alone distinguishes the form and makes it disruptive. In another turn of the screw, we can approach interpolated tales as devices that operate according to Bakhtin's novel function by exposing as arbitrary limits within the literary system *that is the novel*. The "limits" that the interpolated tale exposes as "arbitrary" are point of view, the narrator, setting, and temporality, in other words, the very stuff of fiction.

Throughout this project, I argue that interpolated tales mediate alternative perspectives and play a vital role in how eighteenth-century novelists and readers conceived of the construction of difference. Turning the reader back to an awareness of narrative as a medium

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[40] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). I build on Holquist's succinct articulation of Bakhtin's theory: "Rather, 'novel' is the name Bakhtin gives to whatever force is at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, the artificial constraints of that system" (7).

operating from a particular and limited standpoint, interpolated tales remind us that narrative is contested by alternate perspectives or haunted by their absence. This discomfiting reminder opens a space for philosophical experimentation and the conceptualization of alternate world views.[41] As a highly self-reflexive form, interpolated tales draw attention not only to the speaker but to her circle of interlocutors, a "narrative circle"[42] that includes the reader. Therefore, attention to reading practices also comprises part of this project. While two centuries of literary critics have objected to interpolated tales for disrupting novels' flow, Peter Stallybrass makes a convincing counterargument that the expectations of such flow, or forward propulsion, are retrospectively imposed. In the past, most reading has been a "discontinuous" practice that entailed dipping selectively into a text and skipping back and forth as directed by reader preference or practical purpose. According to Stallybrass, the notion of reading continuously from one page to the next is a modern phenomenon tethered to genre: "The novel has only been a brilliantly perverse interlude in the long history of discontinuous reading."[43] I contend that interpolated tales perpetuate a kind of narrational discontinuity in harmony with this earlier mode of reading and out of key with the novel-centered expectations that were beginning to consolidate during the eighteenth century. Although many of the novels examined here are later

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[41] Roland Greene discusses early modern interpolated tales as devices that embed "multiple genres and perspectives," thus forming "joined horizons" that reflect Baroque understandings of a complex world no longer defined by geographic discovery. Roland Greene, "Cervantes in Shakespeare in Theobald: Three Stages of Literary History in One Artifact," (paper presented at the conference "*Double Falshood* (1727) and *Cardenio* (1613): Theobald, Fletcher, Shakespeare, Cervantes," at the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, January 2014).

[42] Williams, 473.

[43] Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 47.

criticized harshly for not abiding by the "continuity" that the genre of the novel helped to naturalize, this project seeks to demystify that naturalization and to use interpolated tales as a wedge for thinking about how novels are part of a longer and more complex conceptualization of reading practices.

II: Interpolation, Lost and Found: The Test Case of *Vertue Rewarded, or The Irish Princess*

As a test case of the interpolated tale, and as a stepping stone between Cervantes and the picaresque novels of the 1740s, I would like to consider an oddity of book history that engages interpolation as both a literal and literary problem. When, in 1693, the London publisher Richard Bentley was printing the twelfth and final volume of his anthology *Modern Novels,* he was hasty in printing the volume's title page.[44] It listed *Means to Free Europe from French Slavery* as its third book, but due to unknown circumstances, the political polemic dropped out of the series.[45] Instead, Bentley neatly pasted over the old title and interpolated *Vertue Rewarded, or The Irish Princess,* an anonymous novel that, flickering out of view, was not rediscovered

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[44] Bentley compiled forty-odd short novels or novellas, most of them previously published and many translated from French. The best-known was Madame de Lafayette's *The Mistress of Cleves*. Kate Loveman notes that Bentley took the "criterion of entertainment" for determining what to include in *Modern Novels*, and that he ultimately decided that "'novel' could legitimately be used to encompass everything from an oriental romance to a droll discourse on cabbalism." Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660–1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 109.

[45] Ian Campbell Ross and Anne Markey, introduction to *Vertue Rewarded: Or, The Irish Princess* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010). See also, Ian Campbell Ross and Anne Markey, "From Clonmel to Peru: Barbarism and civility in *Vertue Rewarded; or, the Irish Princess*," *Irish University Review* 38. 2 (Autumn/ Winter 2008): 179–202.

until the 1980s and first republished in 2010. The eleventh-hour interpolation itself contains "two or three," or by my count three or four, interpolated tales, which range from a young gentlewoman's "Lovestory" and a conquistador's tale to the transatlantic travelogue of a native Peruvian woman named Faniaca and the folklore of a pre-Norman Queen Cluaneesha attributed to "an ancient Irish Chronicle."[46] These "interlined" tales (37) provide alternative perspectives on the local and the global, the contemporary and the historical, all of which impinge on the main courtship narrative of the nameless Prince of S----g and the eponymous princess-to-be, Marinda. Early novels or protonovels of the 1690s had no established convention for representing simultaneous time, so they turn to the interpolated tale as a device and form that enacts its own circulation. In particular, "The Story of Faniaca" employs magic to expose the vast material systems of European imperialism, mercantilism, and chattel slavery that structure what on the surface looks like a romance plot.

Arguably the first Irish novel, *Vertue Rewarded* is a complex narrative that constellates colonial occupation with romantic love to interrogate them as forms of conquest.[47] It articulates a claim that interpolated tales, here called "interlined" stories, are pleasurable to the reader notwithstanding their interruption of a chronologically-precise historical narrative. Despite its moniker as "the bloodless revolution," the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that brought William and

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[46] Anonymous, *Vertue Rewarded: Or, The Irish Princess,* ed. Ian Campbell Ross and Markey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 34, 57, 62. Further citations from *Vertue Rewarded* will be given by page number in the text.

[47] Hubert McDermott, who announced his discovery of *Vertue Rewarded* in 1986, lauded it as the "first Anglo-Irish novel." The paperback edition he edited notes: "This work can lay claim to being the first Irish novel ever published." Hubert McDermott, "*Vertue Rewarded*: The First Anglo-Irish Novel," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 75.298 (Summer 1986): 177–185. Hubert McDermott, ed., *Vertue Rewarded; Or, the Irish Princess* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1992). Ross and Markey are more measured, describing the text as "One of the earliest examples of Irish prose fiction," 9.

Mary to the throne in England also brought warfare to other reaches of the Three Kingdoms. From 1688–1691, the most protracted violence occurred in Ireland following its invasion by pro-William forces and a series of brutal sieges, including that of Limerick in 1690. The main plot events of *Vertue Rewarded* unfold in occupied Clonmel, a small town on the road to Limerick and thus of strategic importance to the Williamite forces marching up from the south coast. A German prince, who is also a soldier of fortune quartered in the town, finds himself smitten by the beauty of a local woman, Marinda. As a gentlewoman but neither aristocratic nor royal, she is his social inferior, beneath consideration for marriage. Thus begins a contest between her "invincible Vertue" and his not-yet honorable passion. The conceit is a familiar romance trope: love as warfare, with the sparring lovers further thwarted by the consequences of military occupation.[48] Wartime circumstances assemble a total of three main couples: the Prince and Marinda, his "Gentleman of Horse" Celadon and Marinda's cousin Diana, and Faniaca and Astolfo, a Peruvian fortune-teller and the Spanish Conquistador who have been separated by enslavement and war. The lovers' intertwined imperial and romantic plots ironize the lofty rhetoric of the war and frame colonization as a transatlantic problem that creates a circuit of displaced people from Spain to Peru to Ireland.

The narrative and style of *Vertue Rewarded* are curiously elaborate, blending features of romance, fictionality, and topicality. The point of view foregrounds contemporaneity. The first-person narrator, who is extradiegetic but chatty, enjoys commenting on the action, which he sets in a recent and shared past that he assigns a monarchical time frame, "when our present King had

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[48] As the novel's modern editors, Ian Campbell Ross and Anne Markey, note, the many complications of this narrative build up from a deceptively simple base: "A fiction that develops around a romance plot in which a young Irish woman finds her vertue 'rewarded' by marriage to a foreign prince, after he finally renounces his attempt to seduce her, may not sound exceptional." Ross and Markey, 9.

fought the Battel at the Boyne" (40). The narrator's voice throughout is indistinguishable from the authorial persona who first addresses Marinda in a "Dedicatory Epistle" (35) and then devotes a tongue-in-cheek preface to "the ill-natur'd reader" (37). As in the defense tendered by Cervantes's bored translator, the author of *Vertue Rewarded* theorizes his inclusion of interpolated, or "interlined," tales, which he reasons supply a pleasing contrast:

> Therefore to indear it the more to you know, that the main Story is true, I heard of a Gentleman who was acquainted with the Irish Princess, and knew all the Intrigue, and having from him so faithful a Relation of it, I made the Scene the very same where it was transacted, the time the same, going on all the way with the Truth, as far as conveniency would permit; I only added some few Circumstances, and interlined it with two or three other Stories, for variety sake, which is as necessary to the setting off the true Relation, and making it pleasant, especially to you nice Readers, as Sauces are to the dressing up a Dish of Meat, to provoke the Appetite it is design'd for.

The "two or three other" interlined stories are, by my count, three or four interpolated tales that occupy 37 pages, more than a third of the novel's total length.[49] Because the sentence's clotted syntax does not quite track, the question of whether the "interlined" stories are intended to be read as true remains up in the air. They provide contrast to the "true Relation," perhaps because they are untrue or simply because they are "other" and include difference "for variety sake." Regardless of the tales' claim to truthfulness or fictionality, the author assesses them positively. Their "variety...[sets] off the true Relation," makes it pleasing, and whets the appetite. Already, here, at such an early moment in the novel's inception and conceptualization, interpolated tales are cited as evidence in the debate over the awkwardness of narrative discontinuity as a source of unexpected pleasure or unwanted irritation.

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[49] The tally depends on whether Cluaneesha's tale counts. Its point of view is open to interpretation. It could be construed as the narrator's voice. Or, as an implicitly found document, the tale could carry its own narrator.

The three/four interlined stories traverse expanses of time and space, from contemporary seventeenth-century Clonmel to fourteenth-century Clonmel, and from Peru to Portugal through London to Ireland following the shaping force of global war. In the first, a local woman tells "some passages of [her] life," giving a thumbnail sketch of her seven suitors and lamenting how a spinster's machinations parted her from the one she loved (52–56). A feisty burlesque, this narrative hearkens to courtly romance but also serves as a reminder that the unfolding of local plots and their appetites continues apace. The second tale gives the history of a local holy spring that proved the chastity of the ancient princess Cluaneesha and poisoned the courtiers who perjured her, thereby allowing her to ascend to the throne as a female regent (62–64). Most out of place, and certainly out of time, Cluaneesha's tale embeds a pocket of deep time in this intensely contemporary novel. It invokes the supernatural to correct a gross injustice done in the name of disciplining a woman's public reputation and sexual behavior. The third and longest tale, which I will take as my focus, relates the wondrous transatlantic travels of a native Peruvian woman who is seeking her lost lover, Astolfo, a Spanish conquistador (72–96). His account of imprisonment and military service forms the fourth tale (126–130).

Intact and separately titled, "The Story of Faniaca" offers, under cover of magic, a diagram of how early imperial political and economic systems circulate individuals, goods, and information, or in this case, Faniaca, her magic drum, and her "Story." Faniaca cuts a singular figure in the text. She makes her public debut in Clonmel as one of two ladies at a wartime ball who excite attention with their "strange *Spanish* dress" and "long Vails" over their faces (71). When teased that they are locals in disguise, they dance a sarabande while playing castanets as a proof of their foreignness. But neither woman is Spanish. Only at the novel's end is the silent

partner of this duo revealed to be Marinda, our Irish heroine disguised to protect herself from the dishonorable courtship of the Prince. Faniaca, by contrast, grew up in Peru among an indigenous tribe that practiced cannibalism. Her twenty-four page autobiographical narrative, spoken aloud at the ball, offers the most sustained sequence of events in the novel. Their intertext is the recent English translation of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (1685), a seventeenth-century account of indigenous resistance to Spanish imperialism, whose author was himself the product of a relationship between a conquistador and an Incan noblewoman.[50] Faniaca had fallen in love with Astolfo while he was invading her village. First, triumphant, Astolfo had spared the life of Faniaca's father. Later, captive, Astolfo had been on the brink of being cannibalized when Faniaca betrayed her father and people to rescue him. En route to Spain, conversion, and marriage, Faniaca herself falls captive. She and Astolfo are separated and enslaved. Through a torturous but cleverly-managed series of events, Faniaca uses her magic drum, which gives her the power of prophecy, to earn her freedom, to locate her lost lover, and to bring all of the six lovers together for a triple wedding at the end of the novel. Thus, indigenous cultural practices and a woman's constancy in love ameliorate the dispersing forces of war and imperialism.

Faniaca's power is figured as rhetorical and magical. But on closer inspection, her brand of magic turns out to be more temporal than other-worldly. She finds her lover by following the battlefront. Once she arrives in Clonmel, it is a series of coincidences, not her magic drum, that reunite her with Astolfo. The "prophecy" she tells Marinda is that love and "vertue" will prevail.

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[50] Furthermore, his English-language translator, Rycault, had recently served as Chief Secretary to Ireland. Interconnections abound, and Ross traces them all. Ian Campbell Ross, "Ottomans, Incas, and Irish Literature: Reading Rycaut," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, 22 (2007): 11–27; Ross and Markey, 26.

Meanwhile, Faniaca and Marinda conspire, with the aid of veils and Faniaca's reputation as a fortune-teller, to outwit the Prince. Their success turns the hierarchical assumptions of the novel's courtly romance on its head. Just as Marinda, through her unwavering commitment to her virtue and her shrewd tactics, proves her "condition" more than worthy of a prince, so the vim and occasionally lurid color of interpolated tales expose the prince as a cipher most interesting in terms of the stories that his own blandness invites. In a novel teeming with colorful names like Marinda, Faniaca, Cluaneesha, Celadon, the "Prince of S——g" appears pallid in comparison, especially considering that he does not appear to be based on a historical personage. And, after all, he is no storyteller. The differences in rank that separate the three main couples, as men of royal and aristocratic background and women from the gentry, plus the unplaceable Faniaca, are leveled in the comic ending of a triple wedding (135). By "drawing the Curtains" on the "Constant" lovers (136), the final sentence completes the marriage plot while leaving the occupation of Clonmel and the siege of Limerick off-stage and unresolved. Faniaca's "magic" is that of a storyteller who understands how imperial circulation moves its freight, of individuals, goods, and narratives, through the march of armies and along the set channels of trade routes. Shifting attention to her narrative ironizes the reader's desire for an ending, and exposes "magic" as a storyteller's knowledge of how the wheels of empires turn, moving plots and armies.

The scholarly efforts to resuscitate *Vertue Rewarded* have focused on its Irishness, a national affiliation justified by its subtitle, *Or, The Irish Princess*, and retrospectively imposed by the label "first Irish novel." The modern editors, Ian Campbell Ross and Anne Markey consider nationalism essential to their tempered interpretation of *Vertue Rewarded* as "a progressive

narrative concerning Ireland," in which "a feminising civility" subdues the country's post-Norman "barbarity," a hopeful narrative undercut by the novel's ironic mistrust "of the tendency of 'civilizing' missions to turn thoroughly nasty."[51] While I find Ross and Markey's edition and arguments impeccable, the alternative perspectives of the "interlined" stories, and particularly "The Story of Faniaca," lead me to diverge from a strictly Irish and national focus. Instead, I interpret the novel's Ireland as a cosmopolitan location and the hub of imperial and trade circuits that course across the hemisphere, from the European continent to the British Isles to Peru and back. Read with an eye to the novel's displaced people, *Vertue Rewarded* emerges as a transcontinental and transatlantic travelogue whose interlined tales insist on relocating individuals in multilevel networked relationships that imbricate the local and the global, the contemporary and the historical. The text takes on a difficult task in tracking three/four interlined tales and a complex historical main narrative, as well as in balancing its non-hierarchical tendencies and its conclusion with a royal wedding. The final proof that these impulses sit in uneasy and unresolvable tension is the plot device necessary for a happy ending: a magic drum that might not be so magical after all. A tool for including intertextual and transcultural content, the interpolated tale is the site that allows Faniaca to frame her own narrative as an autobiographical and cosmopolitan subject, and allows the novel to leave its characters and their cultures flickering just out of sight, in circulation and unforeclosed. Just as importantly, the form of the interpolated tale allows "The Story of Faniaca" to remain partially assimilated, included but visibly separate when we choose to look for it, and ready to participate in new forms of the circulation it internally practices.

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[51] Ross and Markey, 26.

III. Chasing a Flickering Form

The four chapters of "Idle Stories" attend to moments when interpolated tales come into focus as media events. Each chapter examines a pair of authors working in the same subgenre of the novel and investigates how their interpolated tales mount formal disruptions that also posit previously unimagined subject formations, including of gender, class, and race. My approach neither censures nor applauds interpolated tales, but finds the value of their partial assimilation and its consequences for how we read the tales and their surrounding novels.

The first chapter, "Interrupting Women: 'Memoirs of a Lady' and 'Leonora,'" considers two tales voiced by female narrators within otherwise manly texts, Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and Tobias Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* (1751). These tales make visible the vexed relation between women's ability to claim authorship and the limitations imposed upon them because of their sex. For Leonora's narrator and for Lady Vane, the interpolated tale opens a site for asserting new iterations of female character and for critiquing the punitive logic that reduces a woman's character to sexual reputation.

Other interpolated tales continue this gendered critique but turn away from the organizing individual subject toward communitarian alternatives that redistribute subjectivity. My second chapter, "Didactic Experiments: Form and Community," considers how Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott shift emphasis away from an organizing narrator or single character to a cooperative structure of networked narratives, thus disassociating selfhood from individualism. In *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), the narrative center migrates from a third-person narrator focalized through David to a series of interpolated tales spoken by wronged women. By veering

away from the controlling point of view and away from the nominal protagonist, the text privileges a model of sociable storytellers that dispenses patronage in a just and equitable way. Scott adapts this model in her utopian novels *Millenium Hall* (1762) and the ameliorist *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), which are even more explicit in their political intent to redistribute property beyond consanguinity. In *The Governess* (1749), Fielding designs a schematic narrative pattern that imagines communitarian forms of virtue as well as of narrative. Fielding's radical didacticism leaves her texts open to both conservative bowdlerizations and more admiring adaptations.

Another set of interpolated tales seize on didacticism as the object of critique. My third chapter, "Tell-Tale Hearts: Sentimental Plot-Making," tracks how one interpolated captivity narrative from Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph* (1761) evacuates conduct-book exemplarity and serves as a germ for generations of romance plots. "The History of Miss Price" ambiguates paternal debt with a daughter's sexual fall. The sentimental narrative itself emerges as the debtor-victim's only tool for preventing women's bodies from being treated as one of the family's seizable assets. This logic, which privileges the oral presentation of sentimental narrative as the solution to material problems within that narrative, constructs sentimental communities and underwrites a succession of afterlives that begins with Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). In turn, these tales prove exceptionally generative of other tales and afterlives of many kinds, whether "uniquely female" or not, or "vain to speak of" or not. Interpolated tales remind their interlocutors that it all could have been very different, and instantiate an otherwise and elsewhere space where these secondary narratives may unfold.

Some interpolated tales are explicitly disruptive of the main narrative because of their content or because they give voice to a marginalized character; but for others, the *form* of the tale instantiates the material critique. My final chapter, "Who is speaking? Mediated Voices in *Obi* and *The Female American*," examines how embedded narratives may destabilize the relationship between center and margin in order to denounce slavery and the pursuit of empire. In the abolitionist novel *Obi* (1800), for example, the enslaved mother Amri is an adept oral raconteur whose tale transmits Feloop culture to her son and enables new forms of plot action. Unlike the parliamentary papers and print sources incorporated in the novel, Amri's oral history models an intersubjective engagement between tale-teller and interlocutor, and it is the form of the interpolated tale allows this two-way rhetoric. By contrast, the interpolated tale in *The Female American* (1767) features speakers who are ship captains and gentlemen professionals, agents of empire who are expected to speak from a position of authority. Intercalating the voices of these five white men until they are indistinguishable, the tale critiques the shaping force of colonialism as one that obscures the connections between plot agents and narratives.

Over the course of these chapters, I also hazard a polemic that advocates for a reconsideration of interpolated tales. Having observed the critical shuttlecock that fixates on interpolated tales as a matter of pro or con, I have no desire to make that my fight. Instead, I explain how interpolated tales function. In my view, their uneasy status and apparent lack of consequence to the overall plot makes interpolated tales productively disruptive and contextually complicated. Akin to previous scholarship on the chapter, miscellanies, anthologies, and footnotes, this project attends to the reader's interaction with what I call awkward forms. Like interpolated tales, awkwardness encompasses both negative and positive valences: good

awkwardness is the crackle of sexual attraction, while bad awkwardness is a stone in one's shoe. Such awkward forms are detachable pieces of the novel that operate outside established contracts between author and audience.[52] For insight into how to think about the continual renegotiation of these contracts, I turn to interdisciplinary research regarding storytelling, orality and literacy, and attention. From this multiform approach, new questions emerge: How does the encounter between tale and surrounding narrative change our response to each? How do interpolated tales reorganize the construction of subjectivity, and thus, of difference? Interpolated tales are everywhere in the eighteenth-century novel, but their dual formal status as part and whole, device and form, means that their function is difficult to isolate. Though materially present and recognizable in print, interpolated tales as a concept still elude us; they flicker in and out of focus. Like "some watcher of the skies" similarly transfixed by poring over the solar system or Chapman's Homer, this project gazes on novels and chases after that flickering.[53]

[52] Nicholas Dames, "The Chapter: A History," *The New Yorker* online (29 October 2014), accessed 24 March 2016; Barbara M. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). What Caroline Levine termed "narrative middles" could be considered an awkward form, though not a detachable one. Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles, editors, *Narrative Middles: Navigating the Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (Columbus: The Ohio State Press, 2011). The same is true of the "middles" of dilation and postponement written about by Geoffrey Sanborn, "The Plagiarist's Craft: Fugitivity and Theatricality in *Running One Thousand Miles for Freedom*," *PMLA* 128.4 (October 2013): 907–922.

[53] John Keats, "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," *Poems* (London, 1817).

CHAPTER TWO

Interrupting Women: "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" and "Leonora"

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
"Most Women have no Characters at all"
…Woman and Fool are two hard things to hit,
For true No-meaning puzzles more than Wit.
Alexander Pope, "Epistle II. To a Lady. Of the Characters of Women" (1743)[1]

By the circumstances of the story which I am going to relate, you will be convinced of my candour, while you are informed of my indiscretion; and be enabled, I hope, to perceive, that howsoever my head may have erred, my heart hath always been uncorrupted, and that I have been unhappy, *because I loved, and was a woman.*
Lady Frances Vane, "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality," in
Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751)[2]

"The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality," the secret history of Lady Frances Vane that interrupts Smollett's *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle,* weighs in at some fifty-thousand words and is often deemed the longest interpolated tale in English.[3] In concluding her voluminous tale, Lady Vane slightly misquotes a line from the century's most renowned verse meditation on female subjectivity, Pope's "Epistle to Lady:" "'Tis true, no meaning puzzles more than wit" (449). The line comprises half of a couplet that expands Pope's satiric object to fools as well as ladies,

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[1] Alexander Pope, "Epistle II. To a Lady. Of the Characters of Women," *Epistles to Several Persons (Moral Essays)*, ed. F. W. Bateson, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt, vol. 3.2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 45, 57, lines 1–2, 113–114. Line numbers for following quotations will be given parenthetically in the text.

[2] Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, ed. John Zomchick and George Rousseau. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), 371. Further citations from *Pickle* will be given by page number in the text.

[3] It consumes most of a volume, Volume III, pages 371–449. Zomchick deems it "a fifty-thousand-word scandalous narrative" (xxxviii).

“Woman and fool are two hard things to hit” (line 113). In the epigram, Lady Vane invokes the snippet of verse as a proof of her argument that her husband’s character and behavior remain “altogether unaccountable by the known rules and maxims of life” (449). Like the poets Anne Ingram and Mary Leapor before her and Mary Wollstonecraft after her, Lady Vane seizes on Pope’s equivocally misogynistic satire to legitimize her self-authorized speech and to lodge her personal appeal in the republic of letters: “howsoever my head may have erred, my heart hath always been uncorrupted… I have been unhappy, *because I loved, and was a woman*” (371).[4] Unconvinced, at least one critic has fastened on the Pope quotation as a misprision that redoubles the insult back onto Lady Vane.[5]

Alternatively, in this chapter I consider the quoted verse line as a micro-case study, an indicator of the sorts of problems raised by the particular interpolation of Lady Vane’s “Memoirs of a Lady of Quality,” and, more generally, by interpolated tales that insert a woman’s subjectivity into novels that otherwise expand on masculine perspectives.[6] I argue that interpolated tales promote a version of embodied subjectivity similar to the kind Helen Deutsch

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[4] Anne Ingram, “Epistle to Mr. Pope. Occasioned by his Characters of Woman,” *Gentleman’s Magazine* 6 (December 1736), 745; Mary Leapor, “An Epistle to a Lady,” in *Poems Upon Several Occasions* (London: 1748), 38–40; see also *The Works of Mary Leapor*, ed. by Richard Greene and Ann Messenger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Mary Wollstonecraft riffed on Pope’s “Epistle to a Lady” to begin a chapter on female education, “Most women, and men too, have no Character at all.” Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (London, 1787), 111. Helen Deutsch, “Dismantl’d Souls: The Verse Epistle, Embodied Subjectivity, and Poetic Animation,” in *Vital Matters: Eighteenth-Century Views of Conception, Life and Death*, ed. Helen Deutsch and Mary Terrall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2012), 39–56. Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660–1850* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984).

[5] David K Jeffrey, “Smollett’s Irony in *Peregrine Pickle*,” *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 6.2 (Spring 1976): 143–145.

[6] This chapter was written during a W. M. Keck Foundation Fellowship at the Huntington Library in San Marino, CA.

identifies with the verse epistle, which, like the interpolated tale, is a literary form rooted in "the reader's awareness of the writer/speaker's body," but without the same impulse or even option of moving "beyond the physical."[7] For Lady Vane at least, even the factual question of how to ascribe authorship to the "Memoirs" cannot escape her celebrity body. When within Smollett's novel Lady Vane closes her first-person narrative with the bungled allusion to Pope, "Tis true, no meaning puzzles more than wit," a cascade of questions obtain: Whose line is it anyway? How do we ascribe authorship when a nonfiction narrative is interpolated into a fictional narrative? To tweak Catherine Gallagher's phrasing, how does the interpolation of Somebody's Story change the way we read Nobody's Story?[8] And how does the act of being interpolated into Nobody's Story change the way we read Somebody's Story?

This chapter investigates what happens when women tale-tellers disrupt masculine narratives, and how the form of the interpolated tale enables the representation of a gendered subjectivity that appears nowhere else in these novels. Both tales are oral narratives spoken by interrupting women. "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" appears as an outsize chapter 88 of *Peregrine Pickle* and the brief but critically contested "History of Leonora" appears as a traveler's tale in Chapters IV-VI of Henry Fielding's *Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742).[9] The tales differ in their assigned truth status, respectively presenting Lady Vane's "Memoirs" as referential autobiography and Leonora's "history" as fictional. Nonetheless, each tale's switch to

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[7] Deutsch, 41, 42. Deutsch grounds her concept of "embodied disembodiment" in her reading of Leapor's reimagined "Epistle to a Lady."

[8] Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: the Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

[9] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Further citations from *Andrews* will be given by page number in the text.

a female narrator and assertion of a new tone, style, and brand of content is so extreme that many critics discern the hand of a different author entirely. In both cases, critics most often discern a feminine hand, with Sarah Fielding put forward as the collaborator with her brother and Lady Frances Vane put forward as her own autobiographer, rather than simply as the subject of Smollett's scandal biography.[10]

Disrupting the primary narrative, the female narrator admits a discordant voice that refuses to be absorbed into the whole and instead insists on its independent status as a stubbornly blemished part. In each case, the woman speaker labors to justify her grounds for interrupting the primary narrative and legitimize her authority as a narrator. In these disputes, interpolated tales become a contracted ground upon which readers test their notions of gender and its hermeneutic role in narrative. Both Lady Vane and Leonora's narrator find new possibilities for subject formation in the slippage between character defined as public reputation dependent on sexual self-regulation and character defined as a fictional "body" unmoored from the physical. The transitive and transitional status of these female "bodies" explains, in part, the vehemence and sense of physical disgust that so often accompanies critical assessments of the tales as "blemishes" or "excrescences."[11]

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[10] I will explore the morass of scholarship on the authorship of "Memoirs" later in the chapter.

[11] Francis Coventry, "An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding: with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism," in *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 269. Richard Cumberland and Walter Scott both used "excrescence" to describe interpolated tales; Cumberland to impugn Fielding's "The Man of the Hill" and Scott to impugn "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality." Richard Cumberland, *Henry: In Four Volumes* (London, 1795), 216. Walter Scott, "Tobias Smollett" in *Biographical Memoirs of Eminent Novelists and Other Distinguished Persons,* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834), 132. Ian Watt reiterated the word to acknowledge what he saw as flaws to Fielding's otherwise masterful plotting, "despite a few excrescences such as the interpolated story of the Man of the Hill." Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 268.

The first part of this chapter will explore "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" through the questions of authorship, fictionality, and autobiography that I raised in the first paragraph. I will demonstrate how the narrative's negotiation of these formal problems enables the construction of gendered subjectivity. The second part of this chapter will offer a contrasting interpretation of "The History of Leonora," another self-authorized text of "uniquely female distress."[12] In contrast to Vane, Leonora does not give voice to her own tale, which appears as an oral narrative told by an unnamed lady to while away a coach journey. Also unlike Vane, Leonora is a fictional character based on literary precedent. Unlike Vane's notorious Somebody, Leonora is a Nobody who interrupts a narrative populated by other Nobodies. Despite these differences, Leonora's interpolation raises similar questions of authorship: a footnote appended to a letter recited "from memory" marks it as written "by a young lady" (91). Scholars have long identified Sarah Fielding as the footnoted "young lady." Building on literary precedents to form a material critique of gender norms and educational practice, "The History of Leonora" returns to literary forms as a potential solution to these problems. In both, the female narrators seize on interpolated tales as the ground where they can reclaim women's public characters under terms of their own defining.

[12] Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 180.

I: Authorship and the Celebrity Body

The celebrity body of Lady Vane brought tremendous public attention to *Peregrine Pickle*, and the connection between her body and these texts has always been a lightning rod for speculation and scandal.[13] How to ascribe authorship to the "Memoirs" remains an open question, and the text remains vulnerable to dismissal as "conspicuously an interpolation."[14] Given the absence of a manuscript and paucity of historical documents, the extent to which Lady Vane and Smollett collaborated on her "Memoirs," or whether they were the work of a third hand, will likely remain unknowable. In the definitive article,"The Authorship of the 'Memoirs of a Lady of Quality,'" O.M. Brack catalogues the many lacunae in the historical record: "it remains unclear when (and if) Smollett met Lady Vane, or what the nature of their relationship was," "[w]e do not know the form of the materials Smollett received from Lady Vane," "little is known about Lady Vane apart from the Memoirs; their degree of accuracy is undetermined and, to a great extent, likely to remain that way."[15] Having aggregated the scant available materials, Brack presents a case largely based on "internal evidence," or readings of "stylistic habits and word choices," and argues that Smollett "gave the 'Memoirs' their final form with materials supplied to him by Lady Vane." Brack readily admits that "the external evidence for Smollett's

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[13] Thanks to Bea Russell for sharing this observation.

[14] Ernest A. Baker, Review of *A Study in Smollett, Chiefly "Peregrine Pickle," with a Complete Collation of the First and Second Editions* by Howard Swazey Buck, *The Review of English Studies*, 2.7 (July 1926): 360–363.

[15] O. M. Brack, Jr., "Smollett and the Authorship of 'Memoirs of a Lady of Quality,'" in *Tobias Smollett, Scotland's First Novelist: New Essays in Memory of Paul-Gabriel Boucé,* ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007): 35–73, 45, 46, 62.

role as author or collaborator is tantalizingly vague."[16] The publication and reception history of "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is so vexed that some readers question whether the tale should count as literary at all.

Regardless of the ambiguities of its authorship, "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is generically recognizable as a chronological autobiography of Frances Hawes Hamilton Vane that follows her from childhood through the first four decades of life. To Vane's distress, the bulk of the narrative consists of scenes from a failed marriage: the "odious," "unaccountable," and frequently violent behavior of her second husband, her own extramarital affairs, and her increasingly elaborate but thwarted attempts to flee her husband's persecution. For eighteenth-century readers, much of the frisson of reading the "Memoirs" came from the belief that Lady Vane had willingly consented and cooperated in vending her domestic feud for public consumption. When Lord Vane died in 1789, a sympathetic obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine* attempted to downplay his wife's role in publicizing their marital dysfunction, ascribing at least partial authorship to Smollett: "Lady Vane, in a fit of most unjustifiable resentment, furnished the Novelist with a few particulars that he worked up, by the aid of imagination, to an entertaining episode."[17] In this view, what others took to be "real memoirs" were "supposed by the candid to be very much embellished," and thus closer to a fictional hoax perpetrated by Smollett: "Versed as he was in the arts of publication, he knew that personal

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[16] Brack, "Authorship: 41, 62, 62. Brack organizes two invaluable surveys of reader response, by Vane's peers and by twentieth-century critics. I owe Brack a debt of gratitude for his magisterial compilation of materials. However, I find his close readings of "internal evidence" to be too slender to support a definitive ascription of authorship.

[17] The obituary for Lord Vane that appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April 1789 makes this case and casts Smollett as an almost diabolic spin doctor. *Gentleman's Magazine* 59.1 (April 1789): 376.

anecdotes would contribute greatly to the sale of his book."[18] Invoking a select audience of "the candid" works to police both Vane and Smollett as subaltern figures whose print voices are rendered illegitimate, his class balancing her gender. In contrast, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu performed a close reading to ascribe authorship to Smollett, writing of Lady Vane that "Her Style [in the 'Memoirs'] is clear and concise, with some strokes of Humour which appear to me so much above her I can't help being of the opinion the whole has been modell'd by the Author of the Book in which it is inserted." Nonetheless, in the same letter Montagu granted Lady Vane's claims to the narrative as hers and true: "I think Lady V's memoirs contain more Truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life."[19]

Following the lead of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and most of her contemporaries, I treat the "Memoirs" as belonging to Lady Vane. However, I go one step further in ascribing authorship to her, whatever her role in furnishing "a few particulars" or "real memoirs." This decision is justified by the work of Caroline Breashears on what she calls the female appeal memoir: "Contemporaries recognized the appeal memoir as 'by' its subject if she either wrote it herself or produced it with the aid of a ghostwriter."[20] Early reviewers and readers alike most often responded to Lady Vane's scandalous memoirs as "by" her and "real." John Cleland wrote

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[18] Ibid., 376.

[19] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to the Countess of Bute, 16 February 1752, in *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. 3, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 2–3.

[20] Caroline Breashears, "The Female Appeal Memoir: Genre and Female Literary Tradition in Eighteenth-Century England," *Modern Philology*, 107.4 (May 2010): 607–631, 611. While Breashears finds the debate over the Memoirs' authorship less urgent than many critics, she approves the logic by which Neil Guthrie disambiguates "Lady Vane's claim to the narrative" from the question of authorship : "For instance, while Neil Guthrie has made a strong case that Lady Vane did not write her memoirs as included in *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), he nonetheless recognizes Lady Vane's claim to the narrative: the accuracy of facts 'clearly points to Lady Vane's close participation in the production of the narrative." This close participation led contemporaries to view the work as "hers" (611).

two *Monthly Review* essays puffing the "real memoirs" for giving access to "a character in real life."[21] He emphasized Lady Vane's role in the publication as both active and consensual: "As these memoirs are not only taken from a character in real life, but seem to be voluntarily furnished by the lady V— herself, who is the subject of them, they cannot but be interesting, both from the rarity, as well as the ingenuity of her confession."[22] The public perception that Lady Vane had intentionally publicized her infidelities staggered Lady Luxborough, the poet and publicly fallen woman: "but published by her *own* order, from her *own* Memoirs, given to the author for that purpose; and by the approbation of her *own* Lord. What was ever equal to this fact? and how can one account for it?"[23]

The lure of celebrity and access to its intimate secrets was, for many eighteenth-century readers, the main draw of Smollett's novel. Lady Luxborough wrote of hiring *Pickle* "merely for the sake of reading one of the volumes, wherein are inserted the Memoirs of Lady V—[*sic*];

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[21] John Cleland distinguishes between "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" as the "real memoirs" and its competing "Adventures of Lady Frail" as spurious. He notes that Lady Vane "is credibly reported to have given real memoirs of herself, to the author of the famous novel, entitled, The adventures of Roderick Random [sic], to be inserted and made public in a new work of his." *Monthly Review,* February 1751, iv, 307-308. Also reprinted by Lionel Kelly in *Tobias Smollett: The Critical Heritage* (London: Rouledge & Kegan Paul, 2005), 42-43. See also Brack, "Authorship," 66.

[22] *The Monthly Review*, March 1751, iv, 355-64. Kelly, 44-48. NB: Here it is worth noting that at least one scholar, Neil Guthrie, has proposed Cleland himself as a likely ghostwriter of Vane's "Memoirs." Neil Guthrie, "New Light on Lady Vane," *Notes & Queries* (September 2002): 376-78. Guthrie builds on David Daiches's observation that Lady Vane's narrative voice—marked by a "style of sentimental elegance in narrating her misfortunes"—sounds much like Fanny Hill. David Daiches, "Smollett Reconsidered," in *Smollett: Author of the First Distinction*, ed. Alan Bold (London: Vision Press, 1982), 38.

[23] Lady Henrietta Luxborough to William Shenstone, 25 August 1751, in *Letters Written by the Late Right Honourable Lady Luxborough to William Shenstone, Esq.* (London: Dodsley, 1775), 290–291. Kelly, 68. My thanks are due to both Kelly and Brack for compiling rich surveys of contemporary responses to Lady Vane. Kelly, 39–80. Brack, "Authorship," 42. When, in the 1775 first edition, Luxborough refers to Lady Vane as having shared her memoir "by the approbation of her *own* Lord," it seems possible that "Lord" is a misreading for "hand" (266). Kelly's text reprints the word as "hand." It seems unlikely that Lord Vane approved of the publication of the Memoirs; but then again, Lady Vane consistently referred to his behavior as "altogether unaccountable."

which, as I was well acquainted with her, gave me curiosity," while the "rest of the book is, I think, ill wrote, and not interesting."[24] Thomas Gray, writing to Horace Walpole, dismissed the novel *Pickle* as Lady Vane's "vehicle" and "very poor indeed with a few exceptions."[25] By 1764, the theater critic David Erskine Baker identified Lady Vane's celebrity as the driver of *Pickle*'s sales, "This Episode gave the book a great Run," and reiterated her voluntary participation in the project, "that Lady's entertaining Story; the Materials of which, it is said, she herself Furnished."[26] While critics now agree that *Pickle*'s sales did not make it a "great run," it occasioned a spate of public and private commentary that made it a *succès de scandale*.[27] By 1810, Anna Laetitia Barbauld ascribed authorship to Lady Vane without qualification, "The Memoirs of a Lady of Pleasure, Lady Vane, written by herself, are introduced into this work. They excited interest at the time, the lady being then much talked of, but can now only raise astonishment at the assurance which could give such a life without compunction."[28]

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[24] Luxborough, 265–266.

[25] Thomas Gray to Horace Walpole, 3 March 1751, in *Letters of Thomas Gray*, ed. Duncan C. Tovey, vol. I (London: G. Bell, 1900–1912), 212; Kelly, 69.

[26] David Erskine Baker, *Companion to the Play-House* (London: 1764). The quotation appears on an unnumbered page under the entry "Smollet, *Tobias*, M. D."

[27] Did *Pickle* actually enjoy a "great run"? Certainly, the publication occasioned a barrage of public and private commentary and triggered a paper war on the topic of Lady Vane's interpolation. But Brack contests that the novel's notoriety did not translate to strong sales: "Despite the inclusion of the scandalous memoirs of the infamous Lady Vane, the depiction of Daniel MacKercher and the famous Annesley Case, and the satirical attacks on a number of well-known contemporaries such as Henry Fielding, David Garrick, William Hogarth, James Quin, Mark Akenside, and George Lyttelton, the first edition of the novel had not sold well. In the 'Advertisement' to the second edition Smollett levels various charges at the booksellers and critics, making it clear that the failure of the novel had rankled deeply" (261). O. M. Brack, Jr. "Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* Revisited," *Studies in the Novel* 27.3 (Fall 1995): 260–272. Zomchick and Rousseau agree with Brack and cite as evidence that seven years passed before the publication of a second edition. "Preface," xv.

[28] Anna Laeitita Barbauld, "Smollet [*sic*]," *The British Novelists, with an Essay; and Prefaces, Biographical and Critical,* vol. 30 (London: 1810), viii. Kelly, 293.

Two hundred years later, gender and authorship remain entangled in the critical debate surrounding “Memoirs of a Lady of Quality.” Many critics offer gendered readings of style as evidence for or against Lady Vane’s authorship. One line of scholarship ascribes authorship to Lady Vane because the “Memoirs” are a formal failure, while the other ascribes authorship to Smollett because the “Memoirs” are formally adept. Howard Swazey Buck cites the “feeble and colourless ‘elegance’ of the style,” while James R. Foster singles out their “amateurish manner” and “faded elegance of the style” as evidence of female authorship.[29] Paul-Gabriel Boucé points to an “exquisitely feline remark” and “such subtleties of amorous machiavellism” as evidence of a feminine perspective, and offers an essentialist reading of female knowledge at the level of content: “Only a woman, or rather a young bride, can speak of her sexual modesty and her refusal to go to bed with her husband in broad daylight.”[30] On the opposing side, Neil Guthrie reasons that Lady Vane must have collaborated with a ghostwriter: “The theory that Lady Vane could have penned her own history is not supported by surviving examples of her writing, which reveal a woman of limited education.”[31] Brack reasons from the premise that Lady Vane would

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[29] For much of the twentieth century, Buck was the leading proponent of ascribing the ‘Memoirs’ to Lady Vane: “‘The Memoirs’ were, surely, the work of Lady Vane, possibly touched up by Shebbeare; the revision was hers, with a touch here and there by Smollett" (362). Howard Buck, *A Study in Smollett, Chiefly "Peregrine Pickle," with a Complete Collation of the First and Second Editions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925). James R. Foster, *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1949), 122.

[30] Paul-Gabriel Boucé, *The Novels of Tobias Smollett* (London: Longman, 1976), 137.

[31] Neil Guthrie, 376–78. Guthrie dismisses feminist critics for being too quick to ascribe authorship to Lady Vane, “More recently, some feminist scholars seem simply to have assumed that Lady Vane wrote the Memoirs without assistance” (376). As evidence, Guthrie provides a letter from Lady Vane to Mary Jolliffe: “I thank God we got safe to town tho’ our Coach was over-turn’d, but we we’re out of it, it was not the Coachman’s fault, an old Woman put us out of our road, we were Likewise met by two Hywayman but not Robed, tho’ they attempted to get between the Servants & the Coach, it was upon Putney Common.” Lady Vane to Mary Jolliffe, 1 November 1750. Cited by Guthrie, 376.

simply not have been capable of writing such a complex narrative: "But certainly the materials Smollett received required rewriting. Rewriting needs to be emphasized."[32]

The quest to ascribe authorship has consumed so much critical attention that only a small subset of critics dedicate sustained attention to uncovering the functional value of the interpolation of Vane's "Memoirs." Arguing that Smollett "scorns" Lady Vane as an "unreliable narrator," David Jeffrey reasons that Vane's lack of "clear-sighted judgment"—her refusal to forswear her sexual choices—renders her memoirs meaningless: "Her 'Memoirs' thus subvert the purposes of satire and exemplify instead that 'true No-meaning' which puzzles more than wit."[33] The attempt to read Lady Vane's tale for a "moral lesson" similarly stymies John Warner, who concludes it "exists in a moral vacuum; she sins and lives to sin again, and again."[34] For these critics, the excess of Lady Vane's sexual and narrative agency renders her illegible. In contrast to this punitive logic, Caroline Breashears locates Lady Vane's "Memoirs" as part of a wider tradition of "the female appeal memoir," a genre of "self-authorized" memoirs that allows a woman of lost reputation to "[appeal] to the public because she can get redress no other way."[35] Felicity Nussbaum argues that such "scandalous memoirs" are distinguished by "content [that] is

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[32] Brack, "Authorship," 61. Brack simultaneously argues that Lady Vane was "certainly" incapable of authoring the "Memoirs" and recognizes the narrative as "Lady Vane's story:" "Throughout there is a recognizable attempt by Smollett to make a coherent narrative from the materials he received…That the "memoirs" are too long and repetitious cannot be denied, but it is Lady Vane's story, and, like many editors before and since, he tried to assist her in telling it her own way" (61).

[33] Jeffrey, 140, 143, 145. Jeffrey finds evidence for his appraisal by interpreting Lady Vane's misquotation as proof of her "flaws as a narrator" (143). He argues that Smollett wants the reader to connect Lady Vane with the object of Pope's satire: "like 'Simo's Mate,' she 'never mends'" (145).

[34] John M. Warner, "The Interpolated Narratives in the Fiction of Fielding and Smollett: An Epistemological View," *Studies in the Novel* 5.3 (Fall 1973): 271–283, 278.

[35] Breashears, 607–631.

a uniquely female situation—the Fall from chastity that transformed 'character' and all other experience."[36]

What is the effect of embedding such a tale of "uniquely female" distress within a novel that brims with and chortles over the male prerogative of sexual libertinism and pranks? Jeffrey and Warner both fault the "Memoirs" for its refusal to present a "moral lesson," with Jeffrey going so far as to say that it offers unmitigated "No-meaning." But this argument also has a positive obverse. Smollett refuses to reduce the female protagonist of his interpolation to an example. Instead, the interpolated tale becomes a space where Vane can testify to her own individuality and give shape to her subjectivity in a way that is publicly transmissible. Lady Vane argues that she should be judged according to the dictates of sensibility rather than gendered sexual norms that ambiguate character and sexual self-discipline. Her appeal takes on a keener edge because it is "self-authorized" and "uniquely female," in the terms of Breashears and Nussbaum. Moreover, the exceptional formal construction of Vane's account, as a fact-based autobiography interpolated into a fictional text, suggests that Vane's material intervention finds additional leverage by allying itself with the literary form of the novel. Choosing the novel as her platform to speak from, Vane splits her print self in twain: the autobiographical Lady who can parry accounts with her pamphleteer foes, and the fictional character Vane who befriends Peregrine Pickle and operates in the novel as a dispenser of charity and reproach to the corrupt society that exiled her. It is the slippage between these roles, referential and fictional, that both animates Vane's memoirs and so discomfits her critics.

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[36] Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, 180.

II. Questions of Form and the *Pickle* Plot

The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle is a shaggy dog novel that brims with scatological pranks, promotes a biting Juvenalian satire, and resolves abruptly into a comic ending. *Pickle*'s social world is very much a masculine and libertine domain, and a female perspective appears only in "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality." When William Strahan printed *Pickle* in four compact volumes in 1751, the novel exceeded 300,000 words organized into 114 lopsided chapters, which generally ranged from two to fifteen pages in length.[37] The two disproportionate chapters are of unmistakable heft: the 171-page "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality"[38] and the 71-page hagiographic portrait of Daniel MacKercher and his involvement in the famed Annesley

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[37] [Tobias Smollett,] *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, in which are included, Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* (London: Printed for the Author, and sold by D. Wilson, 1751). The first edition listed neither author nor printer on the title page, instead announcing: "Printed for the AUTHOR: And sold by D. Wilson, at Plato's Head, near Round-Court, in the Strand." Pickle's publication history involved enough complexities that the scholarly edition released in 2014 was a project four decades in the making. Brack maps out the "considerable problems facing the textual editor" of the novel and gives a useful summary of its publication history. He deduces that Strahan was the printer: "The first edition of the novel was published 25 February 1751, *probably* printed by William Strahan in what Smollett described in the "Advertisement" of the second edition as a 'very large impression.'" Brack, "Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* Revisited," 260. Brack's 1995 article explicitly "revisits" his previous attempt to grapple with these textual problems in the same journal, but twenty years earlier. Brack, "Toward a Critical Edition of Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*," *Studies in the Novel* 7.3 (Fall 1975): 361–374.

