

A BIOCULTURAL EXPLORATION OF RISK, RISK-TAKING,
AND FEMALE SEXUAL ENGAGEMENT IN BRITISH NARRATIVES, 1683-1740

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the role of risk, the function of risk-taking, and women's sexual behaviour as expressed in British narratives published between 1683 and 1740. I adopt a biocultural approach — namely, a consilient perspective that gives primacy to how human nature developed through the coevolution of biology and culture. Hitherto, most eighteenth-century literary and cultural critics have not taken advantage of the explanatory and revelatory power of the biocultural approach. The four case studies I present here explore the function of women's risk-taking in my chosen texts. I focus on possibilities that emerge for heroines at the risk of being raped, being socially or sexually abandoned, suffering loss of financial security, facing poor marriage prospects, ruining romantic attachments, and being deprived of sexual gratification.

My introductory chapter lays out the biocultural approach and details some of the key features of our evolved psychology that inform human sexual behaviour. Chapter One explores a much-neglected novel, *The London Jilt*. In this chapter, I argue that the novel's heroine emerges as a *prosocial whore* who willingly incorporates altruistic punishment as a strategy for managing intersexual conflict, even as her prosociality is continually offset by her own opportunism. Chapter Two examines Daniel Defoe's sexualized characterization of Lady Credit who, I argue, deploys a *whore's stratagem* to recruit bipartisan support for England's nascent credit system. Through Lady Credit, homosocial cooperation is made possible despite distrust between warring political factions. Chapter Three considers the effects of loss aversion and intrasexual competition on female sexual risk-taking in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*. In this chapter, I also detail how sexually climactic possibilities might emerge from intentional delay of sexual gratification. Chapter Four investigates

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. I assert that Pamela's self-deception is an intrasexually competitive strategy that allows Pamela to increase sexual risk-taking while avoiding social and parental punishment. And ironically, Pamela's self-deceptive tactics allow this heroine to win over the man who continually threatens Pamela with rape. Ultimately, my dissertation reveals that, by way of a biocultural perspective, risk and risk-taking bring out new facets and dimensions of women's sexual nature thus far overlooked and undiscovered.

Lay Summary

My dissertation is an exploration of risk, risk-taking, and women's sexual behaviour as depicted in British narratives published between 1683 and 1740. I adopt a biocultural approach to inform my analyses, integrating behavioural research on altruistic punishment, intersexual conflict, trust, cooperation, loss aversion, intrasexual competition, and self-deception. Primarily, my study is an experiment in applying a biocultural perspective to my readings of the anonymously published *The London Jilt*, Daniel Defoe's characterization of Lady Credit in his *A Review of the State of the British Nation*, Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*, and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Until now, the topic of risk and women's sexual behaviour has been much neglected in Restoration and early eighteenth-century literary studies. My use of a biocultural theoretical lens contributes new insight into our thinking about the role of risk and the function of women's risk-taking in these narratives that detail women's sexual nature.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author,
Lauri Denise Jang.

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To my Poh Poh, who probably won't read this.
To my parents, who didn't ask too many questions.
And to Paul and Lukas. Obviously.

Introduction

In 1725, one of the most popular and prolific writers of the eighteenth century introduces one of her most sexually intriguing heroines in *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze*. In this short novel, Eliza Haywood imagines a young and nameless female character who unapologetically leads a double life — a public one of virtuous “Reputation” (*Fantomina* 45) and another life secretive and promiscuous, filled with private trysts, sexual trickery, and counterfeit identities. *Fantomina* is centrally about a woman’s insatiable lust for her libertine lover and her clever scheme of disguising herself over and over again — the name Fantomina being one of her aliases — all to seduce the unknowing Beauplaisir. First pretending to be a prostitute, then a housemaid, next a bereaving young widow, and finally a faceless seductress incognita, Haywood’s heroine does not even allow an unplanned pregnancy to spoil her plans of continually renewed and reignited intrigues. Indeed, it is only with the return of Fantomina’s mother that Haywood’s narrative comes to an end. Most interesting about this heroine’s plan is that while each disguise may seemingly serve to pique Beauplaisir’s interest perpetually and, unbeknownst to him, preserve his sexual interest in her, this bold female character in fact performs each role in order to prolong her own sexual gratification.¹ From

¹ As Catherine Craft-Fairchild observes in her *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women*: “Fantomina satisfies her own wishes at the same time as she destabilizes the gaze of her lover, refocusing his look upon her four intentionally manufactured selves” (61). While Craft-Fairchild’s study concentrates on Fantomina’s exploitation of the male gaze, Craft-Fairchild also recognizes that Fantomina “acts upon her own desires” and “is more concerned with procuring her own sexual enjoyment than with being attractive to her lover for his sake; [as] she is intent upon ‘gratifying the Inclination she had for his agreeable Person’ ...for her own satisfaction” (62). Although, as Craft-Fairchild notes, Fantomina’s “disguises do, however, cater to Beauplaisir’s fancies and fantasies” (62).

the outset, Fantomina knows Beauplaisir does not love her, and she certainly does not aim to conquer his heart. Indeed, Fantomina does not genuinely demand love or devotion.² Instead, it is his body that she pursues and the pleasure that only his body could provide (*Fantomina* 51). In other words, *Fantomina* is fundamentally about a woman's own sexual enjoyment and the lengths to which she would go to satisfy and sustain her own lust.

Certainly, literary scholars have offered important analyses of eighteenth-century amatory fiction like *Fantomina*, exploring how the genre's mostly female authors examine women's sexual agency and empowerment through their narratives.³ And while such critics

² Although scholars like Tiffany Potter rightly point out that *Fantomina* — through all her disguises — says she wants Beauplaisir to promise constancy, *Fantomina*'s public acknowledgement of how their intrigue began would certainly harm her reputation. And so despite what *Fantomina* might express to Beauplaisir in a kind of scripted dialogue of what lovers typically say to each other, we can look at her specific actions to determine what *Fantomina* really wants. See Potter's "The Language of Feminised Sexuality: Gendered Voice in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina*."

³ More specifically, discussions around the genre of amatory fiction usually point to examples like *Fantomina* and most, if not all, of Haywood's oeuvre. Beginning with novels by Aphra Behn and Delariviere Manley that centre on women's sexual adventures and the socio-political landscape their female characters must navigate in order to find sexual expression, amatory fiction's popularity, according to Ros Ballaster (one of the genre's leading scholars), declines by 1740 with writers like Samuel Richardson and his sentimental novels like *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* — a text on which this dissertation itself will end. For more, see Ballaster's *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*. Also see Craft-Fairchild's *Masquerade and Gender*; Mary Anne Schofield's *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind* and *Quiet Rebellion: The Fictional Heroines of Eliza Fowler Haywood*; Margaret Case Croskery's "Masquing Desire: The Politics of Passion in Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina*"; Toni Bowers's *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760*; Kathleen Lubey's *Excitable Imaginations: Eroticism and Reading in Britain*; John Richetti's *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*; and (again) Tiffany Potter's "The Language of Feminised Sexuality: Gendered Voice in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina*." More generally on women writers of the early eighteenth century, see Janet Todd's *The Sign of Angellica*; Catherine Ingrassia's *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-*

rightly highlight — for instance, as Tiffany Potter does — that writers like Haywood often imagine “sexually disruptive female character[s]” (“The Language of Feminised Sexuality” 176) in order to question perceptions of women’s sexuality and the public’s attempt to control women’s sexual conduct on the whole, scholars have often understood more sexually aggressive female behaviour as a character’s adoption of male libertine attitudes for the purpose of social and political disruption. That is, turning back to the example of our seductress, as Potter argues: “in her game-like pursuit of the continuing sexual passions of the libertine, Beauplaisir, Fantomina *appropriates the masculinist libertine character*...in order to serially seduce her lover,” “mov[ing] into masculinised realms of sexuality, power and subversion” (176 — emphasis mine). While the adoption of male libertinism certainly would have afforded women a way to challenge male sexual privilege, regarding women’s actions in terms of its subversive purpose perhaps narrows our window of analysis. We might do well to consider how tales like *Fantomina*, in fact, illustrate the fuller range of women’s sexual strategies. More specifically, taking the perspective that women assume male libertinism in order to turn the tables on men themselves in some ways precludes the possibility of libertine-like strategies within women’s sexual repertoire, failing to acknowledge how women’s sexual promiscuity and indulgence might involve importantly different parameters. Indeed, there is no reason to think that female libertinism needs to resemble male libertinism or manifest in the same way.⁴ Instead, I would suggest, authors

Century England; Catherine Gallagher’s *Nobody’s Story*; and Jane Spencer’s *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*.

⁴ Peter Cryle and Lisa O’Connell, for example, make a similar observation in their introduction to *Libertine Enlightenment: Sex, Liberty and License in the Eighteenth Century*, arguing that women are not permitted full access to the sexual freedoms of male libertinism because “the moment she becomes a public woman, her identity is collapsed into her conspicuous sexuality” (11). And yet, as I

like Haywood give light to aspects of women's sexuality that account for a broader spectrum of women's sexual nature. And perhaps a key factor in understanding women's more assertive sexual tactics is how such behaviour leaves women open to much more risk than their male counterparts, even as women's engagement with risk allows for greater sexual and socio-political possibilities to emerge.

Literary scholars have yet to investigate how "Risque" (*Fantomina* 45) is a key feature in risqué novels. We have yet to examine how exposure to the hazard of injury or the danger of loss plays an essential part in how sexual agency and empowerment are experienced by female characters.⁵ Recognizing the role sexual risk-taking plays in novels

argue throughout my dissertation, the matter of women's access to such sexual freedoms may be loaded with biological risks that Cryle and O'Connell and Potter, too, have not considered. That is, while these critics recognize the socio-political costs of adopting a libertine lifestyle for women, such costs are confined as a matter of socio-political contention. As I aim to show, understanding the biological roots of sexual cost differentials may reveal how and why women's libertinism is necessarily different.

On libertinism specifically, see James Turner's *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London*; Harold Weber's *The Restoration Rake-Hero*; Warren Chernaik's *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature*; Tiffany Potter's *Honest Sins*; and Laura Linker's *Dangerous Women, Libertine Epicures, and the Rise of Sensibility, 1670–1730*.

⁵ In my exploration of how risk unfolds in areas of women's sex lives, I leave open the concept of risk to include synonymous terms like "hazard," "danger," and "exposure" that stress the potentiality of negative outcomes. As *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines, risk is: the "(Exposure to) the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstance; a chance or situation involving such a possibility" ("Risk," def. 1). Risk might also include the "possibility of harm or damage causing financial loss" ("Risk," def. 2a) and involve "[a] hazardous journey, undertaking, or course of action" ("Risk," def. 3).

I follow scholars like Rüdiger Trimpop who narrow the notion of risk-taking to risks that are known by the agent (no unknown risks) and "the subjective experience of risk" as "essential for any

like *Fantomina*, for example, allows us to understand why it is that Haywood's heroine pursues a double life. Indeed, to avoid the possibility of anyone gaining "Knowledge of her Name" (*Fantomina* 65) Fantomina ingeniously discovers a strategy that both secures her more vested interest in safeguarding her public reputation while she secretly engages in satisfying her more ephemeral desires. And yet, I would argue, risk — the very thing she hopes to avert — is precisely that which perpetuates her lust. While Fantomina disguises herself as a prostitute in what turns into her first erotic encounter, this first sexual experience is hardly one that leaves her enraptured. In fact, Fantomina is raped by Beauplaisir, and Fantomina struggles in a "Rage of Temper" at her "Loss of Honour" and being "undone beyond the Power of Heaven itself" (47). What begins as a risk-averse plan turns into a scheme that heightens Fantomina's sexual experience because of the pleasure she finds in the level of sexual risk she hazards. As she engages Beauplaisir further and further through each of her personas, the sexual excitement she experiences directly follows from the increased level of danger to which she exposes herself. In this way, risk becomes an integral part of her sexual experience, making her dalliances even more excitingly enticing. Avoiding risk

emotional, physiological, or cognitive change in behavior. Without subject knowledge of a risk, an individual can neither adjust to it, nor include it in any kind of cost/benefit analysis" (9).

As my examination is centred on sexual risk-taking from a biocultural perspective, I have found the following studies especially helpful: Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk"; Martin Daly and Margo Wilson's "Risk-Taking, Intrasexual Competition, and Homicide"; Margo Wilson and Martin Daly's "Competition, Risk Taking, and Violence: The Young Male Syndrome"; Anne Campbell's *A Mind of Her Own*; Sarah E. Hill and David M. Buss's "Risk and Relative Social Rank: Positional Concerns and Risky Shifts in Probabilistic Decision-Making"; X.T. Wang, Daniel J. Kruger, and Andreas Wilke's "Life History Variables and Risk-Taking Propensity"; Bruce Winterhalder's "Risk and Decision-Making"; and Rüdiger M. Trimpop's *The Psychology of Risk Taking Behavior*.

may have motivated this heroine into masking her true identity, but risk itself ends up emerging as the powerful, sexually stimulating force that drives most of the narrative action in *Fantomina*. Furthermore, risk acts upon Haywood's readers in a similar way. Just as her heroine's sexual gratification is sustained through risk, our reading pleasure is also sustained through Haywood's use of sexual risk in this story. With each new persona, readers feel increasingly on edge, waiting for the ruse to be discovered.

A fundamental aspect of my dissertation, therefore, looks at the role of risk and the function of women's risk-taking — that is, seeing what opportunities emerge for women at the risk of rape, social and sexual abandonment, losing financial security and marriage prospects, as well as ruined romantic attachments and being deprived of sexual gratification. Whether by choice or chance (because some women are thrust into risky situations), how does risk-taking figure in depictions of women's sexual behaviour? What are the effects of women's sexual risk-taking? How do environments of risk and options for risk inform women's sexual expression? When and how do women create risky environments? When and how do they engage in sexual risk-taking and heighten risks to their advantage? How is women's sexual risk-taking woven into narratives about women's sexual nature?

To examine these questions, I take a biocultural theoretical approach — that is, a perspective that integrates knowledge about our biologically evolved human nature with evidence of how cultural environments influence our comportment — in my attempt to delve deeper and reach further back into the *why* of women's sexual behaviour. By doing so, my aim is to explore aspects of female characters and texts that have not yet been considered. Informed by biocultural theories, the four case studies I present here are analyses that nudge at the boundaries of what we know about women's sexual psychology. Indeed, biocultural

theories offer me a firm footing on which to explore other possible facets of our sexual behaviour that branch off from what we know about our evolved sexual nature. Thus, I find freedom and flexibility, insight and inventiveness through a biocultural lens — the possibility and a license to imagine in a different direction.

Imagining a Different Direction

Women's sexual risk-taking has not been a topic of sustained investigation in most eighteenth-century literary scholarship. While Jesse Molesworth's *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* deals with aspects of risk-taking in his exploration of the propagation of fantasy through narratives of chance, for Molesworth, risks serve as a counterweight — the possibility of loss or danger — created by authors in order to counterbalance the brighter prospects of gain that fantasies of chance generate through the novel, drawing in readers as such narratives draw out the tensions between “triumph and failure” (89). For Molesworth, risk helps to fuel the fantasy of possibility by heightening the stakes as narratives of chance act as a kind of “remedy for the discovery of one's own ordinariness” (9), allowing readers to “stage[] a retreat from, rather than an advance toward, rational judgment” (10).

Jessica Richard's focus in *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* overlaps with Molesworth's study in ways. However, Richard hinges her exploration of chance on the particular tension that the culture of gambling creates between chance and control. Where Molesworth attends to plot, Richard directs her attention to how strategies at gaming tables and within the realm of early speculative markets inform how characters choose between opportunities to optimize their situations through risk-taking

(chance) and the degree of power they can assume over their circumstances through careful risk assessment (control).⁶ And yet, while both Molesworth and Richard consider how developing ideas in probability theory did little to sway people into being more informed before taking risks, their treatment of female characters like Daniel Defoe's Roxana and Frances Burney's Mrs. Berlington in *Camilla* sidesteps the importance that sex has on the degree and type of risks such characters are willing to assume.

Consider Molesworth's claim: "No critic, I think it is safe to say, would ever describe Roxana as risk-averse" (116). Certainly, if we consider the whole of Roxana's narrative, the collection of situations in which she finds herself, and her ascent in social status within the novel as directly tied to the men with whom she aligned herself through sexual exchange, we might agree with Molesworth's statement. Indeed, Molesworth makes this statement because he believes Roxana is "driven by an insatiable hunger for narrative adventure and by an urge, in doing so, to remake the self" (116). And yet, the self that Molesworth sees in Roxana is one whose biological sex is not factored in. If we are more attentive to Roxana's specific options within each scenario and recognize that her choices are often informed by very particular dangers to her as a sexually desired woman — not even a woman who is sexually desirous herself — then we may see that Roxana is actually quite averse to risk. At each turn, Roxana opts for the least risky of available options — that is, options that provide her with most security. Roxana understands all too well what it means to be a woman without monetary resources, as her five children are taken away from her to live with paternal relatives. But Roxana also understands all too well what it means to bear

⁶ Where Molesworth focusses on writers from Daniel Defoe to Ann Radcliffe, Richard concentrates on mid-eighteenth-century authors like Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding, as well as late-eighteenth-century writers like Frances Burney and Jane Austen.

and provide for more children. Thus, for example, Roxana is indifferent to her landlord's attraction to her maid, Amy, and in fact encourages him to bed and impregnate her willing maid. Attempting to offload women's reproductive work on to this young woman who is under Roxana's employ, Roxana hopes to benefit from the landlord's shelter and resources without physiological costs to herself. Roxana may be a self-confessed "Whore" who purposely makes her maid one too (*Roxana* 83), but such a set up exposes Roxana to less risk.

Jessica Richard, on the other hand, recognizes that gambling obliged women in very specific ways as women risked giving up their "last stake" (113) — that is, giving their bodies up to sexual favours in order to pay off debts. Richard's study of female gamblers at least considers the importance of women's sexual difference — for Richard, the monetization of women's bodies as an exchangeable sexual resource. However, Richard's reading of women like Burney's Mrs. Berlinton in *Camilla* perhaps overlooks how much risk a female gambler engages in. Where Richard focusses on Mrs. Berlinton's desire for control over her unhappy marriage and power over her own sexual objectification through gaming, Richard misses the magnitude of risk to which Mrs. Berlinton exposes herself as she wagers more than her body for exchange. Indeed, Mrs. Berlinton risks marital and social abandonment, unwanted pregnancies and illegitimate children, and being vulnerable to venereal diseases. For women, sexual risk-taking often involves much more than simply the act of sex.

The important issue of female sexual difference as explored in eighteenth-century fiction, of course, has been a topic of much literary research for the past thirty years or so. From Janet Todd's *The Sign of Angellica*, Ros Ballaster's *Seductive Forms*, and Catherine Gallagher's *Nobody's Story* to Catherine Ingrassia's *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in*

Early Eighteenth-Century England, Bradford Keyes Mudge's *The Whore's Story*, and Toni Bowers's *Force or Fraud*, for example, there has been a critical movement to put women's bodies, writing, and sexual issues at the forefront of studying the novel.⁷ Their push for more serious attention to women's voices stems from a reaction to earlier literary studies — like that of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* and Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* — that primarily laid focus on heavyweights like Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Richardson. Partly motivated by the desire to redress the absence of critical attention to women writers, many of the scholars mentioned here see the importance of documenting, examining, and celebrating early female authors like Aphra Behn, Delariviere Manley, Eliza Haywood, Susanna Centlivre, and Mary Davys who had important influences on Defoe, Fielding, and Richardson.

