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ABSTRACT

This dissertation tracks evolving metaphors about women as objects in the eighteenth-century novel. Objectification of women is an oft-cited concept for feminist theorists, but remains a fluid term among scholars. In "She Objects: On the (Im)Mobility of Women in the Eighteenth-Century Novel," I argue that the eighteenth-century novel is a starting point for understanding and categorizing structures of objectification. The Enlightenment and the corresponding rise of the novel is a period associated with the emergence of the liberal subject, the interiority of characters, and contractualism. However, this project considers a parallel narrative about the circulation of commodities, the fluid lines between "stuff" and "characters" in the eighteenth-century novel, and the potential for agency without subjectivity. Fundamentally, this dissertation seeks to question the binaries between subjects and objects in the eighteenth-century and uncover the histories and experiences of women caught up in a mechanism of objectification during this period.

Chapter One, "Cost Benefit Analysis: Circulating Women and the Virtues of Objectification," introduces the circulating woman and draws connections between women and commodities through Daniel Defoe's economic metaphors in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana.* Defoe's protagonists demonstrate how women are connected to markets and commodities through metaphors about money, trade routes, and the figure of Lady Credit. Alongside Defoe, I turn to Eliza Haywood to read into patterns of circulation a system of desire that demonstrates female agency. I read three early Haywood works: *Love in Excess, Fantomina,* and *The Wife to be Lett*, to argue that Haywood presents romantic desire as a cycle in which one pursues an object, becomes satiated of one's desire, and finally desires a new object. In this cycle, women serve as the objects of desire and therefore must find ways to circulate through an economy of

desire in order to experience pleasure. Haywood and Defoe's circulating women are curiously powerful figures who often trick the men around them. Men in these novels often emerge as dupes, objectifying women but ultimately proving powerless to control the commodities they create. Much of the power these female figures hold stems from their ability to be fungible with each other. Because men cannot tell one woman from another, the women manage to switch places, disguise themselves, and pursue their own desires outside of male authority. Fungibility, anonymity, and circulation emerge as a type of objectification in which it is possible to claim agency without subjectivity.

Chapter Two, "The Other Side of the Coin: It-narratives and The Metaphorics of Feminine Objects," offers a reading of it-narratives and a parallel process of personification of objects during the eighteenth-century. The personified it-narrators of the genre often show a kinship with women and employ similar kinds of metaphorical language. I consider the genre of it-narratives in aggregate, focusing on a few coin narratives, such as *Chrysal, Or the Adventures of a Guinea*, and animal it-narratives like *Pompey the Little.* Reading differences in tone, audience, and narrative structure in coin narratives versus animal narrative, I consider how those differences map onto female characters like Moll Flanders and Pamela. Their kinship with different types of it-narratives provides a guiding structure for different types of objectification. The genre of the it-narrative offers in microcosm the story of the novel that I am telling: a gradual shift from circulating objectification to sentimental objectification. Finally, I read John Cleland's pornographic novel, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, as an it-narrative. My reading of Fanny Hill as an it-narrator addresses the limits of agency in objectification by examining the potential agency of a female character that is essentially personified instead of objectified. The

differences in agency between a character like Fanny Hill and Fantomina point to the dangers and pitfalls of claiming agency within a system of objectification.

Chapter Three, "Pamela Petrified: Transitioning from Circulation to Stasis," continues the story of transition between circulation and sentimentality with Richardson's ground-breaking novel *Pamela.* I consider Pamela's fraught relationship with money and disguise, as well as the claustrophobic lack of movement in the novel. In my account, Richardson tames the circulating woman of earlier amatory fiction, offering a new vision of womanhood and objectification suited to domestic fiction. His novel self-consciously rewrites the parameters of objectification and foreshadows the key features of sentimental objectification. Likewise, Richardson's obsession with his control over the text of Pamela itself, and his vocal dissent for other authors using his character, point to growing anxieties about texts and women circulating in the eighteenth-century.

My final chapter, "Playing for Keeps: Sentimental Women and the Vices of Objectification," concludes with an explanation of sentimental objectification: its metaphors, plots, and pitfalls. I argue that sentimental objectification is a process of fixing women into place under the sentimental gaze. Women that are sentimentalized are often objectified in a way that feeds off their suffering and drinks in the image of their aestheticized corpse. The vampiric impulses of the sentimental gaze is pernicious because it eliminates the fungibility of women, thereby eradicating the potentials for agency within objectification. Sentimental objectification is not agential, but, paradoxically, it is rarely registered as objectification at all. This leads to what I call a "mistake" that we make about sentimental objectification. Because sentimental objectification does not allow women to be fungible, it works to individualize the women. It is a mistake to assume that when women are individualized they become subjects. This chapter first

reads the "rules" of sentimental objectification through the metaphors of Erasmus Darwin's poetry and educational tracts as well as sentimental fiction, using Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a test-case. Then, through two famous female contributions to the debates around the "cult of sentiment," I consider the feminist responses to sentimental objectification. I argue that Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* provide incomplete critiques of sentimentality because they both focus on educating women as a fantasy of turning women into good political subjects. My coda, "And the Dead Shall Rise Again: Female Gothic Possibilities Under Sentimentality," offers a rebuttal to Wollstonecraft and Austen's liberal solution to sentimentality in the form of the gothic novel. In my final reading of genre, I argue that the gothic novel recoups agency within the sentimental form, using convention to reinject circulation and female desire into the novel.

Introduction

According to a popular rumor, Rene Descartes made an automaton girl that he named after his daughter, Francine Descartes, after she died of illness in 1640. Descartes himself believed that the human body was much like a machine, perhaps a starting point to the legend that he traveled with a mechanical girl that he loved like his own flesh and blood. A father of the Enlightenment, Descartes also apparently fathered a clockwork girl. The image, however fictional, of Descartes and his automaton daughter provides a framing concept for this dissertation: the Enlightenment may be intimately connected with the birth of the liberal subject, the social contract, and the separation of the public from the private, but it also births a feminized object and a system of objectification of women. This dissertation seeks to question the binaries between subjects and objects in the eighteenth-century and uncover the histories and experiences of women caught up in a mechanisms of objectification during this period. Descartes, for instance, becomes a Pygmalion figure, resurrecting his daughter as an object. She becomes the perfect daughter, frozen in time at the age she died.

While Descartes' ownership of a woman is fictional and metaphorical, E.P Thompson documents the actual ownership of women and their sale in a marriage market made literal. In his book *Customs in Common*, E.P Thompson presents an account of the ritualized practice of wife sale in England between roughly 1760 and 1880, resting on a premise of marriage as a form of contractualism. Contractualism, as captured in John Locke's and Jean Jacques Rousseau's theories of the social contract, is a lasting legacy of the Enlightenment and a foundational idea to many of our social and political practices, including marriage and divorce. Thompson defines ritual wife sale as following a certain set of parameters: the sale must take place in an

acknowledged market, the sale must be advertised, and the wife in question must be brought to market by halter, usually around her neck or waist. The descriptions of wife sale are often relayed in a moralizing tone, highlighting the humiliation of the women involved and their treatment as livestock or chattel. However, Thompson's careful analysis suggests something else is happening alongside the treatment of women as chattel in these accounts of sale. He explains, "a sale might not only be an exchange between husbands; it might also be a device by means of which a wife could annul or be 'bought out of' her existing marriage…If the husband was making life unbearable for the wife she might agree to a sale and make her own arrangements for her 'purchase.'" [1] The sale of women to men they preselected (and had often already taken as lovers) suggests that wife sale might have been a way for certain communities in England to enact divorce and remarriage in the absence of a church ritual. This practice of wife sale resonates in many ways with the trappings of the marriage contract itself, both in its publicness and the treatment of marriage as a contract which the practice of wife sale explicitly dissolves. This contractual language of marriage and wife sale poses some problems when thinking about the nature of women as contractual subjects because it is connected with a rhetoric that treats women as objects within a "sale," from the existence of dowries to the image of the father giving the bride away. Even with rituals that strongly invoke the language of contract, there is a persistent link between interactions people have and treating some of those persons (women) as objects.

Thompson's controversial work on the practice of wife sale points to the challenges of thinking agency into objectification. Since Immanuel Kant's description of the dehumanizing effects of objectification in *Lectures on Ethics*, scholars have been hesitant to read self-

1. E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 436.

determination of any kind into objectification. While Thompson mines the historical record and discovers that women were willing participants in their own sale, it should rightfully make us queasy to think about "willingness" in a practice that requires someone to wear a rope around their neck. What does it mean to say these women had agency in the practice of wife sale? Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon pinpointed objectification, specifically in pornography, as the source of sexual violence. They might say that women engaging in practices of wife sale are internalizing misogyny and experiencing dehumanization and violence as a result.

In light of the harmful effects of objectification, feminist critics have needed to claim women as subjects, throwing off the chains of objectification. The murky agency of the wife for sale is rejected in favor of sovereign subjectivity, which, according to Locke, must include possession of one's own body as private property (My body, my choice). But, subjectivity, specifically a kind of subjectivity informed by contractualism and property rights, is still tinged with the specter of objectification, as Thompson's work on the contractual nature of wife sale shows. In the marriage contract, women are supposed to be able to enter into such an agreement, but in doing so they forfeit themselves as subjects and become the possessions of their husbands. For this reason, Carole Pateman urges us to think of the liberal subject as gendered male. Similarly, Gayle Rubin explains "we are not only oppressed *as* women, we are oppressed by having to *be* women."[2] Taking these two accounts together, it may be impossible to be a subject without sacrificing femininity. Being a woman and being an object might be synonymous, posing an ongoing issue for feminists trying to find a way out of objectification.

If becoming a subject essentially means giving up one's femininity, it becomes very

2. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," in *Toward an Anthology of Women,* ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 204.

challenging to claim agency dependent on subjectivity for women as women. Rubin, Dworkin, Mackinnon, and others suggest the way out of patriarchy in light of these facts is to abolish gender all together. But, really, they seem to mean abolishing women—being a woman emerges as a fraught, irredeemable position because of the dehumanizing effects of objectification. And yet, none of these thinkers have a stable definition of objectification. Kant's definition, which inspires Dworkin's and MacKinnon's, bases objectification specifically off of sexual desires, while Rubin approaches objectification through a more capacious lens informed by Marx, Levi-Strauss, Mauss, and even Freud. For Rubin and other cultural anthropologists, objectification is based on the traffic in women to solidify the ties of kinship. For Marxist feminists, objectification is informed by commodity fetishism. A baseline purpose of my project is to more rigorously and carefully analyze objectification. I map out structures of objectification to come to a more precise understanding of what it means for individual women to be treated as objects. In this dissertation, I also reject the quest to turn women into subjects, asking instead what it looks like to be an object and then sitting with that object-ness. How is objectification felt, experienced, and navigated? Where might we find agency that does not premise subjectivity? Where is that agency emphatically missing?

Martha Nussbaum stands out as one of the few scholars willing to ask the question: when can being an object be good? She suggests a taxonomy of types of objectification in her article "Objectification."[3] Nussbaum's list categorizes how people are treated as objects, including instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity, illustrating my suggestion that objectification is a term that actually denotes a series of structures instead of one concept. One of the difficulties with this constellation of attributes, as

3. Martha Nussbaum, "Objectification," *Philosophy and Public Affair* 24, no. 4 (2003): 249-291.

this dissertation will suggest, is some collections of these attributes contradict others. In many of the novels I will examine, fungibility is comorbid with a set of characteristics that imply movement, while inertness and ownership often carry with them an insistence on particularity at odds with fungibility. The characteristics of objecthood that fit together with each other imply a set of structures that are mutually exclusive. While Nussbaum begins to suggest that some forms of objectification might be more problematic than others, her article stops short of creating a theoretical framework for why that might be. Objectification can be used to mean a variety of things, and not all of them are bad, but knowing the difference emerges as an important political project.

In trying to find agency within objectification, I need to define what agency without subjectivity might look like. I think about agency as identifiable by self-propelled movement and reserve judgement about the kinds of desires that movement serves.[4] Judith Butler's writings on agency and subjectivity in *The Psychic Life of Power* help inform my account of agency outside of subjectivity. She detects a paradox in that the subject is both the condition and instrument of agency, writing "How can it be that the subject, taken to be the condition for and instrument of agency, is at the same time the effect of subordination, understood as the deprivation of agency?"[5] Ultimately, she concludes that agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled, and that we cannot distinguish between the power acting on subjects and enacted by subjects. Building off of these conclusions, this project assumes that objects need not be denied agency in

4. From Hobbes's account onward, it is common during the Enlightenment to think about desire as a driving force behind the will. This dissertation is interested in movement by some women-objects that seems (counterintuitive to a Hobbesian account) void of desire or motives. Instead, this movement seems to be for movement's sake. Characters like Moll Flanders embrace the lure of circulation, and any desires or motives to her actions seem extrinsic to her person.

5. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10.

order to be considered an object. Rather, other qualities can denote something's "objectness," allowing for objectification and agency to happen alongside each other. Objectification allows for agency, but it does not result in a process that creates a subject. Often, agency is conflated with subjectivity, but taking a cue from Butler that agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled, this project does not assume that agency and subjectivity go hand-in-hand.

To that end, this project can be divided into two main impulses: the recuperation of agency for characters that are treated as objects, not subjects, and the critique of a form of objectification birthed by the sentimental novel that confuses sentimentalized women with subjects. I argue that objectification can roughly be divided into two forms: circulating and sentimental. The two forms exhibit different characteristics in Nussbaum's schema and offer different metaphors about women as objects. They are also found in different genres of the novel. Circulating objectification is readily apparent in picaresque novels, amatory fiction, and a certain subset of it-narratives. Sentimental objectification finds its home in domestic fiction, conduct books, and, of course, the sentimental novel. The rising and ebbing tides of these genres help track the dominant cultural conceptualizations of women as objects. My project of categorizing objectification helps crystalize my proposed solution to objectification. Kant proposed monogamous marriage as a way out of objectification; Dworkin and Mackinnon, as well as Rubin and others, proposed the abolition of gender as the ultimate liberating force; Marxist feminists point to the abolition of capitalism as a way to free women from their commodity status. I believe the solution to the harmful, dehumanizing realities of objectification can be found in a critique of private property. It may be okay to be an object, but it is a terrible thing to be owned.

This project is anti-liberal in its attempt to recoup agency without subjectivity and

without a demand to turn women (maybe specifically white women) into political subjects who can enter into contracts. In rejecting the impulse to claim women as subjects, I am attempting to reject a form of feminism that has impeded the dismantling of patriarchy by making women partners in the oppression of others. Growing up in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I was the recipient of a genre of third-wave "Girl Power" feminism which promised that the liberation of women would follow from the successes of a female president, more female CEO's, and more women in S.T.E.M. The failures of this form of liberal feminism have been apparent in recent years. The #MeToo movement has pushed back against the optimism of third wave feminism by reclaiming sexual violence as a shared female experience (me too). Meanwhile, a strand of feminism grounded in anti-transgender activism has grown in popularity and a new form of violent misogyny has blossomed in darker internet enclaves.[6] And, a series of political losses for feminists regarding the U.S. presidency, the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the erosion of reproductive rights once thought secure have underscored how many glass ceilings stubbornly refuse to shatter.

The problem with liberal feminism is that it has proven more liberal than feminist, more grounded in a commitment to personal fulfillment and private property than in the liberation of women. Despite all the progressive messaging we have fed girls and women's successes in education, we find that women are still subject to horrifying amounts of sexual violence, that men still get ahead on the back of that violence, and that there are rarely any consequences. Even

6. Feminists that exclude transgender people from female spaces are sometimes referred to as a "trans-exclusionary radical feminist," although, the acronym TERF is usually used in a derogatory way and has been labeled a slur. People within the movement often will adopt the label "gender critical" instead. "Incels," or, involuntary celibates, is a subculture that primarily flourishes online and has been identified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is grounded in ideas of male supremacy and misogyny as well as racism, but is also characterized by high degrees of misanthropy and self-loathing. Starting in 2014, it has been connected to a series of mass-murders responsible for 45 deaths and counting.

worse, we find that feminism has been co-opted to sell everything from deodorant to dildos, and that white women can claim to be feminists while exploiting black and brown women and excluding trans women.[7] Faced with the astounding political failure of a movement that was marketing its success ("the future is female"), I want to trace back the problems with liberal feminism to its inception in the eighteenth century, and attempt to carve out a path for women that does not involve transformation into subjects. This project is driven by the sense that something has gone wrong in the modern feminist movement and that the problem might stem from a failure to adequately define and understand objectification during the so-called feminist "Sex Wars" of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

This dissertation uses eighteenth-century novels as a way to track and think about competing structures of objecthood because the rise of the novel aids in the solidification of a version of liberal femininity that this dissertation seeks to disrupt. Enlightenment ideas about the role of women in society, liberalism, and contract-theory make this period ripe for considering questions about the relationship between women and objecthood, and those ideas find their way into the literature of the period. The rise of the novel during this period is often told as a long story about the novel becoming more about subjectivity, interiority, and psychology. I consider the same fundamental shifts in the novel as less about the shift toward character interiority and more about a shifting constellation of attributes to describe the object-characters that populate these novels. My project addresses a variety of genres: the picaresque, the amatory novel, the it-narrative, and the sentimental novel, because I believe there are politically motivated notions about subjectivity and objectification embedded in these genres. The rules of the genres expose the structures of objectification I track through the period. Furthermore, this project is essentially

7. Jessa Crispin's *Why I am not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto* offers a critique of feminism along these lines.

a study of metaphorics. Objectification is, parallel to personification, an allegorical process which uses metaphorical language to enact a transformation that has consequences far outside the literary. And yet, because this process is metaphorical, fictionality must be the starting point to an understanding about the effects of the metaphorical upon the literal.

The circulation of women as objects creates a system in which women are treated like commodities or given a monetary value in a system of exchange. Circulating objectification, with its tendency to "price" women as goods (or even treat women as currency), allows for a form of agency in which women influence their circulation in order to pursue their desires. One of their main mechanisms for doing this is by exploiting their fungibility with other women. Because women in a system of circulating objectification may have the same value, they often trade places within narratives unbeknownst to the men who own them. For that reason, these women are, in Nussbaum's categories, often instrumentalized, always fungible, but rarely inert. Rather, their objectification can be classified by a volatile amount of movement, often linking them with commodities circulating through a market.

Sentimental objectification acts completely differently than circulating objectification. In addition to being anti-liberal, this dissertation is anti-sentimental. Sentimentality and the cult of sentiment is often associated with women and told as a story about the power of femininity. However, in examining the structures of objectification within sentimental fiction, I find that sentimental objectification replaces circulating objectification to the detriment of female desire. In contrast to circulating objects, women acting as sentimental objects are particular and incredibly dear to their owners. For this reason, sentimental objectification seems to be a way for women to finally become subjects. They are not fungible with each other, but rather present as individuals. I argue that the individualizing impulse of the sentimental novel does not mean

women become individuals, or subjects, at all. Women are particularized by the men around them *as objects*, which, under the sentimental gaze, allows men access to a well of emotion. For this reason, sentimental objectification is a dangerous and pernicious form of objectification. The women can be mistaken for subjects, but they have significantly less agency. This is because they lose the ability to exploit their objectification for their own purposes. Under the spotlight of the sentimental gaze, they lose the ability to be fungible and to circulate freely. The lack of freedom of movement imprisons them within the homes of the sentimental men who love them. Even worse, the sentimental gaze is most strong when the female object is dead or lost, subjecting female characters to new levels of suffering in order to fuel the tears of the sentimental man.

In many ways, the structure of this dissertation is an old structure, dating back to at least Ian Watt's trajectory through the eighteenth-century novel from Defoe to Richardson to Austen. The traditional canonicity of this project may be surprising, but the course I chart through the eighteenth-century novel is an attempt to rewrite the traditional narrative of the rise of the novel from a story about the rise of interiority and subjectivity to a story about the transformation of objectification. To that end, I pair Daniel Defoe's picaresque with Eliza Haywood's amatory fiction in chapter one, "Cost Benefit Analysis: Circulating Women and the Virtues of Objectification." I chart a course from Defoe to Richardson through the fringe genre of it-narratives in chapter two, "It-narratives: The Other Side of the Coin." And I read Austen alongside Oliver Goldsmith's generic novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Readers may also be surprised by the gender distribution of the authors I have chosen. This is not a project about female authorship, but rather female characters. It would be fair to say this is also a project about masculinity as much as it is about femininity. In tracking the objectified women, we are also

tracking the men who objectify. The changing framework of the male gaze in this narrative, from rabid consumer to sentimental subject, is as central as the way women choose to adapt to it.

This dissertation is indebted to Sandra Macpherson's *Harm's Way,* which helpfully begins to de-emphasize a focus on interiority in the novel that has been a dominant perspective since Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel.* She calls our attention to tort and liability law instead of contract theory as a place to think about what she characterizes as the novel's obsessive focus on bodily injury rather than conjugal affection—this lens allows me to think about people as objects that do things without a reliance on subjectivity or interiority. She begins to turn people into things through tort law and emphasis the passive mediums of harm. Her description can be coupled with Deidre Lynch's account of how the psychological interiority of characters can be created through the use of the material world of things.[8] These two works open up ways of thinking about the structures of objecthood present in their archives. William B. Warner's *Licensing Entertainment* is also a major influence, from his rejoinder to avoid over-gendering novels to his emphasis on the inclusion of novels in a larger discussion about circulating commodities. His reading of *Pamela* as a "media spectacle" has also strongly influenced my own understanding of that novel. Finally, a turn toward thinking about objects in eighteenth-century studies as part of a larger conversation about thing-theory and object-oriented ontology has created a rich conversation for this project to enter into.[9]

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8. I am also profoundly influenced by Lynch's reading of *Sense and Sensibility* in *The Economy of Character* as well as her connection between it-narratives and women.

9. Jonathan Lamb's *The Things Things Say* offers a thing-theory oriented approach to understanding objects in novels, drawing a hard divide between circulating objects and unintelligible, unowned "things," a distinction which underscores the importance of thinking about how something moves when dealing with objecthood.

Julie Park's *The Self and It* provides a detailed account of the 18th century relationship between human-like objects such as puppets, automatons, and wax figures and the changing concept of personal identity. Her book helps this project think about the centrality of novels for blurring the lines between object and the self, thereby leading to an account of objecthood which can include a self or an agent of

Chapter one, "Cost Benefit Analysis: Circulating Women and the Virtues of Objectification," introduces the circulating women and draws connections between women and commodities through Daniel Defoe's economic metaphors in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana.* Defoe's protagonists demonstrate how women are connected to markets and commodities through metaphors about money, trade routes, and the figure of Lady Credit. Alongside Defoe, I turn to Eliza Haywood to read into patterns of circulation a system of desire that demonstrates female agency. I read three early Haywood works: *Love in Excess, Fantomina,* and *The Wife to be Lett*, to argue that Haywood presents romantic desire as a cycle in which one pursues an objects, becomes satiated, and finally desires again for a new object. In this cycle, women serve as the objects of desire and therefore must find ways to circulate through an economy of desire in order to experience pleasure. Haywood and Defoe's circulating women are curiously powerful figures who often trick the men around them. Moll Flanders, for instance, counterfeits her value to marry various men, or Haywood's anonymous "Fantomina" successfully conceals her identity in order to repeatedly allow herself to be seduced by the same man. Men in these novels often emerge as dupes, objectifying women but ultimately proving powerless to control the commodities they create. Much of the power these female figures hold stems from their ability to be fungible with each other. Because men cannot tell one woman from another, the women manage to switch places, disguise themselves, and pursue their own desires outside of male authority. Fungibility, anonymity, and circulation emerge as a type of objectification in which it is possible to claim agency without subjectivity.

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some kind.

Cynthia Wall's *The Prose of Things* provides a lens for viewing a changing understanding of objects as particular and therefore requiring description, which coincides with this project's account of a changing understanding of objects from fundamental fungible to particular and unique. While Wall applies this observation to the practice of spatial description, this project will question the implications of this shift for characters that function as objects.

Chapter two, "The Other Side of the Coin: It-narratives and The Metaphorics of Feminine Objects," offers a reading of it-narratives and a parallel process of personification of objects during the eighteenth-century. The personified it-narrators of the genre often show a kinship with women and employ similar kinds of metaphorical language. I consider the genre of it-narratives in aggregate, focusing on a few coin narratives, such as *Chrysal, Or the Adventures of a Guinea*, and animal it-narrative like *Pompey the Little.* Reading differences in tone, audience, and narrative structure in coin narratives versus animal narrative, I consider how those differences map onto female characters like Moll Flanders and Pamela. Their kinship with different types of it-narratives provides a guiding structure for different types of objectification. The genre of the it-narrative offers in microcosm the story of the novel that I am telling: a gradual shift from circulating objectification to sentimental objectification. Finally, I read John Cleland's pornographic novel, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, as an it-narrative. My reading of Fanny Hill as an it-narrator addresses the limits of agency in objectification by examining the potential agency of a female character that is essentially personified instead of objectified. The differences in agency between a character like Fanny Hill and Fantomina point to the dangers and pitfalls of claiming agency within a system of objectification.

Chapter Three, "Pamela Petrified: Transitioning from Circulation to Stasis," continues the story of transition between circulation and sentimentality with Richardson's ground-breaking novel *Pamela.* I consider Pamela's fraught relationship with money and disguise, as well as the claustrophobic lack of movement in the novel. In my account, Richardson tames the circulating woman of earlier amatory fiction, offering a new vision of womanhood and objectification suited to domestic fiction. His novel self-consciously rewrites the parameters of objectification and foreshadows the key features of sentimental objectification. Likewise, Richardson's obsession

with his control over the text of Pamela itself, and his vocal dissent for other authors using his character, point to growing anxieties about texts and women circulating in the eighteenth-century.

My final chapter, "Playing for Keeps: Sentimental Women and the Vices of Objectification," concludes with an explanation of sentimental objectification: its metaphors, plots, and pitfalls for women. I argue that sentimental objectification is a process of fixing women into place under the sentimental gaze. Women that are sentimentalized are often objectified in a way that feeds off their suffering and drinks in the image of their aestheticized corpse. The vampiric impulses of the sentimental gaze is pernicious because it eliminates the fungibility of women, thereby eradicating the potentials for agency within objectification. Sentimental objectification is not agential, but, paradoxically, it is rarely registered as objectification at all. This leads to what I call a "mistake" we make about sentimental objectification. Because sentimental objectification does not allow women to be fungible, it works to individualize the women. It is a mistake to assume that when women are individualized they become subjects. This chapter first reads the "rules" of sentimental objectification through the metaphors of Erasmus Darwin's poetry and educational tracts as well as sentimental fiction, using Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a test-case. Then, through two famous feminist contributions to the debates around the "cult of sentiment," I consider the feminist responses to sentimental objectification. I argue that Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women,* and Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* provide incomplete critiques of sentimentality because they both focus on educating women as a fantasy of turning women into good political subjects. My coda, "And the Dead Shall Rise Again: Female Gothic Possibilities Under Sentimentality," offers a rebuttal to Wollstonecraft and Austen's liberal solution to

sentimentality in the form of the gothic novel. In my final reading of genre, I argue that the gothic novel recoups agency within the sentimental form, using convention to reinject circulation and female desire into the novel.

Chapter One

Cost Benefit Analysis: Circulating Women and the Virtues of Objectification

Of all the strange and wonderful fictional figures of the eighteenth century, the figure of Lady Credit has a special way of capturing the imagination. The essayist Joseph Addison depicts her in *The Spectator* as perched on a gold throne, turning everything to money with her touch and "in the twinkling of an Eye, she would fall away from the most florid Complexion, and the most healthful State of Body, and wither into a Skeleton. Her Recoveries were often as sudden as her Decays."[1] Like a Tim Burton-esque parrot, Lady Credit occasionally molts into a skeleton as an allegory for the increasingly volatile and complex nature of credit in the British financial system of the 1700s. Daniel Defoe, one of the central authors in this chapter, also wrote extensively about Lady Credit. Sandra Sherman considers his version of the allegorical figure both the "first female narrative subject that Defoe created" and "the one that obsessed him the longest."[2] Lady Credit is a useful figure for this chapter because she embodies many of the key questions of the chapter. She is an allegory, the personification of credit in a feminine figure, but she also helps us think about the reverse process, the objectification of women in connection with the development of commodities in the early decades of the 1700s.[3] Lady Credit is in many ways a misogynistic

1. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* no. 3, March 3, 1711, in *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and The Spectator,* ed. Erin Mackie (London: Macmillan, Bedford Cultural Editions, 1997), 189.

2. Sandra Sherman, "Lady Credit No Lady; or, The Case of Defoe's 'Coy Mistress,' Truly Stat'd" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 37, no. 2 (1995):185.

3. Erin Mackie connects the figure of Lady Credit to the hoop skirt, detecting in both a kindred gendered symbolic structure, which, as she puts it "exemplifies the way that commodities are prone to unsettling and restabilizing appropriations, subversive and normative transformations that highlight interests and expose contradictions in the social practice through which nature, gender, meaning, and power are negotiated." For Mackie, the hoop-petticoat is a commodity that both restricts women and

depiction, particularly in her flagrant sexuality and vaporous hypochondria, as well as in the suspicion with which male figures court her. However, she is also a powerful figure, and the tension between her power and her position as a misogynistic fantasy is never resolved.[4] Female characters in this chapter are objectified by the men around them in a way similar to commodities, but through that objectification they often find surprising ways to practice a kind of agency as objects. They, like Lady Credit, demonstrate power even when they are misogynistically portrayed.

Lady Credit also helps us consider the way female characters in this chapter are tied to allegories about commodities and commerce. Sherman, in "Accounting for Defoe," connects Defoe's novels to concerns about credit and credibility in the eighteenth century with regards to fiction as well as finance, spurred in part by the disastrous South Sea Bubble.[5] She reads Defoe's *Review,* which includes the allegorical figure Lady Credit: "The narrative of Credit (configured as a woman) deconstructs itself as it proceeds, never allowing the reader— the consumer, the consumer of narrative—to maintain a purchase on the underlying value of Credit herself."[6] Even at this early moment, the anonymity of characters like Roxana, which Sherman reads as a reprisal of the character of Lady Credit, represent a disturbing instability

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protects in public spaces, for example, in how women subversively used the hoop to obscure pregnancy. Erin Mackie, "Lady Credit and the Strange Case of the Hoop-Petticoat," *College Literature* 20, no. 2 (June 1993): 39.

4. Ian Baucom describes her power as contained in the disastrous crash of the South Sea Bubble: "Indeed, the wild swell and burst of that bubble was frequently taken to typify her power to create and destroy wealth by the sheer caprice of her affections, or, perhaps more accurately, by the capricious sway she held over the public imagination, the power she held to make the public imagine her real or unreal." Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 81.

5. This is not to say Haywood's writing does not also mark the influence of the bubble and cultural anxieties about gender and credit in this historical moment. See Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

6. Sandra Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 45.

that has the potential to ruin the reader/buyer. For Defoe in particular, objectification of women takes a form that clearly connects to economic systems and objects such as coins, securities, and credit, as well as how eighteenth-century readers navigate fiction. This chapter will read metaphors about women as coins and commodities to present an account of how objectification works when women are compared to commodities, and what kinds of agency these metaphors paradoxically offer the women they objectify.

Ultimately, the figures in this chapter all demonstrate a type of objectification in which women accept their status as objects and then use it as a way to trick and exploit the men around then, who are explicitly or implicitly culpable for failing to control the women that they are supposed to own. I will consider two Defoe novels in this chapter, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana,* as well as several of Eliza Haywood's amatory novels and plays. In Haywood's amatory fiction and Defoe's female picaresque, I detect a shared affinity for plots that feature patterns of circulation: episodic fiction that exposes readers to casts of characters and multiple locales. They both present a vision of heterosexual desire that offers women an agential way to move through the world, all the while objectifying women along lines that liken them to the commodity. Often, the movement of women in these novels is predicated on their fungibility with other women. They are not particular to the men that possess them, and therefore can exploit their interchangeability to their benefit. Trickery and visual sleights of hand help these women channel and direct their fungibility toward their own purposes.

As Defoe and Haywood's women circulate across borders and oceans in an emerging empire, they begin to resemble commodities. Marx's *Capital* resonates in my readings of Defoe and Haywood when Marx presents commodities as magical, anthropomorphized objects. Once a table becomes a commodity, for instance, "it changes into a thing which

transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will."[7] These talking, dancing, thinking objects have affinities with the circulating, agential women that populate this chapter. However, I am not using the word "commodity" to describe the types of objects these women become for a few specific reasons, although it is useful to think about commodities as a centering object for this account of circulating objectification. First, the women in this chapter are not always commodities. They are not always participating in a market and do not necessarily have exchange-value.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, this chapter is not interested in how these women act as commodities for others (primarily men), but rather what these women do for themselves with their commodity status. Marx writes, "If commodities could speak, they would say this: our use-value may interest men, but it does not belong to us as objects."[8] Lynn Festa takes up this suggestion, wiring about the interplay between objects, sentimentality and Marx: "The use-value of objects that interest humans—the properties of the coat that keep us warm, the capacity of food to nourish us—do not matter to the commodity. Once it mysteriously absorbs the labor of the subject, the commodity finds the subject—its labor, its needs—to be oddly superfluous. When endowed with a voice of its own, Marx's commodities use it to snub us."[9] Festa's reading of personification in Marx calls to mind the relationship between commodities and women that feminist critics, including Gayle Rubin and Luce Irigaray, have carefully documented. This strand of feminist criticism

7. Karl Marx, *Capital Vol 1* (New York: Penguin Classics 1990), 163-164.
8. Marx, *Capital Vol 1*, 176.
9. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 116.

considers patriarchy from the starting point of a structural relationship based in the traffic in women between men. However, as Festa points out, these commodities seem to "snub" that system in favor of their own cares and concerns. As I will demonstrate, the women in these narratives will exploit their statuses as things to the men around them for their own purposes.