[38] Smollett, *Peregrine Pickle* (1751). In the first edition, Chapter XXXVIII consists of "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality;" it runs from page 66-237 in the Third Volume.

Case.[39] Both interpolated tales feature a primary historical personage and convey topical material that criticizes failures of the British legal system, in the case of matrimonial and inheritance disputes, respectively. The novel's main plot tracks the peregrinations of its eponymous hero from birth through public school education and Oxford, disinheritance, a Grand Tour, various professional, matrimonial and extramarital schemes, imprisonment, eventual reconciliation with his virtuous beloved, and reclamation of his family fortune and estate. True to his name, Peregrine remains largely on the move, roaming freely around South England, France, and the Low Countries, until his months' of captivity at a Fleet Street prison force a change of heart upon him. While Smollett's stoutest defenders reject the categorical terms picaresque and episodic as too insensitive to the complexity of the novel's project and form, other readers have deemed it an out-and-out mess.[40] How are we to assess the formal problems posed by interpolated tales in a novel whose narrative form is itself so hard to define?

First, I will attend to the novel's form, including a survey of how other critics have approached it, and then return to the question of how the oversize interpolated tale engages with that form. The novel's sprawl has long posed a problem for critics, who divide roughly into three camps: those who find it formless, those who discern a buried form under the formlessness, and

[39] Ibid. The MacKercher "memoirs" appear in Volume IV as part of Chapter CVI, under the capitula title "Pickle is tolerably well reconciled to his cage; and is by the clergyman entertained with the memoirs of a noted personage, whom he sees by accident in the Fleet (172–243). Clifford gives a footnote on the tangled inheritance dispute referred to as the Annesley Case on 804. James Clifford, "Introduction" to *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 1983). See also Lillian de la Torre,"New Light on Smollett and the Annesley Cause," *The Review of English Studies* 22.87 (1971): 274–81. Like Lady Vane's *Memoirs,* the MacKercher tale launches another public appeal that is fueled by rage against the status quo. However, its specific case lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

[40] John Warner argues that the influence of continental picaresques spurs Smollett's creative development, while Boucé argues against the picaresque in order to defend his reading of Smollett's buried formal coherence. Paul-Gabriel Boucé, *The Novels of Tobias Smollett* (London: Longman, 1976). John M. Warner, "Smollett's Development as a Novelist," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 5.2 (Winter 1972): 148–161.

those who argue the formlessness itself constitutes a purposeful form. As early as 1783, James Beattie singled out form as Smollett's Achilles heel: "It does not appear that he knew how to contrive a regular fable, by making his events mutually dependent, and all co-operating to one and the same final purpose."[41] Anna Barbauld extended her criticism to cover Smollett's characterization as well as plot and traced these flaws back to the continental picaresque tradition: "*Roderick Random*, like *Gil Blas*, has little or nothing of regular plot, and no interest is excited for the hero, whose name serves to string together a number of adventures."[42] In 1870, David Herbert introduced *Random* and *Pickle* by writing, "Smollett was no structuralist. These two novels owe nothing to plots and high play in mystery—the whole thing is byplay."[43] For these early critics, Smollett's texts are more miscellanies of adventures and pranks than novels organized by plot and character.

By the mid-twentieth century, the critics invested in rehabilitating Smollett's reputation made reassessments of his form part of their campaign. James Clifford argues that the narrative's "apparent formlessness" springs from its author's splicing of various models, "the picaresque, classical formal satire, comedy, melodrama, the new sensibility, and at times stark realism." Clifford asserts that the novel "follows a clear-cut plan" and "there is a well-designed plot," though he never articulates this plan and plot.[44] Rufus Putney discerns eleven "major

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[41] James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, (London: 1783), 571.

[42] Barbauld, *The British Novelists*, v. See also Kelly, 292.

[43] David Herbert, *The Works of Tobias Smollett, Carefully Selected and Edited From the Best Authorities, With Numerous Original Historical Notes and a Life of the Author* (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo & Co, 1870), 23. Herbert uses byplay, now obscure, to refer to secondary action that occurs to the side, as in a dramatic performance.

[44] James Clifford, "Introduction" xv–xxiv; xxii, xxc, xxiii, xxiv.

divisions" in the *Pickle* plot, Paul-Gabriel Boucé discerns "five articulations," and the twenty-first century editors, Zomchick and Rousseau, discern "three grand movements," though they caution "any such division must ultimately be arbitrary."[45]

These diagrams of Smollett's buried novel form seem to me a forced interpretation. What they articulate as the novel's form or structure I would argue reduces down to thematic unities and/or character development. What seems to me more convincing is John Skinner's baldly-stated negative articulation that *Pickle* "comes as near as can be imagined to a state of pure narrative shambles."[46] Simon Dickie singles out *Pickle* as his exemplar of the category of ramble novels, "wildly heterogeneous texts—stuffed, like *Peregrine Pickle* and so many other early novels, with digressions and interpolations." For Dickie, formal messiness emerges as a defining characteristic of the genre: "Plot is so rudimentary and characterization so shallow, that the usual motors of narrative are just not there… But the predictable comic episodes were evidently satisfying."[47] I share his analysis of *Pickle* as a text that resides beyond readers' expectations for plot and character, and yet finds alternative means of "satisfying" its readers.

Smollett's idiosyncratic approach to form confounds critics looking for formal unities, but this formlessness also provides a breeding ground for interpolated tales. With their

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[45] Rufus Putney, "The Plan of Peregrine Pickle," *PMLA* 60 (1945): 1051–1065, 1060. Also in Zomchick and Rousseau, xlv. Boucé, *The Novels of Tobias Smollett*, 125.

[46] John Skinner, *Constructions of Smollett: A Study of Genre and Gender* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 71. I disagree with the endpoint of Skinner's logic— that Smollett is "barely a novelist at all" (20).

[47] Simon Dickie, "Tobias Smollett and the Ramble Novel," in the *Oxford History of the Novel in English, Vol. 2: English and British Fiction 1750–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 92–108, 102, 105, 105–106. I am in agreement with many of Dickie's readings, but I remain unconvinced of the usefulness of his distinction between the picaresque and the ramble novel. In his view, the ramble novel is less about "bleak survivalism" and "lighter in tone."

distinguishable time, space, and point of view, these tales convey disruptive perspectives and potentially transgressive content that becomes all the more troubling because of its dual status—simultaneously contained within and potentially outside the novel. George Orwell acclaimed Smollett as "Scotland's Best Novelist" while granting that his novels are "formless tales full of farcical and improbable adventures."[48] In this vein, I would argue that *Pickle* is a free-form novel, asymmetrical, hetergeneous, and capacious, whose picaresque hero encounters a series of episodic misadventures and occasionally disappears from the scene entirely. Unbound by any strict adherence to form, probability, or perspective, *Pickle* emerges as a radically open space. In Bakhtin's terms, it is both flexible and dialogized, a point of "living contact" with the "openended present."[49] In this framework, interpolated tales like the "Memoirs" are uniquely suited to be the point of "living contact" between the novel as a print form and the moving target of lived experience and news, "the openended present." At the time of publication in 1751, how Lady Vane's life and marriage would turn out were very much "openended" questions rife with problems that she was presumably trying to influence by making her account public. In *Pickle*, the novel functions as an open space that moves dialogically between the fictional Nobodies of Smollett's invention and the interpolated Somebodies whose historical referents continue to participate in various real plots beyond the bounds of the novel.

Despite the prodigious output Smollett published across twenty-five years as a public man of letters, he left behind remarkably scant theorizing on the novel. The much-cited

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[48] George Orwell, "Tobias Smollett: Scotland's Best Novelist." Cited by Zomchick and Rousseau, "Introduction," xlvi.

[49] M.M. Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," *in The Dialogic Imagination,* ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 7.

exception is the definition of the novel that he offered in the preface to his third, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753):

> A Novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of a uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene by virtue of his own importance.[50]

In the first sentence, Smollett invokes a "uniform plan and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient." But in the second sentence, he tautologically reverts to character as the unifying principle. According to Smollett's self-definition, the novel is a loose cluster of characters and episodic incidents held in orbit by the gravitational pull of one magnetic protagonist. In *Pickle*, this primary gravitational field is non-uniform, as its most recent editors have noted: "With the exception of the interpolated tales of Lady Vane and Daniel MacKercher, *Peregrine Pickle* does provide a principle of integration in the figure of its protagonist."[51] Thus, Smollett refuses to be yoked even by his own loose definition, for both the "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" and the Annesley interpolations put the novel's "principal personage" into eclipse behind new centers of attention, Lady Vane and Daniel MacKercher. Why, then, include these interpolated tales?

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[50] Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. and Jerry Beasley (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 4. Clifford, xxii.

[51] Zomchick and Rousseau, "Introduction," xlvi. The editors also offer the concept of principles of integration as more useful than principles of organization: "If *Peregrine Pickle* has a principle of organization, it is successive rather than causal, additive rather than developmental…with the exception of the interpolated tales of Lady Vane and Daniel MacKercher, *Peregrine Pickle* does provide a principle of integration in the figure of its protagonist," xlvi.

Like the content of the "Memoirs" themselves, the question of Smollett's motives for including them has proven a motor for gossipy speculation. The easiest and most malicious explanation for why Smollett interpolated "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is money. Upon *Pickle'*s publication in 1751, some contemporary readers speculated that Lady Vane paid Smollett a fee for including her story. And while Smollett was living a hardscrabble existence in 1750–1751, no evidence supports this theory of a payment.[52] Considering the marketability of Lady Vane's celebrity, it seems a fair question to ask whether Smollett might have paid her for the right to insert her scandalous memoir. Again, the lack of historical documentation leaves this a matter of conjecture. Along with money, a similarly rumored explanation is sex. The same letter in which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu opined "I think Lady V's memoirs contain more Truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life," she speculated that "I can't help being of the opinion the whole has been modell'd by the Author of the Book in which it is inserted who is some subaltern admirer of hers."[53] Likewise, some readers identify the "Dr. S" who saves Lady Vane's life in 1739 as Smollett, though his medical career was fledgling at that point. Far from

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[52] Buck confidently asserted the Lady Vane wrote the memoirs herself with the help of Dr. Shebbeare, and others including James R. Foster followed his lead. Putney, Knapp, Brack, and Zomchick find it more likely that Lady Vane acted as the source to Smollett. See Brack and Zomchick for the best distillations of the authorship debate. Brack, 39–73, Zomchick, xxxix.

[53] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to the Countess of Bute, 16 February 1752, in *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. 3, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 2–3.

attending to titled ladies, he was fighting for a warrant to serve as a surgeon's second mate on a man-of-war.[54]

Other posited explanations continue in this negative line, though their terms are less concrete. Putney and Boucé both see Lady Vane's tale as monitory, a negative exemplum. For Putney, the satire is directed at a whole class: "Even if Smollett did not intend it, they ["The Memoirs"] reinforce his thesis that the life of the upper classes was often vicious and immoral."[55] For Boucé, the satire is directed against louche individuals: "They point out the danger incurred by those who more willingly obey the dictates of their passions than the rules of moral good sense, and thus have the value of an admonition."[56]

The text itself, however, cedes little evidence for such negative assessments of Vane's account. Smollett carefully introduces her as a benevolent character in the midst of doling out charity, and her "Memoirs" are considerately framed. Pickle himself responds approvingly, as do the other characters gathered "in a select partie" to hear the telling (371). To the extent that Smollett's novel can be said to carry moral teachings, it is always the plot that delivers a satirical comeuppance. And Lady Vane is plainly never corrected. As Warner disapprovingly put it, "she sins and lives to sin again, and again." Moreover, the omniscient Smollettian narrator's tone

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[54] The identity of "Dr. S" is a problem ripe for academic speculations. The four main contenders put forward are Smollett, John Shebbeare, Peter Shaw, and William Smellie. Recent scholars agree that Smollett and Shebbeare should be eliminated because their careers were not yet distinguished enough for them to minister to people of quality. Earlier critics, however, found Shebbeare a convincing candidate. Howard Buck and Foster agree in identifying Dr. S as Shebbeare, though Buck credits him with editing the materials written by Vane herself and Foster ascribes authorship of the Memoirs to him. Buck, 47. James R Foster, "Smollett's Pamphleteering Foe Shebbeare," *PMLA* 57.4 (1942): 1053–1100. Kline advocates for Shaw. Judd Kline, "Three Doctors and Smollett's Lady of Quality," *Philological Quarterly* 27 (1948): 219–228. Zomchick helpfully recaps this debate. Zomchick, 755, n137.

[55] Putney, 1064.

[56] Boucé, 137.

toward Vane and her long interpolation is conspicuously positive and all but deferential. Noting that "Smollett's attitude throughout is that of respectful admiration" for Vane and her plight, Clifford argues that the text disambiguates Lady Vane and her class, and that Smollett simultaneously admires Lady Vane for her "daring nonconformity" while recognizing that "although a rebel, she is also an integral part of the society which he deplores."[57]

It is inarguable that the interpolated tale is an ancient form, reaching backwards to oral folklore traditions, the classical world, the Bible, the oriental tale, and fables of all kinds. But I think it would be a mistake to consider Smollett's interpolated tales as devices that face one direction—backwards. Indeed, "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is resolutely present-ist and topical. Its referents are real people and places and still-juicy scandals, whose publication ignited a paper war. I would like to suggest that *Pickle*'s interpolations are the most unmitigatedly didactic part of the novel, which on the whole undermines its own moral purposes by delighting in Perry's pranks and largely withholding his reformation.

Lady Vane and Daniel MacKercher's tales both voice a moral appeal on behalf of wronged individuals who are unable to seek redress under the legal system. In particular, Smollett's moral indignation on behalf of Lady Vane and her narrative purchase on the reader goes a long way toward explaining the tone of outrage so many critics adopt in discussing her "Memoirs." Readers from Samuel Richardson to Anna Barbauld to David Jeffrey and John Warner have strenuously rejected Lady Vane as the beyond the pale of the sympathetic

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[57] Clifford, xxvi, xxvii.

imagination.[58] Even for twentieth century critics like Jeffrey, it is the bodily actions of Lady Vane that prevent her from being a "principal personage" worthy of their attention. Vane, however, anticipates this resistance and enfolds her counterargument into her narrative. In the midst of a libertine and misogynist picaresque, both Lady Vane and Smollett frame her moral appeal as a gendered one: "howsoever my head may have erred, my heart hath always been uncorrupted, and that I have been unhappy, *because I loved, and was a woman*" (371). Like Benjamin Franklin's decision to euphemize sins of the flesh as a printer's "errata," Vane separates errors of judgment, momentariy lapses or mistakes, from corruption of the heart, which leaves a permanent mark.[59] Despite the eighteenth-century collapsing of a woman's character and "virtue," Vane selects a canny binary of "head" and "heart" that seeks to separate her character from her sexual behavior.[60]

Critics aside, Smollett considered Lady Vane magnetic enough to "unite the incidents" of half a volume, and generations of readers have agreed. Contemporaries like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Horace Walpole, Thomas Gray, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding fed their private correspondence with reader response generated by the "Memoirs," and Grub Street revelled in a public paper war. Eventually, almost two hundred years after the publication of *Peregrine Pickle*, *The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* received its first treatment as a standalone

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[58] Samuel Richardson, letter 6 December 1750 From a letter to Sarah Chapone, in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (London: Clarendon Press, 1964), 73. Kelly, 39–40.

[59] Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990), 33, 41, 43.

[60] The way that Lady Vane works the slippage between character and public reputation is congruent with "the pragmatics of character," a process of constructing inwardness and individuation through literary consumption, which Deirdre Lynch proposes in *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

publication, sumptuously printed on mould-made paper and accompanied by twenty modernist illustrations. This 1925 edition names neither *Peregrine Pickle* nor Tobias Smollett until a brief colophon on the final page. Lady Vane's name suffices to carry the book.[61]

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[61] *The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, Being Lady Vane's Memoirs*, London: Printed for Peter Davies, 1925). This limited edition of 550 copies treats authorship with some ambiguity. The subtitle, "Being Lady Vane's Memoirs," and conspicuous lack of acknowledgment of Smollett suggests an editorial decision to treat Frances Vane as the text's author. Some library catalogues (including the Huntington Library, where I examined this book) list Smollett as the author of record, while others (including the British Library) list the record under Frances Anne Vane, Viscountess Vane.

III. Lady Vane and her Paratexts

In the chapter previous to "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" interpolation, Smollett's third-person narrator focalizes through Pickle and gives an elaborate backstory to explain the prankster's encounter with Lady Vane. Upon abandoning his frivolous pursuit of a Duchess, Pickle pays a charitable visit to a distressed gentlewoman and widow who is dying of want after giving birth to posthumous twins. But he is not the first philanthropist on the scene. A beautiful lady has already provided a first supply of money, sent for a nurse, and taken charge of one of the twins to dandle on her knee. The widow reveals that "the name of her benefactress was the celebrated lady —, to whose character the youth was no stranger, though he had never seen her person before" (370). Pickle too "was not so obscure in the beau monde, but that his fame had reached the ears of this lady" (370). The text distinguishes between Lady Vane's "character" and Pickle's "fame," both of which have become public commodities, and as such encourage the two strangers to regard each other as familiar figures. Thus pre-introduced, Pickle and Vane consort to care for the hapless woman and her children. One infant dies, and the other they sponsor in baptism. This shared benevolent project sets the pattern for Lady Vane's appearance in the main novel's plot as a literary character, or Nobody. She makes a brief second appearance only to pay a charitable visit to Pickle when the talk of the town reports that he has gone mad.[62] Lady Vane's

[62] Lady Vane also offers Pickle her financial assistance, which he declines out of his firm—though frequently eccentric—sense of honor. Pickle then shares with Lady Vane "the following song which he had written in her praise, immediately after he was made acquainted with the particulars of her story" (563), but she deflects this flirtatious banter and urges him to "contract" his gallantry "into a sincere attachment for the fair Emilia" (564).

misadventures as a real body, or Somebody, remain enclosed within the chapter that sets apart "Memoirs" and helps to mark its plot as intact and her own.

Despite its prosy length, "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is framed as an oral narrative related directly by Lady Vane to a "select partie" of friends. Smollett lays out this rather improbable setup in a torturously periphrastic sentence:

> As her ladyship had undergone a vast variety of fortune and adventure, which he had heard indistinctly related, with numberless errors and misrepresentations, he was no sooner intitled, by the familiarity of communication, to ask such a favour, than he earnestly intreated her to entertain him with the particulars of her story; and by dint of importunity, she was at length prevailed upon (in a select partie) to gratify his curiosity in these words. (370)

Written in third person and the past perfect tense, the quintessentially Smollettian sentence agglomerates subordinate and relative clauses and prepositional phrases while transferring weight between Lady Vane (she) and Pickle (he) as subject. By the end of the sentence, Lady Vane agrees "at length" to take over the narrative and to recount her own adventures, which Smollett's narrator collapses into the phrase "in these words." In addition to representing the moment of the third-person narrator's handoff to Lady Vane's first-person perspective, the sentence acts like a compressed preface by staking a truth claim and aspersing any other versions in circulation as fraudulent and inaccurate: "indistinctly related, with numberless errors and misrepresentations." Here, Smollett takes a patent swipe at the unsympathetic hack publication, *The History of a Woman of Quality; or, The Adventures of Lady Frail,* which beat his novel to print by two weeks.[63] A small case is made for Lady Vane's sense of modesty and her

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[63] John Hill, *The History of a Woman of Quality; or, The Adventures of Lady Frail* (M. Cooper & G. Woodfall, 1751). George Rousseau ascribes authorship to the hack John Hill and exhaustively documents his Grub Street career in *The Notorious Sir John Hill: The Man Destroyed by Ambition in the Era of Celebrity* (Lanham, MD: Lehigh University Press, 2012).

motivation. Hardly self-promoting, she is reluctant to share her story, but "at length prevailed upon" to relate the particulars of her case to "(in a select partie)" of friends. The irony of the parenthetical "(in a select partie)" is rich—"the select partie" is capacious enough to contain both a small gathering of likeminded friends and the mass readership of print—but also a becoming fiction. Lady Vane is not one to withhold her power of pleasing from her friends. The chapter, paragraph, and sentence end simply, with a full stop— "in these words."—and no quotation marks.

The edges of the interpolated tale are clean and regularly marked. The tale occupies its own chapter, chapter 88, which opens afresh with its long Roman numeral and succinct capitula that clearly bestows a title on the inset tale: "Chapter LXXXVIII/ The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality." The chapter's first sentence shifts the narrative into the first-person perspective of Lady Vane, rendered without quotation marks, and makes a direct second-person appeal to her interlocutors:

> By the circumstances of the story which I am going to relate, you will be convinced of my candour, while you are informed of my indiscretion; and be enabled, I hope, to perceive, that howsoever my head may have erred, my heart hath always been uncorrupted, and that I have been unhappy, *because I loved, and was a woman.* (370)

In keeping with Smollett's definition of the novel, Lady Vane nominates herself as the "principal personage" of the "story which I am going to relate." Studded with eight first-person pronouns, her opening sentence establishes that character—her own—is the unifying thread of her narrative. Over the course of the next 170 pages, Lady Vane tells the long peregrinations of her promising early life followed by a series of love affairs and thwarted attempts to escape the

control of her second husband, with whom she has been forced to return to live. I will discuss further the details and form of her narrative below.

The conclusion of the "Memoirs" is also marked by a clean edge, though not an immediate chapter break. Lady Vane elects to have the last words out of her mouth belong to Pope. Typographically, the snippet of "Epistle to a Lady" forms a visual break between Lady Vane's first-person narrative and the return to the Smollettian third-person. Indented and italicized like an epigraph but not set off by quotation marks, the single line of verse acts like the edge of a frame that bounds the interpolated tale, which occupies within its own, discrete storytelling space. The quoted line could hardly be more loaded: the half-couplet from "Epistle to a Lady" that opened this chapter. Just as Vane begins the tale by promising "candor" that will allow her to give voice to her own subjectivity, she concludes her narrative by arguing that some subjectivities defy understanding or articulation. Vane explains that she has given up any attempt to understand her husband: "because his conduct is altogether unaccountable by the known rules and maxims of life, and falls intirely under the poet's observation, when he says, 'Tis true, no meaning puzzles more than wit" (449). Married to a fool whom personal experience and great efforts have taught her she can neither understand, conciliate, nor escape, Lady Vane turns to stoical detachment: "by detaching myself, as much as possible, from the supposition that there is any such existence upon earth" (449).

In context, it is clear that Lady Vane ascribes Pope's "No-meaning" to her husband, who is so "unaccountable" that it is hard to believe that "such a character" exists "among the sons of men." In the misquoted line, the dropped hyphen ("No-meaning" becomes "no meaning") opens an alternative reading that wit puzzles more than any meaning. Given Vane's thorough

accounting of her husband's nonsensical ways—in one memorable episode, caught entering his wife's bedchamber at night with a drawn sword, he explained "his intention was to kill the bats" (427)—there is no suggestion that she would accuse him of wit now. Reading intentionality into the error, Jeffrey argues that Smollett botches the line to discredit Vane: "I would suggest that while Lady Vane was hitting that "Fool" her husband, Smollett was able at the same time to "hit a 'Woman.'" For Jeffrey, Vane's parting allusion to Pope proves that her tale is claptrap: "her Memoirs thus subvert the purposes of satire and exemplify instead that 'true No-meaning' which 'puzzles more than Wit.'"[64]

Rather than a negating error, the misquotation can also be read as adding another layer of contingency to the verse line, which becomes less certain and less legible. Whose line is it—Lady Vane's? Smollett's? An unknown ghostwriter's? Pope's? And whose error is the misquotation? The author, the editor, the printer? Smollett left the error uncorrected in the second edition, which he revised significantly in 1758. Functionally, for Lady Vane as a narrator, I would argue that the misquoted verse accomplishes its task: she brands her husband a fool and claims the right to draw her own character to add to Pope's picture gallery. "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" stands as her rebuttal to Pope's assertion that "Most women have no characters at all" (2).

There is no further transition out of the "Memoirs of the Lady of Quality" after the imprecise snippet of "Epistle to a Lady." The next paragraph returns to the third-person narrator: "Her ladyship having thus concluded her story, to the entertainment of the company, and the admiration of Peregrine…" (449). However, the Smollettian narrator does not

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[64] Jeffrey, 145.

immediately resume focalizing through Pickle. Instead, the attention of the *syuzhet* (employment of narrative, or telling of the tale) and *fabula* (chronological order of events, or plot) remain trained on Lady Vane. For the first time since mentioning the "select partie" (371) that have gathered to hear the lady's memoirs, Smollett composes a short scene that depicts the narrative's interlocutors and the sociable environment they form. While Peregrine is filled with "admiration," the general audience finds plentiful "entertainment" in the tale.

In this moment of transition from Vane's "Memoirs" to Pickle's *Adventures,* the primary narrative enacts a scene that wrangles with the problems of authorship posed by the interpolation, an enactment that in turn bleeds into the novel's paratexts. "One of the gentlemen present" diverges from the pleasant aesthetic, sentimental and sociable response "of the company" (449). Instead, he responds with a series of legalistic challenges and clarifications that stage a mini-courtroom drama. Seeming to threaten the sociable consensus, the unnamed gentleman "roundly taxed her [Vane] with want of candour… which he thought essential in the consideration of her character" (449). The language of the confrontation grows increasingly legalistic: the character first denominated blandly as "one of the gentleman present" later becomes "the accuser," and his charges against the lady storyteller are "want of candour," in suppressing some circumstances of her life," having "omitted to mention a thousand acts of uncommon charity, of which he himself knew her to be guilty," as well as "a very cogent motive for her own conduct" (449–450). Thus, "the accuser" and his "peremptory charge" against Lady Vane's "candour" are simply a rhetorical pose taken on by one of her defenders and friends, who has privileged access to her personal history.

The speaker's adoption of an accusatory and bombastic legalistic stance highlights that "The Memoirs" are making an appeal for justice. Specifically, they voice an appeal to public opinion, as Lady Vane has no remaining recourse through law or politics. Here, the opinionated listener makes clear what he considers the function of the Lady's tale: to present its interlocutors—and readers—with a new set of evidence for evaluating her "character," an unstable term that occupies both literary and historical valences. By airing her private concerns in the public sphere, Lady Vane seeks to defend her "character" in the contemporary usage that constricted female character to sexual continence.[65] While she cannot claim chastity, she offers mitigating circumstances and argues that her lapses were born of sentiment and imagination, rather than sensuousness or lust: "howsoever my head may have erred, my heart hath always been uncorrupted." Ultimately, Lady Vane argues that her punishment is unjustly applied against her due to her sex: "I have been unhappy, *because I loved, and was a woman*."

In her artful re-articulation of what character might mean, Lady Vane fashions herself into a literary character, a "principal personage" of the interest and "importance" necessary for Smollett's definition of the novel. Again, as in Vane's introduction to her own tale, "candour" becomes the privileged index deemed "essential in the consideration of her character." In micro, "the select partie" act as one such public audience who finds Vane's case persuasive. At first put out of countenance by the accuser's sharp rhetoric, "the company were agreeably undeceived by

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[65] For analysis of how women negotiated their relation to and control of character in the eighteenth century, see also Felicity Nussbaum, Deirdre Lynch, and Emily Anderson. Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 265. Lynch, *The Economy of Character,* see note 112. Emily Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Like the celebrity actresses of *Rival Queens*, Lady Vane puts forward a traceable redefinition of character tied to "contracted virtue," which she redefines even more liberally to include errors of the heart.

this explanation; which her ladyship acknowledged in very polite terms, as a compliment equally genteel and unexpected" (450)—the story-telling scene closes with the sense that the sociable consensus is all the stronger for having been tested. In the moment when Pickle himself reclaims the narrative's attention, he continues in the legalistic register by testifying to his appreciation of the lady's narrative tone: "our hero, after having testified the sense he had of her complaisance and condescension, in regaling him with such a mark of her confidence and esteem, took his leave" (450). Undoubtedly, Pickle accepts Lady Vane's appeal that her reputation as a fallen woman and her consequent status as a social pariah form an unjust sentence. Although his response is sexualized, and her attractions cause him to leave "in a state of confusion and perplexity" (450), Pickle nonetheless decides to remove Vane from the category of sexual interest: "her ladyship's heart was too delicate to receive such incense, as he, in the capacity of an admirer, could at present pay" (450). Pickle and the novel both accept the case Lady Vane has made for her character and the delicacy of her heart, despite the scandal attached to her public reputation.

Smollett's fictional "one of the gentleman present" bears close resemblance to real-life avatars who sprang to Lady Vane's defense during the paper war that raged before and after the publication of her memoirs. Lady Vane's detractors beat her defenders out of the gate, starting with the apothecary-cum-botanist, Grub Street hack, and general scandalmonger Dr. John Hill, who had managed to preempt the publication of Smollett's novel by two weeks.[66] Hill's 239-page *History of a Woman of Quality; or, The Adventures of Lady Frail* relates a lubricious

[66] See note 62. James Clifford offers a cogent publication chronology that lists 8 February as the publication date for Lady Frail and 25 February for *Peregrine Pickle*. Clifford, "Introduction," xvi.

fictional account that was unsympathetic to its heroine and "more satire than novel" according to G. S. Rousseau, Hill's biographer as well as a co-editor of *Pickle*.[67] On the other side of the argument, the figure closest to Smollett's accusative gentleman is the anonymous "person of honour" who published a fifty-five page pamphlet in defense of Lady Vane in July 1751, called "An Apology for a Lady of Quality" on the first title page and "An Apology for the Conduct of a Lady of Quality, Lately traduc'd under the Name of Lady Frail" on the second.[68] The "Advertisement to the Reader" announces the pamphlet's origin as a private letter whose original recipient "inadvertently let it escape out of his Hands."[69] Afterwards, "the Author heard much Discourse of the Contents of his Manuscript in several Companies, and even saw some Extracts handed about,"[70] which led him to revise it for publication. Like Pickle, the pamphleteer is eager to testify to the delicacy of Lady Vane's heart, and takes this defense several steps farther by articulating her motives for publication and by including contrition as one of them. The "person of honour" singles out sex as the factor most responsible both for the lady's indiscretions and the backlash against her memoirs: "the Conduct of this Lady has been intirely owing to Ill-usage, on the Part of her Husband, and indiscretion on her own," and her "Errors and Indiscretion, as being

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[67] Rousseau, "Notorious," 90. Rousseau attributes not only *Lady Frail* but all of the "Memoirs"-inspired pamphlets to John Hill:"The apparent defence of Lady Vane in the *Apology* was thus one last attempt to spin out a largely artificial controversy based on the dirty linen of the Vanes' married life" (373).

[68] Anonymous, "An Apology for a Lady of Quality./An apology for the Conduct of a Lady of Quality, Lately traduc'd Nnder the name of Lady Frail," (London: M. Cooper, 1751). The pamphlet frames itself explicitly as a rejoinder to the unsympathetic pamphlet that managed to beat Smollett's novel to the press: "her Memoirs were virulently attacked in a Pamphlet addressed to her by Way of Letter; and also, her whole Life was most opprobriously scandalized, by an accumulation of Falsities, published under the title The History of a Woman of Quality; or the adventures of Lady Frail" (13).

[69] Ibid., v.

[70] Ibid., vi.

a Woman, deserve more to be commiserated than exposed." Formulating his readers as likeminded peers through his *entre-nous* tone, he includes a libertine critique of the sexual double standard: Lady Vane is due sympathy, not reproach, "especially by the Male Part of the Species, that…have sufficiently advised themselves by her Weakness."[71] This debate over the legitimacy of the "Memoirs" participates in the cultural shift toward sympathy for "fallen women" that took concrete form in the founding of the Magdalen Hospital in 1758.[72]

Like Smollett's character of the accusative gentleman, the pamphlet seizes on candour as a crucial index for evaluating a personal memoir, though in this case the author finds additional evidence of candour in the style of Lady Vane's Memoirs—"they are penned with great Elegance and Spirit; and the Facts related with much Candour and Impartiality."[73] Moreover, the letter frames the composition of the Memoirs and their inclusion in Smollett's novel as a public act of contrition that Vane performs as part of her attempt to reconcile with her husband:

> Being again re-united to him, she was willing to attempt the regaining of the good Opinion of the World, which had been forfeited by her former Carriage; and in order thereto, she published an Account of the chief Transactions of her Life, and the Motives thereto, under the Title of Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, and inserted them in the third volume of a Biographical Work, entitled, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle.* (8)

Again, this account leaves the authorship of Vane's "Memoirs" as an open question. Vane "published an Account" that she plainly endorses, but there is no hint of what her role might have been in writing, editing, or compiling it. The pamphleteer does suggest that Lady Vane considers

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[71] Ibid., 2–3.

[72] Caroline Gonda, "Misses, Murderesses, and Magdalens: Women in the public eye," in *Women, Writing, and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger *et al* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53–71.

[73] Anonymous, "Apology for a Lady of Quality," 8.

the “Memoirs” very much her own narrative and that she took an active role, having “inserted them” in the third volume of *Peregrine Pickle*. To this respondent, there is an admirable element of the public confessional to her “candid Publication,” not only to set the public record straight, but to render “such an impartial Acknowledgement of her own Faults must needs manifest evident Tokens of a decent Contrition.”[74] For this spirited defender of Lady Vane, the publication of her memoirs also serves a didactic function—not as a negative exemplum, but as a stepwise and almost geometrical examination of vice and temptation: “And the sole intent of the Work seems not so much to justify or apologize for her own Conduct, as to fix the Saddle on the right Horse, in shewing by what Impulses she was drove from the Climes of Virtue, and precipitated to the regions of Vice.”[75]

For this “person of honour,” Lady Vane both falls under the scope of the sympathetic imagination, and her errors have given her insight into not only her own subjectivity but also into human motivation, or “Impulses.” While this reader of Lady Vane perhaps protests too much in his assessment of her “contrition,” he highlights an important feature of her narrative: a depth and nuance of insight into character that exists nowhere else in the novel. Modern readers have deemed this insight as proto-psychological. For Donald Stauffer, Lady Vane’s psychological

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[74] The pamphleteer gives an unequivocal endorsement of Lady Vane’s decision to publish her very private memoirs for a public audience: “This candid Publication of her own Life, is, in my Opinion, a Step far from being reproachable, if not absolutely necessary, for setting aside those numberless Stories and Misrepresentations, wherewith she has been aspersed; and such an impartial Acknowledgement of her own Faults must needs manifest evident Tokens of a decent Contrition.” Ibid., 9–10.

[75] Ibid., 9.

analyses are so "amazingly delicate" that they verge on the "psychopathic,"[76] while Susan Staves asserts that her "exploration of her husband's peculiar psychology rivals the classic case histories of psychopathologies."[77] Lady Vane's personal sufferings and expulsion from the fashionable society into which she was born have given her an understanding of character that encompasses both interiority and motivation. It would be in keeping with the caustic edge of Smollett's social satire if Lady Vane's psychological acuity were conceived of as standing in inverse proportion to her social integration.

In a proleptic move, Smollett's fictional "gentleman" influences the style of the "person of honor" who releases a pamphlet to defend Lady Vane's character on the historical record. I would suggest that Smollett so approbated that pamphlet that he used it as the source text for a letter exchange between the "lady of quality" and a "person of honor" that he bundled into the revised second edition of *Peregrine Pickle* (1758).[78] The first edition had been published with no additional paratexts other than a table of contents, but the second edition included both an "Advertisement" and this letter exchange, which Smollett explained in a post script: "*Note*. The two letters relating to the Memoirs of a lady of quality, inserted at the beginning of the third volume, were sent to the editor by a person of honor" (v). Like the framing of "The Memoirs of

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[76] Donald A. Stauffer, *The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 92. Stauffer and I are in agreement that Lady Vane's insight into character far exceeds Pickle's: "her amazingly delicate psychological—or psychopathic—analyses surpass anything that is recorded for her gallant listener Peregrine Pickle."

[77] Susan Staves, *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain, 1660–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 274.

[78] See note 67. Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, in which are included the Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*. Second edition (London: 1758). Further citations will be given by page number in the text.

the Lady of Quality" itself as an oral narrative shared with "a select partie," Lady Vane's letter locates its origins within the sociable context of a "company" of interlocutors: "The turn which your lordship gave to the conversation of last night, having laid me under the necessity of vindicating the step I have lately taken in publishing Memoirs of my life…" (v). One gentleman's abstention from the sociable consensus troubles Lady Vane: "though no person in the company attempted to invalidate the arguments I advanced, I could perceive that one gentleman was not altogether convinced" (v); his "prudential insinuations" disrupt Lady Vane's sleep: "I have been all night long, tasking my recollection, in order to discover the weak side of my defence" (v).

As in the novel's staging of the "select partie" and the Apology written by the "man of honor," this "Lord—" begins his discourse with the rhetorical feint of being on the offensive:

> I cannot help observing that the serious manner in which you ask my opinion of the motives, which induced you to publish your memoirs, is exactly of a piece with the conduct of those who consult their friends, for approbation, rather than advice….How would your ladyship look, should I now, in consequence of your demand, assume the air of a severe moraliser, and tell you, that the step you have taken, was altogether precipitate and inexcusable… (vi)

The kinship between the letter bundled in 1758 and the 1751 pamphlet stretches to many phrases and pieces of logic. Both texts commend the "elegance and spirit" of Lady Vane's style and identify candour as a crucial index of the sympathetic imagination: "He must be very deficient in candour and feeling…He must be devoid of all taste and reflection, who does not admire your spirit, elegance, and sense" (Letter viii), versus "Your lordship, and every one else that has perused the Memoirs of this unhappy Lady, cannot help observing that they are penned with great Elegance and Spirit; and the Facts related with much Candour and Impartiality" (Pamphlet

8). Both gentlemen resolve that Vane's decision to publish the "Memoirs" was "necessary" due to the gossip mill and spurious account. The letter articulates its thesis more succinctly, "I agree with your ladyship, it was not only excusable, but highly necessary to publish a detail of your conduct, which would acquit you of all or most of those scandalous imputations" (vii–viii), while the pamphlet admits more synonyms and qualifications, "This candid Publication of her own Life, is, in my Opinion, a Step far from being reproachable, if not absolutely necessary, for setting aside those numberless Stories and Misrepresentations, wherewith she has been aspersed" (9–10).

Bundling the "person of honour's revision of the Apology pamphlet and pairing it with an original letter from "the lady of quality" furnishes Lady Vane with yet another print self and produces yet another angle for considering her position in relation to the novel's primary narrator. By its dual status as Other and yet contained within the novel, the interpolated tale creates a two-way relation between Lady Vane and Smollett's third-person narrator that makes her narrative peculiarly alive in the world and capable of producing new iterations, such as this this letter exchange. Thus, the formal device of the interpolated tale allows Lady Vane's autobiographical narrative to occupy Bakhtin's point of "living contact" with the "openended present."[79] As Somebody, Lady Vane cannot shake the strictures of her marriage contract with Lord Vane. As Nobody, Lady V— gains not just one fictional self but the possibility of many iterations, all of them continually finding new literary spaces for reimaginging and renegotiating the terms of her legal, economic, and marital status.

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[79] Bakhtin, 7.

IV: Lady Vane's *Memoirs*: Character and Form

Once Lady Vane takes on the role of narrator, a new set of formal problems emerge for the reader. Her "Memoirs" unfold in one continuous stream of narrative that more or less adheres to chronological order, but the charges of formlessness lodged against *Pickle* repeat themselves writ large. Whereas the primary novel breaks its misadventures into digestible chapters of two to fifteen pages in length, here the narrative flow remains unbroken for 171 pages. Like *Pickle* itself, "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" present a hybrid narrative: conspicuously conforming to many conventions of the scandalous memoir, the tale also frames itself as a female picaresque, a character study, a social satire, and a philosophical disquisition on love in the mode of Ovid. Almost a decade before the publication of *Memoirs*, Horace Walpole, an inveterate follower and commentator on the movements of Lady Vane, discerned a genre likeness between Vane's public scandals and the tales of other female adventurers, both high and low: "Her adventures are worthy to be bound up with those of my good sister-in-law, the German Princess [Mary Moders], and Moll Flanders."[80] Certainly, the episodic barrage of event, the relentless "I went there, I did that," of Vane's narrative gives some ground for charges of the

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[80] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 14 June 1742, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 459. Cited in Clifford's footnotes, 799. In addition to Moll Flanders, the other female adventurers in question are Walpole's "good sister-in-law," Dorothy Clement, the common-law wife of Edward Walpole, with whom she had three daughters and a son. Horace Walpole, *The Last Journals of Horace Walpole*, ed. A. Francis Steuart (London: John Lane, 1910). "The German Princess" was a con artist and serial bigamist who took on fake identities to marry and defraud men; transported to Jamaica, she returned, continued marrying, and was eventually hanged. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Carleton [née Moders], Mary," http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4676 (accessed June 11, 2015).

repetition and undifferentiated-ness of the chapter. However, I would argue that these very factors are representative of a duality that Vane finds productive. On the one hand, the repetition forms of a social critique of the constricted and continually narrowing options available to Lady Vane, and evidence of her argument that being forced to live with her husband put her in an unnatural and unsupportable position; on the other, the choice to continue narrating similar iterations in sequence reveals Frances's allegiance to the literary as a space that makes possible the multiplicity of print selves.

The plot of "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" is so peripatetic and action-packed that it seems beyond the endurance of the physical body: Pickle marvels that Lady Vane's "delicate frame" could withstand such exertions and "variety of adventure."[81] This "variety of adventure" and the repetition of its discrete elements make it difficult to find a handle to Lady Vane's plot. Of the relatively few critics who attend to "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality," most dispense with making any sustained analysis of the plot, and even attempts at plot summary are rare. After all, narratives that are almost entirely event-based are difficult to condense. There is little superfluous commentary or description to cut from a life that careens from one crisis to the next. A plot-dense text has little fat to trim, so all excisions entail cutting muscle. That said, certain patterns are discernible. The plot spans just under twenty years, running from Frances's coming

[81] Upon the conclusion of Lady Vane's narration, Pickle's first response is to express "his astonishment at the variety of adventure she had undergone, which was such as he thought sufficient to destroy the most hardy and robust constitution, and therefore infinitely more than enough to overwhelm one of her delicate frame" (538).

out into society circa 1732 through the time of publication in 1751.[82] The broad strokes of the narrative are relatively straightforward: Lady Vane tells the romantic and sexual adventures of her early life, focusing on her thwarted attempts to escape the control of her second husband, with whom she has been forced to return to live after fleeing him at least six times. For Aileen Douglas, the arc of the narrative is that of an "exemplary body," whose susceptibility is both physical and sentimental, in conflict with its restricted legal and social roles: "The system against which Lady Vane justifies herself is that which makes a woman's body the property of her husband in matrimony, and the argument she uses against it is her own physical experience."[83] I diverge from this reading in my conviction that Lady Vane's singularity, will, and sheer endurance remove her from the category of exemplarity.

The "circumstances of the story" (371) are far more baroque. Keeping a running tally across several categories exposes some order. First and most important are the tally of husbands and lovers. There are two husbands, Lord William Hamilton and Lord Vane, and six lovers who offer Frances their protection, Sewallis Shirley, Lord Berkeley, the "philosophical friend," Lord D—, Lord Fortescue, and the Grand Tour boy. To Lady Vane's great unhappiness, the most sustained of these relationships is her marriage to Lord Vane, with whom she breaks continually

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[82] The exact dating within the "Memoirs" is often less than clear. In identifying the year of Frances's coming out as 1732, I work backwards from the externally established date of her first marriage as May 1733, according to *Gentleman's Magazine* iii. 268: "Ld Wm Hamilton, married to Miss Haws, Daughter of Francis Haws, Esq.: a South Sea Director in 1720. able to give her 40,000 L." Cited in Clifford, 794. It seems likely that Lady Vane shaves a few years off her age when she claims to have come out in Bath "in my thirteenth year" (433) and to have married her second husband as a widow and "giddy girl of eighteen" (450). The exact date of Lady Vane's birth remains unknown, but Clifford and others put it as c. 1715 (793)—which would have made her closer to eighteen years old at the time of her first marriage and twenty at the time of her second.

[83] Aileen Douglas, *Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 85.

and reluctantly accepts in six major reconciliations. Frances has two pregnancies and childbirths; the first ends with a still-birth and the second child dies in infancy. Twice, her life is saved by the ministrations of Dr. S—, a much-speculated upon historical personage who is almost certainly not Smollett.[84] In the attempts to enjoy peace of mind and/or throw off her husband, Frances makes six trips to the Continent, where she twice enjoys the protection of the French King and once the Queen of Hungary. In London alone, Frances takes lodgings separate from her husband in Poland Street, Mount-Street, Pall-Mall, Sackville-Street, Brook-Street, Park-Street, Westminster, Suffolk-Street, Conduit-Street, and Leicester-Fields. In the countryside, she takes houses in Casehorton (now Carshalton), Lincoln, and Essex. There are scores of blanked-out proper names and places in reference to scores of individuals. As Lady Vane's status in society grows increasingly precarious, the threat of violence escalates: Lord Vane draws his sword on her maid, kidnaps Frances, and holds her captive for eleven days; Lord Vane enters her bedroom with sword drawn, later stating that "his intention was to kill the bats" (427); Lord Vane lays siege to Frances's house in Essex, aided by "several domestics armed" (432); a first highwayman robs Frances on the Bagshot heath—he is a "foot-pad armed with a broad sword" (434)—and later "two hussars…with their sabres drawn" (437) rob Frances of her money, jewels, and baggage just outside Mechlin; a jilted lover, Lord D—, enters her bedroom with a horse-whip (435). Dire financial necessity is the factor that compels Frances to return to "this man whom destiny hath appointed my scourge" (414), her husband.

What, then, is the functional value of interpolating Lady Vane's "Memoirs" for its containing novel of *Peregrine Pickle*? Loose as the plotting may be, there is a discernible arc

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[84] See footnote 50 for the speculations on the identity of "Dr. S."

from passion and pleasure to financial constraint and mounting violence. Confronted with these impinging realities, Frances's character shifts its stance from heroic rebellion and a transgressive self-reliance to stoical detachment and resignation. Long in coming as it is, Frances's acceptance that she must continue to live in a domestic arrangement with her husband is analogous to Pickle's prison stay, which persuades him to take on his socially-appointed role as landowner and lawful husband, despite the many social hypocrisies that Pickle so abhors. Pickle and Lady Vane connect over a shared set of principles and a posture of self-reliant rebellion against the social norm. The accounts of their adventures are similarly event-packed and peripatetic, but Lady Vane's picaresque movements are over time increasingly delimited by her female perspective: as Frances loses her public reputation, there are parts of society into which she is no longer admitted. Pickle suffers a similar social exclusion during his extended prison stay, with a crucial distinction: Pickle is allowed a return to respectable society after prison, while no such public rehabilitation is possible for Lady Vane.