Nancy Armstrong, in her seminal *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, reaches for the works of cultural critics like Michel Foucault to inform her ways of understanding sexuality, sexual desire, and biological sex itself as aspects of our human nature that are created through socially constructed ideologies. Primarily referencing Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, Armstrong follows Foucault's assertion that "sex [is] a function of sexuality" and that the larger category of sexuality itself is "a purely semiotic process" always situated in language (Armstrong 11). Thus, Armstrong is hesitant to look to fictional narratives as a way into understanding "female nature or even...female lives" (48) because, for her, such accounts are always already embedded in a socio-cultural system that is informed and controlled by specific historical and political influences. Indeed, Armstrong declares that she "take[s] issue with critics whose discussion of sexuality is grounded in nature," unwilling to believe

⁷ See also John Richetti's *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*, Jane Spencer's *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, and Laura Brown's *Ends of Empire*.

arguments that “the gendered body [i.e. biological sex] belongs to a nature that is beyond culture,” claiming that “the ideas of natural sex...is without doubt the purest form of ideology” (262 n.6). Armstrong is skeptical of arguments of a “biological basis for sexuality which is transcultural and outside of history” (262 n.6). And yet, contrary to such statements, Armstrong recognizes that it is possible to identify “what is specifically female about...[the] kind of writing” she investigates, stating that if we can only identify and separate out “what is [socially constructed] sexuality in the Foucauldian sense of the word [then] we can possibly isolate sex from the other power relations operating under its cloak” (48). Armstrong’s interests are aligned with Foucault, however, and so her aim is to “evade the trap of understanding sexual differences as a universal condition or a static paradigm” (48). And because Armstrong gives primacy to a Foucauldian perspective, she is inclined to view universal sex differences as a rigid paradigmatic “trap.” However, as biocultural approaches understand, to claim that our evolved sex differences have *developed reliably* over our evolution is not to say that this evolved nature is “static” in any way. Indeed, our evolution depended on our ability to adapt to changing environmental (which includes cultural) pressures. Biocultural theories, in fact, offer Armstrong a way to reconcile what she sees as an estrangement between nature and culture.⁸

⁸ In her critique of Jeffrey Weeks’s analytical position, which he summarizes using Robert Padgug’s conclusion — “biological sexuality is the necessary precondition for human sexuality. But biological sexuality is only a precondition, a set of potentialities which is never unmediated by human reality” (262 n.6) — Armstrong views this as a contradiction. However, Armstrong is misguided in her understanding of the phrase “never unmediated by human reality” as throwing into question the whole argument for a “biological basis of sexuality which is transcultural and outside of history” (to repeat again). Her misunderstanding of this is based on her assumption, again, that biological sexuality is fixed and does not respond to environmental pressures. Indeed, to argue that biological sex is transcultural and transhistorical is not to say, as Armstrong seems to think, that “the gendered

Armstrong, of course, is not alone in her preference for social constructivist models of human sexuality and biological sex. Indeed, postmodern cultural ideas from thinkers like Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and stemming from the philosophies of Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the socio-political activism of Karl Marx, attract many literary scholars partly because they believe postmodernism allows for a fresh way to see, question, and make newly meaningful aspects of how we live.⁹ And so the disruptive, subversive possibilities of adopting a postmodern approach in turn makes easier the critic's ability to turn away from what many view as dogmatic, fixed, and (perhaps most interestingly) the

body (i.e. sex) belongs to a nature that is *beyond* culture" (262 n.6 — emphasis mine). Culture informs, and is informed by, nature. To say that there is no "beyond culture" and that human beings are culturally imbedded does not mean, then, that culture is all and that there is no nature. It is always a push-pull and a coordinated dance between the two. See especially Peter Richerson and Robert Boyd's seminal *Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution* on gene-culture coevolution. See also Edward Slingerland and Mark Collard's edited *Creating Consilience: Integrating the Sciences and the Humanities*, and Mark Schaller et al.'s *Evolution, Culture, and the Human Mind*.

⁹ Here, I follow scholars like Edward Slingerland in terminology by "referring to...[the] various strands of social constructivism as 'postmodern' because they are unanimous in rejecting the Enlightenment belief that we can know something about the world beyond disguised social opinions or prejudices" (*What Science Offers the Humanities* 75). As Slingerland makes clear:

[T]he core of "postmodern relativism" is an approach to the study of culture that assumes that humans are fundamentally linguistic-cultural beings, and that our experience of the world is therefore mediated by language and/or culture *all the way down*. That is, we have no direct cognitive access to reality, and things in the world are meaningful to us only through the filter of linguistically or culturally mediated preconceptions. Inevitable corollaries of this stance are a strong linguistic-cultural relativism, epistemological skepticism, and a "blank slate" view of human nature: we are nothing until inscribed by the discourse into which we are socialized, and therefore nothing significant about the way in which we think or act is a direct result of our biological endowment. (*What Science Offers the Humanities* 15)

least interesting aspect of our lives — the biology of our human nature.

Janet Todd, in her influential study of women writers beginning in the early eighteenth century, also admits she does not believe that “an essence of womanhood...can be studied, ...but [only] a sexual, social, historical and artistic artefact” (*The Sign of Angellica* 10) of what women writers offer in their works.¹⁰ Like Armstrong, Todd believes our biology can be separated out from our cultural niche, failing to see that the female writers she celebrates are themselves biological artefacts — daughters of our sexually, socially, historically evolved ancestors who have emerged through deep history.¹¹ And in their commendable goals of reclaiming women’s cultural, economic, and political influence in the eighteenth century, critics like Laura Brown, Gallagher, Ballaster, Ingrassia, and Bowers tend to retreat from biological arguments in order to avoid, it seems, the risk of reducing women down to the body.¹²

¹⁰ To be clear, however, Todd stresses in her introduction that her study “largely avoids the route of psychoanalytical or deconstructionist criticism which sees feminine writing less as writing by women than as a modality open to either sex. [Her] concern is with signature, with women writing rather than with the writing of ‘woman’” (*The Sign of Angellica* 7). Certainly, Todd views schools of thought that are based on psychoanalysis and French Lacanian philosophy as a diversion away from her main focus of “feminist literary history” (*The Sign of Angellica* 7). Because Todd is motivated by a feminist purpose — that is, again, bringing women’s writing to the fore — she acknowledges a sexual difference in how women express themselves artistically where she believes psychoanalytic and deconstructionist criticism blurs such distinctions. Also see Todd’s more recent *Feminist Literary History: A Defence*.

¹¹ See Sarah Blaffer Hrdy’s seminal book *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species*. See also Daniel Lord Smail’s *On Deep History and the Brain*.

¹² The fear of many feminist scholars, for example, who prefer postmodern ideas about the female body as only really knowable through its cultural-historical placement is that the biological lens only gives relevance to the female body in terms of its reproductive imperative. That is, that biology will always reduce women to mothers. As Hrdy observes, one strategy for many feminists is “to deny that

For psychologists like John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, however, the “intellectual framework” of such scholars in the humanities and the social sciences who adhere to what Tooby and Cosmides have coined the Standard Social Science Model (SSSM) has “severely limited” (23) areas of inquiry. Instead of broadening and expanding possibilities of pursuit, the postmodern trend has unnecessarily closed off avenues of exploration. Indeed, Tooby and Cosmides argue that this approach which “claims...autonomy from the rest of science” leads to “the failure of the social sciences to explore or accept their logical connections to the rest of the body of science — that is, to causally locate their objects of study inside the larger network of scientific knowledge” (23). For them, the SSSM restricts progress partly because it “mischaracterizes important avenues of causation,” focuses too heavily on idiosyncrasies, and does not “accept[] and exploit[] the natural connections that exist among all branches of

biology is relevant to human affairs” (*Mother Nature* 24). However, as Elizabeth A. Wilson underscores: “some biologically reductionist demands have the potential to expand our theories of the body in important, innovative, and sometimes exhilarating ways” (*Psychosomatic* 3). As Wilson explicates further in her more recent *Gut Feminism*: “despite its avowed interest in the body, ...feminist work is often reluctant to engage directly with biological data,” which “bespeaks an ongoing discomfort with how to manage biological claims — as if biological data will overwhelm the ability of feminist theory to make cogent conceptual and political interventions” (3). Indeed, as Wilson emphasizes: “biology is much more dynamic than feminists have presumed and much less determinate than many neuro-critics currently suppose” (5). After all, “biology is not a synonym for determinism and sociality is not a synonym for transformation” (9). But even for one like Wilson, however, such integration of what we know about the body into feminist theory seems only tolerable to a certain degree. As Anne Campbell notes in *A Mind of Her Own*, for many feminists, “biology stops at the neck” (19). See Hrdy’s *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species*. See also Griet Vandermassen’s *Who’s Afraid of Charles Darwin? Debating Feminism and Evolutionary Theory* and Elizabeth Grosz’s “Darwin and Feminism: Preliminary Connections” for further discussions on feminism and evolutionary theories. For Laura Brown, see *Ends of Empire*.

science, using them to construct careful analyses of the causal interplay among all the factors that bear on a phenomenon” (23). Alternatively, Cosmides, Tooby, and Jerome H. Barkow call for a new framework — “vertical integration”: “the principle that the various disciplines within the behavioral and social sciences should make themselves mutually consistent, and consistent with what is known in the natural sciences as well” (Cosmides et al. 4).¹³ Edward O. Wilson makes a similar call with “consilience,” finding support with later advocates like Edward Slingerland, Mark Collard, Peter Richerson, Robert Boyd, David Sloan Wilson, and Griet Vandermassen who have refined, tested, and advanced further Edward O. Wilson’s somewhat inchoate conceptualization of consilience.¹⁴ Slingerland and Collard, for example,

¹³ See Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby’s edited *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, especially Tooby and Cosmides’s first chapter “The Psychological Foundations of Culture” which lays out key principles and concepts.

¹⁴ See especially E.O. Wilson’s *Sociobiology* and *Consilience*; Slingerland’s *What Science Offers the Humanities*; Slingerland and Collard’s edited *Creating Consilience*; Richerson and Boyd’s *Not By Genes Alone*; D.S. Wilson’s “Consilience: Making Contextual Behavioral Science Part of the United Ivory Archipelago”; and Vandermassen’s *Who’s Afraid of Charles Darwin?* See also Ullica Segerstråle’s *Defenders of the Truth: The Battle for Science in the Sociobiology Debate and Beyond*; Steven Pinker’s *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* and *How the Mind Works*.

For consilience promoters specifically from art and literary studies, see especially Joseph Carroll’s *Evolution and Literary Theory*; *Literary Darwinism*; “Literature and Evolutionary Psychology”; “An Evolutionary Paradigm for Literary Study”; “Human Life History and Gene-Culture Co-Evolution: An Emerging Paradigm”; *Reading Human Nature*; “A Rationale for Evolutionary Studies of Literature”; Carroll et al.’s *Graphing Jane Austen*; Carroll et al.’s edited *Darwin’s Bridge: Uniting the Sciences and Humanities*; Robert Storey’s *Mimesis and the Human Animal*; Brian Boyd’s “Fiction and Theory of Mind”; “Getting It All Wrong”; “Literature and Evolution: A Bio-Cultural Approach”; “Literature, Evolution, and Cognition: Questions, Answers, Questions — The Example of Hamlet”; *On the Origin of Stories*; Boyd et al.’s *Evolution, Literature, and Film*; Jonathan Gottschall’s *The Rape of Troy: Literature, Science, and a New Humanities*; and *The Storytelling Animal*; Gottschall and D.S. Wilson’s edited *The Literary Animal*; Nancy Easterlin

make a powerful argument for a more developed version of consilience — a “second wave” consilience (Slingerland and Collard 23) — that is more plugged in to the reservations and problems of application that many literary and cultural scholars experience with this approach. As Slingerland and Collard argue, this second generation of the consilience framework is more open to emergent properties that arise via this perspective, promoting the types of “‘thick’ description” (24) that reflect the rich and complex, fine-grained and nuanced critical work that literary and cultural studies are used to, known for, and perhaps of which they are most proud. After all, consilience scholars of this second wave are also wary of the seemingly superficially-imposed, “thin,” diminished, and analytically lean readings of early consilience adopters (24-28). Most importantly, however, for supporters of consilience — ranging from the various fields of anthropology and sociology, philosophy and history, archeology and biology, psychology and literary studies — the postmodern paradigm and the SSSM are wrongheaded not only in their hostility to the idea of truth, but in their aim to

and Barbara Riebling’s edited *After Poststructuralism*; Ellen Dissanayake’s *Homo Aestheticus; Art and Intimacy*; Denis Dutton’s *The Art Instinct*; Marcus Nordlund’s “Consilient Literary Interpretation” *Shakespeare and the Nature of Love*; Michelle Scalise Sugiyama’s “Narrative Theory and Function: Why Evolution Matters”; “New Science, Old Myth: An Evolutionary Critique of the Oedipal Paradigm”; “Reverse-Engineering Narrative: Evidence of Special Design”; Peter Swirski’s *Literature, Analytically Speaking; Of Literature and Knowledge*; and Mathias Clasen’s “Monsters Evolve: A Biocultural Approach to Horror Stories.” See also: Brett Cooke and Frederick Turner’s edited *Biopoetics: Evolutionary Explorations in the Arts*; Daniel Cordle’s *Postmodern Postures: Literature, Science and the Two Cultures Debate*; Daphne Patai and Will H. Corral’s edited *Theory’s Empire: An Anthology of Dissent*; Harold Fromm’s “The New Darwinism in the Humanities: From Plato to Pinker”; and “The New Darwinism in the Humanities, Part Two: Back to Nature Again”; Gottschall’s “What Are Literary Scholars For? What is Art For?”; Robin Headlam Wells and Johnjoe McFadden’s edited *Human Nature: Fact and Fiction*; and Judith P. Saunders’s *Reading Edith Wharton Through a Darwinian Lens: Evolutionary Biological Issues in Her Fiction*.

disabuse us of the possibility of knowing objective truths, exempting us from a responsibility towards reliable and accurate data, obliging us to turn away from durable gains made in the sciences.¹⁵

¹⁵ Many of the art and literary scholars listed in the previous footnote have called themselves, or have been described as, literary Darwinists — specifically, critics who strongly promote and subscribe to consilience, primarily hold an anti-postmodernist position, and who are very much interested in the evolutionary function of art and literature. We can think of this school of thought as being housed under the larger biocultural theoretical model, which includes fields of research outside the humanities. Cognitive literary studies — another field that looks to bring together literary studies with the sciences — takes a less aggressive stance against SSSM and postmodern scholarship. For critics like Lisa Zunshine, Alan Richardson, Tony Jackson, Ellen Spolsky, Blakey Vermeule, Nancy Easterlin, and William Fleisch, research in evolutionary and cognitive sciences can be integrated into existing literary paradigms. For these scholars, cognitive literary studies is “an interdisciplinary venture, ‘rather like ‘feminist studies’ or ‘cultural studies,’ ’ that is ‘loosely held together by a set of common interests, allegiances, and reference points rather than a coherent discipline unified by shared paradigms and methodologies’” (“Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies” 1). As one of the area’s leading proponents, Zunshine makes clear: “It is fitting then that the definition of cognitive literary studies should focus not on the boundaries, goals, or methods of the field but on its dynamic, relational nature” (“Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies” 1). Indeed, some cognitive literary scholars like Richardson are keen to set a distinction between themselves and consilient literary programs that are aligned with the call for vertical integration — that is, “evolutionary literary theory...[is] an outlier that helps define the boundaries of cognitive literary criticism proper” (“Studies in Literature and Cognition” 3). For Zunshine:

...because [cognitive literary scholars] don’t see themselves as working on a puzzle whose pieces must fit neatly together, they feel no need to iron out differences among their “potentially conflicting aims and methodologies.” Indeed, given what a messy proposition the human mind/brain is and how little we still know about it, striving toward a grand unified theory of cognition and literature is to engage in mythmaking.

(“Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies” 1)

See especially Zunshine’s “Introduction: What is Cognitive Cultural Studies?” in her edited volume *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, as well as her edited *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*. See also Jackson’s “Issues and Problems in the Blending of Cognitive Science,

Under the collective call for “second-wave” consilience, biocultural scholars offer a view of human nature that responds to postmodern perspectives. Rather than regarding human behaviour as strictly the result of cultural pressures, the biocultural approach recognizes that:

...cultural processes are rooted in the biological necessities of the human life cycle: specifically human forms of birth, growth, survival, mating, parenting, and sociality. Conversely, from the biocultural perspective, human biological processes are constrained, organized, and developed by culture, which includes technology, culturally specific socioeconomic and political structures, religious and ideological beliefs, and artistic practices such as music, dance, pictorial arts, and storytelling. (“Biocultural Theory” 2)

Furthermore, Joseph Carroll, Mathias Clasen, and their coauthors explain: “Biocultural theory is an integrative research program designed to investigate the causal interactions between biological adaptations and cultural constructions. It thus aims to bring evolutionary and cultural research into a more productive relationship with one another, correcting for the limitations in each and producing a more complete understanding of human behavior” (“Biocultural Theory” 2).¹⁶ And for evolutionary scholars like Richerson, Boyd, Joseph

Evolutionary Psychology, and Literature Study”; “‘Literary Interpretation’ and Cognitive Literary Studies”; and “Questioning Interdisciplinarity: Cognitive Science, Evolutionary Psychology, and Literary Criticism”; Spolsky’s “Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-structuralism”; Easterlin’s “Making Knowledge: Bioepistemology and the Foundations of Literary Theory” and *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*; and Flesch’s *Comeuppance: Costly Signalling, Altruistic Punishment, and Other Biological Components of Fiction*.

¹⁶ Carroll et al’s article offers a comprehensive summary of the various academic fields that have moved towards more integration of biocultural approaches. These include the disciplines of

Henrich, Richard McElreath, and David Sloan Wilson who focus more particularly on the importance of cultural transmission, adopting a biocultural approach certainly does not lead to an impoverished conceptualization of human cultures.¹⁷

My exploration of female sexual engagement with risk and risk-taking aims to contribute to eighteenth-century literary scholarship by applying biocultural theories as a way

primatology and evolutionary anthropology, genetics, evolutionary biology and human ethology, archeology, human life history theory, cognitive psychology, linguistics, evolutionary developmental psychology, evolutionary social psychology, history and political theory, evolutionary aesthetics, and evolutionary literary study (“Biocultural Theory” 2). Carroll et al.’s specific view of the biocultural approach takes seriously E.O. Wilson’s call for consilience — that is, the bringing together of knowledge through “the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation” (*Consilience* 8). Taking into consideration the high standard of requirements for what stands as supporting data, Carroll and his coauthors believe the convergence of evidence from various fields of study helps to construct a very robust portrait of our human nature. For others like Nancy Easterlin and many of the cognitive literary scholars introduced in the previous footnote, however, “[a]dopting a biocultural approach to literary interpretation does not necessitate acceptance of scientific methodology; adoption of a specified set of analytic concepts or a prescribed interpretative model; or adoption of a common groundwork for explanation” (*A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation* 20). Indeed, many of the reservations that Easterlin and her colleagues have with E.O. Wilson’s consilience and Carroll’s strong program of biocultural integration are the kinds of issues raised in Slingerland and Collard’s introduction to *Creating Consilience*, which I have discussed.