I do not want to deny that women have use-value to men, or that they act as a conduit for homosocial interaction and cultural production, but rather I want to think about what women are doing while we are focused on their use-value. Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* turns this network of theories about women as commodities into a "graphic schema" of heterosexual desire into the image of a triangle between men, with women forming the right angle.[10] Sedgwick herself comments in her introduction that the choices in authors and perspectives she includes in the book could potentially be "impoverishing our sense of women's own cultural resources of resistance, adaptation, revision, and survival."[11] My goal with this chapter is not to discount the influential accounts of the role of women in society from a Marxist-feminist perspective, but rather to shift my gaze to the strategies of resistance, adaptation, revision, and survival that Sedgwick worries may be flattened in these types of accounts.

These strategies find outlets in the overlooked possible worlds of William Galperin's conceptualization of the "everyday," or in Jane Bennett's invocation of the "agency of

10. Sedgwick articulates the gaps in Marxist feminism, writing Marxist feminism "has typically proceeded in the absence of a theory of sexuality and without much interest in the meaning or experience of sexuality. Or more accurately, it has held implicitly to a view of female sexuality as something that is essentially of a piece with reproduction, and hence appropriately studied with the tools of demography; or else essentially of a piece with a simple, prescriptive hegemonic ideology and hence appropriately studied through intellectual or legal history." Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire,* 30th anniversary ed. (1985; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 7.

11. Sedgwick, *Between Men,* 12.

assemblages."[12] Bennett encourages us to turn from the dominant focus on bio-politics to the world of things, considering the "thing power" they might possess and the possibilities for distributed agency across an assemblage of things, human and non-human.[13] Her sense of the "power of things" and their ability to claim agency in the world resonates with my argument about how objectification of women is not necessarily an evacuation of agency from a human subject, but possibly the reimagining of an object-agency for that woman. Catherine Gallagher's account of female authors becoming "nobodies" as a way of abstraction that surprisingly lends cultural power to female writers of the eighteenth-century is another example of the strange ways women can create power through processes that seem that they should not afford women power, like the process of becoming a nobody.[14]

Like Marx's outspoken commodities, the women in this chapter don't seem to care very much about their own use-value for men. Instead, they allow their commodity status to distract while they perform various sleights of hand. Many of their tricks hinge on their fungibility with each other in these narratives; one woman has the same use-value as another. When women are fungible, they suddenly have the opportunity to move. They can, for instance, change places with each other unnoticed. Movement is their means of adaptation to

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12. As Galperin writes, "The gyrations leading to the everyday's emergence as something missed, recovered, and writable are reparative in fostering a sense of enchantment, or hope, that is neither intentional nor teleological so much as a prevailing afterwardsness" His evocative portrait of examining what is missed as a process of finding enchantment resonates with my account's attempt to reclaim agency for female characters through their objectification. Both are a process of finding hope in the mundane.

William H. Galperin, *The History of Missed Opportunities: British Romanticism and the Emergence of the Everyday*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), 19.

13. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

14. Gallagher also connects the powerful female authors of the eighteenth-century to emerging systems of credit and the rise of the novel, suggesting ways in which female authorial power capitalized on these emerging forces in the period.

Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

the type of objectification they experience. Because they have this freedom of movement in certain circumstances, they can express agency even while they act as objects. Strangely enough, the more they act like objects, the more agency they are able to express within my model of circulating objectification. Defoe and Haywood's circulating women depict a form of objectification in which objects are fungible as commodities, circulate on a market and are strangely agential in their movement through these markets. They burst with possibility, but also with potential pitfalls and dangers.

The emphasis on circulation in both *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* positions these two novels as productive for thinking through how women can be circulating, fungible, agential objects at the onset of the eighteenth century. Cynthia Wall also points to Defoe as a natural starting point for an inquiry into eighteenth-century things in her book, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century.* However, Wall calls on us to think differently about Defoe, saying "we need to reinvest Defoean things—and early modern things generally—with some *pleasure* that reaches beyond use value or profit."[15] Defoe's work is so caught up in financial metaphors and economic concerns of the period, it can be hard to see his characters, particularly his female characters, as anything other than commentary on various financial systems, an allegory for credit, for instance. While the women in Defoe's narratives are reflecting back anxieties about economic systems, as scholars such as Sherman, Deborah M. Valenze, and Maximillian Novak chart for us, that is not all they are doing. [16] The women in these narratives are also helping to define a type of

15. Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 109.

16. Maximillian E. Novak's work indexes Defoe's economic thought and brings that thought to bear on his fiction. He argues that Defoe was fundamentally a mercantilist, believing a balance of trade and ease of circulation of capital would lead to economic prosperity. Defoe also somewhat unusually portrayed the poor in sympathetic ways, considered the labor of the working poor in his writings on

objectification and carving out a path for themselves within a market economy that casts them in the role of objects. Taking a cue from Wall to reimbue Defoe's objects with pleasure, I think about how his women act like objects that glitter with the promise of sex, fashion, and exotic locales. Associated with coins and the products of new imperial trade routes (such as Roxana's Turkish dress), Defoe's women evoke the possibilities of trade and commerce. His objects *move,* and that promise of movement is also the promise of pleasure. As Wall puts it, "sometimes his things seem happy just being things."[17] Their happiness being things connects them to a thing-y agency that this chapter will explore. I also pair Defoe with Haywood, the eighteenth-century queen of narrative pleasure in order to throw into greater relief the connection between circulation and pleasure.

While Defoe is a helpful starting point given his explicit interest in financial systems and patterns of circulation, Eliza Haywood is just as central to this story. Haywood's prolific career, especially in amatory novels, offers many possible examples to consider. I will address two of her better known amatory novels, *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina,* as well as a lesser known play, *A Wife to be Lett,* in this chapter. Haywood has captured scholarly attention for her frank and powerful depiction of erotic love, particularly female experience of that romantic love. Starting from the consensus that her female characters are often remarkably assured and agential in the pursuit of their desire, I consider the strategies they use to achieve those desires. Their strategies are important because the world of Haywood's

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economics, and revised the picaresque tradition to reflect his views on poverty. One can see these views reflected in his realistic depictions of Roxana starving after her husband abandons her, a scene which influences this chapter's arguments about Defoe's depiction of circulation as practically and economically favorable to stasis.

Maximillian E. Novak, *Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).

17. Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things,* 112.

novels is not a world of limitless sexual utopia for women or men. Rape, sexual violence, rejection, and apathetic lovers hover over her novels as threats to the women who pursue desire at all costs. In amatory novels that refuse to idealize the sexual relationship between men and women, the women often need to manage to turn the realities of their exploitation into tools for their own ends. Haywood's use and envisioning of circulation suggests that romantic pursuit might work as a cycle: desire, satiation, desire again for a new object. Because this cycle of desire-satiation-desire provides problems for women that are less capable than men of easily passing through this cycle to a new object of desire, women become objects of desire, not desiring subjects, in order to circulate through this cycle in a way that maximizes their pleasure. In this way, Haywood provides a blueprint for facilitating both circulation and pleasure through objectification.

Defoe and Haywood both write about women in a way that exemplifies how we can think about objectification in this moment. While Wall needs to remind readers that Defoe's objects ought to be infused with a sense of pleasure, Haywood's objects ooze pleasure. However, because female characters in Haywood's novels experience pleasure, especially sexual pleasure and desire, sometimes contemporary readers are too quick to ascribe a more modern notion of sex-positive feminism to her characters. They have agency and relentlessly pursue their desires, but they still are bleakly objectified. This objectification is usually communicated through their fungibility, for both the male characters and the reader, with other women in the text. Fungibility in this sense means interchangeability with other female characters. Circulation in Defoe and Haywood is the mechanism by which these women are objectified by multiple men, as well as the means for them to achieve agency within this system of objectification. Women in these novels are volatile objects, they are constantly

moving and changing because of their ability to exchange themselves with each other, and their control over their circulation is how they exhibit agency. Rather than a sign of abject disrespect, men failing to tell women apart is the mechanism which allows for women to circulate. Characters like Fantomina and the Wife to be Lett reach across to characters like Moll Flanders and Roxana to demonstrate how all of the women are participating in what Sedgwick would call acts of "resistance, adaptation, revision, and survival.[18]"

I. Daniel Defoe and the Pleasures of Circulation

Moll Flanders, Defoe's famous criminal, explicitly states how women operate in Defoe's novels. She says, "when a Woman is thus left desolate and void of Council, she is just like a Bag of Money or a Jewel dropped in the highway, which is Prey to the next Comer."[19] Defoe depicts Moll Flanders and Roxana using metaphors about objects in order to emphasize their circulation as objects. He also uses fixed, extended metaphors about women as objects, particularly coins and jewels, which help us establish the kind of metaphorical language we can expect from circulating objectification. Moll's 'coin-ness' has been remarked on by other scholars. For instance, Deidre Lynch makes a compelling argument about the conflation of Defoe's characters with money as part of a larger discourse about a subject/object binary: "these narratives make volatile the opposition between individual persons and marketable things."[20] Characters like Moll Flanders trouble the subject/object binary by having use-value to men. They need to be picked up by men but are then often discarded, needing to attract a new owner through their value. Moll Flanders, the lower-class woman of the two, is often

18. Sedgwick, *Between Men,* 12.

19. Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722; repr., New York: Penguin Classics, 1989), 182.

20. Deidre Lynch, "Money and Character in Defoe's Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe,* ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 89.

compared to a coin, whereas Roxana is more often compared to a jewel.

Defoe's depiction of circulation breaks down the relationship between people and things, but also explores both the potential for pleasure and the dangers objectification offers. Danger and pleasure exist both for the men who possess these volatile objects, and for the women who circulate as objects. Moll and Roxana must consider their value and attract new suitors when they are inevitably abandoned; the men must assess their value and worry about debasement and provenance. Lynch draws our attention to the origins of Moll Flanders's pseudonym: "Moll Flanders acquires the surname we know her by during the period of her life when, on the lam from her second husband's creditors, she conceals herself in the neighborhood of 'the Mint,' then a debtors' sanctuary…the detail about location suggests the strength of the identification between Moll and money."[21] Moll's status as a coin is most easily read through the many instances in which she counterfeits herself.[22] She talks about this counterfeit like she is a coin with a false value—it is up to the consumer to make a determination of what her value actually is.

For instance, Moll takes up with an Irish man who she thinks has a large fortune, but they both admit they expected the other person to supply the fortune for the marriage. She denies any wrong-doing, claiming "it presently occur'd to me that my Friend, who call'd him Brother, had represented me in Colours which were not my due."[23] Moll presents herself as a

21. Deidre Lynch, "Money and Character in Defoe's fiction," 89.

22. Deborah Valenze reads coins in the seventeenth and eighteenth century as having "unsettling power" in that they could "introduce categorical instability into many areas of social and personal life." (33). As she puts it, "a great deal was left up to the individual in determining the actual value of any given coin." (39). Moll Flanders similar is an unsettling and unstable character in her novel, constantly changing hands and changing forms as she circulates through the narrative.

Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

23. Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 201.

wealthy widow after she discovers she accidentally married her brother in the American colonies. Her marriage to her brother involves a similar kind of deception, in which she realizes he is courting her "upon the Supposition, nay, it was upon a full Satisfaction, that I was very Rich, tho' I never told him a Word of it myself."[24] She pushes him to claim her value is not the reason he is marrying her, and is able to "get over the Fraud of *passing for a Fortune without Money*."[25] Moll recognizes that she is participating in a market. She explains the logic of the market for women: "as the Market run very Unhappily on the Mens side, I found the Women have lost the Privilege of saying no," in part because if they "counterfeit a negative," they will not be asked again given the glut of choice on the market for men.[26] By "counterfeiting a negative" Moll means rejecting a proposal in the hopes that a suitor will prove his love by proposing again, but her choice of "counterfeit" as the verb seems significant.[27] Because women must accept the first offer they get, it benefits them to exaggerate their value by trickery.

The language of both counterfeit and fraud dominates Moll's understanding of the role of women on the marriage market. While the marriage market is often conceived of as a market on which women are goods that are bought and sold by men, Moll's analysis of her position suggests she is presenting herself more like the coin in an exchange than a good for purchase. She remarks, "it was requisite to a Whore to be handsome, well shap'd, have a good Mien, and a graceful Behavior; but that for a Wife, no Deformity would shock the

24. Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 125.

25. Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 131.

26. There are many instances of actual counterfeiting in the novel as well. For instance, one of the sex workers Moll works with in the second half of the novel carries a purse of "gilded counters" so that she can pickpocket the men she sleeps with without them noticing (296).

Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 112.

27. Mr. Collins famously accuses Elizabeth of this behavior in *Pride and Prejudice* as a coquettish technique to increase suspense and passion.

Fancy, no ill Qualities, the Judgement; the Money was the thing; the Portion was neither crooked or Monstrous, but the Money was always agreeable whatever the Wife was."[28] Moll's reading of the market makes it clear that women are not goods on the market to be valued, because their intrinsic qualities as wives do not matter to the market at all. Rather, they are representations of something, perhaps status or security, and men are trading in that value. In other words, wives can be turned into a monetary amount, so they look more like coins than other types of objects. In the same way a dirty penny is worth the same as a clean penny, an ugly wife is worth the same as a beautiful wife. Part of the reason the marriage market operates in this way is because men return to the market and women reenter circulation with great frequency due to deaths or distance. Additionally, their agency in the market is in counterfeiting themselves, or appearing more valuable than they actually are, knowing full well that a return to circulation is eventually awaiting them.

Like pieces of silver which do not technically lose value, but nevertheless wear away, women in Defoe's novel also lose value over time. Moll recognizes this when she comments, "I was not the same Woman as when I liv'd at *Redriff;* for first of all I was near 20 Years older, and did not look the better for my Age, nor for my Rambles to *Virginia* and back again."[29] The marriage market might not reward looks, but it does seem to care about age. The image of Moll as travel-worn points to the physical properties of coins and women alongside their abstracted value. When Moll infamously switches from adulteress to thief, this shift corresponds to aging, menopause, and her collapse of value on the marriage market. Symbolically, the first thing she steals is a bundle containing baby clothes.[30] Unable to

28. Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 112.

29. Defoe, *Moll Flanders,* 181.

30. Barbara M. Benedict suggests Moll taking things is the action that turns her into a thing: "Not only has the bundle made her into a thief, but it has made her a thing in its place…The object has made an

produce children anymore, she steals articles associated with children. While actually giving birth is an expense and an inconvenience Moll would often rather do without, her infertility signals the end of her participation in the marriage market, and the beginning of her transition to an even more fraudulent section of the British economy. When a man does pay her for sexual labor, it is because he is so drunk that he does not realize Moll's age. She knows she can only count on drunk men to proposition her, which is fine with her since their pockets are easier to pick. She explains: "when he is Drunk already; picking up a common Woman, without regard to what she is, or who she is; whether Sound or rotten, Clean or Unclean; whether Ugly or Handsome, whether Old or Young, and so blinded as not really to distinguish; such a Man is worse than Lunatick."[31] Moll's understanding of her own value allows her to circulate in the appropriate markets. Furthermore, her moral pronouncements on her circulation more often revolve around the men doing the purchasing and exchanging than around her own participation in the market. While Defoe and Moll gesture to the morality of men in the novel, Moll's morality is a less central question. She is both decidedly amoral, and strangely passive when it comes to questions of morality.[32] She regularly wants to absolve herself of judgement as she judges others because of her object-status; in other

object of her self." (27). For Benedict, objects in the eighteenth century take on a certain spirituality, and even a connection to the occult in their ability to control the people around them.

Barbara M. Benedict, "The Spirit of Things," In *The Secret Life of Things,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

31. Defoe, Moll Flanders, 294.

32. Samuel Rowe argues Moll's stolen bundle is an emblem of "the installation of passivity within action" as part of a larger argument about the negative phenomenology of accumulation in *Moll Flanders.* For me, Moll's passive actions and failures to acquire something that looks like economic security is tied to the novel's circulatory drives and Moll's status as an object. Her actions maintain a passive quality because of her status as an object.

Samuel Rowe, "Imaginary Wants: Desire, Villainy, and Capital in Eighteenth-Century Fiction" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2017), 62. ProQuest (AAT 10604840).

words, it is hard to blame a coin for circulating.

Roxana is also a novel about the pleasures of circulation for a female object, with a few notable differences from *Moll Flanders*. If Moll is a coin in her narrative, Roxana is more like a jewel. *Roxana* is also more explicitly about pleasure than *Moll Flanders.* As the preface suggests, the tale might be too pleasurable, and the author must deny aspects of the story that could lead a reader to immoral behavior. Defoe ends this preface by promising the tale can "be read with Profit and Delight," the two main drives of the novel itself.[33] Profit here seems to have a double meaning, suggesting a reader could profit from the moral of Roxana's story and apply it to her own life, but she might just as readily learn how to turn a profit like Roxana does in her rags-to-riches-to-rags story.

Roxana's story opens with her marriage to "an Eminent Brewer in the City" accompanied by a two thousand pounds portion.[34] Her marriage is detailed alongside her dowry portion as a transaction in which her person is part of the goods being exchanged. As a woman with a dowry instead of a servant girl like Moll, she circulates in higher circles that Moll ever could. While Moll circulates through various trade routes in London and the New World, Roxana's routes follow those of eighteenth-century capital, from London to France to the seat of the financial world in Holland. Like the proliferation of actual coins in *Moll Flanders, Roxana* is filled with jewels, including her marriage to a Jeweler and the following scene involving her lover, the prince.

> At last he lead me to the darkest Part of the room, and standing behind me, bade me hold up my Head, when putting both his Hands round my Neck, as if he was spanning my Neck, to see how small it was, for it was long and small; he held my Neck so long, and so hard, in his Hand, that I complain'd he hurt me a little; what he did it for, I knew not, nor had I the least Suspicion but that he was spanning my neck; but when I said he hurt me, he seem'd to let go, and in half a Minute more, led me to a Peir-Glass, and behold I saw

33. Defoe, *Roxana* (1724; repr., New York: Penguin Classics, 1987) 36.
34. Defoe, *Roxana,* 39.

> my Neck clasp'd with a fine Necklace of Diamonds…I was all on fire with the Sight and began to wonder what it was that was coming to me. …I love, Child, says he, to see every thing suitable; a fine Gown and Petticoat; a fine lac'd Head; a fine Face and Neck, and no Necklace, would not have made the Object perfect[35]

I quote from this passage at length because it is remarkable how long Defoe dwells on the scene. Roxana gets many other gifts from various lovers, including property, money, and clothing. However, the narrative pauses on this scene in particular. Additionally, the scene is not really about this necklace, or at least, the bulk of the description is not spent on the necklace. Rather, the description focuses on Roxana's neck itself, its size and length and his ability to wrap his hands around it until it hurts. The prince claims to add the necklace to Roxana's person in order to complete the perfection of the object. This scene is preceded by an equally strange one in which Roxana insists that she does not paint her face to appear younger or more beautiful, and demands the prince rub her face: "I made him wipe my Face so hard, that he was unwilling to do it, for fear of hurting me."[36] The prince polishes Roxana's face like one would polish a gem. Roxana's objecthood is brought to the fore of the narrative in scenes when she interacts with objects she has an affinity with or becomes closely associated with, like these jewels, in the same way that Moll's objecthood can be best noticed in scenes where she interacts with coins. Roxana becomes one with the diamond necklace, and she catches fire, evoking the incredibly hot temperatures where diamonds are formed.

Jewels connect Roxana to the exotic products of empire, as does the other object she is most often associated with: her Turkish costume. Another gift from the prince, Roxana's Turkish dress is the embodiment of the kind of exotic commodities emerging empires could

35. Defoe, *Roxana,* 109.
36. Defoe, *Roxana*, 108.

offer to Europe: "The Dress was extraordinary fine indeed, I had bought it as a Curiosity, having never seen the like; the Robe was a fine *Persian,* or *India* Damask; the Ground white, and the Flowers blue and gold, …and on both Ends where it join'd or hook'd, was set with Diamonds…only they were not true Diamonds; but no-body knew that but myself."[37] When Roxana puts on her Turkish dress, she adopts a disguise, a new identity, but this disguise oddly enough allows her to be recognizable across her multiple aliases. The conclusion of *Roxana* is consumed with her attempt to out-run her past in the form of her daughter. Having changed her identity so many times, she wants no one besides Amy to know her complete history.

Roxana's status as a jewel or luxury good comes with a set of well-known problems. Valuable jewels are often easily traceable and difficult to use as a liquid asset if they are ill-gotten gains. Roxana encounters this when she tries to use jewels from her jeweler husband and a man "knew the Jewels very distinctly" and charges Roxana with the robbery and murder of their rightful owner.[38] She must lie about being his wife, when really she is his mistress and does not have rightful claim to the jewels.[39] Something similar happens to Roxana's person when her daughter Susan goes in search of her, she is recognized not because of her person, but because of her Turkish dress and later a Quaker costume. Just like a jewel, Roxana's high-profile circulation poses the danger of potential buyers finding out her unsavory provenance.

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37. Defoe, *Roxana,* 215.

38. Defoe, *Roxana,* 152.

39. This section of the novel contains an anti-Semitic depiction of an appraiser, a feature common to both It-narratives and this novel. See Ann Louise Kibbe's piece "Circulating Anti-Semitism: Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal"* in *The Secret Life of Things* for a thorough discussion of the relationship between Anti-Semitism and it-narratives. The presence of an Anti-Semitic depiction of an appraiser "appraising" Roxana's story is evidence that this novel has affinities with it-narratives, since this is a trope borrowed from that genre.

Indeed, her daughter exposes Roxana by describing the Turkish dress "so exactly, that I [Roxana] was surpriz'd at the Manner of her telling it."[40] Roxana wears the dress bare-faced, so presumably her daughter should be able to identify her by her face. Instead, she is most identifiable by the jewel-encrusted objects she is associated with. Julie Park reads *Roxana* as evidence that in the eighteenth century, exotic cultural products allowed people to define themselves in terms of these objects, fundamentally connecting the self to "the other."[41] As she puts it,

> Along the way, human beings themselves fell prey to the powers of objectification and its 'instrumental rationality' that had promised to liberate them from a prior state of savagery. The Enlightenment's much-vaunted instruments of reason indeed changed the world, but in doing so, gave humans the license and capacity to dominate others, especially those who submitted to the powers of objects, rather than exerted their own power over them.[42]

Roxana's definition by her objects, particularly luxury products that connect her with exotics products of colonial trade, like jewels and her Turkish dress, put her under the power of objects, not the other way around. For Park, anyone, but particularly women, can be defined by objects if they allow those objects to control them. Chloe Smith likewise reads Roxana's Turkish dress as evidence Roxana exploits artifice to appear artless, participating in a genre of "whore's biography" in which women who participate in the sex trade are joined to their clothing in various ways.[43] These exotic luxury objects are so much a part of Roxana, that she cannot be separated from them.

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40. Defoe, *Roxana,* 335.

41. Park also points out that Roxana's own name is given to her by a crowd commenting on the beauty of her gown, in that way an object seems to make Roxana's identity.

Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects and Mimetic Subjects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 30.

42. Park, *The Self and It,* 32.

43. Chloe Wigston Smith, *Women, Work, and Clothing in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 109.

Roxana is self-conscious about her objectification, but she does not fight the process. One of the most notable features of *Roxana* is her diatribe against marriage toward the middle of the novel. Her opinions on marriage have invited commentary since the novel's release, as have the potentially feminist claims of her argument. Roxana explains that she believes women to be "free agents," and marriage is a mechanism by which "a woman gave herself entirely away from herself, in Marriage, and capitulated only to be, at best, but *an Upper-Servant."* [44] She even attacks the so-called positive side of life as a wife. She characterizes these arguments by saying, "the Woman has nothing to do, but to eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet*."* [45] However, Roxana recognizes that wives are actually engaging in an elaborate job consisting of emotional and physical labor. Furthermore, she highlights the danger of being a stationary object in the hands of a bad owner. Having herself almost starved to death because of a negligent husband, she knows that the role of a wife is often not sitting around and getting to "eat the fat." Roxana here provides she embraces her own status as an object, but insists that she remain an object that can circulate.[46] She provides a spirited defense of circulation in opposition to a stationary life as a wife because circulating for Roxana offers more pleasure, agency, and, frankly, security than being tied to one man as a wife. In that way, Defoe's characters begin to resemble many of the it-narrators that will populate the next chapter. They recognize and even celebrate their circulation as a way to experience pleasure.

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44. Defoe, *Roxana,* 187.

45. Defoe, *Roxana,* 187-188.

46. Roxana is better positioned than Moll Flanders to explain the problems with being a wife because Roxana's upper-class status makes marriage more binding when she enters into it and more likely to involve a loss of capital. Moll wants to play a marriage market because she, as a lower class woman, can easily counterfeit herself to make money and play a volatile lower-class marriage market to her favor. As Moll points out, being a wife just requires the illusion of money, while being a whore requires more intrinsic value. Roxana has that intrinsic value and would rather circulate through that market. Both gravitate to the market that allows them the greatest amount of movement in the narrative.

Objectification is a process that creates value for women by associating them with valuable objects like coins and jewels. In turn, they can leverage that value to experience pleasure. Like Marx's commodities that evolve grotesque ideas out of their heads, Defoe's women get ideas of their own when they are turned into objects.

II. Eliza Haywood and The Possibilities of Fungibility

Eliza Haywood's status in the canon has fluctuated over the centuries. Once a widely celebrated and read author in her own day, she was relegated to the status of a proto-novelist of pulpy amatory fiction before being recuperated by feminist scholars mainly for her depictions of female desire. We know relatively little about the historical figure Eliza Haywood, despite the prolific body of work she left behind. Her political convictions, for instance, remain up for debate, particularly as they relate to a kind of proto-feminism many scholars detect in her work.[47] I am not the first to detect a kind of skepticism of liberal subjecthood in her novels, and I suggest she furthermore suggests a model of desire that highlights and even celebrates aspects of objectification.[48] This celebration is important

47. One of the main challenges of Haywood scholarship remains the difficulty in pinning down this author. Her life, her political associations, and opinions are often confused by the vitriol of her enemies and the obscurity of her own history. Kathryn R. King's *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* attempts to provide some answers to the political convictions of Haywood's fiction. While it may be impossible to answer if Haywood was a Whig or a Jacobin with any certainty, King considers how Haywood reads politics into the domestic space, and suggests she is a pioneer in ushering in the age of sympathy. This claim contrasts interestingly with this project and my claims about Haywood's place in contrast to later sentimental modes. One of the reasons I think Haywood is crucial to this argument is, like King, I think Haywood is committed to accurately displaying the power dynamics women in the eighteenth century experienced in the private sphere, and those dynamics are inherently political for Haywood. Her depiction of objectification, and her characters' responses to that objectification resonate with larger cultural realities present in contexts other than novels.

Kathryn R. King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* (London: Pickering &Chatto, 2012).

48. Juliette Merritt suggests Haywood's attitude toward objectification can be best traced through the figure of the coquet: "The coquet's single-minded pursuit other own objectification is what makes her a suitable figure to fulfill Haywood's vision of female knowledge, a vision that promotes a realistic and uncompromising position on women's assigned place in the social order.

Juliette Merritt. "Reforming the Coquet? Eliza Haywood's Vision of a Female Epistemology" in

because it helps resolve one of the central tensions in Haywood's work: Haywood's characters simultaneously pursue sexual desire and pleasure while balancing potential threats, particularly the threat of sexual violence from the objects of their desire. Despite Haywood's interest, and even insistence on pleasure in the novel and for her female characters, she does not envision a sexual utopia for her female characters. Desire is not a clear path to complete sexual bliss. The women must also contend with violence, abandonment, indifference, and other threats to their pleasure. They understand that the threat of rape and abandonment come along with male objectification, and therefore male desire. Therefore, Haywood provides us a model for understanding the status of women as objects using that status to their advantage. She creates a path forward *within* objectification for women.

Women in her novels often get to enact their desires, including their sexual fantasies, but they need to know how to exploit their status as fungible objects in order to do so. Their ability to exploit their status often rests on their understanding of desire as a cycle in which one will desire an object, satiate that desire, and then seek a new object. Women must exploit this cycle by circulating as objects of desire. They must make peace with their shelf-life as objects of desire and seek new pleasures by reentering circulation. Haywood's own status as a female writer negotiating the eighteenth-century print industry may put her in a unique position to create narratives about ways forward within a system of objectification and patriarchal oppression. As Catherine Ingrassia argues, "As an author of fictional texts for women, she had to engage and increase her community of readers with her narratives depicting women circulating within patriarchal society. As a woman writing she always, at

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Fair Philosopher: Eliza Haywood and the Female Spectator, ed. Lynn Marie Wright and Donald J. Newman (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006.), 179.

some level, had to negotiate the cultural resistance to her discourse and the public appropriation of her life and works within a gendered literary economy."[49] Notably, she does not turn to subjecthood as the answer to women's problems, but works out her own space for female desire within the structures of objectification.

One of Haywood's lesser known plays, *A Wife to be Lett*, provides an example of how objectification works in Haywood's plots.[50] The plot of the play is as ludicrous as it is simple. A man leases his wife out to another man for money and then is comically shocked when she cheats on him with her own lover, freely giving what he is leasing out. Women are treated like spare rooms their husbands can rent out when they are not themselves using them. This narrative of prostitution abstracts women to negative space and places the husband in the position to benefit from their circulation. This is the problem the wife to be let must contend with: how to reclaim the benefits of her own circulation. The wife in question takes her husband's objectification of her and transforms it into permission for her to have an affair of her own. As she puts it, "Since you have taught me, I'll now experience that Charm

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49. Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998),78.

Ingrassia explores how Haywood both was harmed by her public persona and, for instance, Pope's misogynistic objectification of her in *The Dunciad*, and used that notoriety to her advantage for publicity in the marketplace. Her "circulation" on the market as a public persona both led to her objectification and was a reality she exploited for her own economic ends.

50. Haywood's dramas were never as popular as her novels, in part probably due to contemporary unease about women writing bawdy dramas. See Pat Gill, *Interpreting Ladies: Women, Wit, and Morality in the Restoration Comedy of Manners* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994) for a discussion of attitudes toward female characters, author, and audiences of the period. Concerns about female morality specifically in regards to their knowledge of sexual content were magnified by the public nature of the theater. *A Wife to be Lett*'s status as drama is interesting in this context because it seems specifically designed to shock a male audience and challenge assumptions about marriage. Haywood puts a uniquely feminist spin on standard bawdy and bed-swapping restoration drama plots in order to draw attention to how women experience marriage. See also Misty G. Anderson, *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy: Negotiating Marriage on the London Stage* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). Anderson specifically considers female playwrights and the unique ways they navigated gendered assumptions about marriage with comedy.

Mankind's so fond of, Variety—I'll give a Loose to catch unbounded Appetite, range thro' all Desires of Men, nor shall you dare to contradict my Pleasures."[51] In this way, objectification directly results in female agency. Once her husband repents his avarice, his wife reveals that her lover is actually another woman in disguise. They were performing a trick on him to force him to reckon with the consequences of his objectification of her.

Her desire in this play is to put an end to her forced prostitution and craft a better husband. By exploiting her objectification, she achieves her desire. The play ends in a triumphant celebration of her wit and mockery of her husband's foolishness.[52] In a move typical for Haywood, the women in her works use cunning to alter the situation to their favor. They do not attempt to overthrow the system they are in, but exploit their knowledge of it to create a more favorable situation for themselves. These plots often rest on the men not being able to recognize women. In *A Wife to be Lett*, the husband does not recognize that his wife's cross-dressing lover is actually a woman, allowing for the wife to pull off her ruse will still maintaining her virtue in the eyes of her husband.

Jennifer Hobgood reads this play, alongside *The Mercenary Lover* and *The City Jilt* as evidence of "a remarkable lack of confidence in contract that stands in sharp contrast to the traditional interpretation of the eighteenth century as a period characterized by the

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51. Eliza Haywood, *A Wife to Lett*, 2nd edition (London, 1729), 67 act 5 scene 1. Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

52. The husband happily takes his wife back and promises to stop renting her on learning that her lover was not actually capable of cuckolding him. The queer element of this play seems to add to the husband's naivety about female desire. Catherine Ingrassia considers the ways Haywood subverts heteronormative narrative constructions with possibilities for queer intimacy in her article. Haywood's explicit interest in heterosexual desire can obscure possible queer readings of her work. Ingrassia's article is one place to turn to try and make sense of this moment in *A Wife to be Lett*.

Catherine Ingrassia, "Queering Eliza Haywood," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 9-24.

progressive embrace of Lockean social contract liberalism."[53] For Hobgood, Haywood's problem with contracts stems from her recognition that marriage contracts specifically present women as both subjects and objects. As *A Wife to be Lett* suggests, Haywood is particularly suspicious of the ability of women to be subjects when faced with abject objectification. Rather, Hobgood argues "Haywood imagines a feminocentric basis of exchange outside of the delimiting, deactivating contract fraternal society deploys to facilitate male sex-right."[54] In this regard, Haywood could be thought of as a predecessor to Carole Pateman. Pateman argues in her influential book *Sexual Contract* that the social contract is underpinned by the sexual contract—a contract between men about sexual access to women's bodies. For her, contracts are not a path to liberal freedom, but rather a mechanism for upholding patriarchy. Furthermore, the sexual access offered in the marriage contract cannot be a matter of consent because men's and women's bodies do not have the same political meaning. Women cannot consent as free individuals because the individual is always gendered male. Haywood draws out the natural implications a marriage contract in which women have no rights to deny their bodies to their husbands by presenting an extreme example of a husband renting out his wife. Conflating marrying one man with opening oneself up to prostitution to any man points to the problem of thinking about marriage as a contract. Furthermore, Haywood's solution to the problems with contract theory does not attempt to write women into a position of subjective individualism. Instead, she creates space within existing structures of subjugation for women to enact their own desires.

Haywood's most famous novel, *Love in Excess,* provides further depictions of women

53. Jennifer Hobgood, "I Will Sign but it shall be in Flames: Eliza Haywood's Critique of Contract," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004): 73.