But even within the bounds of Pickle's narrative, would the character Lady Vane acknowledge such rehabilitation as her goal? Her own narrative closes with the image of Lady Vane as a radical free agent, subjected to the power of her loathed husband but able to sublimate herself through a stoical detachment, "detaching myself, as much as possible, from the supposition that there is any such existence [as Lord Vane] upon earth" (449). After so thoroughly lashing mid-eighteenth-century *bon ton*, the main novel sits awkwardly with its comic ending, which it squeezes into the nine pages of "Chapter the Last." The inclusion of "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" and the MacKercher case prove the novel's openness to interpolation and raise the specter of the narratives and perspectives to which we are never given

access. Above all, it raises the question of what we might have heard from Emilia, Pickle's long-tried beloved and eventual wife, whom the hero had drugged in an unsuccessful attempt on her person. Quickly married off and bedded in the final chapter, Emilia's fate is to be a Clarissa who outwits her Lovelace and is punished by marrying him. Unlike Clarissa, and unlike Lady Vane for that matter, Emilia wields no agency over the telling of her own tale. It is the interpolation of Lady Vane's tale that adumbrates Emilia's silence and makes it visible. Marred by such lacunae as Emilia's silence and by the violence of its social satire, the text neither fully endorses Pickle's putatively happy ending nor mourns Vane's lack of one.

A different twist on the question is, what is the functional value of interpolating Lady Vane's *Memoirs* into Smollett's novel *for the text of the Memoirs itself*? After all, scandalous memoirs had a proven track record of popularity and profitability as stand-alone publications. In 1748, "*An Apology for the Conduct of Mrs. Teresia Constantia Phillips*" sold over 8,000 copies for a revenue of some 2400 pounds.[85] Susan Staves registers the peculiarity of this embedding when she introduces the *Memoirs* as "one of the best mid-century scandalous autobiographies" and qualifies its interpolation as something of a caveat, "*but* published in Tobias Smollett's novel, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751)"[86] [Italics mine]. Interpolating the presentist, topical material of a scandalous memoir within a fictional form engages a different iteration of the dialectic between fact and fiction that Michael McKeon identified as central to the emergence of the novel.[87] In contrast to the past century's vexed critical debates over the authorship of

[85] Staves, 272.

[86] Ibid., 273.

[87] McKeon, 21.

"Memoirs," the readiness of Lady Vane's readers to ascribe authorship to her because the autobiographical content was "hers" gives evidence of how fiction itself was, as Catherine Gallagher and Irene Tucker have also argued, still emerging as *as a concept*.[88] For many of Vane's readers, fact and fiction can be overlapping terms, even while the distinction between them remains visible, though less than urgent. Lady Vane's appeal for justice renders her Memoirs a direct political intervention, and the heated paper war it ignited gives proof of its success. Part of what makes Lady Vane's claim so powerful is a dual movement: the Memoirs' interpolation within a fictional narrative both makes its realism more scandalous and more persuasive, but also underwrites a logic in which the political intervention is in part so compelling because it conceives of itself in literary terms and forms—in particular, the multiplicability of print selves. Lady Vane's appeal is above all a defense of her public character by reimagining and representing it within a literary space that allows for a more flexible play, both between public and private and between the referential and fictional. The literary tools of repetition, periphrasis, and above all, the representation of interiority allow Vane's appeal to direct itself toward the sympathetic imagination.

After all, Lord Vane had previously wielded the power of publication as an instrument for regulating his marital affairs: once publishing a newspaper advertisement offering a 100-pound reward for this return of his wife, and later proclaiming his ill-usage by the mother of a woman

[88] Catherine Gallager, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel, Volume 1: History, Geography, and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 336–362. Irene Tucker, *A Probable State: The Novel, the Contract and the Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

he was courting while still legally married to Frances.[89] Lord Vane published his public claims in the context of journalistic nonfiction, but Lady Vane's decision to publish her fact-based, material claims within the setting of a fictional world proclaimed a different set of allegiances. Lord Vane offered a cash reward in the newspaper for his lost wife, and his legal and financial privilege meant his advertisement might have achieved its object. He offers a real reward within a legal and economic system that recognizes his claims as real.

But what does inserting Somebody's Story into Nobody's Story do for Lady Vane? What work does fiction do on the real? Perhaps, Lady Vane chooses a fictional home for her autobiographical appeal because she knows there will be no real reward or improvement for her story—even if she wins the case she is setting out for the court of public opinion, the terms of her marriage settlement and marital law offer her no tangible redress. Indeed, they do not recognize her right to lodge this current appeal.[90] With no remaining legal recourse, Lady Vane self-authorizes her autobiography and decides to league it with the newly emerging field of fiction-making, a space that recognizes the existence of her claims, and gives them tangible form in print, the only tangible redress available to her. Lady Vane's autobiographical text not only enjoys the pay-offs of fiction, it delights in the self-creation of its heroine and her transfiguration from being a source of public scandal to becoming a literary character. And within the bounds of Smollett's novel, at least, Lady Vane can imagine the sympathetic and sensible audience that will give weight to her case over her husband's contesting one. By allowing her "Memoirs" to be

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[89] Emma Plaskitt, "Vane , Frances Anne, Viscountess Vane (bap. 1715, d. 1788)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28084, accessed 9 May 2016].

[90] A series of threatened legal actions had come to nothing. Brack, 38.

interpolated into Smollett's novel, Vane succeeds in defining her own sociable spaces— "(in a select partie)" and in print—and contributes to the multiplication of her print selves. Other versions— "indistinctly related, with numberless errors and misrepresentations" (432)—will from the time of the "Memoirs" publication forward be forced into dialogue with her own. At least one version of her print self resides beyond the reach of her husband's legal claim and sadistic behaviors, having successfully sublimated itself to a level of stoical self-resignation.

V. Women talking about women: "The History of Leonora"

In contrast to Lady Vane's extensive autobiographical narrative, Henry Fielding's brief but problematic "The History of Leonora," stages an interpolation that is backwards facing and directed toward literary antecedents rather than topical material. Whereas the literary status of "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" has been a disputed question—an argument that I have undertaken above—the staging of "Leonora" is explicitly literary, with its exotically named heroine, its romance-styled title, and its highly-mannered characters working together to make a recognized homage to *Don Quixote*. Even the novel's table of contents includes capitula inventories that flag "Leonora" as a stand-alone history within the larger history of *Joseph*

Andrews.[91] "The History of Leonora" relates the crime and punishment of an "Unfortunate Jilt" who hazards an honest suitor for a fashionable one before losing both. One moral lesson is as clear as a fable: the coquette and jilt will end up herself a spinster. What function the interpolated tale performs in the larger novel is less evident.

As unlike as the sexual choices of Leonora and Lady Vane may be, their narratives each offer an argument for how female narrators can subvert eighteenth-century norms that reduced women's character to sexual continence and "No character at all." Instead, these narrators find room for agency in the mediation between Somebody and Nobody, and in the process, create female characters notably richer than those populating other parts of the novel. In the case of "The History of Leonora," I will argue that it is the separation between the interpolated tale's posited narrator and narrated heroine—and the self-conscious slippage made possible by this separation—that carves out a space for subversively redefining female character. The switch between the narrative world of *Joseph Andrews* to Leonora's is an extreme leap—between both genres and sexes. From Fielding's roving picaresque with the bawdiness and chamber-pot humor of its upstairs-downstairs mobility, the narrative switches to sentimental romance and its depiction of the domestic sphere of genteel women, a narrative that remains resolutely upstairs and resolutely chaste. Leonora is no Frances Lady Vane, openly taking extramarital lovers and

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[91] The table of contents was added for the second edition. *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams. Written in Imitation of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote,* 2nd ed. (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1742). In total, there are three interpolated tales in *Joseph Andrews*, all of which have received considerable critical scrutiny and are flagged in the table of contents. Following with "The History of Leonora," the other two interpolated tales are described as "In which the Gentleman relates the History of his Life" and "The History of two Friends" (11). There is one other capitula description that feints in this direction: "The History of Betty, the Chambermaid, and an Account of what occasioned the violent Scene in the preceding Chapter" (11). However, while this tale does give a thumbnail biography of Betty, it shares a narrator with the primary narrative, so it does not fall in the category of interpolated tales.

then railing against the social constraints that would deny her any agency of body or property; instead, Leonora responds to her loss of reputation by withdrawing into celibacy and melancholy retirement.

Although Henry Fielding included interpolated tales in all of his novels, that did not stop him from criticizing the form. When reviewing *The Female Quixote* in 1752, Fielding dismissed the interpolated tales of his erstwhile model Cervantes as "extravagant and incredible… approaches very near to the Romances he ridicules."[92] Recycling the same charges of improbability and inutility, Walter Scott damned "The History of Leonora" from *Joseph Andrews* and "The Man of the Hill" from *Tom Jones* as rare flaws of plotting inserted "equally unnecessarily and inartificially."[93] For many readers, the tale's writing, characters, and plot are flat, mannered, stilted, and unnatural—a parody of the romances that Fielding take such pains to asperse in his Preface.[94] After all, Fielding had criticized Cervantes for allowing his interpolated

[92] Fielding, *Covent-Garden Journal,* 281.

[93] Walter Scott, "Henry Fielding" in *Miscellaneous Prose Works* 3, *Biographical Memoirs of Eminent Novelists and Other Distinguished Persons* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834) 1820; Scott (1829) 3:58–82. Scott's flash of negativity appears in the same article that crowned Fielding "the father of the English novel."

[94] Fielding distinguishes his "comic Romance" from the continental romances he tasks as artistic failures: "Such are those voluminous Works commonly called Romances, namely, *Clelia*, *Cleopatra*, *Astraea*, *Cassandra*, the *Grand Cyrus*, and innumerable others which contain, as I apprehend, very little Instruction or Entertainment" (3).

tales to lapse into the absurd improbabilities of romance; one reading of "The History of Leonora" is to interpret it as a satiric parody of Cervantes's formal lapses.[95]

The critical debate over "Leonora's" awkward interpolation within *Joseph Andrews* has continued to flare up periodically since the novel's publication. Jeffrey Williams singled out "the interpolated tales in *Joseph Andrews*—especially 'The History of Leonora or the Unfortunate Jilt' along with the brief 'History of Two Friends'" as moments that "draw disproportionate" critical scrutiny: "In a sense, their very irrelevance seems to spur yet further explanations of their place in the novel, and thereby to provide a fertile site for critical performance."[96] Fielding's greatest champions often number among the harshest critics of his interpolated tales. Fielding biographer Martin Battestin asks whether the interpolated tales were "worth the telling,"[97] while Homer Goldberg begins his defense by deeming them "tame little cautionary tales" and concludes by declaring them "admittedly minor and 'special' elements of the novel."[98] Responding to Goldberg just two years later in the same journal, *Modern Philology*, Brooks launches a stronger defense of why Fielding's interpolations were "justified" by arguing that they provided thematic connections and clarifying differences on broad topics

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[95] Claude Rawson points out that any parody of *Quixote* veers toward mis-en-abime: "The Cervantic element is itself not so much parody as imitation of parody, since parody of romances was already built into *Don Quixote*, as parody of traveller's tales and other genres was built into Lucian's true History and the books of Rabelais" (xxxi). I diverge from Rawson only in suggesting that Fielding found plenty of room to parody *Quixote*'s interpolated tales, which he considered lapses from parody into what should be the parodic object—in other words, romance. Claude Rawson, introduction to *Joseph Andrews and Shamela,* by Henry Fielding (London: Random House, 1998): xi–xxxiv.

[96] Williams, 473.

[97] Martin Battestin, *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art* (Middletown, CT: 1955), 119.

[98] Goldberg, 295.

such as marriage and feminine sensibility.[99] While recognizing that interpolated tales abound in eighteenth-century English novels, J. Paul Hunter insists on branding a subset of them "romantic" and thus insufficiently dedicated to realism and individual consciousness: "These tales are patently not at home in the novel's world, and they stand out sharply... these tales do not deal in subjectivity or introspection very deeply."[100]

One line of criticism recuperates Fielding's interpolated tales as devices for interrogating other literary forms. Jeffrey Perl interprets "The History of Leonora" as "a digression" that dismantles the epistolary novel with Fielding's "negating irony."[101] Comparing *Joseph Andrews*'s three interpolated tales to unwelcoming inns ("few accommodations have proven less hospitable to wary and sometimes wearied travellers"), Bartolomeo concedes upfront that the tales demonstrate a "manifest inferiority in plot, style, and narrative voice, to the larger narrative in which they are imbedded," but recuperates their utility by interpreting them as "allegories of reading."[102] Meanwhile, for readers like Thomas Keymer, Fielding's interpolated tales contribute to the richness of the novel's heteroglossia: "Just as readerships are plural and

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[99] Brooks, ibid.

[100] Hunter, *Before Novels*, 47, 326.

[101] Jeffrey M. Perl, "Anagogic Surfaces: How to Read *Joseph Andrews*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 22 (1981), 249–70.

[102] Joseph F. Bartolomeo, "Interpolated Tales as Allegories of Reading: *Joseph Andrews*," *Studies in the Novel* 23.4 (Winter 1991): 405–415, 405. Bartolomeo grounds his simile in Fielding's comparison of capitula titles to "so many Inscriptions over the Gates of Inns…informing the Reader what Entertainment he is to expect, which if he likes not, he may travel on to the next" (405).

unpredictable, moreover, so too is Fielding's own authorial persona. With its interpolated tales and different diegetic levels, the narrative of *Joseph Andrews* is far from homogenous."[103]

In Cervantine fashion, "The History of Leonora" emerges as a traveler's tale told to while away idle time spent in transit. Making their accident-prone way back from London to Lady Booby's estate, Joseph Andrews and Abraham Adams are bailed out of another innkeeper's debt by Mrs. Slipslop, who passes by in a coach. After much back and forth about precedent and propriety—should the clergyman or injured man take the privilege of riding inside?—Parson Adams joins Mrs. Slipslop in the coach while Joseph continues on horseback. This decision removes our eponymous protagonist from "the narrative circle."[104] When the coach passes by a great house, one of the Lady passengers hails it with a cry: "Yonder lives the unfortunate Leonora, if one can justly call a Woman unfortunate, whom we must own at the same time guilty, and the Author of her own Calamity" (155). Highly-wrought to the point of highfalutin, the greeting craves elaboration, which the interpolated tale provides. But first, the text stages the interpolation by providing it with a sociable context:

> This was abundantly sufficient to awaken the Curiosity of Mr. Adams, as indeed it did that of the whole Company, who jointly solicited the Lady to acquaint them with Leonora's History, since it seemed, by what she had said, to contain something remarkable.
>
> The Lady, who was perfectly well bred, did not require many Entreaties, and having only wished their Entertainment might make amends for the Company's Attention, she began in the following manner. [Chapter break] (155)

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[103] Thomas Keymer, introduction to *History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, by Henry Fielding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xxix.

[104] Williams, 473.

Like Lady Vane within the plot of *Peregrine Pickle*, the anonymous Lady narrator agrees to share her tale upon the request of a small company. She relays her tale orally and conceives of its narration as part of a sociable exchange: Entertainment for Attention. Only at the tale's end will the Lady theorize about the didactic content of this "remarkable" history.

Thus introduced, "The History of Leonora" occupies Book II Chapters IV and VI and then hangs suspended during the intervening fifth chapter, in which the coach stops for dinner and the diegesis briefly reasserts itself to recount a low kitchen brawl that involves a pan of hog's blood and hairpulling. While Leonora's history is constructed as belonging to a separate retrospective time, Fielding allows the diegetic present to puncture the lady teller's story space by having her interlocutors interject questions and commentary: Parson Adams, Miss Grave-airs, Mrs. Slipslop all interrupt over the course of the tale's telling. Permeable as "The History of Leonora" may be, the text marks the twice-told tale's status as a distinct narrative by titling it and setting it apart in two chapters whose capitula declare their own status as contained and ultimately completed narratives, "The History of Leonora" and "Conclusion of the Unfortunate Jilt."

While the text's titling of the interpolated tale is straightforward and lucid, the shift in narrators is halting and belabored. Although the typographical cues are initially withheld, the narrative shifts point of view upon entering chapter IV and with it Leonora's tale:

> Leonora was the Daughter of a Gentleman of Fortune; she was tall and well-shaped, ...she inclined so attentive an Ear to every Compliment of Horatio, that she often smiled even when it was too delicate for her Comprehension.
>
> 'Pray, Madam,' says *Adams*, 'who was this Squire Horatio?'
>
> Horatio, says the Lady, was a young Gentleman of good Family… (155, 157)

Only the diegetic set up establishes that this embedded history is being related through direct speech and that the lady narrator delivers the tale orally to her coach-load of listeners, who have the capacity to interrupt. The tale's opening sentence betrays no indication that the Fielding-esque narrator has given way to "the Lady:" the pronouns remain in the third-person, and there is no punctuation or tagged speaker to denote the lines as dialogue. The text treats her comments more as narration than as dialogue. Although the Lady occasionally offers commentary, generally she stands in a secondhand relationship to the content of her tale, which she relates almost entirely in third person. Fielding gives the Lady no quotation marks and with her occasional first-person interjections, behaves almost exactly like the novel's primary narrator, what I think of as a masked first-person narrator. That the Lady has taken over the helm of the narrative becomes explicit only when Parson Adams interrupts the narrative—his dialogue is given in quotation marks and clearly tagged, while the Lady's "dialogue" is unbound by quotation marks, and her speech is untagged except when she picks up her narrative after interruption.

In comparison to "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" or even the main narrative of *Joseph Andrews*, the plot of "The History of Leonora" is straightforward, compact, and concordant with Fielding's stated purpose of exposing Vanity as one of the roots of Affectation, a classic satirical goal.[105] As the title's "Unfortunate Jilt," Leonora casts off her local fiancé, Horatio, for the flashy Bellarmine, before being cast off in turn. While the foundational joke of *Joseph Andrews* is female lust and male virtue, "The History of Leonora" performs another gender inversion: from male narrator to female narrator, and from one set of female vices to another—from female

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[105] Henry Fielding, "Preface" to *Joseph Andrews* (London: A Millar, 1742), xii–xiii.

lust to female inconstancy, but also to female competition and aggression. The tale is powered by the force of women talking about women: the sympathetic narrator who recounts Leonora's history, and the town's pitiless women who proscribe her to social death. Here, it is worth giving a fuller summary of the interpolation's plot. The heroine is a vivacious and much-petted eighteen year-old, "the Daughter of a Gentleman of Fortune," who forms an attachment of mutually expressed "delicate Sentiments" (163) with Horatio, a barrister of good family. Like Leonora, Horatio bears a literary name that signals the genre switch from realism to romance. The date is already set for the wedding when Leonora—dazzled by a coach and six and Parisian tailoring—falls in love with the newcomer Bellarmine. When Horatio wounds Bellarmine in a duel, Leonora jilts her fiancé in favor of her new admirer. Ignoring her worldly aunt's "prudent Advice," Leonora sacrifices her public reputation in order to nurse her suitor. The female consensus is that Leonora has ruined herself: "The Ladies of the Town began to take her Conduct under consideration; it was the chief Topick of Discourse at their Tea-Tables, and was severely censured by the most part" (201). Upon discovering that Leonora's father will provide no dowry, Bellarmine jilts Leonora in a letter peppered with school boy French: "I am sorry to have the Honor to tell you I am not the *heureux* person destined for your divine arms…Adieu, ma princesse! Ah Amour!" (207). The narrator declares she cannot depict her heroine's reader response: "I shall not attempt Ladies, to describe Leonora's Condition when she received this Letter. It is a Picture of Horrour, which I should have as little pleasure in drawing as you in beholding" (208). Having utterly destroyed her public name, Leonora withdraws from society and enforces her own self-silencing.

Thus, "The History of Leonora" presents the case of a female narrator's recounting a third-person history of a heroine. While the plot content reads as simple and fabular, the form presents multiple strands of complication. In addition to the awkwardly handled shift from Fielding's narrator to the new Lady narrator, the tale treats authorship as a field for play. The lady narrator's first spoken line explicitly introduces Leonora as both a romantic heroine and as an author, "Yonder lives the unfortunate Leonora, if one can justly call a Woman unfortunate, whom we must own at the same time guilty, and the Author of her own Calamity" (105). Leonora may not tell her own tale, but her tale's teller recognizes her as "the Author of her own Calamity" nonetheless. The coach passengers too recognize Leonora's claim to authorship, as revealed when Miss Grave-airs formulates Leonora's plotted future in literary terms as "the Sequel:" "I never knew any of these forward Sluts come to good," (says the Lady, who refused Joseph's Entrance into the Coach), nor shall I wonder at any thing she doth in the Sequel" (89). On one level, the conception that Leonora is "Author of her own Calamity" as well as its "Sequel" reinforces that she is the agent of her own social disgrace, responsible for "the Fall from chastity that transformed "character" and all other experience."[106] On another, the lady narrator ascribes authorship to Leonora much in the same way that Lady Vane's readers ascribed authorship to her. A woman's body is so inseparable from the events of her sexual fall that her character, whether real or fictional, maintains a privileged status as author—the right to claim narratives of her fall as her own, and the attendant right to cast off spurious narratives as false.[107]

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[106] Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, 180.

[107] Lady Vane also exercises this right through her participation in the paper war against John Hill and his *Lady Frail*.

The text poses an extradiegetic authorship debate in the form of a cumbersome and front-loaded footnote, which most scholars now accept points to Sarah Fielding as the author of a letter embedded within the interpolated tale: "[1]This Letter was written by a young Lady on reading the former" (91). The text presents a two-part letter exchange: "Horatio to Leonora," and "[1]Leonora to Horatio." Within the diegesis, the Lady maintains her stance as oral narrator despite the epistolary insertion by explaining that she has both letters memorized: "I will if you please repeat you a Letter from each of them which I have got by heart" (90). The footnote marks a split between fictional and real bodies: Somebody, an unspecified "young Lady" outside of the text, has written the letter attributed to Leonora within the text, a Nobody whose tale is narrated by another Nobody within the text. Most critics follow Martin Battestin in identifying Sarah Fielding as the most likely "young Lady."[108] But why make and mark this authorial split? The first two of the letter's three paragraphs adhere to the conventions of love-letter writing, praising Horatio for "the Refinement of your Mind" and rhapsodizing over predictions of future happiness. The third paragraph, however, turns toward the unromantic topics of conversational tedium and female competition: "…what anxious Hours must I spend who am condemn'd by Custom to the Conversation of Women, whose natural Curiosity leads them to pry into all my Thoughts and whose Envy" manufactures "malicious Designs" (91–92). In the locutionary context of "The History of Leonora," the coach load of passengers and we as readers are thrust

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[108] Martin Battestin with Ruthe R. Battestin, *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), 332. Burrows and Hassall give an excellent summary of the critical debate surrounding Fielding's interpolated tales and pose shrewd questions: "Why did Fielding choose to experiment with dramatic writing most often in interpolated female narratives? Did Fielding believe, or come to believe that a male writer could characterize females better by pretending to let them characterize themselves, as Richardson and Defoe had done, or indeed by turning them over to a female writer?" J. F. Burrows and A. J. Hassall, "*Anna Boleyn* and the Authenticity of Fielding's Feminine Narratives," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1988), 427–53. See also Keymer, 387.

into the position of the bored and curious women who "pry into all" of Leonora's thoughts. This rhetorical move highlights female authorship and women talking about women as the linked problems at the heart of this interpolated tale.

The anonymous narrator had introduced her protagonist as "at the same time guilty, and the Author of her own Calamity" (105), but by the tale's conclusion she offers a more nuanced interpretation of her own narrative. In a serpentine final sentence, the tale-teller extrapolates a surprising moral and advocates greater seriousness in the education of women. The price exacted from Leonora exceeds the balance of her wrongs, and the narrator shifts some of blame to more mature agents and the social structure that leaves young women without the fortification of serious education:

> She immediately left the Place, where she was the Subject of Conversation and Ridicule, and retired to that House I shewed you when I began the Story, where she hath ever since led a disconsolate Life, and deserves perhaps Pity for her Misfortunes more than our Censure, for a Behaviour to which the Artifices of her Aunt very probably contributed, and to which very young Women are often rendered too liable, by that blameable Levity in the Education of our Sex. (112)

Though her indiscretion, Leonora has moved from "the Author of her own Calamity" to the "Subject of Conversation and Ridicule;" she has ceded control of her own narrative to the table-talk of the "Ladies of the Town." For Leonora as heroine of her own story and "Author of her own Calamity," the concordance between public fame and personal agency is exact: there is no slippage for her to work between her character in the eyes of the world and her character as literary heroine. While Lady Vane fastens on her interpolated "Memoirs" as a space for self-transfiguration, Leonora consigns herself to a fate of self-silencing.

But extradiegetically, the Lady narrator stakes out a less contracted ground for female character and arrogates to herself capacities that eluded Leonora—the creative capacities of narrative interpretation, audience formation, and literary allusion. In describing the disjuncture between Bellarmine's display and his actual fortune, the narrator invokes characters from classical history, much to the astonishment of Adams, the impassioned classicist: "[Bellarmine] (notwithstanding all his finery, was not quite so rich as a Croesus or an Attalus.)[109] 'Attalus,' says Mr. Adams, 'but pray how came you acquainted with these Names?' The Lady smiled at the Question, and proceeded" (170–171). Unlike her heroine Leonora, the Lady narrator was not educated with "blameable Levity;" her mind is stocked with classical characters that give her perspective on the dazzle of Bellarmine's equipage and "Cinnamon Colour" coat, of which Parson Adams had requested a full description.[110] Acceding to Adams's request, the lady gives a blazon of Bellarmine's Parisian fashion: "I have been told, he had on a Cut-Velvet Coat of a Cinnamon Colour, lined with a Pink Satten, embroidered all over with Gold; his Waistcoat, which was Cloth of Silver, was embroidered with Gold likewise." In this exchange, the lady proves herself capable not only of making classical allusions but of narrating the realist novel as well the sentimental romance. By indulging Adams's request and then returning to her previously established patterns, the lady reveals that she is the one setting the genre. The

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[109] Both are men of great wealth. Attalus is the more obscure reference. Horace referred to the "flourishing finances" of an Attalus. See J. Thomas, *The Universal Dictionary of Biography and Mythology* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009), 201.

[110] Although Parson Adams is famous for wearing a cassock so shabby that he is routinely believed to be an imposter rather than a real clergymen, he, in a gender reversal, requests the particular details of Bellarmine's dress, which the narrator had simply described as "remarkably fine" and eclipsing the clothing of everyone else at the ball. Only after anatomizing Bellarmine's ensemble does the lady reveal his name: "I cannot be particular as to the rest of his Dress: but it was all in the French Fashion, for Bellarmine, (that was his Name) was just arrived from Paris" (167–168).

narrator withholds the source of her unusual knowledge; her only response to Adams's pedagogical question is to smile. Nonetheless, through this passing classical allusion and her ability to pivot between genres, the Lady demonstrates herself to be a peer to both Fielding and his primary narrator. For Fielding, after all, the right to narrate is best limited to those who have the requisite education—which Fielding was persuaded meant a classical education.

After the narrator proves her classical credentials, "The History of Leonora" pursues a second intertextual engagement with a popular eighteenth-century romance-cum-novel, *The Adventures of Lindamira, A Lady of Quality* (1702), a clever blend of satire and sentiment that follows the internecine dealings of Lindamira with her four suitors, along with the trials of eight other couples.[111] Like the narrator's casual mentioning of Croesus or an Attalus, the intertext *Lindamira* enters the tale via literary allusion. In this case, it is the most severe of Leonora's critics who receives a literary twist in her allusive naming, which the narrator delivers as part of a sinuously ironic sentence:

> The Ladies of the Town began to take her Conduct under consideration; it was the chief Topick of Discourse at their Tea-Tables, and was very severely censured by the most part; especially by *Lindamira*, a Lady whose discreet and starch Carriage, together with a constant Attendance at Church three times a day, had utterly defeated many malicious Attacks on her own Reputation: for such was the Envy that *Lindmira'*s Virtue had attracted, that notwithstanding her own strict Behavior and strict Enquiry into the Lives of others, she had not been able to escape being the Mark of some Arrows herself, which however did her no Injury; a Blessing perhaps owed by her to the Clergy, who were her chief male Companions, and with two or three of whom she had been barbarously and unjustly calumniated…The extreme Delicacy of *Lindamira*'s Virtue was cruelly hurt by these Freedoms which Leonora allowed herself; she said, "it was an Affront to her Sex, that she did not imagine it consistent with any Woman's Honour to speak to the Creature, or be seen in her Company; and that, for her part, she should always refuse to dance at an Assembly with her, for fear of Contamination, by taking her by the Hand." (201–202)

[111] Anonymous, *The Adventures of Lindamira, A Lady of Quality*, ed. Benjamin Boyce (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1949).

These long two sentences offer what may be the novel's most acid critique of the social policing of women by other women, the tyranny of the "Tea-Tables," and the hypocrisy that inevitably results when smearing another woman's public character is an approved way of fortifying your own. Lindamira is the single character to emerge from the otherwise undifferentiated "Ladies of the Town" who ostracize Leonora while themselves remaining nameless and faceless. Within "The History of Leonora," her role is brief but clear: this Lindamira character is self-serving hypocrite who hides her own misdeeds under cover of gossip and false piety, two forms of cant that Fielding detested.

Read in context of the 1702 novel, this thumbnail sketch of Lindamira forms a *Shamela*-esque satire that turns the original heroine's virtue on its head. Despite a title that smacks of the scandalous memoir genre, *The Adventures of Lindamira, A Lady of Quality* narrates neither extra-marital liaisons nor bath-house seductions, a-la-Delarivier Manley. A gentlewoman and a female wit, Lindamira is given to pranks like anonymous letter-writing and attending the theatre in disguise. Unlike Pamela, Lindamira is no goody two-shoes and no proclaimer of her own virtue. However, she does stick to a principled line that Fielding may have found equally risible: Lindamira convinces her beloved that the honorable course of action is to marry another woman for money. The 1702 novel treats Lindamira's action as noble, self-sacrificing, and morally justified under the current system of dependence, patronage, and inheritance. Although Lindamira and Cleomidon enjoy a mutual attachment, she persuades him that it is his duty to marry the heiress chosen by his uncle, upon whom he is dependent. Conveniently, Cleomidon's wife dies, clearing the way for Lindamira to claim her Cleomidon, and the uncle blesses the

lovers' delayed union. Like the Pamela of Fielding's reading, Lindamira turns a blind eye to the victims of the providential logic that she discerns behind her own social and romantic successes. In a sympathetic reading of the original novel, Lindamira is a constant lover who engages in benign pranks and friendships while weathering many delays before her marriage to Cleomidon. In a satiric reading, Lindamira is a coquette and mischief-maker whose coldness causes the death of one suitor and almost kills her beloved; despite gestures toward sentiment and benevolence, her self-serving worldview papers over the multiple deaths attributed to her romantic misadventures and scheming.

But what does the text achieve by inserting a satirized and unsympathetic Lindamira into "The History of Leonora?" The immediate and obvious effect is to provide a moral contrast between Leonora and Lindamira, two sonorously-named and highly romantic characters. Leonora's misdeeds look increasingly venial in light of her severe punishment, the naivete of her decision-making, and the strategic deceit that allows Lindamira such license in her own conduct. Understanding the system of female sexual conduct and social policing in which she lives, Lindamira recognizes that public character is all and uses whatever means necessary to safeguard her reputation—including trashing the characters of indiscreet women. The insertion of Lindamira adds yet another level of intertextual exchange to an already-complex narrative. It embeds within an interpolated tale a mini-parody of an early novel that itself included interpolated tales. This narrative reduplication creates a *mise-en-abyme* effect that darkens Fielding's satire. Although a negative model of how women should read and narrate the public characters of other women, Lindamira finds her specious self-narrative publicly accepted and her tactics rewarded.

What is crucial is that Leonora's lady narrator offers an alternative model of interpretation. Her own character remains opaque, but the narrative she crafts for Leonora sharply condemns the hypocrisies attendant on policing female chastity and offers a sympathetic reading of female character, informed by classical literary models as well as contemporary scandal fiction. By failing to listen to the worldly-wise advice of her aunt, Leonora ceded control of her public character to character assassins like Lindamira and her undifferentiated friends from the tea table circuit. Leonora's lady narrator wrests control back through her mastery of literary devices: allusion, irony, point of view, and audience formation. But the lady narrator's ability to reclaim Leonora's character comes at the cost of her own status as a literary character—with part of her moral authority rooted in her impersonality, the erudite lady functions more as a narrator than a character in her own right. However, by withholding her name and refusing to divulge the source of her own classical education, the lady narrator chooses to maintain this level of anonymity, a tool that she leverages into narrative agency.

In *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*, Leah Price argues that literary criticism takes as its operating premise "a gentleman's agreement to take the parts of a work for the whole."[112] "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" and "The History of Leonora" flout this gentleman's contract and frame their transgression in gendered terms. Previous interlocutors have suggested that these tales are marginal ones, but I suggest that the spatialized concepts of marginality and centrality don't quite apply—relying, as they do, on a progressive logic that the interpolated actively disrupts. After all, interpolated tales are not just parts within the whole. They can function as whole narratives in their own right, as well as supplementary parts of larger

[112] Price, 2.

narratives. In potentiality at least, interpolated tales can be both self and other to the containing narrative. Like Adam's rib, interpolated tales are both expendable and powerful in their capacity to spawn new forms. For Lady Vane and Leonora's narrator, interpolated tales are a site for articulating new iterations of female character and for lodging a material critique of the punitive logic that reduces a woman's character to sexual reputation.

To conclude by returning to "Epistle to a Lady," Pope's final stanza tacks a caveat on to his blazon of the near perfections of Martha Blount, the woman who had once "let fall" the line "Most women have no characters at all" (1–2). Even a woman "at best" (270) still requires "this" (281), an antecedentless pronoun that refers first to the poem at hand and second to the role of a narrator or poet as necessary to articulate female character: "Be this a woman's fame: with this unblest,/Toasts live a scorn, and queens may die a jest" (281–282). Without "this," a woman's character is no more substantial than "a woman's fame," the public character accorded to her by others and so often ambiguated with sexual continence. Lady Vane and the lady narrator of "The History of Leonora" seize upon the interpolated tale as a space for crafting "this," the space that allows them to step into Pope's role and by blessing woman's fame, to transfigure it into woman's character: "The generous god…the world shall know it,/ To you gave sense, good humor, and a poet" (289, 291–292).

CHAPTER THREE

Didactic Experiments: Form and Community

> Twas Fielding's talent, with ingenuous Art,
> To trace the secret mazes of the Heart.
> In language tun'd to please its infant thought,
> The tender breast with prudent care SHE taught.
> Nature to HER, her boldest pencil lent,
> And blest HER with a mind of vast extent;
> A mind, that nobly scorn'd each low desire,
> And glow'd with pure Religion's warmest fire.
> Mary Scott, writing of Sarah Fielding in *The Female Advocate* (1774)[1]

> My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sits down to cut out and prepare work for 12 poor girls, whose schooling they pay for.
> Elizabeth Montagu, writing of Sarah Scott to Gilbert West (1755)[2]

In the reform-minded Christian and literary circles in and outside of Bath, Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott were near contemporaries, friends, and, as sisters to Henry Fielding and Elizabeth Montagu, respectively, younger siblings to fame.[3] As the epigraph demonstrates, both women were celebrated as educators. In *The Female Advocate*, an encomium on female worthies, Mary Scott publicly commemorates Fielding for her didactic prose, "language tun'd to please its infant thought." Writing for the private sphere in a personal letter, Elizabeth Montagu emphasizes her

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[1] Mary Scott, *The Female Advocate* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), 22–23. See also a modern edition edited by Gae Holladay (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, no. 224, 1983).

[2] Elizabeth Montagu to Dr. Gilbert West, 16 October 1755. Pohl, introduction to *The Letters of Sarah Scott* 2 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), xi.

[3] I rely on Linda Bree and Nicole Pohl as the primary biographers of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott. Linda Bree, *Sarah Fielding* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 23. Nicole Pohl, introduction to *The Letters of Sarah Scott*. See Elizabeth Child on the "great deal of cultural authority" wielded by female authors in Bath. "'To Sing the Town:' Women, Place, and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Bath," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 28 (1999): 155–172, 161.

younger sister's knack for discerning and preparing didactic patterns, sitting "down to cut out and prepare work," presumably sort of of needlework, which her pupils could follow as part of the day's learning.

In fact, each epigraph could apply to either woman, as both Fielding and Scott tailored their prose and narrative structures to suit their didactic purposes. Building on scholarship that examines Fielding and Scott separately, I add a new formal argument to the incontrovertible body of evidence that demonstrates how each woman proposed alternative social constructs in her personal life and through the content of her novels.[4] Instead of focusing on the asymmetrical relation between Scott and Fielding as patron and dependent, this chapter considers how Sarah Fielding acted as a literary influence on Sarah Scott, and discovers a previously unexplored connection between the highly-patterned narrative and calendrical schema of *The Governess, Or the Little Female Academy* (1749) and *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762).[5] Reading Fielding and Scott together renders observable how they experiment with interpolated tales to produce new hybrid forms such as distributed point of view, group protagonists, and increasingly, patterned narrative schema. I trace a trajectory from Fielding's first novel, *The*

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[4] I am especially indebted to the work of Betty Rizzo, Nicole Pohl, Betty Schellenberg, and Alessa Johns. Betty Rizzo, *Companions without vows: Relationships among eighteenth-century British women* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994); Nicole Pohl, introduction to *The Letters of Sarah Scott* 2 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014); Betty Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle: Rereading the English Novel, 1740–1775* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Alessa Johns, *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003). Betty Schellenberg has separate chapters on both Sarahs, Scott and Fielding; her attention to form is one inspiration for this project. I find one article that does consider the two women together, but the text of the article appears to exist only in Korean. Ashley Stockstill, "Better Homes and Gardens: The Fairy World(s) of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 6.2 (1998): 137–158.

[5] Though two decades younger, Sarah Scott provided financial support and mediated between Fielding and richer patrons like Lady Bab and Elizabeth Montagu. Bree argues that the asymmetrical relation between Scott and Fielding "veer[ed] toward that of patron to dependent," and that Scott and Montagu felt "protective rather than appreciative" of the friend they often referred to as "poor Fielding." Bree, 23.

Adventures of David Simple (1744), which migrates attention away from the controlling narrator and protagonist to a chorus of mostly female tale-tellers, through *The Governess* and *Millenium Hall* (1762), which overlay their round-robin of storytellers on top of a temporal grid of marked days. Fielding and Scott's sequels, *David Simple*: *Volume the Last* (1753) and *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), too, experiment with storytelling and its potential for regulating and reforming sociability. By shifting attention away from a central narrator or character to a cooperative structure of laterally-directed stories and storytellers, these novels promote a sideways perspective that disassociates selfhood from individualism and redistributes subjectivity across social networks.[6] While not all individuals end up being incorporated into these communal structures, the philosophical novels of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott recognize everyone as a latent tale-teller whose life story has the potential to be networked.

I: Redistributing Point of View in *David Simple*

As with Lady Vane, Sarah Fielding's position as an author was, and, to some extent, is, complicated by her sex. Her preference for anonymity and her practice of collaborating with her brother muddle the task of ascribing authorship for Fielding's early publications. As discussed in the previous chapter, scholars speculate that Sarah Fielding wrote part or all of "The History of

[6] These structures, by advancing multiplicity and branching laterally, and, often, non-hierarchically, bear an affinity to what Deleuze and Guattari termed the "rhizomatic." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* Trans. Brian Massumi. (London and New York: Continuum, 2004) in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1972–1980).

Leonora" from *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and "The History of Anna Boleyn" in *A Journey from this World to the Next* (1743).[7] She may also have written *Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House, as Supposed to be Related by Themselves* (1759).[8] Nevertheless, despite her use of the conventional anonymous signature "by a Lady" and some spurious attributions to her brother, Sarah Fielding was for the rest of her lifetime recognized as "the Author of David Simple."[9] Upon publication in 1744, *David Simple* was immediately "the hit of the season," featuring in the correspondence of Sarah Scott, Elizabeth Montagu, Catherine Talbot, and Elizabeth Carter, and a second edition was underway within three months.[10] April London argues that Fielding's contemporaries most prized her "revelation of inwardness," and often constructed this praise "through contrast with her brother's work," as in the letter Samuel Richardson wrote to Sarah in 1756: "His was but as the knowledge of the outside of a clock-work machine, while your's was that of all the finer springs and movements of the inside."[11] Mary Scott, too, as we have seen in the first epigraph, recirculated the stock association of

[7] Bree supports ascribing authorship to Sarah in both cases of collaboration with Henry, though she remains skeptical about the *Magdalen House* narrative. Bree, viii, ix.

[8] Peter Sabor, introduction to *The Adventures of David Simple* and *Volume the Last*, by Sarah Fielding (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), xxi. Sabor notes that both Catherine Talbot and Elizabeth Montagu wrote to Elizabeth Carter crediting the work to Sarah Fielding.

[9] Sabor, xxvi. Henry Fielding was listed as the author of *David Simple* for eighteenth-century translations into French and for the single British republication of *David Simple* in the nineteenth century, *Adventures in Search of a Real Friend* (1822). To demonstrate that Fielding's peers knew her to be the author of *David Simple*, Bree cites Joseph Warton for writing in 1746, two years after the novel's publication, that he "spent two evenings with Fielding and his sister, who wrote David Simple," J. Wooll, *Biographical Memoirs of the Late Rev. Joseph Warton* (1806), 215. Bree, xxxiv.

[10] Bree, "introduction," (xi).

[11] April London, review of *The Adventures of David Simple* by Sarah Fielding; and *The Adventures of David Simple, Volume the Last* by Sarah Fielding, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 69.1 (Winter 1999/2000): 218–219, 219.

Fielding and inwardness, lauding her ability “To trace the secret mazes of the Heart.”[12] As one of sixty verse portraits, the octet dedicated to Sarah Fielding falls almost exactly at the poem’s halfway point, surrounded by sketches of the poets Mary Masters and Elizabeth Tollett.[13] Fielding’s position in the poem reminds us that her art promotes a form of inwardness that flourishes not in isolation, but by branching outwards in multiple directions through a narrative network forged by the presumption of transhistorical social bonds among women.

Like Henry Fielding, Charlotte Lennox, and Laurence Sterne, Sarah Fielding participated in the midcentury craze for *Don Quixote,* on which she models her idealistic hero and her use of interpolated tales.[14] Both Fielding siblings proclaim their sense of obligation via paratexts. In 1742, the title page for *Joseph Andrews* had trumpeted it as "Written in Imitation of the Manner of CERVANTES, Author of Don Quixote.”[15] Two years later, in the “Advertisement to the Reader,” Sarah Fielding identified the *The Adventures of David Simple*, as a “Moral Romance,” a philosophical quest for “a Person who could be trusted, one who was capable of being a real Friend.”[16] When David’s “Scheme” meets ridicule from shrewder characters, the narrator

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[12] Scott, 22–23; cited by Sabor, vii.

[13] Scott, 20, 23. Over 522 lines of rhymed couplets, *The Female Advocate* constructs what Moira Ferguson has described as “a pantheon of over sixty accomplished women from the sixteenth century to her own day” and a “highly concentrated (and versified) female literary history.” Moira Ferguson, ”The Cause of My Sex": Mary Scott and the Female Literary Tradition, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 50.4 (Autumn 1987): 359–377, 370.

[14] Sabor notes that the invasive revisions Henry Fielding made to the second edition of *David Simple* stressed its Quixotic character. Henry “made some six hundred substantive changes to the text,” including interpolating an entirely new passage that described David’s idea of a “true Friend” as “the Fantom, the Idol of his Soul’s Admiration. In the Worship of which he at length grew such an Enthusiast, that he was in this Point only as mad as Quixote himself could be with Knight Errantry.” Sabor, xxviii.

[15] Sabor, xxviii.

[16] Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple* and *Volume the Last*, ed. Peter Sabor (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 58. Further citations will be given parenthetically in the text.

explicitly places his combined status as hero and fool in the Cervantine tradition, "for his Man of Goodness and Virtue was, to him, what Dulcinea was to *Don Quixote*" (76). Instead of a rogue tumbling between episodic misadventures, her hero is a blameless man of property and sensibility traveling London in search of one true friend.[17] But like the picaro, he remains a largely passive actor in his episodic ambling, more acted upon than actor. What Fielding takes from the Cervantine model is a detached perspective ironized not only through the triangulation of the worldly narrator, Quixote, and the reader, but also through a consort of secondary tale-tellers. David's picaresque movements around London put him in contact with a litany of voices, all of them needy or malevolent or both.

As with *Don Quixote*, the array of interpolated tales in *David Simple* and their muchness have confounded the common reader and critic alike. Within months of the novel's publication in 1744, Lady Grey wrote to Catherine Talbot that her traveling companions "amused ourselves upon the Road with David Simple, & it really did amuse me extreamly." Nonetheless, she complained that the interpolated personal histories grew tedious, "I think I could have spared or at least shorten'd some of the Stories."[18] Henry Fielding, in the Preface he composed for his revised Second Edition, had defensively articulated the novel's form as "a Series of separate

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[17] Schellenberg finds that David's passivity and tender-heartedness make him a "wandering sentimental picaro," while Bryan Mangano compares David and Don Quixote as characters who explore friendship, and whose sequels turn away from comedy to focus "on themes of failure and deception." Betty Schellenberg, *The Conversational Circle*, 26. Bryan Mangano, "Ideal Friendship and the Paradoxes of Narration in Sarah Fielding's *David Simple*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 26.2 (Winter 2013-14): 165–188, 166.

[18] Jemima, Marchioness Grey, Lady Lucas, to Catherine Talbot, 22 May 1744, Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records: Lady Lucas collection; cited in Bree, xxxvi. Bree cites Grey to support her claim that "even some of *David Simple*'s earliest readers were disconcerted by the number and length of inset tales, and the consequent change of focus to and from David's own quest" (xxix).

Adventures detached from, and independent on each other, yet all tending to one great End."[19] Unsurprisingly, Henry Fielding privileges plot resolution, "all tending to one great End," as a function that integrates the proliferation of women's personal histories, "Series of separate Adventures." I, however, find the phrase "independent on each other" more illustrative of Sarah Fielding's technique. Though possibly a misprision on Henry's part, the articulation of "independent on" suggests the construction of a laterally-directed and imbricated form, in which each narrative stacks, like terracotta roofing tiles, "on" the next.

More recent scholars have shared this discomfort over how to deal with the novel's glut of non-primary stories and storytellers. Arnold Needham, who interprets the novel as broken into unrelated and unordered "blocks of narrative," argues that it "begins to disintegrate at the end of the first episode,"[20] while Bree identifies an "overarching structure" in "the rhythm of the connections within and between these various episodes."[21] Liz Bellamy, Michael Genovese, Simon Stern and Karen Binhammer read Fielding's interpolated tales as economic metaphors for changing "commercial" values, "the character of self-interest," "the contemporary debate over

[19] Sabor, xxix.

[20] Arnold Needham, *The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding* (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1943).

[21] Bree, 43.

literary property," and "the currency of exchange."[22] Janine Barchas, Linda Bree, and Betty Schellenberg all interrogate the relation between gender and literary style. Barchas gives a succinct account of how Fielding's third-person narrator "fades away," though I disagree with her conclusion that it is a "non-verbal world which the women of her novel increasingly come to inhabit."[23] Betty Schellenberg identifies a phenomenon she calls "the conversational circle," a narrative model in which "individuals encountered by chance form a network of related characters bringing past and present into congruence and enabling the foundation of an ideally familial community."[24] In a cognate argument, Bree maintains that the novel's "structural coherence" depends less on David's search for a friend than "on airing, from different angles and points of view, the key issues with which the novel is most closely concerned."[25]

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[22]Liz Bellamy, *Commerce, Morality and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 134. Michael Genovese, "'A mixture of bad in all': The character of self-interest in Sarah Fielding's *David Simple," The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual* 22 (December 2012): 207–231; Simon Stern, "Speech and Property in *David Simple," ELH* 79.3 (Fall 2012): 623–654, 626; Katherine Binhammer, "Circulating Stories and Narrative Currency in *David Simple*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, (Spring 2015): 1–19. These critics of *David Simple* build on a broad body of research that studies the relation between the emergent discourses of sentimentalism and capitalism. See also G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender, and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996); Robert Markley, "Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue," in *The New Eighteenth-Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (New York and London: Methuen, 1987); Wendy Motooka, *The Age of Reasons: Quixotism, Sentimentalism, and Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Gillian Skinner, *Sensibility and Economics in the Novel, 1740–1800: The Price of a Tear* (Palgrave: Basingstoke, 1999).