¹⁷ See especially Richerson and Boyd’s *Not By Genes Alone*; Henrich and McElreath’s “Dual Inheritance Theory: The Evolution of Human Cultural Capacities and Cultural Evolution”; Henrich et al.’s “The Cultural and Genetic Evolution of Human Cooperation”; D.S. Wilson’s *Darwin’s Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*; Gottschall and Wilson’s *The Literary Animal*; and Heywood, Garcia, and Wilson’s “Mind the Gap: Appropriate Evolutionary Perspectives Toward the Integration of the Sciences and Humanities.” See also Kevin Laland’s more recent *Darwin’s Unfinished Symphony: How Culture Made the Human Mind*.

to access that fuller picture of human behaviour.¹⁸ Thus far, literary scholars have focussed primarily on the proximate questions, or have limited their explorations of women's sexual behaviour to explanations within the realms of the immediate social, political, and economic environments in which these women are situated. Cultural input factors are integral to how human beings behave, of course, but we can reach further back into our evolutionary past in order to get a deeper and fuller explanation of the resonance of certain sexual behaviours.¹⁹ Not doing so leaves unexplored, remote, and strange numerous facets of our human nature. Few would dispute that sex is strongly connected to political and economic power and exchange, cooperation and competition, alliance formation and reinforcement. However, while sex is certainly *not simply* about mating and reproduction, it is certainly *at its very basis* about reproduction and mating. Therefore, any study of human sexual acts and sexual

¹⁸ To be clear, my use of the term “biocultural” throughout my dissertation, as opposed to “second-wave consilience,” is for the sake of word economy. I have chosen not to use “consilience” on its own in order to preserve the important distinction that Slingerland and Collard have emphasized.

¹⁹ Indeed, human beings have such deep-rooted sex differences that, as evolutionary psychologist David P. Schmitt cites:

In one comprehensive review, Ellis (2011) identified 63 psychological sex differences that have been replicated across multiple cultures and at least 10 studies, with not a single replication failure (probably an overly strict exclusionary criterion).... In another wide-ranging review, Archer (2014) reported culturally-pervasive sex differences are reliably found in the assessment of negative emotions (e.g., fear, anxiety, depression), anti-social behaviors (e.g., aggression, violence, criminality), cognitive abilities (e.g., mental rotation, object location, verbal fluency), personality traits (e.g., agreeableness, neuroticism, sociability), motor activities (e.g., strength, throwing ability, activity level), sexual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., mate preferences, sociosexuality, sexual coercion), and numerous other characteristics such as interest in infants and occupations.

(“The Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 221-222)

motivations should *at least consider* our evolved sexual heritage as part of our toolkit of analysis.²⁰

²⁰ Many literary critics who explore women's sexual nature tend to take up more psychoanalytic views, looking to Freud or Jacques Lacan and their disciples for ways into understanding biological influences on our sexualities. For example, Ros Ballaster — one of the early scholars who revived interest in three key female writers of the early- to mid-eighteenth century who wrote what Ballaster calls “amatory fiction” which targeted a primarily female readership — proclaims that “psychoanalytic criticism offers one, if not the only, route toward an understanding of the importance of the role of fantasy in the production of textual meaning” (*Seductive Forms* 24). In her exploration of this “‘pornography for women,’” therefore, psychoanalysis offers Ballaster a way to understand female sexuality that acknowledges “‘sex difference[s],” as the genre “differentiates between the desires of male and female readers” (35). Catherine Craft-Fairchild also argues that “psychoanalytic theories offer what are perhaps the most useful conceptual models for an analysis of sexual difference and, in particular, for an understanding of the precariousness of female sexual and social identity” (Craft-Fairchild 6). However, as Craft-Fairchild clarifies, “[p]sychoanalysis posits ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ as *psychical rather than biological* categories, *cultural constructions rather than essential* oppositions” (6-7 — emphasis mine). Such comments are meant to appease fears of biological reductionism and essentialism, it seems. And yet, Craft-Fairchild recognizes “difficulties” in reconciling the “transhistorical theory” of psychoanalysis “with [the] historical contextualization” (6) that Foucauldian perspectives insist upon. Craft-Fairchild, I believe, may find resolution via a biocultural theoretical approach that gives emphasis to both. As Griet Vandermassen reminds us: “Although Freud has introduced partially useful concepts such as the unconscious, our current understanding of the workings of the brain indicates that looking through a psychoanalytic lens — in whichever updated version — is like studying the body using the ancient theory of the four bodily humors. It is a nice theory, but it just isn’t correct” (6). However, scholars like Elizabeth A. Wilson have done much to broaden and revive psychoanalysis by investigating Freud’s ideas that predate his theories on sex, making alignments with the neurosciences. See Griet Vandermassen’s *Who’s Afraid of Charles Darwin? Debating Feminism and Evolutionary Theory*, Nancy Easterlin’s chapter “Endangered Daughters: Sex, Mating, and Power in Darwinian Feminist Perspective” in her *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*, Wilson’s *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* and *Gut Feminism*.

Considering the “Bio” in Biocultural

*It is not that women do not enjoy the excitement of risk;
it is that they are more acutely attuned to its possible dangers.*

— Anne Campbell

In order to better grasp how risky environments and sexual risk-taking affect men and women differently, it is helpful to understand the particular costs associated with such factors. As a confluence of ever-increasing evidence shows, psychological sex differences

Thomas Laqueur’s *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* also has had immense influence on scholars’ thinking about women’s bodies. Laqueur traces the invention of sexual difference between male and female bodies in the eighteenth century when there was a shift from thinking in terms of a one-sex model — that is, where reproductive organs are essentially the same in males and female bodies, but that the organs are inverted for women — to a two-sex model — where male and female reproductive organs are qualitatively different. Literary critics like Nancy Armstrong, for example, find basis in an argument like Laqueur’s because it allows her to make the claim that if sex is a socially constructed model, then the idea of a sexual biological reality is moot. As Armstrong writes, “if the gendered body [i.e. sex] belongs to a nature that is beyond culture, ...then why was it not until relatively recently that the difference between male and female came to dominate representations of the biological body” (262 n.6). Interestingly, historian Helen King’s new study, *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*, questions Laqueur’s conclusion regarding a consensus on the one-sex model before the eighteenth century. And as Vandermassen asserts: “One might wonder whether the long reign of this particular one-body model warrants the conclusion that all bodies are socially constructed. Might it not be that those theories of the past were plainly wrong and that, because of the self-scrutinizing tendency of science, we have now developed better theories?” (20). One point that should be made clear in terms of a biocultural application, however, is that while biocultural theorists may claim that there are distinct physical differences between the sexes, differences in sexual psychology are a matter of “degree not kind,” as Anne Campbell argues in *A Mind of Her Own: The Evolutionary Psychology of Women* (40). I expand upon this in the next section, which focusses on biological and psychological sex differences.

exist.²¹ Such differences evolved in part due to variations in mating and reproductive pressures that ancestral men and women faced. As Charles Darwin observed, one pressure is *intersexual selection* — specifically, where the qualities of one sex are preferred and sought after by the other sex, as in the vibrancy of a male’s feathers in many bird species that signal health and vitality, or the offering of nuptial gifts by male insects that signal a male’s ability to provide nutritive provisions and resources to any potential mates. These qualities go into assessing a potential partner’s *mate value* on the mating market.

Other pressures include *intrasexual competition* as well as *intersexual conflict*. *Intrasexual competition* may result in runaway physiological developments like the magnificent size of male antlers as bucks compete with each other for access to viable does. Such competition may also spark one woman’s spreading of gossip among a social group regarding another woman’s sexual behaviour, thereby slaying a sexual competitor’s reputation through slander and shaming. Intrasexual competition can also occur between different generations of competitors. For example, as prominent evolutionary anthropologist and primatologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy explains, higher-ranking females among baboons and macaques often show aggression towards lower-ranking females with daughters, as these lower-ranking daughters would be a source of intrasexual competition for their higher-ranking daughters (*Mother Nature* 81-82).²²

²¹ Indeed, research on this topic is extensive. As the mountain of ever-increasing evidence shows, many psychological sex differences are universally robust across cultures. See, for example, David C. Geary’s *Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences*; Bobbi S. Low’s *Why Sex Matters: A Darwinian Look at Human Behavior*; and Lee Ellis’s “Identifying and Explaining Apparent Universal Sex Differences in Cognition and Behavior.”

²² Hrdy’s important thesis throughout her book *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species* is that our common perception of the selfless, self-sacrificing, nurturing

Intersexual conflict arises between males and females due to conflicting or misaligned mating and/or reproductive aims, which often include differences in investment of resources.²³ For example, in some species of primates, newly dominant males will kill young offspring of females within the troop, freeing (or forcing) such females to bear and invest in his genetic offspring. For humans, common tactics include mate-switching (where women, for example, actively seek out better mates and “switch” in order to upgrade their sexual partner) and its converse maneuver of mate-guarding (where men, for example, aggressively “guard” their mates from opportunities to cheat and from men who engage in mate-poaching). Females can also exploit paternity uncertainty by recruiting investment from multiple potential fathers. And male forms of sexual aggression (like sexual harassment and coercion, physical violence, and rape) are also, unfortunately, common tactics in the war between the sexes.²⁴

From these developments of Darwin’s theory of sexual selection, evolutionary sociobiologist Robert Trivers expanded Darwin’s theory to include the sizeable influence that variations in *parental investment* have on mate preferences and mating strategies.²⁵

mother is a myth, and that mothers often engage in aggressive and more self-interested tactics depending on the surrounding environmental and social pressures they face, continually “balanc[ing] tradeoffs between [their own] subsistence and reproduction” (47).

²³ “Intersexual conflict” is known more simply as “sexual conflict” in most behavioural science literature. I have chosen to use “intersexual conflict” to clarify and stress that I focus on conflict between the sexes.

²⁴ For example, see Buss and Schmitt’s “Sexual Strategies Theory: An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating”; Buss’s *The Evolution of Desire*; Daly and Wilson’s *Sex, Evolution, and Behavior*; Hrdy’s *Mother Nature*; and Göran Arnqvist and Locke Rowe’s *Sexual Conflict*.

²⁵ See Trivers’s seminal chapter “Parental Investment and Sexual Selection” in *Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man*.

Specifically, parental investment is “any investment in an individual offspring that increases the offspring’s chance of surviving (and thus reproductive success) at the cost of the parents’ ability to invest in other offspring” (“Parental Investment and Sexual Selection” 139). In very rudimentary terms, differential investment costs come down to the biological resources and physiological demands that are required in reproduction and parenting. According to Trivers, the sex that invests more will be more choosy or discerning than the sex that invests less. The sex that invests less typically competes more intrasexually for access to the higher-investing sex.²⁶ Importantly, however, we must remember that not all females of all reproducing species bear the weight of unequal parental investment. An organism is designated as biologically male or female by its gamete size — that is, the size of its reproductive cell — which is generally indicative of the level of biological investment in the offspring. So for females, larger gamete size means larger initial investment in terms of energy and nutrients in order to sustain the egg. Females produce a finite quantity of eggs as well, so this reproductive resource is limited. For males, smaller gametes mean less investment, however males are able to produce a larger quantity of sperm over their lifetimes. But as evolutionary researcher David Buss makes clear:

No biological law of the animal world dictates that females must invest more than males. Indeed, among some species such as the Mormon cricket, pipefish seahorse, and Panamanian poison arrow frog, males in fact invest more.... The male Mormon cricket produces a large spermatophore that is loaded with nutrients. In areas where food is scarce, large spermatophores become extremely valuable to the female but simultaneously become difficult

²⁶ Again, see Trivers’s “Parental Investment and Sexual Selection.”

for the male to produce because they require extensive food consumption. Females compete with each other for access to the high-investing males holding the largest spermatophores. Among these so-called ‘sex-role reversed’ species, males are more discriminating than females about mating.

*(Evolutionary Psychology 107-108)*²⁷

Yet for humans, the physiological costs that women must bear in order to procreate generally exceed the level of investment required by men. Women also face biological limits to the number of offspring they can have compared to men. As Buss explains succinctly:

Women’s greater initial investment per gamete does not end with the egg [of which there is “a fixed and unreplenishable lifetime supply of approximately four hundred ova”]. Fertilization and gestation, key components of human parental investment, occur internally in women [which is physiologically taxing]. One act of sexual intercourse, which requires minimal male investment, can produce obligatory and energy-consuming nine-month investment by the woman that forecloses other mating opportunities. In addition, women alone engage in the activity of lactation (breastfeeding), which lasts as long as four years in some societies....

(Evolutionary Psychology 107)

Because women bear greater reproductive costs and are subjected to greater parental investment relative to men, as Trivers argued, women tend to exercise greater discernment when selecting a reproductive partner. However, men (again, in general) tend to be less discriminating relative to women when choosing a mate because men’s physiological costs

²⁷ See also J. Maynard Smith’s *The Theory of Evolution*; Trivers’s “Parental Investment and Sexual Selection”; and Donald Symons’s *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*.

are much lower (i.e. sperm is cheap, as the saying goes) in comparison to the greater possible benefit (i.e. offspring) men would accrue with each copulative encounter. All else being equal, this heavily skewed parental investment scheme greatly affects the kinds of partnerships that women and men seek. Women are typically more selective (again, relative to men) of the quality of mating partner and tend to prefer long-term mates who will invest resources in their offspring. Men more typically seek short-term mates (once more, relative to women) in order to optimize their reproductive potential.²⁸ Considering this imbalance, women also take on more risk when they mate with any specific man.²⁹ As Buss stresses:

²⁸ While it might seem rhetorically clumsy or awkward to continually qualify with terms like “in general” and “relative to,” I do so here in my introduction, at least, in order to stress and make clear that evolutionary theories like Trivers’s parental investment theory is useful to make predictions about which sex behaves in what ways and why. So even while feminist-minded biologists like Patricia Adair Gowaty, Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, and Anne Fausto-Sterling try to make useful counterarguments against Trivers’s claim by raising examples like sex-role reversed mating habits of some male sea horses and pipefish to raise doubts about inherent female choosiness and male competitiveness, we should remind ourselves that more choosiness in male seahorses is *relative to* the level of choosiness in female seahorses, and that more competitiveness in female pipefish is *relative to* the level of competitiveness in male pipefish. We must remember that this does not mean male seahorses are not competitive *at all*, or that female pipefish are not choosy *at all*. Indeed, Trivers’s theory still holds. See especially Campbell’s *A Mind of Her Own* on feminist politics and biology. See also Vandermassen’s *Who’s Afraid of Charles Darwin?* and Elizabeth A. Wilson’s *Gut Feminism* on the effects of prioritizing feminist agendas in science. For Gowaty, see “Sexual Natures: How Feminism Changed Evolutionary Biology”; for Hrdy, see “Empathy, Polyandry, and the Myth of the Coy Female”; for Fausto-Sterling, see *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men*.

²⁹ Of course, men also engage in sexual risk-taking when trying to secure a mate. For men, however, much of this kind of risk-taking is within the realm of intrasexual competition. Like many other mammals, males must compete with each other in order to win access to females. Within any male population, therefore, much reproductive variability exists as men who are able to compete and win will reproduce, while others will likely not reproduce at all. For men, then, more effort is invested into mating rather than the kind of parenting effort in which most women invest. But we must

Because women in our evolutionary past risked investing enormously as a consequence of having sex, evolution favored women who were highly selective about their mates. Ancestral women suffered severe costs if they were indiscriminate: They experienced lower reproductive success, and fewer of their children survived to reproductive age. A man in human evolutionary history could walk away from a casual coupling having lost only a few hours or even a few minutes. His reproductive success was not seriously compromised. A woman in evolutionary history risked getting pregnant as a result and therefore could have incurred the costs of that decision for years.

(Evolutionary Psychology 108)

Although “[m]odern birth control technology has altered this,” Buss makes clear, “human sexual psychology evolved over millions of years to cope with ancestral adaptive problems,” and so “[h]umans still possess this underlying sexual psychology, even though the current environment has changed” (*Evolutionary Psychology* 108).³⁰ Therefore, women’s

remember that other important factors — like a skewed sex ratio within a population, or high pathogen levels in the environment, or sociosexual rules imposed in specific religious cultures, for example — greatly affect how men and women tweak or make adjustments to this biological algorithm of mating effort versus parenting effort. See David P. Schmitt’s important chapter “The Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences: Men and Women Are Not Always Different, but When They Are...It Appears Not to Result from Patriarchy or Sex Role Socialization” in *The Evolution of Sexuality*. Here, Schmitt lays out the various layers of biocultural influences that men and women are subjected to, affecting greatly how our sexual psychology has and is shaped over time. See also Hrdy’s influential book *Mother Nature*.

³⁰ As Edward H. Hagen keenly notes:

If a species’ current environment diverges too rapidly and too far from its EEA [environment of evolutionary adaptedness], the species will go extinct. The human species is clearly not going extinct; hence, the common belief that EP [evolutionary

approaches to sexual risk-taking are still strongly informed by these evolved conditions and demands.

Forms of sexual selection, like intrasexual competition and intersexual conflict, and sex differences in parental investment drive what biocultural researchers like David P. Schmitt call “obligate sex-specific adaptations” (“Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 223). These obligate or universal sex differences prove to be evolved adaptations that manifest stably across all cultures. Importantly, however, as Schmitt makes clear:

Of course, even obligate sex differences are not immutable, as there always exists a continuous interplay of biological and environmental factors that can alter the degree of human sexual differentiation. Sometimes the size of psychological sex differences is variable as a direct result of specially-designed psychological adaptations. That is, sometimes evolution generates culturally-variable sex differences by design.

(“Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 225)

psychology] claims humans currently live in an entirely novel environment is incorrect. Most aspects of the modern environment closely resemble our EEA. Hearts, lungs, eyes, language, pain, locomotion, memory, the immune system, pregnancy, and the psychologies underlying mating, parenting, friendship, and status all work as advertised — excellent evidence that the modern environment does not radically diverge from the EEA. (154)

And what is also clear is that in many parts of the world where women do not have access to modern methods of birth control, pressures of mate selection resonate more strongly. See Hagen’s “Controversial Issues in Evolutionary Psychology.” On our evolved adaptations and the modern environment, see also Campbell’s *A Mind of Her Own*; Buss’s edited *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*; and Robin I. Dunbar and Louise Barrett’s edited *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*.

In such cases, *facultatively-mediated* sex differences develop — that is, differences that arise as a result of sensitivities to the specific local environment, as in “both men’s and women’s long-term mate preference adaptations for health, attractiveness, and intelligence in potential mates...in cultures with high pathogens,” or fluctuations in “cultural levels of polygyny..., fertility rate..., sociosexuality levels..., expressed mate preferences..., and degree of parental care...” (“Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 226).³¹ As well, *emergently-moderated* sex differences also develop. These variations evolve due to transmitted cultural behaviours learned from social groups, regardless of the environment. For example, many religious groups preach the importance of suppressing sexual, and therefore reproductive, desires. This suppression would greatly influence how women, for instance, think about and express their sexual desires, especially inhibiting their consideration of evolved sexual strategies like short-term mating. Or if the prevailing philosophy is that men, and therefore fathers, are not requisite to the stability and fruitfulness of the family unit, then the currency

³¹ Another helpful way to think of facultatively-mediated adaptations is in the sense of the plasticity of our phenotypes, as in the development of calluses in locations where our skin is subject to greater levels of friction or rubbing. Here, calluses are the facultative adaptation that solved the problem of our skin’s vulnerability. The “phenotypic plasticity” of our sex differences, or what John Tooby and Leda Cosmides call “evoked culture” (“The Psychological Foundations of Culture” 117) are part of our adaptive design to deal with the specifics of our local environments. That is, “facultative adaptations are designed to interact with only *certain* ecological factors and to generate only *certain* functional outcomes” (“Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 228 — emphasis mine). Again, as Schmitt helpfully explains:

...human psychological adaptations may be built in a way that generates patterns of cultural variability, but not in an agnostic blank slate way. Instead, human psychological adaptations are designed to pay specific attention to particular sources of ecological information and generate specifically designed, highly functional, sex-specific forms of behavior....