54. Jennifer Hobgood, "I Will Sign but it shall be in Flames," 95.

turning fungibility to their advantage in order to fulfill their desires. She introduces women in this novel in named pairs such as "Amena" and "Alovysa" or "Melantha" and "Melliora." This technique is often ignored as a feature of the novel's early form or even considered a flaw in the text. However, it creates an effect in which the reader also struggles to tell female characters apart, like our hero D'elmont. The naming technique Haywood uses reinforces the idea that these women really are fungible and allows the female characters to trick both D'elmont and the reader.

In one scene, Melantha, specifically exploits her fungibility to enact her own desires in the narrative. D'elmont has recently fallen deeply in love with his ward Melliora, who reciprocates his love but will not allow him to cheat on his wife, who is also still madly in love with him. Melantha enters into this love-triangle as a minor character who also desires D'elmont. She overhears her brother and D'elmont's plot to give D'elmont access to Melliora's room that night. This happy accident leads to a plan: "It presently came into her head, to betray all she knew to Alovysa, but she soon rejected that resolution for another, which she thought would give her a more pleasing revenge."[55] Melantha decides to wait in Melliora's room and then reveal herself to D'elmont after he has professed his love to the person he thinks is Melliora. She thinks, "'twill be a charming piece of vengeance, besides if he be not the most ungrateful man on earth, he must adore my generosity in not exposing him to his wife, when I have him in my power."[56] It seems important that the names "Melliora" and "Melantha" look similar to each other, and it is Melliora, not Aloyvsa, that Melantha chooses to impersonate. Melantha specifically conceives of this trick as placing D'elmont in

55. Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess,* 2nd ed., ed. David Oakleaf (1719; repr., Peterborough, ON: Broadview press, 2000), 140.

56. Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess,* 140.

her power, and as revenge on his lack of desire for her. She imagines her actions as "vengeance" against him for perhaps slighting her love, or for making her feel desire for him in the first place. Acting on her desire as "vengeance" implies both agency and a forceful sense of entitlement to act on that agency. One would think fungibility would contribute to subjugation, but it actually contributes to Melantha's power and her conception of herself as powerful.[57] One calculation she does not make, however, is that D'elmont is not there to profess his love:

> Tho' the Count had been but a very little time in the arms of his supposed Melliora, yet he had made so good use of it, and had taken so much advantage of her complying humor, that all his fears were at an end, he now thought himself the most fortunate of all mankind; and Melantha was far from repenting the breach of the resolution she had made of discovering herself to him. His behavior to her was all rapture, all killing ecstasy, and she flattered herself with a belief, that when he should come to know to whom he owed that bliss he had possessed, he would not be ungrateful for it.[58]

Melantha had not intended to have sex with D'elmont, but she does not regret "complying." D'elmont, in contrast, does have regrets. Despite his love for Melliora, he is unable to distinguish her body from Melantha's in the dark. He is horrified when they are discovered in bed together, rousing the whole house. Melantha's brother tries to kill her, but she insists her virginity is still intact, a ruse D'elmont goes along with. Even though he is furious, he does not seek to punish her.[59] Melantha's role in the narrative ends when she is

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57. Her fungibility with Melliora in this scene is reminiscent of Roxana's fungibility with her servant Amy, particularly the scene in which Roxana's lover sleeps with and impregnates Amy at Roxana's request. It is common to read Roxana and Amy as almost the same person, and Roxana's lover certainly treats them the same in sleeping with both of them. I would argue that these novels depict scenes where women trade with each other in sexual situations in order to depict the extremity of their fungibility. They are not only similar looking, but they have the same use-value to men in that men can sleep with them and not tell the difference.

58. Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess,* 141.

59. It should be noted that this scene can be read as a curious example of male rape, since D'elmont did not consent to have sex with Melantha, although he was the more aggressive party in the context of the actual sex act.

"married in a short time, and had the good fortune not to be suspected by her husband, though she brought him a child in seven months after her wedding."[60] In all of this, Melantha gets the last laugh. She gets a night of bliss with a man she desires and is not punished for it. The fact that Melantha is able to trick D'elmont and then trick her brother and future husband into believing she is still a virgin speaks to how her fungibility leaves open space for her to maneuver. The men are simply not paying enough attention to fully enact possession of her. This is because the men are so concentrated on the women's use-value as sexual objects, they remain unaware when one woman exchanges herself for another.

Melantha's refusal to acknowledge she is sneaking into D'elmont's room for sex points to another way women use objectification in this novel to their advantage. Sex scenes in Haywood novels, particularly in *Love in Excess,* blur the lines between seduction and consent.[61] Given the risks of expressing sexual desire for women, objectification becomes a way to enact plausible deniability of female desire. Take this passage from the beginning of the novel, where D'elmont undertakes an early conquest of Amena: The narrator casts the seduction as an attack on Amena's reason by the forces of charm and desire. Militant metaphors of attack continue in the climax of the seduction scene:

> Vertue and pride, the guardians of her honour fled from her breast, and left her to her foe, only a modest bashfulness remained, which for a time made some defense, but with such weakness as a lover less impatient than D'elmont would have little regarded. The heat of the weather, and her confinement having hindered her from dressing that day, she had only a thin silk night gown on, which flying open as he caught her in his arms, he found her panting heart beating measures of consent, her heaving breast swell to be pressed by his, and every pulse confessing a wish to yield (58).

Haywood anthropomorphizes aspects of Amena's mind (her virtue, her honor, and her

60. Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess,* 159.

61. See Toni Bowers for an explication of seduction in the eighteenth-century novel in contrast to rape. Toni Bowers, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

modesty) as military forces that fail to protect her from ruin at the same time that she objectifies Amena as a collection of these anthropomorphized actors. Her agency is divided up into warring forces that challenge our ability to read Amena as acting as a subject. Parts of her body are grammatically performing actions, but she does not appear as the subject in sentences about her actions. The very grammar of Haywood's sentences alienates her as an individual from her actions. Her "panting heart," "heaving breast," and "every pulse" carries the action, but they are separated into individual units, disallowing her from acting as a person instead of a collection of body parts.

This is a common feature in Haywood's early amatory fiction. Passivity and external causes for female sexual desire appear again in *Fantomina,* for instance. When Fantomina does pursue her desire, the grammar of the novel alienates her from her actions and thoughts, thereby making her less than culpable for her actions. For example, she decides to dress as a prostitute and attend the theatre because she is curious about how men will address her, and "Therefore thought it not in the least a fault to put in practice a little Whim which came immediately into her Head."[62] The idea comes from outside of her mind, so she judges herself blameless for acting upon it. Later, she meets Beauplaisir, who wants to take her back to some private rooms. The heroine is about to confess that she is not a prostitute when "the influence of her ill Stars prevented it, by putting an Excuse into her Head, which…did not take from her the Power of seeing and entertaining him a second Time."[63] The grammar in these sentences is tortured, passive, and riddled with litotes. These deliberate uses of passive voice and anthropomorphism of female cognition reinforces these women's status as objects.

62. Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina,* ed. Alexandra Pettit, Margaret Case Croskery, and Anne C. Patchias (1724; repr., Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2004) 42.

63. Haywood, *Fantomina,* 43.

They are quite literally often objects of sentences. In embracing this objectification explicitly in scenes where women pursue sexual desire, Haywood suggests that objectification is a way for women to pursue their desire, not a barrier to that pursuit. It allows them to put cognitive distance between their desires and their actions, avoiding some of the culpability and harsh consequences for embracing both desire and subjectivity.

Fantomina provides another more extreme example of the fungibility of women. The novel features a very simple reoccurring plot: The unnamed heroine seduces her lover, Beauplaisir, in a series of disguises without his knowledge. Thinking he is seducing a parade of women, he is actually monogamous. After the drama of her initial seduction, Fantomina realizes "the rifled Charms of *Fantomina* soon lost their Poignancy, and grew tasteless and insipid."[64] She literally grows stale. So, she comes up with a plan to repackage herself and make herself an exciting consumer good all over again. This repackaging is considered in terms of her own agency:

> Her Design was once more to engage him, to hear him sigh, to see him languish, to feel the Strenuous Pressures of his eager Arms, to be compelled, to be sweetly forc'd to what she wished with equal Adour, was what she wanted, and what she had form'd a Stratagem to obtain, in which she promised herself Success.[65]

The syntax emphasizes Fantomina's desire; but, the thing she wants is a bit odd; she ultimately seeks to be compelled or forced. So, paradoxically, her agency takes the form of seeking a lack of agency. This is the backwards logic of an object doing something, not a subject. She is still the object of the sentence, even when, grammatically, she is the subject. For example, in the phrase "she promised herself success," she is both the subject and the indirect object. Her sexualized gaze is also strangely flipped. She wants to see and hear and

64. Haywood, *Fantomina,* 267.
65. Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina,* 268.

feel him want her. She wants to be the object of his gaze and witness herself as that object through his eyes. Her aggressive display of agency in seeking female pleasure can only come about once she calmly accepts her position as a commodity and finds a way to exploit her own fungibility.

Although Beauplaisir is intimate with Fantomina on many occasions, he never realizes she is the same object in each of these encounters. Haywood addresses the skepticism this might be met with:

> It may, perhaps, seem strange that Beauplaisir should in such near Intimacies continue still deceiv'd: I know there are Men who will swear it is an Impossibility, and that no Disguise could hinder them from knowing a Woman they had once enjoy'd. In answer to these Scruples, I can only say, that besides the Alteration which the Change of Dress made in her, she was so admirably skill'd in the Art of feigning, that she had the Power of putting on almost what Face she pleas'd, and knew so exactly how to form her Behaviour to the Character she represented, that all the Comedians at both Playhouses are infinitely short of her Performances: She, could vary her very Glances, tune her Voice to Accents the most different imaginable from those in which she spoke when she appear'd herself.[66]

In this paragraph, Haywood assigns Fantomina almost-supernatural powers of disguise. Fantomina can put on faces, like the faces of coins, and change her value. This seems especially true since her disguises move up and down the social hierarchy, from a noble woman to a rural servant girl to a wealthy widow. All of her disguises are code for different values, which alter how quickly Beauplaisir tires of her. For example, he tires of his rural servant girl lover much more quickly than that of his noble woman, presumably because the value of seducing a servant is less given the perceived ease of the target. Beneath these social trappings communicated through her dress and attitudes, her body is the same underneath her clothing. This novella is able to make two sophisticated arguments about how female value is tied to markers of class and about how beneath this societal value, the bodies of women are

66. Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina,* 274.

completely fungible and unrecognizable. In the same way one does not wonder if one has spent a specific dollar in one's hand before, Beauplaisir does not wonder if he has already "spent" the particular female body in front of him.

In the midst of such abject objectification by a man that she loves, Fantomina does not despair, but gleefully uses her fungibility to pursue her wildest sexual fantasies. Haywood also images an end point for the disturbing anonymity Fantomina is allowed to play in. When she becomes pregnant, the history of her body forces itself past the abstraction of her objectification.[67] Regardless of how fungible Beaplaisir might imagine her to be, she still can claim him as the father of her child. However, this revelation does not cause Beauplaisir to realize his love for this particular woman. Instead, he exits the narrative, leaving Fantomina to the convent. Haywood's protagonists have an atypical ability to avoid punishment for their sexual discretions. Fantomina joins a French convent (an ending that itself is something of a joke considering the amount of erotica set in convents during the period) and Melantha goes on to marry another man. For Haywood's characters, fungibility allows them to have a long and fruitful afterlife.

III. Circulation: A Brief Moment of Freedom

Haywood and Defoe usher in the form of the novel alongside the image of the circulating, fungible woman. The structure of their plots rest upon the novelty and variety of changing scene and partners. As such, the women in these novels are presented as fungible with each other in order to facilitate constant movement for the purposes of the plot. Both of these

67. Both Defoe and Haywood seem to imagine some biological reality of female reproductive cycles to be a limit case for objectification. For Haywood, it is often pregnancy, but for Defoe it is usually menopause. Both Moll Flanders and Roxana stop being able to circulate in the same way when they stop being able to reproduce. Defoe sees fungibility as a trait specific to fertile women, while Haywood seems more conscious of how pregnancy itself provides barriers to the free movement of women.

authors are interested in the circulation of bodies alongside the circulation of objects. Moll Flanders and Roxana delight in their circulation and the freedom it provides. In Haywood's work, the fungibility of women is essential to how they function in their worlds. She emphasizes that fungibility through various plot devices, including the images of wife-renting, a shape shifting woman who seduces the same man repeatedly, and paired lovers a male hero interchanges in turn. Even though the female characters in Defoe and Haywood's canon are deeply objectified, they still exhibit agency. Their agency is not in spite of their objectification, but rather because of it.

At the moment Defoe and Haywood are writing, female objectification can be best defined as represented by an object that is circulating, fungible, and importantly, agential. They are "in on" their status as objects and exploit the ways objects move in order to achieve their own desires; the men around them fail to fully possess them as objects because the women are able to successfully find agency in objectification. This structure of objectification even at its conception is surrounded by anxiety about the ability of women to circulate, to desire, and to express agency. The women in these novels are dangerously subversive in their fungibility. Moll and Roxana circulate amongst various groups of criminals, engaging in theft, prostitution, and adultery; Melantha, Fantomina, and the Wife to be Lett buck conventional morality and unabashedly express sexual desire and pleasure. The men in these novels are on the receiving end of this potential danger. They aggressively objectify the women around them for their own sexual pleasure, but when the women they objectify are simultaneously exploiting this process of objectification, these men often appear idiotic. Beauplaisir fails to realize he is having sex with the same woman, the husband in *The Wife to be Lett* thinks he is being cuckolded by a cross-dressing woman, and Moll's many

suitors think they are marrying a rich woman when she actually has nothing. In their rush to turn the women around them into objects, they fail to notice some trick the women are able to get away with. These types of narratives circulate alongside discourse about the novel as improper and even subversive for young women. Usually anti-novel sentiment is considered in light of the sexual content of the novel potentially corrupting the minds of young women. Novels are dangerous to women because they will potentially open women up to men's exploitation. But, the subversive image of the circulating woman tricking the men around her suggests that novels were just as dangerous for teaching women how to exploit men.

Chapter Two

The Other Side of the Coin: It-narratives and The Metaphorics of Feminine Objects

So far, this dissertation has identified some key metaphors for the rhetorical framework of objectification in the eighteenth-century novel. Defoe's fiction in particular develops the vocabulary of circulating objectification. Rhetorical features of this vocabulary include metaphors about women as coins or commodities, allusions to trade routes, consideration of financial features such as credit and securities, and an overwhelming interest in the movement and circulation of female characters. We can see these kinds of metaphors at play in his novels and in allegorical figures like Lady Credit, as well as in the circulation of Haywood's heroines through economies of desire. In the balance of this project, I track the shift in the meaning and vocabulary of objectification from circulation to stasis and from the mercantilist logic of the picaresque novel to the structure of feeling present in the sentimental novel.

In my account of objectification, I detect a rhetorical shift in what it means to objectify someone. One place to track this shift is in novelistic metaphors referring to female characters. By the onset of the Romantic novel, women will be compared more often to living things (particularly plants, flowers, and blooms—a "Greenhouse Romanticism" as Diedre Lynch puts it) and the economic metaphors that dominated my account of women in my first chapter will fall by the wayside. This is not to say that, for instance, the figure of Lady Credit disappears entirely or that there is not a long, old tradition of comparing women to flowers dating back to the Middle Ages and beyond. Rather, I argue that different forms of objectification are accompanied by different rhetorical moves, including the types of objects

people are compared to. Parsing metaphorical language helps classify the structure of objectification at play. In other words, Defoe and Richardson are not the same kind of author because of the metaphorical language they use about women, and, by extension, the way women in their novels are objectified.

Many scholars have looked to it-narratives to think about objects and their metaphorical relationship with women. For thinking about women, it-narratives represent the other side of the same metaphorical coin. It-narratives showcase metaphors which personify objects, domestic fiction displays metaphors that objectify people. These two directions of metaphor about women as objects and objects as women complement each other and tell the same story. It-narratives are explicitly about objects, and their literalness when it comes to objectification helps clarify the narrative arc from women as circulating objects to women as stationary, sentimental objects. It-narratives also help establish limit cases for objectification by considering actual objects and their depictions in literary texts. Finally, they share a vocabulary with the rhetoric of objectification. Many of the same metaphors and rhetorical objects appear in both it-narratives and domestic fiction, allowing us to more easily track and account for these metaphors.

The it-narrative has garnered renewed attention from scholars in recent years across fields of interest, opening up and incorporating these strange novels into the larger literary landscape of the period. Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" as well as a renewed interest in material culture studies have scholars reconsidering the importance of objects in all aspects of literary and cultural studies, including the eighteenth century.[1] Scholarship on it-narratives

1. The most authoritative account of it-narratives in recent scholarship can be found in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, edited by Mark Blackwell.

has led to some insightful accounts of commodity fetishism and sentimental objects. Deidre Lynch considers the circulation of coin in it-narratives as building an accumulation of characters as well as drawing parallels to the circulation of commodities.[2] Lynn Festa uses it-narratives to think about how sentimental objects are the antithesis of commodities.[3] Johnathan Lamb argues for the differences between objects of exchange, which serve human purposes, and things, which do not.[4] Studies of it-narratives span across the emergent fields of thing theory and animal studies. But, as Festa points out, "Curiously, thing theory and animal studies, two of the main approaches to what recent work calls 'the question of the human,' have little to say to one another."[5] The divide between these two fields offers a somewhat truncated vision of it-narratives, which either generally concentrates on novels of circulation and commodities or sentimental modes and sentimental objects.

As a genre, however, It-narratives offer a shifting metaphorical landscape for the kinds of stories that are told and the kinds of objects novelists turn to in order to tell these stories. Most it-narratives are written by little-known or anonymous authors and make up a growing body of down-market print culture. For that reason, I spend some time discussing the genre in aggregate and considering broad trends in it-narratives across the span of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. At the beginning of the genre's popularity, it-narratives can be classified most commonly as tales of circulation and there are a large number of coin narratives. Toward the beginning of the nineteenth century, animal narratives are more

2. Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

3. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France,* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

4. Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say,* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

5. Lynn Festa, *Fiction without Humanity: Person,. Animal, Thing in Early Enlightenment Literature and Culture,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) 9.

common. I am relying here on Liz Bellamy's research, which tracks the rise and fall of different types of it-narrators:

> specie [coin] narratives declined from 29 percent of all circulation narratives in the first half of the eighteenth century, to 18 percent in the second half, 17 percent in the first half of the nineteenth century, and only 9 percent in the second…In contrast, while there were no animal narratives in the first half of the eighteenth century, these made up 27 percent of the total in the second half, rising to 45 percent between 1801 and 1850, and declining to 37 percent from 1851 to 1900.[6]

Bellamy explains this trend as evidence of a change in the perceived audience of it-narratives from satirical (and often sexually explicit) tales for adults to moral instruction for children. Building on Bellamy's data collection, I account for the shift from coins to animals as indicative of an additional tonal shift toward the sentimental. Bellamy points to how the types of objects writers are interested in depicting changes over the course of the eighteenth century, and I elaborate on the questions these narratives open about objectification, commodities, and women.

Tales of circulation fall out of style in favor of tales that promote a sentimental structure of feeling and relationship to the main character. There are other types of objects, including clothing, carriages, umbrellas, and everything in between; these objects often straddle or trouble the divide between circulating, fungible objects like coins and individualized, sentimental objects like animals. However, tracking a broad shift from coins to animals in the genre of it-narratives allows me to think about a parallel shift in the narratives the eighteenth century tells about women. In other words, the differences between an it-narrator like Chrysal the coin and a character like Pompey the lapdog help illuminate the differences

6. Liz Bellamy, "It-narrators and Circulation: Defining a Subgenre," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture, Bucknell University Press, 2014), 130.

between a character like Moll Flanders and a character like Clarissa.

Other scholars have made the comparison between object narrators and women.[7] Considering women's legal rights (or lack thereof) during the eighteenth century, the connection between female novel characters and talking objects is inevitable. Bonnie Blackwell provides a succinct argument for this account of it-narratives:

> the implicit goal of novels narrated by objects is shaping 'an ideal women out of the stuff of novels. Though it does not explore the psychology of the narrator itself, the circulation novel presents a powerful cautionary tale about the dangers of female sexual autonomy. Object narrators urge the female reader not to avoid her objectification by men, which appears as an inexorable fact of life, but to take care to be possessed by only one male so as to assure her longevity and safekeeping.[8]

Blackwell argues that it-narratives are a kind of assemblage of femininity, drawing connections between the way the object moves and the implications that movement has for female sexuality. I am likewise interested in the way objects move and how that connects to the way women move. By tracking attitudes toward circulation and transference between owners in it-narratives, it becomes possible to think more broadly about objectification and a growing anxiety about the dangers of female agency as captured by different structures of objectification.

It-narratives take as their roots the secret history, and present prurient tales other narrators would not be able to tell, such as *The Episode of the Petticoat* in *The Memoirs and Interesting Adventures of an Embroidered Waistcoat* (1751); these types of tales take private

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7. Nicholas Hudson, for example, considers *Evelina* as a kind of it-narrative and goes so far as to argue it-narratives are a starting point for the evolution of non-focalized narration that ends with Austen novels. Nicholas Hudson, "It-Narratives: Fictional Point of View" in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture, Bucknell University Press, 2014).

8. Bonnie Blackwell, "Corkscrews and Courtesans," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture, Bucknell University Press, 2014) 269.

experiences (including one's relationship with one's literal intimates) and makes that experience public.[9] As Mark Blackwell puts it, "the satiric project in which numerous it-narratives participate shares with the novel of interiority an epistemological problem: how to know who others really are and what they are really like."[10] The circulating it-narrators peep through drawers and keyholes in order to learn the secrets of man. The first it-narrative I will consider takes full advantage of the intimacy enabled by the it-narrative. I will begin by considering John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* as an it-narrative to explore the difference between objectified female characters and it-narrators. Then, I will consider in turn coin narratives and their resonances with circulating objectification and animal narratives and their resonances with sentimental objectification.

II. Fanny Hill: Women Personified

In order to emphasize the depth of connection between female protagonists and it-narrators, the first it-narrative I would like to discuss is not typically classified as an it-narrative at all. While some of Daniel Defoe's and Eliza Haywood's novels display a pattern of circulation for their female characters, John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* goes a step further and actually treats the narrator, Fanny Hill, like an it-narrator. Cleland's titular heroine, will, according to the O.E.D., possibly help launch the slang metonym of "Fanny" for "vagina." Although the name "Fanny" did not carry that connotation in Cleland's day, the continued association of his heroine with a pun for *mons pubis* suggest that readers react to Fanny by reducing her to her sex organs, highlighting the extent of her status as an object.[11] Fanny Hill enters circulation not when someone digs her up from a

9. See Mark Blackwell, "General Introduction" in *British It-Narratives, 1750-1830,* ed. Mark Blackwell, (Brookfield, VT: Pickering &Chatto, 2012), xiv.

10. Blackwell, "General Introduction," xv.

11. Patrick Spedding and James Lambert debunk the common interpretation that Cleland intended

mine, but when her parents die of smallpox and she goes to London for no other purpose than to "seek my fortune."[12] She travels with a companion, Esther, who, upon arrival in London, leaves Fanny to find a place. As Fanny describes it: "she wish'd me good luck, and hoped I should always have the grace to keep myself honest, and not bring a disgrace to my parentage. With this, she took her leave of me, and left me, as it were, on my own hands, full as lightly as I had been put into hers."[13] The way Fanny Hill describes herself being put into hands, including the odd description of being put into her own hands, positions her as an object in relation to other people. She is picked up by various people as she passively circulates through London, both as a young woman is "picked up" by men, and as a penny might be "picked up" in the street.

One of the scenes that throws her it-narrator status into sharp relief is a scene in which she spies on her present owner, Mrs. Brown:

> One day, around twelve at noon, being thoroughly recover'd of my fever, I happen'd to be in Mrs. Brown's dark closet, where I had not been half an hour, resting upon the maid's settle-bed, before I heard a rustling in the bed-chamber, separated from the closet only by two sash-doors, before the glasses of which were drawn two yellow damask curtains, but not so close as to exclude the full view of the room from any person in the closet. I instantly crept softly, and posted myself so, that seeing every thing minutely, I could not myself be seen; and who should come in but the venerable mother Abbess herself![14]

Fanny Hill goes on to describe, at length, her mistress's sexual encounter with a strange man, and comment on sex and sexuality in general as an outsider with no prior understanding of sex acts. Her position in this scene mirrors a common dynamic in it-narratives of the it-

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Fanny's name as a metonym in their article "Fanny Hill, Lord Fanny, and the Myth of Metonymy," *Studies in Philology* 108, no. 1 (2011): 108-132. Even so, the persistence of this myth suggests that the reduction of Fanny to a body part (one of the hallmarks of objectification and Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze) is so apparent that the myth takes on a life of its own.

12. John Cleland, *Fanny Hill* (G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1963), 32.
13. Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, 35.
14. Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, 62.

narrator lying around in a domestic space, perhaps a drawer, only to witness its owner partaking in some strange behavior (usually sex) that the narrator can spy through a key hole. Fanny is likewise hardly sentient before the main characters of the scene enter and begin having sex; she simply happens to be in a closet lying on a settle-bed when they walk in. Her position as a complete stranger to the sex acts she then describes creates a similar effect to that of an it-narrator describing the strange behavior of its human masters. Her naivety makes the sex acts strange in the eyes of the viewer. Cleland uses that effect in order to inject novelty and interest into pornographic scenes, but the technique also reinforces Fanny's inclusion in the it-narrative genre. Authors use the narrative structure and the non-human distance it-narrators provide as a way to satirize human vice and folly. Lynn Festa suggests that, "in object narratives, human personality proceeds from personal property (which was also in the eighteenth century, called personality), not vice versa."[15] She suggests owners are often in the clutches of their objects, since their objects satirize the intimacies of their life to a public audience. Here, Fanny Hill does the same thing, acting as a vessel for the distribution of salacious details, which she relays with equal parts horror and interest.

Like the it-narrators, her circulation is also predicated on her use, in this case her sexual use to the men who briefly possess her. While this sexual use is not of her own volition, she does gratify her own desires through that use. However, her fulfillment of her desires is an oddly passive process. Desire for Fanny Hill is the desire of being used as she is intended. For instance, when she comments on a penis for the first time:

> that wonderful machine, which I had never seen before, and which, for the interest my own seat of pleasure began to take furiously in it…from which the instinct of nature, yet more than all I had heard of it, now strongly informs me I was to expect that supreme pleasure which she had placed in the meeting of those parts so admirably fitted for each

15. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire*, 123.

other.[16]

Fanny Hill's desire is a natural instinct radiating from her vagina itself. The description of a penis as a "machine" that fits into a woman's body is an oddly mechanical metaphor which emphasizes utility. Cleland will return to this metaphor many times in the text, describing penises as machines or assemblages of objects other than flesh, such as "a column of whitest ivory" or a "horn covered in velvet."[17] These types of description reinforce the instrumentality and objectification with which this novel treats sex, as well as sex organs. The objectified penis becomes more like a dildo than a body part. It is almost as if Fanny cannot help but see the world through the lens of objectification, since she is describing the world as it appears to an object. Furthermore, Fanny begins to look forward to the loss of her own virginity, remarking "adieu all fears of what man could do unto me; they were now changed into such ardent desires, such ungovernable longings, that I could have pull'd the first of that sex that should present himself, by the sleeves, and offer him the bauble, which I now imagine the loss of would be a gain I could not too soon procure myself."[18] Her virginity is turned into a bauble, or trinket, that she can offer; it is almost as if she is pulling her virginity from herself like a detachable accessory. The gains of pleasure she can procure herself happens when she allows someone to procure her.

When she and other women experience sex, Cleland focuses on depictions of pain, bleeding—particularly the perforation of the hymen—and the prowess of the male sex organ. Because of the novel's almost obsessive fixation on female pain, scholars have wondered how much this novel can tell us about female desire.[19] Cleland's construction of vaginas as

16. Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, 64.
17. Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, 95.
18. Cleland, *Fanny Hill*, 74.
19. See Aaron Hanlon, "*Fanny Hill* and the Legibility of Consent," *ELH* 86, no. 4 (2019): 941-

"natural" and penises as either luxury goods or powerful machines furthers misogynistic fantasies about the prowess of men and the "natural" sexuality of women. Aaron Hanlon reads the confusing interplay of female desire and female pain in the novel as calling for a "non-ideal theory of consent" in contrast to either contractual theories of consent (as Frances Ferguson discusses in "Rape and the Rise of the Novel") or liability models (such as those described in Sandra Macpherson's work).[20] Hanlon's attempts to parse the messy realities of sexual violence and sexual pleasure in the novel stem from his considerations of a character like Fanny Hill as a subject with agency, rather than an object. In my account, her desire has a fraught relationship to consent that defies typical models because her desires are the desires of an object, not a subject. Fanny's desires and her relationship to consent and agency are easier to parse when we think about, for instance, a coin narrator's passive desire to circulate. Or, to recall a more contemporary example, we might think about the plates and cutlery in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast,* desperately waiting to be used for their intended purpose.[21] The circulating it-narrator may be frustrated if it is stuck in a drawer or the Beast's plates may yearn for a dinner guest, but these objects have little power to realize or manipulate desires.

Fanny Hill is not the same as Roxana or Moll Flanders or even Fantomina, whose narrative is also preoccupied with her sexual antics. Fanny is the hard limit of the thesis that

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966. Hanlon provides an in-depth discussion of Cleland's use of female pain and what that could mean for depictions of female pleasure in the novel.

20. Aaron Hanlon, "*Fanny Hill* and the Legibility of Consent." See also, Frances Ferguson, "Rape and the Rise of the Novel," *Representations* No. 20 (1987): 88-112. *JSTOR.* And, Sandra MacPherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

21. Lumiére, a man turned talking candle stick, sings in the Disney cartoon: "life is so unnerving/for a servant who's not serving/ he's not whole without a soul to wait upon." His status as a service worker is turned into an employer's fantasy, in which he is abstracted into an object with no other purpose than to serve. His desires are desires of use, a structure that also applies to Fanny Hill.

objectification predicated on circulation allows women to exploit their own fungibility in order to be agential. Fanny is an it-narrator, and therefore is not being objectified by either the narrative or the men in the narrative; she is already an object. While Fantomina exploits objectification to achieve her desires, Fanny is essentially *personified* by her narrative. Fantomina's desires require agency, and she pursues her own interests in deliberate ways. Fanny simply describes desire in terms of how someone else intends to use her. Her conflation with an object is so complete that it is hard to talk about her as a character that can be separated out from her role as an object. Part of the reason for this has to do with *Memoir of a Woman of Pleasure's* genre. The novel is pornography, and as such, operates under different rules than even Haywood's erotica.

Frances Ferguson sheds light on how pornography specifically operates in her definition of the genre: "Pornography is, I argue, one of the principal examples of essentially utilitarian social structures that aim to manifest the differential value of actions to individuals and that raise questions about the justice of social recognition."[22] In other words, pornography often ascribes various levels of power to actors in a hierarchical structure such that it values those actors based on their actions. Pornography gives us a way to think through the mechanisms of utilitarianism, in which people are evaluated purely on their actions. On Jeremy Bentham, Ferguson writes, "The individual whose value is confirmed by the objective evaluation of a particular social environment at a particular moment may be granted a perspicuous value then and there, but he or she has no existence independent of that environment. Being is not merely postponed. It ceases to be an available notion."[23] Ferguson's explanation of the

22. Frances Ferguson, *Pornography, The Theory: What Utilitarianism Did to Action* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14.

23. Ferguson, *Pornography, The Theory*, 5.

connections between pornography and utilitarianism help illuminate why a pornographic novel about a woman is a limit case for the explanations this dissertation can offer about women and objectification. The question of the role objectification has in pornography has animated feminist debates for generations. I want to combine the structure of desire I see in it-narratives with Ferguson's work on utilitarianism and pornography to suggest that Fanny Hill's status as a sex object alters how we might think about her objectification in comparison to, for instance, the structure of desire and objectification in Haywood's erotic novels. Fanny has to wait to be used, her desire lacks agency in a way that Fantomina's does not.

In other words, Fanny's status as a pornographic object throws into relief some differences between Fanny and the circulating woman-object. for instance, Fantomina's objecthood is something separate from herself that she uses to her advantage. While her desires about being "sweetly forced" share some similarities with Fanny's, they are decidedly less mechanical. Fantomina desires a feeling, a sensation, in comparison, what Fanny desires can perhaps best be described as an insertion. While I do not think Fantomina is a subject wearing an object costume, at the same time she is something more than a pornographic object like Fanny Hill. She exhibits agency in key ways, particularly in her exploitation of her relationships with men for her own purposes. In that sense, we can talk about the objectification of Fantomina versus Fanny's personification. Fanny's status as a limit case also points to how precarious female agency through objectification can be. In carving a space for movement for themselves through objectification, characters like Roxana or Melantha risk becoming Fanny's. They teeter on the edge between a thing outside the full control of men and a pornographic sex toy, gaining agency, but perhaps risking losing

themselves in the process.

III. Coins: Circulating Objectification and Women

From Fanny's it-narrative and its fraught relationship with the kinds of pleasure circulating objectification allows, I would like to turn explicitly to coin narratives and consider their connection to Defoe's female characters. Coins are by their very definition objects that track circulation, fungibility, and abstracted value, which in part explains their significance to authors interested in thinking about women as fungible and circulating. Liz Bellamy calls these types of novels "novels of circulation." She claims these it-narrators lack volition and the novels themselves lack the sentimentality of other novels of the period, instead focusing on alienation.[24] Character relationships are eschewed in favor of transactional relationships which can display a variety of social classes and trades.[25] Because of the frequent comparisons between women and coins in the it-narratives of the century, it is worthwhile to consider what discourse about coins contributes to our understanding of these metaphors. One place to begin thinking about the connections between women and coins are two historical events: the Recoinage crisis in the 1690s and the South Sea Bubble in the 1720s. These two events, and common anxieties about value, circulation, and contracts, permeate accounts of how women can circulate in narratives and have preoccupied literary scholars interested in the topics of fictionality and women in fiction.