[23] Janine Barchas, "Sarah Fielding's Dashing Style and Eighteenth-Century Print Culture," *ELH* 63.3 (Fall 1996): 633–656, 633, 641. Though the narrator certainly fades into the background, Simon Stern is right to remind us that she intrudes again at the novel's close." Simon Stern, "Speech and Property in *David Simple*," *ELH* 79.3 (Fall 2012): 623–654, 625.

[24] Schellenberg, 27.

[25] Bree, introduction to *The Adventures of David Simple*, by Sarah Fielding (London: Penguin Press, 2002), xxix–xxx.

My own reading of David Simple foregrounds point of view, not simply as a technique for airing “key issues,” but as an epistemological and formal problem in its own right. What is the effect of redistributing point of view across a network of tale-tellers? Schellenberg, whose readings emphasize the domestic, consensus, and the submission of the individual to the group, criticizes the circularity of the narrative form she has identified and argues that it tends to “reinforce and consolidate” traditional structures of authority.[26] Along with Linda Bree, I consider Fielding’s narrative experiments disruptive. Pointing to the intact histories of Cynthia, Camilla, and Isabelle, Bree explicitly links Fielding’s gender critique to form: “Sarah Fielding offers a wide-ranging critique—more rather than less radical because inscribed in an inset tale rather than as part of the main narrative—of the position of women in contemporary society.”[27] The argument that the form of the interpolated tale can whet the edge of political critique is one I undertake over the course of this project. The voices that all-but silence David are not simply vehicles for speaking out about “others’ economic self-interests.”[28] Rather, their communitarian form provides Fielding with a device for shifting the narrative balance away from individual subjectivity to collective alternatives, a lateral rather than circular movement.

The plot of *David Simple* progresses as a quest for narrative. As a child, David held all he had in common with his brother Daniel, but this trust relationship was unreciprocated. The primal fall occurs in chapter II, when Daniel forges their father’s will and suborns witnesses to disinherit David. Although David recovers his share of the fortune, he is bereft by the loss of his

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[26] Schellenberg, 9.

[27] Bree, xxvi.

[28] Genovese, 211.

brother's friendship. Meandering through London, from Ludgate Hill to the 'Change, Fleet Street, the Strand, Covent-Garden, Pall-Mall, and Westminster, David's search for one "Real Friend" unfolds as a search for stories, as the various people he meets narrate the pivotal moral decisions of their lives and their outcomes. In this context, storytelling emerges as David's mechanism for determining where to invest his trust along with his money. Having resolved to sound "all the Classes and Degrees of Men," David relies on a tireless "Curiosity" to convince strangers to narrate their histories. A term repeated by the text nineteen times, "Curiosity" becomes the narrative driver for the plot, which increasingly shifts its attention from David to the series of unfortunate characters he meets—and mostly, to unfortunate women. In keeping with the novel's commitment to narrative surplus, the search for "one real friend" turns up three: a homosocial best friend, a companionate wife, and a companionate wife for the homosocial best friend. Intriguingly, the first real Friend David encounters is Cynthia, the core character who most exceeds the roles available to her: Cynthia is the heterosexual best friend, wit, and most skillful narrator in the book.[29] Only after rescuing Cynthia from her fate as a Toad-Eater does David find his one true friend split into two bodies, Valentine and Camilla, a brother and sister who become his true friend and his companionate wife. Even then, it is the sister Camilla who speaks on behalf of Valentine, the true friend who remains largely voiceless and blank. In the narrative world of David Simple, women are the most vulnerable economic players, but they are also the most powerful storytellers.

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[29] Betty Schellenberg gives a pithy description of the friends' relation, "Cynthia as intellectual leader and David as chief sympathizer," 29. Deborah Down-Miers makes a case for recognizing Cynthia as novel's true heroine. While I agree that Cynthia is more interesting and cleverer than David, appointing her as the sole protagonist would obviate what I consider one of Fielding's goals: to build a novel around a hero who is often foolish and almost always boring. Deborah Down-Miers, "Springing the Trap: Subtexts and Subversions," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670–1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), 311.

Starting with the introduction of Cynthia, both David's presence and the narrator's presence shrink as a series of interpolated tale tellers predominate. From Book II Chapter VII through the novel's conclusion in Book IV Chapter IX, six interpolated tales consume almost two thirds of the narrative. The longest "blocks of narrative" are three first-person interpolated tales in which a female speaker tells the history of her life and which the intertitles denominate as such: "The History of Cynthia," "The History of Camilla," and "The History of Isabelle." Embedded within the latter is a doubly interpolated tale (the fourth interpolated tale), in which Isabelle relates a school story about her brother, the Marquis de Stainville. Adopting the first-person perspective, Isabelle ventriloquizes her brother and insists that the narrative is "in his own Words" (159). Cynthia then tells an interpolated tale (the fifth tale) in third-person about a coquette, her sister, and the coquette's many beaux. The final interpolated tale (the sixth tale) relates the death-bed history and confession of an atheist, who is revealed to be David's wicked brother, Daniel, whose attempt to steal his brother's inheritance launched David's search for a real friend.

All of the six interpolated tales are catalogues of woe and grievance that respond to the secondary prong of David's quest: "his design was to seek out one capable of being a real Friend, *and to assist all those, who had been thrown into Misfortunes by the ill Usage of others*" [italics mine] (21). As reports of such "ill Usage," the interpolated tales all function either to voice protest of harms that seem irremediable or to provide didactic case studies of how not to live. Meanwhile, David's role switches to an interlocutor function: his "Curiosity" catalyzes the storytelling moment while his empathetic predisposition as the Man of Sensibility provides a ground for his moral and affective response. In listening so raptly and responding so rapturously,

David follows part of his own prescription for the behavior becoming to a real friend: one "who could not see another's Sufferings without Pain" (59). Throughout the novel, the demands of sensibility usually travel through one extra level of mediation—it is more frequently instantiated as one who could not *hear* of another's sufferings without pain. To close the narrative circuit, David's inherited fortune allows him to take what becomes his main form of action: removing sufferers of "ill Usage" into new lodgings, where they are dependent only on David's benevolence, and never made to feel it. In the pages that follow, I focus on "The History of Cynthia" and "The History of Camilla" as the most representative tales and the ones whose tellers are fully integrated into the Simple family by novel's end.

Cynthia stands as the novel's liveliest narrator: arch, knowing, nimble, and a woman of feeling, but unlike David, our man of feeling, no gull. David encounters Cynthia while making a tour of "High Life" alongside his quondam friend, Mr. Varnish. The chapter's ironic intertitle makes clear that this episode will interrogate the problem of locating words in context and pursuing stable definitions: "In which People of no Fortune may learn what monstrous Ingratitude they are guilty of, when they are insensible of the great Obligation of being ill used; with many other Things which I shall not acquaint the Reader before-hand" (76). The grim joke here lies in the ironic reversal of "ingratitude" and "obligation," which the fortunate use to bludgeon the unfortunate and make them feel the sting of dependence. Having been orphaned and disinherited, Cynthia is living as the companion to a fine lady, who flogs cognates of the word "ingratitude" to capture Cynthia's flaws as an "ungrateful Creature" guilty of "monstrous Ingratitude" (79). When David offers assistance, Cynthia demurs with the reasoning "That she dared not ever receive any more Obligations" (79). According to the narrator, it is the

"Innocence of David's Looks, and the Sincerity which was visible in his Manner of expressing himself" that persuade Cynthia to share "the History of her Life; which will be the Subject of another Chapter" (79).

Cynthia's tale narrates betrayal by a patron and conforms to the genre of social satire. The intertitle for her tale articulates the problem of mismatched sensibility and sociability, "In which is displayed the Misery young Persons, who have any Taste, suffer, unless they are bred up with reasonable People" (80). An alternative title might have identified the chapter for what it is, "The History of Cynthia," a title retrospectively posited by the following chapter's "The Continuation of the History of Cynthia" (88). Cynthia's personal history opens the new chapter without textual markers or apology. As a sprightly, first-person Wit, Cynthia simply declares, "I cannot say, I ever had any Happiness in my Life" (80). Cynthia's family responds to her childhood desire for education with stock antifeminist discourse promoting needlework as more advantageous for husband-catching. Left unprovided for, Cynthia becomes a self-described "Toad-Eater," a position she compares to "Slavery" under "pretence of…Affection" (91). From the beginning, Cynthia positions herself as a dictionary to David's innocence and ironically explains a sequence of words: Wit, Libertine, making a Butt of someone, Raillery, her own re-definition of Prostitution, Toad-Eater, fine Ladies, Tyranny and Slavery, led Captain. Cynthia's definitions are idiosyncratic, context-driven, and brimming with wit. When David asks Cynthia to elaborate on "what she meant by fine Ladies," she alludes to Pope's "Epistle to a Lady" by jesting that their Characters evade definition: "I know them when I meet with them; but they have so little of what we call Character, that I don't know how to go about the describing them. They are made up of Caprice—and Whim—they love—and hate—and are angry—and pleased—

without knowing any reason for either" (90). Her satiric redefinition of prostitution aims at the heart of the gentry, "for I shall always call it Prostitution, for a Woman who has Sense, and has been tolerably educated, to marry a Clown and a Fool" (86). Filled with amazement and "Curiosity," David pays for Cynthia to "go into a Lodging by herself" (94).

The second long interpolation, "The History of Camilla," compasses an even bleaker series of events. Her betrayal occurs within the family circle, the genre is sentimental with flashes of the gothic, and the tone is wounded without being bitter or humorous. Each woman's narrative matches her character. Cynthia is the wit, capable of sentiment and empathy, but Camilla is the consummate woman of feeling. Camilla's opening line frames her tale as a sentimental one, which she cannot tell without embodied displays of affect, "The task I have undertaken, Sir, cannot be performed without Interruptions from the Remembrance of past Sorrows; but I make no question, you will be so good as to pardon my Weaknesses" (104).[30] When Camilla asserts her confidence that David will "pardon [her] Weaknesses," she uses the phrase as a euphemism for tears. Despite these tears and her sensible heart, Camilla is hardly weak. She is, unexpectedly, the protectress of her brother, Valentine, whom she guards from the memory of their shared past: "only whenever her Brother came in, she must leave off, not being willing to remind him of some Scenes, which she used her utmost Art to make him forget" (104). In a surprising gender reversal, for these siblings it is the brother who must be shielded from information considered too indelicate for his hearing. It is Camilla who carries the burden of knowledge and the responsibility of bearing witness to the wrongs they have suffered.

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[30] Camilla employs a similar turn of phrase when she recounts having to tell Valentine that their father has hit her: "with the Interruption of Sighs and Tears, I told him every thing that had happened" (123).

"The History of Camilla" is structured by the cruel conflation between public reputation and private character that pins this novel's heroines. Spanning 76 pages and three chapters, it comprises a psychological study of female competition and sexual manipulation. The plot arc is as clear as a fairy tale: the wicked stepmother who turns her husband against his own children. The domestic interior becomes a gothic space of filial alienation and violence. Her emotions continually on the fret, Camilla questions whether she was *compos mentis* while living with her father and Livia, and apologizes for the loose form of her narrative, "I tell you, Sir, every thing without Order, and hope you will be so good as to forgive the Incoherence of my Style" (118). The tale's double-climax arrives when Camilla's father strikes her and then Livia accuses the siblings of incest (120). As the woman of feeling, Camilla loses her voice, trembles, and swoons. As the man of feeling, David mirrors her response: he is able to catch Camilla and prevent her fall, but he too is at danger of fainting away. They are a complementary pair: Camilla is the sentimental narrator who recounts her sufferings and re-performs them in the contortions of her own body, while David is the interlocutor whose curiosity prompts the telling of her tale and whose sympathetic imagination allows him to feel what she feels, almost to the same extent. Crucially, Camilla recovers and continues her autobiographical account. Telling her own story is Camilla's only form of redress.

Along with the novel's other interpolated tales, "The History of Camilla" claims oral narrative as a site for both self-making and community building. The examples of Cynthia and Camilla suggest that, in this novel, the impulse to narrate is a feminine attribute. Notably, "The History of Camilla" counts as the only "History of Valentine." Although Valentine is half of the "Real Friend" David has been seeking, he is a mostly silent partner afforded very few lines of

direct discourse. First, his sister, and eventually, his wife, do the talking for him. The novel relies on the deus ex machina of an unexpected inheritance to bring about a comic ending. Once Camilla and Valentine are reunited with their father, David immediately asks for Camilla's hand in marriage. The doubling logic of the novel requires a double wedding, but Valentine plays true to character by remaining a silent part. So it is Camilla who asks their father's consent for Valentine's wedding: "Camilla saw Valentine was afraid to speak, as Cynthia had not yet given him Permission; and therefore undertook it herself… On this Valentine fell on his Knees, and said, his Sister had asked the only thing could make him happy" (235). Ultimately, laterally-directed narratives spoken by women are the force that knits Fielding's benevolent community together. For all of Camilla's adherence to the gendered norms of softness and sentiment, she authorizes herself to speak as the head of her household. In speaking for her brother to form his engagement, she asserts a right for her language to count in the legal and sexual sphere.

Over the course of *David Simple*, the narrative balance increasingly shifts away from the third-person omniscient narrator and its focalization through David to a series of interpolated tales. The central tales, of Cynthia and Camilla, allow marginalized women to articulate the case of wrongs done to them. Crucially, Fielding constructs her network of tale-tellers to branch out laterally, from sister to brother, from wife to husband, from friend to friend, among members of a group who recognize everyone as a potential tale-teller. They rely on the circulation of narrative to redistribute resources and to decide where to invest their trust. In the utopian ending, this distribution prospers because the double wedding creates a closed system in which both narrative and resources circulate. Already vetted by having shared their narratives of suffering and having responded appropriately to others' narratives, all the actors included in this "little Society" (237)

operate in good faith. The narrator argues that her closing tableau is replicable: “And, as strong a Picture as this is of real Happiness, it is in the power of every Community to attain it…it is this Tenderness and Benevolence, which alone can give any real Pleasure, and which I most sincerely wish to all my readers” (237–238). *David Simple*’s virtuous cycle of narrative lays the conditions that render this “Tenderness and Benevolence” possible. The sequel will raise the question of how to deal with non-virtuous actors, and whether David’s benevolent system includes a sufficient method for sorting out the difference between duplicity and sincerity.

II: *Volume the Last*: Storytelling in Bad Faith

Published in March 1753, nine years after the first two volumes, *The Adventures of David Simple, Volume the Last* is a two-book sequel that resumes the narrative following the double wedding that unites David, Camilla, Cynthia, and Valentine into a blended family. The first chapter provides “a brief Account of the Transaction of eleven years” (245), which have seen the addition of six children and a series of dire financial setbacks. Eleven is the magical number here: eleven family members, eleven years elapsed, and the oldest daughter is “little Camilla, now eleven Years old” (261). The preface warns that the sequel carries a solemn moral, that “the Attainment of our Wishes is but too often the Beginning of our Sorrow” (241), and the first chapter cites Milton in turning “These Notes to tragic” (261). The sequel then narrates how the poor but happy family of eleven loses their little remaining fortune to fraud and one by one

succumbs to disease: exposure, old age, fever induced by over-enthusiastic playing, Jamaican fever, small pox, measles, galloping consumption, maternal and paternal grief. By the novel's end, just two of the eleven remain alive: Cynthia and little Camilla, like Horatio and Fortinbras directed to recall the tragedy of what happened here at the conclusion of *Hamlet*. Like Samuel Richardson's move from *Pamela* (1740) to *Clarissa* (1748), Fielding darkens her conception of providential logic in the move from the *David Simple* (1744) to *Volume the Last* (1753). From "Virtue Rewarded" and the virtuous cycle of David's well-funded benevolence, the narrative shifts to a death-facing providential logic that distributes rewards only in the after life.

On the face of it, *Volume the Last* gives little scope for the study of interpolated tales. Morally orientated toward the next world, the narrative takes on a simpler form than the first four books. Rather than the multifold interpolations that enlivened the virtuous picaresque of David Simple, the narrator's voice is all but unbroken in the sequel. There are, however, two brief but crucial exceptions: the beggar's tale and the story of Mrs. Tilson. One is a tale motivated by distress that lodges an appeal for benevolence. The other is a tale motivated by malice and self-interest that seeks to preempt charity. Both are implicated in the final unraveling of the Simple family. In the tension between the two tales, told for good and ill, Fielding interrogates storytelling as a practice that carries both promise and risk. The specter of storytelling activated by malice haunts Fielding's moral tale.

When poverty renders the Simples stationary, David neither encounters new claimants upon his benevolence nor has a fortune to disburse. The single exception is a roving beggar who stumbles upon David at home, an event signposted by the intertitle, "David again enjoys his favourite Pleasure of relieving one of his Fellow Creatures in Distress, with the Consequences

that attended it" (312–313).[31] For the first time in this novel, the narrator give way to a new speaker. In his story, the unnamed beggar emerges as an avatar for David, who had been disinherited as the result of forgery in the part. Well educated and "bred up in Affluence," the man is "disinherited and banished" when he marries for love. He and his wife support the family and prepare their children to "earn their Bread by Labour," but the lure of great expectations destroys this plan. An uncle in Scotland promises that he will make them "ample Provision," but they are denied this second fortune by a forged will. Without even the means to pay the family's travel expenses, the beggar has watched his wife and four children perish from want on the road home from Scotland. The beggar's oral autobiography is succinct, calamity-packed, and rational. He recites the train of his Job-like losses chronologically and expresses sentiments worthy of the man of feeling, both about his wife and favorite daughter, "the Image of her Mother, the Darling of my Soul." He is, however, too rational to be an enthusiast, "yet there still remains in me natural Appetite enough to wish to be relieved from this uneasy Pain of Hunger."

The Simple family decides to credit his story after close reading both his body, and its "meagre Looks" and his prose, "This poor Man's Language proved, that he had not had a vulgar Education." Their close reading investigates the beggar's intent and determines that it is genuine distress. The whole family deems the beggar himself as a "wretched Object of Misery" who makes "their own Distresses…light in the Comparison." The rhetoric of the beggar's tale achieves immediate effects, both physical and emotional: little Camilla "forgot her Hunger" and little David "was warmed with the remembrance of…his dear little Sister Fanny." Here, storytelling activates a virtuous cycle of benevolence. The beggar recites his many losses, the

[31] The beggar's tale occupies pages 312–313. All quotations are drawn from those pages.

Simples reflect on their own similar losses and share their scanty portions, the beggar helps David in the garden. However, there are only good faith actors at work in this virtuous narrative cycle, while *David Simple Volume the Last* worries over the possibility of bad faith.

Beyond the Simple's family circle, a vicious narrative cycle brews in response to their virtuous one. When the beggar assists David in the garden, local gossip spreads that the Simples have hired a servant. Fielding's narrator assumes an epic position to satirize gossip and invokes *The Aeneid*: "But now that tall Lady with the hundred Eyes and Ears, mentioned by Virgil, who is well known to be the Publisher of the Transactions of Kings and Heroes, condescended to look into David's humble Garden, and swiftly bore the Tale to Mr. *Orgueil* and Mr. *Nichols*, that David had hired a Servant" (314). Unwittingly, the beggar emerges as the plot driver of the Simple family's destruction. As a result of the beggar-fueled gossip, the Simples' primary creditor, Mr. Nichols, calls in a deed of execution on the family house, which his debt-collector promptly burns down in a drunken accident. The family will never regain their independence. They are given shelter by the Dunsters, the kind family of farmers whose daughter Cynthia had taught to read. Meanwhile, the beggar proves himself a plot driver for good as well as bad fortune by rescuing the three remaining Simple children from the flames. Now, a second baseless rumor spreads, this time that the beggar ignited the fire with a careless pipe. Orgueil takes this rumor as proof that David is too imprudent to be helped, but his "Rule of Rectitude" directs him to find out "the true State of the Case" (318). For the second time the beggar recounts his tale of woe, and receives relief: "when [Mr. Orgueil] heard the poor old Man tell his own Story, he relieved him himself… accompanying his Benefaction with a strict Command that he should immediately leave that Country and get home to work" (318). To Orgueil, the beggar

appears to be a symbol of David's folly in imagining himself in a position to extend charity, a role he finds appropriate only for himself. As a storyteller whose tale of woe criticizes class structure and the legal system, the beggar's narrative voice poses a threat to the county society which ambiguates property and moral authority. Orgueil moves quickly, "Immediately," to silence the beggar's protest narrative by removing the storyteller and his tale from the Country.

The novel's second teller of an interpolated tale designs her narrative to disrupt rather than promote the virtuous cycle of benevolence. Motivated by malice and self-interest, Mrs. Orgueil tells a modern day fable of a man who ruins his family fortune through his generosity toward a friend. The narrator lays bare the venality that drives authorial intent: "Mrs. Orgueil's Reasons for telling this story is pretty plain. And she had in store a dozen of the same Kind; with some one of which she was always entertaining her Husband whenever she had any extraordinary Fears of his generosity" (323). Mrs. Orgueil's worldly parable advances a clear logic of wealth as a zero-sum game. Even before telling the tale, she glosses its moral and directs it against her husband in the imperative mood, "remember that Charity begins at Home, and that it is incumbent on every Man to take Care of his own, and not ruin himself and his Family for the sake of a romantic Friendship, as Mr. Tilson did which Story all the Country knows" (320). Inappropriate generosity is Mr. Tilson's only offense: Mr. Tilson had been mortgaging his estate to help a young friend recover his fortune, but the suit came to nothing when the young man died. Mrs. Orgueil frames the decline of the Tilson family as a tragic fall: "For I tell you Dame Dunster, being reduced from Forty thousand Pounds to Six, is certainly being utterly ruined…for it is a sad thing, Mrs. Dunster, for a Man, under the Pretence of Friendship and Generosity, to ruin his Wife and Family." (322). Ruin, sadness, and filial

alienation are the inevitable consequences of excessive generosity. For Mrs. Orgueil, telling one of her stock stories of financial ruination is her best means of holding in check her husband's occasional flashes of charity.

As a bad faith actor, Mrs. Orgueil wields narrative to consolidate her own class position and defend her property. However, her version of the "History of Mr. Tilson" will go neither uncontested nor uncorrected. Mrs. Orgueil is, as it turns out, an unreliable narrator: "Mrs. Orgueil had an Art, by dropping some Circumstances, and altering and adding others, of turning any Story to whatever Purpose she pleased" (323).[32] In keeping with the novel's bleak tone, Mrs. Orgueil achieves her object. Her husband limits his support of the Simple family to piddling amounts doled out to defray funeral expenses and other emergencies. The Orgueil family survives the novel's slaughterhouse ending with their fortune intact. However, Fielding offers a moral check on the power of Mrs. Orgueil's bad faith narrative—in the figure of a working class woman, Dame Dunster. While Mrs. Orgueil's intended audience is her husband, his mind is preoccupied—"to speak the Truth, [Orgueil] seldom heard much of [his wife's tales], for his Thoughts were otherwise employed." Instead, her primary interlocutor is Dame Dunster, who "greedily hearkened after every Word" (323). Unlike Mr. Orgueil, Dame Dunster is an active listener. She counters with her own set of facts, objects to biased definitions of shared words, and forms her own interpretations.

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[32] Financially-minded as she is, Mrs. Orgueil both inflates the size of the Tilson family's purported fortune and flattens the moral context to fit her own purposes: "For the Truth was, that Mr. *Tilson* originally had but Five hundred a Year—that his Grand-father owed this very Estate to the Family of the young Gentleman whom he had supported in his Law-suit—that his Daughter *Nanny* was contracted to him; and although she really had a very great Affection for him, yet the Match, on the Success of the Law-Suit would have been very advantageous of her Side—Mrs. *Tilson* never was at Court in her Life—Mrs. *Bromley* had really a great Escape by not marrying the Nobleman, so much regretted by Mrs. *Orgueil*—and was at that Time one of the happiest Women in the World" (323).

In a novel concerned with the unreliability of narrative in a credit economy, Dame Dunster embodies female orality and homespun wisdom associated with another time. From the moment Mrs. Orgueil invokes the story of Mr. Tilson, Dame Dunster counters her prejudiced narrative, fact-checks her assertions, and contests her use of individual terms. First, Mrs. Dunster questions whether she and Mrs. Orgueil are speaking of the same Mr. Tilson and then deconstructs what it means to be ruined: "How was that pray, Madam (says my Dame;) for thof[33] Mr. Tilson lived in the next Parish to us, we never heard a Word of the Matter. And if he was ruin'd, he must have met with some good Friend who made up his Loss" (320). Here, Dame Dunster receives Fielding's moral imprimatur in the first-person possessive "my Dame." "My Dame" lays out her counter-evidence to Mrs. Orgueil's version of events and grounds her knowledge of Mr. Tilson through the propinquity of property; he "lived in the next Parish" to the Dunster farm. Dame Dunster reasons that his fortune was intact enough to provide one daughter with a dowry, one with "a very pretty Fortune," and his widow with a "good Jointure." When Mrs. Orgueil asperses Miss Nanny Tilson for cherishing the memory of her fiancee when it was his lawsuit that "ruin'd" her father, Dame Dunster offers a rebuttal in both sentimental and pragmatic terms: "Why so indeed, I have heard Folks say, (cries my Dame;) and for that Reason, 'tis thought as thof Madam Tilson's Jointure, and Miss Nanny's Fortune, will all come among Madam Bromly's Children" (321). As a woman of sensibility, Nanny is right to remain faithful to her beloved. Moreover, her romantic fidelity is compatible with filial loyalty because her inheritance will be absorbed back into the family estate.

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[33] "Thof" is a dialect form of "though." That Fielding ascribes this archaism to Dame Dunster emphasizes the latter's connection to traditional oral modes and her homespun wisdom.

According to the narrative logic of *David Simple*, one of the primary tasks of storytelling is ascertaining who is to be pitied and who is not, and then redistributing resources justly to the most deserving parties. When Mrs. Orgueil opines that Mrs. Bromley is the woman she pities the most in the world, Dame Dunster responds with disingenuous class deference: "Well, to be sure, Madam, (says Mrs. Dunster) your Ladyship must know better than we poor Folks do, who is to be pitied, and who is not." Then the good Dame rattles off a list of counter-evidence that deconstructs Mrs. Orgueil's waspish characterization of the Tilson's ruination:

> … thof all my Neighbours be forever a talking of Mrs. Bromly's Happiness… and as to old Madam Tilson, and Miss Nanny, they be the goodest natured People in all the Country, and by the kind and charitable Actions they be always doing to relieve their poor Neighbours, one should think'em so far from ruined, that they must be worth a Mint of Money. (322)

In contrast to the Virgilian image of negative gossip as the Lady with the hundred Eyes and Ears, here the text depicts a kindlier positive image of gossip that reports on the happiness and charitable largesse of neighbors. Not only are the slandered Tilsons happy, "the goodest natured People," but Dame Dunster conceives of their continual charity as proof that their wealth is self-replenishing, "worth a Mint of Money." What Mrs. Orgueil fails to anticipate is that Dame Dunster, both illiterate and lower-class, has her own means of gathering information and a practiced ability to craft this information into narrative shape. Though it is only a glancing mention, Dame Dunster's "thof all of my Neighbours be forever a talking of Mrs. Bromly's Happiness" conjures the image of a gossip network directed toward reinforcing the positive. Part of an oral tradition that privileges women, Dame Dunster is an eager listener, she "greedily hearkened after every Word" (323), but not a passive receptacle for Mrs. Orgueil's parable.

Instead, Dame Dunster offers a counter-narrative that reevaluates the Tilson family as financially stable, good natured, and genuinely respected by their neighbors.

Even in the deathward spiral of *Volume the Last*, Sarah Fielding never completely turns her back on the potential for networked narratives to promote benevolent action. Dame Dunster exemplifies Fielding's use of interpolated tales to achieve a sideways perspective. In correcting Mrs. Orgueil, she asserts her narrative authority and demands the right to be recognized as a fellow tale-teller. Through this exchange, Fielding reminds us that her construction of networked narratives is a broad one, which recognizes its speakers as inhabiting a plane of latent tale-tellers who also have the potential for their stories and lives to be networked.

III: *The Governess*: Moral, Fable, and Point of View

Often put forward as the first novel written specifically for children, *The Governess; Or the Little Female Academy* (1749) makes good on the promise of its title: explicitly set in school, the novel focuses on the small educational and sociable circle nurtured by Mrs. Teachum, the eponymous governess, and tracks the moral transformation of her students, all of whom are girls. While didacticism features in both *The Adventures of David Simple* and *Volume the Last*, as well as Sarah Fielding's work in every genre, *The Governess* uses didacticism not only as a moral orientation but as the muscle of its plot and the bones of its formal structure. This chapter turns its attention from the novel's didactic content and intent—which are well-established and

inarguable—to its experimentation with didactic form. Upon analyzing Fielding's highly ordered and schematized form, point of view emerges as a tool that can transform individual subjectivities and reorient them toward a more communitarian, and even co-constituted, world view. Part of the complex schema of *The Governess* lies in the alternation of what it presents as paired oppositions: Fable and Moral, description and lifestory, imported narrative and indigenous narrative, unmarked introductory time and measured calendar days. Despite the complexity of this schematic form, its harmonious patterning allows Fielding to deliver moral content in a way that makes it accessible to children. While exhorting feminine obedience and self-regulation, the novel's form enacts a distributed subjectivity and promotes a communitarian rethinking of both virtue and property. It is the attempt to reimagine virtue and property as shared and mutually dependent rather than individual entities that make the possibility of false friendship a specter that haunts all of Fielding's writing. Participating in the same project of experimental narrative and social forms as *David Simple* and its sequel, *The Governess* offers Sarah Fielding's most complete vision of how fiction can reorganize individual subjects into redistributed subjectivities that conceive of their place in the world as fundamentally networked, formed and continually revised in the sociable context of other voices and texts.

To diagram this networked form, I will first attend to the theory that the novel offers of itself and to its critical reception. I will pay particular attention to the structuring oppositions of "Fable and Moral" that Fielding identifies as the novel's methodology in its paratext. In the dedication "To the Honourable Mrs. Poyntz," a former Maid of Honor now married to one of the royal family's tutors, "The Author" hails "those Methods of Fable and Moral…as the most effectual means of conveying useful Instruction" (45). Fielding's use of Fable and Moral as a

two-pronged methodology conforms to Dryden's theorizing of the terms and his view of literature's didactic mission: "The moral is the first business of the poet: this being formed, he contrives such a design or fable as may be most suitable to the moral."[34] When Samuel Johnson published his *Dictionary* five years after *The Governess*, he defined fable as "A feigned story intended to enforce some moral precept"[35] and the noun form of moral as "the doctrine inculcated by a fiction."[36] For both entries, Johnson included the above quotation from Dryden's *Dufresnoy*. However, in the latter instance, Johnson restores a phrase that the prior entry had silently omitted: "The moral is the first business of the poet, *as being the groundwork of his instruction*: this being formed, he contrives such a design or fable as may be most suitable to the moral. Dryden's Dufresnoy." In this formulation, the author must begin with his moral, "the groundwork of his instruction" or his field of meaning, first, and then reverse engineer his fable, which encompasses both plot and form. For these three enlightenment moralists—Dryden, Johnson, and Fielding—the author must work deductively by setting her moral before contriving the design of her fable. Then, the reader works in reverse—starting with plot and form, and extracting meaning from them.

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[34] As Jayne Lewis has demonstrated, Dryden was eighteenth-century England's most influential source of fables, following his publication of *Fables, Ancient and Modern*, just two months before his death in 1700. Jayne Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also W. K. Wimsatt, Jr, "Samuel Johnson and Dryden's 'Du Fresnoy,'" *Studies in Philology*, 48.1, (January 1951): 26–39.

[35] Johnson's definition for fable cited the above sentence of Dryden's and paired it with a citation from Addison's *Spectator*, "The first thing to be considered in an epick poem is the fable, which is perfect or imperfect, according as the action, which it relates, is more or less so."

[36] Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (London: 1755–1756), 757, 1322. For a digital version, see *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic by Samuel Johnson,* ed. Brandi Besalke. Last modified: January 5, 2014. http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/?page_id=7507. http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/?page_id=7070&i=1322.

Fielding uses the opposition of fable and moral as the structuring tension of *The Governess*. She also organizes the novel's many interpolated tales into these two categories. In my reading, fables are imported narratives—fairy tales, letters, a play—that Mrs. Teachum's students receive from outside sources and then read aloud to each other during their leisure time. Morals are the indigenous narratives, original tales that the girls tell about themselves, as catalyzed by applying the fables to their own lives. In other words, the sharing of fables generates more fables, or the subset of fables here denominated as morals. This fable/moral scheme first appears in the Preface, which puts its theory into practice by illustrating "the true Use of Reading" (46) via concrete example: the Fable of the "Magpye" and the Moral of the Watkins sisters. The text glosses both fable and moral as monitory narratives that depict obstacles to the educational process. The Magpye warns students not to "fansy yourselves too wise to be taught" (46). In the fable, the other birds seek to learn the Magpye's "Art of building a Nest" with a roof, but their impatience with the first steps of the lesson causes him to fly away before demonstrating the half of the lesson that would haven been new to them.[37] Next, the Preface holds up the negative example of the Watkins sisters, who earn the contempt of their peers by keeping their clothes in such disarray that they are never ready to leave the house. Thus, the Watkins sisters demonstrate the necessity of developing a system that stores knowledge in "regular Order" rather than "irregular Heaps" (47). The text takes this call to order as a structuring principle. Even the preface's articulation of the novel's "Design" conflates the language of moral purpose and the language of form: "The Design of the following Sheets is to prove to you, that…all manner of Wickedness, is the greatest Folly" (48). Ultimately, the

[37] Fielding bookends her novel with bird fables—her closing fable is about a competition among the birds, in which the dove who doesn't deign to compete wins the prize as happiest bird.

distinction between Moral and Fable collapses, as yet another instance of the impossibility of separating out Form and Content. Nonetheless, for didactic purposes the novel continues to employ Fable and Moral as if the distinction between them were stable.

The Governess provides an original and ritualized application of the distinction between Fable and Moral. The Fable is an oral or written story that operates at a level of remove from the interlocutors' world—the novel's fables include animal fables adapted from Aesop, fairy tales, letters telling of characters living at some distance, and a closet script of Steele's early sentimental comedy, *The Funeral* (1701). For the purposes of this project, I will call these Fables imported interpolated tales, because their contents are seen as arriving in the novel world of Mrs. Teachum's school as discrete units from the outside. The Moral consists of one student's transference of the fable onto her own life story and then sharing the results in the form of an autobiographical confession. As Patrick Fleming has observed, the novel makes a categorical distinction between fairy tales and the girls' lifestories: "Within the frame of *The Governess*, these are autobiographical tales, not fiction."[38] I will call these brief confessional portraits indigenous interpolations, because their plot content—the moral confessions of the students—exists "within the frame" of the novel and hangs together to form the primary substance of the plot. They are interpolated because each girl briefly emerges as a narrator to voice her own lifestory, which can stand alone as a discrete whole that occurs in a separate time and space than does the telling of the tale. Thus, the Fable and Moral operate in a call and response sequence, where a story that enters into the "Little Academy" from elsewhere acts as a trigger both for the

[38] Patrick Fleming, "The Rise of the Moral Tale: Children's Literature, the Novel, and *The Governess,*" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.4 (2013): 463–477, 472.

moral reformation of an individual student and for the production of her autobiographical narrative.

So highly patterned is *The Governess* that it veers on numerology. Nine emerges as a magical number: the "Little Female Academy" accepts nine students who each embody one of nine capital vices, Mrs. Teachum enjoys nine years of companionate bliss with her husband, and the plot counts out nine days, Monday through the following week's Tuesday. As with many of the text's features, the repetition of nine draws on both Christian and classical traditions: the nine female students take on a resonance of the nine female muses while also carrying the association of nine with divine completeness and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.[39] A structural map of *The Governess* hews to a remarkable symmetry: nine girls tell their life stories and slowly purge their previous ill will and character flaws over the course of the nine post-reconciliation days. The plot of the novel lies in tracing the arc of moral reformation followed by each girl and the group as a whole. Each lifestory occupies its own discrete storytelling space, marked off and labeled by intertitles, and is preceded by a description of the girl's person. Here, the narrator describes her rationale as driven by the delight side of the Horatian imperative: "But as, in the reading any one's Story, it is an additional Pleasure to have some Acquaintance with their Persons; and as I delight in giving my little Readers every Pleasure that is in my Power; I shall endeavor… to set before their Eyes the Picture of this good young Creature" (60).

The Governess uses explicit textual markers to help readers discern its regularized schematic pattern. The slim, 245-page volume is not divided into chapters and books. Instead,

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[39] As articulated in 1 Corinthians 12:8–11, there are nine gifts of the holy spirit, which, as acts of grace, cannot be earned. The nine gifts are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

the narrative is ordered by frequent and often descriptive intertitles. First are the paratexts, a conventional dedication and Preface. Then, in the position of Chapter I, stands a reiteration of the title: *The Governess; Or, the Little Female Academy*. Instead of chapter breaks, what follows are 38 intertitles, or descriptive section breaks, which hold some similarities to the conventional use of capitula titles to signpost key plot happenings, a widespread practice by novelists like Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Sarah Fielding in her other novels. In contrast, the intertitles of *The Governess* signpost narrative blocks of variable length without setting them up as narrative units to be counted and assigned a number. Some of the intertitles provide a plot precis in the conventional fashion: "An Account of a Fray, begun and carried on for the sake of an Apple: In which are shewn the sad Effects of Rage and Anger," "A Dialogue between Miss Jenny Peace, and Miss Sukey Jennett, wherein the latter is at last convinced of her own Folly…" (51, 54). However, many of the intertitles follow a standard formula. Each of the nine girls receives first a personal description and then an autobiographical space: "The Description of Miss Jenny Peace" followed by "The Life of Miss Jenny Peace," "The Description of Miss Sukey Jennett" followed by "The Life of Miss Sukey Jennett," and so on for each of the nine girls. The formula remains unbroken.

As with the Fable/Moral trope, Fielding uses oppositions to structure the circumstances of her plot. The narrative's pivotal plot event is two-fold: in brief, a schoolgirl spat followed by reconciliation. In the words of the text's intertitles, the requisite Fielding family parody of an Homeric battle becomes "a Fray, begun and carried on for the sake of an Apple," and the consequent reconciliation is tagged a "Scene of Love and Friendship, quite the Reverse of the Battle." Carrying classical and Biblical overtones, the fray both obeys the logic of Milton's

fortunate fall and parodies it. Fielding dates her calendar to the event: the fray occurs on a Friday night, and the girls make peace on a Sunday, which becomes day zero of the novel's calendar. Only on Monday does Fielding initiate her countdown of nine days, all of which are announced and marked in the intertitles: "MONDAY/ The First Day after their Repentance: And, consequently, the First Day of the Happiness of Miss Jenny Peace and her Companions" (68), "TUESDAY/ The Second Day," (85), and "WEDNESDAY/ The Third Day" (92), and so on through "TUESDAY/ The Ninth Day" (160). Examining the novel as a whole, the pages that precede the marking of the nine calendar days emerge as a preamble. The introduction of Mrs. Teachum and her benevolent project, the fray and reconciliation, and even the description and lifestory of the already-reformed Miss Jenny Peace are instrumental components that set up the almost liturgical calendar to come. The core of the novel is the virtuous cycle of external narrative, autobiographical confession, and pledged reformation that the other eight students act out over the course of nine days.

The exceptional case that paves the way for this virtuous cycle is the autobiography of Jenny Peace, the one student whose reformation occurs prior to her arrival in school. Jenny occupies a privileged position from the moment she enters the novel. Her name is visually set apart and ranked highest by the sentence that introduces all nine students and names them in a playbill-like fashion: "At the Time of the ensuing History, the School (being full) consisted of the Nine following young Ladies:

Miss Jenny Peace,

Miss Sukey Jennett, Miss Nanny Spruce,

Miss Dolly Friendly,	Miss Betty Ford,
Miss Lucy Sly,	Miss Henny Fret,
Miss Patty Lockit,	Miss Polly Suckling.

At the peak of the symmetrical lists which neatly stack four by four, "Miss Jenny Peace" occupies the position of star billing reserved for the principal player. Of Mrs. Teachum's nine students, Jenny is the only one who has received moral instruction from a mother before enrolling in the Little Female Academy. Orphaned or half-orphaned, several of the girls were raised by old family servants, nurses, and governesses who spoiled them by treating them as the superior party of their acquaintance; the rest were raised by neglectful parents, including one "sickly" mother (102) and one "old and unhealthy" grandmother (107). In contrast, Mrs. Peace is an exemplary figure of both motherhood and education: not only "the best Woman in the World," but one who "made it the whole Study of her Life to promote [her children's] Welfare, and form their Minds in the manner she thought would best answer her Purpose of making them both good and happy" (62). Now orphaned but content at Mrs. Teachum's, Jenny's vice was "repining" at the death of her pet cat, Frisk, which her mother explains must be moderated lest excessive passion "interfere with your Duty" and become an "Offence to that God" to whom only gratitude is due (65–66). Jenny traces her current state of sangfroid and good cheer back to the death of Frisk: "This little Accident, as managed by my Mamma, has been a Lesson to me in governing my Passions ever since" (67). With her passions thus tempered, Jenny is in a position to pass along "her Mamma's Precepts" (67) and to help her schoolmates reform themselves.

Intertexts give Mrs. Teachum's students access to their own subjectivities and inspire them to undertake reform. Once Jenny has shared her lifestory, the novel's ur-tale, narratives brought in from the outside act as the catalyst for the novel's internally framed storytelling moments. Of the eight girls who need moral correction, each makes a public confession only after hearing an imported interpolated tale that interrogates what she considers to be her over-riding vice, be it vengefulness, lying in in the name of friendship, treachery, envy, vanity of dress, vanity of person, malice, or weak will (in other words, being a follower). Fielding reinvents the seven deadly sins to suit her subjects and audience—young girls of school age, ranging from eight to fourteen. Including Jenny's sin of repining, Fielding's unique canon of vices numbers nine. Intertexts act as the bridge from Jenny's prior reformation to the almost born-again epiphanies of her eight schoolmates and their public articulation.

There are five interpolated tales that are framed as completely external to the world of the text: two fairy tales, about Barbarico and Benefico and about Princess Hebe, the story of Caelia and Chloe, the letter about Mrs. Dison, and Steele's play, *Funeral, or Grief a-la-Mode*. Each of the imported interpolated tales provides a moral that the girls apply to their own lives and which allows them to detach from the vice that they confess in their life stories, which function as the novel's indigenous interpolated tales. Mrs. Teachum's students find delight and instruction in these tales, and Mrs. Teachum herself articulates a spirited preemptive defense of fairy tales as appropriate reading material for children.[40] At least one of the tales, Barbarico and Benefico,

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[40] Sarah Fielding included a similar fairy tale in *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple and Some Others, to which is Added A Vision* (London, 1747), 352–392. See also Sylvia Kasey Marks, "Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*: A Gloss on her 'Books upon Education,'" in *Women, Gender, and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Memory of Betty Rizzo*, ed. Temma Berg and Sonia Kane (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2013): 59–80.

proved amenable to excerpting and went on to live a vigorous afterlife as a stand-alone publication sold by children's book imprints on both sides of the Atlantic.[41]

Nonetheless, it is the novel's imported interpolated tales that Fielding's contemporaries and modern critics have seized upon as formally problematic. Many dissenters and educators in the Sunday school movement took exception with the tales' use of what Mrs. Teachum calls "supernatural elements"—the Giants, fairies, castle dungeons, and magic wands that favor romance over realism. In 1820, the children's author Mary Martha Butt Sherwood edited an evangelical revision of *The Governess* that excised the fairy tales and wove Biblical quotations throughout the text. Her introduction defends this editorial decision with the following logic: "But since fanciful productions of this sort can never be rendered generally useful, it has been thought proper to suppress the rest, substituting in their places such appropriate relations as seemed more likely to conduce to juvenile edification."[42] More recent scholars, too, have taken a skeptical view of the pedagogical value of these "fanciful productions." Writing from a perspective that privileges formal coherence, F. J. Harvey Darton dismissed the novel as nothing more than "a collection of stories."[43] Focusing on the fairy tales in their own right, Karen Rowe cautions us to remember that they are constructed to demand mediation: 'Fairy tales, embedded

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[41] At least one Boston bookseller printed and sold this fairy tale as a standalone publication. Sarah Fielding, *The story of the cruel giant Barbarico, the good giant Benefico, and the little pretty dwarf Mignon*; (Boston, Mein and Fleeming, 1768). The title page reads: "Printed by Mein and Fleeming, to be sold by John Mein at the London Book-Store, north-side of King-Street. MDCCLXVIII. At which place may be had, a great variety of entertaining and instructive books for children."

[42] Mary Martha Sherwood, *The Governess; or, the Little Female Academy* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston & Son, 1820). See also Candace Ward's Broadview Edition of *The Governess,* which includes excerpts from Sherwood's edition in an appendix (234).

[43] F. J. Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932, 1982), 157.

and contextualized, become exemplary pedagogical instruments to be, however, carefully mediated so that these amusements never exist as ends to themselves."[44]

Within the careful didactic structure of *The Governess*, the five imported narratives are both agents and objects of mediation. Each is introduced with moral commentary and then publicly glossed by the girls in group discussion, under the supervision of Jenny Peace. On only one occasion, Mrs. Teachum sits in on the girls' reading circle and quizzes their comprehension and retention. As interpolated tales, these stories mediate alternative perspectives, whose jarring introduction reorients the girls' relation to their own subjectivities. Mapping out the novel's structure reveals the call and response pairing of intertext with autobiographical confession:

Monday:
- The Story of the Giants (Fairy Tale One)

Tuesday:
- Explication of Fairy Tale One
- The Description of Miss Sukey Jennett/The Life of Miss Sukey Jennett
  - Vice: Vengefulness
- The Description of Miss Dolly Friendly/The Life of Miss Dolly Friendly
  - Vice: Lying in the name of friendship

Wednesday:
- The Story of Caelia and Chloe
- The Description of Miss Lucy Sly/The Life of Miss Lucy Sly
  - Vice: Treachery

Thursday:
- Mrs. Dison Letter
- The Description of Miss Patty Lockit/The Life of Miss Patty Lockit
  - Vice: Envy

[44] Karen E. Rowe, "Virtue in the Guise of Vice: The Making and Unmaking of Morality from Fairy Tale Fantasy," in *Culturing the Child, 1690–1914: Essays in Memory of Mitzi Myers*, ed. Donelle Ruwe (Lanham: The Children's Literature Association and The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005), 2–66.