(“Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences” 226)

of such an idea might curtail women's desire for long-term mating arrangements with men. Both *facultatively-mediated* and *emergently-moderated* sex differences, then, also have considerable effects on how women's sexual psychology is expressed.³²

These aspects of our evolved sexual psychology have tremendous influence over the unfolding of our sexual behaviour. And utilizing knowledge about such influences over our sexual psychology would prove useful, I insist, to our understanding of how women like Fantomina might have been attuned to the specific sexual pressures of the libertine environment in which she wanted to explore her sexual range and which likely increased her attraction to the mate qualities of a Beauplaisir. Acknowledging the weight that emergently-moderated variations have on our behaviour might also help us to understand further how Fantomina's many disguises were an erotically appealing solution to the strict social codes that forbade Fantomina's sustained involvement with a rogue like Beauplaisir. As well, knowing that she has the monetary resources to both hide and sustain her pregnancy and provide for her child after birth, Fantomina is able to more easily accept the costly reproductive risks such an affair brings on. By applying a biocultural approach that recognizes these dimensions of our evolved sexual psychology, and especially recognizes the particular risks that women come up against (and, at times, opt for), I aim to put into sharper focus how a range of female sexual behaviour was expressed through certain female

³² As Schmitt clarifies further, obligate, facultative, and emergently-moderated phenomena need not be exclusive: "there can exist combinations of these first three evolutionary explanations of sex differences" ("Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences" 228). It is possible, and likely, that facultative adaptations and emergently-moderated ones have a hand in any specific expression of sexual behaviour, as in "mate preference differences suppressed by religion" ("Evolution of Culturally-Variable Sex Differences" 228).

characters in the eighteenth century, highlighting how risk-filled situations and sexual risk-taking influenced such depictions.

At its basis, therefore, this dissertation is an experiment in application. It frames select eighteenth-century texts as case studies and attempts to apply theories from fields in biocultural studies to examinations of female engagement with risk and sexual risk-taking. By way of this approach, I believe, we are able to expand our thinking about the function of women's sexual risk-taking and consider yet unexamined possible phenomena that emerge from their risk-taking ventures. For example, in Chapter One, "The Prosocial Whore: On *The London Jilt*, Intersexual Conflict, and Altruistic Punishment," I bring to bear behavioural game theoretics on altruistic punishment on my study of a young prostitute's comportment in the anonymously published *The London Jilt*. By considering how altruistic punishment works within the specific realm of intersexual conflict — again, that is, conflict as a result of the differing and competing demands on male and female reproductive investments — I argue that though the whore-protagonist Cornelia represents a suspect class of women, Cornelia emerges as (what I call) a *prosocial whore* because she purposely takes on costly risks to herself (like rape) in order to punish men for their maltreatment of women. In this way, theories on altruistic behaviour combine with our understanding of women's evolved sexual psychology, allowing us to recognize prosocial characteristics in this seemingly unlikely sexual heroine. While I demonstrate in my first chapter that altruistic punishment is incorporated into Cornelia's strategy for managing intersexual conflict, however, I also acknowledge that her prosociality is often counterbalanced by her own opportunism, rendering this heroine intriguingly problematic and precarious. Hence, by way of a

biocultural perspective, I hope to reconsider and recast our conceptualizations about the sexual conduct of some well-known female characters. With each chapter, I bring together theories on our evolved sexual psychology with behavioural theories like those on altruistic punishment, intersexual conflict, cooperation, trust, loss aversion, intrasexual competition, and self-deception to analyze female characters with regard to the kinds of sexual risk-taking in which they engage.

In Chapter Two, titled “‘To Make a Whore an Honest Woman’: On Daniel Defoe’s Lady Credit as an Agent for Homosocial Cooperation,” I consider another socially-minded female character. While Lady Credit is not a female figure in any of Defoe’s novels, she does inform his later heroines found in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. Looking at Defoe’s creation of a purely emblematic embodiment of the early eighteenth-century credit system he was politically motivated to endorse, Defoe’s Lady Credit, I explain, adopts (what I call) a *whore’s stratagem* in order to serve as both agent and emblem of homosocial cooperation between politically divergent men who are distrustful of each other due to deep divisions in new governmental party lines. Appreciating women’s full range of sexual strategies — that is, not simply the either/or options of short-term or long-term mating tactics, but the possibility of a mixture of both — Defoe’s Lady Credit allows factional party men to trust each other via their metaphorical sexual access to her, despite their partisan distrust of each other, and cooperatively work together to strengthen England’s nascent national credit scheme. Ultimately, I claim that Defoe’s Lady Credit is valued as a lady because she is able to play the whore.

Chapters One and Two, therefore, mainly focus on two female characters on which relatively little has been written, and who both represent the whore figure often treated more

acerbically because of her sexual agency. And yet, while Cornelia is a heroine who readily takes grave sexual risks in order to seek justice, Defoe's Lady Credit is in fact a figure who is quite risk-averse, despite her seemingly sexually risk-leaning practices. Indeed, as I explore in Chapter Two, it is precisely Lady Credit's anomalous sexual behaviour that sets her apart from Defoe's more famous fictional prostitutes, Moll Flanders and Roxana. And what I demonstrate specifically is how Defoe's depiction of Lady Credit's sexual mobility, capacity, and plurality counters existing scholarly judgement regarding her sexual status as either a virgin or a whore.

Chapters Three and Four, however, turn to novels that explore the dangers of male-female sexual engagement. By threading through theories on loss aversion and intrasexual competition into a study of the especially competitive financial climate of the early eighteenth century, I examine in Chapter Three, titled "'How Dangerous It Is to Give Way to Passion': Loss Aversion and Delaying Gratification in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*," how Haywood explores in her first novel the effects of increased financial risk-taking on women's sexual risk-taking more generally. Where our evolved aversion to suffer losses combined with high within-sex competition for sexual partners leads to increased sexual risk-taking in some women, Haywood offers those women who cannot afford such risks — because they do not have familial or financial security for auxiliary support — a certain pleasure to be found in the delay of sexual gratification. Because Haywood manages to create narratives that convey the dangers of giving way to passion, even while satisfying those passions by way of deferred moments, I argue that Haywood composes tales that serve as both risky and safe devices for her female readers. Centrally, I demonstrate how Haywood situates climactic possibilities in deferred moments and, via this secondary avenue,

makes imaginable sexual pleasure to emerge and satisfy impulses when one's social environment is not amenable to actual physical sexual expression.

In my final chapter, "The Subtle Game: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Sexual Risk-Taking Through Self-Deception," I consider perhaps one of the most contentious characterizations of female virtue. While Richardson's portrait of a young maid servant — Pamela, who is rewarded for enduring harrowing sexual attempts against her — inspired fervent supporters on the one side and adamant critics on the other, few have considered the riskiness of Pamela's choices along her journey. Although Pamela (and her author) insist that her conduct is risk-averse, I argue that Pamela in fact engages in high levels of sexual risk-taking through self-deception. With constant threats of social ridicule and punishment, along with prospects of parental disgrace, Pamela is a much more designing heroine than we have considered hitherto. As I explain, Pamela necessarily deceives herself in order to, ironically, better secure for herself the man who constantly threatens to rape her.

Throughout this dissertation, I look to the explanatory and revelatory power of the biocultural approach — that is, what the framework allows us to see and acknowledge as deeper causal factors of human behaviour that lie beyond the *purely* cultural, political, social, economic, historical, biological, or otherwise. As well, my intention throughout is to consider possible emergent features of women's sexual behaviour that develop as a result of the particular plights of the heroines on which I focus. And so, while the *topic* of my study is centred on women's sexual risk-taking behaviour and how women's evolved sexual psychology informs such behaviour, the conclusions at which I arrive do not necessarily make specific claims about women's social or political purposes. Nor should my arguments, I believe, be directed towards obligations to specific sociosexual political claims. Rather

than being driven towards certain political intentions, I welcome such possibilities to emerge from my explorations of risk and female sexual risk-taking, hoping that the analyses I proffer in this dissertation might contribute to broadening insights regarding women's sexual nature.

Chapter 1

The Prosocial Whore: On *The London Jilt*, Intersexual Conflict, and Altruistic Punishment

*...for this passion, namely the desire of revenge, takes its Birth jointly with the Females,
and remains with them until that they have given up the last Gasp....*

— *The London Jilt*

Published in 1683, *The London Jilt; or, The Politick Whore* begins with a preface that justifies its topic — to warn its readers of the vast number of “Cheats that the Misses of this Town put upon Men” (*London Jilt* 41). As with many narratives about salacious women, the anonymous author of this novel insists that “[w]arnings of this kind cannot be too often repeated, nor instances of their Devilish Pranks and Practices too frequently proclaim’d” (42), cautioning readers that no matter “how beautiful and attractive soever the outside of the Apple may be, that it is Rotten and Pestilent at Core” (42).³³ For our edification and judgement, then, *The London Jilt* “set[s] before the Eyes of Mankind” “the Jilt displayed in her true Colours, all her Wheadling and Treacherous Decoys laid open” (41). And yet, even while the author asserts that the writing of this tale is inspired by “the Trade of Jilting” that has “grown so ripe,” forewarning readers of the “damn’d unbounded self-interest, and...insatiable Avidity of Money” (42) that possess these “London Misses,” this particular narrative’s “Common Whore[]” (41), more revealingly, exposes more pernicious trickery

³³ See, for example, Bradford Keyes Mudge’s *The Whore’s Story*; Julie Peakman’s *Mighty Lewd Books*; and James Grantham Turner’s “The Whores Rhetorick: Narrative, Pornography, and the Origins of the Novel.”

than her own.³⁴

Undoubtedly, readers of *The London Jilt* are alerted to deep-rooted tensions between the sexes. Indeed, most conflicts that emerge out of this narrative primarily stem from sex differences. Just as men are urged to “be upon their Guard against all Female Ambuscadoes” (41) and to not “be lured by their False Attractions into that bitter Trap of theirs” (42), the author also unwittingly warns the reader of male “Cheats” who only try to further their own interests. While this writer lays bare the jilt’s “Stratagems and Artifices” (42), also unmasked are those men who advance their own stratagems and artifices at the expense of women and the public more generally. In exposing the whore, *The London Jilt* spotlights evolved intersexual conflicts, where the novel’s whore-protagonist additionally achieves a reversal to what its preface claims by exposing the tactics men use to defraud, victimize, and abuse women. By creating a heroine with an intense devotion to fairness and dedication to “the Law of Talion, or Retribution” (105), the author of *The London Jilt* imagines a whore-protagonist who is a most uncommon “common woman.”³⁵

With my focus on risk, risk-taking, and women’s sexual behaviour, I argue that the heroine in *The London Jilt* behaves differently from most representations of prostitutes in Restoration whore narratives. Where textual “Pieces of this Nature” (*London Jilt* 41)

³⁴ It should be noted that while the anonymous author of *The London Jilt* does make reference to his male identity in his address to the reader — “Thus sure the Publick cannot blame or Condemn a Man, for drawing his Pen in so necessary an occasion, especially at this time...” (*London Jilt* 42) — as I explore in this chapter, the considerable level of detail the author goes into regarding the life cycle of women’s bodies, concerns with (as well as remedies for) aging, and socio-economic troubles for women perhaps suggest otherwise. Without further evidence, however, we cannot know for certain.

³⁵ See Ruth Mazo Karras’s *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* for more on the history of “common women.”

typically characterize prostitutes as being motivated by their voracious sexual appetites or their avaricious appetites for lucre, I argue that *The London Jilt*'s Cornelia exhibits more prosociality — that is, behaviour that positively benefits others.³⁶ In other words, while both sexual gratification and financial motives assume a prostitute's purely self-interested purpose in most whore narratives of the early eighteenth century, *The London Jilt* — in addition to its author's simple proposition of exposing female trickery — also puts forward a representation of a prostitute who uses her sexual access for more altruistic purposes. In particular, I demonstrate how Cornelia focusses on sexual retribution, specifically punishing men who victimize women. Distinctively, Cornelia willingly takes on costly risks in order to punish injurious men. In this way, as I will argue, altruistic punishment gets folded into Cornelia's strategy for managing intersexual conflict.

Remarkably, despite its popularity at the time of publication, no extensive analysis of *The London Jilt* exists, with the exception of Charles H. Hinnant's introduction to the 2008 Broadview edition and Roger Thompson's brief article published in 1975.³⁷ Although Melissa M. Mowry introduces this novel as a comparative example for her study on the Restoration prostitute — that is, to argue that *The London Jilt* provides yet another depiction of political disorder expressed as sociosexual lawlessness — Mowry cannot see past the

³⁶ Among literature in the behavioural sciences, according to psychologist Patricia H. Hawley, prosociality generally refers to positive “‘behavior that benefits another,’ such as helping, sharing, and cooperating” (49). See Hawley's chapter “Evolution, Prosocial Behavior, and Altruism: A Roadmap for Understanding Where the Proximate Meets the Ultimate.” For more literature on typical characterizations of prostitutes as completely self-interested, see, for example, Laura J. Rosenthal's *Infamous Commerce*, Melissa Mowry's *The Bawdy Politic*, and Catherine Gallagher's first chapter in *Nobody's Story*.

³⁷ Hinnant's introduction is especially informative about the influence of this early picaresque novel.

mercenary motives assigned to the novel's heroine in the preface. Mowry's reading, instead, reduces Cornelia to one of "the shrewdest characters early modern pornography created" (Mowry 119).³⁸ With this chapter, not only do I hope to give greater consideration to this neglected novel and, more especially, its intriguing whore-protagonist, but I also take issue with the convenient characterization of Cornelia as yet another self-interested and corrupt prostitute. The broader implications of my argument, therefore, complicate the kind of anti-republican function that scholars like Mowry claim for *The London Jilt* — namely, that this novel is a "most vivid example[]" of the loyalist "trend" (Mowry 46) of satirizing the ambitions of parliamentarians, as its heroine succeeds in "the transformation from republican whore to entrepreneurial individual" (118). For Mowry, this early novel demonstrates the level of "class cannibalism" that results from an increasingly "fragment[ed]" and "failed" (46) democratized society. In arguing instead that a crafty and cunning "Politick Whore" like Cornelia is not only willing to assume great risks in order to seek sexual retribution, insisting on the punishment of men for their disdainful behaviour, but also shares with her audience how women go about deceiving men, I believe readers of *The London Jilt* will discover (far from a "cannibalis[ti]c" and "failed" structure) an approach to sexual justice and social accountability through this heroine. As opposed to the kind of top-down, authoritatively sanctioned response to injustice, this "trickster-whore" (Jones 187) character is one who is attentive to local, ground-level, emergent solutions to unfair treatment.³⁹ Thus,

³⁸ See also Loring Pfeiffer's article, "'Some for this Faction cry, others for that': Royalist Politics, Courtesanship, and Bawdry in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, Part II," for more on the politicization of the whore and bawd figures.

³⁹ More specifically, Vivien Jones traces the lineage of the "trickster-whore" character in her study of Sally Salisbury — the real life Sarah Prydden — in the 1723 publication of *The Authentick Memoirs of the Life Intrigues and Adventures of the Celebrated Sally Salisbury*. Part of this lineage includes

I aim to rethink the capacity, the scope, the reach of the whore figure more broadly and her contribution to a public who distrusts her. However, before I move on to a fuller analysis of Cornelia's behaviour, it would be advantageous to consider the research behind altruistic punishment.

Paying to Punish

Studying the evolution of cooperation, social scientists who more specifically focus on the phenomenon of social punishment find increasing evidence that a sense of fairness is deeply rooted in human beings, especially when it comes to punishing those commonly referred to as defectors, cheaters, or free-riders in fields where behavioural game theory is relevant.⁴⁰ As with cooperation, the act of punishment is an interesting problem about which there are heated debates within the behavioural sciences. At the heart of such explorations is why people bother to punish at all, especially given that in most circumstances people must pay a cost to do so — whether in terms of time, effort, and/or resources. To investigate, researchers control for input factors by getting subjects to play various games, which often

“the traditional figure of the prostitute as irrepressible trickster, familiar from such texts as *The Whore's Rhetorick...or The London Bawd...*, and clearly influential on Defoe's shape-changing protagonist in *Moll Flanders*” (Jones 180). To this, I would add *The London Jilt*. See Jones's “Luxury, Satire and Prostitute Narratives.”

⁴⁰ As behavioural economist Herbert Gintis makes clear, game theory is essentially “multiplayer decision theory where the choices of each player affect the payoffs to other players, and the players take this into account in their choice behavior” (48). Investigating how our sense of fairness is rooted in our evolutionary past, researchers have also found that chimpanzees will punish peers who cheat. See, for example, Sarah Brosnan and Frans de Waal's article “Monkeys Reject Unequal Pay.”

include single (or one-shot) anonymous encounters in ultimatum and dictator games.⁴¹

Indeed, as Patricia H. Hawley explains, even in “carefully controlled laboratory experiments” where “conditions can be set that (1) maintain players’ anonymity such that no reputational enhancement can occur [as good reputation is a resource in itself], (2) disallow material rewards for issuing punishment, and (3) prevent future benefits for the punisher,” subjects “still punish defectors so that others (and not themselves) will benefit” (54).⁴²

In both ultimatum and dictator games, two players anonymously engage in a division of resources where one player proposes how a set amount of resources is divided between the two players, and the second player can respond to the proposer’s offer either by accepting or rejecting the amount. For example, in ultimatum games where a proposer offers an unknown responder \$1 of the \$10 that is allotted them (which would leave the proposer with \$9), the responder can choose whether to accept the \$1 and leave the proposer with \$9 or the responder can refuse the \$1, in which case the proposer would lose \$9. The most rational choice for the responder, as behavioural economists Ernst Fehr and Urs Fischbacher recognize, is to accept any amount offered since it is better than nothing (“Nature of Human Altruism” 786). However, such researchers find that most responders reject proposals that offer less than 25% of the allotted amount (“Nature of Human Altruism” 785-786). As Fehr and Fischbacher stress, “the motive indicated for the rejection of positive, yet ‘low’, offers is that responders view them as unfair” (“Nature of Human Altruism” 786). Most interestingly,

⁴¹ Through one-shot interactions, researchers isolate the problem of direct reciprocity where a subject’s earlier choices can affect future encounters with the same players, as when subjects temper their present choices for fear of reprisal.

⁴² Even though, as Hawley notes, there may be a *propensity* for human beings to punish defectors and “behave ‘morally’ even if it bears a cost,” we should be careful not to therefore extend this finding to pronounce *definitively* that “therefore humans are inherently moral/egalitarian” (54).

however, is that “[m]ost proposers seem to understand that low offers will be rejected. Therefore, the equal split is often the modal offer in the ultimatum game” (“Nature of Human Altruism” 786). These points, I believe, deserve emphasis: that is, not only do most responders have such a *deep sense of fairness* that they are willing to forgo low monetary gain so that proposers will not benefit, but proposers themselves also recognize fairness and anticipate rejection by most responders and so avoid this by making offers closer to a 50-50 split from the start.⁴³ Indeed, as William Flesch notes, even in dictator games where responders have no vetoing power over what the proposer (in this case, the dictator) offers, most proposers still offer more than a “99-1” division, although not as high as in ultimatum games (33). And as evolutionary social scientists like Joseph Henrich and his colleagues have demonstrated in their well-cited article “Costly Punishment Across Human Societies,” the robustness and prevalence of this willingness to pay a cost in order to impose punishment for unfair treatment can be found cross-culturally.