The Recoinage crisis refers to problems with currency devaluation in the 1690s. Circulating coins had been worn and clipped so badly that people could no longer trust the coin's face value. Certain laws incentivized people to forge coins or ship them overseas

24. Liz Bellamy, *Commerce, Morality, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 120.

25. Bellamy, *Commerce*, 121.

where they could fetch a higher value in countries like France. Issues with the currency not only affected people's day-to-day lives, but solving the crisis involved wrestling with the nature of money itself. As James Thompson puts it in his influential work *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel,* "Defining money involves defining value, and clarifying the relation between money and value leads ineluctably to the question of representation."[26] Of the many competing recoinage plans put forward, John Locke's was eventually adopted. Locke argued strongly against debasing the currency in order to address the clipping problem for economic as well as philosophical reasons; as Charles Larkin puts it: "For Locke, the state had a responsibility to its citizens to provide a sound currency. In debasing the currency, the state would effectively renege on its responsibility to ensure that property (which was defined as money in this situation) be maintained to the standard that the citizenry expected, that is, its true weight and measure."[27] Daniel Carey reads Locke's arguments about coinage as having larger significance for his theories about philosophy and ethics: "In several other contexts of Locke's philosophy, including his moral theory and critique of religious enthusiasm, we see a comparable effort to secure a standard beyond the control of individuals, which stabilizes meaning and provides protection against various kinds of abuse and manipulation."[28] The sheer number of coin narratives in which the coin is debased points to anxieties about the value of coins; their value is often suspect and the reader is often aware they are counterfeit. And yet, political and social order rests upon their

26. James Thompson, *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 17.

27. Charles Larkin, "The Great Recoinage of 1696: Charles Davenant and monetary theory" in *Money and Political Economy in the Enlightenment*, ed. Daniel Carey (Liverpool: Voltaire Foundation in association with the Liverpool University Press, 2014), 96.

28. Daniel Carey, "John Locke's philosophy of money" in *Money and Political Economy in the Enlightenment*, ed. Daniel Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, Voltaire Foundation, in association with Oxford University Press, 2014), 60.

value being held to some common standard.

These questions of representation and fictionality that debased money raised in the period get worked out in key ways in the literature of the period, as many other scholars have considered. Deborah M. Valenze points out that "forms of money (including credit) violated the boundaries between objects and people, which were dimly demarcated in the early eighteenth century."[29] Examining money within a broader network of social meaning for early modern people, Valenze tracks the relationship between people and money and the ways people can be conflated with their money. Discussing categories of people including servants, children, women, and, of course, enslaved people, who were routinely priced, she writes, "The condition of being priced brought with it a concatenation of opportunities and risks associated with economic developments at the end of the seventeenth century. And because it overlapped with social categories of dependency, the state of being measured according to monetary value appeared normative and sometimes even desirable to contemporaries."[30] The possible desirability of having a monetary value speaks to my considerations of the positive aspects of circulating objectification.

In addition to considering how fiction works out historical concerns about money, scholars have also thought about the connections between fictionality and credit. Mary Poovey reads the South Sea Bubble as fundamentally challenging people's relationship to credit, and through that their relationship with fiction itself.[31] Credit and particularly the

29. Deborah M. Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 23.

30. Deborah M. Valenze, *The Social Life of Money,* 224.

31. Mary Poovey reads this crisis of credit and fiction through the lens of many of the authors that are central to this dissertation, including Defoe and Samuel Richardson: "one of the strategies by which writers like Richardson counteracted the debilitating effects of the Bubble was to cultivate a distinctive realm of fiction, in which writers and readers might explore uncomfortable cultural anxieties without suffering their consequences," (113). Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in*

freedom of circulation credit allows, became suspect and potentially dangerous. The circulation of women in these novels is filled with anxiety and strongly connected to political economy because similar anxieties about the nature of money and the risk associated with credit permeated the culture.

Susan Staves tracks another major change to monetary systems in the eighteenth century by considering the separate property of women. She traces a shift from dower law, which tied women to landed property in forced shares and interfered with the alienability of land, to jointure, which acted like a contract with flexible terms.[32] Staves notes the transference of property must always be thought of as a process in which "women functioned to transmit wealth from one generation of men to the next generation of men."[33] Pin money, an allowance given to the wife for her maintenance, is more commonly discusses as for the dignity of the family to ornament the wife, not for the wife's explicit use.[34] These two shifts to the treatment of women's property, one to a system which allows greater movement and alienation, and the second to a restricted understanding of female agency surrounding pin money, parallels a change in objectifying metaphors referring to women.

These large scale cultural anxieties about women, money, credit, and fiction intersects in early eighteenth-century it-narratives about coins. Coin narratives make up a large number of the earlier, circulating version of the it-narrative and often feature narrators that revel in their powers to circulate across growing markets and avenues of commerce. However, this portrait

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Eighteenth- and Nineteenth- Century Britain (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

32. Staves argues liberalism is more likely to treat this shift as positive, allowing for more freedom of movement, while Marxists are more likely to notice the erosion of security and ease of exploitation of women.

33. Susan Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 4.

34. Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property,* 156.

of specie narratives is not totalizing. As Liz Bellamy puts it, "coins may not always be viewed purely in terms of their fungibility. The narrating coins are represented as having an intrinsic emotional value, distinct from their nominal value, as the narrative of commerce and exchange is replaced by a narrative of sentiment."[35] In other words, coins become good luck tokens as a narrative based on patterns of circulation is replaced by a narrative based on structures of sentimentality. Take, for example, Robert Ainslie's "The Life and Adventures of a Scotch Guinea Note" (published in *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany,* 18, 1826—marking it as one of the later coin narratives), in which the narrator remarks

> I hear and see all that my masters and mistresses do; and many a *queer* story I could tell you about them; but servants should not be tale-bearers; and though both my brother the Golden Guinea, and our cousin the Rupee, in their written voyages and travels, transgressed in that respect, I shall not do so; for the people are most kind to me, ever receiving me with gladness; and some are so attached to me, that not all the mechanical powers of the law…can wrench us asunder and separate us.[36]

The author of this tale is quite self-conscious about the shift in this coin narrative from the ones of the preceding decades, as evidenced by the citation of two famous it-narratives as narrated by the banknote's "brother" and "cousin." The Scotch Guinea Note is a different kind of narrator. While it has seen the "queer" behavior of people that it could satirize like the earlier coin narrators, it feels loyalty toward its owners, like that of a good servant who will not tell tales. The Guinea Note also cites the kindness people display toward it and the attachment they have to it as reasons why this is a different type if tale. It is also not truly a specie tale at all, even though it claims kinship with specie narrators, because it is a note and not a coin. As a note, its value depends on trust because its value is based on the bank

35. Liz Bellamy, *Money,* vol. 1 of *British It-Narratives*, 1750-1830, ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2012), xlviii.

36. Robert Ainslie, "The Life and Adventures of a Scotch Guinea Note," in *Money,* ed. Liz Bellamy, vol. 1 of *British It-Narratives,* ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2012), 319.

guaranteeing the note. Like the trust between a master and a servant, the note must hold that trust between the consumer and the bank. Without trust, the note has no value, and the note-narrator performs that trust by keeping its owner's council. Even for the coin it-narratives, the genre that embodies the plot of the circulating object, the force of the sentimental narrative penetrates to fundamentally change the types of stories that are told.

Despite variances in the genre, I want to think about how coin might share affinity with the tales of circulating women in chapter one of this project. The novels are structured around small vignettes that require circulation in order to move between episodes frequently. Additionally, the stories are explicitly interested in commerce. They treat commerce as a wonder to be marveled at through the viewpoint of the coin that makes the whole system possible. At the same time, early it-narratives take a moralizing stance toward the people that populate them. The coins who circulate are put off by the desire of their owners to possess them. In this way, they are also like Moll and Roxana, who show disdain for the lovers that want them at the same time that they enjoy moving through those lovers in a pattern of circulation.

Chrysal, *Or the Adventures of a Guinea* remains one of the best-known of the genre, and it helps define some of the key features of novels of circulation.[37] Chrysal's story is a found narrative, and the text invites us to contemplate the wonders of commerce that allow for this fantastic tale to see the light of day: our narrator ducks into a poor family's house to get out of the rain. After interrupting their breakfast, he marvels at the wonders of commerce (and by extension empire) that allow for the poor family's breakfast to be assembled:[38]

37. The name "guinea" comes from the name of a region in West Africa, where much of the gold used to make the coins originated in the 17th century.

38. The author, Charles Johnstone, is himself a product of empire. He was Anglo-Irish, born in County Limerick in 1719. He traveled to India, established a newspaper, and eventually died in Calcutta

> The family were at breakfast, at their tea, and, as the rain continued, I had the leisure to reflect on the advantages of commerce which thus, in a manner, joins the opposite extremities of the earth, by bringing their products together: at the same time, that the variety in the equipage of the tea-table, or indeed stool on which 'there was nothing of a piece' suggested a just ridicule on the vanity of luxury.[39]

Then, he begins to read the scrap of paper the family's butter is wrapped in. The scrap is part of Chrysal's narrative, and he is able to track down the rest of the scraps through a shopkeeper who buys them from a recluse who found the papers in a boarding house. The papers themselves have been edited by a preacher and were written by an alchemist. The amount of mediation between the frame narrative and the actual story of Chrysal compounds and emphasizes the role of circulation. The papers our narrator finds have entered a circulation of their own: edited by a preacher, taken by a recluse, sold to a shopkeeper, wrapped around butter, and finally placed in the hands of a man taking shelter from the rain. The paper itself, therefore, has its own provenance and story of circulation to tell. This frame story becomes a meta-narrative about how books are circulating in an increasingly commercial marketplace.

This emphasis on circulation also comes with an established value judgement. The narrator experiences sublime wonder at the variety of the poor family's breakfast table and the sheer complexities of commerce and logistics that brings it together, but at the same time he notes the table offers a "just ridicule on the vanity of luxury." In the same way, the adventures of the guinea offers both a breathtaking tale of commerce and a harsh satire of greed. Circulation delights, but it also exposes the follies of man. This appears to be a commonality with the stories of female circulation in my first chapter. Characters like Moll

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around 1800. His sympathetic portrayal of circulation can perhaps be tied to his own benefits from the colonial projects of the British East India Company.

39. Charles Johnstone, *Chrysal, or, The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760; repr., London: Printed for Hector M'Lean by Howlett and Brimmer, 1821), 1. Hathi Trust.

Flanders, Fantomina, Roxana, and the Wife to be Lett expose the follies of the men in their lives while taking pleasure in their circulation through these men. Like the coins, the women are not exactly owned by the men; rather, they are briefly in their possession before re-entering circulation. Tracking a character like Moll across England, overseas, and back again is reminiscent of the pleasures of mapping Chrysal's travel.

Human characters in *Chrysal* also begin to resemble the objects they possess, troubling the relationship between a person and a thing. Consider this curious description of the alchemist who transcribes Chrysal's story:

> He was a tall thin man, above six foot high, and no thicker than a watchman's staff, as I may say; then his constant leaning over his work, bent his long back, like a bow, especially as he had no belly to keep it up, for he lived almost upon nothing, so that when he walked, the length of his legs, and his great stoop made him look as if he had no body at all. As for his face, it was as long as my arm, and not broader than the edge of my hand; his eyes were sunk half a foot into his head, and always covered with spectacles, his nose was hooked over his mouth, as his chin turned up an handful to meet that and the constant toasting, over the charcoal, had shriveled up his skin so, that his whole face looked, as if it was covered with scorched parchment.

His cartoonish appearance and impossible proportions, particularly his lack of a body and parchment-like skin, give him the appearance of a bundle of papers. Of course his purpose in the narrative is to provide the bundle of papers that Chrysal's story is written upon. Therefore, the alchemist begins to take on the characteristics of an object he is associated with, troubling our ability as readers to distinguish between the human and non-human characters.

Chrysal is dug up from the ground by Traffick, a character whose very name invokes the importance of circulation in this chapter.[40] In the story of Traffick, we get a clear account

40. Traffick's name, as well as his eventual imprisonment and forced labor in a gold mine, also reminds readers that people are being trafficked alongside the circulation of commodities in the emerging empire. Slavery, while not an explicit part of this story, is in the near background of Traffick's tale.

of how women are treated as objects who circulate in the narrative. Traffick is the son of a wealthy London merchant. His fall from the upper echelons of London's tradesmen to a mine in South America is a cautionary tale about the dangers of a heart stuffed up with avarice. His main sin is with regards to Amelia, the daughter of a friend of the family who he hopes to marry one day. When her father dies and he is put in charge of her fortune, he cannot help himself but scheme her out of the principal of it. His greed has a mind of its own, as he refuses to think about his long term happiness, even his ability to possess her fortune in its entirety as her husband. As he puts it:

> While she was in possession of her whole fortune, the highest wish of my heart was to marry her; but no sooner had an unhappy accident given me an opportunity of defrauding her of far the greatest part of it, than that respectful love immediately sunk into loose desire, and my success in my former schemes against her, set my thoughts at work to accomplish the gratification of this passion, on my own base terms.[41]

Here the acquisition of capital is a drive on par with sexual desire. The text equates sexual conquest with the hostile takeover of her fortune. Possessing her body and possessing her capital are essentially the same thing. Avarice in this narrative becomes an embodied thing, stopping up his heart, possessing his thoughts, and eventually leading to his ruin. Amelia becomes a thing as well, and he describes his possession of her fortune as the same as possessing her: "for the success of my former attempt, so far from satisfying my avarice,…had made me look upon herself, and all that belonged to her as my property, which I was as impatient to possess as if it were detained from me by injustice."[42]

The tale of Chrysal's circulation can only be told because of the circulation of another object: Amelia. Deprived of her fortune by her presumed fiancé, Traffick, she leaves for Jamaica, causing Traffick to realize the error of his ways and follow her. Their decampment

41. Johnstone, *Chyrsal*, 35.
42. Johnstone, *Chyrsal*, 36.

to the colonies is an instance of their circulation in a broader economy that Traffick was playing on as a merchant in London. Amelia is taken by Spaniards and Traffick becomes a buccaneer. Eventually, he is captured by Amelia's husband and in an act of righteous justice, banished to the mines for his treatment of Amelia. Her circulation, and Traffick's pursuit of her along established trade routes, leads to him digging up our protagonist. Given Traffick's desire for monetary wealth, and his conflation of the possession of wealth with the possession of Amelia, she comes to symbolize wealth in the narrative. Her movement to the colonies is symbolic of new markets opening up for England at this historical moment. Ultimately, her narrative role is replaced with a talking coin, suggesting she and Chrysal are the same type of object.

The novel also comments on Chrysal's connection to women. The text genders the soul of all objects female, and the coin has special ability to gain access to those souls, suggesting Chrysal has a special relationship to the feminine. Anne Louise Kibbie provides a helpful understanding of the gendering of coins in her close reading of a scene in *Chrysal* which approximates clipping a coin with raping a woman. This is a common trope: "Addison's Elizabethan shilling recounts falling into the hands of an "Artist" who "with an unmerciful Pair of Shears cut off my Titles, clipped my Brims, retrenched my Shape, rubbed me to my inmost Ring, and, in short, so spoiled and pillaged me, that he did not leave me worth a Groat" (*Tatler* 249, 3:272)."[43] Kibbie tracks how coins change sex from primarily feminine in Elizabethan and Jacobin texts, to primarily masculine. At the moment in which Chrysal was written, Kibbie suggests gendered metaphors about clipping coins associates clipping

43. Ann Louise Kibbie, "Circulating Anti-Semitism: Charles Johnsone's *Chrystal,"* in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 256.

with sexual violence.[44]

IV. Animals: Sentimental Objectification and the Fear of Abduction

As Bellamy points out, there are very few coin narratives toward the latter half of the eighteenth century and many more animal narratives. The coin-narrators that dominate the origin of the genre give way to animal narratives. The genre transforms from a genre primarily interested in satirizing human nature and describing economic systems of circulation for an adult audience to a form of children's literature interested in cultivating moral and emotional intelligence. This transformation is dramatic, and, in the context of this project, indicates to me that a radical transformation happens in the way eighteenth-century culture portrays objectification. If we understand it-narratives as a genre that helps us think about women's relationships to objects, a shift in the genre points to a shift in that relationship between women and objects. The genre, taken as a whole, offers further evidence for key differences in structures of objectification and a temporal shift between two competing modes of objectification.

The sentimental mode connects to the genre's new interest in both reform and education. The objects no longer tell the story of capitalism and satirize human nature, but rather face situations which encourage a sentimental reader response. Heather Keenleyside documents the growing importance of animal narratives to the genre in the second half of the eighteenth century. She asks us to think about "the various sorts of human being that appear repeatedly in narratives of nonhuman lives, like women, slaves, servants and the poor."[45] She suggests

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44. However, this is not a static metaphor. Kibbie's article tracks how clipping coins changes from a narrative about raping the female body to an anti-Semitic narrative about the Naturalization act and fear of a "Jewish threat to the masculine body, circumcision, which is described as a kind of castration," (257).

45. Heather Keenleyside, *Animals,* vol. 2 of *British It-Narratives*, 1750-1830, ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2012), xii.

that in these animal it-narratives, people often lack agency and inhabit "the uncomfortable territory between persons and things."[46] Lynn Festa writes, "If…the eighteenth-century tales ends either with the annihilation of the object or the anticipation of its unremitting circulation in the market, the Victorian tales reunite objects with their most virtuous owner or otherwise carry them into sentimental retirement."[47]

Animal it-narratives focus on sentimental scenes of pain and misery and often conclude when the animal narrator reunites with an owner, emphasizing its belonging to one particular owner over and above other temporary owners. With these narratives, the first owner is often the "true" owner. This differs from earlier it-narratives, in which previous owners will sometimes reappear, particularly if the text wants to revisit a plot line, but the text and the object have no particularly affinity to one owner over another. While the coin narrators of early it-narratives seem to revel in circulation, sentimental it-narrators often experience transfer to a different owner as a loss or a theft. Moments of transfer are portrayed as traumatic, allowing for an outpouring of sentimental feelings of grief, sadness, and nostalgia. We will later see that same thread picked up in abduction plots for sentimentalized women. Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little* is one of the earliest and best-known examples of an eighteenth-century it-narrative involving an animal. Telling the tale of Pompey, the Italian lap-dog, this it-narratives helps illuminate some particular innovations the animal it-narrative offers the genre.

Pompey is notable firstly because he does not really act like a narrator. Most it-narratives are heavily mediated, (for example, the nesting frame stories in *Chrysal*), but the

46. Keenleyside, *Animals,* vol. 2 of *British It-Narratives*, xv.

47. Lynn Festa, "Moral Ends of 18th- and 19th-Century Object Narratives," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 325.

it-narrator still emerges as an important voice in the text. The "talking" object is, after all, part of what makes the it-narrator a narrator at all. Pompey, in contrast, does not speak or hold opinions about his owners, and the text has a third person narrator. In fact, Pompey is hardly personified as an it-narrator at all, but for all intents and purposes seems like any other dog. The narrator even self-consciously pauses a few times to recognize how rarely our hero actually appears: "If the foregoing Dialogue appears impertinent and foreign to this History, the ensuing one immediately concerns the Hero of it; whose pardon I beg for having so long neglected to mention his Name."[48] This it-narrative is not really about its it-narrator. Instead, Pompey is a vehicle for characters to feel sentimental attachment.

Coventry seems to want to use Pompey as a vehicle to provide commentary on various levels of society, as clearly seem from the chapter headings: "Relating a curious dispute on the immortality of the soul, in which the name of our hero will but once be mentioned." The titular hero seems to get in the way of Coventry's narratives more often than he assists. The character's emotional reaction to the dog is more important than the dog itself (although the dogs does set up various jokes about the dog as person, such as the education of a lap dog, Pompey as a dog about town, etc.). Coventry's focus on the character's emotional connections to Pompey is what signals to me that this novel is beginning to enter a sentimental register. The purpose of the it-narrative is primarily for emotional displays. However, I do not want to suggest *Pompey* is a sentimental novel. The human characters are strangely caricatured. The character surnames are in the tradition of Restoration drama and indicate outsized personality traits, such as Lady Tempest, who throws a series of temper tantrums. *Pompey* blends the satirical mode of earlier it-narratives with sentimentality by

48. Frances Coventry, *The History of Pompey the Little,* (1759; repr., New York: Garland Publishing Inc. 1974), 29.

combining exaggerated stock characters with interest in their emotional attachment to a lap-dog and the spectacle of the lap dog suffering. This novel indicates the new purpose of the objects of it-narratives as conduits for the emotions of people around them, including readers.

Lady Tempest's reaction to her loss of Pompey in the park serves as one such emotionally charged scene. She leaves Pompey behind after he chases a bird out of her line of sight and, on her realization that he is missing "her Guilt immediately flew in her Face, and she cried out with a Scream, *As I am alive, I have left little Pompey behind me.*"[49] Her reaction is over-the-top, but Coventry dwells on her experience of Pompey's loss with the expressive "her Guilt immediately flew in her face." This is a point of mockery for her servants, who pretend to look for the lapdog while laughing and drinking behind her back. While her servants find her attachment to the dog ridiculous, her intense grief drags on for several weeks as she posts rewards and advertisements for the dog: "She continued to advertise him in all the news-papers for month together, with increase of the reward as the case grew more desperate."[50] It is the nature of the sentimental object to be felt most intensely at the moment of its loss.

Her eventual reunion with the dog occurs near the end of the novel when Pompey makes his way back to London from Cambridge with a new mistress. In the very same park where he was originally lost, Lady Tempest sees him again and picks him up, causing his current owner to claim she is stealing him. This opens a dispute between the two women, with Lady Tempest arguing, "And will you be pleased to know like-wise, young lady, that I have a right to take my property wherever I find it."[51] The lady protests that it is impossible to remember

49. Frances Coventry, *Pompey the Little,* 70.
50. Frances Coventry, *Pompey the Little,* 73.
51. Frances Coventry, *Pompey the Little,* 256-257.

a dog after eight years, but Lady Tempest is indeed right that Pompey is the same dog. This dispute becomes a public spectacle and, finally, a legal dispute. Lady Tempest humorously responds that "Pompey shall be ready to put in his answer as soon as he hears your bill is filed against him at chancery."[52] Her joke implies that Pompey is the one on trial, not Lady Tempest. This joke imparts Pompey with the agency to commit crimes and to stand trial for those crimes. The joke works, however, because Pompey clearly lacks that agency and subjectivity.

The lawyer's response on hearing the case is to warn the women that "there is no question madam, but they are to be considered under the denomination of property, and not to be deemed *ferae naturae,* things of no value, as ignorant people foolishly imagine; but I say, madam, there is something very peculiar in their nature, madam.— Their prodigious attachment to man, inclines them to follow any body that calls them, and that makes it so difficult to find a theft."[53] In other words, Pompey can be valued as property, but he seems to have enough locomotion (I won't call it agency) as to make it difficult to prove theft. The solicitor makes it seem as if Pompey cannot be stolen because he will run off with anyone. As this project considers sentimental abduction scenes featuring woman-objects, we might do well to remember this lawyer's account of Pompey's supposed abduction. The same might be said about how sentimental narratives treat women. They are easily lost (they run off with anyone), but harder to recover with their value intact. Women, like lap-dogs, are peculiar in their nature.

All the same, the court case is never resolved. Although, readers might want to imagine a Solomon-like judgement for the dog in which Lady Trusty betrays her superior emotional

52. Frances Coventry, *Pompey the Little,* 259.
53. Frances Coventry, *Pompey the Little,* 262.

attachment to the dog and is rewarded for it. Her ability to recognize the dog after years apart speaks to her sentimental attachment to him. Despite the text driving toward an ending that adjudicates sentimental attachment, it strangely swerves from the full force of the claim; this swerve ultimately makes for an unsatisfying ending. Instead, Pompey dies in Lady Tempest's care, thereby ending the narrative. Perhaps we can take Lady Tempest's final act of care for the dog as a tacit acceptance of her claim to ownership. I wonder too if Pompey as an object is unable to carry the full weight of a trial over his ownership. Coventry sets up the scene, but then seems to abandon it in favor of a swift and quiet death for his strange hero. Pompey's death additionally connects him to the deaths of female characters in the sentimental novel. Once abducted, they often die for unexplained reasons, in part because their value to the men around them has been compromised. Perhaps Pompey's value too has been tainted by his willingness to run off with just about anyone. Lady Tempest's promiscuous lap-dog dies a medically inexplicable death that offers the opportunity for readers and characters to mourn him, much like Clarissa.

The Adventures of a Donkey, an 1815 it-narrative by an anonymous author under the pseudonym Arabella Argus, sits more firmly in the genre of sentimental novel. As Keenleyside puts it, "pleas for kindness toward a lowly animal like the donkey can easily resonate as pleas for kindness toward lowly human being — children, the poor, laborers, servants."[54] Designed mainly as a tale for children, the novel lingers over the donkey's tales of suffering at the hands of cruel masters in effusive detail. Donkey is eventually sold to the city and suffers greatly working for a poor family. While moments of exchange in earlier it-narratives are quick affairs, and occur frequently, *The Adventures of a Donkey* lingers over

54. Heather Keenleyside, "Introduction to *The Adventures of a Donkey," Animals,* vol. 2 of *British It-Narratives*, 256.

his transition to a new home and describes like an abduction:

> I was surprised one morning, by farmer Howel's presenting a sieve of corn for my acceptance, and hastening to avail myself of this luxurious treat, was for some minutes unconscious of the snare into which I had fallen. A rope, a common rope was passed round my neck, the sieve withdrawn, and in a few minutes I was led out of the meadow. It was in vain I brayed and called upon my mother, she was far from home…I recollected my mother's advice, 'that docility was an amiable trait in a Donkey,' and endeavored to accommodate my feelings to my situation.[55]

The donkey experiences his sale as a kidnapping, even as he tries to make the best of his distressing circumstances. His attachment to his mother, interior monologue about his emotional state, and experience of changing owners as abduction are features I connect to a sentimental register.

The donkey is not good at his various jobs, often narrating his mistakes like a hapless apprentice attempting to avoid the wrath of his master. For instance, the donkey is working for a man who sells plates and other crockery. He is expected to obey commands, but confesses he often has trouble understanding the commands in a crowded street. Hearing something, "which to me sounded like 'Plates off,' caused me to stop suddenly; a jingling, or rather a concussion among our crockery convinced me I had done mischief. My master seized my reins, struck me violently across the mouth, yet evidently expected me to bear his brutality with Spartan indifference."[56] The donkey then runs with the entire cart into a hole and the master continues to beat him:

> by this time a small but select crowd were assembled—one or two persons lamented the poor man's loss of his broken crockery, but a gentleman who had been chiefly instrumental in assisting me to rise, declared 'the scoundrel is justify punished. I have watched you for some minutes,' said he, addressing my master. 'Do / you know Sir, you are liable to imprisonment for maltreating this wretched animal? And I am strongly inclined to make you an example.[57]

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55. Arabella Argus, *The Adventures of a Donkey,* in *Animals,* ed. Heather Keenleyside, vol. 2 of *British It-Narratives,* ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2012), 263.

56. Arabella Argus, *The Adventures of a Donkey,* 269.

57. Arabella Argus, *The Adventures of a Donkey,* 271.

This scene, in which the narrator acquires a life-long injury, is a spectacle of suffering.[58] It takes place in a busy London street and draws the attention of an unnamed man who seems to stand in for the reader, making an example of the owner in the same way the text makes an example of him. The class difference between the gentleman and the lower class owner is apparent, and the donkey often speaks poorly of his low-class, city dwelling masters in comparisons to his upbringing among "better" people. The brutality of the lower classes in this story seems tied to the text's pedagogical mode. The donkey's pitiful position and the spectacle of suffering the scene creates, complete with a gathering crowd, is designed to cultivate sentimental feelings in the book's young readers.

When we compare a narrator like Chyrsal to a narrator like the donkey, we can begin to see some key differences. While Chrysal is a relatively impartial, alien narrator who offers up character studies of human nature, the donkey presents a suffering spectacle that allows the reader to inhabit a sentimental positionality. It-narrative plots increasingly exhibit reunion narratives between objects and their first, true owner. For instance, objects like Pompey become less fungible. He is a particular, specific lap dog that his original owner can once again identify when she sees him years later. He still circulates, but it is not a vehicle for him to display agency. Rather, his many owners are presented as a series of trials he undergoes

58. This scene also reminds one of the examples Sandra Macpherson highlights in her work *Harm's Way.* She calls our attention to tort and liability law instead of contract theory to characterize the novel's obsessive focus on bodily injury rather than conjugal affection—this lens allows me to think about people as objects that do things without a reliance on subjectivity or interiority. One of her examples of liability without intent is a donkey with a cart, which is mobilized in this it-narrative in a way that calls us to question the master's responsibility and the way he blames the Donkey. Macpherson emphasizes the passive mediums of harm in tort law, in other words, actions without agency, to begin to turn people into things. In this it-narrative, a thing is turned into a person to similar effect. Sandra Macpherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 2010).

before Lady Tempest finds him again. Argus's donkey is even less interested in circulation; moments where the donkey changes owners are traumatic experiences. It experiences exchange as theft or abduction, not circulation. The changes to it-narratives reflects back changes representations of women undergo in this period. If it-narratives are a sort of metaphor about women, then their genre shifts also record shifts in the types of metaphors narratives use to represent women.

V. Lost Objects/Lost People: Classified Ads, Slavery, and the Novel

The way in which these loss scenes in it-narratives invoke trauma and grief ties them to scenes in which women are abducted. Considering classified ads in eighteenth-century newspapers provides a concrete, spatial way of connecting loss of objects to loss of people in the period.[59] I believe the connection between, for instance, Lady Tempest's newspaper ads searching for her lost dog and sentimental women is present not only in the literature of the period, but in the way people in the eighteenth century conceive of the world around them. Classified ads from the period contain ads very similar to the one Lady Tempest would have placed. An ad from the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* in London, February 10th, 1777, provides one such example:

> A Dog lost by a footman, on Friday Noon the 7th instant, near Paddington or Lissam Grean; a small, yellow and white SPANIEL, yellow ears, and three or four yellow marks on his body; is pretty fat, and the hair rather curled. Long white hair about his neck and throat; has a short back, and short legs and tail, a roundish head, and short nose; has a yellow spot on his forehead, answers to the name of JUBA.[60] Whoever brings him to

59. I am not the first scholar to recognize the literary potential of eighteenth-century classified ads. See also Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say.* As well as, Barbara M. Benedict, "Encounters with the Object: Advertisements, Time, and Literary Discourse in the Early Eighteenth-Century Thing-Poem," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 193-207.

60. The name "Juba" has racialized connotations. A main character in Joseph Addison's 1713 play, *Cato,* Juba is a Numidian prince, allied with Cato against Caesar. See Srinivas Aravamudan's chapter "The Stoic's Voice" in *Tropicopolitans* for a discussion of the character Juba. Aravamudan also writes about the prevalence of classical names for both slaves and pets: "Names such as Zeno, Socrates, Scipio, and Scipio Africanus were common for slaves, but such names were also later adopted for dogs,"

> Lady Austen's in North-Audley Street Grosvenors-square, shall receive One Guinea Reward. No greater reward will be offered.

Lady Austen's ad could easily have been written by Lady Tempest. The fat spaniel is more than likely a lap-dog, like Pompey. The ad (rather pettily) lays blame on the footman for losing the dog, perhaps clarifying for any readers that the Lady did not lose her dog, as Lady Tempest does. The detailed description of the dog has an oral quality about it, as if details are rattled off from memory. One can imagine how these ads and the it-narratives of the period become connected. The ad hints at a story, and causes one to wonder at the fate of Juba the fat spaniel.

Many objects besides lost lapdogs appear in classified ads. *The Daily Advertiser* from London, June 29, 1743, for instance, advertises for several lost or stolen items including a grey gelding with a white face and small brown spots, five state-lottery tickets, a sliver fluted candlestick, a plain gold watch, and a brown crystal stone. These ads often imply the objects were stolen, providing a record of crime alongside an attempt to reclaim property, usually promising a reward "no questions asked." Alongside the objects, ads also appear for two runaway apprentices, John Berry and William Basset. John is described as "about twenty years of age, about five foot six inches high, and of a fresh complexion; he went away in his working dress, and supposed to be gone towards Chatam in Kent." William is "about nineteen years of age, thin and pale-faced, thin lips, and a [illegible] Nose, about five feet six inches high, went away from his master." These two ads for missing people appear in the same column of the paper as the ads for the missing stuff. John's master promises a reward,

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(65). Pompey the dog is another such example, it is the same name that Richard Steele uses for a spoof letter in a 1710 edition of *The Tatler,* in which an African boy named Pompey owned by a fashionable lady unfavorably compares the price of the collar he wears to the collar his lady's lapdog wears (34).

Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialsim and Agency, 1688-1804,*(Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

while William's just warns against employing the boy. The detailed physical descriptions are in the same register as the description of the horse, or even Juba the dog. The passive phrasing of "went away from his master" leaves us to only guess at why John may have tried to escape his apprenticeship. We might be reminded of the Donkey's experience working for a master in London and the beatings he received at his master's hand. Both spatially and at the level of description, these ads do not differ from the ads for lost stuff. Whether this close proximity at the level of description speaks to the personification of the objects in the ads or the objectification of the people remains an open question.

Alongside apprentices, a final example from Barbados expands our understanding of the types of people who appear in classified ads by considering the larger context of empire. *The Barbados Mercury* classified section, October 27, 1781, includes this evocative description for a piece of jewelry: "Dropped, from a Lady's neck, Between the Tamarind Tree in the Roebuck and Pulman's corner, A GOLD HEART, set round and strung with garnets. Whoever will leave it at the Printing-Office, shall receive a Dollar reward." The ad is oddly intimate, referencing a specific tree that was presumably a landmark for inhabits of Barbados. It is also narrative, the phrase "dropped, from a lady's neck" offers a story beginning *in medias res.* One wants to read the it-narrative based on this ad. Right alongside the ad is a list of men who have "absented themselves from the second battalion of both or Royal American Regiment, viz." The ad offers "Four Dollars Reward for each man or for any other (in future) found." Below that ad is one for a fugitive slave, "named Will, stout made, stoops at the shoulders, speaks good English, about five feet, seven inches high, and was lately sent from Barbados to Antigua for sale." The ad suggests that Will was possibly able to travel a great distance, and was presumably trying to return to Barbados for some

reason. Scholars have recently begun working more closely with fugitive slave ads in order to discern more about these peoples' histories. These ads offer tantalizing glimpses into the stories behind them, and they connect the histories of the people that appear in these ads to the imagined histories of the lost objects and animals that it-narratives provide. The classified ads left behind allows us to reconstruct just how close people like servants, slaves, and soldiers were to objects in the eighteenth-century imagination.