Friday:
    The Princess Hebe: A Fairy Tale (Fairy Tale Two)

Saturday:
    Continuation of the Fairy Tale

Sunday:
    Churchgoing and visit from two vain ladies
    The Description of Miss Nanny Spruce/The Life of Miss Nanny Spruce
        Vice: Vanity of dress and superiority of station
    The Description of Miss Betty Ford/The Life of Miss Betty Ford
        Vice: Vanity of person

Monday:
    Richard Steele's *Funeral*, or *Grief-a-la-Mode*
    The Description of Miss Henny Fret/The Life of Miss Henny Fret
        Vice: Malice
    The Description of Miss Polly Suckling/The Life of Miss Polly Suckling
        Vice: Weak-will

Tuesday:
    The Assembly of the Birds: A Fable
    Letter announces the departure of Jenny Peace

This schematic structure instantiates the methodology of "Fable and Moral" that Fielding had prescribed in her Dedication "as the most effectual means of conveying useful Instruction." Fielding gives "Fable and Moral" the sense that Johnson's *Dictionary* would articulate, with Fable defined as "A feigned story intended to enforce some moral precept" and the noun form of Moral defined as "the doctrine inculcated by a fiction."[45]

Point of view emerges as the crucial category for negotiating Fielding's two-step pattern of Fable and Moral. Johnson's *Dictionary* frames the difference between fable and moral as a distinction between authorial intention and reader reception. Thus, the distinction collapses

[45] Johnson, "Dictionary," 1322. See note 203.

depending on what point of view is under consideration. For Johnson, Dryden, and Fielding the author must work deductively by setting her moral before contriving the design of her fable. However, the reader's experience of the terms is involuted. For Mrs. Teachum's nine students, they must reason inductively from the fable to discern its moral and then deductively to apply the moral to themselves; without knowing it, they are modeling what the reader should do. Thus, oscillating between induction and deduction, and between other-directed and inward-facing points of view, is the educational practice that Fielding's form enacts. Through this patterning, the Fable and Moral form a call and response sequence, in which the imported interpolated tale acts as a trigger both for the moral reformation of an individual student and for the production of her autobiographical narrative, but also for the production of a networked subject, whose subjectivity is socialized and best understood in the context of fellow tale-tellers and interlocutors. Within this formal logic, Fielding's schoolgirl characters feel self-authorized to articulate their own confessional lifestories, which are designed to help readers self-authorize and self-narrate their own stories. Nonetheless, in both cases, Fielding proposes an understanding of "self" that branches laterally and cannot function or be defined outside of its collaborative social unit.

The first imported interpolated tale offers a convenient test case for the novel's call-and-response structure, and for the distributed subjectivity it promotes. Fielding's nine-day calendar begins on a Monday, the second day after the Fray and the first day after their Sunday reconciliation. The intertitle explicitly articulates that just as the girls have been reborn, the narrative clock has been reset: "Monday/ The First Day after their Repentance: And, consequently, the First Day of the Happiness of Miss Jenny Peace and her Companions" (68).

Now, there is a unanimous consensus in the "little academy" that Jenny Peace is "the best Friend they had in the World" and the "most proper Person to direct them in their Amusements" (68). The narrative skips over the morning's formal lessons to the pre-lunch leisure time, when the girls "adjourn to their Arbour" (68) and Jenny produces a story from her pocket. The first-person plural omniscient narrator gives a simple description of the storytelling circle and then withdraws: "She then began to read the following Story, with which we shall open their First Day's Amusement."

Framed by the intertitle, "The Story of the cruel Giant Barbarico, the good Giant Benefico, and the little pretty dwarf Mignon," the imported interpolated tale takes over the narrative. First, it establishes its elsewhere time and place, "A Great many hundred Years ago, the Mountains of Wales were inhabited by Two Giants" (69). Barbarico is "most wicked" and "most miserable," delighting only in "Acts of Inhumanity" while Benefico delights only "in Acts of Goodness and Benevolence" (69). Because Barbarico takes particular pleasure in destroying happiness, he takes captives, once kidnapping a five year-old boy, Mignon, from his loving family and then years later kidnapping a shepherd, Fidus, from the arms of his beloved. In the end, it is the now-grown Mignon who incapacitates Barbarico: Mignon discovers a magical ribbon that paralyzes Barbarico, allowing Benefico to decapitate the evil giant with his own sword. Where once Barbarico's reign spread "Affright and Terror" now Benefico's benevolence "diffused tranquillity and Joy thro' all the happy Country round/ Thus ended the Story of the Two Giants" (83). The girls immediately disperse once the tale is finished, agreeing to meet under the arbor tomorrow. Thus, the text delays articulating the listeners' responses and interpretations. Instead, Jenny meets with Mrs. Teachum to give her nightly account of the day, shows "the Story

she had read," and hopes "it is not improper." Mrs. Teachum gives the fairy tale her stamp of approval, ex post facto, and enjoins Jenny to continue: "A very good Moral may indeed be drawn from the Whole, and likewise from almost every Part of it… And if you have any more Stories of this kind, with a equally good Moral, when you are not better employed, I shall not be against your reading them" (84-85).

The Moral to Jenny's Fable will be worked out among the students on the following morning, "TUESDAY/ The Second Day." Jenny asks her listeners to gloss her story and cites her mother's injunction to be sure to understand everything she reads. The girls agree that "certainly it was of no Use to read, without understanding what they read," begin talking simply "to prove they could make just remarks" (85), and fall to "contending which was the prettiest part" (86). Jenny steers them from these assertions of personal taste back to the "Moral of the Story and what Use they might make of it" (86). For this first story, Jenny recites the "Moral" Mrs. Teachum has instructed her to share: happiness arises only from goodness, and submitting to suffering is the first step to overcoming difficulties. Jenny then spells out a utilitarian philosophy of reading that also acts as the catalyst for the novel's call and response structure: "In order therefore to make what you read of any Use to you, you must not only think of it thus in general, but make the Application to yourselves" (87). When Jenny analyzes Barbarico as evidence that revenge carries within it misery, Sukey Jennett interrupts her out of zeal to confess her susceptibility to this vice: "That she herself had experienced the Truth of that Observation in the former Part of her Life" (87). Sukey's epiphany is introduced as the first in a series when Jenny Peace asks her, "If she was willing to lead the Way to the rest of her Companions, by telling her past Life?" (87). This call to pair reading with personal application inspires Sukey

Jennett to tell her own "true Confessions,' in the hopes of setting "an Example of Honesty and Ingenuousness" (87). This move, from imported interpolated tale to personal application and to creation of autobiographical subject, acts as the fuse switch for the narrative circuit that energizes the novel.[46]

Sukey Jennett's confessional autobiography models the form that will be followed by the seven classmates who follow her. Having heard the imported interpolated tale and recognized her cardinal vice, Sukey announces her desire to share her "true Confessions" (87–89). First, the third-person narrator briefly introduces the person of the character about to speak, almost like a preface to the impending interpolated tale. These personal descriptions follow a simple intertitle, "The Description of Miss Sukey Jennett." This formula, "The Description of Miss ____," continues without interruption or variation for all eight of the school girls' confessions. Following the intertitle, the principal narrator provides a physiognomical reading of the girl's person and visage, before handing off the narrative to the character in question: "and with great Mildness, and an obliging Manner, she told her Story as follows:" Despite the openness suggested by the colon, the narrative does not switch point of view immediately. First, another intertitle mediates the narrative handoff from the third person omniscient narrator to temporary first person narrator: "The Life of Miss Sukey Jennett." This intertitle formula too remains constant throughout the novel. Only once introduced by the intertitle does the new speaker begin her first person narrative: "My Mamma died when I was so young that I cannot remember her" (88).

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[46] Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, 180.

In four paragraphs, Sukey relates her past vengefulness and the misery it caused her. Coddled by the old family servant who raised her, Sukey had learned to beat even inanimate objects if they hurt or displeased her: “When I was but Four Years old, if ever anything crossed me, I was taught to beat it, and be revenged of it, even tho’ it could not feel” (88). At school, Sukey’s policy fails her and earns her only punishments, “till Miss Jenny was so good to take the Pains to convince me of my Folly, and to make me be reconciled to you, my dear Companions” (89). Pleasurable sociability is Sukey’s reward for turning away from the vengefulness that led her into continual quarrels with and retaliation against her classmates. “Reconciliation” is the novel’s preferred term for this pleasurable and benevolent sociability, which is made possible by subordinating personal desires and grievances to the needs and equilibrium of the group. The “Fray” that had set the novel’s plot and reconciliation into motion had been a dispute “carried on for the sake of an Apple” and who would get the “one Apple something larger than the rest” (51). From that event, the distribution of property had been framed as a problem that the novel sought to answer by modeling the benefits of a communitarian system. However, the novel makes an even more radical argument by incorporating virtue and narrative itself into a communitarian system.

The fable and moral system gives Mrs. Teachum’s girls the key to subject formation. However, the novel remains more invested in plural subjectivities than singular subjectivities. The patterning of the set-up, the small scale of the sins, and the small differences between the girls renders them nigh indistinguishable. Through the careful schematization of fable and moral, the reiteration of intertitle formulas, and rhythmic narration of the eight girls’ confessions against a liturgical calendar of eight days, Fielding argues that each girl’s reformation and

storytelling is inextricable from the ritualized sociable space led by Jenny but dependent on the presence and performance of a group of speakers and interlocutors. For Fielding, it is this group figuration that takes the place of any singular protagonist or narrator, and thus provides a model of transmission that invites child readers to replicate the fable and moral application in their own lives. By designing this form to carry its communitarian construction of property, subjectivity, and narrative beyond the text, Fielding advances a radical didacticism that left her text open both to conservative bowdlerizations as well as to more admiring adaptations. In both cases, it enjoys a proliferation of vigorous afterlives. Fielding's vision, of young girls whose narrative exchanges have led to the formation of a laterally branching and networked sense of self, is one that Sarah Scott will continue and expand in her philosophical novels of the 1760s.

IV: Charitable Patterns in *Millenium Hall* and *The History of Sir George Ellison*

1762 was a landmark year for both Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott as authors, and the women were co-participants in each other's publication events. Nearing the end of her life, Sarah Fielding released *Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates* (1762), an original translation directly from the Greek, and the only work Fielding published under her full name. Sarah Scott and Elizabeth Montagu spearheaded the subscription for the sumptuous edition, which eventually

sold 707 copies for 6 shillings a piece, netting Fielding some £ 200.[47] That fall, Sarah Scott wrangled to press a didactic publication of her own, *Millenium Hall,* a philosophical novel about practical Christianity that continued and extended the formal experiments Fielding had carried out in her novels. As I have shown, *The Adventures of David Simple* shifts the emphasis away from its protagonist and primary narrator toward a sequence of female tale-tellers who produce a model of networked narratives that allows for the just distribution of patronage. Going one step further, *The Governess* replaces plot with narrative and calendrical schema in which nine schoolgirls relate their life-stories according to a call-and-response pattern over the course of nine days. These arithmetical schema offer a variation on the frame tale, in which the girls' tales together figure as a corporate whole that promotes the authoring and circulation of more stories. I identify a similar logic of patterning at work in *Millenium Hall*. In Scott's utopian novel, two male travelers visit "an amiable family" of ladies who live in community while practicing the arts and practical charity. Similar to the narrative structure of *The Governess*, the story carefully plots its interpolated tales onto a calendar. This time, four tales are told over seven days, with only the cycling of breakfast, dinner, and supper to mark the passage of time. The interlocking structure of the four similar interpolated tales works in tandem with the women's shared property to knit together the Millenium Hall community. Both property and narrative become joint holdings. Scott uses her reticular scheme of interpolated tales as a tool for integrating individuals with a communitarian superstructure, and for both organizing and producing the narratives that would allow for her model's replication.

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[47] Peter Sabor, "introduction" to *The History of Ophelia*, by Sarah Fielding (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2004), 11. Most of Sarah Fielding's publications were signed "By the author of David Simple," but *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* had been signed S. Fielding. Sabor gives the financial breakdown for Fielding's translation of Xenophon in his introduction to *David Simple*, xxiii.

Scott's long and varied publication history evinces a fondness for didactic patterns. One of her early collaborations with the printer Samuel Richardson and her life companion, Lady Barbara Montagu, produced three sets of didactic playing cards categorized as *Historical*, *Geographical*, and *Chronological* (1759).[48] The project's ambition was to apply the appeal of playing cards and their visual patterns to worthy factual content, thus redirecting an instrument of dissipation toward educational purposes. The enterprise, however, proved unsuccessful; only a few sets found purchasers.[49] Notwithstanding this publication failure, patterns and the language of patterning recur in the way that Scott organizes her published works and the way her contemporaries described her lifestyle and habits. As briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Elizabeth Montagu discerned patterns as the hallmark feature of her younger sister's daily life, which she described as observing the "regularity" of a "convent:" "My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sits down to cut out and prepare work for 12 poor girls, whose schooling they pay for."[50] Notably, this ordered life adheres to temporal patterns, the "regularity" of set times and tasks, like the hours of a convent

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[48] Nicole Pohl has reconstructed this unusual publishing project, which was undertaken to benefit a distressed gentlewoman, Elizabeth Pattillo. "The plan was to design and sell educational cards for teaching chronology, history and geography. Lady Bab renewed her acquaintance with Samuel Richardson, who offered to print the cards for the women. The three different sets, *Historical*, *Geographical*, and *Chronological* cards, were advertised in newspapers in 1759 for subscription for the price of 6 to 12 shillings each, or one guinea for all" (xix).

[49] Pohl, xix.

[50] Elizabeth Montagu to Dr. Gilbert West, 16 October 1755. Pohl, "introduction," xi.

or Methodist journaling practice,[51] and aesthetic patterns that are both material and visual, the "work" that Scott sits to "cut out and prepare" for her students. Scott's previous fictional publication, *A Journey Through Every Stage of Life* (1754), had offered a more schematic variation on *The Arabian Nights.* In Scott's version, a clever servant plays storyteller for her princess in order to beguile their time in exile. In all of these diverse instances, Scott turns to narrative and visual patterns in the service of her didactic intentions and projects. In this sense, the pattern, or scheme, promotes the transfer of knowledge between the author or benefactor and reader or beneficiary. Through the twinned schema of networked interpolated tales and calendared events, Scott proselytizes for an aesthetic and political value system that both produces and is produced by order. By reiterating pattern as a didactic practice, Scott reinforces her world view, a take on the "Great Chain of Being" that not only stretches vertically but horizontally through its insistence on "social interdependence."[52] In the pages that follow, I will chart how Scott devises original narrative forms to underwrite the social, political, and economic experiments embodied by her community.

A Description of Millenium Hall is perhaps the best-known utopian novel of the eighteenth century. To formulate her philosophical novel, Scott synthesizes many disparate genres, including travel guides, catalogues of worthies, saints lives, and even antiquarian texts.

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[51] Felicity Nussbaum argues that a journaling practice that adheres to "the strict structure of hourly and daily entries" helped to create "Methodized Subjects" marked by "work discipline, upward mobility, and self-government." *Autobiographical Subject,* 86, 102. Certainly, Sarah Scott and Barbara Montagu's religious affiliation as Latitudinarian Anglicans is closer to Methodism than Catholicism would be. In comparing the two women's domestic routine to a convent, Montagu emphasized their celibacy, which Montagu was wont to do after the scandal of her sister's divorce. At other times, Montagu satirized her sister's celibacy.

[52] Pohl, xxxiii. Nicole Pohl has described Scott's world view as "anchored in a system of social interdependence and social hierarchy."

As Crystal Lake puts it, *Millenium Hall* is a "hybrid text."[53] Like the novel's politics, its form is experimental. Those scholars who consider the form of *Millenium Hall* often do so to attach it to a gender ideology. The split between Ellison's epistolary narrative and Mrs. Maynard's sequence of personal histories can be read as a frame tale and inset narratives that also categorize neatly as male and female respectively.[54] For some scholars, the relation between the two narrative fields is antagonistic. While Susan Lanser compiles evidence to ironize Ellison's perspective,[55] William Wandless interprets Ellison's and Maynard's narratives as complementary but corrective. I favor this integrative approach, but consider the duel narrative schema as imbricated in Scott's larger project to imagine forms of subjectivity that do not depend on individualism. Like the ash trees whose clonal culture forms one organism, the Millenium women constitute one interdependent community. The exchange between Ellison's spectatorship and Mrs. Maynard's networked narratives redistributes the resource of readerly attention away from individual members to the patterns of the group structure, thus foregrounding the group as the unit of both analysis and value. By performing this dynamic narrative exchange, the novel's two-hearted form models the replication to which its utopian community aspires, and which Scott later reiterated in the sequel, *The History of Sir George Ellison*.

To support this argument, I will chart what I call the novel's two-hearted form, paying particular attention to the didactic patterns that Scott uses to organize her radical positions.

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[53] Crystal B. Lake, "Redecorating the Ruin: Women and Antiquarianism in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*" *ELH* 76.3 (2009): 661–686, 680.

[54] See Lake, ibid.; David Oakleaf, "At the Margins of Utopia: Jamaica in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 28:1 (Fall 2015): 109–137; William Wandless,"Secretaries of the Interior: Narratorial Collaboration in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 21.2 (Winter 2008-2009): 251–281.

[55] Susan Sniader Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 225–230.

Scott's communitarian project demands new ways of representing both time and subjectivity, and I will argue that these innovations become most visible to us in the novel's formal construction. There are two primary strands of narrative. One is the chronology of the week-long visit paid by George Ellison and Lamont, which Ellison conveys through a retrospective epistolary narrative. The second strand is a set of interlocking personal histories that explain the individual characters and fortunes of the five women who founded Millenium Hall. For simplicity's sake, I will refer to Ellison's visit as the calendar scheme and the interwoven personal histories as the storytelling scheme. As narrated by Mrs. Maynard, these retrospective personal histories are a formally peculiar iteration of the interpolated tale. The dual structure of calendar and storytelling schema poses a series of questions. Do these personal histories constitute the primary narrative, or does Ellison's encounter with Millenium Hall? Is Ellison's narrative a frame to the ladies' histories, or are the ladies' histories interpolated tales that punctuate the primary narrative? Many critics denominate *Millenium Hall* a frame tale, a formal category that distributes precedence to the inset narratives. I would argue that Scott poses an unsettled relation between primary and secondary and leaves the balance of power between them an open question. She structures her narrative as a matter of exchange between two forms of telling the story, thus privileging the movement between the two forms over the would-be stability of either.

The interplay between these two temporal and narrative schema enacts the integration of individual and group that undergirds Scott's social philosophy. *Millenium Hall* imagines methods for translating communitarian principles into innovative domestic and economic structures. While Fielding had set her experiments among filial relations and in school, Scott theorizes a remote and sustainable society in which a group of ladies pool their resources to

support a communal life and a wide circle of philanthropic endeavors. Part of Scott's goal is to embody these utopian experiments in what she imagines as explicitly material terms. Much of her imagination is architectural. Along with the country house of Millenium Hall itself, the ladies fund activities in six separate compounds: a home for distressed gentlewomen, a furniture factory, almshouses for the elderly, a private enclosure for people whose deformities were previously marketed to the public, schools for 100 girls and 50 boys, and a carpet manufacture. Like Fielding, Scott uses a highly patterned narrative framework to advance her political argument: one of the six leading ladies of Millenium Hall tells the personal histories of her five friends through four interpolated tales, one of them broken into two parts, "The History of Miss Mancel, and Mrs. Morgan" (78) and "Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan's History continued" (123). Two of these personal histories include a doubly-interpolated tale, in which the heroine's long-lost mother reveals herself and explains how she came to be separated from her child. Mrs. Maynard, the narrator of the four interpolated tales, gives only a one-sentence account of how she came to join the feminotopia. Among the harrowing personal histories of feminine distress, the text explains the structures the women have put in place to prevent others from suffering various indignities based on their class, gender, or disability. Thus, the retrospective personal histories are interspersed with descriptions of the present-day solutions, interlacing biographical content with (fictional) political economy. Scott's novel glosses personal accounts to attend to political problems, and the interpolated tales are the engine for this project of communal living: the tales both explain the members' motivations, and how they acquired the fortunes that sustain Millenium Hall.

The calendar scheme that relays George Ellison's visit to Millenium Hall takes a contorted epistolary form, which I interpret as another marker of the novel's concern with the transmission of alternative social ideals. The novel instantiates an odd form of epistolarity that consists of one letter, as long as a "volume" (53). While this letter is written by one unnamed gentleman to another, I have elected to follow the line of scholarship that retrospectively identifies the letter writer as George Ellison, the sequel's protagonist.[56] Many signposts of epistolarity are absent.[57] Ellison takes great care to explain the context that induces him to write "a very circumstantial account of this society" and what he considers to be its potential didactic value. The letter's recipient is an educator, likely the book's real publisher, John Newbery, whose "constant endeavors have been to inculcate the best principles into youthful minds, the only probable means of mending mankind" (53).[58] Ellison gives his friend *carte blanche* to publish the letter if he deems it morally instructive: "I therefore submit the future fate of the following sheets entirely to you, and shall not think any prefatory apology for the publication at all requisite" (54). Nodding to the epistolary pose, Scott provides her narrator's personal history, "You may remember, Sir…" (54). Over some decades in Jamaica, Ellison amassed a fortune but impaired his constitution. He, under doctor's orders, is taking a health tour of western Great

[56] Sarah Scott published *The History of Sir George Ellison* in 1766. The sequel tracks Ellison's attempts to model his heterosexual marriage, family, and estate on the feminotopia at Millenium Hall. I elect to refer to the narrator as Ellison, not only for simplicity's sake, but also because doing so emphasizes the chain of transmission that Scott enacts between the ladies of Millenium Hall and their male visitors, and *Millenium Hall* and its sequel, *The History of Sir George Ellison*. For an opposing view, see David Oakleaf, "At the Margins of Utopia: Jamaica in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall,*" n53.

[57] There is no date or place marked at the letter's top right, no addressee beyond "Dear Sir," and no signature at the end. The letter, and the novel with it, begin simply: "Dear Sir…" (53), and conclude, "I am, Sir./ *FINIS*" (249).

[58] Oakleaf builds a strong case for identifying the unnamed correspondent as Newbery. "Scott's narrator addresses *A Description of Millenium Hall* not to some anonymous friend in the country but to John Newbery, the novel's publisher. Newbery was widely respected for publishing moral books for young readers" (129).

Britain. His traveling companion is an old friend's son, Lamont, a twenty-five year-old puppy and infidel who is nonetheless "good-natured, and not unentertaining" (55). As a free-thinker and man of fashion, Lamont will act as the foil and dialogic antagonist to the pious ladies and Ellison, himself a man of feeling.

As a classically disinterested spectator, Ellison scrutinizes Millenium Hall and is converted by its project to recast both property and narrative as interdependent structures rather than independent ones. A providential chaise breakdown somewhere in Cornwall introduces Ellison and Lamont to the ladies who hold their fortunes in joint stock and now live communally at Millenium Hall. In another providential stroke, the housekeeper, Mrs. Maynard, turns out to be a near-relation and old friend of Ellison's. She takes on the role of tour guide and keeper of institutional memory. The physical plant is vast, encompassing the property of several former estates and at least seven sets of buildings. The community's population includes hundreds of people organized in a variety of life-work schemes including schools, a carpet manufacture, a furniture factory, extensive subsistence farming, a good dairy, a pigeon house, a rabbit warren, a good-sized fishery, child-rearing, and home crafts ranging from cloth spinning to broth-making. Cleanliness and order are the watchwords of this diverse community. The word that Ellison returns to thirteen times in its different variants is "neat," which he applies equally to the groundskeeping and the bodies of the female inhabitants, sometimes in the same sentence: "She [the late minister's widow] carried us into her little garden, that was neat to an excess" where were also found "some of her children…all dressed with the same exact neatness of herself" (195). The women Ellison interviews also self-identify as "neat:" "if we are not idle that is all they desire, except that we should be cleanly too…for that we cannot be healthy if we are

not clean and neat" (67). Through this patterned repetition of neatness and cleanliness, Scott constructs a logic whereby the external structures of neat hygiene and dress conduce to the internal structures of self-regulation and community-mindedness.

The only characters who occupy both the calendar and storytelling schema are the founding members of Millenium Hall, recognizable individuals who have consented to integrating their material lives completely in their community project. These six ladies live in the main house and have contributed their fortunes of varying size: Mrs. Maynard, Mrs. Selvyn, Mrs. Mancel, Mrs. Trentham, Lady Mary Jones, and Mrs. Morgan. As the only fully named and recognizable persons within the communitarian project, these ladies are individually introduced and given a physical description: "I shall endeavor to give you some idea of the persons of the ladies, whose minds I shall afterwards best describe by their actions" (59). Although Ellison promises "I shall afterwards" describe the ladies' minds, he does not function as the narrator of their biographical content. Instead, Mrs. Maynard is the speaker of the four interpolated tales that deliver the promised description of the five ladies' "minds…best describe[d] by their actions." These tales largely conform to the genre of female "personal history," so popular in romances and later derided by Jane Austen in both her juvenilia and *Northanger Abbey*.[59]

Traditionally, these personal histories are narrated directly by the autobiographical subject herself. Here, Scott elects to add a level of remove. Mrs. Maynard acts as the retrospective tale-teller who narrates her friends' development from infancy through adulthood, the many specifically gendered indignities they have suffered, and how they came to join the

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[59] Instead of a personal history, Austen gives two sentences of simple facts: "This brief account of the family is intended to supersede the necessity of a long and minute detail from Mrs. Thorpe herself, of her past adventures and sufferings." I am indebted to Jocelyn Harris for directing me to this quotation. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21.

feminotopia at Millenium Hall. This secondhand storytelling practice does not render the ladies voiceless. Scott assigns plentiful dialogue to all five of the ladies, when they explain their principles and praxis to their gentlemen visitors. However, as Mrs. Maynard explains, the women have no interest in self-narrating: “themselves are never the subject of their own conversation” (76). In keeping with this lack of self-directed interest, the only personal history that Mrs. Maynard does not narrate is her own. Instead, she embeds in “The History of Mrs. Trentham” a one-sentence explanation of how she came to join “this heavenly society:” “When Mr. Maynard died, leaving me but a small jointure, Mrs. Trentham was indulged in her inclination, of asking me to spend the first part of my widowhood with her and her friends” (242). Separating biographical subjects from the narrator function is one more tactic for advancing Scott’s radically communitarian argument. Here at Millenium Hall, even autobiographical content does not “belong" to the autobiographical subject. Rather, personal histories are held as common property like more material goods.

The contesting schema of calendar time and storytelling time and the movement between them triangulate the positions of part, whole, and observer into a dynamic relation that suggests how individual characters could reorganize themselves in communitarian forms. Scott constructs her plot on the calendrical framework of seven days and a sequence of four interpolated tales. The calendar of seven days employs a Biblically resonant number in line with Scott’s latitudinarian belief system. However, the days are not explicitly numbered or labeled as days of the week. Instead, the passage of time is marked by a progression of meals. Ellison marks the transition from one day to the next with identical language, “the next morning” or “the next day” (64, 122, 167, 196, 248). Unnamed and uncounted, the days blur. Ellison remarks that

inhabiting the sociable environment at Millenium Hall modifies his experience of time: "At this house every change came too soon, time seemed to wear a double portion of wings" (64). For Ellison, this fleet passage of time is a utopian effect of two factors. First is the ladies' "regular and rational way of life," which he finds more pleasing and mentally strengthening than "a course of dissipation" (64). Second is the charm of Mrs. Maynard's storytelling, which he is always loath to end. The explicit storytelling moments are framed as moments of pause, of delightfully idle time to relax under an arbor or on a riverbank. The transition out of the storytelling back to the diegetic present is often abrupt and presented as an interruption, usually upon the occasion of the next meal. The bell calls Ellison, Lamont, and Maynard to a series of breakfasts, dinners, teas, and suppers. By and large, the contents and conversations of these meals go unrepresented. Yet, the clock-like regularity of the recurrence anchors the text in a version of time apprehensible to the reader.

In contrast to the quickness that characterizes how Ellison experiences the passing of his calendared days, the narrative slows down and halts for four storytelling moments that also occupy a privileged position in the novel's textual structure. Instead of numbered chapters, the novel is divided into six labeled portions: the letter's introductory comments ("A Description of Millenium Hall") and four interpolated tales ("The History of Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan," "Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan's History continued," "The History of Lady Mary Jones," "The History of Miss Selvyn," and "The History of Mrs. Trentham"). Though unnumbered and not labeled as chapters, these histories function in a chapter-ish fashion: they are marked by intertitles, begin on a new page, and conclude on a full page before the narrative moves on to the next history.

Scott constructs a discernible calendar as the skeleton for her overlapping schema. Although the text never counts the days' numbers, the reader can reconstruct what turns out to be a week spent at Millenium Hall. The visitors arrive late one afternoon and depart after breakfast one morning. As evidenced by this narrative map, Scott crafts a recursive pattern of labor and leisure, with storytelling ranked somewhere in between as a mixed occupation.

Day One (56–64)

—chaise breakdown brings Ellison and Lamont to Millenium Hall
—family concert
—supper

Day Two (64–122)
—visit to almshouses for elderly women
—breakfast, bell rings
—visit to enclosure for persons previously exhibited as "monsters"
—interpolated tale #1: "The History Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan" (78) (told under an arbor)
—dinner, bells rings
—walk to distressed gentlewomen's home
—supper

Day Three: (122–167)
—skipped meal (breakfast)
—"Miss Mancel and Mrs. Morgan's History continued" (123) (told in the flower garden)
—doubly interpolated tale #1: Mrs. Thornby, Miss Mancel's long-lost mother (148-150)
—dinner
—wedding of girl educated at Millenium Hall, rustic ball
—supper

Day Four (167–196)
—breakfast
—interpolated tale #2: "The History of Lady Mary Jones" (told "on a green bank under an elm," 171)
—dinner
—river boating party
—visit to minister's widow, small furniture manufacture
—tea

—concert
—supper

Day Five (196–223)
—visit schools, prayers
—breakfast
—interpolated tale #3: "The History of Mrs. Selvyn" (told in the garden)
—doubly interpolated tale #2: Emilia Reynolds, secret fallen mother (211–218)
—skipped meal (dinner)
—concert
—supper

Day Six (223–248)
—breakfast
—interpolated tale #4: "The History of Miss Trentham" (told under an arbor in the flower garden)
—carpet and rug manufacture
—dinner
—skipped meal (supper)

Day Seven (248–249)
—breakfast
—farewell
—"Finis"

Surveying this diagram, the quotidian routine of events and narrative is evident. Each day brings the telling of one interpolated tale at midday. There is also a succession of two to four meals, a field trip or two to observe the social experiments the ladies have devised, and domestic entertainments like family concerts or a wedding. For Ellison, the ladies' community is an experiment in world-making. He wonders how women who deserved "to have the world almost at command, were brought thus to seclude themselves from it, and make as it were a new one for themselves, constituted on such very different principles from that I had hitherto lived in" (76). As Ellison and Lamont tour the grounds of Millenium Hall, converse with the various inhabitants, and while their way through the meals and outings of seven days, they are being

educated in the rules and practices of an alien social structure. Lamont, in addition, is undergoing a course of personal reformation. Framing his letter for his unnamed correspondent, Ellison explicitly self-identifies his role in the account as that of an observer: “I have no other share than that of a spectator, and auditor, in what I purpose to relate” (54). The labor that Ellison and Lamont, as visitors, perform is split between “spectator” and “auditor:” the labor of observing and interrogating the labor of the inhabitants (“spectator”) and the labor of listening to the personal histories that gave rise to Millenium Hall (“auditor”). As the narrative map shows, each day contains a combination of these activities. Usually, Mrs. Maynard and her interlocutors take time to pause after breakfast and to find a peaceful spot for her storytelling: under an arbor, in the flower garden, on the riverbank under an elm, in the garden, and under an arbor in the garden. Scott treats narrative (Mrs. Maynard’s stories) and material structures (schools, manufactures, the estate) as co-constituting the experiment in social justice her novel imagines.

Scott designs her imaginary work-life scheme to evoke a sense of symmetry and precise order. Part of this logic of order is impressed upon Ellison and Lamont visually, as spectators who take a thorough tour of Millenium Hall and its various schools, almshouses, and manufactures. Throughout, a plan of order and neatness reigns; complementarity and reciprocity are crucial to this system. Operating out of a “row of the neatest cottages” that act like almshouses, the elderly women follow a codified exchange of tasks so they can all live comfortably and cleanly: “Now, there is neighbor Susan, and neighbor Rachel, Susan is lame, so she spins cloaths for Rachel; and Rachel cleans Susan’s house, and does such things for her as she cannot do for herself” (66). Scott’s sometimes unsentimental take on reciprocity is exemplified by what amounts to a child tithe on poor families: the old women also look after

"every child after the fifth of every poor person." The rationale is that this child swap benefits all three parties. The elderly women gain "pretty company," while the mothers gain child care, and the children, who are instructed in knitting and spinning, gain the means of future support. Without equivocation, Scott's system leaves no room for the sentimental bonds between blood relations.[60] Instead, such filial affections should be horizontally dispersed among all community members.

As a spectator, Ellison is quickly converted to this model of benevolent patronage, with its emphasis on work and orderliness, and its disregard for the primacy of biological ties. Visiting the "inclosure" for disabled persons once exhibited by "monster-mongers" (72), Ellison notes approvingly that their labor passes his inspection. He finds the poultry "kept with the most exact cleanliness," the garden produces not only "the finest flowers" but the earliest ("before they are blown in any other place") and their house is "a very neat habitation" (73–75). Child labor is a common theme to the various work sites of Millenium Hall, the largest of which is a "manufacture of carpets and ruggs" (242). Remarking that "there is no sight so delightful as extensive industry," Ellison looks approvingly on the labor force of "several hundreds of people of all ages, from six years old to four-score… some spinning, some weaving, others dying the worsted, and in short all busy, singing and whistling, with the appearance of general chearfulness" (243). This redistribution of filial affections and social ties is crucial in two ways. One, the novel's vision of social justice as achievable through benevolent patronage only works if nepotism is held in check. And two, this movement away from blood ties will be one of the

[60] See Alessa Johns on Scott's "Socratic anticonsanguinity," 190. See n8.

most radical commitments Ellison makes when, in the sequel, he models his extended family and estate on Millenium Hall.

The auditor function allows Ellison and Lamont to engage the storytelling scheme, through which they learn the personal histories of distress that led the founding members of Millenium Hall to embark on such a radical experiment in practical Christianity. As in *David Simple*, Scott considers "curiosity" as one of the shaping forces of moral life. Ellison describes his eagerness to understand the personal circumstances that inspired the communitarian project: "I was so filled with astonishment, at characters so new, and so curious to know by what steps women [chose seclusion]… I soon made my curiosity known, and beseeched her to gratify it" (76). As before all of the tales, Scott situates Mrs. Maynard and her two interlocutors in an idyllic spot, and brings the primary narrative to a halt. Here, the pathetic fallacy helps to signal the transition: "A rivulet ran bubbling by the side of the arbour, whose gentle murmours soothed the mind into composure, and seemed to hush us to attention, when Mrs. Maynard thus began, to shew her readiness to comply with my request" (77). There is a chapter-ish break, and "The History of Miss Mancel, and Mrs. Morgan" begins in untagged first person at the top of a new pages. All four tales are set apart in this fashion. As bodies of text, these personal histories are distinct and independently situated. It is the recursiveness of their content and their periodic placement within the context of the Millenium Hall project that joins the tales in a linking structure, which both advances Scott's belief in social interdependence and models the transmission effect that Scott hopes her novel might attain.

The four interpolated tales that follow are didactic to the point of being ideological: they are outraged condemnations of the social, political, and economic structures that render women

complete dependents on the benevolence of their various guardians. Each tale begins in the same way and ends in the same way. Bereft of maternal guidance and parental protection, the women undergo a series of trials of their sexual chastity and social indignities that threaten their class status. All five of the women are orphans or half-orphans who find themselves undereducated and/or vulnerable to sexual predation as a result.[61] When summarized, the tales emerge as clear fables of parental dereliction and the social injustices directed against women. Louisa Mancel is a beautiful orphan who falls into the snares of a lecherous guardian; providentially, he drops dead and she finds herself working as a ladies' companion for her own long-lost mother. Mrs. Morgan, née Melvyn, is Miss Mancel's beloved school friend; her wicked stepmother blackmails her into marrying a grotesque and unfeeling old man, whom she eventually reforms before his death. Educated only in fashion and fashionable learning by her two female guardians, Lady Mary Jones is a giddy coquette until she is saved from unwitting bigamy by a providential carriage accident and later counseled by a serious female friend. That friend, Miss Harriot Selvyn, is impeccably educated by her pretended father in all things besides religion; she first finds Christianity, escapes the attentions of a rake, and then learns she has a secret mother. Adopted by her grandmother after her parents' death, Miss Harriot Trentham is raised among a bevy of orphan cousins, loved by cousin Henry and loathed by her female cousins; after Henry marries a coquette, Harriot is saved from the fate of living an unserious life when she is disfigured by small pox.

Some combination of prudence and providential intervention rewards the women with a sizable inheritance: £40,000 for Miss Mancel, £2,000 in lump sum, plus £1,400 a year, plus

[61] In particular, all five women are denied the moral guidance and education of a mother, though Louisa Mancel and Harriot Selvyn are eventually reunited in adulthood with their long-lost or secret mothers.

the estate that becomes Millenium Hall for Mrs. Morgan; ￡10,000 for Lady Mary Jones; ￡12,000 for Miss Harriot Selvyn; ￡4,000 for Miss Harriot Trentham. The origins of these fortunes taint them. As Nicole Jordan has demonstrated, over half of these "providential" inheritances derive from Britain's colonies in the West Indies, and therefore, from the labor of enslaved people.[62] This shadow of contamination helps to explain the ladies' determination that benevolent action is the main pleasure that money can buy. While these fortunes would suffice to purchase independence, the ladies prefer to buy in on a consensual and mutual dependence—despite the pain associated with being a dependent that runs throughout all of their personal histories. In contrast to their previous lives, the Millenium dependence is communal, between women, and among equals. The interlocking structures of their similar narratives work in tandem with their shared property to knit together the Millenium Hall community.

Free speech enables and is enabled by the ladies' version of sociability, which Scott theorizes as both rational and benevolent. Scott structures her conception of free speech by contrasting Hobbes with classical republican rhetoric of freedom and liberty.[63] Like most of the novel's explicit philosophizing, Scott's disquisition on free speech and sociability occurs as part of a polite conversation occasioned by the visitors' response to one of Millenium Hall's experiments. Strolling home from a neighboring mansion that now provides a home for "indigent gentlewomen" and former "toad-eaters" (115), Ellison and Lamont query the ladies on the principles they have used to construct their way of life. As usual, Louisa Mancel's voice

[62] Nicole Jordan, "Creole Contagion: Narratives of Slavery and Tainted Wealth in *Millenium Hall*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 30 (2011): 57–70.

[63] Conyers Middleton, the great classics scholar, was her stepgrandfather. Gary Kelly, 'Scott, Sarah (1720–1795),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24912, accessed 9 May 2016].

predominates, comparing contemporary British society to “the state of war, which Hobbes supposes the first condition of mankind” (111). Reproving Lamont for his tendency to “mistake a croud for society,” Mrs. Mancel then offers her own definition of society, focusing on its underpinnings in free speech:

> What I understand by society is a state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections; where numbers are thus united, there will be a free communication of sentiments, and we shall then find speech, that peculiar blessing given to man, a valuable gift indeed; but when we see it restrained by suspicion, or contaminated by detraction, we rather wonder that so dangerous a power was trusted with a race of beings, who seldom make a proper use of it. (111)

It is striking how much of this passage circles around the language of speech and communication, almost to the point of tautology: “mutual confidence,” “correspondent affections,” “free communication of sentiments,” “speech, that peculiar blessing.” Scott turns to the opposition of danger and safety to prove the “power” of speech. Again positioning her rhetoric against Lamont’s likely libertine counterargument, Mrs. Mancel explains why they have no need for fashionable entertainments: “no cards, no assemblies, no plays, no masquerades” (112). She uses the classical rhetoric of freedom and liberty to build her case.

While open conversation and free speech are rational pleasures enough for this community, Mancel treats them as utopian privileges possible only in the safe space of this utopian social structure. Mancel’s positive definition of “society” and “liberty of speech and action” is built in contradistinction to contemporary British society, which is characterized by fear and concealment: “while we can with safety speak our own thoughts,” “we do not wish to drown conversation in noise,” “we are not afraid of shewing our hearts, we have no occasion to conceal our persons” (112). The implication is that these “admirable ladies” have secluded

themselves in part to escape a society where they did not enjoy the "safety" of speaking their own thoughts or showing their hearts. In this construction, it is only in a successful society, "where numbers are thus united," that it becomes possible to enjoy "a free communication of sentiments." Elsewhere, "the peculiar blessing" of speech remains "dangerous," and discretion and concealment become cardinal virtues. What remains understood but unspoken is that in such unfree or restrained societies, it is women who are most punitively constrained by these norms of discretion and concealment.

Sarah Scott uses schematic patterns as a tool for integrating individuals with a communitarian superstructure, and for both organizing and producing the narratives that would allow for her model's replication. Her epistolary narrator, George Ellison, concludes his volume-length letter by articulating his role in this process of transmission as two-pronged: communication and imitation. After gesturing toward an apology if his letter has been "too prolix," Ellison explicitly states his didactic aspirations, "If what I have described, may tempt any one to go and do likewise, I shall think myself fortunate in communicating it" (249). Meanwhile, Ellison's own thoughts turn toward the material application of his didactic content: "For my part, my thoughts are all engaged in a scheme to imitate them on a smaller scale" (249). Four years later, when Sarah Scott published a sequel of sorts, *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), her narrator transfers the order of a feminotopia onto his extended heterosexual family and estate. While visiting the "neat to an excess" widow during his visit to Millenium Hall, Ellison had singled out her house as earning a special scrutiny: "Its extreme neatness rendered it an object worthy observation; and I was particularly attentive, as its size suiting my plan of life, I determined to copy it" (195). Neatness and scale are the determinants of Ellison's particular

attention. The patterned architecture and narrative Ellison encountered at Millenium Hall provide a "scheme" he has observed, as auditor and spectator, to be sound. Just as the women hold their personal histories in common, free to be shared if useful but of little personal interest, their utopian model is free and open to imitation.

In 1767, Sarah Scott organized a communal society modeled on her novel *Millenium Hall.*[64] With the enthusiastic consultation and financial support of Elizabeth Montagu, Scott settled on a lease for a seventeenth-century house called Hitcham and gathered a small cohort of "amiable ladies," including Elizabeth Cutts, Grace Freind, and Miss Arnold. Scott and Montagu had always hoped that Sarah Fielding would be among this number, and they had diligently conspired to hide from her how they would absorb the cost of her living expenses. Fielding, however, declined the invitation to join a utopian project due to her increasingly ill-health. Scott nursed Fielding through her final months. She moved to Hitcham only after her friend's death on April 9, 1768. That month, Elizabeth Montagu paid a happy visit, and thanked her sister for "ye pleasing hours you gave me in yr millenium, as it resembles yr millenium in quality I wish it did so in quantity."[65] But a decline in Scott's health, too, left her unable to manage the many obstacles and spiraling expense of the Hitcham experiment, which died on the vine by November.

Hitcham's failure strikes a melancholy note, but its attempt, and its fusion of philosophical principle and material practice, accords with the fictional experiments Fielding and Scott had been performing for over twenty years. Beginning with Fielding's first novel, *The*

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[64] I draw on the work of Nicole Pohl and Betty Rizzo to draw this portrait of Hitcham. Nicole Pohl, "introduction." Betty Rizzo, introduction to *The History of Sir George Ellison* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), xviii

[65] Quoted by Betty Rizzo, "introduction," xxviii.

Adventures of David Simple (1744) and continuing through Scott's sequel, *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), both women tried out new narrative forms that sought to redistribute not only property, but also point of view, and with it, subjectivity. As in the attempted feminotopia at Hitcham, Fielding and Scott designed their novels' characters and their stories to achieve a structural interdependence, best articulated by the Shakespearean epigraph to *The Governess* (1)*:*

> Shall we forget the Counsel We have shar'd…
> We, Hermia, like two Artificial Gods,
> Created with our Needles both one Flower…
> As if our Hands, our Sides, Voices and Minds,
> Had been Incorp'rate? So we grew together,
> Like to a double Cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an Union in Partition.[66]

The philosophical novels of Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott experiment with different structures for achieving this "Union in Partition," including plural forms that exceed the "double." For both Scott and Fielding, their fictional experiments in mutual incorporation live on.

[66] The title page further attributes this quoted verse to "SHAKESPEARE'S Midsummer Night's Dream."

CHAPTER FOUR:

Tell-Tale Hearts: Sentimental Plot-Making

Goldsmith could not help knowing *Sidney Bidulph*, and its inserted sentimental tale evidently supplied hints and patterns of the involvements that [*The Vicar of Wakefield* as] a novel about a static household needed. In this case literary influence can be instructive in showing how Goldsmith raises Mrs. Sheridan's padding, a mere meaningless good story suitable for magazine romance, to the myth of Job (with hints of the penitent prodigal) and to a point from which to evaluate the moral world around him.

Morris Golden, "Sidney Bidulph" and "The Vicar of Wakefield" (1979)[1]

The intimate public legitimates qualities, ways of being, and entire lives that have otherwise been deemed puny or discarded. It creates *situations* where those qualities can appear as luminous… That is why […] political critique tends to appear mainly in episodes that don't matter narratively, or in resistant movements, phrases, or timbres.

Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint* (2008)[2]

Once the talk of the town, Frances Sheridan's novel *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761) had been out of print and out of fashion for nearly two centuries when, in 1979, Morris Golden published his article connecting the Anglo-Irish contemporaries Oliver Goldsmith and Frances Sheridan.[3] This neglect occurred despite the sentimental novel's rich anecdotal history, for Boswell's *Life of Johnson* had circulated both Charles Fox's praise of "Mrs. Sheridan's *Sidney Biddulph* [*sic*]" as "the best of all modern novels" and Samuel Johnson's characteristic compliment through negation: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles,

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[1] Morris Golden, "Sidney Bidulph" and "The Vicar of Wakefield," *Modern Language Studies* 9.2 (Spring 1979): 33–35, 34–35.

[2] Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 3, 11.

[3] This chapter was written during a Chawton House Library Fellowship with the support of the Grace M. Hunt Archival Research Travel Award.

to make your readers suffer so much."[4] What is remarkable is that Golden was able to recognize a short interpolated tale in a novel that no one was reading as the germ of Goldsmith's genre-defining *Vicar of Wakefield*. The "inserted sentimental tale" that caught Golden's eye is the history of Miss Price, a seduction-captivity narrative in which a virtuous clergyman and his daughter are falsely imprisoned by a wolfish patron. Preserved by her invincible virtue and the timely aid of Sidney Bidulph, Miss Price staves off her would-be seducer and receives her bourgeois comic ending of marriage to a thriving linen draper. But while Golden locates "literary influence" in the history of Miss Price, he declines to assign it any other value. The tale is "padding," a "mere meaningless good story," and "suitable for magazine romance."[5]

This catalogue of literary failure reiterates the language of critique often directed at interpolated tales by both eighteenth-century and current-day readers. The tale's slight size ("mere") is paratactically connected to its lack of function ("meaningless"); its quality is attacked in class terms as decidedly low brow ("suitable for magazine romance"); and there is something almost anatomically distasteful and perhaps female about its flabby form ("padding"). I find evidence for a potential rejoinder in Lauren Berlant's concept of "the intimate public," an imagined community of affect grounded in the expectation that its members "already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience."[6] While Lauren Berlant derives her theory of "intimate publics" from twentieth-century American "Women's Culture," I find that long before the emergence of recognizable

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[4] James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1934), 390.

[5] Golden, 34–35.

[6] Berlant, viii.

mass culture, eighteenth-century women writers and fictional characters often represent or seek out intimate narrative exchanges based on the assumption of shared female experience that Berlant theorizes. Miss Price's life and narrative have indeed "been deemed puny [and] discarded," but part of Sheridan's project is to "legitimate" that life and to launch a gendered "political critique" through the narrative encounter that occurs between Sidney and Miss Price. In Berlant's phrase, the two women's intersubjective exchange could be interpreted as "luminous."