In very basic terms, altruistic (or costly) punishment is the act of willingly “paying or sacrificing what one has to punish someone one perceives as behaving unfairly. The altruism in altruistic punishment consists in the fact that it costs to punish..., and the punisher’s willingness to pay this cost may be an important part in enforcing norms of fairness” (Flesch 31).⁴⁴ As Fehr and Fischbacher have studied extensively, the motivations behind one’s

⁴³ See especially Robert H. Frank’s *Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* on how emotions like anger over another’s unfair behaviour or another’s unfair treatment inspire one’s willingness to pay to punish transgressors.

⁴⁴ There is an extensive debate on whether or not altruistic punishment is actually altruistic. Many researchers argue that the act of punishing cheaters or defectors confers other benefits like augmented reputation and trustworthiness, and even pleasure from the act of punishment. See, for example, Robert Trivers’s “The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism”; Richard Alexander’s *The Biology of Moral*

willingness to pay in order to penalize those who violate or exploit fairness goes “beyond reciprocal altruism [where there is an expectation that how one treats an other will be reciprocated with later encounters] and reputation-based cooperation [where one’s reputation in a community might directly affect how likely others will agree to cooperate]” (“Nature of Human Altruism” 785). Examining this phenomenon of altruistic punishment through game theoretic experiments that involve prisoner dilemma, ultimatum, and dictator games, the investigators clarify further:

Strong reciprocity is a combination of altruistic rewarding, which is a predisposition to reward others for cooperative, norm-abiding behaviours, and altruistic punishment, which is a propensity to impose sanctions on others for norm violations. Strong reciprocators bear the cost of rewarding or punishing even if they gain no individual economic benefit whatsoever from their acts. In contrast, reciprocal altruists...reward and punish only if this is in their long-term self-interest. Strong reciprocity thus constitutes a powerful incentive for cooperation even in non-repeated interactions when reputation gains are absent, because strong reciprocators will reward those who cooperate and punish those who defect. (785-786)⁴⁵

Moreover, to verify further the robustness of this propensity for altruistic punishment, many researchers have experimented with the introduction of third-party players who observe or are made aware of some violation but have no stake in the game being played.

Systems; Robert Axelrod and William D. Hamilton’s “The Evolution of Cooperation”; and Fehr, Fischbacher, and Gächter’s “Strong Reciprocity, Human Cooperation, and the Enforcement of Social Norms.” See also Frank’s chapter on “The Altruism Paradox” in his *Passions Within Reason*.

⁴⁵ For further research on altruistic punishment, see also Fehr and Gächter’s “Altruistic Punishment in Humans” and Fehr and Fischbacher’s “Third-Party Punishment and Social Norms.”

For example, Fehr and Fischbacher conducted an experiment with three players in a dictator game: where one player is allocated 100 monetary units (MUs) by the experimenters, a second player is the recipient of whatever amount of monetary units the allocator would like to confer, and a third player is given 50 MUs by the researchers (“Nature of Human Altruism” 787). As dictator games stipulate, the allocator can divide the 100 MUs and give the recipient however much the allocator wants. And because it is a dictator game, as opposed to an ultimatum game, there are no repercussions for the allocator if the recipient refuses. The third player, however, can spend any amount of her 50 MUs in order to punish the allocator if she thinks the allocator has offered an unfair amount to the recipient. In other words, where the recipient has no direct recourse for unfair treatment, the third player can step in to punish the allocator instead. However, this third player must pay in order to punish the allocator. And in the specific experiment that Fehr and Fischbacher conducted, the allocator’s income was reduced by 3 MUs for every MU the third player paid to punish.

What is most interesting to behavioural economists who do such research is that there is no reason to expect that the third player — who has no monetary stake in whether or not the allocator chooses to share his MUs — would pay to punish the allocator. As Fehr and Fischbacher write: “[b]ecause it is costly to punish, no selfish third party will ever punish” (“Nature of Human Altruism” 787). And yet, what they found was that third-party observers are willing to pay a cost to sanction allocators who deal unfairly in such games: “In fact, 55% of the third parties punish the allocator for transfers below 50 [MUs], and the lower the transfer, the higher the punishment. Moreover, between 70 and 80% of the recipients expect that allocators will be punished for unfairly low transfers” (787). Experiments using third-party punishment, therefore, further bolster arguments for altruistic punishment since third

parties indeed have nothing to gain (and only resources to lose) from such interactions.

Furthermore, as Hawley elucidates, it is essential that we recognize the difference between proximate and ultimate levels of explanation for punishment behaviour (49-54). Social scientists who specifically take on an evolutionary perspective tend to focus on ultimate or distal explanations of behaviour — that is, a perspective that probes into the broader ‘why’ questions that reach further back into our ancestral past to the kinds of concerns that certain behaviours functioned to solve — as opposed to proximate reasons that are more narrowly focussed on the mechanisms of ‘how’ certain behaviours solved specific problems. As Hawley emphasizes, the matter of “conscious intentions” and motivations on the part of the actor bears “little value” at the ultimate level partly because “there are sizable incentives for falsifying one’s intentions” and motivations (50). But also, “evolutionary approaches focus on *effects of behavior* (motoric, cognitive, emotional), especially in currencies related to reproductive success (e.g., somatic development, material and social resource acquisition, hierarchy ascension, mating, offspring rearing)” (51). At the ultimate level, therefore, prosocial behaviour is defined in terms of whether or not the behaviour “confers a fitness benefit to a recipient” and, if altruistic, whether or not that benefit to another is “at a fitness cost to the actor” (51). These important distinctions make their way into my analysis of *The London Jilt*’s whore-protagonist.

To be clear, my focus in this chapter is on the *effects* of Cornelia’s choice to punish injurious men at a cost to herself. My claim is not that Cornelia is *consciously* public-minded or self-sacrificing in seeking prosocial ends. Indeed, according to evolutionary theorists like Hawley, Cornelia need not have conscious intentions, or be consciously motivated, to help others. In fact, Cornelia sees her own actions as entirely self-preserving; she is candid in her

desire for sex and money. Instead, I stress, Cornelia's prosociality emerges *despite* her conscious opportunism, so deep-seated is her sense of fairness. While Cornelia may think that her own eagerness to punish men is motivated by personal grievances (proximate motivations), my reading considers her behaviour as more broadly instigated by a desire to punish men who exploit conflict between the sexes. In other words, Cornelia's actions spring forth as a counter-strategy to men's prioritization of their sexual purpose. While the conscious motives of our heroine are not clearly centred on the protection of women or women's biological goals, Cornelia's willingness to bear costs to push back against male sociosexual advantage, thereby conferring benefit to women more broadly, certainly suggests altruistic conduct.⁴⁶ Considering Cornelia's behaviour at the ultimate level, I believe readers will discover surprising complexity in *The London Jilt*'s whore-protagonist. To be sure, Cornelia's choice to seek retribution despite tremendous risks to herself captures the redemptive potential of this trickster-whore heroine — a character for which and in which readers perhaps do not expect prosociality achievable or credible. And as seasoned bawds like Mother Creswel would perhaps insist, as the next section explores, Cornelia's actions unnecessarily puts at risk her own self-preservation.

⁴⁶ Again, see Hawley's chapter "Evolution, Prosocial Behavior, and Altruism" for a helpful elucidation of the differences between proximate-level and ultimate-level understandings of prosocial and altruistic behaviours. Indeed, my focus on Cornelia's prosociality and altruistic behaviour is mainly concerned with her *willingness* to act against men who take advantage of women and whether or not her actions were, as Hawley explains, "performed at a fitness cost to the self" (51). Conscious intentionality and motivation "do not bear on evolutionary [ultimate] definitions of altruism" (50).

Conduct of Whores

*It is the greatest happiness that any mortal is capable of,
to be instructed in a prudent conduct, and sage management of their affairs,
by that experience, which was not gained at first without many hazardous adventures,
and a multiplicity of certain dangers.*

— *The Whores Rhetorick*

Published in the same year as *The London Jilt*, *The Whores Rhetorick* is essentially a conduct book written in the style of a whore-dialogue, as James Grantham Turner has explored, that is an example of an early pornographic text.⁴⁷ An anonymously written English translation of the original Italian *La Retorica delle Puttane* (1642) by Ferrante Pallavicino, *The Whores Rhetorick*, at its basis, counsels on risk management, instructing women who sell sex on how to safeguard their self-interests. Its content is centred on the grooming of a young Dorothea into the “Trade” of prostitution to become a “first rate Whor[e]” (*Whores Rhetorick* 19). The seasoned bawd in this dialogue — the infamous, real-life Mother Creswel — advises Dorothea on how to be a successful whore by being one who always has her own interests in mind. And by that, of course, Creswel means that “a Whore[’]s interest and worldly lucre ought to be considered as her first, last, and her greatest wish” (213). The key, of course, is that her “avarice must be insatiable” and she “must therefore never fly any occasion of increasing [her] stock” (40). For any “Lady in this Trade” (40), then, she must follow this great bawd’s “political Maxim” (146):

⁴⁷ See Turner’s *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuality, Politics and Literary Culture, 1630-1685*.

A Whore is a Whore, but a Whore is not a Woman; as being obliged to relinquish all those frailties that render the Sex weak and contemptible. A whore ought not to think of her own pleasure, but how to gratifie her Bedfellow in his sensitive desires: She must mind her interest not her sport; the Lovers sports, the ruine of his interest and the emptying his Purse. The unthinking part of Women place all their worldly happiness in the centre of venereal Pastimes.... (144-145)

The Whores Rhetorick teaches women in the profession how to manage the greatest risk to their “business” (50). For Creswel, risk management in prostitution mandates that a whore expunge her womanly self in order to guard her own self-interests. The consequences for those “following their fancies more than their judgments; and loving to please their Eyes and not their Reason in the choice of their Friends” is that they will “become in a short time poor, beggarly and miserable, rejected of the world, and most of all by those Men whom they afforded most plentifully of their free love” (145-146). Examples of such forsaken “impolitick Whores” (145) can be found in many contemporary characterizations, like the well-recognized jilted courtesan Angellica — who is ruined because she tragically falls in love with Wilmore, the dubious, double-faced rake in Aphra Behn’s popular play *The Rover* (1677) — and the spurned prostitute Corina in *The Revenge; or, A Match in Newgate* (1680), who is given over to marry another man by the very lover who betrays her. In order to avoid such fates, Creswel advises “those especially of this Vocation” (19) to arrive at “a hatred of Men” and to maintain “a cool state of indifference” (154), which will keep them safe from “any dangerous and unprofitable amours” (27). As Laura J. Rosenthal observes, the business of prostitution demands, for Creswel, that a whore be able to “delay gratification rather than

just [being a slave to her own] gratification” (18). This mother-bawd even urges that “a Whore ought rather to hate the whole race, than love one single Man: and indeed it is requisite she should have a secret antipathy against Men, that she may fleece them with less regret, and never be moved to lend one Penny, to any of her broken Friends” (*Whores Rhetorick* 156). The prostitute is to become “a person dead in Law...[a] person dead as to all Laws, except those prescribed by [her] own interest[s]” (221). For Mother Creswel, then, a professional whore owes no duty to anyone beyond herself, for one who “exposes her Soul and Body for gain is more than a fool, to be influenced in any degree, by either the obligations of Friendship, the Laws of Justice or points of Honour” (90).⁴⁸

By Creswel’s standards, as we will see, *The London Jilt*’s Cornelia is indeed bad at being a “Lad[y] of business” (*Whores Rhetorick* 219). From Creswel’s standpoint, Cornelia unnecessarily takes on risks that would compromise the monetary rewards she can gain and is, therefore, reckless with her own future prospects. While Cornelia is certainly motivated by pecuniary desires, she is not “extream cautious to avoid all dangerous curiosities” (*Whores Rhetorick* 27) that are sexually motivated. Undeniably, Cornelia’s actions are still very much compelled by her need to fulfill her erotic desires. As well, Cornelia is unable to maintain the social indifference that Creswel prescribes. Although Cornelia certainly does not represent a philanthropic heroine, she also does not fall into the easy persona of the rage-filled, vengeful whore. In this way, Cornelia is a definite departure from Behn’s Angellica and the kind of prostitute *The Revenge* scripts for its Corina. While theirs is a bloodthirsty,

⁴⁸ As scholars like Mowry have investigated, *The Whores Rhetorick* is a political response — indeed, “perhaps the best known pornographic satire of the Restoration” — that “allegorizes the political conflict between Tories and Whigs, warning against the dangers of Whig political victory” (68). Representing Republican corruption, then, Mother Creswel would be indifferent to principles of probity.

murderous passion that compels their vengeance against the lovers who abandon them, Cornelia's fierce desire for revenge (although still self-interested) is not motivated by the same kind of fervent rage perhaps because her encounters with men are less about ardent love. While Creswel claims that successful whores should abide by no laws, Cornelia claims to "regulate [her] self by the Law of Talion, or Retribution" that indeed propels "the whole Course of [her] Life" (*London Jilt* 105). Because she willingly pays a tremendous cost in order to punish men who aggress against women — that is, risking her virginity in one episode and risking abuse and her very life in others — Cornelia becomes a redeemable character despite her dubious vocation.

More generally, whore narratives like *The Whores Rhetorick* and *The London Jilt*, as well as plays like Behn's *The Rover* and *The Revenge*, speak to exploitations that women in such a profession likely experienced during the Restoration period. Although none of these texts directly comment on the likely skewed sex ratio of the population during this time, the imbalance of the sexes that favoured male choice certainly would have influenced how prostitutes (and women more broadly) were treated. Noting the work of psychologists Marcia Guttentag and Paul F. Secord for their work on sex ratios, Anne Campbell relays that in terms of operational sex ratios — that is, the ratio of sexually *viable* and *active* males and females rather than simply a total tally of the number of males to females overall — birth rates are not the only determinant of the ratio.⁴⁹ Indeed, other social factors like drug addiction and alcoholism, unemployment, illness and disease, and war often have severe implications on the availability of worthwhile men (*A Mind of Her Own* 196). From this standpoint, Campbell makes clear: "Though available, [men who are unfit] are unlikely to

⁴⁹ See Campbell's *A Mind of Her Own*; and Guttentag and Secord's *Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question* on the particular evolution and effects of skewed sex ratios.

[be] chosen as long-term partners since they represent a drain on the women's assets rather than an economic advantage" (*A Mind of Her Own* 196). And as literary scholar Felicity Nussbaum remarks in *The Brink of All We Hate*: "That women apparently outnumbered [sexually eligible] men in England (as a result of emigration to America, men's greater susceptibility to the plague, and the Civil War) must have created conflict between a superior male minority and an inferior female majority" (9). Adding further: "Lawrence Stone notes that the number of marriageable girls at the level of the peerage exceeded that of eligible boys. In 1694, ...one historian estimated that there were approximately ten men for every thirteen women in London" (Nussbaum 9).⁵⁰ Although historians like Margaret Pelling rightly question the accuracy of the population statistics based on unreliable record-keeping — with some inhabitants of the time believing "there be three Women for one Man" — the "perceived excess of women" (696) would have been enough to influence men's behaviour towards the opposite sex.⁵¹ With the view that fewer eligible men were available, women would have had to compete with each other in order to win male attention.⁵² And certainly, this scenario would have been advantageous to male choice. This likely gave increased

⁵⁰ See Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*.

⁵¹ Pelling's concern is with, as she says, "number as an aspect of contemporary culture and belief," and so is less interested in "real numbers" (699). While Pelling may be right that inhabitants are not able to accurately assess the real sex ratio, she perhaps underestimates how people's behaviour is indeed based on "everyday observation[s], [to] make an objective assessment of whether the sex ratio was balanced or not" (699). That is, even if their actual assessments were inaccurate, their perceived assessment may be enough to influence their behaviour. See, for example, Vladas Griskevicius et al.'s article "The Financial Consequences of Too Many Men: Sex Ratio Effects on Saving, Borrowing, and Spending" on their experiment that "manipulated perceived local sex ratios" (71) and its impact on spending behaviour.

⁵² See Anne Campbell's "A Few Good Men: Evolutionary Psychology and Female Adolescent Aggression" and *A Mind of Her Own*.

license to men to behave more liberally and roguishly towards women, and to be frivolous with their courtships. Where male libertinism may have been vaunted in the foreground of Restoration culture — with Charles II and the infamous Earl of Rochester as proud proponents of this ideology — its undercurrent of misogyny would understandably trouble women who find themselves having to negotiate with such rakes.⁵³

At the root of Mother Creswel's "Misanthropia... [or] Man-hating" (*Whores Rhetorick* 154) is the intersexual conflict between men and women due to their competing goals and concerns. Remember that intersexual conflict comes from the divergence and imbalance between the sexes in terms of how to allocate resources and energy towards sexual and parental investment, as I have discussed in my introductory chapter. Where men (in general) tend to focus on multiple, short-term couplings where their parental investment is low, women (again, in general) tend to prefer longer-term, more committed unions. Because of the greater biological costs of childbearing and childrearing on women, they generally prefer partners who are willing to share resources and time raising offspring. These differences in objectives and costs directly influence the differing sexual strategies that men and women tend to adopt in their attempts to secure a mate.⁵⁴ And so when Creswel insists that "a Whore is not a Woman," she underscores that the whore in trade must tamp down any

⁵³ Again, on the culture of libertinism, see James Turner's *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London*; Harold Weber's *The Restoration Rake-Hero*; Warren Chernaik's *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature*; Tiffany Potter's *Honest Sins*; and Laura Linker's *Dangerous Women, Libertine Epicures, and the Rise of Sensibility, 1670–1730*.

⁵⁴ For behavioural researchers, an organism's engagement with sexual strategies need not be conscious. As Buss makes clear: "Although the term *sexual strategies* is a useful metaphor for thinking about solutions to mating problems, it is misleading in the sense of connoting conscious intent. Sexual strategies do not require conscious planning or awareness" (*Evolution of Desire* 6).

biological influences or bodily desires that might detract her from the monetary security that Creswel sees as more reliable than any one love interest. Where Mother Creswel resigns her sex, Cornelia's actions, as I will explore below, reconsiders the case of being a "Woman" for the "Whore." And if the combination of a skewed sex ratio with the prominence of libertinism affords men an advantage in sexually exploiting women, then part of Cornelia's purpose is to challenge such men — even if it is at a high cost to herself.

"Though It Might Have Cost Me Dear"

*...the Female Sex being once crossed,
will hardly ever let slip opportunities of revenge...*

— *The London Jilt*

The London Jilt is a story that follows the progress of one particular harlot. Cornelia gets into the "Trade" (*London Jilt* 50) of prostitution after the death of her father and after smallpox disfigures her mother to the extent that her mother can no longer "play...with her Buttocks...[and] profit on that part of the Body" (53). To avoid poverty, therefore, Cornelia allows herself to be coached by her mother into the profession. The novel follows Cornelia through a number of her mischievous adventures as she, with much playful humour, shares with her reader her sexual escapades.⁵⁵

In Cornelia's foray into the profession of profiting from her body, she meets Squire Limberham who quickly begins to seduce her. Cornelia, of course, is drawn to his physical beauty, describing him as "the most beautiful man I think I ever saw in all my life," especially noting that "his Tongue was so admirably well hung, that he had, the greatest

⁵⁵ See Charles H. Hinnant's introduction and appendix for more on the picaresque literary tradition.