Srinivas Aravamudan suggests that the connection between domestic animals like lapdogs and slaves could be even closer than these ads suggest. Africans, particularly African children, were transported to England to be sold and treated as pets; they served as living status-symbols for elite women in the eighteenth century. He argues, through a reading of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko,* that enslaved Africans and pets are engaged in the same metaphorical exchange that this chapter outlines for women and it-narrators. Aravamudan offers a compelling account of comparisons between African slaves and lap-dogs in everything from visual culture (such as paintings of elite women with their dogs and enslaved children), to material culture (expensive collars for both dogs and humans), to discourse (his reading of Oroonoko as a "pet-king"). Aravamudan writes about the processes of objectification and personification that both pets and Africans undergo through this comparison:

> Pets, once acquired and privatized, can be suspended from their earlier participation in the public sphere as objects, taking on an honorary subjectivity. The initial status of the pet subject is honorary, or virtualized, because it depends on the contingent and fetishized investment of the owner. The owner's disinvestment returns the pet to the identity of an objectified commodity in the marketplace…Africans and women, variously extraneous to such ideas, begin challenging those who claim ownership of them by exerting subjective authority over themselves as objects. The subject is simultaneously alienated (this body is property that belongs to someone else) and empowered (as I'm property, I can own myself).[61]

61. Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans,* 44.

I agree with Aravamudan's account here of the way sentimental objectification works. The pet or person achieves a prized position that can look like subjectivity or even power over their owner. However, I want to resist his characterization of the status of the pet or person as having a "virtualized" subjectivity; it seems quite possible that virtual subjectivity can just be a nicer name for false subjectivity. Oroonoko's status as a "pet-king" to the doting, white narrator or Pompey the Little's hold over lady Tempest is not an emblem of subjectivity, virtual or otherwise. I have already established that objects and objectified people can display their own kind of agency, but it is more accurate to think about agential objecthood than virtualized subjectivity. Agential objecthood avoids eliding the forces of objectification and honors the limitations on agency that objectification enacts.

However, Aravamudan's concept of virtualized subjectivity does capture a sense of the possible empowerment available through objectification. Differentiating between circulating objectification and sentimental objectification helps crystalizes where agency can be recovered. This empowerment is found in the possibilities of circulation, not in the register of the sentimental. This can be seen in Aravamudan's reading of Southerne's adaptation of *Oroonoko* and the white character Charlotte. In the play, Charlotte uses metaphors about women operating on a marriage market, reference to credit, trickery, and impersonations to "find her agency through manipulating the constraints of her objectification."[62] I think her references to financial systems and credit, versus Oroonoko's continued comparisons to a pet, speaks to the differences between circulating and sentimental objectification. It also suggests that enslaved people, while commodities, are more often than women objectified in a sentimental register, constraining their agency even further. The difference in levels agency

62. Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans,* 50.

between circulating and sentimental objectification will preoccupy the next two chapters of this project.

Chapter Three

Pamela Petrified: Transitioning from Circulation to Stasis

Samuel Richardson's enigmatic novel about a young servant girl who records her employer's assault and eventually marries him radically reshapes the literary landscape after its release. It is no understatement to claim *Pamela* as an epoch in the history of the novel. *Pamela* plays an equally essential role in my understanding of the trajectory of representation of female objectification in the novel. The novel warrants its own chapter as much for the ways it troubles my established categories of objectification as for the way it shapes them. Pamela, in essence, is an object that looks like she should be able to circulate but cannot. Her failure to act in predictable ways charts new courses for the representation of women in novels and ushers in a new mode of objectification.

Many other scholars have sought to characterize what is new about this strange novel. Nancy Armstrong's evergreen argument about the emergence of a new kind of domestic femininity in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* relies on *Pamela* as the linchpin on which the old form of femininity transforms into the new domestic womanhood necessary for the emergence of the liberal state. William Warner's *Licensing Entertainment* recasts the Rise of the Novel as a story about emerging forms of new media, in which Richardson, through *Pamela,* rewrites the novel of amorous intrigue and thereby creates a media event responsive to market forces. More recently, Vivasvan Soni argues in *Mourning Happiness* that Pamela represents a major transformation in human understanding of the hermeneutics of happiness from the ancient concept of tragedy to the eighteenth-century trial narrative, leading to sentimental novels and finally Kant's ethics. These three accounts share a sense that

something changes once *Pamela* enters the literary marketplace. Armstrong detects a change in the rhetoric surrounding women, Warner notices the influence of mass culture and market forces, and Soni suggests *Pamela* paves the way for the sentimental novel.

Their readings of a shift in the eighteenth-century novel, with *Pamela* as a starting point, influence my own sense that *Pamela* connotes a shift in a teleology of objectification in the period. Changes to structures of objectification in this novel unite Armstrong's sense of changes to feminine domesticity with Warner's connection of this novel with broader cultural attitudes toward markets and circulation and Soni's suggestion *Pamela* lays the groundwork for the sentimental novel. *Pamela* begins a process of exerting control over women through new metaphors about women as objects which fix them in place, and new understandings of how objects shape the identities of women. Prior to *Pamela,* women in novels exhibit greater ability to move and are described primarily in terms that emphasize their fungibility and their status as commodities. After *Pamela*, women are more often defined as objects that stay in one place (unless moved by force through an abduction narrative), and they are objectified in a sentimental mode that emphasizes male emotions about them rather than their own agency. *Pamela*, as a sort of linchpin for this change in rhetoric, contains characteristics of both versions of eighteenth-century objecthood.

Pamela's characters attempt to act out the old plots of circulating objects in earlier novels (such as disguising oneself, changing partners, traveling, etc.), but are unable to do so and must carve out new plots that require Pamela to act as a stationary object. In this way, Pamela seems like an object that should be able to move but cannot. This new "rule," that Pamela cannot freely circulate, will become a cornerstone of the new version of objecthood taken up in the sentimental novel. In this chapter, I will consider some of the objects that

populated the texts of the previous chapter, the coins and clothing women are often associated with. These objects are fraught sites for how the novel thinks about objecthood, ownership, and personhood. I examine how coins are treated as sentimental objects and how sentimental objects such as clothing are treated as commodities, a conflation of commodities and sentimental objects that speaks to the text's confused and slippery relationship to objects. I also track how, through reference to objects, Pamela and Mr. B. shift the rhetoric surrounding their relationship from one of purchase to one of theft, and the implications that has for Pamela's status as an object. This shift from purchase to theft connects to Pamela's inability to move of her own volition. Mr. B.—instead, is the primary actor responsible for her movement, and more often than not he prefers for her to remain stationary. This novel, alongside *Clarissa*, is particularly important for documenting a shift in how women move in novels from a pattern of circulation to a pattern of abduction. Pamela's insistence that she can leave Mr. B. whenever she wishes mirrors the reader's expectation that Pamela *should* be able to move and draws attention to the significance that she cannot.

Pamela's status as a servant creates new considerations for this project. Most of the women that have populated the novels we have examined thus far have been upper class women (with the notable exceptions of Roxana's servant Amy and Moll Flanders). When we do see low-class women, one thing we might note about them is how easily they are able to move anonymously through various jobs, partners, and cities. Servants in particular should be fairly interchangeable and free to circulate, hallmarks of the type of objectification on display in Chapter One. The novel is preoccupied with the self-conscious transformation of Pamela from servant girl to upper-class woman, and Pamela's status as a servant is important for understanding how she acts as an object. The terms of her employment, and particularly

her wages, help determine how she and Mr. B. relate to her object-status, and highlight some of the stranger aspects of her object-status. R.C. Richardson's comprehensive account of servants, *Household Servants in Early Modern England,* helps us to imagine the social consequences of Pamela's status. Richardson cautions against attempts to reflect on the exact wages of servants for a given period; servant wages were highly localized and depended on a variety of factors, including household size, geographical region, year, and household duties.[1] R.C. Richardson found accounts of maid servant wages ranging from £4 4s to £8 8s for a variety of years and geographical locations.[2] So, four guineas, a specific sum Pamela receives in the novel could have been anywhere from a full year of wages to half a year, a considerable sum by any count. Indeed, gifts such as the clothing Pamela receives when her mistress dies effectively tie her to the estate, because it would have created social confusion if she were to wear them outside of the context of the estate. [3] Gifts and perks are common in this historical record, but clothing in particular became a fraught gift because of risk of social confusion between servants and their masters.[4] Servants could also expect to pick up odd jobs and piece work, like Pamela's project of sewing a waistcoat for Mr. B., as a way to earn

1. For more scholarship on servants, see *Domestic Service and the Formation of European Identity: Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th-21st Centuries,* ed. Antionette Fauve-Chamoux (Bern: Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers, 2004). One of the most expansive contemporary accounts of servants in Europe, Fauve-Chamoux's anthology considers a wide variety of servant experiences to present an account of the role of servants in European identity.

See also, Jeremy Musson's chapters on eighteenth-century servants in *Up and Down Stairs: The History of the Country House Servant* (London: John Murray, 2009). His work focuses on the country house from the 1400s to the 19th century. Of particular interest to this dissertation is his discussion of servant wages, the presence of slaves (usually small children) from the West Indies, and the various duties of servants like Pamela.

2. R.C. Richardson, *Household Servants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 81.

3. See also Kristian Booker's work on the topic. Booker considers both *Pamela* and *Roxana* in terms of "emulation anxiety," or the cultural anxieties about servants emulating their masters and the possible break down of class barriers that could entail. Kristina Booker, *Menials* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2017).

4. R.C. Richardson, *Household Servants,* 87.

extra money.

Pamela's stationary nature becomes even more glaring once we understand that discussion about servants in this period was primarily about them moving too much and abandoning their masters for any small consideration.[5] R.C. Richardson explains that after a tax on male servants was introduced, most eighteenth-century servants were young women. Anxieties abounded about servants attracting male "followers" and marrying, for marriage would presumably distract a servant from properly serving the family. Most servants were recruited through word of mouth from relatively close to where they were serving, although there were some employment centers for servants, especially in the cities. During the eighteenth century, servant movement was relatively easy, leading to much hand-wringing among the upper-class about how to find and keep good servants.[6] Because of their intimacy with their masters and their master's domestic spaces in particular, Kristina Booker argues literary representations of servants are "an ideal figure for testing elements (like self-interest) that threaten reigning cultural values."[7] In my account, this means that Pamela's position as a servant might help Richardson work through the threatening elements of a version of female objectification that rests on circulation, using a category that upper-class people were already highly anxious about circulating: servants. In portraying Pamela as a stationary, sentimental object, he arrives at something that is starting to look like sentimental objectification.

Scholarship on *Pamela* often focuses on either Pamela's upward mobility and the blurring of class lines in the novel, or Pamela's emerging interiority and the relationships

5. See R.C. Richardson's *Household Servants* for a reading of the "servant problem debates," including Daniel Defoe's extensive, moralizing wiring on servants.

6. R.C. Richardson, *Household Servants,* 227.

7. Kristina Booker, *Menials,* 27.

between her authorship, interiority, and authority.[8] My reading of *Pamela* will not focus on her interiority or her ability to build power through her own writing. Instead, I want to focus on scenes of constraint, immobility, and stasis in this novel, even as Pamela's rhetoric is one of movement and escape. An account of the events of the novel focused on stasis open up new avenues for thinking about the innovations Richardson makes to the form of the novel. While the trajectory from amatory fiction through Richardson to sentimental novels may feel familiar, my investments in thinking through this change are investments in the changing attitudes toward objectification, and how that restricts old avenues of circulation. The main question for me in this chapter is: When and how can Pamela move? By answering this question, the changes happening to objectification in the novel can come into focus, and it is possible to understand how *Pamela* paves the way for the rise of the sentimental object.

I. Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth: Pamela's Four Guineas and Three Bundles

Pamela's relationship to her wages is not what one might expect for a young servant girl helping to support two aging parents. Her relationship with Mr. B. can only be appropriate as long as it is the relationship between an employer and an employee, and yet both she and her parents display anxiety about accepting any sort of payment from Mr. B. Her wages, presumably for completing domestic tasks for her mistress including helping her dress, writing, and some embroidery, become tinged with connotations of sex work when Mr. B. becomes her new master. Her relationship to him, and the duties she will be expected to perform, are suddenly an open question. Pamela comes to believe more and more that

8. Widely influential readings of Richardson's work include: Ian Watt, *Rise of the Novel* (1957; repr. Berkey: University of California Press, 2001); Frances Ferguson, "Rape and the Rise of the Novel," *Representations* 20, (Autumn 1987): 88-112; and Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). These readings provide accounts of interiority and its importance in Richardson's work. All three accounts put interiority, and the problems of reading/representing a character's interior state of mind, at the center of their arguments about the novel.

accepting payment from Mr. B. has the added strings of sex attached. As a servant, she actually does not receive any sort of formal wages, as she states at the beginning of the novel: "I have no Wages as yet, but what my Lady said she would do for me as I deserved."[9] Mr. B. gives her four guineas out of his dead mother's own pocket as a gift, not a substitute for wages, and Pamela promptly sends that money back home. Those four guineas have the makings of a moral dilemma for Pamela as she and her parents consider if it was right of her to take that money, or if it sets up the beginnings of a relationship with Mr. B. that will lead to her ruin. Her father frets: "But I am thinking about those same four Guineas: I think you should give them back again to your Master; and yet I have broke them. Alas! I have only three left; but I will borrow it if I can."[10] Her father refers to the coins as "those same four" and worries that some damage is done because he has broken one of the coins, in other words, spent some of the money. He thinks he needs to go into debt in order to leave the remaining coins intact and pay back the full amount of Pamela's gift. It is both odd that Pamela's father does not want to spend the money, and that he thinks about keeping the coins together at all. In other words, he does not treat the coins as an amount, but "those same four Guineas," as if they are particular and as if those particular coins need to be returned. Pamela's response about money from her employer is equally strange:

> Don't trouble yourself, now I think of it, about the Four Guineas , nor borrow to make them up; for they were given me, with some Silver, as I told you, as a Perquisite, being what my Lady had about her when she dy'd, and, as I hope for no other Wages, I am so vain as to think I have deserv'd them in the fourteen Months, since my Lady's Death: for she, good Soul! Overpaid me before in Learning and other Kindnesses[11]

9. Given that servants were fed, housed, and clothed, it is possible they were paid sporadically and in lump sums depending on their master's wishes.
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2001), 38.
10. Richardson, *Pamela,* 37.
11. Richardson, *Pamela,* 46.

Pamela implies that Mr. B. has not been paying her since his mother's death, and also refers to the money she has received as a "perquisite." A perquisite can mean a tip, but Pamela doesn't really seem to be referring to a tip. A tip is usually given for service, this seems more like a gift. "Perquisite" can also mean "A thing that has served its primary purpose or that is no longer in use, and to which a subordinate, employee, etc., has a customary right."[12] The clothing Pamela receives from her dear, dead lady is a more classic example of a perquisite, suggesting this definition of the word could be in play in this passage. Referring to money as a perquisite using this secondary definition is, however, confusing because money does not have primary and secondary possessors. You cannot have second-hand money.[13] Pamela's reference to this payment in the same breath as her celebration of her Lady as a "good soul" connects these coins to a feeling, and begins the process of turning them into particular objects with an emotional history. The coins no longer function as coins, and the change highlights the difference between objects that circulate and sentimental objects.[14] Objects that circulate cannot be second hand. Her reference to being overpaid by "kindnesses" with no fixed value suggests that Pamela's relationship to her employer is explicitly divorcing itself from its monetary value and entering an emotional economy instead.

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12. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 1.c "Perquisite," accessed April 13, 2020. https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/141391?redirectedFrom=perquisite.

13. Bank notes could be considered a possible exception, given their value is often derived from relationships rather than intrinsic to the note itself, however, servants would not be normally coming into contact with bank notes at this particular moment.

14. Deidre Lynch points to a similar strangeness regarding money in later sentimental novels such as *The Man of Feeling* and *A Sentimental Journey.* She writes of sentimental fiction, "money's value depends on its not circulating. It depends on money's being divested of its money-like qualities." Lynch points to novels in which this relationship between people and their non-circulating money has been codified. Pamela's confusion about how to treat her money speaks to the early stirrings of this trope that the sentimental novel will later take up.

Deidre Lynch, "Personal Effects and Sentimental Fiction*,"* in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 79.

These same four guineas make another appearance several pages later, this time in a conversation between Pamela and Mrs. Jervis in which she rehashes the same concerns. She wonders, "There are four Guineas, you know, that came out of my good Lady's Pocket, when she dy'd, that, with some Silver, my Master gave me: Now those same four Guineas I sent to my poor Father and Mother, and they have broke them, but would make them up."[15] Changing her position on the status of the four guineas, she wonders if she should return them, and now Mrs. Jervis restates their status as wages: "To be sure, my Dear, you need not, said she, you have well earn'd them by that Waistcoat only."[16] Again, it is notable that Pamela insists on the specificity of the coins, even once they have been broken up and scattered.[17] Mrs. Jervis's perfectly reasonable suggestion that Pamela consider the guineas as payment for the waistcoat—meaning her embroidery work is worth at least the money she receives—ignore the actual circumstances of Pamela receiving the coins, which happened pages earlier than the introduction of the waistcoat. The coins are presented to her in the language of gift-giving, never of wages. This gift implies a relationship with the gift-giver that must be maintained and imply the other types of non-monetary payment, such as Pamela's mistress's "learning and kindness," which she bestows to Pamela like a gift. The coins bind Pamela to Mr. B. in a relationship that creates a fixed system between the giver, the receiver, and the gift.

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15. Richardson, *Pamela,* 80.

16. Richardson, *Pamela,* 81.

17. April London reads these scenes as evidence that "Pamela's initial ingenuous account of her acceptance of the guineas is soon followed by a letter that reveals she has exchanged the passive role assigned women in the seduction scenes of early amatory novels for a more active and vocal resistance," (35). London is right to claim amatory fiction as a necessary referent for these scenes, but I do not think Pamela has successfully managed to transition from their rules surrounding women and property, nor do I think transitioning from the role amatory fiction allows is a means of active or vocal resistance.

April London, *Women and Property in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Marcel Mauss's famous essay "The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies," defines gifts as "presentations which are in theory voluntary, disinterested, and spontaneous, but are in fact obligatory and interested."[18] Spanning multiple examples from societies across time and the globe, Mauss argues the ritual of gift-giving creates social fabrics, it cements the relationship between two individuals.[19] Most importantly, Mauss explains that giving a gift can be a demonstration of power, especially if the receiver cannot reciprocate appropriately. Thomas Hobbes is the thinker primarily responsible for shifting the definition from one of obligatory, social reciprocity to a more contemporary understanding of a gift as spontaneous and given without expectation of reciprocation.[20] He holds up the contract as fulfilling the role gifts have in Mauss's archaic society.

Pamela's fear of Mr. B.'s gift of four guineas is her reaction to his demonstration of power over her. Pamela is skeptical of both the gift and the contract, with good reason, since Mr. B. tries to ensnare Pamela with first the gift and then the contract over the course of the novel.[21] Mr. B. uses both the gift and the contract to attempt to ensure the power dynamics of

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18. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*: *The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 1.

19. Jacques Derrida famously reads Mauss's essay in his work *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money.* Derrida confronts what he considers to be the paradox or "impossibility or the double blind of the gift: For there to be gift, it is necessary that the gift not even appear, that it not be perceived or received as gift," (16).

Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

20. See Harry Liebersohn, *The Return of the Gift: European History of a Global Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014) for a consideration of gifts in a specifically European context. Both discuss Hobbes's influence on European understanding of the gift into the eighteenth century.

21. This idea is further complicated by Lévi Strauss's observation that the original gift in a gift economy was women, exchanged to cement kinship ties. The possible kinship ties Pamela might cement between classes is one of the driving problems of the novel. Ultimately, she isn't really a gift, but she is not a circulating woman either. She becomes the new type of object Lynn Festa calls the "sentimental object." Sentimental objectification removes women from circulation without necessarily introducing the kinship ties Lévi Strauss insists women are used for in the gift economy.

reciprocity germane to both a pre-modern understanding of gifts and the early modern role of contracts. Pamela has much more trouble avoiding the problem of the gift, since she accepts the guineas, than she does Mr. B.'s contract later in the novel. This may be because the role of the gift and her role as servant make the meaning behind the guineas difficult to parse. Nevertheless, it is the gifts she receives, not Mr. B's status as her employer, which creates the power dynamics between these two characters. As C.A. Gregory puts it, "gift-exchange—the exchange of like-for-like—establishes an unequal relationship of *domination* between the transactors."[22] The significance of a gift points to Pamela's symbolic relationship to Mr. B.; she herself will become an object imbued with a sense of relationality. Her object-ness will be defined by her relationship to her owner, Mr. B., not by her innate characteristics as the circulating woman was.

Pamela, unlike Moll Flanders, does not share the properties of a coin. When Moll receives coins, even counterfeit ones, they aid in her circulation. When Pamela receives coins, she becomes less capable of moving because of the debt those coins create. Pamela's coins solidify emotional relationships of debt. Money, therefore, has a much different meaning in this novel than it did in *Moll Flanders*. Money becomes a suspect object because it often contains the threat of the gift, binding characters into a social relationship of reciprocity. Therefore, Pamela's labor does not create capital for her, but creates the opposite in the form of debt to her employer, because her service results in a gift instead of wages. This debt means that the more she works for Mr. B., the more difficult it is to extract herself from his influence.

Money in the novel becomes tinged with impropriety for other reasons besides the

22. C. A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities,* (Chicago: HAU Books, 2015), 46.

possibility that it is a gift. The money Mr. B. offers Pamela is weaponized as an insult that calls her virtue into constant question. One of the problems with even the possibility of Pamela's wages is their continued association with sex work in the novel. Much of this association comes early in the novel when Mr. B. sexually harasses Pamela in the summer house and then attempts to smooth over the incident with money: "and here's something, said he, putting some Gold in my Hand, to make you Amends for the Fright I put you to…And I charge you say nothing of what has past, and all shall be well."[23] Pamela rightly interprets the money as hush money and refuses to accept it, because accepting it would be a tacit acceptance of his unsolicited advances as well. From this incident, it becomes impossible for her to separate out money given to her for her work as a servant and money given to her as a way to make her complicit in an exchange of money for sexual favors.[24] She must always interpret the double meaning that money holds.

This double meaning is especially prominent because Mr. B. frames the money not as wages, but as a kind gesture to "make amends" which comes with its own price of demanding her silence. The money is not wages, but rather a gift with clear strings attached, or in other words, a bribe. In this same incident, Pamela also remarks that when Mr. B. blocked her from exiting "I would have given my life for a farthing."[25] This remark is just

23. Richardson, *Pamela,* 24.

24. See Roxana Wheeler's account of the "love-labor paradigm" underwriting the relationship between the salve-holder and the slave in eighteenth-century, patriarchal understandings of the passions associated with the relationship between master and servant. Wheeler charts emerging discourse about wages as disrupting the grateful, loving servitude that masters had come to expect from their servants. Mr. B's desire for Pamela's love on top of her service seems connected to his refusal to pay her in standard wages.

Roxana Wheeler "Powerful Affections: Slaves, Servants, and Labour of Love in Defoe's Writing" in *Defoe's Footprints: Essays in Honor of Maximillian E. Novak,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 127-152.

25. Richardson, *Pamela,* 25.

hyperbole (how can a dead person spend a farthing after all), but also points to a funny mismatch between what her life is worth (a farthing) and what her silence/sex might be worth (gold). The thing both Mr. B. and Pamela get wrong in these scenes is that they think they can buy Pamela. There is a fantasy at play that he can buy her or that she can buy herself. But their mutual failure to enact something like a sale points to the ways in which Pamela is very much not like a commodity, even if she sometimes masquerades as one. She cannot sell herself when she is already possessed. Both accuse the other of forgetting their relationship to each other, Mr. B. charging "Do you know who you speak to!" and Pamela retorting "Yes, I do , Sir, too well!—Well may I forget that I am your Servant, when you forget what belongs to a Master."[26] Pamela means to say that it is beneath her master's social position to make love to his servant. But, both are pretending that some sort of exchange needs to happen here, when in reality the nature of their relationship means Pamela is already owned by Mr. B.

Metaphors about women as coins in literature of the period connected women to patterns of circulation. The separation of coins from their typical meaning in this novel mirrors Pamela's separation from circulation. The money in this novel is divorced from a larger economy and becomes particular, or it stops existing at all. Wages are replaced with gifts, debt, and bribes, troubling the economic relationship wages should produce. Mr. B. formally breaks his economic relationship with Pamela, when he says, "From this moment, I will no longer consider you as my servant."[27] Mr. B. has the ability to unilaterally change the terms of her relationship to him in this moment, removing her from his service as a servant to gain her future service as a wife. Slowly, money is evacuated from the world of the novel. When

26. Richardson, *Pamela,* 23.
27. Richardson, *Pamela,* 83.

Mr. B. presents Pamela with a contract that would offer her money and goods in exchange for a relationship with him, she rejects the contract outright. She and Mr. B. cannot have a relationship based on payment of money, because the very existence of money calls attention to the problem of Pamela's inability to circulate. The entire plot of the novel cannot happen without the fantasy that Mr. B. needs to do something to possess Pamela, and the implication that Pamela has the ability to circulate (in essence: leave Mr. B.). Part of this fantasy is achieved through Pamela and Mr. B. scrubbing their relationship of monetary significance.

During one of Pamela's attempts to leave Mr. B., she divides up her possession into a series of bundles.[28] Although, it may not be right to call the objects in those bundles her possessions, because she denies that the objects in the first two bundles belong to her at all.[29] The first bundle is comprised of her Lady's gifts to her, the second of her Master's gifts to her, and the final bundle is comprised of the things she considers her own. She declares "Those things there of my Lady's I can have no claim to" and "I have far less Right to these of my worthy Master's."[30] Laura J. Rosenthal presents a way to read these bundles that clearly articulates their role in the narrative: "With these three bundles, Richardson's

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28. Pamela's bundles, however, remind me of another famous character's bundles: Moll Flanders. Moll Flanders's turn to theft occurs when she is down on her luck and "saw lye on a stoll just before the counter a little Bundle wrapt in a white Cloth; beyond it, stood a Maid Servant with her Back to it," (254). In a famous scene, something speaks to Moll Flanders and says "take the Bundle; be quick; do it this Moment," thus ushering her into a life of crime (255).

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722; repr., New York: Penguin Classics, 1989).

Sam Rowe reads bundles in Moll Flanders as "economic objects *par excellence."* He suggests that a bundled group of objects has a particular enticing quality that give the bundle a kind of power over the subject in that the object is causing desire for the subject.

Sam Rowe, "Imaginary Wants: Desire, Villainy, and Capital in Eighteenth-Century Fiction" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2017) 44. ProQuest.

29. Cynthia Wall reads these bundles as "a sort of past, present and future," (135). Of Richardson, she adds his innovations in description to a long list of newish features in *Pamela,* suggesting he is "reassembling and reuniting the *things* of a house into the *meaning* of a house,"(199).

Cynthia Wall. *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

30. Richardson, *Pamela,* 79.

narrative lays out Pamela's choice at an early three-way juncture. The heroine explains this choice in terms of moral propriety and sentiment: the first bundle, sadly, suggests her lost position and a lost friendship upon Lady B's death; the second bundle implies the sexual compromise Mr. B. demands; the third bundle will clothe her for the virtuous innocence she intends to retain."[31] The first two bundles are about relationships with other characters because they are full of gifts. Her relationship with her Lady must be discarded alongside her relationship with her Master if she is to be free because, even though her relationship with her Lady was not tinged with the potential for sexual assault, it still forced her to enter into gift exchange with Mr. B.

When Pamela bundles her objects and begins to think about them as assemblages of her relationships with various characters in the text, her rhetoric surrounding her objects and herself shifts to one of theft. Again, she thinks about objects she has received from others not as wages, but as gifts of a particular kind. Gifts as Pamela represents them never fully become the possession of their recipient. Pamela cannot bring the objects with her if she terminates the relationship she has with the gift givers, nor can she sell or use the objects. Therefore, taking the goods is akin to theft, even though they are her own possessions. Pamela then applies that logic to her own person. In arguing with the odious Mrs. Jewkes, she explicitly refers to herself as a thief: "are you afraid I should confederate with them to commit a Robbery upon my Master? May-be I am, said the odious Wretch; for to rob him of yourself, would be the worst that could happen to him, in his Opinion."[32] Pamela goes on to ask "how came I to be his Property? What Right has he in me, but such as a Thief may plead

31. Laura J. Rosenthal, "Pamela's Work," *The Eighteenth Century* 46, no. 3 (2005): 245.
32. Richardson, *Pamela,* 126.

to stolen Goods?"[33] Here, Pamela again questions her status, wondering how it is possible she can be stolen in the same way she wondered how it could be possible she could be bought.

II. Movement in the World of Pamela

The slipperiness of Pamela's status as object is further compounded by her failure to circulate. As I have mentioned, Richardson's social history suggests that Pamela in real life would have easily moved from one employer to another. Yet, Pamela simply cannot escape Mr. B.'s control. For all of Pamela's hand-wringing/writing about leaving Mr. B.'s employment, she does not. It is deeply strange how much rhetorical energy the novel spends on Pamela talking about escape, thinking about escape, and trying to escape with no success. As I suggest in chapter one, free movement for women is a strong indicator that they have agency, even when they are objectified. Pamela's failure to move could signal a failure of agency. Her inability to access the power of circulation, and the text's incessant meditation on these failures, draws our attention to Pamela's desires and the possibilities of female agency this text offers.

Consider, for instance, just one of Pamela's attempted escapes, in which she finds herself unobserved in the garden and attempts to run out into the pasture of Mr. B.'s country house: "For I had been down again; and ventur'd to open the Door, and went out about a Bow-shoot into the pasture; but there stood that horrid bull, staring me full in the Face, with fiery Saucer Eyes."[34] All of Pamela's prison breaks end with similar catastrophic results, so that Mr. B.'s estates begin to resemble Daedalus's labyrinth or a maximum security prison. Consider another escape attempt, in which Pamela is walking with Mr. B. in the garden and

33. Richardson, *Pamela,* 126.
34. Richardson, *Pamela,* 152.

he puts his hand around her neck:" I was running from him; and he said, Come back, when I bid you.—So, knowing every Place was alike dangerous to me, and I had nobody to run to, I came back, at his Call, and I held my Hands together, and wept."[35] It is hard to read this as a credible attempt at escape if Pamela returns as soon as she is called.

What is going on in these scenes? For me, they exaggerate and practically make comic Pamela's inability to circulate. Utterly trapped, Pamela's failures to leave begins to look like a desire to stay. Like someone with Stockholm syndrome, Pamela's material reality begins to leech over into her own desires, so much so that when she is finally released to go home to her parents she writes to them: "I think I was loth to leave the House. Can you believe it?—What could be the matter with me, I wonder!—I felt something so strange, and my Heart was so lumpish!—I wonder what ail'd me!"[36] Readers are perhaps less surprised than Pamela that she does not want to leave, for she has refused to leave for almost 300 pages. In this way, the text focuses on desires that are sublimated, barely articulated or even outright rejected in the minds of the characters. Pamela's failures of agency and inability to circulate in a strange way allow her to realize what she desires. Mr. B.'s entrapment *of her* allows paradoxically for his seduction *by her,* alongside her realization of her own desire. This is importantly different from Fantomina's snap realization she would like to be "sweetly forced" by Beauplaisir. Both Fantomina and Pamela have desires that relate strangely to traditional notions of agency, as well as desires that they seem to hid from themselves. But, Fantomina's desires require an articulation of some kind in order for her to exploit her own circulation. Pamela's desires are only realized when she abandons any notions of agency or circulation. Only through her physical constraint is she "rewarded" by realizing her desire for

35. Richardson, *Pamela,* 210.
36. Richardson, *Pamela,* 244.

her captor.

Circulation is no longer a salient narrative because this narrative, unlike previous narratives, insists on Pamela and Mr. B. as particular characters that are not fungible with others. *Pamela* is a much smaller, more contained narrative than Defoe or Haywood's novels. There are essentially two characters and a confined location. For all of the novel's sprawling length and capacious narrative, it resembles a Tom and Jerry cartoon in which Mr. B. and Pamela play an extended game of cat and mouse, neither particularly interested in ending the game. The depth of their connection creates a type of narrative movement that looks like the opposite of circulation as these two characters rattle around a confined area, only showing interest in each other. For this kind of narrative to work, Richardson must innovate a new way of representing the gendered interaction between Pamela and Mr. B. Part of his template for this gendered interaction is conduct literature, suggesting this novel is meant to be an exemplar. In holding Pamela up as an example to all other women, a paragon of virtue, Richardson makes his heroine even more particular. She becomes a special kind of object, oft imitated, but never duplicated.

Richardson is flagging for readers that he is not writing a story of circulation, so what is he writing? In this novel, he employs a plot device that will become central to sentimental fiction: the abduction plot. Lying about his plans for Pamela, Mr. B. writes a letter to Farmer Norton to secure Pamela's person at a more secluded estate, explaining "I have, *to oblige her father,* order'd her to be carry'd to one of my Houses, where she will be well us'd, to try if by Absence, and Expostulation with both, they can be brought to know their own interest."[37] Mr. B. abducts Pamela, moving her to a different house. It may be helpful to pause on Mr. B.'s

37. Richardson, *Pamela,* 106.

movement in the novel, since it contrasts with the constraints Pamela is under. If Pamela is implausibly immobile, Mr. B. is hyper mobile, popping up in random hallways and rooms just when you think he is gone. This is another feature of sentimental novels, in which male characters are granted extreme powers of mobility in contrast to female characters, who are often trapped in one location.