In the three decades since the publication of Golden's article, *Sidney Bidulph* has been recuperated, largely by feminist scholars, and republished in three modern editions.[7] A memoir of female passivity, the novel follows the virtuous Sidney through a series of masochistic renunciations that terminate with her mistakenly bigamous marriage and the death of her beloved from an ambiguated grief and suicide. A brief comic interlude, the history of Miss Price has no bearing on the arc of Sidney's tragic plot. Despite the narrowness of Golden's interest, his reading remains the sole extended interpretation of Miss Price's tale. As I argue throughout this project, the interpolated tale is a form that mediates alternate perspectives without assimilating them, while signaling its own transmissibility and raising the possibility of intersubjective community. This chapter argues that Sheridan uses the interpolated tale as a juncture for exploring the asymmetrical relation between narrative outcomes and didactic content in the sentimental novel, while imagining how storytelling and the social networks it creates can afford

[7] Credit for resurrecting the *Memoirs* is due to a raft of scholars including Margaret Anne Doody, Patricia Meyer Spacks, Janet Todd, James Foster, Gerard Barker, and Betty Schellenberg, as well as the novel's editors, Sue Townsend, Joan Coates Cleary, Patricia Köster, Heidi Hutner, and Nicole Garret. Pandora released the first modern edition in 1987, followed by Oxford World's Classics (1995) and Broadview (2011).

reparative plot effects and pleasure. When Sidney hears Miss Price's tale of woe, she immediately recognizes it as a call to moral action and moves swiftly to liberate the Prices from debt slavery. Sidney's intervention transforms a gothic tragedy into a romantic comedy. However, as Sidney's own tragedy unfolds, she finds no way to apply the knowledge gleaned from this interpolated tale to her own narrative. Still, she finds solace in the reciprocal narrative encounter and the chance to restore a blameless family's public character. Thus, the interpolated tale allows Sidney to confront differences in class and fortune as well as to recognize that Miss Price's history holds no application for her own, while glimpsing the pleasures of intersubjectivity. Despite their real social differences, she and Miss Price enjoy a series of sentimental exchanges they find exceptionally satisfying in their providential logic and in the immediacy of their application. Sidney interprets her status as a woman who has endured specifically female forms of suffering to mean that she enjoys an *a priori* understanding of Miss Price's female suffering.[8] The slippage between form and content invites listeners and readers to form a cathexis with the tale and the imagined community of sentimental women it conjures. The same breach between the tale and surround that allows for the transfer of emotion enables the construction of a gendered politics built around the ironic knowledge that a woman's character cannot be reduced to her public reputation just as her virtue may not determine her plot outcome.

But there is another turn of the screw. *The Vicar of Wakefield* is not the only metamorphosis of Miss Price's seduction-captivity narrative, which proves surprisingly generative in its afterlives. Attending to the singularity of Miss Price's interruption of what is

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[8] Berlant, ix.

otherwise Sidney's epistolary perspective, this chapter unearths a forgotten line of sentimental narratives. These narratives stretch before and after the fictional moment when the character and narrator Miss Price met her savior and perfect interlocutor in the form of Sidney Bidulph Arnold. In Sheridan's version, Miss Price is an unfortunate clergyman's daughter entangled in the fall of her family from country gentry to London debtor's prison. When Miss Price escapes an attempted rape by her family's patron, the patron trumps up charges of debt, under which terms the family languishes in prison for eighteen months. The family's only means of subsistence is the daughter's piecemeal labor. It is while vending handmade flowers on the street that Miss Price providentially encounters Sidney, who rescues the family within days.

The elements of Miss Price's tale are as recognizable and open to transference as a fairy tale, and they reemerge in a recursive pattern in sentimental texts spanning the next century. Goldsmith reworks the plot material from the father's perspective and redistributes the emphasis of his satire away from gender to a systemic critique of enlightenment political economy. In the transatlantic blockbuster *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth* (1791), published in America as *Charlotte Temple* (1794), Susanna Rowson includes an interpolated tale about a virtuous old man clapped into prison for refusing to barter his daughter; the vicious creditor is the family's former patron. Later in the nineteenth century, *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39) features a sentimental heroine who sells handicrafts to support herself and her infirm father, whom yet another cruel but patient creditor is attempting to starve into handing over his daughter. Notably, in the case of Dickens's novel, the villain's aim is a forced marriage rather than kept mistressdom or rape.

The basic elements of Miss Price's tale serve as a starter kit of sentimental plot-making. They contain a compact set of characters (vulnerable father and daughter, villainous creditor), an

external agon (debt), and an internal agon (the sexual double standard). Some forms are more mobile than others, and interpolated tales like Miss Price's are notably on the move. Like earworms, energumen, and other narrative carriers, interpolated tales provide a bounded and (usually) brief form that is adroit at intertextual transfer.[9] Simultaneously intact and open, the device of the interpolated tale allows the seed of a brief autobiographical narrative (the history of Miss Price) to migrate and generate similar interpolated tales (*Charlotte Temple*), whole novels (*The Vicar of Wakefield*), novel subplots (*Nicholas Nickleby*), and interpolated tales on which whole novels hang *(Conclusion to the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*). Part of this mobility is due to the way that interpolated tales signal their own transmissibility: because they instantiate moments of intersubjective exchange within the plot of their containing novels, they inherently supply a mode of narrative transfer and enact transmission between the tale-teller and interlocutor zero. But before chasing afterlives, I will survey the original tale and the peculiar position it occupies in both Sheridan's novel and its sequel.

[9] Earworms are catchy snippets of song that loop unbidden in the listener's head, and energumens are bodies and texts "wrought upon" or "possessed" by alien discursive systems, in Wendy Belcher's definition. *OED* Online, s.v. "earworm," http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/318883rskey=1Svk1V&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 20, 2016). Wendy Laura Belcher, *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson: Ethiopian Thought in the Making of an English Author* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8, 17.

I. Tragedy Turns Comedy: Miss Price's Tale Interrupts *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*

Dedicated to Samuel Richardson as he lay dying, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* was one of the eighteenth century's most popular novels, going through six editions by 1796.[10] While the heroine Sidney Bidulph is often compared to Clarissa Harlowe, Frances Sheridan plumbs female suffering that is the result of an ill-matched marriage rather than rape, two crimes against the heart and personal sovereignty that the novel positions together without equating. A paragon of virtue and feminine submissiveness, Sidney Bidulph sacrifices the man of her heart and quickly marries a feeble substitute, all out of obedience to her mother. The plot hinges on articles of withheld information. Again under the influence of her mother, Sidney convinces her beloved Faulkland to marry Miss Burchell, the mother of his illegitimate child. Only later does Sidney learn that the supposed seduction victim was in fact the aggressor, a "sly rake in petticoats" (396) who sought to marry only for money.[11] Against the grain, the novel's villains, seducers, and bad actors are women, including Sidney's well-intentioned but egregiously-misguided mother. The exceptional case of male villainy is the vicious Mr. Ware, who terrorizes and imprisons Miss Price, the narrator and heroine of the novel's sole interpolated tale.

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[10] Samuel Richardson died on July 4, 1761, and *Sidney Bidulph* was published four months earlier in March of that year. Heidi Hutner and Nicole Garret, introduction to *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, by Frances Sheridan (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Editions, 2011), 13. Hutner and Garret have provided a scrupulous edition of the novel with helpful appendices.

[11] Frances Sheridan, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, ed. by Heidi Hutner and Nicole Garret (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2011), 43. Further citations from *Memoirs* will be given by page number in the text.

Focusing on Miss Price's seduction-captivity narrative shifts attention to the question of what work is being done when Sidney transforms from narrator to interlocutor, and when a putatively oral narrative interrupts an epistolary novel. Only when Sidney takes a break from her relentless self-narrating does she finds an opportunity to escape her characteristic passivity. So often crippled by the information withheld from her, Sidney relishes the opportunity to participate in a reciprocal narrative encounter in which the knowledge exchanged has no particular utility for the construction of her own plot or of *The Memoirs*. Instead of exemplarity, Miss Price's narrative abides by a different logic: it is valuable to Sidney not as information exchange, but as an intimate narrative encounter that allows for transference and emotional cathexis in excess of its didactic content. The sharing of the interpolated tale allows these two female narrators to partake, however fleetingly, in an intersubjective community of women whose gendered knowledge allows them to communicate across social class and differences in personal misfortune.

Since its publication in 1761, *Sidney Bidulph* has provided little ground for critical consensus, even among its admirers. Like Samuel Johnson, eighteenth-century reviewers agreed on their affective response to what *The Critical Review* termed the "irresistible pathos" of the novel, but they differed on the moral implications posed by leaving virtue unrewarded.[12] While the *London Magazine*'s reviewer declared himself too "charm'd" to worry whether the novel encouraged "the too popular doctrine of predestination," *The Monthly Review* fretted "that such

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[12] *The Critical Review* 11 (1762): 186–98. Quoted in Appendix B: Reviews of *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph,* 534.

representations are by no means calculated to encourage and promote Virtue."[13] In Clara Reeve's *The Progress of Romance* (1785), three literary ladies debate these opposing reviews before endorsing cheerfulness: "I do really think that books of a gloomy tendency do much harm in this country, and especially to young minds;— they should be shewn the truth through the medium of chearfulness, and let to expect encouragement in the practice of the social duties, and rewards for virtuous actions."[14] Nonetheless, the novel found a wide readership. In addition to brisk sales, the novel ranked as a favorite selection from lending libraries.[15] In 1824, when Alicia LeFanu published a family biography of her grandmother, one reviewer recollected the long cultural currency of Sheridan's first novel: "Some of us can remember the great popularity which it [*Sidney Bidulph*] acquired, and the great avidity with which it was read: for in the circulating libraries it retained an undisputed supremacy long after its appearance, and even down to a period comparatively recent."[16] Two years later, the Irish actor John O'Keeffe recorded his perception of a particularly national interest in the novel: "Mrs Sheridan's 'Sidney Biddulph' was more read and admired in Ireland than any novel I ever heard of."[17]

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[13] Ibid., 534, 535. *The Monthly Review* 24 (1761): 260–66. *London Magazine* 30 (1761): 168. Both reviewers foregrounded "tears" as a marker of their emotional response. *Monthly Review*: "The Author seems to have had no other design than to draw tears from the reader by distressing innocence and virtue, as much as possible." *London Review*: "We have read, and we have wept over the journal of Miss Bidulph."

[14] Ibid., 538.

[15] Sheridan's modern editors, Hutner and Garret, describe the Memoirs as "hugely popular" in the circulating libraries and "enormously successful" (back cover, 13). Heidi Hutner and Nicole Garret, "introduction," 9–34.

[16] *Monthly Review*, CIV, 2nd series (1824), 257–258. Also cited by Foster. James R. Foster, *The Pre-Romantic Novel in England* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1949), 144.

[17] John O'Keefe, *Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe*. *Written by himself* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 86. O'Keeffe goes on to add: "Though then a young reader, I liked it very much" (86–87). Cited in Siobhán Kilfeather, *Dublin: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 53.

In the twentieth century, Richardsonians led the charge in resurrecting *Sidney Bidulph* as a novel of scholarly interest.[18] After all, the novel was dedicated to the "exemplary Goodness" and "distinguished Genius" united in "THE AUTHOR OF CLARISSA AND SIR CHARLES GRANDISON" (43). While recent scholars have hailed *Sidney Bidulph* as "one of the best English sentimental novels" and as an innovator in novel form, the agreement ends there.[19] How is one to interpret the self-described "fatality" of events in Sidney's tragedy?[20] One camp of scholars lauds *Memoirs* as an anti-conduct book (Margaret Doody, Jean Coates Cleary, Marla Harris, Anna Fitzer), while another wonders if Sheridan's bleak view of undeserved suffering and predestination verges on amorality or masochism (Janet Todd, Patricia Meyer Spacks, Margaret Doody again).[21] Betty Schellenberg locates the novel's feminism in its restructuring of public and private in a way open to female readers: "a text that could be read in an intimate private setting while promising its readers access to a public virtue."[22] One of the few scholars who

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[18] Foster and Doody both follow a Richardsonian trail to *The Memoirs*.

[19] Foster, 142.

[20] Sidney employs this word twice, both times applying it to her relationship with Faulkland: "I cannot help thinking, my Cecilia, that there is a sort of a fatality has attended Mr. Faulkland's attachment to me" (322). "Read it, and see by what a fatality we have been governed" (349).

[21] Margaret Anne Doody,"Frances Sheridan: Morality and Annihilated Time," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670–1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), 324–58. Jean Coates Cleary, introduction to *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, by Frances Sheridan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Marla Harris, "Strategies of Silence: Sentimental Heroinism and Narrative Authority in Novels by Frances Sheridan, Frances Burney, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Hannah More" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1993). Anna Fitzer, "Mrs Sheridan's Active Demon: *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* and the Sly Rake in Petticoats," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr* 18 (2003): 39–62. Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-Century English Novels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): 134–140. Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

[22] Betty Schellenberg, "Frances Sheridan Reads John Home: Placing *Sidney Bidulph* in the Republic of Letters," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 13.4 (July 2001): 561–577. Noting Sheridan's participation in multiple professional circles, Schellenberg reminds us that "A reading of Sheridan as one of Richardson's 'daughters,' if not actually wrong, does not tell the whole story" (563).

address the sequel, John Traver contends that *The Memoirs* and *Conclusion* together work as "mutually corrective" complements: the former employs "the prolongation of narrative" to criticize "partiality and rigidity in judgment in female characters" while the latter condemns the same flaws in male characters.[23] In a recent queer reading, Susan Lanser argues that the main "structurally erotic relationship" in the novel exists between Sidney and Cecilia.[24] Leaving these ethical and political debates open, the most recent editors of *The Memoirs* opt to label it a problem novel: "While perhaps not feminist, then, by our contemporary standards, the novel registers the problematic and unstable cultural, social, political, and economic conditions for middle- and upper-class English women in the eighteenth century."[25] With the exception of Golden, none of these texts pays more than a passing mention to the history of Miss Price.

The form of *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* fuses a complex frame tale and quasi-epistolary core. The prefatory "Editor's Introduction" explains the premise (43). An elderly woman, Cecilia, shares the diary-style correspondence of her virtuous girlhood friend, Sidney Bidulph, with an anonymous male houseguest. He becomes its literary agent and editor. Starting in April 1703 and ending in June 1708, Sidney's first-person journal entries document "a

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[23] John C. Traver, "The Inconclusive Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph: Problems of Poetic Justice, Closure, and Gender," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20.1 (Fall 2007): 35–60, 36, 37. Traver also argues that the novel should be read in the context of "the dramatic conventions and theatrical debate concerning poetic justice" (37), a view I whole-heartedly share and will pursue later in this chapter.

[24] Susan Lanser, "Novel (Sapphic) Subjects: The Sexual History of Form," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 42.3 (2009 Fall): 497–503, 499, 500. "The implicit task of this novel is to turn a woman's intimacy with another woman [Sidney's with Cecilia] into a socially sanctioned union with a man [Sidney's with Faulkland]… *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* exchanges a heterosexual plot for a same-sex union effected through narrative form."

[25] Introduction, 21.

Tragedy in Prose"[26] whose five ill-fortuned years mirror the five acts of a stage tragedy. On rare occasion, Sidney requests that some trusted amanuensis continue her account on her behalf, the lion's share of the correspondence is in Sidney's hand.[27] The strikingly dramatic plot carries the heroine from courtship to a disastrous first marriage to an accidentally-bigamous second marriage, a popular stage convention since Thomas Southerne's play *The Fatal Marriage, or the Innocent Adultery* (1694) had adapted Aphra Behn's novella *The History of the Nun: Or, the Fair Vow-Breaker* (1689).[28] While the editor appends an introduction and Cecilia prefixes a biographical headnote, the remainder of the text is Sidney's half of the correspondence, posited as "the Journal," written in first person, and sent in bulk as packets. This hybrid of epistolary and journaling practice may seem unwieldy, but it was historically appropriate. One year later, James Boswell mailed similar packet-correspondence to his friend John Johnston, which was later published as *The London Journal: 1762-1763*.[29] At the end of the third volume, Sidney's journal "breaks off" and the editor reappears to pen a short paragraph apologizing for the

[26] Gordon Turnbull, ed., James Boswell's *London Journal, 1762-1763* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 43. Turning this phrase in the footnotes to Boswell's *London Journal,* Turnbull uses it to refer to what he believes to be a lost dramatic work that Frances Sheridan was working on at the time of her death. "Frances Sheridan was at this time writing stage comedy. In 1766 Thomas Sheridan wrote from France, where the Sheridans were then resident, that she had begun 'a Tragedy in Prose" based on a two-volume continuation of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph. If complete, it has not survived." Considering that the original *Memoirs of Sidney Biduph* was three volumes and the *Conclusion* an additional two volumes, it seems plausible to me that Thomas Sheridan's phrase, "Tragedy in Prose," was referring to the completed *Sidney Bidulph* text, with its five volumes imitating the five acts of a tragedy.

[27] Sidney hands over the task of recording her experiences only when incapacitated. Thus, it is Cecilia, the beloved confidante, who narrates the tragic conclusion on Sidney's behalf (459–467). The editor tags this section, "CECILIA'S NARRATIVE, &c. BEING A SUPPLEMENT TO Mrs. ARNOLD'S JOURNAL" (459). Susan Lanser argues that the relationship between Sidney and Cecilia is "structurally erotic." Lanser, 498.

[28] Aphra Behn, *The History of the Nun*, in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, vol.3, ed. Janet Todd (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 206.

[29] Gordon Turnbull, "Boswell, James (1740–1795)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2006, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2950 (accessed February 2, 2016).

narrative's truncation and for his failure to "recover any more of the manuscript" (467). At the time of her death in September 1766, Sheridan was working on two additional volumes, which were published posthumously as *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* in 1767. The sequel follows a second generation of "fatal events" (489). This time, attention focuses on Sidney's two daughters and adopted son, who fall under the influence of a wicked brother and sister and themselves form a contorted, quasi-incestuous love triangle.

With the exception of Miss Price's tale, Sidney Bidulph's first-person voice dominates the novel. An elaborate paratextual scaffold works to support the premise of Sidney's unceasing self-narrating: "THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION,' Cecilia's biographical headnote, and the handful of bracketed notices of skipped intervals "in which time, though the Journal was regularly continued, nothing material to her story occurred" (145, 147, 435).[30] Unlike Pamela and Clarissa, Sidney is not writing to the moment. Her journal-styled letters are written in past tense, the product of reflection and solitude. In rare moments of direst grief, when Sidney "has not the heart to write, nor scarcely to do any thing" (297), she appoints a trusted confidante like Patty Main, Dr. Main, or Cecilia as her amanuensis.[31] Within the frame construction of the novel

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[30] These moments are very much paratexts according to the definition offered by Genette: "For us, accordingly, the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers, and more generally, to the public…this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text…" Genette, 1, 2. Examples of paratexts include titles, subtitles, intertitles, prefaces, epigraphs, epilogues, and footnotes.

[31] One such episode occurs when Sidney's first husband is slowly dying after being thrown from a horse. The editor notes the transfer thus: "*[Here Mrs Arnold's maid Patty continues the journal.]"* Patty describes the urgency of her task, and opens her entry by writing to the moment in the style of Richardson: "Oh, madam! how shall I express myself! my poor master, now he is so good, we are going, I fear, to lose him: I must write, according to my lady's custom, every thing in the best order I can" (297). From this point, first Patty then her brother settle into a retrospective narration similar to Sidney's. Sidney resumes the journal after a fortnight.

as a codex diary,[32] Sidney values dialogue both as a carrier of information she needs as a heroine and as a formal contrast to the pained, inward contemplations that consume most of her time as a narrator. The novel's brisk and at times theatrical dialogue is one of its most Richardsonian features.[33] Reported sometimes as direct and sometimes as indirect speech, dialogue is frequent and, while unmarked, clearly distinguishable from Sidney's narrative voice.

Occupying a singular position, Miss Price's tale stands as the only sustained alternative to Sidney's voice and subjectivity. Miss Price interrupts the main plot at a pivotal moment: between the emotional climax of Sidney's realization that she has committed a grievous error by persuading Faulkland to marry Miss Burchell and the plot climax of her own accidentally bigamous marriage to him. In general, interpolated tales are not indigenous to epistolary novels, whose organizing principle is strong first-person narration. After all, epistolarity has a built-in mechanism for switching point of view by switching letter writer. As Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook has shown us, eighteenth-century epistolary narratives carry a "double ontological status" of print and manuscript, in part because we understand letters as "bearing traces of the body that produced them."[34] For Cook, epistolary narratives mediate a set of crucial binaries: private and public, script and print, and "corporealized, gendered writing subject" and "the disembodied

[32] Christina Lupton draws attention to *Memoirs*'s status as a codex book, a form whose material structure generates an "awareness of the narrative event as something that is both unavoidable and thinkable as having been otherwise." Thus, for Lupton, the codex book enables the text's fictionality by invoking similar tensions as the ones I identify as raised by the form of the interpolated tale. Christina Lupton, "Codex, Contingency, and the Fate of the Novel" (presentation, ISECS 2015: 14th International Conference for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Rotterdam, NL, July 31, 2015).

[33] Hutner and Garret speculate, "Frances Sheridan was a playwright... [and her] method of writing dialogue likely varies according to the pace of the scene or her vision of the interactions between characters," making it worth preserving despite the fact that it "may seem inconsistent to twenty-first-century readers." Hutner and Garret, 39.

[34] Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 2.

voice of the citizen-critic."[35] Importantly, the manuscript letter exchange between Sidney and Cecilia occurs between class equals. In contrast, Miss Price's tale offers a relatively intact first-person narrative spoken aloud by a minor character who is Sidney's social inferior. A tale-teller rather than a letter writer, Miss Price conjures a fictional embodiment is tied to orality rather than manuscript. Her physical presence and invocation of oral tradition allows the flower-vendor to overcome the difference in rank between the two women and seize upon shared sex and gender as sufficient for an intersubjective exchange.

The transition between epistolary narrator (Sidney) and oral tale-teller (Miss Price) is rough going. In her March 14 letter to Cecilia, Sidney first recounts how she came to function as Miss Price's interlocutor. Struck by the look of "silent anguish" on a street vendor's face, Sidney questions the girl and finds her uncommonly pretty, gently spoken, and industrious-seeming (400). When Sidney learns that the girl's father is an imprisoned clergyman, she suspects that a tale of uncommon "misfortunes" must explain the family's "distressed situation" (400). Like Sarah Fielding's David Simple before her, Sidney is actuated by a form of benevolent curiosity, which seeks out tales of injustice in the hopes of remedying them: "My curiosity was excited by her manner. I desired her to sit down, and relate to me the particulars of her story./ She obeyed with a sensible politeness that pleased me" (401). Like Henry Fielding's "The History of Leonora," Miss Price's narrative is a permeable interpolated tale. During the seventy-nine paragraphs when Miss Price commandeers the narrative (401–416), Sidney interrupts her six times. The moments when Miss Price resumes the thread of her tale are the only instances when

[35] Ibid., 8.

her monologue is marked as tagged speech. Otherwise, the vast majority of Miss Price's tale is narrated as untagged direct discourse.

For the remainder of the seventy-nine paragraphs, Miss Price speaks in a continuous first-person voice that is untagged and represented as direct speech. Thus, the text enacts a false insistence that Miss Price's tale is a first-person oral narrative embedded within Sidney's first-person epistolary narrative. Sidney herself acknowledges the oddity and even implausibility of this scenario: "I have given you this affecting story, my Cecilia, pretty nearly in the girl's own words. I was much moved by it" (416). While the interpolated tale itself has staked its moral and truth claims in its unmediated status as an oral narrative and the speaker's physical presence, Sidney here scales back the letter's representational claim to "pretty nearly in the girl's own words." Although Sidney ultimately concedes the impossibility of representing orality and physical presence in letter form, she only admits this impossibility after having attempted a utopian representation. To fact-check the girl's tale, Sidney goes directly to the prison, where Mr. Price corroborates all, orality and physical presence again giving moral heft to his claims. His version of events, however, goes unrepresented. Sidney's narration collapses it into a sentence: "He then repeated to me every particular, as I had before heard them from his daughter, enlarging on certain passages, which she had but slightly touched upon" (418).

The substance of Miss Price's tale is simple and harrowing. In the telling, two genres compete. For Mr. Price, it is a tale of patronage gone wrong: he refused to sell his daughter to his patron, Mr. Ware, who in turn trumped up a charge of debt and threw him into prison. For Miss Price herself, it is a tale of gothic horror, with borrowings from *Clarissa.* While hosting the Prices in London under false pretenses, Ware attempts to assault the daughter one night; she,

however, screams continuously, fights him off, and throws herself on to the floor, wounding herself. Rushing into the room, Mr. Price discovers what his daughter describes as "a spectacle of horrour; my cap was off, and my nose bleeding with the fall" (409). The aggressor then holds both father and daughter hostage with the aim of compelling her to be his kept mistress. After Miss Price makes a daring nighttime escape, Ware claps her elderly father in prison on spurious charges of debt. Having sold off most of their belongings and languished for eighteen months in debtor's prison, the Prices regain their liberty only through Sidney's benevolent intervention.

However dark, Miss Price's tale narrates a dramatic sequence of scenes that make for some of the novel's best reading. The episode is event-packed and quickly-paced, and Miss Price is a fine heroine. When Ware locks her into her room, Miss Price engineers an escape plan worthy of a Restoration comedy. First, she ties a piece of weighted paper to a string and uses it to catch the attention of the night watchman. To the same string, she has tied a second piece of paper weighted with a guinea. This second paper contains a note that "in a large plain hand, beseeched him" to help her climb down from the window's height (412). When the watchman returns with a friend and "a sort of plank, or board," Miss Price hugs her father goodbye (412). Her escape makes a suitable climax: "having my apparatus ready for descending," Mr. Price holds some "strong ribbons" that were tied under his daughter's arms, while she "slid down by the sheets which I had fastened together corner-ways with a knot" (412). In addition to the sense of gothic horror and adventure, Sheridan tempers the episode with humor. Miss Price explains that she "must go alone" because her father's body—"being in years, and pretty corpulent" (410)—renders him unfit for such window escapes. Once she is delivered to a safe house, Miss Price pays off the "trusty watchman" and "dismissed him, very well pleased with his night's

adventure" (413). This splicing of tragedy and comedy within the tale repeats the foundational doubleness of the text. Read by itself as an intact narrative, Miss Price's tale is a tragedy. But within the context of the larger work, Sidney's benevolent intervention transforms the domestic tragedy into a comedy. This hopeful glimmer of restitution deepens our sense of Sidney's undeserved tragic fate.

Like Sheridan, Sidney proves herself a skillful comic playwright. Her management of an inventive happy ending for the Prices leaves a measure of happiness for herself. Here, as so often on the eighteenth-century stage, the genre of comedy functions as a reparative form that is conceived of as correcting tragedy.[36] For Sidney, redressing the wrongs done to the Prices is the most satisfying form of work available to her: "I never experienced such heart-felt satisfaction as I have received from restoring comfort to these truly deserving people" (421). With the able help and connections of her cousin Warner, the West Indian nabob, Sidney is able to have the clergyman released from his debt. Miss Price enters Sidney's service and promptly marries Harry Main, one of the worthy Main sons and a prospering linen-draper. At that point, the Prices exit the plot of *The Memoirs.* Assisted by Sidney's gifts of a thousand-pound dowry for the daughter and a hundred-pound annuity for the elderly father, the Prices depart to set up their own bourgeois household. Even the name "Price" dord not appear again until the sequel, at which point the father and daughter take on a surprising prominence that I will investigate below. The Prices exit Sidney's prose tragedy showering her with their "prayers and blessings," and go off to enjoy their comic ending in peace (424).

[36] I am indebted to Helen Deutsch for this notion of comedy as a genre that works to "remedy tragedy's injustices."

What effect does this oral interpolated tale have on its containing epistolary narrative? In terms of placement, Miss Price's tale marks a hinge in the plot. Just twelve days earlier, Sidney had written of learning the secret that lay at the heart of her misfortunes. Her brother, Sir George, finally breaks his gentleman's code of silence to reveal that he numbers among Miss Burchell's many lovers. Miss Burchell's only motivation in marrying Sidney's beloved Faukland was to access his title and fortune. Sidney has no framework for assimilating the information, exclaiming to her brother, "You have given me an idea of a character which I thought was not in the female world" (396). Sidney conceives of her ignorance as literary as well as sexual: the female rake is an example of a character she has never encountered. In contrast, Sidney immediately grasps Miss Price's tale of female suffering at the hands of a cruel male seducer and sets about liberating her from his snare. In Berlant's terms, Sidney operates on the assumption of an *a priori* gendered understanding: as women, they "already share a world view and emotional knowledge" based on their "broadly common historical experience" as women.[37] The novel tracks two marriages orchestrated by Sidney: Orlando Faulkland to Miss Burchell and Miss Price to Harry Main. Counterintuitively, it is immediately upon learning of the tragic failure of the first marriage that Sidney undertakes setting up the second—and indeed, it is a successful match. Rescuing the Price family is the apogee of Sidney's benevolent happiness as the ward of her rich cousin. Directly afterwards, Faulkland reappears to set in train their unwittingly bigamous marriage and his eventual suicide.

At stake in the joining of Miss Price's comic rescue and Sidney's tragic fate, and the juxtaposition of Sidney's two cases of matchmaking, again, one tragic and one comic, is the

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[37] Berlant, viii.

question of whether we should read their narratives as exemplary or exceptional.[38] Much of the feminist recuperation of the novel has focused on how it subverts conduct literature by a logic that punishes Sidney for her submissiveness. In the words of Anna Fitzer, "her text demonstrates not so much by example, but rather through an exposure of the unreliability of example, the implausibility of abiding by a set of conventions or regulatory laws."[39] The turn I would like to take is to reframe the question from the perspective of the heroine: does Sidney read Miss Price as an example? In what moral position does the interpolated tale place its interlocutor? How can the interlocutor mediate between her own similarity to and difference from the speaker in such a way that allows her to formulate a two-way interpretation: what the tale teaches the interlocutor about the teller, but also about herself? As Paul Ricoeur writes of the parable, the interpolated tale here is an encounter with the "unexpected" that issues a call to action, even if the action called for is the act of interpretation.[40] For Sidney, the other-directed interpretation of Miss Price's tale is an easy task. She asks some probing questions and then compares the daughter's and father's versions of events against each other. She hears the tale of distress as a call to action and immediately heeds it. Money is the necessary remedy: £400 pounds is all that is required to free this family from its debt slavery, and in the end, no money changes hands. Simply the promise of paying off the debt suffices to convince Mr. Ware to forgive it.

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[38] Sidney conceives of herself as a tragedy heroine: "Nothing but an extraordinary fatality, which could neither be foreseen nor avoided, had made me unhappy" (177).

[39] Fitzer goes on to argue that Sidney's submissive femininity is performative, and indeed, that the performance of femininity is a strategic response to eighteenth-century gender conventions: "Sidney turns in the kind of overstated performance which, in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Partridge saw fit to applaud...Anybody may see she is an actor" (53).

[40] Paul Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics," *Semeia* 4 (1975): 29–145, 103. "Parables are stories given as fictions. But what they mean is the same [as miracles]: the course of ordinary life is broken, the surprise bursts out. The unexpected happens; the audience is questioned and brought to think about the unthinkable" (103).

What remains opaque to Sidney and to her readers is the other half of the two-way interpretation. How can Sidney apply the knowledge of this interpolated tale to herself? Unfortunately for her, Miss Price's interpolated tale proves an object lesson in the genre divide between comedy and tragedy. While Sidney's patronage saves Miss Price, cousin Warner's patronage cannot save Sidney. She understands perfectly the didactic content of Miss Price's tale, but finds no way to apply its lessons to herself. Not only is Sidney's tragedy irremediable by money, but it is wildly out of proportion to her errors of judgment. Why is Sidney's suffering so disproportionate to her virtue?[41] Even Samuel Johnson, advocate of didactic literature, questioned whether Sheridan had the right to make "readers suffer so much."[42] In the case of the problems that lay siege to Sidney, neither money nor virtue offers protection and redress. What Sidney learns over the course of the novel is all of the pieces of knowledge that have been actively withheld from her: the letter in which Faulkland pleads his case, her brother's liaison with Miss Burchell, her husband's precarious finances. The belated revelation of this knowledge comes too late to release her from the "fatality" of the choices she made with her tragically incomplete knowledge.

At the end of the novel, readers finally hear from Sidney's silent interlocutor, Cecilia, who rushes to condole with her friend. Cecilia records the immediate aftermath of Faulkland's death and praises her friend's piety and submission. From her retrospective viewpoint, Cecilia

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[42] Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, 390. Boswell glosses Johnson's words as a "high compliment." Boswell himself includes praise of *Sidney Bidulph* in his favorable portrait of Mrs. Sheridan: "Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative…Her novel, entitled 'Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph,' [*sic*] contains an excellent moral, while it inculcates a future state of retribution; and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of 'heaven's mercy" (389–390).

then leaps proleptically forward, skipping over ten years of quiet domestic life. Cecilia recollects watching "with delight" as Sidney shared her narrative with her now-teenaged daughters: "This, said she, I do, not as a murmurer at my fate, nor to move your pity at my misfortunes, but to teach you by my example, that there is no situation in life exempt from trouble" (466). The undeserved pathos of Sidney's "example" remains a hermeneutic puzzle. Margaret Doody doubts whether "the 'moral'—interested Sheridan primarily."[43]

Sidney is at peace with her tragic fate, but her readers are not. Eighteenth-century reviewers singled out "tears" as the novel's primary effect. Patricia Meyer Spacks suggests "outrage," while Janet Todd describes the position of Sheridan's reader as disturbed.[44] And I suspect that what unites these responses is the sense that Sheridan's narrative produces a discomfiting excess of affect without offering the relief of guidance about how to manage it. Affect, and in particular, the negative emotions expressed in tears and rage, underwrite the intersubjective community created between Sidney and Miss Price, as well as Sidney, Miss Price, and the reader. While at first blush, Sidney's "example" may seem to suggest less what to do than what to feel, I would argue that it makes a case for redefining what counts as an action. The examples of Sidney and Miss Price construct a logic by which feeling catalyzes a virtuous cycle of storytelling and active listening, which in turn constitutes a sociable community. Sheridan's novel provides evidence that the listening and storytelling bound up with feeling can become acts that mediate difference and enable intersubjectivity.

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[43] Doody, 355.

[44] Spacks, 138. "Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph establishes outrage at the female situation of helplessness by the entire organization of its plot." Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660–1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 162. Todd compares Sarah Fielding and Frances Sheridan, noting that their novels interrogate how sentimental norms can "easily become self-destructive masochism" (161).

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Considering the constricted bounds of Miss Price's narrative in *Memoirs*, the interpolated tale proves surprisingly generative and replicable in its afterlives, as written by Frances Sheridan and others. Even after Frances Sheridan's death in 1766, Miss Price's tale proved remarkably portable to other novels of sentiment for generations to come. In addition, in *Conclusion to the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, Mr. Price joins Sidney's household and figures as a major character. Miss Price, now Mrs. Main, reappears primarily in the service of a second interpolated tale, the story of Miss Theodora Williams, another seduction narrative that turns out to be the secret driver of the novel's denouement. The remainder of this chapter explores the proliferation of afterlives that take the basic elements of Miss Price's tale as a germ for sentimental plot-making. First, I will examine the singular role of Theodora Williams's story in Sheridan's sequel to *Sidney Bidulph*.

II. First Hand, Second Generation: *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*

At the time of her death at the age of forty-two, Frances Sheridan was in the midst of revising two complete manuscripts. The following year, they were published posthumously as *The History of Nourjahad* and *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1767). The

former is an oriental tale in which the ruler of Persia uses the illusion of eternal life and vast wealth to instruct a callow young minister in the vanity of human wishes. The latter is a two-volume sequel that provides plotted and formal closure: it completes Sidney's tragic outcome of death and Sheridan's "Prose Tragedy" by bringing the volume count to five, thus mirroring the five acts of a stage tragedy. Picking up "eight or nine years" after the inconclusive ending of *The Memoirs, Conclusion* traces the trajectory of Sidney's tragedy through to a second generation of sufferers. Despite Sidney's good intentions in raising her two daughters and Faulkland's son together as siblings, the three young people fall into a toxic love triangle further complicated by the machinations of a villainous brother and sister. Just as Sidney found no parabular solution to her own problems in Miss Price's tale, the painful knowledge she acquired over the course of *Memoirs* does not prevent her daughters from making fatal romantic mistakes of their own. In these two novels, women's narratives fail to provide exempla for the conduct of fellow women, and instead offer the consolation of two-way recognition and cathexis. Like *The Memoirs*, its sequel contains a single interpolated tale framed as the first-person oral narrative of a distressed gentlewoman, under threat of seduction or successfully seduced. Unlike Miss Price's tale with its complete inutility to the main plot and its ultimately comic resolution, Miss Theodora Williams's tale holds the secret key to the novel's outcome—which, along with the interpolated tale itself, involves unmitigated tragedy. Again, Sheridan uses the interpolated tale to interrogate formal as well as philosophical problems. Instead of testing the boundary of comedy and tragedy, Miss Williams's tale takes the silencing of women and their attempts at self-authorization as the substance of both its plot and its formal structure.

The single interpolated tale that interrupts the *Conclusion* is even more awkwardly framed and heavily mediated than its predecessor. Within the epistolary codex of the *Memoirs*, Miss Price speaks her narrative aloud to Sidney, who then recounts it as an intact interpolated tale within her letter to Cecilia. In contrast, the second tale appears as part of a strange breakdown in the novel's epistolary structure. To open the sequel, the same editor explains that he has found a second trove of letters, which narrates the marital and romantic tragedy of the Arnold daughters and continues through Sidney's own death from a broken heart.[45] The letters have carefully been preserved by the family of Sidney's loyal servant and friend, Patty Main Askham, who also happens to be the sister-in-law of Miss Price. Miss Price had achieved her comic resolution by marrying Harry Main, Patty's worthy brother. Patty herself had been enfranchised from servant to friend on the wedding day (*Memoirs* 424). To situate the formal breakdown in which the interpolated tale appears, the mostly-silent editor briefly plays narrator to explain that he is omitting part of the letter sequence and including some "detached sheets of paper" out of the sequence: "All this the editor omits to avoid prolixity, excepting a little narrative extracted from some letters written by Mr. Main to his sister Askham, which he inserts as it has a material connection with the story" (137).

The "little narrative" is Theodora Williams's first-person account of having been decoyed into a sham marriage by Edward Audley, the arch-villain of the primary narrative. In a footnote that is information-dense and withholding, Sheridan flagged Mr. Main to explain his importance in the *Memoirs*; "Mr. Main is mentioned in the former part of these Memoirs. He was brother to

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[45] Frances Sheridan, *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, ed. by Nicole Garret and Heidi Hutner (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2013), 137. Further citations from *Conclusion* will be given by page number in the text.

Mrs. Askham, and married to the daughter of Mr. Price. He was a linen-draper, and had been settled many years in London" (137). The symmetry of the framing is remarkable: "the daughter of Mr. Price" had been the heroine of *Memoirs*' interpolated tale, and now she and her husband are the protectors of the heroine of *Conclusion*'s interpolated tale. As we move from *Memoirs* to *Conclusion*, it is in keeping with the darkening tone that Miss Price escapes her would-be seducer, while Theodora Williams considers herself both "undone" by and married to the rake who will not acknowledge her.

The formal breakdown between the end of Letter 36 (137) and the beginning of Letter 37 (152) places the narrative and the reader in a radically free space, outside the epistolary conventions of intertitles, correspondent names, dates, and signature lines that shape the remainder of the novel. As a device that is flexible but bounded, the interpolated tale emerges from this chaotic space as a recognizable and relatively stable form for the disoriented reader to latch on to. Three letters from Mr. Main to his sister, formerly Patty Main and now Mrs. Askham, convey the raw material of plot. However, they are rendered unfamiliar by the editor's sudden intrusion: in revealing that he has "extracted" the pertinent "little narrative" from the longer letters, he asserts himself as a temporary narrator. The exceptions within the exception are 22 continuous paragraphs in which Theodora Williams narrates her betrayal in the first person, without breaks, tags, or quotation marks. Within this frame, Theodora's history is presented as direct speech.

Point of view does yeoman's work to enable the genteel epistolary novel to represent the seduction narrative of a barely-middling class young woman. The shift in first-person

perspective from the editor to Theodora is quickly achieved, with a further gesture toward brevity:

> The young woman related to him the particulars of her story, which I shall endeavor to compress in as narrow a compass as possible.
>
> Sir Edward Audley, said she, after having called on me two or three times under pretence of hastening me with his linen, at last writ me a passionate love-letter, in which he begg'd I would give him an opportunity of seeing me alone the next evening…
>
> This, Sir, is my unfortunate story; and though I dreaded of all things to see either you or Mrs. Main, yet I am now rejoiced at our meeting, that you may advise me what to do.
>
> I told the poor creature (proceeds Mr. Main) that I was afraid her case was without remedy. (138, 145)

Theodora adopts first-person pronouns in the second sentence ("called on me") and continues speaking from this perspective for 22 paragraphs. During this time, the first "said she" is the only time dialogue is tagged until Theodora hands over the role of narrator to her guardian in the parenthetical "(proceeds Mr. Main)." Theodora is "rejoiced" to meet with Mr. Main because it gives her the chance to share her "unfortunate story," a story that she craves to share despite her persistent fear that it is "vain to speak of" (142). Like Miss Price's oral relating of her tale to Sidney, Theodora seeks the two-way relation between tale-teller and interlocutor and hopes to find some comfort in her guardian's response as well as in the telling. Again, the construction insists on the immediacy of direct address. This insistence registers as forced when one considers that the direct address is being filtered through both Mr. Main's letter and the editor's extraction of it, but the novel posits it nonetheless. Part of the novel's moral imperative is to restore the legitimacy of Theodora's voice and narrative, a legitimacy that Edward's hoax has stolen by suborning two false witnesses against her true account and by denying her evidence of own marital status. When Edward swears and inquires what reason Mr. Main has to doubt of his

supposed marriage to Theodora, Mr. Main responds, "Her own account" (149). Because the law admits no validity to Theodora's account without a substantiating witness, it is all the more important that the novel restore this validity. In Sheridan's logic, as well as Mr. Main's, "her own account" is vindication enough.[46]

A forthright and efficient narrator, Theodora lays out a stepwise record of how she was tricked into a sham marriage followed by the clues and painful deductions that made her aware of it. First, Sir Edward offered her "a handsome settlement" to act as his kept mistress, which she rejected "with the contempt it deserved" (139). Next, he proposed a clandestine marriage, to be concealed during his mother's lifetime. Unbeknownst to Theodora, the clergyman who performed the marriage is Edward's servant in disguise. Nonetheless, as an exchange of vows, the marriage would be considered legally binding, except that the only witnesses other than Theodora are the co-conspirators in gulling her. With chilling precision, Theodora chronicles the clues that led her to realize the truth of her situation: the clergyman exits the house wearing the clothes and "even the hat…of a layman" (141), the clergyman reappears the next day "in the person of [Edward's] pretend servant" (141), Faulkland treats her "with less respect than was due to Sir Edward's wife" (142), her friend who failed to show up to witness the wedding pays a visit

[46] The plot of Theodora's "unfortunate story" centers around her betrayal into a clandestine wedding and thus hinges on the peculiarity of Britain's marital law before the Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, which required a formal public ceremony for marriages to be legally binding. Mr. Main's first letter introduces Theodora and reports on her disappearance. One of the novel's many vulnerable orphans, Theodora has been left to the care of Mrs. Main, the former Miss Price, who provides her with steady "plain work" while seeking to place her "in some genteel family" as an upper servant (137). Theodora disappears from her lodgings not long after being employed "to make up some linen for Sir Edward Audley" (138). The editor interposes himself here to comment on the prolixity of Mr. Main's epistolary style: "Mr. Main in this letter, which is long and circumstantial, hints at his strong suspicions of Sir Edward Audley's being the person who had decoyed her away" (138). Theodora's first-person account is interpolated into the editor's extraction of Mr. Main's second letter, which relates finding "the place of her retreat" (138). The editor offers a brief summary of the narrative situation before giving way to Theodora's point of view: "The young woman related to him the particulars of her story, which I shall endeavor to compress in as narrow a compass as possible" (138).

and sneers at Dora's claim that she is rightfully married. Theodora recognizes her lack of a witness as the crux of the problem: "Yet what could I do? I had no witness to my marriage, and I thought it vain to speak of it" (142). Without substantiating testimony Theodora's words have no legal standing. She considers herself not just disempowered but silenced—"I thought it vain to speak of it." Though she had "dreaded" being discovered "living in an unlawful state," Theodora later expresses that she is "rejoiced" at being found by Mr. Main, an encounter which allows her both to seek his advice on her marital status and "to speak of it" at all. While Mr. Main too believes that Theodora's legal standing is unpromising—"I was afraid her case was without remedy" (145)—he agrees to help Theodora reassert her right to "speak of it," both to him and directly to Edward.

The plot of Theodora's tale literalizes her struggle to narrate her own autobiography and to discover a sympathetic audience. Cowed by the structural forces that privilege Edward's voice as that of a gentleman, Theodora initially requests that Mr. Main act as her agent and speak on her behalf. The heated dialogue of Mr. Main's confrontation with Edward inspires Theodora to speak on her own behalf—a moment of self-authorization that Edward attempts to dismiss as the declamatory posturing of an actress on the stage. Prompted to give "her own account" by Mr. Main, Theodora explains her legal reasoning to Edward: "If we were legally married, it cannot hurt you to put me in possession of a proof of it…As for Mr. Main, as I have already told him every circumstance that has passed, he may as well be trusted with the proof of our marriage as myself" (148). Nonplussed by "the spirit with which the girl made this fair proposal," Edward resorts to insults, questioning Theodora's quondam virginity and whether she had been "play'd any trick before."

Though technically couched within the epistolary narration of Mr. Main, this confrontation between the rake and his wronged wife unfolds in dramatic dialogue that belies Sheridan's theatrical background:

> …Upon my soul, madam, I did not think you had been so knowing in the ways of the world. I thought I had got an inexperienced girl; but I find—She interrupted him briskly, Sir, you have got an honest girl, and, if the expression became me, I would say, a girl of honour—Mighty fine, ma'am! Were you ever play'd any trick before? Or is this your first adventure? The poor girl burst into tears. 'Tis unmanly of you, Sir, to add insult to deceit. By Jupiter, said he, I believe the girl has been on the stage! That is so theatrically pretty! (148)[47]

The moment when Theodora rediscovers her voice, Edward attempts to discredit both her narrative of "uniquely female distress" and the genuine affect of her tears as acting, "theatrically pretty" and artfully simulated. It is Theodora's claim that she is not merely an "honest girl" but "girl of honour" that seems most to affront Edward and to trigger his accusations that she is operating within a dramatic register, "Mighty fine, ma'am!" By asserting herself as a person "of honour," Theodora is encroaching upon Edward's male privilege of having his word as his bond and other prerogatives that adhere to the loose gentleman's contract that gives such license to his behavior. While Edward lodges his accusations that Theodora is behaving like an actress in order to undermine her narrative, the comparison redounds to her benefit—not only has she found her voice, but she is deploying it with persuasive skill and emotional effect. This

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[47] The rat-a-tat dialogue between Theodora and Edward sounds very much like some of Clarissa's most heated debates with Lovelace. In terms of plot parallels, Edward's success in silencing Theodora by accusing her of being "on the stage" echoes the scene in which Lovelace succeeds in recapturing the runaway Clarissa. Lovelace, too, distorts the theatricality of Clarissa's accusations to discredit her in the eyes of the decent women who have given her shelter. Lovelace recounts this scene to Belford in Letter 8 of Volume 5: "This violent Tragedy-speech, and the high manner in which she uttered it, had its desired effect. I looked upon the women, and upon her, by turns with a pitying eye; and they shook their wise heads, and besought *me* to retire, and *her* to lie down to compose herself" (89). Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*, *Volume 5* in *The Clarissa Project*, ed. Florian Stuber and O. M. Brack Jr. (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 89.

bantering dialogue is the climax of the husband and wife's confrontation; never again in the novel do they exchange words while inhabiting these roles. Immediately afterward, when Edward is called out of the room to converse with Faulkland about an urgent debt, Theodora and Mr. Main slip downstairs and escape into a hackney-coach. The scene of dramatic rescue closes with a silent anti-climax.