Capacity in the World to excite Love in the most insensible heart” (55-56). As she informs her reader, Cornelia’s natural temperament inclined her towards the opposite sex from a very young age: “I had also a Gallant at the School, and I was mightily concerned, that I was not of Age enough to marry him, for I began to imagine, that there was nothing in the World more pleasant, than to sleep in the Arms of a Man” and “desiring to be caressed and flattered by Men” (43-44). Having such “a peculiar inclination for handsom men” (56), Cornelia agrees to run away with Limberham without him having to first provide evidence of his capital wealth. Right before they elope, however, the squire’s history is revealed when strangers arrive at Cornelia’s house of business and, seeing Limberham, reveals to Cornelia and her mother that Limberham — although handsome, well-bred, and “descended from one of the richest and most considerable Families of the County of Surrey,” which afforded him to “pass...for a perfect Gallant” (57) — was in fact “Guelt” (66).⁵⁶ As Cornelia is told, Limberham’s crime is sexual fraud — his deliberate deception of another young woman named Clara. Indeed, Limberham had seduced Clara away from a man she loved, Aleippe, and convinced Clara’s mother to marry her daughter off to himself all while knowing that his own impotency precluded the consummation of their marriage and any children as a product of their union, “which was the very Hinge of the whole Business” (64). Even after Clara and Limberham marry and she suspects that he is impotent, Limberham furthers the deceit in order to save his sexual reputation, paying an already pregnant and unwed maid to fraudulently claim that Limberham impregnated her. Of course, Limberham is eventually exposed. But as Cornelia begins to realize, Limberham is preparing to cheat her in the same way. As one of the strangers claims, “what he has done did well deserve an Exemplary

⁵⁶ As Hinnant helpfully footnotes, “Guelt” is an “[o]bsolete form of gelt; gelded, castrated, and hence impotent” (*London Jilt* 66 n.1).

Punishment” (56).

After such revelations, Mother Creswel would have advised Cornelia either to simply stop meeting with Limberham and pursue other profitable men or to marry Limberham anyway and happily live off his estate while discreetly enjoying lovers on the side. Indeed, the latter is precisely the choice made by Tricksy — the mistress-turned-wife of John Dryden’s own impotent Limberham who appeared on stage only a few years earlier in *The Kind Keeper; or, Mr. Limberham* (1680). Where Tricksy may be satisfied to trade in sexual gratification for financial security, Cornelia opposes the devious method by which her Limberham tries to counterfeit sexual fecundity. Although Cornelia admits that she “was not very much dissatisfied [by the wealth he would share with her], and though he should have bought [her] Diamond Rings, Pendants, and such Rarities” so that she “believe[d] [she] should not have been very much displeased” (*London Jilt* 69) with marriage to Limberham, for Cornelia, women’s sexual pleasure in marriage must not be denied. Indeed, she imagines the kinds of erotic pleasure that “Nature” (69) affords women and that if she “had gone away with him, [Limerham] would have suffered [her] lower parts to have endured Hunger after a miserable manner” (67). For Cornelia, “Maiden[s] of [her] Age had need of something else than Bread” (72).

Sexual fulfillment is a human right for Cornelia, being the “Joy...expected, and the Fruits of the Conjugal Estate” (72). For this reason, “so full of Vexation to have been so miserably deceived by this Eunuch,” Cornelia is determined that she “would have revenged [her] self for such a trick” (67). As she describes to her reader the episode in which she exacts her revenge against Limberham, Cornelia goes into detail about how “the naked Body of the beautiful Limberham did so possess [her] Thoughts” (70), arousing her with his

“caresse[s] and embrace[s]...[which] made [her] Mouth Water, insomuch that [she] would have given all [she] had in the World that his Gimcrack had been in better Condition” (69). She admits: “for to speak the Truth, his Posture, his Looks, his Actions, and all his brave Qualities pleased me so well, that I should have infallibly had for him the greatest Passion in the World, if he had been something better provided with you know what” (69). Indeed, Cornelia admits further: “it is a burdensome thing that bears the Name of a Maiden-head, and which several Damosels are obliged to keep so long for want of Servants, became every day more importunate and troublesom, insomuch that I could hardly support it any longer” (69). To deny the women he seduces sexual fulfillment — to “do nothing more than whet their Appetites, without being able to satiate them in the least” (70) — Limberham must be punished.⁵⁷ And it is for this injurious oversight that Cornelia seeks retribution. And yet, Cornelia is not unfair. As Hinnant notes, her punishment of Limberham in this case is “moral rather than mercenary”: “after having drugged Squire Limberham with an opiate and relieved him of his watch, discovers a purse of gold on his person. In spite of her avidity for ‘Gold,’ she refrains from taking all of it” (21). Indeed, Cornelia divides the gold “into equal Portions, without taking a Penny more” than what she would be entitled to if they were “a Man and a woman, in case of Separation,” taking “neither more nor less than if it had fallen to [her] by Inheritance” (*London Jilt* 72). In this way, Cornelia’s sense of justice is about rebalance and restitution, and decidedly not about blind profiteering. As Hinnant has observed, Cornelia’s “decision to seek revenge” comes from a place of “self-justification

⁵⁷ For Hinnant, “Lamberham’s deceit is censurable because it fails to acknowledge the right of women to enjoy their own bodies” (21). In my opinion, however, Cornelia’s actions against Limberham here are not simply about a pro-female, feminist agenda. As I try to argue throughout this chapter, Cornelia’s deep sense of fairness lies outside of purely seeking sexual parity or advancement. Even while she seeks retribution for sexual injustices, her aims are rooted in locating a just outcome.

rather than of greed, malice, or rage” (21). The characterization of this prostitute is a clear departure from an Angellica, a Corina, and a Mother Creswel. Instead, our heroine here simply seeks fair treatment.

In fact, Hinnant’s criticism touches upon a much larger point about Cornelia’s character when he comments that Cornelia’s parting letter is a way for her to “defend her conduct while acknowledging guilt”:

If Cornelia is righteously indignant about [Limberham’s] deception, she is also restrained about a punishment that she seeks to distinguish from mere avarice. She assumes that such an act, however justified, can easily be misunderstood as a scheme proffered by money-hungry jades eager to dupe the unsuspecting. A necessary evil, revenge needs to be carefully explained by a moral agent aware of its temptations and limits. (22)

Hinnant’s observation here is connected to the kind of altruistic punishment I believe Cornelia enacts, making her a prosocial whore who takes on costly risks in order to ensure the punishment of one who would cheat others of mating and marriage opportunities, “though it might have cost [her] Dear” (*London Jilt* 67). Specifically given her management of the Limberham affair, Cornelia’s behaviour positions her as a third-party punisher who willingly takes on risks in order to penalize the self-seeking, deceitful squire. Although Cornelia justifies her “Design” against Limberham to her bawd of a mother as “perhaps...something to [their pecuniary] Advantage” in order to “hinder her [mother] from embroiling and ruining the whole Intrigue, by an unseasonable [public] Raillery” (67), our whore-protagonist is resolute in her desire to punish Limberham, potentially taking on considerable loss to see this man punished. In secretly running away with Limberham as part

of her plan to exact revenge, Cornelia puts her body at risk by “trust[ing] a Man with [her] Maiden-head, who did not look like one that was Guelt” (69).⁵⁸ If the strangers’ claim that Limberham is a sexual fraud turns out to be false and he were able (and she willing) to engage in sexual intercourse, at best Cornelia would leave without having negotiated the best price for her virginity. At worst, however, if Cornelia discovers Limberham able (and herself unwilling), our heroine risks the real danger of rape.

For what we may view as remittance for Limberham’s villainy, Cornelia acknowledges the risk of recourse after she safely returns to her mother, announcing her fears to her mother “in case Squire Limberham should Sue [them] upon this Business” (74) or retaliate with physical abuse. Like Mother Creswel in being “[a] Whore...skill[ed] in Physiognomies,” Cornelia’s mother is practiced in “Reading Men” as an “essential part of her breeding and qualification” (*Whores Rhetorick* 135) and so assures our heroine that Limberham would rather accept “the loss of sixty or seventy Pounds” than to be sexually exposed and further lose his reputation for “his Insufficiency” (*London Jilt* 74). But it is telling that the still-inexperienced Cornelia is concerned about Limberham exacting his own revenge, wary of whether or not she has taken her actions too far. The rhetorical tone of her parting letter to Limberham indeed seeks to dial down the possibility of a counter-retaliation:

I beseech you not to pass by our House without calling to see us when you come that way, where you shall be very welcome and have a Lodging, which you know is better to take at a Friends House, than that of a Strangers: And as I have trusted you with my Virginity, and that you were the first who could prevail with me so far, you may easily believe, (for the first Amours are the

⁵⁸ Cornelia does indeed resell her virginal status, as is the practice of most prostitutes, making the ultimate value of a marketed virginity suspect because of this practice.

strongest) that you will ever be look'd upon with a kind Eye by her, whose Heart is oppressed with Sadness, when she remembers her Disappointment, in not having found you as performing in Bed, as you were at Table. (73)

This note is meant to appease Limberham and, as Hinnant comments, is “intended to leave him without any hard feelings” (23). Perhaps this is why Cornelia is such an intriguing whore-protagonist, unlike our sympathetic responses to the plights that overtake Angellica or Corina, and unlike our disgust at opportunistic bawds like Creswel. Even while Cornelia displays a strong impulse to see injustices redressed, she does so with seemingly dispassionate good humour.

For scholars like Mowry, Cornelia's behaviour represents the kind of self-interestedness that is on the rise during an era of contested monarchical claims.⁵⁹ However, as we see with her schemes against Limberham, Cornelia recognizes that the squire's actions are reprehensible because he misrepresents what he can offer the women he pursues. Cornelia's concerns are, in fact, more expansive than perhaps scholars like Mowry imagine. Especially with the Limberham affair, we see Cornelia at her most cognizant when it comes to consciously intending to punish Limberham in order to socially benefit the young women Limberham will surely encounter later. Certainly, as economist Robert H. Frank might claim, Cornelia's willingness to pay a cost in order to punish Limberham signals her general commitment to fairness and the just treatment of women.⁶⁰ Indeed, Limberham will likely be less inclined to try the same game after his entanglement with Cornelia. While we may be

⁵⁹ Specifically, Mowry's thesis applies to the increasingly democratized and entrepreneurial society in the aftermath of the Interregnum. She describes the interactions between individuals as increasingly unregulated and barbarous.

⁶⁰ See Frank's *Passions Within Reason*.

more familiar with the kinds of sexual tricks of the trade that women like Cornelia and Mother Creswel perpetrate against men, male figures like Limberham also enact a form of sexual fraud meant to deceive hopeful young women who seek a husband. Not only does he deny women like Clara procreative possibilities, but Limberham also denies them sexually satisfying marriages. Furthermore, this squire precludes other young, virile men like Aleippe from winning for themselves wives like Clara — essentially removing young, fertile women from the mating market. Cornelia's actions here benefit both the Claras and the Aleippes of her world. Cornelia's reader may not approve of her "damned Wheadling Arts" (*London Jilt* 41) as a "Wom[a]n who trade[s] in Flesh" (105), but the ability and willingness of this "Politick[ing] Whore" (title page) to accept tremendous risks to herself — to leave herself vulnerable to biological exploitation — in order to exact revenge on a pretender like Limberham affords redemption to this whore-protagonist. And this quality, I would insist, is what makes Cornelia an altruistic punisher. Unlike more familiar portrayals of prostitutes like Angellica or Corina who are purely motivated by passion and spite to attempt revenge against the men who abandon them, Cornelia's desire for retribution is not solely based on personal, rage-filled retaliation for her individual grievances. Rather than hostile or sinister, her retaliatory actions here are altruistic — motivated by her mindfulness to fair treatment — even if she adopts a mischievous attitude in going about it. And while she may play the trickster, Cornelia's "Pranck[s]" (*London Jilt* 74) in fact mete out a certain variant of social justice.

Balancing Upon the High Rope

To be clear, however, Cornelia walks a fine line between redeemability and reprehensibility. While this London jilt's prosocial conduct in her management of her affair with the squire is commendable, Cornelia is far from being an honourable recasting of the whore figure. As we see during the early days of this trickster-whore's venture into the business of prostitution, Cornelia quickly learns the advantages of intentionally exploiting male desire for reproductive fitness through real and fake pregnancies. While there might be a degree of wavering with her own dishonest schemes, Cornelia, nonetheless, extorts paternal interest from various clients, as we witness during her days with Valere.

One of the only gallants whose story Cornelia relates with tender affection, this "honest" (*London Jilt* 77), "good easy [if] credulous" (79) Valere sets up Cornelia comfortably in a residence of her own, having agreed that if she "would be faithful to him, and not abandon [her] self to any other Man, he would...provide [her] with all things [she] had occasion for" (77). Although Cornelia recognizes that Valere "really loved [her] from the bottom of his Heart," she still makes provisions to protect her own future interests, "in case Valere came one day to abandon [her], [she] might not have reason to bewail his loss" (78). And so Cornelia establishes a side business where she can entertain other men "to drive on [her] Trade as well as he" (79). Cornelia eventually falls pregnant but is uncertain about which of the six men actually fathered the child. Because Valere is ignorant of Cornelia's other lovers, he naturally "imagin[ed] that he had got the Child, [and] was so transported with Joy" (82), he bestows further monetary funds on Cornelia. She additionally exploits the other men, pleading to each his paternal responsibility to provide for the child. Indeed, Cornelia capitalizes on men's desire to be cocksure of their sexual vigour, even availing

herself of the kind of sperm competition evolutionary biologists assert to be common in male intrasexual rivalry: “I endeavoured also to make them believe, that Valere could not contribute much thereto; and though they seemed not to believe me in this; yet I could easily perceive by their Looks, that they were not displeased at this Discourse. Thus are these young men so easie and credulous in point of getting Children” (82).⁶¹ Cornelia eventually miscarries the baby but cleverly uses the incident to convince Valere of her financial vulnerability because of their unwedded status. Fortunately for Cornelia, Valere provides her with a £30 annuity after the birth of their stillborn daughter, just days before his own death.

⁶¹ In line with much of the research on intersexual conflict and men’s evolved sexual psychology, Cornelia observes that women have a remedy to ease men’s paternity uncertainty:

But the Women have found good Remedies to this Inconveniency: ...if there be only a Neighbour-Gossip at the Labour or Christening, who swears upon the truth of a Woman, that this Child resembles the man who bears the Name of its Father, as perfectly as if he had been spit out of his Mouth: Then it is the Husband, tho’ he sees the contrary plain enough, is obliged to believe it, according to the ancient Custom, and must seem to be over-joyed at the matter. (*London Jilt* 82-83)

As researchers like Martin Daly and Margo Wilson have investigated, a common tendency among maternal grandparents is to claim that a newborn baby resembles its father in an effort to secure paternal investment in their daughter’s child (“Whom Are Newborn Babies Said to Resemble?”). Done mostly unconsciously, it demonstrates the importance of easing a father’s doubts about the legitimacy of the offspring.

In addition, Cornelia also touches upon the issue of parent-offspring conflict when she expresses her happiness with discovering that she has miscarried the child:

I pretended likewise to be very much afflicted, that I might please him, tho’ indeed I was over-joyed: For I easily foresaw, that it was not very convenient for a Maiden of my Circumstances to have Children; and besides, I do not believe that there is a Miss in all this City, who will say, that I am mistaken in this Matter, by reason that this young Baggage gives so much trouble, and is attended with so many Inconveniencies, that most of our time is lost upon it; and we must abandon our own Affairs. (*London Jilt* 83)

After this episode, Cornelia recognizes the pecuniary opportunities in paternal uncertainty and so ventures again to profit from some men's reproductive ambitions. Directly following her affair with Valere, Cornelia engages the fifty-year-old Philander, who "had a great Desire to have a Child," and so our trickster-whore admits:

[I] took the Resolution of being once more with Child, were it only for the pleasure to see what Advantage I might get thereby. For that purpose I told him about three weeks afterwards (for I was not willing to do it immediately, for fear he should find out the Cheat) that undoubtedly I was with Child....

Philander was so over-joyed to hear this News, that there was easily to be seen in his Face the Signs of Satisfaction and Delight; and he promised me

Mountains of Gold, if I was so happy as to bring a Boy into the World. (90)

Indeed, to fake pregnancy, Cornelia details how she contorts her body by "half unlac[ing]," which would make her "Body hard under [her] Bosom, which made [her] Belly swell bravely, and rendred it so hard, ...that [she] could have deceived the cunningest Midwife in all the Town" (91). When Cornelia's ruse is finally found out and she loses Philander's patronage, Cornelia laments: "I had a very great loss in losing him, since that during the time of my counterfeited big Belly, I had got from him near a hundred pound, and I do not doubt but that I should have obtained as much more when I had been delivered; for he was one of the best Gallants I ever had" (92). Cornelia may behave prosocially in her willingness to punish opportunistic men like Limberham, but her prosociality is also counterbalanced by her own opportunistic desires to exploit men like Valere and Philander.

Revealingly, Cornelia's desire to exploit male investment is also, in turn, counterbalanced by her willingness to expose tricks of the trade that women use to deceive or

extort men. Just as Cornelia's maid, Sarah, betrays Cornelia's ploy to Philander's benefit, Cornelia exposes the often counterfeit nature of women's beauty, conveying with great detail women's arsenal of beautifying practices. And so, where Cornelia informed her readers that she had laced to distend her belly to simulate pregnancy, she also betrays the secret of lacing to feign youth and reproductive robustness, as she ameliorates her languid breasts (after having given birth) in a bid to fake virginity and be "taken for a real Maid": "For they were so soft, that when I was not laced they could not continue in their place. ...I could not make use of any other means, but by lacing my Body as streight underneath as I could bear it, and by doing so my Breasts rose up so high, and swell'd in such a manner, that I could rest upon 'em with my Chin" (88).

An especially noteworthy example elaborates on Cornelia's attempt to find a "Remedy" for her pallid complexion — a product that would allow her "to second Nature" (86) and attract lovers to her new house of business. Indeed, Cornelia expounds on the qualitative differences between products she "use[s] for the rendring...[her] Cheeks red" (86). She evaluates the peculiarities of Spanish wool, the root of a specific red-colouring plant, and Spanish paper, recommending the best ways to effectively apply each.⁶² While Spanish wool could "communicate[] a colour, which seem'd to be altogether natural," Cornelia warns that one would "perceive[] in a few days that this Colour did not remain firm enough to pass for really true and natural" (86). The root, however, proves "much firmer," although it must be rubbed with "a little Butter, ...and by that means the Root renders of it self a very fine red," which then "you make it dissipate so Artificially, that no Body can

⁶² Charles Hinnant's footnote regarding the particular root that Cornelia recommends cites the source as "Possibly cochineal, a plant used as a brilliant scarlet dye" (*London Jilt* 87 n.2). However, as we know now, cochineal is an insect that gives off red dye when the female insect bodies are crushed.

observe how the White divides from the Red; for if you did not diminish this Colour, which is very high, by little and little, with a Finger wet in Spittle or Water, you might easily perceive the Deceit” (87). Regarding the “Spanish Paper, which is now much in use both with Ladies of Pleasure and others,” Cornelia is most particular, cautioning her reader “you must be careful when you buy them” (87):

If they are of a Grocer, upon which there seems some Gold to sparkle, you will be very seldom deceived therein: Others are good, and of a firm and durable Colour; but on the contrary, if they are red and of a pearl or blew Colour, they are neither good, nor firm of Colour, and by too much sweating it might be easily made appear what you endeavour to keep concealed with so much Care and Precaution. It is made use of in the following manner. The Green which conceals under it a very agreeable Red, must be somewhat wet and moisted with the Tongue or Finger. Afterwards you take the Paper, and with the place that is wet, you rub two or three times upon the Cheeks, and they become almost as red as Blood, insomuch that afterwards you by little and little dissipate it with a wet Finger, after the same manner that was prescribed in the Root of —— and that Colour is so firm, that if you have good Paper, it will hold two whole days in case of need, without renewing it.