III. Clothes without Bodies

Besides Pamela's inability to circulate, she also finds herself closed off from another tool the circulating woman uses often: disguise.[38] Pamela's inability to disguise herself like Fantomina or Roxana reinforces her stationary status. The clothing in this novel act without bodies underneath. In other words, the clothing itself sometimes becomes more important than the body, as characters build identities through clothing. Including a surprisingly low level of physical descriptions, the text treats descriptions of textiles as stand-ins for descriptions of bodies. Considering the feminist theory of "womanliness as a masquerade," as the psychoanalyst Joan Riviere put it and as it was taken up in the work of Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, among others, the centrality of the performance of clothing in a novel about the formation of one girl's identity comes as no surprise. And, the clothing Pamela wears have serious implications for how she is perceived in the text.

In *Fantomina,* the unnamed main character uses disguise so effectively she seems to shapeshift. Likewise, Roxana uses costumes like her Turkish Dress or her Quaker costume to

38. The title of this sections comes from Chloe Wigston Smith, "Clothes without Bodies: Objects, Humans, and the Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century It-Narratives and Trade Cards," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 23, no. 2 (2010-2011): 347-380. She argues, contrary to many accounts of the comingling of bodies and objects in the eighteenth century, that depictions of clothes without bodies actually reinforces human agency and difference from objects by exerting control over commodities worn close to the body. I borrow Smith's phrase to describe the way characters in *Pamela* are physically identified more so by their clothes than by their bodies.

completely reinvent herself.[39] Terry Castle's influential *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* considers the centrality of disguise and identity to eighteenth-century culture, reading the masquerade as a cultural phenomenon of carnivalesque disorder reaching to the heart of questions about the self and other. In *Pamela,* I would argue, Pamela herself thinks of her own identity in terms of the items of clothing she wears, in contrast to Roxana's desire for her clothes to obscure her identity. The fungibility beneath clothing that characters like Roxana and Fantomina count on in order to circulate is replaced with a fierce and self-conscience insistence on the particularity of clothing and the particularity of the people associated with that clothing. The potential anonymity of bodies underneath clothing becomes a source of anxiety instead of transgressive power in this text, as can be seen through a preoccupation with stripping.

When Pamela dresses in plain clothes to visit her parents, for instance, she acts as if she is choosing clothing that accurately represents her identity: Once she puts the outfit on, she exclaims "O the pleasure of descending with Ease, Innocence, and Resignation!—Indeed there is nothing like it!"[40] Mr. B. calls her a "little Villain" and says "I was resolved never to honour your unworthiness, said he, with so much notice again; and so you must disguise yourself, to attract me, and yet pretend, like an hypocrite as you are—."[41] If Roxana and

39. Although, Defoe troubles Roxana's ability to use disguises. Her Turkish dress, at least in her daughter's hunt for her real identity, acts more as an identifier than a disguise. Her vanity and desire to wear the costume ultimately result in her undoing. Julie Park considers in *The Self and It* how eighteenth-century patterns of trade allowed people to begin to associate their identity with objects, opening up discourses about people putting themselves under the power of objects. Disguising oneself, even for highly fungible and circulating characters like Roxana, is a dangerous and troubling activity with the potential to backfire.

Julie Park, *The Self and It: Novel Objects and Mimetic Subjects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

40. Richardson, *Pamela,* 55.

41. Richardson, *Pamela,* 57.

Fantomina present a rubric for how clothing can be used to disguise bodies, thereby allowing for their circulation, Pamela attempts to draw our attention to this as a problem. In this scene, Pamela seems unaware of how clothing can work as a disguise, acting as if this peasant dress she assumes is something other than a costume. Mr. B. names the clothing as a disguise in order to tease Pamela and then to shame her, suggesting the disguise is fanning his desire instead of allowing Pamela to escape his notice.

Pamela is well known for its attempted-rape scenes, but on closer inspection, most of the scenes of threat in the novel are not threats of rape so much as threats of stripping. Taking off clothing is seen as an intense violation of personal identity and can be perpetrated by men as well as women. Fearful that her new housemates will allow Mr. B. into her room, Pamela refuses to go to bed, leading Mrs. Jewkes to announce, "you shall be made to come to-bed; and Nan and I will undress you."[42] The centrality of undressing is repeated in this scene; Mrs. Jewkes then tells Nan "undress my young Lady. If she won't let you, I'll help you: And if neither of us can do it quietly, we'll call my Master to do it for us."[43] Pamela and Mrs. Jewkes continue to argue, with Mrs. Jewkes actually taking Pamela in some sort of bear hug and picking her up before saying "undress, undress I tell you."[44] Mrs. Jewkes's insistence in this scene that Pamela undress for bed seems tinged with sexual violence, especially considering they will share a bed. Pamela eventually agrees, although she keeps two coats on and the bedroom keys in her hand for her own protection.

This undressing scene comes after Mr. B. has presented Pamela with a contract (as well as rape threats) for her to become his mistress, which she categorically refuses. Perhaps Mrs.

42. Richardson, *Pamela,* 194.
43. Richardson, *Pamela,* 194.
44. Richardson, *Pamela,* 195.

Jewkes's incessant demands she take off her clothing is an attempt to understand this servant girl who refused these terms. Counter-intuitively, however, the novel suggests that undressing will obscure more than it reveals. The terms of the contract themselves are quite preoccupied with clothing, promising Pamela "four complete suits of Rich clothing" as well as other trinkets and finery.[45] In these clothes, Pamela would appear as his wife, and yet she would really be nothing more than his mistress. Understanding the disparity, Pamela refuses the offer. The scene that directly follows involved a woman demand that Pamela strip, perhaps drawing attention to how easily clothes can come off, and therefore how easily identity can change with a costume change. Pamela refuses the clothing of a wife because "Fine cloaths become not me," as she says to Mr. B.[46] Since she wears her mistress's old clothing we know that is not strictly true, but instead Pamela seems to want to say that the clothing of a wife would not become her if she were not a wife. Her clothing would not accurately reflect her identity. Undressing is so problematic in Pamela because it strips away a character's identity and, even, their existence in the novel. If clothing communicates identity and needs to accurately reflect identity, a lack of clothing blurs lines of class and perhaps even gender. This anxiety is reflected in popular concerns about servants wearing their masters' clothing, as already discussed. Characters are so closely associated with the objects on their bodies that removing their clothing might be akin to destroying them. It is unclear if there is anything beneath their clothing to uncover.

Undressing takes on further significance once Pamela begins sewing her writing into her clothing in order to protect her letters from Mr. B. and Mrs. Jewkes. Pamela sews the writing

45. Richardson, *Pamela,* 190.
46. Richardson, *Pamela,* 190.

"around her hips."[47] The placement of the papers is reminiscent of a pregnancy that she is concealing; she protects her writing like she would protect a child. She also turns her clothing and her writing into one object by making the writing part of her clothing. This is a metafictional moment in the text since the clothing is actually made of writing and does not actually exist aside from its description in the text. It also draws attention to the two main ways Pamela manufactures her identity: her writing her own story and her self-expression through her clothing. Both of these aspects are wrapped up in Mr. B. in strange ways, and yet need protecting from him. Her clothing is given to her from Mr. B., it prevents her from leaving Mr. B., and yet it is something she fiercely protects as part of her own identity. She worries constantly about her clothing accurately reflecting her identity in part because her identity is in constant flux. Part of the text's anxiety also seems to stem from the concern that beneath the clothing and the writing sewn into the clothing, Pamela's body may be unremarkable. The story does not start with Pamela, or even Mr. B., but with a gift of a fine lady's clothing to a servant, transforming her into something else. The text charges scenes of stripping perhaps to imply that if Pamela were to strip, what lies beneath these objects is not going to be able to carry this narrative.

When Mr. B. learns that her writings are stashed on her person, he threatens "I never undrest a girl in my life, but I will now begin to strip my pretty Pamela; and hope I shall not go far, before I find them."[48] Whether or not we believe the rake Mr. B.'s claims that he has never undressed a girl before or his hope that he will not get very far, Pamela reacts with horror to this threat of two-fold violation, the exposure of her body and the exposure of her mind though her personal writing. Mr. B.'s desire to expose Pamela for what she really is

47. Richardson, *Pamela,* 227.
48. Richardson, *Pamela,* 235.

centers less on the removal of her clothing to expose her naked body as it does to expose her writings, which the reader knows contain copious descriptions and records of her clothing and how that clothing changed over time. The clothing she wears is protecting more information about her clothing, suggesting this threat of revealing is not really about the body beneath her clothing. The naked body cannot give Mr. B. any additional access to her mind or reveal her true self, and his licentious desires are not tied to her naked body, but tied to the erotic exercise of touching her clothing. Anne Hollander suggests fashion is inherently erotic because of its suggestion of nudity beneath clothing. She writes,

> People's clothes had the effect of making their inferred nude bodies seem more, not less, desirable. Nakedness, of course has its own fierce effect on desire; but clothing with nakedness underneath has another, and it is apparently even more potent… For six centuries, fashion has perpetually re-created an integrated vision of clothing and body together. There is a strong eroticism in this method, since it plays on the dialectic of dress and body.[49]

Here, the inherent eroticism of clothing is extended to supersede the naked sexuality of nudity. Mr. B. is perhaps less interested in Pamela's body than her mind, and her mind is in her petticoats.

The only time a character willfully strips in this novel is when Pamela attempts to launch an escape by throwing her clothing in a lake as a decoy. Her clothing is inextricably linked to her person so much so that the presences of her clothing in the lake is enough for them to assume that she is also in the lake: "Thither they all ran! and finding my clothes, doubted not I as at the bottom."[50] Further still, when Pamela throws her own clothing in the lake to make Mr. B. assume she has drowned, she then begins to contemplate drowning herself. Mr. B. and Mrs. Jewkes are not the only ones that conflate Pamela's clothing with her body, she does so

49. Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 85.
50. Richardson, *Pamela,* 176.

as well. In this scene, it is almost as if once her clothing is in the pond, Pamela cannot help but feel a desire to follow them. She might as well have thrown her own body in the lake, the pull of her clothing is so intense. The way her clothing is treated, her own consideration of this event, and the odd way her clothing stands in for her body in the scene argue that clothing in this novel actually replaces bodies. Rather than a mind/body duality, this novel suggests a mind/clothing duality.

If Pamela cannot disguise herself, Mr. B. shape shifts in extraordinary ways. In a truly bizarre scene, Mr. B. attempts to rape Pamela while cross-dressing. Her letter recounting the events set up dramatic irony as readers learn that Mr. B. is really a wolf in sheep's clothing:

> So I looked into the closets, and kneeled down in my own, as I used to do, to say my prayers; and this with my under cloaths in my hand, all undrest, and passed by the poor sleeping wench, as I thought, in my return. But Oh! little did I think, that it was my wicked, wicked master in a gown and petticoat of hers, and his apron over his face and shoulders. What meanness will not Lucifer make his votaries stoop to gain their abominable ends![51]

While this scene is probably intended to be harrowing, the effect of picturing Mr. B. with an apron over his head is somewhat comic. It is slightly unbelievable that Pamela does not notice that the body next to her, pulling her against him, is male. He must be taller than Nan, his hands must be bigger, he must smell differently than she does. Yet, Pamela does not seem to notice any of these differences. In women's clothing, his body becomes indistinguishable from Nan's. Pamela cannot put on a shepherdess costume and masquerade her way out of the house, but Mr. B. can pass as an elderly woman in the world of the novel. The conflation of bodies and clothing by not only male characters who are "tricked" by the elision, but by women themselves who begin to experience clothing as an extension of their bodies, points to a shifting understanding of objects. Objects are imbued with increased significance in the

51. Richardson, *Pamela,* 202.

text of Pamela. No longer a guise that women exert some control over, clothing becomes an object that Pamela desperately seeks to keep from controlling her.

IV. Sister Wives: Pamela and her Afterlife

After the success of *Pamela,* and the proliferation of sequels, Richardson released *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* alongside an advertisement which directly calls out those sequels and parodies: "There being Reason to apprehend, from the former Attempts of some Imitators, who, supposing the Story of *Pamela* a Fiction, have murder'd that excellent Lady, and mistaken and misrepresented other (suppos'd imaginary) characters, that Persons may not be wanting, who will impose new Continuations upon the Publick."[52] He considers the attempt to challenge his authorial authority as essentially murder. The media frenzy that followed *Pamela* resulted in what basically amounts to fan fiction in the form of sequels, parodies, adaptations and commentaries. Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor expertly detail the range of texts that were spawned in the wake of Pamela, and provide historical insight into Richardson's marketing strategy and *Pamela*'s publication history in *Pamela in the Marketplace.* They suggest Richardson ran an ambitious and unusual marketing campaign for *Pamela,* "having sold *Pamela* once as piety, and arguably once again as pornography, he then gave a third identity to the novel by repackaging it as pedagogy."[53]

Despite this aggressive promotional strategy, Richardson did not claim the text and insisted on its provenance as a set of found documents, which complicated his ability to control the narrative after it was released on the market. As Keymer and Sabor colorfully put it, "though Richardson had all the protectionist instincts of a one-man Disney Corporation, he

52. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 603.

53. Tomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, '*Pamela' in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 35.

had none of the legal arsenal."[54] In short, fledgling copyright law and his insistence on anonymity made it difficult to protect his text from usurpers. Richardson's background as a printer gave him an increased sense of a text as his property, and the way he speaks about *Pamela* the text resonates with Pamela the character's new status as an object that Mr. B. possesses.

William Warner also tracks some of the problems with Richardson's relation to the emerging print market of the period. He suggests Richardson is not only trying to control his own text, but *Pamela* is trying to control how people read, and self-consciously promising to reform the bad reader into the virtuous reader.[55] This reforming impulse extends to the entire print market, which operated as Warner puts it, as "an open system in which entertainment circulates on a market for culture that is non-hierarchical, that is swept by whim and fashion, and that sanctions whatever succeeds."[56] As Betty A. Schellenberg puts it, "When the London papers announced continuations of *Pamela* by several other writers, Richardson's protests invoke the patriarch whose daughter has been kidnapped or even raped: his 'plan' risks being 'basely Ravished out of [his] hands, and, probably, my characters depreciated and

54. Keymer and Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace,* 52.

55. The "bad reader" is primarily the reader of earlier novels, like those by Haywood or Behn. William Warner suggests a different tension between what he terms novels of amorous intrigue (and what I think about as novels of circulating women) and *Pamela* in that Pamela and Mr. B are in tension over her relationship to novels: "When her young master indulges in novelistic assumptions about their common situation and pressures her to yield to his desires, she refuses to play the novelistic role of seduced victim. The heroine only escapes her captivity within the novel by deflecting the actions through a new kind of writing—the letters with which she records her trials." (186). Warner sees the change in *Pamela* to be a change in Mr. B from rake/novelistic villain to reformed novel reader, as he and Pamela get on the same page (so to speak) about what kind of novel they are in. I see the tension as about Pamela's status in the novel and track a change in her from an object that can be bought to an object that can only be stolen. The status of her movement as an object denotes a major change in how novels will relate to and think about women going forward.

William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1998).

56. William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 225.

debased' (Richardson to James Leake, August 1741)."[57] Richardson's sense of possessiveness over his text, and his concerns about the text circulating, parallels the rising concerns about women circulating. Richardson does not want his text to engage with new owners, so he asserts his authorial authority over *Pamela* as his object. Although the nature of publishing dictates he has to allow *Pamela* to circulate, he resorts to the language of sexual threat to describe that circulation. Allowing *Pamela* outside of his control invokes the language of abduction and rape, turning the text itself into the sentimental object.

Pamela in her Exalted Condition is Richardson's response to the market's voracious demand for more writing about Pamela. Even still, it has not received nearly as much critical attention as *Pamela,* and has a reputation as dull, moralizing, and unnecessary.[58] It may be all those things, but it is also exceedingly odd and uneven in interesting ways. In the context of changing structures of objecthood, I think this novel attempts to consider how to write plots around the new sentimental woman-object, with somewhat mixed results. In this novel, Pamela has fully transformed from a wayward coin to a potted plant. A countess in *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* remarks that it "Would have been strange, (excuse me Mrs. B for I know your story) if such a fine Flower had not been transplanted from the Field to the Garden."[59] Because this transformation is complete, Richardson must come up with plots that utilize this new type of object he has created. In his sequel, Richardson addresses two

57. Betty Schellenberg, "Authorship" in *Samuel Richardson in Context,* ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 104.

58. Warner briefly addresses *Pamela II*, but the existence of that book seems to undermine his argument that Pamela is the novel to end all novels. Instead, *Pamela II* tries to extend the plots that Warner suggests are foreclosed. A notable exception to the general tendency among critics to ignore the sequel is Terry Castle's influential *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-century English Culture and Fiction,* which reads the masquerade scene in that novel and Pamela's Quaker costume.

59. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 116.

anxieties about the new type of sentimental woman-object that will find a home in sentimental fiction: fears about the sentimental woman-object becoming boring and questions about what to do with the women that do not become sentimental objects.

The major plot point in this novel somewhat surprisingly revolves around polygamy. When Pamela becomes pregnant, Mr. B. begins to express interest in polygamy, especially when Pamela makes clear her desire to breastfeed. Lawrence Stone documents medical concerns into the eighteenth century about the effects of sexual intercourse on milk production, leading the recommendation that women not engage in sex while breastfeeding.[60] This recommendation led women to wean early or rely on a wet-nurse in order to prevent infidelity in their marriage. Mr. B.'s insistence that Pamela use a wet-nurse seems to be tied to his desire to keep her sexually available for his own use, and it is during their debates about breastfeeding that he brings up polygamy. As Felicity Nussbaum explains, "In the eighteenth century, polygamy was defined variously as a husband's taking more than one wife, marrying after the death of his first wife, or even seducing a woman while married to another and therefore being held responsible for her ruin." [61]

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60. For more information on the history of breastfeeding, see:
Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Penguin History, 1991).

61. Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 75.
Felicity Nussbaum reads the polygamy plot in *Pamela in her Exalted Condition* in relation to emerging ideas about the otherized African woman who might engage in polygamy. Nussbaum also recognizes the polygamy plot as related to a problem in this novel: "Until Pamela becomes pregnant in *Pamela* II, there is little to say about the virtuous domestic married woman, no story to be told," (85). However, Nussbaum ultimately reads this plot as connected to Pamela's authority as a pregnant woman and polygamy as a patriarchal response to Pamela's assertion of authority. I do not think the polygamy plot has to do with Pamela's authority, but rather her solidified status as a non-fungible, non-agential object.
For more information on polygamy in the eighteenth century, including analysis of various tracts in favor or against Polygamy, see Carol Blum, "Polygamy: Fertility and the Lost Right of Man," In *Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction and power in Eighteenth Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). The eighteenth century saw the proliferation of texts encouraging the

At a masquerade, Mr. B. becomes taken with a charming nun, leading Pamela and her friends to suspect him of engaging in an affair. Pamela grows increasingly distressed over her husband's potential infidelity and what will become of her if he decides to take a second wife. As Mr. B. warned in the second half of *Pamela,* her visible distress is displeasing to him. At one point, he criticizes what she is wearing by saying "But is this the best Appearance you chuse to make to receive such Guests?"[62] However, it becomes clear that Mr. B. is not actually criticizing how she is dressed, but he goes on to comment "You look well in any thing—But I thought you'd have had your Jewels—Yet they would never have less become you; for of late your Eyes have lost that Brilliancy that used to strike me with a Lustre, much surpassing that of the finest Diamonds."[63] Pamela has become literally less shiny in Mr. B.'s eyes. Because Pamela is not the shiny toy she once was, Mr. B. is desirous of consuming a new object.

In the world of the novel, the polygamy plot is not about infidelity, but rather about the anxiety that the new sentimental woman-object will lose her shine. Men will want to consume anew, creating a problem of what to do with the old object that has a singular owner and cannot be recycled. Pamela worries about retiring with her parents and if she will be allowed to be with her child if she is replaced. She knows that her position as prized possession is only guaranteed as long as she is still prized. There is no mechanism to keep her from being discarded, and she cannot reenter circulation as the Roxana's of the world used to do.

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taking of multiple wives as a way to rationally and logically increase procreation and promote population growth. Also, See Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* for an example of an instance in which remarriage is treated as adultery.

62. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 409.

63. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 409.

Ultimately, it turns out Pamela was wrong to assume Mr. B. had taken a mistress and domestic bliss is restored by the novel's conclusion. But, this does not happen before Mr. B. admits, "Whatever it costs me, and I have been inconsiderately led on by blinking Passion for an Object too charming, but which I never thought equal to my *Pamela,* I will (for it is yet, I bless God, in my Power) restore to your Virtue an Husband all your own."[64] The polygamy plot is not particularly satisfactorily resolved. Mr. B. admits he was enticed by another, but ends up putting Pamela on trial for her ill humor and denies the affair. Domestic bliss is restored because Pamela becomes shiny again once she learns the affair did not take place. The problem of Mr. B.'s boredom with her, especially when she is out of humor and not working properly, is not adequately addressed. Ultimately, I think the plot of a husband growing bored with his postpartum wife feels tired and distasteful even in 1739. It is not picked up in later sentimental novels.

Another problem with the plot of Richardson's sequel is his attempt to incorporate the "extra" women in the text. He allows them to live in the world of the novel and does not kill them off, a confusing situation for students of the later novels of the eighteenth century. Pamela takes in Mr. B.'s illegitimate child and Mr. B. continues to have a friendship with the woman he almost cheated on Pamela with. These various other women are all "extra" to the main marriage plot that drove the first novel.[65] In earlier novels that work on a pattern of circulation, these women are not extra, but because Richardson has insisted on the particularity of Pamela and the singular domestic bliss of their home, these women suddenly have nowhere to go. Richardson's desire to include these women, to try and build plots

64. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 433.

65. For an influential reading of one of Mr. B.'s former mistresses and illegitimate child, see Charlotte S. Sussman, "'I Wonder whether poor Miss Sally Godfrey be living or dead': The Married Woman and the Rise of the Novel," *Diacritics* 20, no. 2 (1990): 88-102.

around them and even sometimes have them write letters or speak, will drop out of later iterations of the novel. "Extra" women will have to exit the narrative and will often be killed off in service of the plot.

I think Richardson attempts to address these problems because he moves his female characters too far beyond the point of having anything recognizable as agency. For example, a rakish character writes to Mr. B. saying,

> As if our Daughters Eyes were not our own Eyes, their brazen Faces our brazen Faces; at least till we can find somebody to take them, all the rest of their Trumpetry, off of our Hands—Saucy Baggages! Who have neither Souls nor Senses, but what they have borrowed from us, and whose very Bones, and the Skin that covers them, so much their Pride and their Ornament, are so many Parts of our own undervalued Skin and Bones.[66]

While the novel is not sympathetic toward this character, Miss Darnford, a highly regarded character in the novel, writes to Pamela a similar sentiment: "You have your own will in everything; A good Reason why, Because you make your own Will his."[67] Here, Richardson creates a problem for himself. When the female characters in this novel have the faces, skins, and will of the male characters in the novel, it is hard to mobilize them to do anything in the narrative. They become the kind of objects that it is difficult to write anything about, because they simply reflect the use their male owners have for them. So, his main plot details what happens when Pamela becomes a broken object. Later iterations of the sentimental woman-object will back down from such a totalizing portrait of objecthood. They will create the illusion of agency within a marriage plot through the dual-option plot, in which a woman can pick between two suitors, usually only one of which is actually eligible. Extra women will be killed in service to the plot, and anxieties about what happens to these women when they are not shiny and new are silenced. Richardson's experimentation with

66. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 90.
67. Richardson, *Pamela in her Exalted Condition,* 288.

how to work with the new type of objecthood he introduces falls by the wayside, leaving behind a curious but rarely discussed example of the extremity of the initial version of the sentimental woman, and the specter of abandonment and obsolescence that clings to her from her inception.

Chapter Four

Playing for Keeps: Sentimental Women and the Vices of Objectification

Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation propose a shift in the rhetoric of objectification from circulation to stasis, from fungible commodification to particular sentimentality. It-narratives over the course of the long history of the genre shift in tone, audience, and style. *Pamela* introduces a new type of novel and plot centered on a markedly different type of woman than, for instance, Moll Flanders and Fantomina. In this final chapter, I lay out a new mode of objectification in contrast to "circulating objectification." I argue the sentimental novels of the 1790s capture a different mode of objectification and bring to fruition the shift I track in chapters two and three. This is not to say that circulating objectification is dead and gone, but rather that it is no longer the dominant form. Instead, I will refer to a new type of objectification by the mode that best exemplifies its use: "sentimental" objectification.

As Deidre Lynch puts it: "Sentimental novels are cluttered with things."[1] I am explicitly interested in the "clutter" of things in the sentimental novel and how people, especially women, make up that clutter. In my final chapter, I turn away from the moving, whirring, shape-shifting object-women of circulating objectification to consider the sentimental woman. For a genre that is typically focused on the figure of the sentimental man, I argue that the sentimental woman and the gender binaries dividing the two are just as important for getting to the heart of the mechanics of the genre. Lynch's account of the sentimental novel

1. Deidre Lynch, "Personal Effects and Sentimental Fiction," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature and Culture, Bucknell University Press, 2014), 63.

argues that the emotional relationships people have with things in these novels collapse the difference between things and people, meaning it is "hard to distinguish the one sort of relationship from the other—even if, convinced of the folly of fetishism, we tend to believe that the difference between, say, ownership and friendship is a difference worth preserving."[2]

Sentimental objectification can be defined by a few key features that differentiate it from circulating objectification. While circulating objects move freely (even agentially) and are fungible with other objects, sentimental objects are essentially the opposite. They are particular and individualized, and as a result are typically fixed in place. When sentimental objects move, they are often considered "lost" by their owners. My definition of sentimental objectification is heavily influenced by Lynn Festa's consideration of the genre in *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France.* In her account, there are two different ways objects are used in the period to solidify social relationships: the exchange of objects consolidating relationships between kin, i.e. the gift, and objects articulating social relations, i.e. the commodity fetishism.[3] The sentimental, in her reading, creates an alternative category to either the gift or the commodity. Sentimental objects articulate a private, individualizing relationship with an object that sets them apart from the relationality implied by commodities or gifts. Specifically, sentimental objects become the opposite of commodities for Festa. If the commodity is fully alienable, the sentimental object is absolutely particular. Her reading of the "particularity" of the sentimental object is connected to its ability to act as a conduit for sentimental feeling: "the community the sentimental creates is not based on the (critically limitless) objects that produce feeling, but

2. Lynch, "Personal Effects and Sentimental Fiction" in *The Secret Life of Things,* 63.

3. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 72.

on who is allowed or able to experience certain kinds of feeling about these objects."[4] In this way, the sentimental creates a hierarchy of characters: people who experience sentimental feelings and people who act as conduits for those feelings. The question of who is a subject and who is an object in a sentimental novel hinges on this hierarchy.

Festa's account of the sentimental taps into a branch of scholarship considering empire, transatlantic eighteenth-century studies, and the slave trade with fruitful results for considering the sentimental. Some of the most robust theories of sentimentality have come from recent considerations of abolitionist texts and sources connected to the slave trade. For instance, Ian Baucom's *Spectres of the Atlantic: Financial Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* takes the historical event of the *Zong* massacre, in which one-hundred and thirty-three enslaved people were thrown overboard for the insurance money, in order to make a claim about financial capital in the 18th century. The story of the *Zong* massacre is also a stark and concise example of the role objectification played in the slave trade: "Captain Collingwoood had not so much murdered a company of his fellows as hurried them into money."[5] While my study confines itself to tracking the history of the objectification of white women in novels, considering a parallel discourse about slavery illuminates the final turn of this project: considering the potential responses to sentimentality.

Sentimentality is strongly associated with "women's fiction" and with abolitionism because it is often thought of as a discursive mode that can combat objectification. For instance, Baucom goes on to consider the 1840 inaugural World Anti-Slavery Convention and the call Henry B. Stanton (President of the American Anti-Slavery Society) made for "a

4. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire,* 54

5. Ian Baucom *Specters of the Atlantic: Financial Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 93.

world literature, antislavery in its principles and sentimental in its address."[6] When the discourse over sentimentality and the use of sentimental fiction as a rhetorical technique is taken up by abolitionists, they are directly confronting circulation, transformation of bodies into money, and commodification as a literal process, as Baucom's example demonstrates. There are key differences between slavery and the experiences of women in the same period. However, both abolitionists and feminists turn to sentimentality as a tool to combat objectification and, crucially, they both miss a key point about sentimentality that is illuminated by a closer consideration of the mechanisms of objectification underpinning the sentimental object.

Lauren Berlant clearly articulates the mechanism of the sentimental mode, which she tracks from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into nineteenth-century "women's culture":

> As a force for the conversion of the politically privileged, sentimental politics has had powerfully transformative effects on which subordinate populations are recognized as candidates for inclusion in the body politic. But as [James] Baldwin asserts, the humanization strategies of sentimentality always traffic in cliché, the reproduction of a person as a thing, and thus indulge in the confirmation of the marginal subject's embodiment of *inhumanity* on the way to providing the privileged with heroic occasions of recognition, rescue, and inclusion.[7]

Again, at the center of the genre are the objectified people at which the sentimental viewer can direct his gaze, despite the stated attempt of practitioners of the sentimental to enact the opposite of objectification.

While Berlant is interested in contemporary connections between sentimentality and "women's culture," Laura Hinton suggests that the association of the sentimental genre with women and femininity might be overblown. Her study of the sentimental, *The Perverse Gaze*

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6. Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic,* 210.

7. Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 35.

of Sympathy: Sadomasochistic Sentiments from Clarissa to Rescue 911, reevaluates a common assumption that the sentimental genre is by and about women, contending instead "the formal structures of sentiment are based upon symbolically masculine ideals" and suggesting that a "culturally masculinist bias" has "blinded us to the depth of sentiment's relation to male symbolic structures, as well as to the number of actual male artists who have reproduced sentiment's themes."[8] Hinton reevaluates the sentimental as a female genre, possibly even a feminist genre, and instead considers the masculine ideals and gender binaries inherent in the formulation of the genre. I take up her assertion that sentimentality hinges on masculine ideals and unpack some of those male symbolic structures that Hinton points to in her long overview of the genre.

As Hinton and Berlant both suggest, abolitionists, such as those at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention, and women writers embraced sentimental literature as a method to elicit sympathy for subordinate populations and peoples. Scholars have pointed to the objectifying potential of the sympathetic gaze, and my argument further expands upon the specific ways the sentimental gaze objectifies the very groups it potentially liberates. I think the sentimental gaze papers over a root of objectification by enacting a "mistake" that both readers and authors make. That mistake lies in conflating sentimental objects with subjects. Because the object becomes particular and singular, not fungible (individualized if you will), it is mistaken for an individual; in being mistaken for an individual, the object is mistaken for a subject. This mistake then warps potential responses to sentimentality, particularly feminist responses, as I will examine in Wollstonecraft's writing and Austen's fiction. In this chapter, I hope to articulate how and why sentimentality relies on metaphorical logic that depicts

8. Laura Hinton, *The Perverse Gaze of Sympathy: Sadomasochistic Sentiments from Clarissa to Rescue 911*(Albany: SUNY press 1999), 3.

sentimental objects (specifically women) as static things in the service of a masculine, sentimental gaze.

I will begin this chapter by establishing some of the features of objectification under the "cult of sentiment," particularly focusing on the metaphorics and narrative structures present in the sentimental novel. To do this I will examine Erasmus Darwin's poetry and prose, which illuminates a few dominant sentimental metaphors and utilizes personification and objectification in clarifying ways for understanding sentimental objectification. Then, I will consider Oliver Goldsmith's sentimental novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* to understand how the sentimental woman-object is mobilized in narrative. Through Darwin's poetics and Goldsmith's narratives, we can see how sentimental men objectify women around them in damaging ways. I will then turn to Wollstonecraft and Austen, who both position themselves in some ways as offering a counter-claim to the sentimental hegemony of pedagogy and narrative. However, I argue their anti-sentimental project is flawed, both in how it reimagines pedagogy and how it reimagines narrative. My lens of objectification helps expose the flawed arguments present in Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Austen's novelistic meditation on the cult of sentiment, *Sense and Sensibility.*

I. Potted Plants: Grow-Your-Own Woman

Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, is probably best known in literary circles for his two long botanical poems, *The Loves of the Plants* (1789) and *The Economy of Vegetation,* usually published together as *The Botanic Garden* (1791). He also explicates a new metaphor for women to coincide with a new form of objectification fit for the eighteenth-century's turn to the sentimental. Just as the circulating form of objectification has a dominant image that women are commonly compared to, the coin, so does the sentimental

form.[9] These metaphors are crucial to this project because they succinctly communicate what kind of object sentimental women-objects are. Darwin also uses these metaphors to weigh in on the role of female education as it relates to sentimentality, allowing for a clearer understanding of how education, sentimentality, and the metaphorics of female objectification intersect. Darwin's 1798 work, *A Plea for the Conduct of Female Education, In Boarding Schools* puts forward a portrait of women as plants that need careful tending by a teacher-botanist, gendered male. Darwin also genders and feminizes these metaphors, whereas gardening metaphors and metaphors comparing teachers to gardeners can also apply to pupils of any gender (one could think about the Parable of the Sower, for instance). Indeed, the word "tutor" comes from Latin roots meaning "to guard" and can apply to teachers and to supports used to train plants to grow in certain directions. Darwin's account of how to educate women uses metaphors about women as objects and enforces a pedagogy of sympathy that considers women as part of a non-human ecology of sentimental, living objects.