The moment of Theodora's return to the bourgeois family also marks the reappearance of the unfortunate Miss Price, now the fortunate Mrs. Main. As the wife of Mr. Main and co-guardian of Theodora, Mrs. Main emerges as a lead player in the unfolding of Theodora's tale. Before returning to the novel's primary plot about the Bidulph/Arnold family and its predominant epistolary form, the editor provides some closure to Theodora's "little narrative." Given in compressed form, a third letter from Mr. Main explains that his wife has found an appropriate position for Theodora as a "genteel servant" in the countryside. First, however, Mrs. Main "dictated" (149) a farewell letter for Theodora to send her jilt husband. In it, Theodora explains her motives in having left Edward despite her own conviction that they are married, giving instructions for how he can reach her should he decide to acknowledge the marriage, and requesting the return of her clothes: "I cannot live with you, without considering myself in a state of infamy…your love, Sir, if you should still have any for me, can never be of any value to me, so long as you think me unworthy of your esteem" (150). Delicate and rational, the letter makes clear that Mrs. Main has enjoyed a superior education.[48] Mrs. Main's eloquence achieves its intended effects. The clothes are returned by porter that night, and the following day Faulkland pays a visit as Edward's emissary, offering 50 pounds in compensation and explaining

[48] Indeed, her father, Reverend Price, who so carefully educated his one surviving daughter, appears in the *Conclusion* as the learned tutor to Orlando Faulkland as well as Sidney Bidulph's chaplain of sorts.

Theodora's assertion of a marriage as "an invention of hers, contrived to save her credit with" her guardians (150).

What follows is a fascinating legalistic exchange between Faulkland and Mrs. Main, who speak as the advocates of Edward and Theodora, respectively (150–152). The scene is refracted through Mr. Main's epistolary first-person persepctive. Once Faulkland has opened by describing Theodora's account as "contrived," Mrs. Main rallies to her ward's defense. Cutting Faulkland off, Mrs. Main questions the internal logic of Edward's account: "My wife interrupted Mr. Faulkland here…pray, Mr. Faulkland, let me ask you, if this poor young creature had voluntarily consented to live with Sir Edward as a mistress, what should induce her to quit him so suddenly?" Mrs. Main further reasons that Theodora would only have had to have claimed to be secretly married to have "saved her credit with us." Faulkland admits the justice of this question, and responds that Sir Edward had only "made her some promises of marriage." Faulkland concludes with a capsule rendition of his friend's libertine philosophy: such vows "meant no more than to give a girl a pretence for yielding to her own inclinations with a better grace, and that he thought the person in question had experience enough to know how far men were to be trusted on those occasions" (151). Again, questioning Theodora's sexual knowledge, or "experience," becomes part of the libertine logic for silencing her claims.

For all of Mrs. Main's superior education and rhetorical skills, she is eventually silenced by the effrontery of Faulkland's argument: "Mrs. Main lifted up her hands and eyes at this" (151). She does not speak again during this strange interlude. Within five paragraphs, the primary narrative of the Arnold sisters and the epistolary form both reassert themselves. Read in the context of Miss Price's captivity narrative from *The Memoirs*, Mrs. Main's silence is an

evocative one. Faulkland reasons that Miss Williams should have had "experience enough" to know that men's promises cannot "be trusted on those occasions" of sexual seduction. As Miss Price, Mrs. Main had suffered the overtures of a rake who locked her into his house; only by tying her sheets into a rope had she escaped his predatory attentions and control. Even now, as a married woman, she is singularly capable of discerning the injustice of a logic that holds that a woman's fall from chastity is proof that she should have known better than to fall—or, as proof that prior guilty knowledge effected that fall. Nonetheless, Mrs. Main recognizes that without a second voice to substantiate Theodora's version of accounts, it is Edward's that will hold. Faced with the remorselessness of this libertine logic, Mrs. Main holds her tongue. Miss Williams is sent to the country, where her friends predict that she will "pine away the rest of her life in sorrow" (152).

After disappearing from the narrative for one hundred pages, Theodora reappears transformed from victim into rescuer. The minor character once silenced by her misfortunes now acts as a plot driver and force for thwarting masculine intrigue. In her new incarnation, Miss Theodora Williams is living under the assumed name of Mrs. Spillman and working as the housekeeper in the very house her husband chooses for kidnapping Sidney's daughter Dorothea, an heiress whom he values for her dowry of £20,000. Appropriately, Sheridan chooses the first mention of Mrs. Spillman to come from the pen of Audley, writing to his sister Sophy almost mad with the frustration of his plans and Dorothea's escape: "Yet *she* was not the contriver of it herself; another *she* imp, who is gone off with her, was at the bottom of the plot. The house-keeper, she of whose discretion and honesty that fool Bendish vaunted so much, has been the instrument of mischief" (256). Used to being conspirer rather conspired against, Edward resorts

to the language of magic to explain how two women could have foiled his plans. Of Mrs. Spillman, he writes that "this witch having the keys of the house in her possession, had nothing to do but to unlock the doors, and fly with my prey," while of his would-be wife he writes, "Miss Arnold (the sorceress, I cannot name her with patience)" (257). Edward recognizes the destruction of his plans, and can now only hope to bring Faulkland down in his ruin.

Only once Dorothea returns safely to her mother at Woodberry does the narrative unmask Mrs. Spillman as Theodora and give voice to her perspective. While Dorothea raves in the manner of Ophelia and Clarissa's mad songs, Sidney questions her daughter's rescuer minutely. As Garret and Hutner have pointed out, the names Dorothea and Theodora are anagrams; the characters hold symmetrical positions within the text as the victims of Sir Edward's most villainous schemes. Upon Edward and Dorothea's arrival at the Bendish house, it is Theodora's previous knowledge of Edward's principles that allows her immediately to recognize Dorothea's position as kin to hers and to assume that he has ensnared another young woman in "some base design" (261). In recounting the tale of Dorothea's escape to Sidney, Theodora initially withholds the nature of her personal connection to the affair: "The poor creature stopped and wiped her eyes, into which the tears sprung fast. Are you then acquainted with Sir Edward, madam? said I. Yes, to my great sorrow, madam, she replied. I will tell you my unhappy story another time" (261). Theodora later admits that she has an especial interest in preventing Dorothea from being forced into marriage: "I own, madam, pursued she, that though pity would have induced me to assist one of my own sex, I had a still nearer reason for wishing to deliver the young lady out of her tyrant's hands"—i.e., to prevent the man she considers her legal husband from committing bigamy (260).

Names take on an almost magical significance in a text as concerned with false marriage, bigamy, and adoption as *Conclusion*. Only when Sidney comments that "it was lucky" that Bendish never called Theodora by her surname in Edward's presence does Mrs. Spillman reveal herself as the Miss Williams introduced to the novel one hundred pages earlier:

> I had for a certain reason, madam, said she, changed my name, when I first hired with old Mrs. Bendish; I called myself Mrs. Spillman, but my maiden name is Williams. You are then married? said I. Her having said her maiden name, suggested this question to me. The poor thing blushed exceedingly, and answered in a faltering kind of manner, Yes, madam; but it would have been happy for me if I never had. Again I perceived a tear start into her eye; but wiping it off, she proceeded:… (263)

Once again, the painful complexity of Theodora's relationship to Edward causes her eyes to tear: she is married, but without recourse to compel her husband to acknowledge the tie; unwilling to claim the name of a husband who will not acknowledge her, but unwilling too to live under her "maiden name." Perceiving Theodora's inability to discuss Sir Edward Audley without crying, Sidney deduces their roles as seducer and seduced, and infers how torturously imbricated Theodora's feelings toward her husband must be: "probably some little jealousy, or even remains of love for her betrayer, may have mixed themselves with the more charitable motives of her conduct" (265).

For Theodora, telling the tale of her betrayal is a matter of audience selection. While the Mains were sympathetic interlocutors, the friend suborned by Audley scoffed at the implausibility of the account. Theodora had "promised to relate" her "unhappy story" to Sidney, but when she does, the editor interposes to preempt what would have been a repetition of her interpolated tale: "[Mrs. Arnold here briefly gives the substance of this young woman's unhappy story, with which the reader is already acquainted in Mr. Main's letters to his sister Askham. She

then proceeds:]" Here, the editor extracts Sidney's own extraction of "the substance" of Theodora's tale and cordons it off between brackets, another rupture to the novel's epistolary form. Theodora's tale threatens to swamp the primary narrative and must be contained. Even Sidney, a correspondent not notable for her brevity, feels that she must be circumspect in reporting the interpolated tale secondhand: "I have give you the purport of this unfortunate girl's narrative, though in much fewer words than she employed to relate it" (270).

Abbreviated and contained, Theodora's tale remains secondary to the primary tragedy of Sidney's daughters, but the plot's conclusion recognizes the validity of her account. By the end of the novel, Theodora receives two legal acknowledgments that seek to offer some restitution for her suffering. Both are deathbed legacies: Sidney Arnold bequeaths her three thousand pounds and Sir Edward bequeaths his name, acknowledging the marriage with his dying breath.[49] Theodora chooses to set her own terms for her quisling marital status, wearing deep mourning but not a widow's weeds, and never adopting the name of Audley. During a brief meeting with Sophy Audley, her sister-in-law, Mrs. Spillman explains the nicety of her decision: "I meant not to assume a title after Sir Edward's decease, of which he did not think me worthy during his life" (301). The editor devotes a final chapter to narrating "the remainder of Mrs. Arnold's story, or rather that of her daughters" (298). As with the letters from Mr. Main that included Theodora's interpolated tale, the editor here chooses to "compress" Mrs. Askham's "diffuse" narrative "in as narrow a compass as I can" (298). One sentence suffices for concluding Theodora's story: "Mrs. Spillman, who would never take the name of Audley, retired about the same time to her friends

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[49] Sidney Arnold bequeaths her three thousand pounds, "as a token of gratitude for the eminent service she had rendered Miss Arnold" (297). Shot in the throat and holding the wound that will kill him closed with his hand, Edward Audley acknowledges that he is married: "If any female should come to claim my name after my death, let her take it; for it is all I have to leave her" (282).

in Buckinghamshire" (302). Of Mrs. Main, the narrator informs us that her father, Mr. Price, chooses to live with her rather than continue in the household of Lord V— and the Arnold sisters: "He then repaired to London to pass the evening of his days with a daughter and son-in-law, who are highly deserving of all his tenderness" (302).

Thus, unlucky Theodora Williams ends up holding "the clue to the labyrinth" of the novel's plot as well as the keys to Harry Bendish's house on Bagshot Heath.[50] She rescues Dorothea from Sir Edward's captivity, and Dorothea's return prevents Orlando from breaking his vows in a quasi-bigamous marriage to Cecilia. Theodora's own rescue from Edward and her placement in the Bendish family are due to the orchestrations of Mrs. Main, who as Miss Price herself had a narrow escape from becoming a seduced woman, a fate she escaped in part through the benevolence of Sidney Bidulph. The result is a complex set of nesting relations that communicate across texts and generations. In *Memoirs*, Miss Price recounts her history; Sidney Bidulph saves her by rectifying the wrong of the Prices' debt and imprisonment, and finding Miss Price a worthy husband, Mr. Main. In *Conclusions,* Theodora Williams tells her story; the Mains save her from "living in infamy" with Sir Edward and rectify her situation to the limited extent possible by finding her employment; Theodora then saves Dorothea Arnold from Sir Edward, Dorothea saves her sister Cecilia from Faulkland; the Price/Main family reunite under

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[50] Alicia LeFanu, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan, mother of the late right Hon. Richard Brinsley Sheridan…. by her grand-daughter, Alicia Lefanu* (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824), 115. The phrase originates in Smollett's definition of the novel, but Alicia LeFanu directly applied it to her grandmother's novel in her family biography of Frances Sheridan (115). Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. and Jerry Beasley (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 4. Smollett offered these much-cited observations on novel form in the preface to his third novel, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753): "A Novel is a large and diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groupes, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of a uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene by virtue of his own importance."

one household; and Theodora retires to the countryside with the competence bequeathed by the dying Sidney Bidulph. Each interpolated tale, Miss Price's and Theodora's, acts as the nucleus to a set of benevolent and occasionally heroic relations through which women (and a few men) attempt to mitigate the many forms of knowledge that are withheld from them and then held against them in the remorseless conflation of personal chastity and public character. From *Memoirs* to *Conclusion*, and from Miss Price to Miss Williams, Sheridan imagines the intergenerational transfer of the knowledge of "uniquely female distress" and provides a space for wrongs otherwise deemed "vain to speak of."

III. Oliver Goldsmith's Other Lives of an Interpolated Tale

This chapter turns now from an anatomy of Sheridan's interpolated tales to the previously unknown history of their transmission by other authors. While I have offered a counterargument to Morris Golden's dismissal of the "inserted sentimental tale" in *Memoirs* as "meaningless," I gratefully build upon his premise that Miss Price's tale serves as a source text for *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with both plots revolving around the conceit of an unworldly and virtuous vicar thrown into prison by an aristocratic man seeking leverage to seduce his daughter.[51] Golden

[51] Golden, 33–35. Golden reasons that Miss Price's tale "evidently supplied hints and patterns of the involvements that a novel [*The Vicar of Wakefield*] about a static household needed." The meaning of "static household" remains obscure. Certainly, the Primrose family's class privilege and fortune are not "static." Perhaps Golden means that the family is relatively stationary. However, they move 70 miles upon the collapse of their finances, and move house several times as their luck worsens.

meticulously compiles the many borrowings Goldsmith's novel took from Sheridan's tale: the disruption of the father's course of study by the offer to tutor a young gentleman on the Grand Tour; Mr. Price's patron drowns crossing a river he thought was fordable, "a fate from which Goldsmith's Burchell saves Sophia" (34); Ware offers to have "ladies of his acquaintance" take Miss Price out to public entertainments, "the trick Squire Thornhill tried to play on the Primrose girls;" Ware and Thornhill both have the clergyman fathers thrown into debtor's prison, where they fall ill and languish.[52] As I have shown, Miss Price's tale not only formulates a strong critique of libertine privilege and its narrow conception of female character; it also initiates a chain of additional inquiries into the boundary between comedy and tragedy, exceptionality and exemplarity, and into narrative's ability to issue calls to action and to raise the possibility of intersubjectivity. Indeed, the surface simplicity of Miss Price's tale is one manifestation of its status as a myth or parable, designed for oral retelling, and open to appropriation.

Granting Golden's discovery of "literary influence," I want to shift my emphasis to modes of transmission and to pursue further the implications of rereading *The Vicar of Wakefield* in the context of Miss Price's tale and *Sidney Bidulph*. The categorical difference is gender. Rather than the seduction victim, Goldsmith focalizes through a first-person narration by a virtuous father and clergyman. There is also a qualitative distinction to be drawn. While Miss Price and her father are both morally blameless, Charles Primrose and Olivia are both compromised characters. Olivia is a coquet who consents to a clandestine marriage with her seducer, and the vicar is a holy fool whose innocence has an ironic shadowing: self-interest often

[52] Golden also records the commonalities between *The Memoirs* and *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a whole: both novels use the frame device of an editor who has compiled a first-person history, both Bidulph and Primrose are compared to Job, and Goldsmith even recycles the proper names of Burchell, Arnold, and Faulkland. Golden, 33.

dictates the things he prefers not to know, say, or do. The near-collapse of the Primrose family is due in large part to the father's dereliction of duty, and the kindly vicar repeatedly turns a blind eye to his own complicity in his misfortunes. Despite the plot connection between the Prices and the Primroses—even their names echo each other—the vicar's character most closely resembles the passive heroine Sidney Bidulph. While Sidney considers her passivity thrust upon her by her gender and, more specifically, by her role as a dutiful daughter, the vicar's narrative is an exploration of male passivity. Primrose fails to husband his family's fortune and looks the other way while his daughter coquettes openly with a known libertine. When Mrs. Primrose argues with Mr. Burchell about the propriety of sending her daughters to London with women of unknown character, the vicar recuses himself from the quarrel: "I stood neuter" (58).[53] As a man of feeling, Primrose struggles to act in the face of adversity: his "too violent" sensations prevent him from attempting to rescue his daughter Sophy from drowning (20), he responds to a house fire by falling "upon the pavement insensible" (112), and falls silent when asked to confront the patron who brazenly seduced his daughter, "in fact I could not contradict him" (156). The sensibility that had enabled Miss Price and Sidney both to take heroic action here disables Primrose, though he eventually learns to temper it. While Goldsmith criticizes the excess of feeling that stands between Primrose and appropriate fatherly action, lack of sensibility is by far the greater crime.

Goldsmith launched his most famous critique of the emerging capitalist system in his blighted pastoral, "The Deserted Village" (1770).[54] Four years earlier, *The Vicar of Wakefield*

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[53] Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ed. Arthur Friedman and Robert Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Citations will be given parenthetically in the text.

[54] Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village: A Poem" (London: 1770).

had directed its satire against the same object: the emerging capitalistic system of credit and debt that causes Primrose's £14,000 fortune to vanish overnight and the residual aristocratic license that permits Squire Thornhill to reign tyrant over his tenants and household. During the novel's one extended political set piece, the vicar makes an impassioned plea for the middle classes to back constitutional monarchy as their best defense against the"possessor[s] of accumulated wealth" on the one side and "the rabble" on the other: "The middle order may be compared to a town of which the opulent are forming the siege, and which the governor from without [the king] is hastening the relief" (88).[55] Only a sequence of deus ex machina plot devices save the Primrose family from complete ruin. Their beggarly friend Mr. Burchell is revealed to be a benefactor in disguise, a reworking of Sidney's nabob cousin Warner who dresses in rags to test the kindness of his relations while controlling for self-interest. The Primrose family's nemesis, the practiced con artist Ephraim Jenkinson, turns state's evidence and provides the proof that Olivia's clandestine wedding to Squire Thornhill, though morally dubious, was legally valid. And even the merchant whose crash evaporated the Primrose family's fortune in Chapter II is arrested in Antwerp carrying enough funds to cover his investors' losses (167). Within two pages, the vicar moves from debtor's prison to performing the double wedding that should secure his family's fortune through the next generation.

The satisfaction is complete, though the comic resolution hangs by a thread. The vicar's final sentences frame his passivity as Christian forbearance: "I had nothing now on this side of

[55] Speaking through the vicar, Goldsmith elaborates his conception of the middling class at some length: "But there must still be a large number of the people without the sphere of the opulent man's influence, namely, that order of men which subsists between the very rich and the very rabble; those men who are possest of too large fortunes to submit to the neighbouring man in power, and yet are too poor to set up for tyranny themselves. In this middle order of mankind are generally to be found all the arts, wisdom, and virtues of society. This order alone is known to be the true preserver of freedom, and may be called the People" (87–88).

the grave to wish for, all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity" (170). All of the vicar's "good fortune" is due to the machinations of Sir William Thornhill, formerly Mr. Burchell, and his willingness to exercise his aristocratic privilege for good. Only Olivia and Ned Thornhill's fates remain unresolved. His punishment is to serve as a toad-eater to a melancholy relation; hers is to remember her legal husband "with regret" and to hope for his reform" (169). Refigured and narrated from a male perspective, Miss Price's tale transforms from a vehicle of female solidarity to an ironic exposé of the social and economic disparities that leave even the virtuous middling classes vulnerable to chance and malice alike.

But Miss Price's tale might well move analeptically as well as proleptically. In arguing for *Sidney Bidulph's* literary influence, Golden opened negatively by critiquing an alternative literary precedent, "The History of Miss Stanton," a "bleakly sentimental piece in the *British Magazine*" that "has long been attributed to Goldsmith."[56] James Prior's 1837 *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* had been the first to assign this possible attribution and recognize the essay as "a tale where we find something like the first rude germ of *The Vicar of Wakefield*."[57] In the twentieth century, Charles Osgood is the scholar most cited for asserting that the "analogy" between the two texts is so "obvious" that it requires no further substantiation, and then ascribing authorship based on that claim: "Appearing as it did in 1760, it ["The History of Miss Stanton"] either

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[56] Golden, 33.

[57] James Prior, *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith, M. B., from a variety of original sources,* vol.1 (London: John Murray, 1837), 350–51. Prior later repeated this claim and excerpted "The History of Miss Stanton" in his edition of *The Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith, M.B., including a variety of pieces now first collected* (London: John Murray, 1837), 214. One quibble is that Charles Primrose fights no duel. His son George attempts to fight a duel for his sister's honor, but Thornhill refuses to meet him. As a result, George scuffles with Thornhill's servants.

served as a source of suggestion to Goldsmith for his novel, or else, as seems more probable, he wrote it himself."[58] But as Golden notes, the similarities between "The History of Miss Stanton" and *Wakefield* are quite unspecific: each text "concerns a seduced young woman and her father, an old clergyman who fights a duel."[59] (Prior had listed additional similarities: a Northern setting, the clergyman's renowned hospitality, and his peculiar tendency of "sitting by the wayside" and conversing with strangers.[60]) Certainly, the "analogue" between Miss Price's tale and *Wakefield* is much closer, but one chain of influence need not disprove the other. Rather than pitting *Sidney Bidulph* against "Miss Stanton" and valuing each of them only in relation to *Wakefield*, what might be gained by reading all three of these texts together?

The oldest and most elusive of the three texts, "The History of Miss Stanton," was published by *The British Magazine* as an anonymous periodical essay in July of 1760. Subtitled her "Affecting Story" and wedged between essays of political commentary ("On the present state of affairs") and geography ("Description of the parish of Monymusk"), "The History of Miss Stanton" is fable-like in the simplicity of construction.[61] The essay thus participates in what Richard Taylor has called a "most conspicuous feature" of *The British Magazine* under Smollett's editorship," the "series of exempla" or "moral tales" that were "designed to edify parents and their children on the hazards of romantic love and the need for matrimonial

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[58] Charles G. Osgood, Jr., "Notes on Goldsmith," *Modern Philology* 5.2 (October 1907): 242–252, 6.

[59] Golden, 33.

[60] Prior, 350–51; also cited in Osgood, 238.

[61] Anonymous, "To the Authors of the BRITISH MAGAZINE." *The British Magazine*, *Or, Monthly Repository for Gentlemen & Ladies*, 1760–1767 1, (July 1760): 425–428. Further citations will be given parenthetically in the text. See also Arthur Friedman, ed., *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, III. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

prudence."[62] As we will see later with *Charlotte Temple*, the efficacy of these "moral tales" was open to debate due to the titillating nature of the romantic scenarios they warned against. In a moralizing vein, the correspondent who submits "The History of Miss Stanton" begins with a meditation on the value of sentimental literature: "fictitious stories of distress…may have real merit in the design, as they promote that tenderness and benevolent love to each other by example, which didactic writers vainly attempt by maxim, or reproof" (425). Nonetheless, these stories lack "the sanction of truth," and too often become "unnatural" (425). Staking a truth claim, the narrator reasons that "any real merit" to be found in the following story "must be wholly ascribed to that sincerity that guides the pen" (425). The letter writer further attests to the purity of his intentions: "I am unused to correspond with Magazines; nor should now have walked from obscurity, if not convinced that a true, though artless tale, would be useful" (425). Our correspondent protests his own innocence before plunging into his "artless tale" of innocence betrayed.

From the moment of the correspondent's self-introduction, we are immediately situated in the realm of the sentimental. The plot unfolds quickly. Mr. Stanton, a benevolent clergyman, has raised his daughter Fanny to be "the staff of his old age, the pride of the parish…and what is more extraordinary, deserving of all that praise" (425). After noting Fanny's beauty in church, a "travelling rake" called Dawson disguises himself "in the habit of a scholar" and insinuates himself into the Stanton household and particularly into Fanny's affections (426). Convincing the Stantons to allow him to return their hospitality, Dawson persuades the father and daughter to visit his country house, where he succeeds in seducing Fanny in a matter of days. Though

[62] Richard C. Taylor, *Goldsmith as Journalist* (Rutherford, Madison, and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1993), 92.

treacherous, the seduction is consensual. Learning the truth, Mr. Stanton vows to take a form of revenge conformable to "my God, my country, my conscience" (427). When Dawson stands unmoved to Mr. Stanton's tearful expostulation, the clergyman challenges him to a duel as a "man of honor" (428). Upon Dawson's pistol shot, Stanton drops to the ground; Fanny throws herself weeping on her father's body. Finally, Dawson's heart is moved, and he pledges to restore Fanny's honor by marrying her. Stanton rises from the ground to claim his satisfaction: "The old man, who had only pretended to be dead, now rising up, claimed the performance of his promise; and the other had too much honour to refuse" (428). The narrator's closing sentence completes the comic ending and a tongue-in-cheek gloss: "They were immediately conducted to church, where they were married, and now live exemplary instances of conjugal love and felicity." This phrase-long instantiation of the shotgun wedding performs an ironic deconstruction of what it means for a fictional marriage to be "exemplary."

The elements shared among these three tales are simple but foundational. The protagonists in all three cases are a benevolent clergyman and his most cherished daughter, who are "esteemed by the rich, and beloved by the poor" ("Miss Stanton," 425). In their innocence, they are the perfect dupes to their antagonist, a practiced rake who commits a crime against hospitality by attempting to seduce the daughter and then refusing to repent of the crimes when confronted by the pious father's expostulations. While these plot conceits form a "rude germ" of narrative that migrates from the *British Magazine* to *Sidney Bidulph* to *Wakefield* and then on to *Charlotte Temple* and *Nicholas Nickleby,* "The History of Miss Stanton" stands out as occupying a lighter register: it is a tale of consensual seduction made right by a prank. The protagonists and antagonist reconcile a closing scene that is comic in both senses of the word: Miss Stanton

marries Mr. Dawson, "exemplary instances of conjugal love and felicity," and the venerable Mr. Stanton resurrects himself after playing dead. Crucially, debt is absent from this early instantiation in the chain of seduction narratives. Diverging in its darker tone, Sheridan's reworking shifts from consensual seduction to an attempted rape, and adds the elements of trumped up debt and imprisonment; these revisions remove any possibility of the criminal courtship's evolution into marriage. While Miss Price gets her comic ending, Sheridan has to move outside the small circle of original players—Miss and Mr. Price and Mr. Ware are the interpolated tale's only named characters—to find a suitable husband for her plucky heroine. The tone of *The Vicar of Wakefield* falls somewhere in between the histories of Miss Stanton and Miss Price. In part because the novel so heavily ironizes its unreliable narrator, the tone is hybrid: serio-comic, tragicomic, sentimental and satirical. As the primary satiric object shifts from gender to class, the novel exposes the domestic body of the Primrose family as vulnerable to aristocratic and capitalist predation much in the same way as the seduction narrative exposes the vulnerability of its female victims. The spectre of debt further darkens the novel. Though spared a gothic encounter with rape, the seduced daughter Olivia is excluded from the comic resolution. Her marriage, albeit legal, hangs in abeyance. Olivia's uncertain fate is the perhaps-tragic shadow in a tragicomic novel struggling to sustain its comic ending.

It is Sheridan's expanded history of Miss Price that sets the tone for a more sentimental line of seduction-captivity narratives that critiques the valuing of female virginity as simply one more asset available for seizure by creditors. For these unfortunate families, paternal debt and the threat of female fall are similar mechanisms for becoming "undone." The sentimental narrative itself emerges as the debtor-victims' only tool for removing women's bodies from the

family balance sheet. By privileging the oral presentation of sentimental narrative as the solution to material problems within that narrative, these seduction tales signal their own transmissibility, which they prove by traveling so easily between different authors and different generations of authors.

IV. *Charlotte Temple:* A Broken Narrative Circle

Yet another afterlife of Miss Price's tale occurs in *Charlotte Temple*, a text that enacts the transatlantic circulation to which it subjects its heroine. Like *Sidney Bidulph*, *Charlotte Temple* ranked among the most popular novels of its time. Its primary success, however, came in the newly independent United States, where it has gone through "nearly 200 editions" and remained the nation's best-selling novel until deposed by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852.[63] Like Sheridan, Susanna Rowson punctuates her narrative to give one interpolated tale, a similar seduction-captivity narrative that occurs at the remove of a generation. The victims are the heroine's mother and grandfather, and their rescuer will later become Charlotte's father. In Sheridan's version, the flower-seller's father is a moral clergyman imprisoned for refusing to pander his daughter to his patron, who retaliates by recasting an annuity as a loan. In Rowson's version,

[63]Spencer D. C. Keralis, "Pictures of Charlotte: The Illustrated *Charlotte Temple* and Her Readers," *Book History* 13, (2010): 25–57, 25. Article Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40930527. As early as 1933, R. W. G. Vail counted 158 editions; Vail estimated the novel's readership at more than 500,000, and dubbed it America's most popular novel before *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. R. W. G. Vail, *Susanna Haswell Rowson, the Author of Charlotte Temple, a Bibliographical Study* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1933).

Charlotte's grandfather is a moral naval officer imprisoned for refusing to pimp his daughter to his son's rich best friend, who retaliates by recasting a gift as a loan.[64] Like Miss Price with her artificial flowers, Lucy Eldridge supports herself and her infirm father by selling handicrafts. When the text first introduces Lucy to the reader and Henry Temple, her future husband, a teardrop falls from her eye onto the flower she is painting on a decorative fan mount. In both cases, the unfortunate father-daughter families have passed a year and a half in prison by the time they share their narratives with a sympathetic interlocutor. Benevolent strangers resolve each of the situations.

While Rowson follows Sheridan in making gender injustice the primary object of her critique, she also reworks elements of Goldsmith's version, especially its point of view. As in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the speaker of the tale is the protective, yet all-but-helpless, father figure, Mr. Eldridge. The interpolated tale itself is situated in a narrative caesura between chapters one and two. After Chapter I opens with the diegetic present that will lead to Charlotte's seduction, Chapter II opens with the narrator's relaying a telescoped genealogical summary of the Temple family. Flashing back some fifteen to twenty years, the episode depicts how Charlotte's father, Henry Temple, met her mother, Lucy Eldridge. This narrative then gives way to a ritualized prologue to the interpolated tale, which signals the change in narrator from third-person omniscient to Captain Eldridge's first-person. At the end of Chapter II, Eldridge sends his daughter from the room and announces the tale-telling moment: "My story is short...[yet] I will relate every circumstance" (11). Chapter III then opens in Eldridge's voice, which begins as tagged direct discourse that progressively sheds its tags as the narrative momentum builds.

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[64] Rowson, Susanna. *Charlotte Temple*, ed. Marion L. Rust (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011). Further citations from *Temple* will be given by page number in the text.

Relating the "unexpected misfortunes" of his family, Eldridge explains how he came to be imprisoned in Fleet Street, with Lucy attending on him. Until recently, Captain Eldridge, his wife, his son, George, and his daughter, Lucy, had lived a quiet but content life on his income as a naval officer. Scrimping to pay for a liberal education for George, the family had no means to purchase him a commission in the army, his profession of choice.[65] George's school friend, Mr. Lewis, advanced the money but took the father's note as collateral. After Lewis propositioned Lucy to become his kept mistress, Eldridge banned him from the house. In turn, Lewis initiated a furious retaliation against the family, clapping Captain Eldridge in debtors prison and then killing George in a duel. The shock of seeing her son's dying body killed Mrs. Eldridge, and the Captain himself spent "three weeks insensible" from fever. For a year-and-a-half, the Captain has languished in prison while his daughter earns what money she can through needlework and painting. The tale concludes when Eldridge tells Temple that the sum total of his debt is 500 pounds.

Like Sidney Bidulph before him, Henry Temple recognizes Captain Eldridge's tale as a straightforward call to action. In response, Henry Temple mortgages his estate to clear the debts, marries Lucy, and builds a contented domestic circle that includes his liberated father-in-law. The tale's telling achieves a speedy and complete response—at least for the first generation, and among the male dyad of Temple and Eldridge. But to build on Jeffrey Williams's construction of the "narrative circle," the interpolated tale falls short because the circle of interlocutors is too small.[66] The didactic example of how her mother foiled a seduction attempt never reaches

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[65] This plot point hearkens to Wakefield. Primrose's debt is contracted by purchasing a commission for his son, also named George.

[66] Williams, "The Narrative Circle," 473.

Charlotte, whose lack of this gendered knowledge leads her to fall victim to the fate her mother eluded.

The task of matching speaker and audience and of expanding the narrative circle to include all readers—and specifically, otherwise excluded female readers—is a function that this novel explicitly undertakes. Rowson's third-person narrator frequently slips into first-person in order to exhort her audience, who are directly apostrophized as women: girls ("young and thoughtless of the fair sex"), mothers ("sober matrons"), and vulnerable young women who have no mothers ("some who are so unfortunate as to have neither friends to advise, or understanding to correct them") (5,22,5). Beginning with the Preface, Rowson launches a moral defense of her "Tale of Truth" and posits that it can act as an intergenerational carrier of the "uniquely female distress" that follows seduction: "I may have children of my own, said I, to whom this recital may be of use, and if to your own children, said Benevolence, why not to the many daughters of Misfortune… I shall rest satisfied in the purity of my own intentions, and if I merit not applause, I feel that I dread not censure" (5). Plainly, Rowson predicted moralizing resistance to her sentimental love story. As the feminist educator and abolitionist Lydia Maria Child put it in *The Mother's Book*, her 1831 parenting guide, "*Charlotte Temple* has a nice good moral and the end, and I dare say it was written with the best intentions, yet I believe few works do so much harm to girls of fourteen or fifteen."[67] The question of what kind of didactic content was appropriate for romantic girl readers was still very much in play. Rowson self-consciously manipulates the interpolated tale as a form for interrogating possibilities of various audiences, and for criticizing the patrilineal transfer of information into which her novel interjects itself. Ultimately, the

[67] Lydia Maria Child, *The Mother's Book*, Sixth Edition (New York: C. S. Francis & Co, 1846), 91.

interpolated tale raises the specter that haunts both didactic and sentimental novels: the lack of connection between didactic content and moral outcomes, a problem that Rowson seeks to contain by adroitly conjuring a specific sentimental audience.

V. *Nicholas Nickleby*: Interpolated Tale Turned Subplot

Like Oliver Goldsmith and likely influenced by *The Vicar of Wakefield* in particular, Charles Dickens refashions the plot skeleton of Miss Price's narrative but drops its framing within an interpolated tale. Instead, *Nicholas Nickleby* folds the debt captivity narrative in a crucial subplot, the history of Madeline Bray, the protagonist's love interest.[68] The core elements are in place: Madeline lives in confinement with her father as the result of his debts, and attempts to eke out a subsistence with her gentlewomanly handiworks (painted velvet, handscreens, sketches). Her father's creditor proposes to forgive the debt, on the condition that Madeline must become his wife. Our hero, Nicholas Nickleby, spends much of the final quarter of the novel trying to avert this scarcely consensual marriage. In a darker turn, Dickens transforms the debtor father from a virtuous fellow sufferer into a villain, party to the conspiracy against his daughter and willing to barter her to regain his class status. Mr. Bray's debts are real, the result of his dissolute lifestyle, but he longs to escape the gentleman's punishment that confines him to the

[68] Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby* (London: Penguin Classics, 1999).

Rules of King's Bench Inn.[69] Dickens skillfully mines Miss Price's tale for its ore of unalloyed sentiment. Madeline is blameless but paralyzed, willing to marry a miserly ogre out of filial piety to an unloving father. Sentimental and bland, she is the perfect heroine for Nicholas, who as Chesterton argued, is the pattern of a hero, an encounterer of amusing adventures and brilliant grotesques, but himself a boring nonentity.[70] Madeline Bray never tells her own tale, which the plot reveals through other voices in a piecemeal fashion. As characters, Nicholas and Madeline are beautifully flat.[71]

Divesting the sentimental germ, Miss Price's tale, of its sheath, the device of the interpolated tale, Dickens also jettisons the storytelling moment when a character's articulation of the tale itself constitutes an event contributing to its solution. In the run-up to the coerced marriage, Nicholas recounts Madeline's plight to as many characters and potential actors as he can, and reveals the hidden conspiracy to Madeline herself. But narrative is insufficient to halt the nuptials, which requires a *deus ex machina*. The morning of the wedding day, Mr. Bray drops dead as he is about to hand his daughter over to the bridegroom-creditor. For both Madeline and Nicholas, the novel's arc as a *bildungsroman* is less about building a narrative circle than it is

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[69] As a man of some property imprisoned for debt, Mr. Bray is able to avoid living in the prison proper by purchasing "Liberty of the Rules," which gives him license to live within a designated distance of King's Bench Prison in Southwark. Mr. Micawber would later inhabit this prison in *David Copperfield*. Mark Ford, introduction to *Nicholas Nickleby,* by Charles Dickens (London: Penguin Classics, 1999), xxviii.

[70] G. K. Chesterton, *G. K. Chesterton: Collected Works*, *Volume XV: Chesterton on Dickens* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 258. "*Nicholas Nickleby* is Dickens's first romantic novel because it is his first novel with a proper and dignified romantic hero; which means of course, a somewhat chivalrous young donkey…But Nicholas Nickleby is a proper, formal, and ceremonial hero. He has no psychology; he has not even any particular character; but he is made deliberately a hero -- young, poor, brave, unimpeachable, and ultimately triumphant. He is, in short, the hero."

[71] Ibid., 260. To Chesterton, Madeline holds even less appeal than dull Nicholas: "But his daughter [Madeline] is merely the young woman with whom Nicholas is in love. I do not care a rap about Madeline Bray. Personally I should have preferred Cecilia Bobster. Here is one real point where the Victorian romance falls below the Elizabethan romantic drama. Shakespeare always made his heroines heroic as well as his heroes."

about claiming the birthright that has been theirs all along. Madeline's singular misfortune acts as a counterweight to what the text considers her singular value: her flawless beauty and selflessness, which renders her willing to sacrifice her own life to purchase a few months of peace of mind for her unloving father. For readers, considering Madeline's tale as one of many similar captivity narratives transforms a wrong that the novel treats as singular into a shared misfortune. In this context, what might have been simply another case of boy saves girl becomes instead an iteration of how some stories, in their openness to emotional identification and their ability to travel across texts and across time, achieve the status of myth.

From the starting point of "the history of Miss Price" and its sequel in "the history of Theodora," the portability of these tales and the replicability of their form is crucial to the logic both of their home novels and the sentimental novel as a genre. As long as much of women's lived experience can be silenced with the admonition that it is "vain to speak," there will be a need for alternative forms that are not defined by utility—by whether to speak is in vain or not in vain. These forms legitimize speaking as an act in its own right and as an action that can yield reparative affect and the possibility of intersubjective communities. With its authorization of "idle stories, foreign to the purpose," the device of the interpolated tale provides an open form that signals its own transmissibility, thus modeling the exchange and circulation later enacted by afterlives of diverse formulations, whether "uniquely female," or not, or "vain to speak of," or not. Interpolated tales remind their interlocutors that it all could have been very different, and instantiate an otherwise and elsewhere form where these secondary narratives can unfold. In this chapter, I have diagrammed a chain of transmission from interpolated tale to interpolated tale, from interpolated tale to novel plot, and from interpolated tale to novel subplot. While the novel

emerged within the print medium as a category with recognizable conventions and critics over the course of the eighteenth century, the interpolated tale reminded readers that its presence simultaneously suggested and foreclosed alternate fictionalities.

CHAPTER FIVE:

"Who is Speaking?": Mediated Voices in *Obi* and *The Female American*

In the climactic moment of *The Female American* (1767), the eponymous heroine, Unca, enters the hollow body of an ancient sun idol and employs its acoustic amplification to catechize the local Indians about the nature of the Christian God.[1] As Unca's voice booms out from the mouth of the idol, the Indians respond with "frantick" joy until the dialogue reaches a sticking point when their high priest asks: "Who are you then?"[2] Unca's evasive answer upsets her audience, who are convinced that the voice's refusal to reveal its identity means it is the work of the evil one. The people first throw themselves on the ground in grief and then begin to make a hasty retreat to the ocean. "Our dialogue was strangely stopt," Unca recollects (95). In this moment of discursive pause, our heroine's missionary endeavor almost collapses, until Unca hits upon an "expedient" measure for convincing the assembly that she is not "the evil being whom ye dread" (96). This chapter examines the high priest's question, "Who are you?," as a narrative problem that transatlantic texts like *Obi: Or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack* (1800) and *The Female American* stage repeatedly: "Who is speaking?" In other words, "Who is the narrator?" And, "From what position does the narrator speak?" In these two novels haunted by the anxiety

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[1] Unca Eliza Winkfield, *The Female American*, ed. Michelle Burnham (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001). I will conform to the text's use of the term "Indians" to refer to the native peoples living on a remote island somewhere off the eastern seaboard. As one of the novel's twentieth-century scholars has noted, the "Indians" depicted in *The Female American* seem to combine features of the tribes native to North and South America. Tremaine McDowell, "An American Robinson Crusoe," *American Literature* 1.3 (1929): 307–309.

[2] Winkfield, 94, 95. Further citations from *The Female American* will be given by page number in the text.

of cross-cultural over-writing, the formal question of "who is speaking" becomes imbricated with a philosophical and political question, "What is *this* narrator's authority to speak?"

In this chapter, I analyze a pair of transatlantic narratives, *Obi* and *The Female American*, both of whose interpolated tales denounce imperialism, but by taking inverse formal approaches. Some interpolated tales are disruptive because their content relays the perspective of a subaltern character, but for others, the form of the tale instantiates the critique.[3] In the abolitionist novel *Obi*, the enslaved mother Amri is an adept oral storyteller whose tale transmits Feloop culture to her son born in Jamaica, and enables new forms of plot action. Unlike the parliamentary papers and print sources embedded in the novel, Amri's oral history models an intersubjective engagement between tale-teller and interlocutor; it is the form of the interpolated tale that allows this two-way rhetoric. By contrast, the interpolated tale in *The Female American* features speakers who are ship captains and gentlemen professionals, agents of empire who are used to speaking from the center. Intercalating the voices of these five white men until they are indistinguishable, the tale critiques the shaping force of colonialism as one that ambiguates plot agents and narratives. By forming a breach between inset tale and surround, the interpolated tale offers an alternative perspective that these novels use to unsettle colonial hierarchies between speaker and spoken for.

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[3] I read these eighteenth-century texts as actively engaging problems of who speaks and who is spoken for, concepts best articulated in a twentieth- and twenty-first century context by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271–313.

I. Speaking Culture in *Obi*

Inspired by the hero of a 1782 slave rebellion in Jamaica, *Obi: Or, the History of Three-Fingered Jack* labors to place the voices of enslaved people at the heart of its abolitionist argument.[4] During the Romantic period, the figure of Three-fingered Jack emerged as a popular hero/anti-hero, best known thanks to the melodramatic renderings of his life that were a staple of the pantomime repertory. In contrast, little is known of William Earle, Jr. the author of the 1800 novel I consider here.[5] As an epistolary novel, *Obi* uses the oral-literate divide as a productive tension for putting cross-cultural perspectives into dialogue. The primary narrative presents one-half of a correspondence: the eastbound letters written by settler George Stanford in Jamaica for his friend Charles, whose correspondence is left unrepresented. Stanford organizes his letters around the adventures of a heroic figure, Jack, who leads an uprising of slaves against the white planter class. Stanford narrates the arc of Jack's life, from the time of his parents' capture through his eventual death, dismemberment, and apotheosis into folk hero. Interrupting

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[4] William Earle, Jr., *Obi; Or, the History of Three-Fingered Jack. In a series of letters from a resident in Jamaica to his friend in England* (London: Earle and Hemet, 1800). There is a single modern edition, edited by Srinivas Aravamudan. William Earle, Jr., *Obi; Or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2005). Further citations from *Obi* will be given by page number in the text.

[5] Jeffrey Cox, "Theatrical Forms, Ideological Conflicts, and the Staging of *Obi,*" *Romantic Circles* (August 2002). https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/obi/cox/cox.html. (accessed October 12, 2015). In his introduction, Aravamudan notes that the main traces of Earle in the historical record are his prison sentence of six months and the separate accusations of plagiarism lodged against him: "Not much is known about William Earle Junior, although his writings clearly reveal a predilection for sentimentalist excess and rhetorical flourishes." Earle, 9.

Stanford's perspective are three verse narratives and two interpolated tales. This chapter will focus on the prose interpolation, "Makro and Amri: An African Tale," in which the enslaved mother of One-fingered Jack shares with him an oral autobiography to transmit their native culture and instill its warrior code of revenge. Amri's tale operates as a ground for representing an elsewhere time and space, and for mediating the exchange of knowledge that reaches beyond the epistemological to the ethical, political, and hermeneutic: what W.J.T. Mitchell called, "the knowledge of subjects by subjects."[6] Ultimately, the print text is able to acknowledge Amri as a subject because her accomplished tale-telling permits an intersubjective exchange, thus initiating a dialectic between the openness of oral tradition and the closed nature of the print text afforded her.

Like Earle's choice of subtitle, "Or, the History of Three-Fingered Jack," George Stanford opens his work in a biographical frame that promises to be both monovocal— "my narrative"— and monofocal— "about three-fingered Jack" (71). But Stanford's first move belies both of these priorities. The promised "history of Jack" instead opens by focusing on Amri as the biographical object of study: "So, without lengthening this preamble, I thus begin:/ Amri was a beautiful slave, the property of Mr. Mornton, of Maroons Town" (71). Exchanging first-person for third-person retrospection, Stanford introduces Amri *in media res* as an enslaved woman in Jamaica who has "never failed to nurture the baneful passion of revenge" in her son (71). Then, within paragraphs, Amri's subject position shifts as she becomes both the narrator and subject of her interpolated tale, which moves analeptically to the formative events that led to her

[6] W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Pictorial Turn," *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 33.

enslavement and transportation. Both temporal and narratorial, the shift in perspective comes at the cost of a belabored and formally awkward style.

The novel repeatedly draws attention to the formal and ethical problems created by using a print text to represent spoken narratives. The elaborate print introduction to Amri's tale jars with the text's insistence on the importance of its orality. A series of formal markers set Amri's tale apart from the text. Her autobiographical narration receives a separate title, "MAKRO and AMRI,/ An/ *African tale.*" The typeface gives the names Makro and Amri a visible heft by marking them with capital letters. And the subtitle both declares its geographical setting and self-identifies its genre category as "an African Tale." All of these typographic features make the intertitle "Makro and Amri" read like a secondary title page, and render it separate from the main narrative and a complete unit in its own right. Later in the nineteenth-century, one penny-dreadful boy's edition of *Three-Fingered Jack* so zoomed in on Amri's tale that it became the primary narrative, consuming eleven of the chapbook's fourteen pages.[7]

Bearing its own epigraph, "I am innocent of this blood, SEEYE to it" (73), the interpolated tale proclaims its participation in an emerging field of abolitionist discourse. The citation hearkens to double-barreled referents, Biblical and contemporary. The line's original source lies in the King James Bible's version of Matthew 27:24, in which Pontius Pilate

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[7] Anonymous, *Three-Fingered Jack. The Young Gentleman's Library; or Treasury of Entertainment with Coloured Plates and Gilt Edges* (London: Orlando Hodgson, n.d.). Thanks are due to Diana Paton for drawing attention to this publication in her online bibliography of *Three-Fingered Jack.* The page is part of The Slavery Website Paton created in collaboration with Brycchan Carey (http://www.brycchancarey.com/slavery/tfj/earle.htm). This Amri-focused penny-dreadful version has no date, and measures just 2 by 4 inches. A copy is available at the Library of Scotland.

symbolically washes his hands of the blood of Christ.[8] By the late-eighteenth century, the phrase had become an ironic rallying cry for abolitionists, who argued that the blood of colonial slaves was on the hands of all British subjects. In 1797, Robert Southey's influential sonnet sequence, "Poems on the Slave Trade," had cited Matthew 27 as its epigraph.[9] Thus, the interpolated tale "Makro and Amri" repurposes an abolitionist epigraph as its epigraph, referring back to the same sonnet sequence cited on *Obi*'s title page as the novel's epigraph. The elaborate staging of Amri's tale both makes a claim for its own self-reflective literary status, and situates it within the larger field of abolition literature—but insists on the fiction that it is narrated with the first-hand authority of the enslaved woman herself.