(87-88)

Cornelia’s meticulous depiction of the distinct differences in quality and application of rouge seems most curious.⁶³ However, her analysis not only illustrates how keenly aware our

⁶³ In this regard, the primary audience of *The London Jilt* seems to be a female readership, as is suggested by Cornelia’s offhand comment to her readers that “you must be careful when you buy them.” Indeed, Cornelia often seems to directly address a female reader, advising them about those

heroine is to deception, especially perceptive to the telltale signs of natural female beauty, but also exhibits Cornelia's readiness to unmask female dissimulation for men's benefit. Indeed, Cornelia regularly shares with her reader the various ways women artificially bolster that which nature has either not bestowed or has taken away with age and circumstance. And so we are treated to a most engrossing portrait of women's bodies. Relating the practice among some "young Women who fasten Ropes to the top of their Beds," Cornelia reveals that they then "[l]ie on their Backs, ... thrust their Hands therein" so that "the Blood may retire, and they seem the whiter: And for that purpose they must endure the Penance of continuing lying in that manner for a whole night together without being able to turn on the one side or other" (156). Many older women have their "Fore-top[s]...so strongly fastened, that [their] Forehead in Spite of the Teeth must seem smooth; and tho' this causes a terrible pain in the Head, yet they will not complain of it: for it is much better to endure a little Pain, than to serve for a Remedy to love, by suffering a wrinckled Forehead to appear" (52). Even "more surprizing" for Cornelia is the habit of still others "who having Warts, Freckles, or some such other like Deformities in their Faces, have taken off the Skin with biting [caustic] Waters and such other like means, for the recovering a new Skin which might not be subject to be disfigured like the former" (156). In this way, Cornelia betrays to her audience the severity of "practices which the Female Sex makes use of to help nature" (156). And in this way, too, the purpose of the novel as prefaced by its anonymous author manages to slip in, as the reader is able to see "our Jilt exposed naked in all her Deformities" (42). Just as Cornelia's willingness to punish Limberham confers a sociosexual benefit to characters in *The London Jilt*, Cornelia's exposition regarding women's counterfeit beauty confers a

supplies that will stand up to bouts of "amorous exercise" that "occasion[...sweating]" (*London Jilt* 86) and also about those remedies to the changes in their bodies.

benefit to her readers more generally — exposing women’s tricks even as she instructs women on such techniques. As either “an Enemy of the Female Sex” (156) or one who has “always done what was possible to deceive [men]” (94), Cornelia’s allegiance is not clear-cut. The uneasy tension between her redemptive qualities and her abhorrent traits, as well as Cornelia’s continual negotiation of their fine balance, I would argue, is what makes this trickster-whore heroine so complex and absorbing.

Seeking Reparation

While Cornelia’s earlier experiences with Limberham, Valere, and Philander surely centred on male priorities of engaging in sex and reproduction, Cornelia’s marriage to the Tobacco Merchant at the beginning of the second volume of *The London Jilt*, however, shifts the narrative to highlight tensions and risks surrounding control and management of resources. Just when Cornelia seemingly attains that which Mother Creswel deemed impossible — marrying a man with monetary resources and his own trade, who is sexually experienced and gratifying to her, and one whom she loves “from the bottom of [her] Heart” (*London Jilt* 113) — our heroine realizes that her strong commitment to reciprocate for offences leaves her immensely vulnerable. Indeed, while Cornelia may have played at long-term domestic arrangements with Valere and Philander, Cornelia’s entrance into genuine marriage proves much more dangerous when she exhibits her same avaricious ambitions. As Cornelia combines her trickster-whore schemes with her unrelenting sense of what is just and fair, we see this heroine exposed to even greater peril.

When Cornelia meets the Tobacco Merchant — “the Man [she] wanted” (109) — he seemed to be a perfect match for her. Before they marry, however, the Tobacco Merchant

confesses his mercenary motives for having married his previous wife, “who had been old, ugly, and rich, and with whom he had made a considerable Fortune” (111). His own past, therefore, affords him clear insight and skepticism into the kinds of chicanery of which Cornelia usually avails herself. He explicitly warns Cornelia that he is no dupe and that he will not tolerate any such tricks: “be careful that I never find the least Infidelity on your part, and be assured that I have padded this way long enough to know all the Turnings and Windings of it” (112). What starts as a sexually fulfilling relationship quickly unravels, and Cornelia soon finds that the Tobacco Merchant easily resorts to physical violence to keep his wife in line. Upon discovering that Cornelia has been financing her more luxurious tastes by stealing from his tobacco shop, he attacks her: “for one Morning when all the People were gone to Church, having called me into a Back-Room, he represented to me my Duty with such very pertinent Reasons, that I was very sensible of them for above a Week afterwards” (115). For this, Cornelia decides to get revenge: “I...took an irrevocable Resolution of planting two Horns upon his Front, ...and exercise my Body in Labour as strongly as ever” (115). And in her resolve to cuckold him, she decides to resume her trade of “whoring” (123) until she can “make [her] escape,...with the Profits that [she]...gain[s] by the Labour of [her] Body” (119). In this way, Cornelia’s plan strikes at both the Tobacco Merchant’s demand for sexual fidelity and his control over her access to earnings.

Of course, the tremendous risks Cornelia takes in getting sexual revenge in this manner may seem like a benefit that only she would garner. However, female readers of *The London Jilt* would perhaps identify closely with Cornelia’s experience with domestic violence or remember their own encounters with men who would capitalize from women, getting satisfaction from seeing a character like the Tobacco Merchant suffer. As Hinnant has also

observed, Cornelia's time with her husband here offers an illustration of a "plight...all-too-typical of women who have become victims of male oppression" (20). Suspecting that Cornelia has a side business, the Tobacco Merchant sets out a plan to catch his wife in the act of prostitution. But after he finds himself in bed with a woman he thought to be the wife he thought he entrapped, the Tobacco Merchant makes the gravity of his threats clear to our heroine and any other women with whom she may have colluded:

I ought to have considered on your Bitchery before I married you; But you may well fear the Effects of my just Anger, if ever I catch you in a Fault; and for your parts, said he, turning towards the Landlady and the Whore, who had lain with him, you shall know in a short time, that I have practiced the world too well not to be jilted and laugh'd at with Impunity. (127)

Such a vocalized warning would have reminded Cornelia of the violence her own mother suffered after her mother's younger lover, a "Bully of a Fellow," "squandered away what she had, and had a hundred times broken her Bones with beating her" (93). True to the code of retribution that Cornelia follows, the Tobacco Merchant gets his comeuppance in tit-for-tat fashion, losing his wife in the midst of a violent, physical brawl between himself and her lover. Because Cornelia must remove herself entirely from London in order to escape retaliation from her husband, for she "expected every moment to have had [her] Throat Cut" (133), and because she spends the rest of her life in fear of being found by the Tobacco Merchant, Cornelia exposes herself to extreme risks by exacting sexual revenge against an abusive mate.

Undoubtedly, *The London Jilt*'s portraiture of marriage here draws attention to the kind of "sexually antagonistic coevolution" (Rowe and Day 277) of the sexes that is at the centre

of tensions between Cornelia and the Tobacco Merchant. More specifically, as G.A. Parker defines, this is ““a conflict between the evolutionary interests of individuals of the two sexes”” (quoted in Rowe and Day 277). And as Tracey Chapman and Linda Partridge sum up most vividly:

Harassing, philandering, infanticidal males, and reluctant, picky, demanding females show that natural selection can result in sexual conflict. Coercion by males for matings with reluctant females is common, as are philandering males who abandon their partners with dependent young in favour of new mates. Females, too, can insist on mating only with males offering large enough rewards, and will cuckold their mates for their own gain. The consequences of sexual conflict can be drastic, including infanticide of a female’s offspring by a new male and sexual cannibalism. (189)

While there is no *actual* sexual cannibalism in the novel, the continual back-and-forth amplification of risks taken between Cornelia and the Tobacco Merchant compounds the rivalry between these two characters so that Mowry’s observation about “class cannibalism” echoes here even as their conflicts are biologically, as opposed to politically, motivated.

Where Valere and Philander more freely (or foolishly) share their resources with Cornelia, naïve to the extent of her schemes, the Tobacco Merchant is more watchful and wary of Cornelia’s designs, primed to the possibilities of exploitation. Certainly, Cornelia’s marriage to the Tobacco Merchant seems to come closest to real, equal partnership because of their similar mercenary histories. Love, commonality, and (for Cornelia, at least) the opportunity for financial security seem to hold these two characters in a union, at least for a while. However, when Cornelia secretly diverts away assets her husband arrived at through

the exploitation of his first wife, what began as sexual cooperation between Cornelia and the Tobacco Merchant easily slips into sexual conflict, proving their suspicions of and guardedness with each other always only suspended. Most interesting, however, is how Cornelia's management of sexual discord in fact promotes her prosocial purpose. That is, her insistence on punishing her husband for prioritizing his own interests above hers — as expressed through the Tobacco Merchant's physical abuse of Cornelia as an attempt to control her behaviour and his resources — promotes more widely her prosocial function. Just as sexual cooperation slips into sexual conflict, Cornelia's early selfish actions against the Tobacco Merchant, which put into jeopardy their cooperation, slides into more altruistic behaviour as Cornelia exposes the extent to which men attempt to control women. Again, Cornelia's conduct is by no means virtuous, but what starts off as a selfish enterprise leads her to actions worthy of more commendation. What the Limberham and Tobacco Merchant episodes especially highlight is that the sexes are always already mutually exploitative. Differences in biological investments in seeking mates, reproduction, and parenting can lead to great conflict between men and women. While there might be a common interest in producing and raising offspring, when such a generative venture is left out of the picture as it is for Cornelia and the Tobacco Merchant, what men want often runs counter to what women want.

Cornelia's repeated encounters with the Rope-Dancer, however, perhaps testifies most viscerally to the risks to which Cornelia exposes herself when those she punishes are given the opportunity to retaliate. Indeed, with each of Cornelia's encounters with the Rope-Dancer, the author ratchets up the level of danger our heroine faces, drawing attention to the potential constant one-upping, arms-race fallout of reprisal. Where the Tobacco Merchant

might have considered holding back full fury because Cornelia was his wife, the Rope-Dancer's rancorous vindictiveness seems to have no restraints.

The trajectory of Cornelia's life stems directly from her initial encounter with the Rope-Dancer when she was a child. Beginning the novel, Cornelia recounts her father's meeting with the Rope-Dancer. Posing as a tightrope walker, this agile conman draws in Cornelia's father by claiming that he, too, can learn acrobatics and "Vault upon the High Rope" (*London Jilt* 45). Of course, seduced by the "boldness in their Tricks and Jumps, and especially their Dexterity" (45), Cornelia's father decides to try and, in the course of the attempt, is robbed by the impostor of money and household possessions while he dangles, helplessly suspended on a high rope. The young Cornelia witnesses all of this but is rendered powerless when the Rope-Dancer strikes her and "threatned [her] with a naked Knife to cut [her] Throat," which was "accompanied with a dozen Boxes of the Ear" (46). This episode causes further friction between her parents and, after her father dies from poor health due to reduced circumstances stemming from the robbery, Cornelia's mother goes into prostitution in order to support herself and her daughter. When Cornelia later encounters the Rope-Dancer by accident, she therefore decides to get revenge.

After seducing the Rope-Dancer into a potential sexual rendezvous, Cornelia drugs him with the help of her mother. They then proceed to rob him, but this is not punishment enough for Cornelia. The effects of the Rope-Dancer's actions years earlier were much more personally damaging to Cornelia's life. In a way almost reflective of what the Rope-Dancer did to her parents, Cornelia redresses his earlier violations by stripping the criminal of his clothes, dressing him in rotting female attire (perhaps representative of her mother's reduced

bodily state), and placing him in a coffin which she arranges to ship off down river (a nod to her dead father). Being our whore-protagonist, however, Cornelia characteristically sends him off with a letter in hand — a bill of reparation, of sorts — accounting his past wrongs for which she seeks retribution. While this episode echoes the kind of chicanery we saw with Limberham — satisfyingly comic in her deliverance of just punishment — the consequences of her actions here come to highlight the price our heroine will pay upon her third encounter with this bandit.

Dressed this time as a “counterfeited Woman” (*London Jilt* 152), the Rope-Dancer feigns being pursued and attacked by two men in order to recruit Cornelia’s sympathy before he reveals himself and threatens to kill her if she does not return the money she had stolen from him. The irony not lost on her reader, of course, is that the Rope-Dancer demands back the money he had initially stolen from Cornelia’s father years earlier. Adding to this injury, the Rope-Dancer insults our heroine by also pressing for “the Interest of so many years that have passed since” (152) she sent him off in the coffin. After a terrorizing physical altercation, Cornelia manages to escape, but only after the Rope-Dancer disembowels her guard dog and only after he thinks he has successfully killed Cornelia:

...he pursued me so fast, and came so near me, that striking at me, he cut me over the Head, by which I could pass no other Judgment than that he intended to cut my Throat: And to make him believe that he had done my Business already, and to prevent any farther Mischief..., I fell topsy turvy upon the Ground, without uttering one word. (153-154)

The Rope-Dancer “skudded away like a Hare” after this, and so Cornelia “lose[s] the Pleasure [she] should have had in seeing him upon a Gallows” (154).

The Rope-Dancer is the most dangerous figure Cornelia encounters throughout the novel. Unlike most of the other male characters, the Rope-Dancer represents a more hardened criminal who carefully uses disguise and deception in order to con his victims. While Cornelia is a trickster-whore figure who may exploit male weaknesses and who uses pranks to redress wrongs, she is by no means the purely greedy, purely opportunistic fraudster that the Rope-Dancer embodies. Indeed, Cornelia is much more of a businesswoman in that those men who pursue her understand that she is in the business of prostitution. In this sense, she very much, as she claims, “hate[s] all manner of dissimulation,” preferring “plain dealing” (156). Cornelia’s punishment of the Rope-Dancer — at extreme risk to herself, as this third encounter shows — certainly benefits the public more generally. Where Cornelia’s earlier affair with a young thief, Jukomo, only resulted in the loss of her jewelry, her experience with the Rope-Dancer represents a much more dangerous level of criminal activity for which she attempts to seek restitution. Because Cornelia literally takes pains to punish this transgressor, our heroine does most service to the public even while her own rationale may have been more personally motivated. Undoubtedly, Cornelia has a stubborn resolve for fairness. Even when she tells her reader about being victimized by Jukomo, she maintains her sense of justness, intimating that she perhaps deserved Jukomo’s treatment of her:

I ought not to take the thing so very ill; for as it was my custome to deceive others, and as I should not have taken delight in seeing that men had been wanting to treat me with all manner of respect and civility, methinks it is but just, likewise, that I forget what has been done to me, to which I find my self

obliged with so much the more reason, as that I cannot say, that he stole from me more than I had got from him before. (146-147)

With regard to the Rope-Dancer, however, Cornelia's reader understands that the barbarity of his attack on her is categorically unjust, severe, and excessive. Ultimately, the Rope-Dancer's ability to evade capture is perhaps a testament to the limits of Cornelia's capacity to attend to society's welfare.

The reappearance of the Rope-Dancer powerfully puts to the reader the grave risks to which Cornelia exposes herself each time she seeks reprisal from any of the men with whom she has dealings. As I have stressed thus far, Cornelia's deep sense of fairness goes beyond legal parameters of justice. As Cornelia's mother had tried to convince her daughter during the second encounter with the Rope-Dancer to "run to a Justice of Peace...that he might grant a Warrant to a Constable to seize on this Gallant," Cornelia's insistence on "manag[ing] this Affair [her] self" (101) not only highlights her mistrust of legal authorities, but perhaps also speaks to the more satisfying outcome of imagining a stripped down Rope-Dancer waking up inside a coffin that has set sail. A testament to the risks Cornelia takes in order to achieve justness, the resultant cut on her forehead from the Rope-Dancer's final attack certainly leaves our heroine "bravely marked" (154). The mutilation is a cost her body bears. While she is able to disguise the wound, the laceration speaks to the toll this prosocial whore's body sustains in seeking reparation.

As with many whore narratives, there is no victory for Cornelia in the end. While she evades poverty because of annuities secured early on — again, one from Valere at £30 and another she purchased herself at almost £60 per annum — and while she may escape penance

as do later whore-protagonists like Moll Flanders and Roxana, Cornelia's end is hardly rewarded. Indeed, as her body transforms, becoming "more and more ugly," she eventually receives "no Benefit from any body" (160). No longer desirable, her body stands in the way of any sexual pleasure she enjoyed previously. "[Y]ellow, by having been too often at the sport" (155), Cornelia is "rendred...so ugly, that no Body now comes to torment [her]" (167). Crucially, this is a real loss for Cornelia because she took so much pleasure in her occupation. And so, where Behn's Angellica hung a sign to advertise her business and her status, Cornelia's body, in the end, accounts for this whore-protagonist's life in such a business through the signs her body bears.

Throughout this chapter, I have focussed on the prosocial conduct of *The London Jilt's* trickster-whore. By virtue of Cornelia's willingness to take on great risks in order to punish men like Limberham, the Tobacco Merchant, and the Rope-Dancer, who would not think twice about victimizing or exploiting women, I argue that altruistic punishment is integrated into Cornelia's strategy for managing intersexual conflict, regardless of whether or not she is consciously aware of the effects of her tactics. However, as we have also seen, Cornelia is not incapable of enacting her own deceptive ways in order to manipulate and capitalize on men's credulity. While perhaps whore figures like Behn's Angellica or *The Revenge's* Corina may more aggressively and specifically seek to overturn male libertinism, Cornelia's experiences highlight deeper and broader issues related to evolved differences between the sexes. Indeed, Cornelia is hardly a champion of women's interests, looking to unite prostitutes or to rally women against men. In fact, there is little evidence that she is genuinely compassionate towards other female characters in this novel. While it might be desirable to claim that Cornelia's actions are motivated by a feminist purpose to redress

wrongs against women, I have refrained from simply seeing our trickster-whore in such a light. Doing so, I believe, narrows our understanding of Cornelia's more socially-minded behaviour. As my exploration of this whore-protagonist's solutions to her particular and individual circumstances aimed to show, the prosocial effects of Cornelia's behaviour have more expansive reach by levelling the effects of both male sexual dominance and female sexual manipulation. And through Cornelia's willingness to assume costly risks in order to arrive at a kind of social justice and fair treatment, Cornelia manages to attain redemptive possibilities not available to women like Angellica, Corina, and Mother Creswel, or even to later whore-protagonists like Moll Flanders, Roxana, and (as I will explore in my final chapter) Eliza Haywood's Syrena — who, in many ways, is Cornelia's literary descendant.