Darwin had two illegitimate daughters with a governess employed in his service, Mary Parker, after the death of his first wife. In Charles Darwin's biography of Erasmus, he files the daughters under the chapter "His Moral Qualities," writing, "to his credit be it said that he gave them an excellent education, and from all that I have heard they grew up to be admirable ladies."[10] In 1794, Darwin invested in establishing a career for his two daughters, Susanna and Mary Parker, Jr. at the time 21 and 19 respectively. He bought an old pub near

9. Darwin's poetry has also been influential to scholars thinking about the history of science and the influence of science on Romanticism, particularly because of his important role in the history of botany.

10. Charles Darwin, *Charles Darwin's The Life of Erasmus Darwin,* ed. Desmond King-Hele, 1st unabridged ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 64.

the Peak District and opened the school; it grew to about 30 pupils and was a well-respected institution.[11] His educational tract, *A Plea for the Conduct of Female Education, In Boarding Schools,* was designed to both aid in his daughters' formation and running of the school, and advertise the school itself. Its legacy in the study of female education is mainly for its radical beliefs in the importance of providing women with a balanced and robust education, including in the study of botany and other sciences, at that time a somewhat controversial topic for women's education. Darwin practiced Linnaean classification, a system devised by Carl Linnaeus. It classified plants based on their reproductive systems. Because classifying plants based on their reproductive systems led to discussion of sexual organs of plants, botany was considered an improper topic for women. Concerns about women learning about plants blended into concerns about women learning too much about their own reproductive anatomy, triggering nothing short of a moral panic.

Others have already seriously considered the interplay between Linnaean classification, interest in botany, and romantic literature. While comparisons between women and flowers are incredibly old metaphors, the comparisons take on new significance in the romantic period. Deidre Lynch called us to consider not only "green" romanticism, but also "greenhouse" romanticism.[12] Particularly, the image of the "blooming girl" and the interplay between the simile of women as blooms, and various hot house techniques that brought the botanical products of empire home to Great Britain. Amy King's work *Bloom,* more completely explicates what she calls the "botanical vernacular" of the 18th century novel, particularly the bloom. As she points out, Linnaean taxonomy by its very nature "endows the

11. Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement* (London: Giles de la Mare, 1999).

12. Deidre Lynch, "'Young Ladies are Delicate Plants': Jane Austen and Greenhouse Romanticism," *ELH* 77 no. 3. (Fall 2010): 689-729.

plant with sentient features generally associated with the human; he provides scientific accounts of plant irritability, pleasure, movement, and sensitivity."[13] So, innate to Linnaean taxonomy is the imperative of personification. Sam George provides a trajectory for Botany and woman's writing from 1760-1830, arguing that we can read women's relationship to the Enlightenment through literary comparisons between women and flowers.[14] In George's account, female botanists become associated with both order and national identity. Accounts concentrate on the privileging of native plants over exotic species as a political concern, culminating in intensifying concern about women studying botany in the moments just before the French Revolution.

The directionality and implications of both Darwin's personification of plants as women and his objectification of women as plants in his poetry and educational tract help clarify static, sentimental metaphors about women for my analysis of sentimental novels in the period. Turning first to his personification in *The Loves of the Plants,* the poem begins with an address to the "gentle reader" —possibly the female reader— to look through a camera obscura. Through the pinhole, she can see the poet's [15] enchanted garden, where the poet will performing enchantments of his own. For example, he explains, "Whereas P. Ovidius Naso, a great Necromancer in the Famous Court of Augustus Caesar, did by art poetic transmute Men, Women, and even Gods and Goddesses, into Trees and Flowers; I have undertaken by familiar art to restore some of them to their original animality, after having remained

13. Amy King, *Bloom: The Botanical Vernacular in the English Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.

14. Sam George, *Botany, Sexuality, and Women's Writing 1760-1820: From Modest Shoot to Forward Plant* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

15. The link between the development of landscape gardening and a boom in conduct literature in the eighteenth century is far from uncharted territory. For example, see Michel Baridon, "The Gentleman as Gardener: Pope, Shenstone, Mason," in *The Crisis of Courtesy: Studies in the Conduct- Book in Britain, 1600-1900,"* ed. Jacques Carre. (New York: E.J Brill, 1994.)

prisoners so long in their respective vegetable mansions."[16] The camera obscura is a piece of optical technology that depicts a reversed and inverted image. The narrator's claim to transmute the men and women turned into trees and flowers seems to use the power of the camera obscura to flip and invert them, suggesting the transformation is simply a matter of optics, a trick of the eye the can be performed on people and plants to show one is simply the inverted opposite of the other.

From the Camera Obscura, we move to another optical image where the plants become "diverse little pictures suspended over the chimney of a Lady's dressing room."[17] George's work evokes for me one possible reading of the appearance of the lady's dressing room in this poem. She draws our attention to the image of the tulip in both Pope's epistle "To A Lady," in which he compares women to tulips, writing, "Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show/Tis to their Changes that their charms they owe; / Their happy Spots the nice admirer take,/ Fine by defect, and delicately weak" and, more notably for Darwin's metaphor, in Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" in which the poem ends with the image of "gaudy tulips raised from dung." Tulips, according to George, are significant because the variegated tulips with streaks (spots in Pope's account or gaudy tulips in Swift's poem) are only show flowers, their brilliant streaks are actually a disease that render the flowers weak and barren in comparison to their "natural" monochromatic sisters.[18] The flowers in the dressing room of Darwin's *Loves of the Plants* invokes the luxuriant women of Pope and Swift's poetry, as well as the possibly illicit secret histories of the plants.

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16. Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden, a poem. In two parts. Part I. Containing the economy of vegetation. Part II. The Loves of the Plants. With philosophical notes.* 4th ed. (London: 1799). *Eighteenth Century Collections Online,* xv.

17. Darwin, *The Botanic Garden,* xvi.

18. George, *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing,* 24.

The poem itself combines stanzas of rhyming couplets with scientific notes about the flowers depicted in the lines. *The Loves of the Plants* is not only an entertaining description of an enchanted garden, but also a scientific and pedagogical text, in which the poetic metaphors can be read in service to the pedagogical aims of the botanist narrator. However, the personification of the poetry warrants closer investigation, because the way Darwin uses personification is so riotous and overabundant that it challenges a reading of this poem as simply providing female-friendly mnemonic devices to learn Linnaean classification. For example, Darwin's entry on Genista reads "Sweet blooms GENISTA in the myrtle shade, and *ten* fond brothers woo the haughty maid." The footnote indicates "ten males and one female inhabit this flower."[19] The personification for this entry, and for many others, applies to both the plant itself, who is "sweet" blooming in the shade, and for the individual parts of the flowers. The stamens and pistils are personified male and female, for this flower as ten brothers all wooing one maid. The androgynous nature of the flowers themselves and the emphasis on the numbers of male parts to female parts attempts to write biology into gender relations, but struggles to both personify the flowers as one gender, or both genders, and personify the individual parts of the flowers as also gendered.

Much later in the poem, the botanist describes Cuscuta with a lengthy metaphor:

> *Two* Harlot-Nymphs, the fair CUSCUTAS, please
> With labor'd negligence, and studied ease;
> In the meek garb of modest worth disguised,
> The eye averted, and the smile chastised,
> With sly approach they spread their dangerous charms,
> And round the victim wind their wiry arms.[20]

This personification is followed by an extending metaphor comparing the plant's "wiry

19. Darwin, *The Botanic Garden,* Canto 1 pp. 5.
20. Darwin, *The Loves of the Plants,* Canto 3 pp. 151-152.

arms" to snakes in the Greek myth of Laocoon. The plant itself is personified in the reference to arms, but then compared to snakes in the same stanza. Stacking metaphors on top of each other, as well as personifying entire plants and then personifying parts of plants, confuses and overextends the poetic language, creating the impression of an enchanted garden in possible need of some pruning.

The overabundant personification is an attempt to express the "aliveness" of plants. Darwin is not creating a system of allegory where men and women simply refer to the male and female parts of the flowers, but he is also personifying the flowers themselves, the sky, the clouds, the sun, Time, and other figures of nature. He is stacking personification, allusion, metaphor and simile on each other to prevent any sort of classification system for his metaphor, even in his poem about classification. Like the women/flowers men/trees depicted in the Camera Obscura, the botanist is not simply depicting flowers as women, but is showing a human essence inside plants through the apparatus of the camera obscura. The optical technology is not creating an illusion, rather a flipped and inverted image of something that is really there. The intensely expressive illustrations of the flowers underscores this point. Dahlia Porter's article "Epistemic Images and Vital Nature," reads the "aliveness" in these botanical images as an attempt to convey something of the movement of plants to readers. While not perhaps strictly scientific, they still convey something of the plant's core essence.[21]

Turning from the aliveness of Darwin's women-plants, I now want to think about how his Camera Obscura works in the opposite direction. Namely, what to make of the plant-women that populate his manual for the successful running of a girls boarding school. This

21. Dahlia Porter, "Epistemic Images and Vital Nature: Darwin's *Botanic Garden* as Image Text Book," *European Romantic Review* 29, no. 3 (June 2018): 295.

educational tract is often analyzed alongside Hannah More and Maria Edgeworth's work on education for their shared practical outlook on how women should be educated for the age of the Enlightenment and their debt to Rousseau's thinking on the topic. Charles Darwin notes Erasmus's manual in his biography for its common-sense attitudes. While More, Edgeworth, and Darwin all consider the propriety of women studying botany in a practical way, the metaphors they use about women and their relationship to plants are remarkable in their own right. More remarks, for instance, "the cultivator of the human mind must like the gardener, study diversities of soil, or he may plant diligently and water faithfully with little fruit."[22] Educators are like gardeners tending small shoots to their full maturity, and these tracts often make the case for women to learn botany alongside their assertions that women need to be educated in order to tend to the education of their children. Although, it is notable that Moore's gardener is male, suggesting a gardener or a botanist is still a male gendered figure.

Darwin's educational work takes metaphors about women and plants to extremes. Take for instance, this passage from section 27 "Care of the Shape:"

> Young ladies should also be directed where two sleep in a bed, to change every night, or every week, their sides of the bed which will prevent their tendency to sleep always on the same side; which is not only liable to produce crookedness, but also to occasion diseases by the internal parts being so long kept in uniform contact as to grow together. For the same reason, they should not be allow'd to sit always on the same side of the fire or window; because they will then be inclined too frequently to bend towards one side; which in those constitutions, where the bones are too soft, is liable to produce crookedness of the spine.[23]

Anyone who keeps houseplants will recognize the advice as applicable to potted plants, which must be turned regularly so that they do not grow crooked toward the weak sun

22. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (London: 1799), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online,* 147-148.

23. Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education, in Boarding Schools* (Derby: 1797), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online,* 77.

through a window. Here, Darwin is suggesting good advice for houseplants is good advice for boarding school students. Like a petulant succulent, women also need to be turned lest they grow crooked toward the sun. Darwin's educational tract might provide common sense and practical advice for running a girls boarding school, but much of the advice could simultaneously be applied to running a greenhouse. Another example, he has an entire chapter on air, and writes "A constant immersion in pure air is now known to contribute much both to the health of the system, and to the beautiful color of the complexion."[24] Much of his book considers the type of environment in which women will grow the best. His book also contains helpful tips for any deformities or diseases that might strike various girls. The way these possible deformities are categorized and presented as a list is reminiscent of Darwin's classification of plants in his botanical poems. Like plants, women's bodies can be listed, cataloged, and tended to by a knowledgeable caretaker.

Ultimately, Darwin's metaphors about women as plants and plants as women serves a larger purpose than just the reflections of an eccentric botanist. Rather, his metaphors seem to indicate a larger claim about the centrality of sentimentality. Charles Darwin characterizes Erasmus's educational philosophy as guided by the sense that "sympathy with the pains and pleasures of others is the foundation of all our social virtues; and this can be best inculcated by example and the expression of our own sympathy."[25] As Erasmus writes, "compassion, or sympathy with the pains of others, ought also to extend to the brute creation, as far as our necessities will admit,"[26] Even in his description of sympathy, he does not draw hard lines distinguishing between people, animals, and plants. He divides novels into three categories,

24. Erasmus Darwin, *Conduct of Female Education,* 70.
25. Charles Darwin, *The Life of Erasmus Darwin,* 42.
26. Erasmus Darwin, *Conduct of Female Education,* 48.

amorous, humorous, and serious; dismissing the first two out of hand, he sees some merit in certain serious novels, but ultimately thinks "because the high-wrought scenes of elegant distress display'd in novels have been found to blunt the feelings of such readers toward real objects of misery."[27] In other words, cultivating sentiment is important, but the over-wrought sentimentality of novels might make female readers less capable of recognizing real-world examples of sentimentality.

The image of the botanist teacher lovingly tending his pupils/plants by rotating them in their beds suggests a kind of sentimental mode in Darwin's writing. The botanist teacher becomes a version of the sentimental man, and the women in these texts become beautiful, living, but ultimately stationary objects that need to be tended and rotated to prevent deformity. His commitment to sentimentality and its centrality in the cultivation of the female mind goes part and parcel with his treatment of women as female objects. The plant women of Darwin's educational tracts and botanical poems provide a structuring metaphor for this chapter, which will recur in many of the novels I will now examine.

II. The Sentimental Man on the Move

Female character in eighteenth-century sentimental novels are defined more or less in contrast to the better-theorized "sentimental man." If the sentimental men are the characters experiencing the sentimental feelings, the female characters are generally *sentimentalized* by men as sentimental objects. This vision of masculinity, with its complementary vision of femininity, is captured in novels such as Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality,* and Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison.* In order to demonstrate my coordinates for this lineage

27. Erasmus Darwin, *Conduct of Female Education,* 37.

of the sentimental novel, centered on the figure of the sentimental man, I turn in this section to Oliver Goldsmith's beloved but strange novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield.* A widely regarded sentimental novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield* offers a useful template for thinking about how the narrative structure surrounding female characters in the wider canon of eighteenth-century sentimental novels works. This narrative structure offers some helpful tools for understanding other novels similar to *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Critical discourse on this novel has robustly debated the combination of sentimental and satirical tone within the novel itself, however, I want to put this conversation aside in order to put forward a more formalist consideration of the novel. This formal argument will allow me to make a series of points about how gender operates in this novel in order to understand how objectification works in the sentimental novel more broadly.

The novel opens: "I had scarce taken orders a year before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife as she did her wedding gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well."[28] We begin this novel with a simile about a woman being like a wedding gown. This comparison between a woman and a particular type of consumer good establishes a pattern of objectification that will come to define this novel. The Vicar's wife is like a wedding gown, specifically, a practical wedding gown, if not a particularly pretty one. A practical wedding gown is already a strange object, perhaps, since wedding gowns are not typically chosen for their practicality. Nevertheless, he wants a gown and a wife that "wear well" or perhaps that he can wear out through a virtuous life of self-sacrifice. The metaphor also commissions the vicar in the role of the female shopper, even as he takes a wife and exercises heterosexual reproductive masculinity, hinting at the feminized

28. Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (Oxford: Oxford Worlds Classics, 2006), 9.

gender roles the sentimental man gets to adopt once the female characters become objects. The wedding gown, practical or not, is primarily a sentimental object. It is commissioned for a very specific event and expresses the idea of monogamous commitment. The vicar is explicit about the single-use of wives and wedding dresses. One of his favorite topics is the pleasure of marriage, and his belief that men should only marry once. He seems much more interested in the institution than the particularities of the wife he has chosen to "wear well." But, he does state that he "valued myself upon being a strict monogamist," meaning he will take no wife if he is widowed as both a matter of personal virtue and a religious tenet, because he does not believe clergy should remarry. [29]

The Vicar's obsessive enthusiasm for marriage and belief that a man should only have one wife brings us to one of the defining characteristics of the sentimental object. Women have very limited roles they can play in sentimental narratives. By the time the Vicar has told us that he married his wife, her role in the narrative is essentially complete. Much of the satirical comedy of the novel seems to stem from her failures to live up to the way she is sentimentalized, without deterring the Vicar's enjoyment of sentimentalizing both her and his marriage. In fact, a woman seems most useful to the sentimental narrative when she is dead. Her corpse provides an ideal object for the sentimental man to reflect on and express sentimental feelings about. The vicar creates an elegant solution for the problem of a living wife:

> I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraved upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, oeconomy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame,

29. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 12.

and constantly put her in mind of her end.[30]

Although his wife is not dead, he still tries to invoke her death in the home by displaying a picture of her tomb. In this way, he is able to sentimentalize her eventual death and conjure the image of her corpse even when she is still alive. The image of dead women haunt sentimental narratives, particularly dead moms and dead potential wives. These figures allow sentimental men to display their sentimental qualities. Most important, the dead, sentimentalized women have no other role than to be a canvas for the sentimental man to project onto. As the *Vicar of Wakefield* demonstrates, even living women in sentimental novels are often treated as corpses.[31] One of the main plots that preoccupies the novel is the demise of the Vicar's idyllic family through a series of catastrophes, both financial and personal. Invoking the Book of Job, the trials test the Vicar's stoicism and goodness. The vicar has two adult daughters, Sophia and Olivia, whom the vicar describes as "beautiful and blooming."[32] All of his children are a "very valuable present made to my country" in his eyes.[33] Again, the daughters are described using botanical metaphors and the children are assessed in terms of their value as objects. Furthermore, the girls are named for "romantic" heroines, much to the vicar's dismay, underscoring their status as novelistic conventions more so than characters. [34] Both are abducted in the course of the novel. The loss of his two daughters is one way in which the Vicar is tested, establishing his daughters not as characters in their own right, but rather property for the vicar to lose.

30. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 13.

31. As Claudia Johnson puts it, "Women abused in love are expected to die. This is what conventionally happens in sentimental novels." Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 64.

32. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 10.

33. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 10.

34. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 11.

Olivia is abducted by the evil Squire Thornhill, who has been courting her but has no intention of marrying her. The vicar and his wife blame Olivia for her breached virtue after she agrees to marry the squire in a sham marriage. The incident is relayed by one of the vicar's young sons, who says "she is gone off with two gentlemen in a post chaise, and one of them kissed her, and said he would die for her; and she cried very much, and was for coming back, but he persuaded her again, and she went into the chaise, and said, O what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!"[35] While the vicar and, by extension, the novel seems to hold Olivia culpable for her loss of virtue, the text itself does not depict this scene as an elopement. Olivia demonstrates very little agency in this scene, therefore I will refer to it and scenes like it as "abduction scenes." The vicar remains centered in this scene. Because of Olivia's lack of agency, her movement seems predicated on the feelings and desires of the male characters around her.[36]

Sophia, the more obviously virtuous daughter, is simply abducted by ruffians, "snatched from us, carried off," during the climactic final pages of the novel. [37] Sophia's abduction is not quite as central to the narrative, but does allow the vicar to shed more tears over the desolation of his family. While Sophia is missing, Olivia fakes her death to convince the Vicar to approve of her seducer's marriage to another woman. He was still holding out hope that she and the squire would be united in a legal marriage. Her "death," like her mother's

35. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 79.

36. One might recall Toni Bower's work in *Force or Fraud* distinguishing between rape and seduction, and unpacking the political connotations of "collusive resistance" as a key question in novels from 1660-1760. Here, Olivia's abduction takes place "off stage," as does much of her courtship. The question of Olivia's resistance to the rakish nobleman is flattened and seems non-essential to the narrative, signaling a shift of concerns from the novels that preoccupy Bower's account. Toni Bower, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

37. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 139.

preemptive grave stone and the two abduction plots, allow for the main event of the sentimental novel: the prolonged grieving of the sentimental man.

Comparing the movement of Sophia and Olivia to the women that populate the first chapter of this dissertation, a couple of key differences emerge. First, the Vicar's daughters are not circulating, but are rather taken and moved by the men around them. Second, their desires are not motors for the plot like the desires of a Haywood heroine or a Defoe character. Instead, the male characters are constantly the center of the action. We hear about Olivia's abduction through the vicar's son, and Olivia's primary reaction to the abduction is not fear for her own life and safety, but rather a lament for the feelings of her father. Finally, sentimental novels seems to have a morbid fascination with permanently removing women from circulation. Even though this novel does not kill any of its female characters, it symbolically kills them in order to cash in on the emotional impact their imagined deaths can have, from the vicar picturing his wife's grave before she is in the ground to mourning his daughters who he assumes are dead. Female death in a sentimental novel powers further narrative, and this is a unique and defining feature of the genre because of the way in which women are objectified. This is true even when women are the main characters of the narrative, such as Richardson's *Clarissa*, where he fully realizes the sentimental plot he only begins to develop in *Pamela.*

The sentimental novel's fascination with dead mothers and suffering brides centers women that are narratively static. Unlike the women in the circulating novel, who are vastly interchangeable and are objectified in comparison to fungible objects like coins, sentimental women are objectified in terms of sentimental value. As the vicar insists, a man can only have one wife. Therefore, sentimental novels cannot be about circulation because women in

these novels can only be owned by one man. Once their possession is understood, they actually become more valuable to the narrative dead, rather than alive, because they cannot propel the plot any further while alive. Dead, they can invoke sentimental feelings in men, spurn the men toward revenge or a journey to try and recover their abducted/dead daughter/wife/mother, or even haunt their children. Claudia Johnson defines the genre similarly: "Classic texts of sentimentalism by Samuel Richardson, Henry Mackenzie, Hugh Kelly, Henry Brooke, and Oliver Goldsmith similarly recur to the spectacle of suffering womanhood to elicit the melting humanity of male onlookers, and to make possible their *lacrimal, ergo sum."*[38] The corpses of women are the fuel of the sentimental tale.

The sentimental man and the sentimental woman are complementary figures. While women in these novels are defined by their inability to move of their own volition, male characters in these novels exhibit hyper-mobility, explaining the abundance of grand tours, picaro figures, and travel in these novels. Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* or the loose, episodic structure of *The Fool of Quality* stands out as illustrative of male mobility. Within *The Vicar of Wakefield,* this trope is primarily apparent through the figure of Mr. Burchell, an odd picaro figure who, much to the vicar's dismay, courts Sophia. He rescues her on multiple occasions, first from drowning, and then from the mysterious ruffians who abduct her. Although the vicar had resisted his suit because of his perceived low class, once he saves Sophia the second time the vicar offers her to him: "Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense she is yours, if you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her, obtain her consent."[39]

38. Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*: *Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 17900s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5.

39. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 150.

Once the vicar has proven he has humbled himself, by offering his daughter as payment to Burchell for his good service to the family, Burchell reveals himself to be Sir Thornhill. Sir Thornhill chose to disguise himself in order to shed the sometimes burdensome trappings of his nobility and travel more freely. His ability to move not only through space, but also up and down the class hierarchy according to his desires is perhaps most reminiscent of Fantomina. This previous female pleasure of anonymity and circulation is now distinctly male. Sophia in this scenario becomes a prize to be traded between men. Her consent to the match is an afterthought in the sentence itself, coming after the vicar's charge to Burchell to "take" if he wants.

Because of the difference between male and female mobility, sentimental novels are preoccupied with a loss of freedom of mobility for male characters. The debtor's prison in *The Vicar of Wakefield,* or the press gang in *The Man of Feeling* are examples of threats to the unfettered mobility of male characters. Of all the indignities and tragedies that the vicar faces, none can compare to his imprisonment by the villain Squire Thornhill for his refusal to consent to the squire's marriage to a woman besides Olivia. The scene of the vicar going to the debtor's prison draws comparisons to Jesus going to the crucifixion, elevating the vicar from Job to a Christ figure when his is imprisoned. When some of his poor parishioners try to free him, like Simon Peter cutting off the ear of a solider sent to arrest Jesus, the Vicar responds "and is this the way you love me!"[40] Constraints on male characters are an ordeal on par with the crucifixion because constraint is feminized. When men are constrained in sentimental novels, the event is presented as a great tragedy or crisis.

I think that this novel, and by extension sentimental novels, gender-bend much less than

40. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 123.

critics have suggested, in part because of the boundaries of gender that these novels offer readers. While male characters in these novels may cry, display emotion, and exhibit weakness, they still not do transgress the boundaries of gender the internal logic of the novel lays out for them. When they do, it is a source of great distress and a narrative problem the characters must overcome. These male characters look a lot less feminine when we consider what femininity and womanhood means in the context of the narratives itself. Femininity is primarily defined by an inability to move and narratives revolving around death, both products of the structure of objectification these novels rely on.

My argument about sentimentality and the role of the sentimental woman is fundamentally an anti-sentimental argument. Despite the threats and dangers of circulation, women in those narratives do not suffer from the bleak understanding that the best kind of female character is a corpse. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* highlights this issue by resurrecting Olivia only to have her marriage to her seducer (read: rapist) turn out to be legally binding, a happy ending that rescues her virtue and restores the family: "Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends and fortune at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay and restore former health and vivacity."[41] On learning that she will remain married to a man who abducted her against her wishes, raped her, and then abandoned her, Olivia stops decaying. Olivia is once again described in language more appropriate to flowers than to people. Once blooming, her fall from virtue began a process of decay that can be only stopped by her reclamation by the man who deflowered her. Even if she was not actually dead, she was dying until her marriage is verified. The fact that her husband is a rapist who

41. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* 164.

has ruined many women is not relevant in the logic of the sentimental novel. Her only possible future is marriage to the only man she has had sex with, or death. This is a startling departure from the way women in previous novels have been objectified. Roxana's narrative opens with the story of her abandonment by a villain, Olivia's story can only end with her reunification with the villain that abandoned her.

III. Wollstonecraft: A Rebuttal to Sentimentality

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* stands as one of the best-known feminist responses to sentimentality. Claudia Johnson calls Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* "A militantly anti sentimental work."[42] Wollstonecraft's attack on sentimentality focuses on the ways the sentimental deforms women. While Wollstonecraft pinpoints the mental and physical restrictions sentimentality places on women, as Johnson explains, "he problem undermining society in her view is feminized men."[43] In Johnson's account of sentimentality, "the conservative insistence upon the urgency of chivalric sentimentality fundamentally unsettled gender itself, leaving women without a distinct gender site. Under sentimentality, all women risk becoming equivocal beings."[44] Johnson's account of Wollstonecraft is forceful; while the *Vindication* is often hazily remembered or excerpted to be read as a female complaint about a lack of education and opportunity for women, Johnson draws us toward Wollstonecraft's larger political project, and her main point of contestation with Burke that he has "crippled rather than enhanced male virtue itself by feminizing the state."[45]

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* is not particularly invested in women at all, but is in fact

42. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings,* 23.
43. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings,* 23.
44. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings,* 23.
45. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, 28.

preoccupied with the degrading potentialities of the sentimental man. Her writing on women, and the metaphors about women she turns to, are enlightening, however. On the first page, she returns to an extended metaphor about women that dominated the 1790s:

> The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity—One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education.[46]

Like Darwin, or Goldsmith, or any number of sentimental novels she disapproves of, Wollstonecraft too cannot help but discuss the hyper-feminine women of the sentimental moment as hot-house flowers, over fertilized to the point of barren blooms. Female fecundity, and the stationary, ornamental nature of greenhouse flowers, is too apt a metaphor to pass up. However, as I hope I have indicated, these metaphors have a rotten center, resting as they do on a conceptualization of women as dead things or, at best, things we can imagine as dead for our pleasure. Using these metaphors taints Wollstonecraft's argument.

Wollstonecraft shows her hand a bit with the use of this metaphor as well. In the *Vindication,* she is not invested in recuperating the actions and lives of contemporary women, but treats them as the same types of objects that the sentimental novel does. She rails against this treatment of women, but uses objectifiying language about women to do so, such as in this passage:

> Gentleness, docility, and a spaniel-like affection are, on this ground, consistently recommended as the cardinal virtues of the sex; and, disregarding the arbitrary economy of nature, one writer has declared that it is masculine for a woman to be melancholy. She was created to be the toy of man, his rattle, and it must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused.[47]

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46. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics: 2008),71.

47. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women,* 100.

Here, women have the qualities of lap-dogs. And, Wollstonecraft goes even further: comparing women to toys, particularly a noisy rattle, to infantilize men and objectify women with vitriol. I cannot find these metaphors useful in the service of female liberation. Calling some women lapdogs or rattles implies that the liberation of some women as good liberal subjects comes at the expense of others, who are explicitly objectified in Wollstonecraft's account. Wollstonecraft is not trying to argue that women are not the way they are depicted in the sentimental novel, but rather leans into metaphors about women as sentimental objects to emphasize the problem with the sentimental *working* to deform women and debase men.

Wollstonecraft is not speaking to women to abandon their chains, but rather making an impassioned plea to the men that educate women to change their tactics. As she puts it, "Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison."[48] She often turns to metaphors such as these, in which the female figure is trapped, confined, debased, and deformed by her circumstances. Perhaps ironically, Wollstonecraft's arguments about the sentimental acquire their most persuasive force when they employ the images of female suffering so crucial to the genre's functioning. Wollstonecraft, in effect, uses sentimental rhetoric to argue for an end to sentimentality.

This rhetorical issue highlights a pertinent fact about sentimental objectification. Thinking back to the model of circulating objectification prevalent at the beginning of the eighteenth century, female characters and by extension, female authors, could carve out possibilities within the confines of objectification. The fungibility of the women allowed them to have some freedom to pursue their own desires. The sentimental model of

48. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women,* 112.

objectification offers no such relief. Sentimental narratives, because of the way they rely on dead women (actually, potentially, and effectively), preclude other narrative potentials. Gone is the room to maneuver that women found in the metaphors about coins. In these new metaphors comparing them to hot house flowers, there is little imagination left to envision women outside of the narrative system that exists to trap them. This is why Wollstonecraft ends up turning to the very metaphors she seeks to critique; sentimentality closes off the availability of other metaphorical language. Wollstonecraft has a liberal solution to the problem of sentimental womanhood. She argues women should be educated to be functional and productive members of the nation. In parts of the *Vindication,* she sounds inseparable from her conservative contemporary, Hannah Moore, in her argumentation that women should be educated so that they can better discharge their domestic duties.

Both Wollstonecraft and Johnson argue about the sentimental in terms of its dangerous potential to gender-bend. Johnson, zeroing in on Burke's chivalric treatment of Marie Antionette in *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* characterizes a "unsettled and highly politicized phase of sentimentality" that she further describes as a "crisis of gender."[49] However, neither Wollstonecraft nor Johnson's reading of Wollstonecraft pays particular attention to the genre conventions of the sentimental woman. It is undoubtable that the sentimental man does acquire some traits normally associated with femininity, such as crying, displaying affection and emotion, and even fainting. But, that does not mean that there are not gender differences in these novels. It is not difficult to tell the women apart from the men, even if the men have adopted traditionally feminine virtues. Sentimental men are defined as men because they are not sentimental women. They move unfettered, even if

49. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings,* 28.

they cry as they travel. Missing this key distinction between sentimental men and women leads to arguments like Wollstonecraft's, where some women can be educated to be good liberal subjects at the expense of others, and men can be shamed to adopt a more masculine attitude. In fact, the emotional presentation of the sentimental covers up the reality that sentimentality is not a radical departure from gender difference. Quite the contrary, sentimentality offers rigid gender difference if we only know where to look. The most dangerous problem with the sentimental, by my account, is the way that it forecloses possibilities for female characters outside of the sentimental mode. Feminist responses like Wollstonecraft's are ultimately ineffective responses to sentimentality. The sentimental impoverishes potential feminist responses to its logic because it offers a closed system defined by female immobility and death.

IV. Liberal Feminist Possibilities under Sentimentality: Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

First conceived in 1795, just four years after Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* is as much a product of the debates over the sentimental in the 1790s as it is of its later publication date in 1811.[50] Critics read Austen's relationship to sentimentality in two main ways, which Deidre Lynch neatly summarizes:

> Austen's position within histories of the novel is pinpointed by relating her to a concept of 'romantic individualism.' Either she is against it, as we are told by the scholarship associating her with anti-Jacobin recoil from the cult of sensibility and the moral claims of individual feeling, or she finds in her novels the means—specifically, her use of free indirect discourse—of bringing about an ideal blend of the individual and the social, rehabilitating sensibility for the nineteenth-century novel's sociocentric world.[51]

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50. See Ros Ballaster, Introduction to *Sense and Sensibility* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1995).

51. Lynch is not primarily interested in coming down on one side of the debate over the other, instead focusing on how Austen surprisingly depicts interiority as a "social space" and "supplements" readerly experiences of sentimental feeling with "lighthearted games of stereotype-recognition."

Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 212.

Deidre Lynch's account of *Sense and Sensibility* reminds us that this boundary I am drawing between circulation and stasis, between commodification and sentimentality is a porous one; even in the world of one's inner-life there is still evidence of public space. Her reading of Marianne, for instance contains such an uncomfortable juxtaposition: "In her cultivation of individuality (*because* of her cultivation of individuality), Marianne may be recognized as a type—a victim of convention in more than one sense."[52] Even given these caveats, we can draw some boundaries between circulation and stasis of female characters, particularly if we question how and when these characters can exhibit agency.

Claudia Johnson establishes some of the relationships between Wollstonecraft and Austen in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel.* Arguing Austen is less suspicious of sentimentality than Wollstonecraft, she also rejects the idea that Austen is necessarily conservative, finding traces of Wollstonecraft's radicalism in Austen: "Austen may slacken the desperate tempos employed by her more strenuously politicized counterparts, but she shares their artistic strategies and their commitment to uncovering the ideological underpinnings of cultural myths."[53] She reads *Sense and Sensibility* as a "critique of conservative ideology" that is "extremely trenchant and in some ways extremely radical."[54] In a similar vein, I suggest in my account of *Sense and Sensibility* that Austen takes up Wollstonecraft's spirited feminist polemic against sentimentality in the *Vindication*. Austen, in my reading, acts out Wollstonecraft's polemic in novel form. Both fail to provide a template for combatting the sentimental and suggest only education as a possible antidote. As such, it is an ideal case study to see how female authors navigated the sentimental mode of

52. Lynch, *The Economy of Character,* 230.
53. Johnson, *Jane Austen,* 27.
54. Jonson, *Jane Austen,* 69.

objectification.