Amri's tale stakes claim to a large scope, both vertically and horizontally: it opens in a pastoral Africa and carries her through capture by slave traders, the middle passage to Jamaica, and life on a plantation. The torture and death of Amri's husband are followed by an account of her son's early childhood and the death of her father. Introducing her narrative as a myth of origins, Amri's descriptive passages combine elements of genealogy, geography, and anthropology to give her son a sense of the Africa where he was conceived but which he has never seen: "My son, your country borders on the Gambia, and its inhabitants are distinguished from all others by the name of Feloops" (74). The tale's climactic event is framed as an act of ingratitude: when Makro and Amri pluck a drowning European from the ocean, he first lives with them as a friend and then repays them by selling them into slavery. Amri explicitly reasons that Captain Harrop succeeds in betraying his hosts because his profit-driven logic falls on the blind

[8] Mt 27: 24 AV**.**

[9] Robert Southey, *Selected Shorter Poems, c. 1793–1810*, ed. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford, and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004), 49.

side of the Feloop world view: “we could find no such deception in our own countrymen, and were not sufficiently acquainted with the character of the Europeans./ Free from suspicion, we laid ourselves open to his cursed wiles, and became the dupes of our own credulity” (79). For Makro and Amri, Harrop’s treachery poses a hermeneutic problem: until the arrival of this shipwrecked intruder, such smiling treachery simply does not exist in their world.

Harrop's betrayal of his rescuers—“his saviours!” (79) as Amri reminds us—constitutes what the text represents as an unfortunate fall into knowledge accompanied by a cascade of transitions, from pre-modern to modern, from Old World to New World, from pastoral to plantation, from freedom to slavery. In response, Amri switches genres as well. Her tale morphs from a Shakespearean romance in the vein of *The Tempest* or *Pericles* to a revenge tragedy, with Captain Harrop as the object of Amri’s revenge. The middle passage marks the tipping point. Amri’s tale accords with the logic Paul Gilroy formulates in *The Black Atlantic*, in which he conceives of slave ships as “cultural and political units”: “mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected.”[10] Mid-transfer in the infernal sphere of the slave ship, the married couple is segregated by gender and Makro's masculine code of honor inspires him to choose death over enslavement. While dying his chosen stoic death, Makro implores the pregnant Amri to raise their child to revenge him. Discursively, Amri turns to the device of the interpolated tale to carry her narrative across the middle passage to Jamaica and a new field of narrative possibilities.

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[10] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 16–17. Gilroy acknowledges the influence of Bakhtin and de Certeau, and cites each at some length.

The established eighteenth-century discourse about the ethical status of slavery and its relationship to enlightenment benevolence is at stake in “Makro and Amri, An African Tale,” which bases its reasoning on the premise that chattel slavery distorts and obviates the basic human impulse of gratitude. Amri seeks to instill in Jack the principles of honor, filial obligation, and revenge, while acknowledging that both she and her son will need to negotiate the transfer of these imperatives into the New World planter economy that they currently inhabit. Just one day after Amri completes her tale-telling, an unknown European stands by Jack in the field and spins a tale of “gratitude:” a “daughter of Africa” had “snatched [him] from a watery grave,” an act he repaid by “matur[ing] her understanding” and bringing “her to a happier clime” (107). In rejoinder, Jack articulates his mother’s tale of European ingratitude and treachery, negating his interlocutor's vision of benevolent slavery. The European is revealed to be Harrop. Crucially, Amri’s tale has inoculated her son against the slave trader’s revisionist history and eloquence, and Jack’s re-transmission of the tale renders Harrop mute. Thanks to his mother’s tale-telling, Jack knows more about Harrop than Harrop does about Jack, and Jack leverages his knowledge advantage to destroy the man who enslaved his family. In fine, Amri's tale achieves its short-term, perlocutionary goal of enflaming Jack's desire for vengeance, setting in train a series of events that culminate in the achievement of her long-term goal. Harrop dies a coward's death at the hands of Jack, while Jack and Amri die the kind of noble deaths they had envisioned — they both die fighting, resolute and uncompromised.

The paradigmatic antecedents of “Makro and Amri” are “Inkle and Yarico,” the ill-starred lovers of the century’s stupendously popular fable on the incompatibility of slavery and

sensibility.[11] Even the paired character names (Makro/Amri, Inkle/Yarico) are sonic echoes and near anagrams. In the influential *Spectator* essay (1711), Yarico was an Indian princess who saved Inkle, a shipwrecked Englishman, who returned her love by selling her into slavery, exulting to receive a higher price because she is pregnant with his child.[12] In Earle's version, Makro and Amri are a Feloop couple who, after rescuing and hosting two shipwrecked Europeans for three months, are betrayed by one of them and sold into slavery. In contrast to Yarico, Amri enjoys two distinct forms of agency: 1) she has the opportunity to raise her son, instilling in him her quest for vengeance 2) she acts as the narrator of her own life. Indeed, the oral transmission of Amri's autobiography to her son Jack is the formational moment in his development as a revenge-seeking Feloop man.

Ultimately, Amri wields an extraordinary degree of agency *as a narrator*: her storytelling effects both cultural transmission and new forms of plot action. Embedded in Stanford's anthropological and sentimental narrative, Amri's tale operates within its own genre—and genres—as it transitions from romance to classical revenge tragedy. In the terms of Johannes Fabian, the epistolary text treats Amri's Africa as contemporaneous to her English narrator and audience, but not coeval. According to Fabian, to taxonomize a society as primitive or savage produces a "rhetoric of temporal distancing" and attendant "denial of coevalness" that re-inscribes a dehumanizing hierarchy between colonizer and colonized.[13] At the other pole is coevalness, the

[11] I am fully persuaded by the case Frank Felsenstein builds for the enormous cultural impact of "Inkle and Yarico." Frank Felsenstein, *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World: An Inkle and Yarico Reader* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[12] Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, "No. 11," in *The Spectator*. 5 vols., ed. D. F. Bond (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 50, 50, 50, 51. The issue-date for this essay is Tuesday, March 13, 1711.

[13] Johannes Fabian, *Time & The Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 35.

intersubjective sharing of historical time and space that Fabian articulates as his ideal. Within *Obi*, the form of the interpolated tale mitigates such temporal distancing by emphasizing the tale-teller's embodied presence and oral tradition, which seem to offer a model of "coevalness." Unlike the asymmetrical, one-way rhetoric that emerges from the encounter between anthropologist and object, Amri's tale creates a dialogic engagement between tale-teller and interlocutor within the text, and among tale-teller, narrator, and reader beyond the text. What makes Amri's tale so exceptional is the singularity of her self-fashioning and her freedom from gendered typecasting. Amri removes herself from sexual emplotment, favors violence over sentiment, and values the domestic space only as an ideological breeding ground. For Amri, even pregnancy proves empowering rather than debilitating. Both single-minded and bloody-minded, Amri wields the interpolated tale as a weapon of war, and the larger narrative treats her purpose and methods as worthy of respect. Placing Amri's oral history in dialogue with other forms of print history, including paratextual parliamentary sessional papers that I will discuss below, the novel ascribes greater moral authority to her subaltern speech. It is the form of the interpolated tale helps make these disruptive values legible.

Earle's text purposefully aligns the oral transmission of cultural practices and family wrongs with the narrative logic that underlies the West Indian folkloric tradition of Obi.[14] Also frequently spelled Obeah, Obi is a syncretic religion similar to voodoo and Santeria, in which the division between the practice, the beliefs, and the practitioner becomes elided. In both cases, a new set of narrative, ethical, and embodied practices emerge out of the encounter between East and West. Importantly, different groups are seen as having different access to the privileged

[14] Earle's text spells the word "Obi" and capitalizes it. I will conform to Earle's usage.

knowledge of Obi, depending on their cultural heritage. What matters here is the listener's response to the privileged knowledge conveyed by the interpolated tale, or the recipient's decision of what to do under the aegis of his Obi. Earle's text takes a gingerly approach to the syncretic religion, which he gives a belated rollout. Despite pride of place in the title, the term "Obi" goes unexplained until Letter V, when an eleven-page footnote gives an encyclopedia-like explanation. This footnoted moment marks the text's full introduction of the term. Twenty-five of the text's twenty-seven instances of the word "Obi" appear after this point. The awkwardness and scope of this paratextual apparatus signal that the text has reached a flashpoint: the moment of cross-cultural encounter between an Enlightenment discourse and folklore, between Old World and New World, and between print and orality.

The pivotal Obi footnote runs alongside one of the emotional high water marks of Amri's tale: the execution scene in which Amri recognizes that the Obi-Man being tortured to death in front of her is her father, Feruarue. Before the moment of two-way filial recognition, the text simply introduces the man suffering punishment as an "Obi-Man" charged with inciting a band of "frantic desperadoes," and gives a brief account of his capture. In fleeing from a troop of soldiers, some of the rebels had "led the way to the cave of an Obi-Man,*" a designation that Earle flags with an asterisk and then expands upon in the text's longest footnote, stretching from page 72 to page 82 in the first edition. This intertextual footnote repurposes a chunk of text lifted directly, and with slight but telling revision, from the House of Commons Sessional Papers of 1789. Specifically, the plagiarized text comes from the *Report of the Lords of the Committee of*

the Council Appointed for the Consideration of All Matters Relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations, Part I.[15]

All the while, Earle's ponderous footnote acts as a running text that accompanies the visceral primary narrative of Feruarue's torture and reunion with his daughter. Within the diegesis, the cold-blooded planter Mr. Mornton acts as the judge or arbiter of the vigilante court and speaks from a similar position of institutional power as the footnote. He offers to pardon Feruarue if the latter divulges the "hidden means" by which he "spirited up the negroes to a rebellion" (98). Scorning this wheedling offer of clemency as a bribe, Feruarue admits that he has "studied Obi" but that it is a privileged form of knowledge that the white planters cannot access. Secrecy is one of the principles of Obi: "I'll show you a Feloop can keep a secret… I acknowledge I spirited up the slaves to rebellion… but how I effected this remains with me, and with me shall expire" (99). Mornton continues pressing Feruarue to confess until the moment the accused is simultaneously hanged and burned alive. Honoring Feruarue's desire for secrecy, Amri's narration of this plot sequence offers no speculation or insight into what constituted his Obi knowledge.

The split between footnote and novel plot suspends the reader between dramatic narrative and information delivery, a lopsided distribution of attention that Amri easily wins. As we near the horrific climax, the proportion of text on the page tilts in favor of the footnote. While Amri recounts the horror of watching her father's torture and death, her proportion of the space on the page shrinks to three or as little as two lines of text. Nonetheless, Amri's tale has no trouble asserting the priority of its claim on the reader's attention and sympathy; her scene of parental

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[15] See also Appendix A of Aravamudan's modern edition of *Obi*, 168-181.

recognition overwhelms the bureaucratic prose in small footnote-font beneath it. Already succinct, Amri's narrative gains superadded suspense from its truncation into short chunks:

> We all marched in procession to see the unhappy fate of our countryman.
> The wretched criminal was brought [page break, 76]
> before us— Merciful God! I looked upon him and stared wildly in his vener-able face—
> “It is— it must be,” I cried, [page break, 77]
> tis my father Feruarue,” and screaming, I threw myself into his arms." [78]

Each page break acts as an additional caesura, compounding the effect of the three shrewdly placed em-dashes. Amri's oral narrative is not only emotional, it is blazingly dramatic, best evidenced in her mastery of timing: she introduces a wretched criminal, halts, recognizes him, halts, and only then reveals that the recognized figure is her father. Stanford's third-person narration briefly interrupts to depict the perlocutionary effect of the mother's call to vengeance: “During the latter part of the narrative, Jack’s eye sparkled with envenomed fury… The soul of a hero was visible in him, and his expressive countenance displayed a mind and strength capable of performing a great and glorious achievement” (89). Feruarue has died a noble and honorable death; Amri has told a vengeance-fueling tale; and Jack has absorbed the history of a second generation of wronged ancestors awaiting retribution.

In contrast, the footnote conveys impersonality at the level of style and content. It is hard to imagine a text that more perfectly embodies the institutionalization of imperial power than the inert prose of a corporately-authored report of a parliamentary committee, as is the excerpted Sessional Paper. Breaking into the subdivisions of “Obiah practice” and “Obiah trials,” the report includes language taken from the 1760 Obiah act law—which “enumerated” talismanic materials as “Blood, Feathers, Parrots Beaks, Dog teeth, Alligators Teeth, Broken Bottles, Grave Dirt, Rum, and Eggshells” (172). It also includes the more particularized first-

hand reporting of one Jamaica Planter. He recalls the case of one accused practitioner, an old woman, whose hovel local officials searched and burned, after extracting "the Implements of her Trade, consisting of Rags, Feathers, Bones of Cats, and a thousand other Articles" (175). But the woman herself does not speak. Preferring to exile the accused woman to Cuba, the planter "declined bringing her to trial" (175), and the secrets of her practice disappear with her.

The colonializing relation between obi and the Sessional Papers designed to police it hold consequences for the editorial practices that have shaped the text as it is available to modern readers. The Sessional Papers' originally oppressive function may have contributed to Aravamudan's decision to displace the footnoted quotation to a separate appendix. Aravamudan, after all, advances a sympathetic reading of Earle as a sincere abolitionist writing in good faith and with solid information—notably, Aravamudan remains open to the idea that 19 year-old Earle might have been apprenticed in Jamaica, a speculation for which no evidence has been found.

However, comparing the language of Earle's footnote to its original source material casts a slightly different light. Although the footnote text is only slightly revised, the revisions that Earle makes consistently temper the report's harshness toward the African Obi practitioners. The sinuous and caveat-laden first sentence is all but exactly rendered; in a case where the exception proves the rule, the one change renders "concurrent" as "current." The second sentence of the Sessions Report—which elaborated on the previous claim that most large plantations have "one or more" native Africans who are Obi-practitioners—is silently omitted, while the diction of the third and fourth sentences is strategically toned down. Here is the language of the Sessions Report, sentences 2-4:

The oldest and most crafty are those who usually attract the greatest Devotion and Confidence, those whose hoary heads, and a somewhat [*sic*] peculiarly harsh and diabolic in their Aspect, together with some Skill in plants of the medicinal and poisonous species, have qualified them for successful imposition upon the weak and credulous. The Negroes in general, whether Africans or Creoles, revere, consult, and *abhor* them… Such is the Trade which these *Wretches* carry on at different Prices. [Italics mine][16]

Earle omits entirely the dehumanizing and explicitly demonizing first sentence of the passage and its comparison of Obi-men to the devil ("harsh and diabolic in their Aspect"). His revisions to the second and third sentences are slight, but significant enough to cast the Obis in a more sympathetic light. While the Sessions Report claimed that "Negroes in general" "abhor" the Obis, Earle modulates their emotion to "fear" rather than abhorrence. The "Wretches" of the report instead are "impostors" and successful businessmen: "The trade which these impostors carry on is extremely lucrative" (72). Where the Sessions Report is sneering and dismissive, Earle is tempered, curious, and—for the most part—withholding judgment. Obi-Men may be impostors, but their folk practices emerge out of intolerable conditions. To Earle, Obi practitioners are confidence men who can provide a measure of comfort despite their imposture. They may not have the powers they claim, but they are not evil.

One way we can test the effect of the plot/footnote construction is by comparing the early print editions with the modern scholarly edition that has made this text newly available for teaching and research. Aravamudan's decision to banish the footnote is not unproblematic. To remove the novel's longest footnote "For the sake of avoiding unnecessary repetition"(97) seems to me an "unnecessary" disciplining and homogenization of the text. In the first place, the repetition is not exact. In the second place, the textual awkwardness of the oversized footnote

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[16] Aravamudan, 170. Appendix A.

formally registers the difficulty and discomfort of the moment, which attempts to convey oral and print narratives simultaneously—an impossible task. By placing the footnote and primary narrative as running texts on eleven pages, Earle leaves the order of content delivery a matter of reader's choice.

What is the effect of pairing Amri's wrenching personal tale with Earle's anthropological footnote on Obi? By representing Feruarue's execution and a Sessional Report on Obi as concurrent texts running simultaneously on the same page, Earle builds a productive tension between different conceptions of knowledge into his novel's narrative structure. So often sanguinary and vengeance-seeking, Amri articulates a family tragedy that conveys an undeniable sympathetic appeal. Indeed, in the moment that extinguishes her own capacity for sentiment—"all the remaining sparks of humanity perished in my bosom" (99–100)—Amri recounts the sentimental tableau most likely to evoke a sentimental response on the part of her contemporary readers: a father-daughter reunion and execution scene. Vitally, in a text interrogating chattel slavery Amri's interpolated tale is conceived of, and labeled as, her own property, much as Feruarue's Obi knowledge is a form of property that the planter class cannot strip from him.

I interpret Earle's dry and pedantic Obi footnote as his attempt to build into narrative form the ethical and epistemological problem of how different audiences have different access to different bodies of knowledge. Feruarue elects not to reveal the secrets of Obi. The footnote text delivers sterile content in an anthropological form that foregrounds the distance between Earle's English print readers and the context-driven folk practice. In this reading, Earle's decision to keep Amri's personal history and the Obi footnote separate is a formal choice that acknowledges the incommensurability of folk practices and print narrative, but also uses the clash between

these forms to advance his attack on the slave trade. The text supplies the novel with enough bare data to grasp Obi intellectually, while withholding the sort of lengthy intradiegetic encounter with Obi that might been more phenomenological, more gothic, or even titillating. Delivering information at the extra-diegetic level, Earle's Parliamentary footnote presents an outside-looking-in version of Obi. Meanwhile, Feruarue's folk wisdom remains his secret and Amri's tale remains her own personal property. Amri's tale itself remains resolutely unsentimental. The five named characters who operate according to the principles outlined in Amri's tale—Amri, her father Feruarue, her husband Makro, her son Jack, and her rescuer Mahali—do not survive the novel's end. Their code of family honor and vengeance ultimately cannot be resolved into the sentimental logic that unites the novel's few survivors. What the interpolated tale gives Earle is a device that allows him represent Feloop culture as intact and worthy of respect, while recognizing that it lies beyond the pale of the sentimentalism his novel otherwise promotes.

II: Cross-cultural, Crossed Narratives in *The Female American*

Published under the name Unca Eliza Winkfield in 1767, *The Female American* takes its pseudonymous author and heroine as its primary narrator. Like a female Robinson Crusoe, Unca spends a good chunk of the novel jerry-rigging solutions that allow her to survive alone on a

desert island.[17] However, Unca's identity and categorical imperative make her completely unlike Crusoe. If Crusoe is the Everyman of the Dissenting middling classes, Unca is an exceptional character on every front: royal, rich, and well-educated. As a biracial colonial woman with a "tawny complexion" (49), Unca is of royal lineage, the heiress to a nabob-sized fortune, and exceptionally well-educated, adept in English, "the Indian language" (50), Latin, and Greek. Her priorities are religious, other-directed, and non-materialistic. Despite the inauspicious passage I cited to open this chapter, Unca ultimately employs the sun idol to convert the native population and joins their community as a female prophet.

The text simultaneously endorses its conversion narrative while rejecting mercantile colonialism, and the strain to bind these two positions animates the plot. In Betty Joseph's reading, it is Unca's marginalized position as a biracial woman that allows her account to operate outside of national narratives and to advance a form of Christian imperialism that is not economically exploitive.[18] Mary Helen McMurran situates Unca's evangelism in the context of Enlightenment debates about "pagan prognostication," while Matthew Reilly argues that the

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[17] Hans Turley categorizes the novel as a Robinsonade, though the text's modern editor, Michelle Burnham, takes issue with the term as overemphasizing Crusoe as a singular "ur-text" as opposed to part of a wider tradition (16). Hans Turley, "Protestant evangelicalism, British imperialism, and Crusoian identity," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660–1840,* ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 183. Michelle Burnham, "Introduction" to *The Female American*, Second Edition (Petersborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2014), 16. One of the novel's earliest twentieth-century critics, Tremaine McDowell, points out similarities between the two novels' formal construction and prose style. McDowell, 307–309. While admiring that "the female American writes…prose unparalleled in eighteenth-century American fiction for simplicity and directness" (308), McDowell ultimately dismisses the novel: "The incidents recounted in *The Female American* are so preposterous that the book has little intrinsic worth" (309).

[18] Betty Joseph, "Re(playing) Crusoe/Pocahontas: Circum-Atlantic Stagings in *The Female American,*" *Criticism* 42.3 (2000): 317–335.

novel's critique of Enlightenment subjectivity draws on Quaker and Arabic sources.[19] While sharing these scholars' interest in narrative authority and how power is situated, I shift attention to how the novel recursively stages the question "who is speaking?" as a way of mediating its competing desires to honor indigenous culture but to convert its practitioners to Christianity, and to prioritize orality but to do so in print.

Desert island narratives place constraints on the representation of voice and the varieties of voices available. For long stretches of time when Unca is living in Crusoe-like isolation on a desert island, she stands as the sole speaker within the *fabula,* the only voice whose dialogue punctuates the chronology of plot events. With the exception of one interpolated tale spoken by cousin Winkfield, Unca is the organizing voice of the *sujet.* Her first-person point of view delivers the narrative. Indeed, speaking to herself and narratorial role-playing are two of the strategies that Unca employs to maintain her sanity and to boost her spirits while she is living in a world devoid of other speakers. Unca conceives of these strategies as part of the Christian practice of meditation:

> My dear uncle was a great recommender of meditation… And, according to his further advice, I used to talk to myself aloud, as the occasion required, as I would to another; and that with all the force of argument, vehemence, and energy of expression I could, or as the nature of the subject required... On these occasions, it was always my custom to imagine to myself that my uncle was speaking to me; this I thought, as it were, inspired me, and gave an energy to my words, strength to my arguments, and commanded my attention. I have sometimes indulged this reverie to such a degree that I have really imagined, at last, that my uncle was speaking to me.

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[19] Mary Helen McMurran, "Realism and the Unreal in *The Female American*," *Eighteenth Century:Theory and Interpretation* 52.3-4 (Winter-Fall 2011): 323–342. Matthew Reilly, "'No eye has seen, or ear heard,' Arabic Sources for Quaker Subjectivity in Unca Eliza Winkfield's *The Female American*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 44.2 (Winter 2011): 261–283.

By reflecting on my late sickness and the occasion of it, I was led into one of these soliloquies, and thus in the imagined person of my uncle did I address myself. (69)

Without the physical presence of interlocutors, Unca labors to translate her thoughts into articulated rhetoric and to imagine narrative scenarios that place her on both sides of the divide, as speaker and listener. There is a doublethink logic to this narrative exchange. Unca accepts that she is both the speaker, who used to "talk to myself aloud, as the occasion required," and the audience, "it was always my custom to imagine to myself that my uncle was speaking to me." The passage's final sentence literalizes the psychological collapse that Unca willfully imagines between self and uncle, or self and other: "thus in the imagined person of my uncle did I address myself." Unca's narrational role-playing offers several benefits. Using the rhetorical device of speaking "in the imagined person of my uncle" creates a narrative circuit of speaker/addressee, which Unca argues bolsters her ability to craft a meaningful and persuasive narrative: "this...inspired me, and gave an energy to my words, strength to my arguments, and commanded my attention." Narrational role-playing allows Unca to transform her thoughts into speech acts, whose perlocutionary effects are self-directed.

Fear of madness stalks both the problem of having no one to talk to and the practice of talking to oneself. Unca herself is aware of this problem, and elects highly-wrought language to signal her awareness. To bridge the transition back from the avuncular soliloquy to Unca's dominant first person, the text bookends the exhortation with two invocations of the adverb "thus:" "Thus in the imagined first person of my uncle did I address myself" (70) and "Thus did I endeavor to fortify my heart, and to learn patience and resignation to the dispensations of providence" (71). The adverb "thus" functions here according to its primary definition, given by

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as "In this manner; in this wise."[20] The repetition of "thus" draws attention to the narrational role-playing of the soliloquy—an imagined narrative interpolation—as a formal device and practice that Unca finds expedient for articulating her self-directed didactic rhetoric, "thus" fortifying her commitment to the spiritual resources of her Christian faith. Similarly, the text advocates Unca's narrational role-playing as a literary practice concordant with the novel's primary logic: the overarching "dispensations of providence" (71). Even when an individual speaker finds herself stranded on a desert island, narrative calls out for narrative. The individual first-person narrator finds formal devices for putting her perspective into a circuit with other perspectives and voices, though she noticeably selects perspectives that reinforce her own providential world view. Speaking "for" another becomes a practiced skill that helps Unca achieve her desired outcomes.

The problem of speaking for others is central to the plot and literalized in the single break to Unca's first-person narrative. The sole interpolated tale intercalates the voices of five white men in order to construct a critique of mercantile colonialism. There is a long lead up to the narrational transfer. Visiting "the oracular statue" (121) one day, Unca spots a group of indiscriminate Europeans and eventually recognizes one of them as her cousin Winkfield, who has traveled from England in search of her. Before revealing herself, Unca employs the oracle's uncanny acoustics to terrify and control the search party of European men. Unca's transgressive humor is heterodox, perhaps verging on the blasphemous. When the men dispute among themselves whether the oracular marvel is the work of God or the devil, Unca laughs at their

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[20] *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic by Samuel Johnson,* ed. Brandi Besalke. :Page View, Page 2057." Accessed 15 April, 2015. http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/?page_id=7070&i=2057

pious concern: "I could not help being much diverted at their fears" (123). The text lavishes time and attention on Unca's elaborate prank: in seriatim, she speaks through the idol, sings "a midnight hymn of [her] uncle's composing" (123), requests that the search party sing a hymn, sets an Aeolian harp to play through the idol's mouth, dresses herself in ancient priestly vestments, emerges aboveground from the subterranean passage, and sneaks up behind her cousin, as if materializing from thin air. Exceeding Unca's expectations, Unca's prank completely unmans—and silences—her would-be-rescuers: "Upon this all turned and saw me, to their great surprize. They stood still and silent like mutes" (126). While Betty Joseph emphasizes the ways in which Unca's status as a biracial woman marginalize her,[21] this prank works through a separate logic. Here, Unca's narrative position—as a woman, but moreover, as a woman speaking through the mouth of an idol and donning the clothes of an ancient civilization—gains part of its force because it is so unusual. Her position is not so much marginal to her male interlocutors as it is off their map entirely; they turn to the supernatural as the only possible explanation for the "strange things… seen and heard to-day" (127). Having already talked herself back into sanity and good health and converted the native population to Christianity, Unca's voice routs a band of male adventurers--such is the narrative force that the novel accedes to its heroine's voice.

The analeptic backstory that explains how Winkfield arrived on the island is long deferred and anything but chronological. Unca and Winkfield are first reunited in Chapter VI, but only in Chapter IX does the text begin to account for his appearance, an account which continues to be withheld from the reader: "but now, in his turn, my cousin briefly told me how he

[21] Joseph, 327.

came to know here I was; of which hereafter" (136). The promised account appears in Chapter X-XII as the novel's sole interpolated tale, but the time lapse occurs at the level of *fabula* as well as *sujet*. Part of the delay springs from a dual indifference: Unca's lack of interest in romantic love and the text's lack of interest in elaborating a marriage plot. One half-sentence collapses the Winkfield cousins' courtship into a phrase and announces the companionate marriage: "to whom, through his constant importunity, I was at last obliged to give my hand, about two months after his arrival" (141). Winkfield speedily acquires the Indian language, and the husband-and-wife missionaries spend much of their time catechizing the Indian children, having sorted them by gender. Unca shows no small pride in this accomplishment: "what with catechising, and his preaching twice a week, we had greatly the appearance of a christian country" (141). Only after two months of courtship ("his constant importunity"), language acquisition, and intensive religious education of the native population does Unca find the time to hear a full account of how her husband made his way to her desert island. The capitula describes the precipitating event for this tale: "Mr. Winkfield marries his cousin, and proceeds in the work of conversion. He relates by what means he came to the knowledge of her being in that part of the world" (140). The interpolated tale takes as its conceit that Winkfield is narrating to Unca the sequence of providential encounters that allowed him to find her desert island.

Making the switch from the monovocal first-person point of view that organizes the novel's first twenty chapters into Cousin Winkfield's multilayered narrative is syntactically rough going. The narrative shifts between tagged and untagged direct speech, a script-like dialogue form, and five overlapping first-person narrators, two of whom shift names. Unca signals that she is stepping aside through a curt transitional sentence, "It was thus:" (141). The

colon conveys a sense of separation, pause, and openness. Winkfield's first sentences are presented on the page as direct speech and set off by quotations marks: "'There came one day,' *said my husband*, "a sea-faring man to my father..." (141). [Italicization mine.] The phrase marks the sentence as direct speech narrated by Unca. Only at the end of the first speech does the narrative shift into the elsewhere time and space of Winkfield's first-person narration, with the abrupt "Yes Sir, replied the Stranger, "your brother, I am sorry to inform you, died… " (141). This tagged direct speech had occurred two years earlier in England, and carries us away from the primary narrative to a confusing sequence of colonial reportage.

As the novel plunges into a welter of embedded dialogues and long first-person speeches, Winkfield drifts in and out as the organizing first-person point of view. Breaking down the interpolated tale into its narrational components makes this segmentation clear.

Winkfield's Interpolated Tale: 12 pages, 47 paragraphs (141–152)
Narrators:
2 paragraphs Winkfield
4 paragraphs dialogue format; speakers are Mr. Winkfield senior and Stranger
2 paragraphs Stranger
5 paragraphs dialogue format; speakers are Pirate (later Captain Shore) and Merchant Captain (formerly Stranger)
3 paragraphs Captain Shore
1 paragraph interruption by Winkfield senior, as narrated by Winkfield junior
8 paragraphs dialogue; speakers are Merchant Captain and both Winkfields
12 long paragraphs Captain Shore
4 paragraphs Merchant Captain (formerly Stranger)
6 paragraphs Winkfield junior

First, Winkfield recedes into the background for long passages, in which an unnamed Stranger/ Merchant Captain and then Captain Shore emerge as the primary narrators; later, he reclaims his central position as the organizing narrator.

In three distinct passages, the lines are organized roughly as a script that apportions speaking roles. Each speaker is denominated by a character name followed by a period: "Mr. Winkfield senior." or "Stranger." or "Pirate." (142, 142, 144–145). The lines of speech follow in quotation marks. A reformed pirate, Captain Shore, speaks in first person for five pages, until he is jarringly thrust back into third person by the Stranger/Merchant Captain: "'And now, Sir, said captain Shore, speaking still to me..." (149). The transition is unmarked enough that the novel's modern editor, Michelle Burnham, attaches a footnote: "The 'me' here is the Merchant Captain" (149).

The text's shifting among five first-person narrators[22] as well as between chunks of dialogue and long passages of monologue-like exposition makes point of view a problematic device to track. In a footnote, Burnham flags the absence of a stabilizing narrator: "Again, Winkfield Jr.'s account of previous events is presented as a series of dialogues within a dialogue that makes it difficult to distinguish speakers from each other" (141). For the reader, the embedding of "dialogues within a dialogue" and radical destabilizing of point of view makes mistaken identity all-but inevitable. Burnham diagrams the tale's nestled narratives into four levels: "In the following account, John Winkfield Jr. tells a story heard by his father, the minister Winkfield Sr., who tells a story told by an unnamed stranger who is the captain of a merchant

[22] The interpolated tale assigns dialogue to five separate speakers, who are eventually revealed to be three men, who are nonetheless treated as five characters. For simplicity, I will refer to these five/three characters as five speakers.

ship, who tells a story told by a pirate, who is revealed to be Captain Shore." However, I would argue that the chain of witnessing is both more complicated—the pirate/Captain Shore also narrates information he has heard from "the wicked captain" who maroons Unca—and less complicated—because Winkfield Jr. is one level less removed than Burnham says. We know from Winkfield's respectful cautioning of his father not to rush the Merchant Captain (144) that two Winkfield generations are physically present as interlocutors to the visitor's strange tale. In this novel, the near impossibility of distinguishing speakers from each other is a formal problem limited to its awkward interpolated tale, in which professional Englishmen talk over each other.

The shaping force of rapacious colonialism itself deforms Winkfield's interpolated tale, which compresses the transatlantic voyages of four ships under three captains and the vagaries of their fortunes, including mutiny, piracy, murder, pardon, restitution, justice, and redemption. The transatlantic circulation of goods, people, narratives, and, to a lesser extent, texts—in other words, colonial mercantilism—functions to separate these peripatetic narratives from their actors. Even in the face of this narrative dispersal, the novel places a premium on oral narration. Crucially, Captain Shore sends a Merchant Captain (first called "Stranger") to deliver an oral account of Unca's betrayal to her relatives. Shore also sends "a letter" and "some other papers belonging to your niece" (150), but the text is similarly uninterested in attending to these documents or to clarifying whether Shore or his agent is speaking. There are moments when Shore emerges as a first-hand, first-person narrator, despite the *sujet*'s contorted insistence that it is Merchant Captain who is speaking. The effect is a recursive pattern of the separation of actors and narrators, interspersed with restorative attempts to locate the role of actor and narrator in one person. While the speakers are the agents of territorial expansion—sea captains and gentleman

professionals—the involuted form of the tale and the warping of their narratives ends up articulating a critique of the very imperial activities they make possible. Even in the most densely mediated exchange, the novel advances a commitment to orality and an ideal of unmediated communication—ideals that it considers worth preserving, even if it means turning to the mediated technologies of manuscript and print.

Within the interpolated tale, point of view is a contested privilege. The text enacts this tension by staging a confrontation between several of its subnarrators: the "sea faring man" (141) who is first dubbed Stranger and then Merchant Captain, and his interlocutors, the Winkfields junior and senior. The Stranger/Merchant Captain who brings news of Unca to her relatives in "Surry" (48) stands as one of the novel's great plot drivers, along with "the wicked captain" who maroons Unca and Captain Shore, the reformed pirate, who captures "the wicked captain" and re-discovers Unca's desert island. That three nautical men—two of whom remain unnamed—wield such influence over the plot is a marker of the novel's investment in colonialism as a force that both produces the movement of people and goods and is produced by this movement. When the "sea-faring man" introduces himself as bearing news of the Virginia Winkfields, he preemptively apologizes for the rambling and circumstantial form of his narrative: "I shall be ready to give you all the information that I can about her. But as I cannot do so in a few words, I must beg your patience, whilst I relate to you circumstantially all the particulars that I know" (142). Notably, the Stranger/Merchant launches into his account without securing Winkfield senior's agreement to his concession, and the concerned uncle objects as the tale builds to its bloody climax:

> "....But suspecting the captain to be guilty"…
>
> Here Mr. Winkfield senior interrupted him somewhat peevishly: 'Pardon me, Sir, you are very prolix. I am confounded and want to know what all this has to do with my niece…let me know the worst at once; was my niece murdered, Sir, on board this ship?"
>
> Merchant Captain: 'No, Sir, she was not, and may be yet living for ought I know to the contrary.'
>
> Mr. Winkfield senior: "May be yet living! you talk mysteriously. I thought you came to tell me news about her, and you only say she may be yet living—I abhor suspense; if you know anything concerning her, tell it me at once."
>
> Mr. Winkfield, junior: "Honoured Sir, don't be in such a hurry, you will offend the gentleman, and we may never come to the perfect knowledge of the affair."
>
> Merchant Captain: "Sir, I take no offense, I attribute your father's interruption to his concern for his niece, but cannot give him the information he wants except in the manner I was going to do it. If it be agreeable, I will proceed." (144)

Here, the text stages a debate between different conceptions of narrative. For Mr. Winkfield Sr., the function of narrative is to deliver "news" that has a teleological bent and contains outcomes: the murder or survival of his beloved niece. Taking issue with the Merchant Captain's use of the modal auxiliary verb "may yet" and its open-endedness, Winkfield demands that the tale-teller skip to the ending. Declaring "I abhor suspense," Winkfield privileges content as a thing, or "anything," that can be extracted from form. Articulating the narrative logic that undergirds both the novel and the interpolated tale, Winkfield Jr. reasons that form and content are inextricable, and that narrative is a system of cultural as well as information exchange: "don't be in such a hurry, you will offend the... gentleman, and we may never come to the perfect knowledge of the affair." Chastened by his own attempt to seize information without accepting the manner in which it is conveyed, the elder Winkfield makes peace by attributing his bad literary practices to the humoral theory of human temperament: "I am of a warm temper…I hope therefore you will excuse my rude interruption, and be pleased to proceed in your own way" (144). Unoffended and unfazed, the Merchant Captain reiterates that his narrative is inflexible: "[I] cannot give him

the information he wants except in the manner I was going to do it" (144). The Captain is speaking on behalf of others, a narrative responsibility that the novel takes very seriously.

Unca is the primary narrator, but it is important that she is not the only narrator. I read the stylistic knottiness that marks the text's narration of its single interpolated tale as a signal of a larger philosophical problem: how can a consolidated first-person narrator encounter others and use their language without imposing an orientalizing hierarchy? In this reading, the inclusion of Winkfield's interpolated tale becomes a way for the text to mediate between the impulse to exchange and replicate stories while attempting to protect the independence of various parties. The formal awkwardness of Winkfield's interpolated tale contributes to the strength of its political critique of colonial mercantilism, which works to separate plot agents and the narratives they shape.

Much as the text interrogates the questions of who speaks and how one can speak for another, these remain open questions upon the novel's conclusion. Having strained to represent multiple points of view without erasing the difficulty of any such project, the novel never focalizes through the point of view of the local Indian population. Unca, half-Native American and self-proclaimed female prophet, assumes the mantle of speaking for the local people. In the same breath, Unca and Winkfield decide to sever all ties with Europe as the best way of protecting the Indians' civilization, and to destroy the pagan idol Unca used to convert them to Christianity. For this pseudonymous text at least, the anxiety of cross-cultural overwriting remains unresolved—and unresolvable.

In both of these transatlantic texts, the interpolated tale emerges as a ground for critique of slavery and the colonial project. In the case of *Obi*, the interpolated tale is a didactic and political space that allows Amri, an enslaved woman, to transmit her native culture and her own revenge-focused ideology to her son born in the New World. It also advances the novel's argument for abolition. In the case of *The Female American*, the interpolated tale intercalates the narrative power of five white ship captains and professional men—all agents of empire—and criticizes the shaping force of British colonial power as one that ambiguates plot agents and narratives. The interpolated tale's two-hearted status, as formally Othered yet within the containing narrative, contributes to its efficacy for voicing critique. At the same time, dual status renders it both vulnerable to expurgation and flexible enough to re-form into multiple afterlives of its own. By cleaving a breach between tale and surround, the interpolated tale provides these transatlantic texts with a dynamic structure for holding their miscellaneous voices in open conversation.

EPILOGUE:

Whither the Interpolated Tale?

This brief account of the family is intended to supersede the necessity of a long and minute detail from Mrs. Thorpe herself, of her past adventures and sufferings, which might otherwise be expected to occupy the three or four following chapters; in which the worthlessness of lords and attornies might be set forth, and conversations, which had passed twenty years before, be minutely repeated.

Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817)[1]

In our June 'Messenger," we spoke at some length of the 'Watkins Tottle and other Papers,' by 'Boz.' We then expressed a high opinion of the comic power, and of the rich imaginative conception of Mr. Dickens—an opinion which 'The Pickwick Club" has fully sustained….From the volume before us we quote the concluding portion of a vigorous sketch, entitled "A Madman's MS."

Unsigned review of *The Pickwick Papers*, *Southern Literary Messenger* (1836)[2]

When, in the first epigraph, the narrator of *Northanger Abbey* summarily introduces a new character by denying "the necessity of a long and minute detail from Mrs. Thorpe herself, of her past adventures and sufferings," Jane Austen effectively kicks Lady Vane, Leonora, Cynthia, Amri and their fellow tale-tellers out of the novel.[3] Of course Don Quixote, Henry Fielding, and other characters, authors, and critics had been threatening to do as much for generations. But their critical disfavor had been, as we have now seen, a feature of the interpolated tales that early novelists continued to wield, disrupting their plots. Nonetheless, Austen presents a different

[1] Thanks to Jocelyn Harris for directing me to this passage. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21.

[2] This review appeared under "Critical Notices" in the November 1836 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. [Anonymous], *Southern literary messenger; devoted to every department of literature and the fine arts* 2.12, November 1836, 787–788. It is available online thanks to the University of Michigan's Humanities Text Initiative. http://name.umdl.umich.edu/acf2679.0002.012

[3] These characters narrate interpolated tales in *Peregrine Pickle*, *Joseph Andrews*, *David Simple*, and *Obi*, respectively.

case. Her adult novels steer clear of interpolated tales. With her silencing of Mrs. Thorpe, Austen does more than satirize the inset tales of woe that stipple the Gothic and other-romance inflected novels that are her primary target. She alerts us that the golden age of interpolated tales is drawing to a close. And Austen, herself, was a principal player in their decline. Her role in developing free indirect discourse and other refinements in narrational omniscience meant that authors had a wider palette of literary devices for representing difference. But to say that interpolated tales went out of fashion is not to claim they ever went away. For the two centuries that spanned *Don Quixote* and *Obi*, interpolated tales had been a nearly-ubiquitous feature that co-constituted novel form. Starting in or around 1800, they become a more occasional form. To conclude my study of eighteenth-century interpolated tales, I put forward the contrasting examples of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens to indicate what the nineteenth century held in store for this awkward form.

In the juvenile work "Jack and Alice: A Novel" (1787), Austen had satirized eighteenth-century prose and novel conventions, including parodic "Life & Adventures" animated by unrepining orphans, eloped governesses, and the folderol of sentimental romance.[4] In contrast,

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[4] Jane Austen, "Jack & Alice: A Novel" in *Jane Austen: Minor Works*, ed. by R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 12–29. Olivia Murphy makes a convincing case that Samuel Johnson's periodic style, Frances Brooke's *The Excursion*, and Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* are Austen's primary sources for this novel, and that Johnson and Richardson are among the primary objects of her satire. Olivia Murphy, "From Pammydiddle to *Persuasion*: Jane Austen Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Literature," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32.2 (2008): 29–38.

her adult novels never let go of omniscience as their mediating perspective.[5] The content of the Eliza narrative in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), a gothic tale of two seduced women—mother and daughter—duplicates many of the tropes common to interpolated tales like the histories of Miss Price (*Sidney Bidulph*) and of Lucy Eldredge Temple (*Charlotte Temple*).[6] A distinct set piece, the Eliza episode stands out as a capsule narrative that introduces a new time and space, as well as a relatively new genre, the Gothic.[7] Colonel Brandon narrates the bleak content through direct discourse, but the omniscient narrator reasserts herself in between his paragraph-long speeches. Through still visibly intact, the episode is far more assimilated than it might have been as a conjectural interpolation, "The History of Eliza." In the place of interpolated tales, Austen's novels employ free indirect discourse to complement direct discourse with the chatter of mediated voices. In a vital distinction, these voices are integrated into the primary perspective and the reading process without making separate bids on our attention. Austen's version of the nineteenth-century novel offers a plurality of voices rather than the plurality of autonomous storytellers that interpolated tales engrafted into eighteenth-century novels.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that as novel form consolidated, critics and authors increasingly shared a consensus that interpolated tales were a naive device associated with romance and other

[5] Thoroughgoing work has revolved around Austen's use of free indirect discourse, also called free indirect style or free indirect speech, as well as the development of free indirect discourse as a device. For in-depth treatments of this topic, see Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); Frances Ferguson, "Jane Austen, *Emma*, and the Impact of Form," *MLQ* 61.1 (March 2000): 157–180; D. A. Miller, *Jane Austen: or, The Secret of Style* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); John Bender, *Imaginging the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Michael McKeon, *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 485–91.

[6] Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2002), 145–150.

[7] The Gothic begins with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).

primitive stages of novel development. In this, Henry Fielding, Francis Coventry, Clara Reeve, Richard Cumberland and Walter Scott all articulated an evolutionary conception of novel theory that anticipated "the rise of the novel" critics in the twentieth century.[8] After all, the critical wavering between negative and positive valuations of interpolated tale form had always been a lopsided one that tilted toward the pejorative. If, however, as we have seen, a feature of interpolated tales is their ability to provoke attack, so too is their ability to summon defense a feature. By the early part of the nineteenth century, interpolated tales were an intermittent, but still controversial, and perceptible component of novels. Charles Dickens, master of narratorial omniscience and, in many ways, exemplar of nineteenth-century novel form, included nine interpolated tales in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837;1837).[9] Often compared to the tales of Cervantes and Henry Fielding, the *Pickwick* interpolations have provided dozens of scholars with a "fertile site for critical performance."[10] For much of the twentieth century the dominant view held that the tales were simply padding as a result of the demands of serialization, a dismissal that set up Robert Pattern's defense that "in letters and by format, Dickens emphasizes the tales

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[8] Henry Fielding, *Covent-Garden Journal* 24 (March 24, 1752), republished in *The Covent-Garden Journal*, ed. Gerard Edward Jensen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1915), 281; Francis Coventry, "An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding: with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism," in *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood (London and New York: Routledge,1995), 269; Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (New York: The facsimile text society, 1930); Richard Cumberland, 78 from *The Observer*, 27, 1785, in *Novel and Romance: A Documentary Record 1700–1800*, ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 249; Walter Scott, *Prose Works* vol. 3, *Biographical Memoirs of Eminent Novelists and Other Distinguished Persons,* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834), 132.

[9] Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1937). The interpolated tale under discussion here, "A Madman's Manuscript" (139–147) appears in Chapter XI, as the result of what the capitula describes as "an antiquarian discovery" (132).

[10] Williams, "The Narrative Circle," 473.

to a degree inconsistent with their being inserted merely as stopgap measures."[11] Thus begins a dance that this project recognizes as a conspicuous reiteration.

Among the clamor of voices that took sides in the debate over *Pickwick*'s interpolated tales, one contemporary reviewer bears special attention. In closing this project, I turn to the passage quoted in the second epigraph, a brief squib that appeared in the November 1836 issue of *The Southern Literary Messenger*. Declaring a "high opinion" of Dickens, whose "general powers as a prose writer are equaled by few," the anonymous critic limits his catalogue of praise to eight sentences. Rather than concluding the evaluation in his own words, he plucks out "a vigorous sketch"—*Pickwick*'s second interpolated tale, "A Madman's Manuscript"—and reprints it over twenty paragraphs.[12] Thus does the unsigned reviewer, Edgar Allen Poe, remind us that one man's critical problem is another man's short story. Across generations, Dickens's critics continue to debate the art or awkwardness of interpolated tales. What the almost elegant iterability of this back-and-forth makes visible, is that for interpolated tales, their awkwardness is their art.

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[11] Robert L. Patten, "The Art of *Pickwick*'s Interpolated Tales." *ELH* 34 (1967): 349–66; Deborah L. Tomas, *Dickens and The Short Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

[12] Edgar Allan Poe, Review of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* in *Essays and Reviews* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 207. Peter K. Garrett, "The Force of a Frame: Poe and the Control of Reading," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 26: "Strategies of Reading: Dickens and after Special Number" (1996), 54–64.

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