Austen's novel is full of vindictive, tyrannical women. While Austen offers us the occasional female villain, from Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice,* to Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park, Sense and Sensibility* is notable for the number of these characters and their relative control over the men in their lives. The novel's opening conflict, for instance, is driven by one such character and her harmful influence on the protagonists of the novel, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood. When their father, Henry Dashwood dies, his estate passes in its entirety to his son, and his son's son, by the will of his uncle. Not in control of his own property, he begs his son Henry to provide for his widow and Henry's two half-sisters, Elinor and Marianne. In this complex explanation of the future of the Norland estate, the reader learns that Elinor, Marianne, their mother, and their younger sister are at the mercy of their brother. Their brother, however, is at the mercy of his wife, who convinces him to essentially leave them with nothing, arguing, "They will live so cheap! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expense of any kind!"[55] Although John Dashwood must know he is not fulfilling his promise to his father and is cruelty condemning his half-sisters and step-mother to poverty (possibly forever as their fortunes will directly impact the types of matches they can make), he allows himself to be convinced. Mrs. John Dashwood's arguments are cartoonish in their exaggeration (she surely does not believe they can live without spending anything), but they also point to a startling logic in the text about the women. Her claims that they will have no expenses, keep no company, never travel and the like rests on the assumption that these women, widowed and unmarried, will be essentially

55. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 14.

dead. Absence of a father or a husband, they will not consume anything. These women have no existence in Fanny Dashwood's imagination.

Mrs. Dashwood immediately highlights the absurdity of writing a story about these women at all, and, since the novel is indeed about these women, the narrative places itself in direct opposition to Mrs. Dashwood's logic, painting her as one of the novel's early villains. Prior to this winning argument, Mrs. Dashwood pushes on her husband by asking him to think of the wellbeing of his son, who would get a little less if his sisters and step-mother got anything, and insisting to him that paying them an allotment annually would be a burden in that it "takes away one's independence."[56] Her stakes in this situation are mostly unclear, given that she and her husband have more than enough and have just inherited a great deal more. Her claims that she is concerned for the future of her son seems far-fetched at best, but they point to an interesting reality in the novel: the patriarchal oppression of women, through the enactment of property law, finds its most spirited defender in the first female character we meet. She appears comically cruel, needlessly vindictive, and exceedingly petty as a result. Her position is also ripped out of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*. One of Wollstonecraft's concerns about poorly educated young women is the possibility they will be seen as an "unnecessary burden on the benevolence of the master of the house, and his new partner" when inevitably left in the care of a brother after the death of a father. She further describes the hypothetical brother's wife as a "cold-hearted, narrow-minded woman…she is displeased at seeing the property of *her* children lavished on a helpless sister."[57]

Mrs. Dashwood's harmful meddling in affairs concerning Elinor and Marianne does not stop there, however. Elinor quickly finds herself attached to Edward Ferrars, Fanny

56. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 13.
57. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women,* 135-136.

Dashwood's brother. Given Elinor's poverty (which Fanny has no small hand in), neither Fanny nor her mother Mrs. Ferrars can approve of the match. They both have high ambitions for Edward in the world of politics or law, disregarding his own modest desires to take orders. Elinor thinks for some time that his mother's and Fanny's ambitions for Edward are at the heart of their difficulties. She is later to find out that his secret engagement to one Lucy Steele is the true source of their unhappiness, as Edward is unwilling to break the engagement. On his mother's realization that he will not be marrying Miss Morton, she disowns him. Even more so, "she would never see him again; and so far would she be from affording him the smallest assistance, that if he were to enter into any profession with a view of better support, she would do all in her power to prevent his advancing into it."[58] Again, her cruelty and vindictiveness is almost hyperbolic. Not content to simply disown him, she essentially threatens to haunt him. When Lucy Steele captures the attention of Edward's brother and breaks off her engagement with Edward in order to accept a proposal from Robert Ferrars, his mother's response is even more inexplicable: "Lucy became as necessary to Mrs. Ferrars, as either Robert or Fanny; and while Edward was never cordially forgiven for having once intended to marry her, and Elinor, though superior to her in fortune and birth, was spoken of as an intruder, *she* was in everything considered, and always openly acknowledged, to be a favorite child."[59] Again, the logic here escapes the narrator as well as Elinor, who both concede the turn of events with the equivalent of an eye-roll in free-indirect-discourse.

Finally, Willoughby himself is not immune to the cruel malice of the women around him. In his emotional tête-à-tête with Elinor, thinking Marianne might die of a fever, he

58. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 249-250.
59. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 350-351.

attempts to justify his past actions. One of his main points is that the callous letter he sent to Marianne while she was in town, denying their previous romance, was in fact written by his new wife. He ironically asks Elinor "what do you think of my wife's stile of letter-writing?—delicate—tender—truly feminine—was it not?"[60] When she rightly points out the letter was in his handwriting, he passionately exclaims,

> Yes, but I had only the credit of servilely copying such sentences as I was ashamed to put my name to. The original was all her own—her own happy thoughts and gentle diction. But what could I do?—we were engaged, everything in preparation, the day almost fixed—But I am talking like a fool. Preparation!—day!—In honest words, her money was necessary to me, and in a situation like mine, anything was to be done to prevent a rupture.[61]

These women, and their ability to control and torture the men around them bear a resemblance to the bad women that populate Wollstonecraft's *Vindication.* For Wollstonecraft does not solely think that the state of the rights of women renders them as objects, but that it offers them a warped power over men seated in their own vanity as beautiful objects, and this power over men turns women into petty despots:

> Women, it is true, obtaining power by unjust means, by practicing or fostering vice, evidently lose the rank which reason would assign them, and they become either abject slaves or capricious tyrants. They lose all simplicity, all dignity of mind, in acquiring power, and act as men are observed to act when they have been exalted by the same means.[62]

The unreasonableness with which the wives and mothers of the novel act indicate that these women have been warped in the very way Wollstonecraft describes. They are irredeemable in the eyes of the novel and in Wollstonecraft's polemic against them.

While Austen and Wollstonecraft seem to share a sense of the destructive power of women in the age of sentimentality, they do seem to relate to sentimental men differently.

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60. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 306.
61. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 306.
62. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women,* 113.

Wollstonecraft places the blame for the warping of the female character squarely at the feet of sentimental men. In contrast, Austen presents a more nuanced portrait of the right kind of sentimental man. After Marianne recovers from her illness and confesses to Elinor that she unfavorably compares her conduct to Elinor's, Elinor responds with the platitude "Our situations have borne little resemblance."[63] This statement is false. Even though the girls have often compared their suitors to highlight their differences (mostly Marianne finding Edward Ferrars wanting in comparison to Willoughby), their similarities are actually what matters. While Willoughby is the more traditionally sentimental hero, with his love of ruined cottages and poetry, he, Edward Ferrars, and even Colonel Brandon can all be classified as sentimental men. They are all confronted with a female character that they once had an emotional attachment to that has since outlasted her usefulness, a "spare" woman in the logic of the narrative. Their reaction to this spare/sentimentalized woman is a kind of narrative litmus test that evaluates their worthiness by establishing them as the right kind of sentimental man, the kind that can form sentimental attachments to women and maintain those attachments based purely on a sense of duty to the past.

Colonel Brandon provided the clearest template of the right way to relate to the "spare" women he encounters. His story is also illustrative in that it presents a new pattern of fungibility for women in the mode of sentimental objectification. Colonel Brandon confesses to Elinor that he was once in love with a young woman, Eliza. However, her fortune was large, a burden equally as dangerous in this novel as a fortune too small, and she was married to Colonel Brandon's brother.[64] Material concerns constantly threaten love matches in the

63. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 322.

64. Brandon's situation mirror's Edward's; both men are attached to women who will go on to marry their brothers. In this section, I consider ways women mirror each other, replicating some of the fungibility women have in earlier narratives. The coincidental similarities between Edward and Brandon's

novel, and, in this case, the family's desire to bolster their estate with Eliza's fortune led to a tragic conclusion: "But can we wonder that with such a husband to provoke inconstancy, and without a friend to advise or restrain her, (for my father lived only a few months after their marriage, and I was with my regiment in the East Indies) she should fall?"[65] Eliza's fall is inevitable given the failures of the men around her to guide her, an eventuality that also reflects Wollstonecraft's pessimism about the ability of women under the grip of a system of sentimentality to govern themselves. Eliza's story is one of the failures of patriarchal control, as well as the ravishes the sentimental can have on the bodies of women.

When Colonel Brandon eventually finds her, "hardly could I believe the melancholy and sickly figure before me, to be the remains of the lovely, blooming, healthful girl, on whom I had once doted." While she is not dead when Brandon finds her, he is relieved to find that she is mostly dead, as "Life could do nothing for her, beyond giving time for a better preparation for death."[66] Able to do that, Brandon is then allowed to turn to the task of mourning her, a task he had already begun when she married. Note once again the reference to Eliza as "blooming" and then decaying upon her fall into infamy. She turns into "remains" and then finally a corpse, where she carries out her narrative purpose as a sentimental woman, giving the Colonel an object to prove his sentiment feelings.

He takes care of her bastard daughter, Eliza Smith, who, in another mirroring, is seduced and then abandoned by Willoughby, giving birth to her own child out of wedlock.[67] Neither

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situations is one such example of this "doubling effect" in the novel.

65. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 195.

66. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 196.

67. See Susan Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003). Greenfield provides another account of the strange doubling of mothers and daughters in novels of the period. *Mothering Daughters* offers a reading of the rising role of motherhood in the eighteenth-century novel, particularly the connection between mother-daughter relationships and psychoanalysis. Greenfield points to the mirroring of mothers and daughters in

of these characters provide their own accounts of events, but exist purely in Colonel Brandon's narrative for the purpose of highlighting his own emotional depth. In this way they are classic sentimental women in the vein of the *Vicar of Wakefield;* their narrative purpose is effectively filled by death in order to provide an object for the sentimental man to prove his sentimentality. Both of these Elizas bear more than a passing resemblance to Marianne, a resemblance the Colonel continues to comment on. In fact, it is the way Marianne's beauty begins to fade and soften after her romantic disappointment with Willoughby that seems to enflame the Colonel's feelings even more. Although he insists, "Their fates, their fortunes cannot be the same; and had the natural sweet disposition of the one been guarded by a firmer mind, or an happier marriage, she might have been all that you will live to see the other be."[68] Brandon loves Marianne because of her resemblance to these other, tainted Elizas. The possibility that she can be seduced and destroyed without his loving guidance is part of Marianne's charm.

Here, the fungibility that female characters used in Haywood novels to exploit their own objectification is repurposed and finds new life in the sentimental. However, it no longer offers women the ability to move undetected, but rather ties them to patterns of abuse and ruin. Women are not fungible with each other indiscriminately, but rather find their romantic plots dictated by dead doppelgängers whose mistakes they are potentially doomed to repeat. Their appeal to their male suitors is furthermore enhanced by their resemblance to dead women. The sentimental man is able to preemptively experience their deaths through this resemblance and thereby value them as sentimental objects while they are still alive—knowing what it felt like to lose the first Eliza, Colonel Brandon can more easily experience

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novels by Burney and Radcliffe as a possible pre-Oedipal bond.

68. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 196.

the thrill of imagining the death of Marianne, for instance.

Colonel Brandon's worthiness comes from his sense of duty to the spare women he once loved. This sense of duty is unfavorably compared to Willoughby's abandonment of the women he should continue to hold sentimental attachment to. This comparison is aided by the women themselves, who are in fact one-and-the-same for both men. Brandon continues to protect Eliza's daughter Eliza until she has a disastrous encounter with Willoughby at Bath. Willoughby seduces her and "he had left her promising to return; he neither returned, nor wrote, nor received her."[69] Willoughby never successfully accounts for his behavior at this moment. His behavior to Marianne is similarly callous, albeit less extreme. Even though Willoughby presents as the most obviously sentimental, and by far the most interesting and romantic suitor in the novel, he is not the ideal sentimental man in that he does not maintain attachments for purely sentimental reasons. Most damning of all, even when he still has feelings, he allows himself to abandon women. The action that seems to redeem him the most in Elinor's eyes is his visit to Marianne's sick bed. Not willing to continue his attachment to her in light of financial obstacles, he at minimum shows deep feelings on the possibility of her death. Colonel Brandon, by contrast, maintains his sentimental attachment to his first love despite her marriage and even through her descent into infamy.

While Marianne's suitors run the gambit from the perfect example of the sentimental man in Colonel Brandon to his antithesis in Willoughby, Elinor's suitor Edward falls somewhere in the middle. He forms an early and ill-conceived attachment to Lucy Steele. It is easy for Elinor to patch together how the engagement came about, after the initial shock wears off:

> The youthful infatuation of nineteen would naturally blind him to every thing but her beauty and good nature; but the four succeeding years—years, which if rationally spent, give such improvement to the understanding, must have opened his eyes to her defects of

69. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 198.

> education, while the same period of time, spent on her side in inferior society and more frivolous pursuits, had perhaps robbed her of that simplicity, which might once have given an interesting character to her beauty.[70]

We may wish to note that Lucy Steele is the victim of the kind of bad education Wollstonecraft warns will make men fall out of love with women. The novel does not seem to fault Edward for falling out of love with his first love when he finds a better object in Elinor, but he is expected to hold to his choice. Despite the condemnation to poverty and unhappiness the marriage is certain to bring, he refuses to back out when Lucy does not drop the connection, only freeing himself to do so once she breaks it off herself to marry his brother. He is not attached to the present-day Lucy, but rather a memory of an old attachment. His perseverance and refusal to abandon her as a spare woman proves his worthiness in the eyes of the novel, allowing him and Elinor the happy ending. *Sense and Sensibility* is not a takedown of sentimentality or sentimental men, but rather a refinement of sentimentality from Willoughby's misguided attachments to poetry and landscape to an honorable refusal to abandon the spare women that inevitably populate a sentimental narrative.

The sentimental litmus test that all three suitors in the novel face implies that only the men that are worthy pass the test and point to an interesting problem with female agency in the novel. Despite the sense that the women are choosing suitors, there really are no choices to make here. Marianne's plot is often constructed as a choice between Colonel Brandon and Willoughby, but in effect only Colonel Brandon is a real choice.[71] The novel creates foils in

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70. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 134.

71. This is a common plot device in Austen novels. Austen heroines often have to choose between two men, only one of which is a legitimate possibility. Often they find out some new information that immediately disqualifies the other option. For example, Mr. Wickham vs Mr. Darcy, or Mr. Churchill vs. Mr. Knightly. Maria Edgeworth similarly applies this type of marriage plot in *Belinda,* offering a false choice between Mr. Vincent and Clarence Harvey. Claudia Johnson's reading of modesty in Austen may

order to make comparisons between characters: Colonel Brandon and Willoughby; Lucy and Elinor; Eliza and Marianne; Elinor and Marianne; Sense and Sensibility. Through these comparisons, the novel can offer the illusion of choice, agency, and desire, but, in effect, the choices are false. The sentimental form of objectification does not have a space for female agency because its ideal form for female characters is a dead body. Marianne and Elinor are constructed as dead things in the first pages of the novel; women who will keep no company, never travel, and consume nothing. As attached as readers might grow to them over the course of the novel, they never really get to join the realm of the living. Their respective desires have no ability to impact the plot. They must be chosen by their respective suitors, not the other way around. As much as the novel may try and present contrasts as choices, no true choices exist.

Sense and Sensibility and the *Vindication* both struggle with carving out a space for female agency within sentimentality, and both texts hold out education as a potential antidote to sentimentality. The role of education in the relative worthiness of the women of the novel is clearly delineated in the difference between Elinor and Lucy. Lucy's "defects of education," as the text puts it, drive away Edward's initial attachment after he has seen more of the world.[72] Edward's gradual realization that Lucy's poor education and lack of knowledge about the world would render her an unsuitable wife for his modest lifestyle calls to mind Wollstonecraft's warnings about the products of female education. She holds that

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offer a possible defense of this kind of plot device in Austen. Given that it was immodest for women to feel a preference for a man before he announces his intentions, Austen's reticent heroes provide a problem for heroines. Perhaps her heroines are not presented with choices to underscore the problematic way her culture related to female desire. Even still, Austen heroines never have two interested suitors that are both eligible, and that does seem to produce a problem for agency.

Johnson, *Jane Austen,* 62.

72. Wollstonecraft*, Vindication of the Rights of Women,* 134-135.

confining women to frivolous tasks such as needlework, novel reading, and "accomplishments" renders them inadequate as companions to their husbands and mothers to their children. Furthermore, men may have their passions enflamed by a woman's sensibility, but their passion will soon wain if she is a bad mother and housekeeper.[73] Lucy Steele enacts this idea by clinging to a romanticized notion of her relationship with Edward, dooming them both to unhappiness and making them both the subject of gossip. Furthermore, Marianne's emotional development into a more sensible character is deemed completed when she prepares her own educational system:

> I mean never to be later in rising than six, and from that time till dinner I shall divide every moment between music and reading. I have formed my plan, and am determined to enter on a course of serious study. Our own library is too well known to me, to be resorted to for anything beyond mere amusement. But, there are many works well worth reading, at the Park; and there are others of more modern production which I know I can borrow of colonel Brandon. By reading only six hours a-day, I shall gain in the course of twelvemonth a great deal of instruction which I now feel myself to want.[74]

Although Elinor feels this plan to be excessive, and seems to knowingly laugh at Marianne's belief in her own self-discipline, readers are to understand that the very recognition on Marianne's part that her education is lacking and needs improvement demonstrates her new-found virtue. While the novel and Wollstonecraft's polemic both hold up education of women as an antidote to sentimentality, the hollow nature of Marianne's educational plan betrays the shortcomings of this argument.

Although this novel is often thought of as a narrative about women learning and improving (Marianne learning to be less sentimental and Elinor learning to be more open about her feelings), in reality their respective "educations" about sense and sensibility have nothing to do with their eventual marriages. Both of their husbands loved them before their

73. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 271.
74. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility,* 320.

respective reformations; the emptiness of their eventual transformations in the role of the plot again points to the problem with the lack of agency in the novel. Like their choices, their respective growth as characters must be artificially made to feel important in the novel because it does not in fact impact the plot. Marianne's educational program for herself is a façade at best that is only lent significance by Elinor's approval of it. Education is a toothless remedy to sentimentality. In effect, it is mostly an attempt to say that if women were less silly, men would not abandon them.

The problem with Austen and Wollstonecraft's attempts to write themselves out from under the sentimental mode is that it does not reach to the root of the way the sentimental mode works: through its structure of objectification. Perhaps Austen is not trying to write herself from out of the sentimental mode at all. Critics have long debated the relative radicalism or conservativism of Austen's novels. William Galperin calls for us to rethink our understanding of the historical Austen and these debates. Using Michel de Certeau's concept of "oppositionality," Galperin writes, "oppositionality is more a way of getting on that a practice predicated on the revolutionary or utopian dream of getting out."[75] Reclaiming female agency from the sentimental must address the fact that women in the sentimental mode are often rendered into things that look like corpses. While Austen may normally find a way to "get on" without "getting out," sentimentality is not one of those systems for which women can afford to just get on. When Austen replicates that narrative through the two Eliza's, she cannot then carve out a different path for Marianne and Elinor. Her gestures as education do not enact a kind of female agency. The bodies of the Elizas underpinning this narrative foreclose those possibilities. While I think Wollstonecraft wants to provide an

75. William Galperin, *The Historical Austen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 30.

alternative to sentimentality, her alternative is simply not radical enough to overturn the system itself. Austen, likewise, may try and condemn aspects of the sentimental mode, but ultimately her novel offers an intensification of the mode because of a failure to understand the underlying structure of sentimentality. An imprecise understanding of objectification, particularly as it is enacted by the sentimental man in the sentimental novel, results in a failure to understand and then to adequately critique sentimentality.

Coda

And the Dead Shall Rise Again: Gothic Possibilities Under Sentimentality

While the sentimental mode may have limited the possibilities for agency for female objects, especially in comparison to circulating objectification, no genre is better equipped than the gothic to reimagine possibilities of agency for female objects under the sentimental. If women in sentimental narratives are often turned into corpses in the service of the narrative, the gothic offers the potential to reanimate those corpses. Austen, through Wollstonecraft, attempts to rehabilitate sentimental object-hood into liberal subject-hood with limited success, offering readers nothing more than the illusion of choice and the wish-fulfillment of a good match. The gothic, meanwhile, has no problem leaning in to both the sentimental form and the realities of objectification. Therefore, like the women of the first chapter of this project, gothic heroines are able to exploit the rules of their narratives to find ways to enact their desires.

Ann Radcliffe, the bleeding heart of the gothic genre, provides one such template for how to reimagine agency under the sentimental in one of her earliest novels, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). In my reading of the novel, Radcliffe recapitulates some key Richardsonian sentimental plots, re-injecting them with some elements of circulating object-hood, to present a reformed sentimental tale in which female desire and female agency once again drive narratives. The gothic tradition is often divided along a gender binary, separating "feminine" gothic writers such as Radcliffe, who famously unmasks the supernatural as natural in a magic trick of Enlightenment rationality, and "masculine" gothic writers such as Matthew Lewis and Horace Walpole. Lewis is the slasher film to Radcliffe's psychological thriller, the horror to her terror. Diane Long Hoeveler brilliantly theorizes the tradition of gothic femininity Radcliffe charters in her book *Gothic Feminism: the Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes.* She writes,

> In the female gothic work she [the gothic heroine] creates what she thinks are alternative, empowering female-created fantasies. In her triumphant act of self-creation she rejects her subjugation and status as "other," whether object or absence, and she refuses to subscribe passively to confining male-created ideologies of the "woman as subject." She proffers instead victim feminism as a female-created ideology, mixing one part hyperbolic melodrama with one part Christian sentimentalism, and creating a heady brew that promised its readers the ultimate fantasy: their socially and economically weak positions could actually be the basis of their strength. The meek shall inherit the gothic earth.[1]

Hoeveler's characterization of gothic feminism as an alternative fantasy that centers female desire while rejecting "male-created ideologies" of subject-hood influences my reading of the genre as a re-imagination of the possibilities for female agency under sentimentality. At various points, Hoeveler considers Radcliffe heroines as "exchange commodities" living in a system that traffics in women and sentimental objects in the prisons/asylums/domestic spaces of their "bad dads." Considering I have argued until this point that circulating objectification and sentimental objectification are diametrically opposed, the unique way the feminine gothic uses both threads of objectification in service of female fantasy deserves consideration as a final turn to this project's narrative.

The gothic novel is influenced by eighteenth-century theories of the sentimental, starting with Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), in which he famously theorizes the sublime and the beautiful. Ann Radcliffe then perfects the depiction of the sublime in novels. From the onset, gothic aesthetics and sentimentality share common links. Burke explains, "For sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected; so that this passion may either partake of the nature of those which regard self-preservation, and turning upon pain may be a source of the sublime."[2] Radcliffe's novels, well known for their depictions of imagery that

1. Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: the Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 19.
2. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry,*(1757; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 41.

captures Burke's idea of the sublime, also rests on sentimental depiction of distress. Her female characters regularly face horrors and trials that rival those of Clarissa. Radcliffian heroines therefore offer readers a chance to experience the pleasure of the sentimental, alongside the sublime.

Turning to one of Radcliffe's first novels, *A Sicilian Romance,* the influence of sentimental plots is apparent. Radcliffe recasts Richardsonian sentimental plots in service of female agency and desire. First, when Julia learns her father is planning on forcing her to marry an older, odious suitor, she finds herself in a situation quite similar to Clarissa. Choosing between submitting to patriarchal authority and running off with a different suitor, she faces a moral dilemma that could be pulled straight from *Clarissa:* "She would escape the dreadful destiny awaiting her, but must, perhaps, sully the purity of that reputation, which was dearer to her than existence."[3] Although Clarissa and Julia face a similar dilemma, Radcliffe reimagines Clarissa's coerced abduction by Lovelace as a conscious decision Julia makes to run away with her lover, Hippolitus (approved by the brother, an example of a good patriarchal figure, which prevents the narrative from completely upending patriarchal structures). Clarissa's rake is recast as Julia's gothic hero, changing this would-be abduction scene into a scene of pursuit, in which the Gothic heroine does not risk losing her reputation by running from the excesses of patriarchal control.

The reimagining of abduction into pursuit injects movement for women back into the sentimental novel. Gothic heroines move around a lot, between castles, within castles, through gloomy forests, and in the shadow of monasteries. While they are often being chased through these landscapes by odious suitors, evil stepfathers, or banditti, they still chart paths for themselves through these sinister landscapes. Julia, unlike Clarissa, is able to manage her escape

3. Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance,* ed. Alison Milbank (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 62.

for her own purposes.

Likewise, Julia successfully disguises herself and disposes of her own clothing in a scene that might recall a similar moment in *Pamela.* Recounting her journey, Julia explains, "About a quarter of a league from the walls we stopped, and I assumed the habit in which you now see me. My own dress was fastened to some heavy stones, and Caterina [Julia's servant] threw it into the stream, near the almond grove."[4] One might read this scene and recall Pamela's failed attempt to escape Mr. B's gothic castle when she drowns her clothing in the pond to distract from her escape. Unlike Pamela, Julia is not captured. She successfully disguises herself as a peasant girl and escapes detection. Pamela's pond becomes Julia's stream, the running water aiding in her escape. Part of the reason for Julia's success is the assistance of her friends, servants, brother, and lover. The world of the gothic novel is repopulated with helpmates, particularly female servants, who ensure the heroine's successful evasion of the gothic villain.

Gothic novels also reimagine the fates of the sentimental women who die to power the sentimental narrative. In particular, these women are exploited for their sentimental potential, but then exhumed by the gothic heroine. She feels her kinship with these female ghosts, but ultimately escapes their fate. Jane Eyre's connection to and discovery of Bertha, the supposed ghost in Rochester's attic, is one such example. The heroine's goal in the gothic novel is to find the dead woman who isn't really dead.[5] Another example comes from *A Sicilian Romance,* in which Julia literally recovers her dead mother, walled off in an abandoned wing of the castle, but still very much alive. Discovering her father intends to finally finish the job of killing her mother, Julia helps orchestrate her escape. Her brother, Ferdinand, also discovers his mother has

4. Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,* 108.

5. See Yael Shapira's *Inventing the Gothic Corpse: The Thrill of Human Remains in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) for further historicizing and contextualizing of the role of the corpse in gothic narratives.

been alive all this time and searches for her, but is unable to find her body. The task of rescuing the mother is ultimately reserved for the gothic heroine. The novel ends with the family reuniting in an old lighthouse, and the revenant mother embracing the son: "Great God, I am recompensed! Surely this moment may repay a life of misery!"[6] she says. Hoeveler reads this scene as a scene that "speaks to the gothic child's fantasy that she has the divine power to give birth to her parents. This is a potent moment, the image of a child delivering her mother from the underworld speaks to that child's greatest fear: the loss and abandonment through death of a parent. The fantasy as Radcliffe presents it reverses and denies the fear."[7] For Hoeveler, the mythic reclamation of the mother allows the daughter to, in effect, give birth to herself, and furthermore transform the suffering spectacle of womanhood into a heroic tale of female power and strength.

We might also recall Terry Castle's argument that "a crucial feature of the new sensibility of the late eighteenth century was, quite literally, a growing sense of the ghostliness of other people."[8] In Castle's reading of the "uncanniness" of the eighteenth-century, Radcliffe's novels offer both confusion about who is alive and who is dead, and a "deindividuation" of characters such that they blend into each other in an uncanny way.[9] Remembering that Freud's concept of the uncanny is connected to objects that seem human, like dolls and waxworks, I draw a line between Castle's discussion of the uncanny in the 18th century and objectification. Julia's uncanny mother works against subjectivity while still claiming power and agency for Julia as she rescues the ghosts in her ghost story.

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6. Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,* 197.
7. Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* 68.
8. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125.
9. Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* 127.

As I previously suggested in my reading of *Sense and Sensibility,* Sentimental narratives replace the radical fungibility of objectified characters with a doubling effect along generational lines. Women might be fungible with their mothers, or other dead characters, but this fungibility has the effect of implying these female characters are somehow already dead; it does not allow them agency. In addition to resurrecting the dead mother, gothic novels also reintroduce fungibility as a possibility for movement in the narrative arch. *A Sicilian Romance* does this explicitly, by figuring Julia's escape in relation to her confusion with another gothic heroine in pursuit. For, in the forest, there are two women with their lovers escaping from evil patriarchs. Just when we think Julia is at risk of being caught, Radcliffe swaps her with a near identical figure:

> Wretched girl! I have at least secured you!,' said a cavalier, who now entered the room. He stopped as he perceived Julia; and turning to the men who stood without, 'Are these,' said he, 'the fugitives you have taken?'…Madame now stepped forward, and an explanation ensued, when it appeared that the stranger was the Marquis Murani, the father of the fair fugitive whom the duke had before mistaken for Julia.[10]

Because Julia is indistinguishable from this other gothic heroine, who is enacting a near identical plot line, both women are able to escape their pursuers, who cannot tell them apart. This is not quite the same as the fungibility Haywood characters exploit, it is more constrained because of the impact of their need to escape. But, it allows them to safely avoid capture and enact their own desires to be with their lovers, instead of the suitors their fathers have chosen. Julia's double also points to the generic nature of gothic novels, the rigidity of their conventions often cast by critics as a potential detractor from the seriousness and literary value of the form. However, generic convention seems to be crucial to how the novel imagines possibilities of agency. Julia is fungible with other women because their stories are the same, not because they

10. Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,*112.

might look the same. Their narratives are fungible, as well as their persons, creating a shared kinship between all women, and creating the potential for structures of mutual aid so important for the heroine's escape.

This hybridized version of objectification points toward some key differences between sentimental and gothic plots. I have suggested that sentimental novels predominately privilege male emotions and experiences, with women acting as conduits for these emotions. While gothic heroines are still spectacles of suffering, like sentimental women, their experiences of that suffering take center stage. For instance, Julia and Hippolitus begin their romance when Julia overhears Hippolitus confess his love for her. Instead of Mr. B lurking in closets to overhear Pamela's innermost thoughts, Julia is given the upper hand in possessing knowledge of Hippolitus's inner-most feelings. But, unlike a Haywood heroine, she does not use this information to scheme for sexual pleasure, but instead "She caught at a chair to support her trembling frame; and overwhelmed with mortifying sensations, sunk into it, and hid her face in her robes."[11] Julia is still a picture of meek, sentimental womanhood, but now her emotional experience, her power of choice to reject or accept Hippolitus, dictates the scene.

Furthermore, the gothic hero becomes feminized in service of the female heroine's desires. Hippolitus's very name suggests an illusion to Hippolyta, the Amazonian woman engaged to Theseus in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* herself an allusion to the mythological Greek figure. In some versions of the myth, Hippolyta was abducted by Theseus. The recasting of the gothic hero here as a feminized victim of abduction, as well as a symbol of female strength, begins to hint at the gender-bending treatment Radcliffe gives the sentimental man in her gothic romance. Hoeveler likewise suggests the gothic hero is necessarily "wounded and

11. Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,* 51.

vulnerable." In other words, "To put it crudely, a wounded man is a castrated man is a safe (easily manipulated) man."[12] Claudia Johnson's reading of the sentimental as creating "equivocal beings," finds its true power in the sentimental gothic, in which gender binaries (and all other binaries) are disrupted. The gothic hero displays key differences to the sentimental hero in my schema of gender binaries in sentimental stories. The gothic hero is often captured, imprisoned, injured, or presumed dead, as Hippolitus is in *A Sicilian Romance.* Like the sentimental woman, his presumed death, injury, or peril is a vehicle for the gothic heroine/sentimental man to experience the emotional payoff of the narrative, placing the pursued gothic heroine in a more typically masculine role. The flipping of these gender roles, combined with renewed avenues for women to express their desire, through movement and fungibility, rehabilitates sentimental plots in service of female agency.

The gothic novel also offers a tantalizing glimpse at a critique to the most damaging legacies of objectification. Starting with Locke, a foundational feature of liberalism is a sense of the body as an individual's property. Selfhood and subjectivity emerges from a person's right to their own body as their property. As I said in the introduction to this project, many feminists have searched for a way to abolish objectification and proposed various solutions, from abolishing gender, to abolishing capitalism, to outlawing pornography. However, it seems to me that the problem with objectification is grounded in the problem with property, particularly treating the body as property. By basing the self on possession of one's own body, objectification is a process done to someone that can alienate them from their own selfhood. As I have previously stated, it may be okay to be an object, but it is a terrible thing to be owned. Problems with ownership, particularly inheritance, are integral features of the gothic novel. These novels imbue domestic spaces,

12. Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* 32.

specifically inherited domestic spaces, with horror. Escaping the gothic villain is also about escaping the grips of control of the gothic castle. Private property is not a way to create the self, but rather a mechanism for a patriarchial figure to control and possess others. The gothic novel seeks to neutralize the perils of private property. Again we can turn to *Jane Eyre* and the catastrophic burning of Rochester's estate as one such example. To quote Wolfram Schmidgen on Radcliffe, "For a politically oriented criticism, her [Radcliffe's] highly deliberate descriptive acts are nothing less than attempts to exorcise what Mary Wollstonecraft called the "demon of property."[13] In this way, the gothic novel liberates women from the desperate suffering of sentimental objectification and the suffocating fiction of the liberal subject.

The most dramatic consequences of this rehabilitation is the gothic heroine's unique powers of resurrection. Having traced an arch of objectification through multiple genres of the eighteenth-century, from picaresque narratives and amatory fiction of the 1720s, to it-narratives, to sentimental novels and their strange cousin, the gothic novel, it becomes clear that the way a character is objectified matters. These genres all rest on a certain kind of gender relation that treats women as objects, but the power of female characters to find agency within objectification varies based on how they are objectified. The eighteenth century, with its preoccupation with subjectivity, commerce, interiority, and individualism, uniquely positions itself as working out the anxieties of female objecthood and the question of female subjecthood. While not the final word on how objectification works in narratives, the novels of the period establish patterns and templates that continue well into the present.

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13. Wolfram Schmidgen, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Law of Property* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 155. See also, Ann Gaylin, "Ghostly Dispossessions: the Gothic Properties of *Uncle Silas*," in *Troubled Legacies: Narrative and Inheritance,* ed. Allan Hepburn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) for a reading of the relationship between the gothic and private property.

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