Chapter 2

“To Make a Whore an Honest Woman”: On Daniel Defoe’s Lady Credit as an Agent for Homosocial Cooperation

...[T]he Belief that this CREDIT was their Mistress, sure to them only, and that no Body could debauch her but the Bank, &c. Little dreaming, that in spight of all Mr. Defoe’s Allegories of a beautiful Coy Virgin Lady, called CREDIT, his Virgin prov’d a Whore, a meer Common Strumpet, will lie with any Body that has but Money to supply her insatiable Cravings; Nay, *the worst sort of Whores*, a mercenary Whore, for she forsakes her best Friends that have spent all their Estates upon her, as soon as ever their Money fails them, and will run after, and prostitute her self to those that have no manner of Occasion for her, always fawning upon, and flattering, and hanging about them that slight her and scorn her, while she is inexorable to the Entreaties of a poor Man, or a poor Nation, though they may be in Danger of Ruine for want of her. (*Eleven Opinions about Mr. Harley* 41)

When Daniel Defoe published his *Eleven Opinions about Mr. Harley* in 1711, defending the new Chancellor of the Exchequer against Whig supporters of the disavowed Earl of Godolphin, Defoe at one point seemed to be attacking the very figure whose social virtues and economic value he had been promoting for the past five years in his *A Review of the State of the British Nation*.⁶⁴ Indeed, since 1706 Defoe had been extolling the necessity

⁶⁴ Earlier publications of Defoe’s *Review* were published under the title *A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France: Purg’d from the Errors and Partiality of News-Writers and Petty-Statesmen, of all*

of a most compelling female character whose importance was twinned to the very survival of the nation — Lady Credit. Critics like Sandra Sherman, who have focussed on Defoe’s depictions of his “Coy Virgin Lady” in his writings on Harley, take note of Defoe’s seemingly anomalous departure from his usual praise of Lady Credit, his “Favourite Mistress” (7.102 [1710]: 470).⁶⁵ Sherman speculates that “Defoe now explicitly denominated Lady Credit a whore, when in the *Review* she had never been so thoroughly of the demimonde” because “by late spring, 1711, Defoe’s speculations on his ability to sustain Air-Money narratives had become totally sublimated in the narrative of Lady Credit’s body” (“Lady Credit No Lady” 198). Sherman believes that Defoe gives in and allows his narrative of “his Virgin” in *Eleven Opinions* to slide into a characterization of “*the worst sort of Whores*” in order to show how, ultimately, Lady Credit is “elusive” and “unstable” (“Lady Credit No Lady” 198), thereby reflecting the instability of the market she is meant to stabilize. There is no doubt that Lady Credit is typically represented as fickle and unreliable, as Defoe’s contemporaries Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison attested in their own work.⁶⁶

Sides. As P.N Furbank and W.R. Owens tell us in their biography, *A Political Biography of Daniel Defoe*: “This original title — it went through a number of changes, ending up as *A Review of the State of the British Nation* — was intentionally provocative, given that England was at war with France. It was meant to assert the need to face facts and to learn from one’s enemies” (35).

⁶⁵ All references to Defoe’s *Review* are from John McVeagh’s edition, with parenthetical citation indicating volume, number, year, and McVeagh’s page number.

⁶⁶ See Swift’s April 19th, 1711 installment of *The Examiner* (No. 37) where he juxtaposes credit of Exchange Alley with “national credit,” the difference being that the first is a “sickly dame” who may well have “worse diseases, considering what hands she passes through” while the latter is “of another complexion” and “of sound health, and an even temper, her life and existence being a quintessence drawn from the vitals of the whole kingdom” (*The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift* 134). Addison’s March 3rd, 1711 installment of *The Spectator* (No. 3) depicts Public Credit as “infinitely timorous in all her behaviour.” Either due to her “delicacy of...constitution, or that she was troubled with

However, I believe Defoe's treatment of Lady Credit throughout his *Review* offers other kinds of "strategic effect[s]" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 197) that critics like Sherman have not considered.

We must remember that Defoe's *Eleven Opinions* was published at a tumultuous time in Britain's political history and its purpose was to defend Robert Harley (a Tory) against his Whig critics. Indeed, Defoe supported Harley's campaign to form a more "moderate" (Furbank and Owen 112) bipartisan ministry, and Defoe's severe portrait of Lady Credit here, I would insist, is a rhetorical maneuver implemented to wrestle away a proprietorship the Whigs claimed over this lady.⁶⁷ By definitively exposing Lady Credit as "a mercenary Whore" who would unblinkingly abandon any loyalties the Whigs believed her to honour, Defoe effectively dispels their "Belief that this CREDIT was *their* Mistress, sure to *them* only" (emphasis mine). As he develops throughout a number of his *Review* installments, Defoe reminds Whigs here that this female embodiment of "this Thing call'd CREDIT" (7.55 [1710]: 271) — which, according to many economic historians such as P.G.M. Dickson, Julian Hoppit, John Brewer, and Bruce Carruthers, propelled Britain to become a major powerhouse on the global stage — is not solely "their Mistress" (7.58 [1710]: 284).⁶⁸ Rather, Lady Credit is necessarily a communal whore — "the whole Nation's Mistress" (7.58 [1710]:

vapours," Addison's depiction of credit highlighted the "sudden[ness]" of her changeable nature (Addison 21).

⁶⁷ For more on Harley's more moderate stance, see John Richetti's *The Life of Daniel Defoe*, especially pages 124-129; Furbank and Owen's *A Political Biography of Daniel Defoe*; and Bruce Carruthers's *City of Capital*.

⁶⁸ See Dickson's *The Financial Revolution in England*; Hoppit's "Attitudes to Credit in Britain, 1680-1790" and "The Use and Abuse of Credit in Eighteenth-Century England"; Brewer's *The Sinews of Power*; and Carruthers's *City of Capital*.

284).

To be sure, Defoe primarily creates a history for, and expands on, the developments of Lady Credit in order to explain what credit is and why all subjects of the British nation need to sustain it. However, as I will explore in the following chapter, even while scholars like Sherman rightly claim that Defoe ends up revealing the more dubious aspects of credit itself — exposing the precariousness of its foundation and, thereby, even disrupting the ground on which Lady Credit stands, ever testing her footing — I believe Defoe’s specific risqué representation of this financial medium serves more to seduce “Party Men” (7.61 [1710]: 298) into bipartisan cooperative relations. That is, Defoe intentionally creates a sexualized metaphorical representation of credit, confident in her ability to deploy her sexuality in order to recruit male investment in her. For Defoe, Lady Credit’s ability to captivate the interests of such men overrides her fickle nature. And as I will show, Defoe achieves this end by exploiting this lady’s female sexuality in order to engage men’s sexual and financial interest in her. In other words, Defoe scaffolds men’s economic interests with men’s sexual interests in order to promote credit and political alliances. Indeed, Defoe’s Lady Credit has a masculinizing effect, brought about by her “Power of Transmutation” (6.31 [1709]: 169). In this way, I will claim, Defoe banks on trading men’s desires to masculinize themselves in a profession that increasingly debated the feminizing effects of marketplace trading and the consumption of luxury goods. I argue that Defoe sees his sexual depiction of Lady Credit as a way to both entice tradesmen to use credit and for their usage of her to signal their own manliness to others.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ On the effeminacy and the feminizing effects of the late-seventeenth century marketplace, see G.J. Barker-Benfield’s *Culture of Sensibility*; Laura Brown’s *Ends of Empire* and *Fables of Modernity*;

I maintain throughout this chapter that Defoe's Lady Credit is a most "*useful Lady*" (7.58 [1710]: 284) because she adopts what I call a *whore's stratagem* in order to both legitimize men's participation in an increasingly feminized market arena and to forge homosocial cooperative alliances, resolving the problem of mutual political distrust between the parties. Thus, I take seriously what John Richetti seems to only observe in passing: "the joke...that her virginity is renewed the more she accepts suitors" (*Life of Daniel Defoe* 151). Instead of seeing the irony of Lady Credit's behaviour as a "joke," I will argue that her virtue, in fact, is dependent upon her "suitors" exploiting her sexual availability. As both an emblem and agent of bipartisan, homosocial cooperation, Lady Credit's value emerges precisely from what she allows her competing "suitors" to do — to trust each other in economic terms (despite their political distrust) and cooperate.

Making the claim that Defoe recruits the particular sexual strategy of a prostitute in order to encourage cooperation is, I realize, more than strange. However, as I will show, Defoe encourages his readers to view Lady Credit's virtue and value as not dependent on her loyalty to any single tradesman, politician, party, monarch, or nation. She purposely is not "pinn'd to the Girdle of...[any one] Man" (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 55). Indeed, Lady Credit is valuable precisely because she is not faithful, for her function is very much wrapped up in reflecting the trustworthiness and reputation of those who are permitted to use her. Furthermore, Lady Credit is a female figure through which men can work together to ensure the strength of the British nation against the French. In other words, as John O'Brien observes, "she offers men divided by party a figure through which to find common cause"

E.J. Clery's *The Feminization Debate*, and Stephen H. Gregg's *Defoe's Writings and Manliness*, for example.

(611).⁷⁰ And crucially, I will demonstrate, the way Lady Credit does this precisely relies on her ability to “prov[e] [herself] a Whore” — a seemingly sexually risky venture, even as it in fact demonstrates her distaste for risk.

Born in the House of Trade

Defoe first introduces Lady Credit in his *Review* on January 10, 1706. From the start, he assures his readers that, being Money’s younger sister, Credit is “a very useful and officious Servant in Trade”:

...in the absence of her senior Relation, but with her Consent, and on the Supposition of her Confederacy, is very assistant to her; frequently supplies her place for a Time, answers all the Ends of Trade perfectly, and to all intents and Purposes, as well as Money her self; only with one Proviso, That her Sister constantly and punctually relieves her, keeps time with her, and preserves her good Humour.... (3.5 [1706]: 29)⁷¹

While Lady Credit may be “a coy Lass,” she is, Defoe promises, “wonderful chary of her self” and “a most necessary, useful, industrious Creature” whose name is synonymous with

⁷⁰ While O’Brien makes this remark about Defoe’s Lady Credit, it seems only in passing that he considers Lady Credit a rallying figure. Indeed, O’Brien’s main concern is with Lady Credit’s necessarily gendered characterization as representative of credit’s precariousness. See O’Brien’s “The Character of Credit: Defoe’s ‘Lady Credit,’ *The Fortunate Mistress*, and the Resources of Inconsistency in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain.”

⁷¹ In the opening of his next installment of his *Review*, Defoe makes clear that when discussing credit, it is “to be understood, as it respects Trade only” and that he is strictly “upon the Credit of Trade” (3.6 [1706]: 35) as opposed to more general notions of reputation, such as “*Fame*, which rais’d from Good Actions, or from a general Rectitude of Conversation and Behaviour, is what Solomon calls a *good Name*” (3.6 [1706]: 35).

“Honour” (3.5 [1706]: 29). Throughout Defoe’s initial depiction of Lady Credit, he highlights her steadfastness and “how absolute this Lady is,” even if her extreme principles push her to “despotickly...govern...all her Actions” (3.5 [1706]: 29). Indeed, as Defoe explains, “[i]f once she be disoblig’d, she’s the most difficult to be Friends again with us” (3.5 [1706]: 29). Furthermore, “[n]or is she to be won by the greatest Powers; Kings cannot bribe her; Parliaments cannot force her” (3.5 [1706]: 29) although many have tried. Despite this attribute, however, many monarchs and men in parliament — from Henry V, who “brought her over from France” (7.57 [1710]: 280), to Queen Anne — have persuaded Lady Credit with assurances of “her Security” (3.5 [1706]: 30) and promises to uphold and respect her “inestimable...Value” (6.32 [1709]: 174), only to abuse her most grievously.⁷²

Elaborating further, Defoe conveys her history of ill-use and exploitation by those who should have administered better management. Lady Credit’s “Immense Value and Infinite Consequence...contain’d in the Teeming Womb, of this Mother of Great Designs” (3.5 [1706]: 32) must be acknowledged, Defoe insists. And to those “who Cry out, our Funds are Exhausted, our Money is gone, and we are not able to carry on the War [of the Spanish Succession] three Years more” Defoe attests that “meerly upon Credit, without any such thing as an extraordinary Fund, [England could]...carry on the Expence of War these 20 Years” (3.5 [1706]: 31). Such is the power Lady Credit wields.

Defoe’s agenda in creating this allegory of credit is to convince his readers of how important and powerful credit can be. Lady Credit is a “Machine...the Wheel within the Wheel of all our Commerce” (6.31 [1709]: 169). Individual tradesmen depend on her,

⁷² Although Defoe writes on June 14, 1709 that Lady Credit arrives in England with Queen Elizabeth (6.31 [1709]: 170), he revises this by August of the next year to state that she was introduced to England by Henry V (7.57 [1710]: 280).

becoming impotent “if...[she] foresake him”: “his Trade dies, his Money won’t circulate, the Vitals of his Management stagnate, his Ships won’t sail, his Bills won’t be accepted”

(6.31 [1709]: 169). As well, the whole British nation relies on Lady Credit:

...while [she] dwels in a Nation, [she] doubles their Strength, they can fit out Fleets without Money, have Money without Funds, and Funds without Deficiencies.... ...’tis by Her you raise Armies, fit out Fleets, cloth your Soldiers, establish Banks, sell Annuities, pay Equivalents, and in short by Her you found your grand Alliances have supported the War, and beat the *French*.... (6.31 [1709]: 169)

And yet, her powers do not simply end there. Defoe piques his readers’ interest by detailing Lady Credit’s mysterious nature. In trying to unravel the certain “*Je ne scay Quoi*” of “this invisible Phantasm,” “this Non-natural, this Emblem of a something, tho’ in itself nothing” that “has the effectual Power of Transmutation,” Defoe writes: “it is the best Philosophers Stone in the World, and has the best Method of Multiplication of Metals” (6.31 [1709]: 169). Not only can she “turn Paper into Money, and Money into Dross,” but Lady Credit also:

...tyrannizes over Youth, Beauty, Vertue, Estate; she makes honest Women whores, and Whores honest Women; by her the Homely get Husbands, while all Men shall shun the Fair; if she forsake the honestest Woman in the World, no Body will touch her; If she covers the most scandalous Behaviour, it passes for Vertue; the Spouse deceiv’d by her takes a Prostitute, and swears she was a Virgin; Demonstration will hardly convince against her Evidence; and a

whole Life of Vertue won't repair the Injury she does, where she falls off.

(6.31 [1709]: 169-170)

Throughout his *Review*, Defoe works to convey the absolute importance of credit because of her transformative powers. With such tremendous abilities, however, Lady Credit has been under continual threat throughout the ages as many have tried to take possession of her, to the point that towards the end of William III's reign, Defoe laments, she was taken "Prisoner, toss'd...in a Blanket, ravish'd..., and in short us'd...barbarously, and had almost [been] murther'd" (6.31 [1709]: 172). Although Lady Credit's status and safety may be at risk, we must remember she stands ever resolute in her principles. Even with such aggressive tactics, Lady Credit does not capitulate. She would rather flee a country than live in submission. And so, the only way of securing her person is to "convince her, that [there is]...really no Occasion for her": "one of the best ways to get full Possession of her; for as once to want her, is entirely to lose her; At once to be free from the Need of her, is absolutely to possess her" (6.32 [1709]: 175).

It is no surprise, then, that many literary critics are drawn to Defoe's Lady Credit and have written about her particular elusive quality. Early critics of hers, like Paula R. Backscheider and J.G.A Pocock, have explored Lady Credit's lineage and relation to other "goddesses" (Pocock 453) of finance — like Luxury, Occasion, Fantasia, and especially Fortuna ("Lady Credit No Lady" 187), with Lady of the South Sea's later induction, Catherine Ingrassia notes, after the stock market crash of 1720 (*Authorship* 25). For such critics, Defoe's female allegory offers much to connect the development of the new credit-based economic system with a history of women's fickleness and unreliability, thereby claiming the instability of both. Stemming from these early critics' claims about Lady

Credit's volatility, many other scholars locate the source of Defoe's depiction in early beliefs about female physiology and women's susceptibility to hysteria.⁷³ Undeniably, however, Sandra Sherman's work in particular has set the foundations in much recent thinking about this particular female character.⁷⁴

Sherman's main claim regarding Lady Credit insists that she "is an oxymoron" and that Lady Credit necessarily "must eschew ladylikeness" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 185). For Sherman, Lady Credit embodies a flexible status as a virgin-whore-virgin because her "regenerative hymen" (186) affords Lady Credit the ability to "career through...as chaste, whore, and chaste again" (187).⁷⁵ Calling this Lady Credit's "bivalent sexuality" — in that she is both "'chary,' remote from sex, even ostensibly a virgin, but also sexually active, a 'mistress,' a flirt, and the object of assault" (190) — Sherman registers definite concern and an uneasiness with regard to Lady Credit's elastic sexual status: "[Lady Credit] hold[s] in suspension chariness and jade, elaborating a narrative that at any point features one, the

⁷³ See Erin Mackie's "Lady Credit and the Strange Case of the Hoop-Petticoat" and *Marriage à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator*; Sandra Sherman's "Lady Credit No Lady; or, The Case of Defoe's 'Coy Mistress,' Truly Stat'd" and *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe*; John O'Brien's "The Character of Credit: Defoe's 'Lady Credit,' *The Fortunate Mistress*, and the Resources of Inconsistency in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain"; Terry Mulcaire's "Public Credit; Or, The Feminization of Virtue in the Marketplace"; Catherine Ingrassia's *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*; Marieke de Goede's "Mastering 'Lady Credit'"; Laura Brown's *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in English Eighteenth Century*; and Michael McKeon's *The Secret History of Domesticity*. See also Colin Nicholson's *Writing and the Rise of Finance*, pages 45-49.

⁷⁴ See Sherman's article "Lady Credit No Lady; or, The Case of Defoe's 'Coy Mistress,' Truly Stat'd" and her book *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe*.

⁷⁵ Although, Sherman notes, "not even goddesses [like her predecessors had] survive[d] rape as a virgin" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 187).

other, or *some unresolved combination of both*” (191 — emphasis mine).⁷⁶

Examining more closely what Defoe offers in his *Review*, however, I see Defoe in

⁷⁶ Kimberly S. Latta follows Sherman in her thinking about Lady Credit as a woman caught up in an either/or struggle between virgin and whore. While Sherman believes Defoe’s depiction of Lady Credit’s precarious sexuality represents his true thoughts on the precariousness of the credit system itself — essentially claiming an unsteadiness and uncertainty of the whole financial system — Latta’s analysis figures Lady Credit as an emblem of “the new types of women in public” (361) — that is, “marriageable women” (365) — whose “virtue is unstable” (365). In asking “what *kind* of woman is Lady Credit” (363), Latta concludes that:

On one level (where we read this [Lady Credit] as an allegory about credit), Defoe suggests that the relationship between England and the new economic form must resemble a marriage based on industry, honor, and fidelity. On another level (where we read it as an allegory about women), Lady Credit’s volatile temper and interest in proposals, titles, and settlements suggests that she figures not just as a new economic form, but also a new social type, the marriageable woman, the mistress of the marriage market. (364)

Latta certainly shares Sherman’s concern about Lady Credit’s flighty character and seeks to resolve this problem of Lady Credit’s bivalence by linking her to what Latta sees as a new breed of women so that Lady Credit “acts not like a prostitute, but rather like a woman investigating the terms of her marriage contract” (364), although concluding that “as maidens who ‘carried themselves to Market,’ marriageable women engaged in something not unlike prostitution” (375). In the end, it seems, the problem with Lady Credit’s dichotomous sexuality persists for Latta.

While McKeon, in turn, follows Latta in exploring Defoe’s Lady Credit as a “marriageable woman” (*Secret History of Domesticity* 445), McKeon, however, sees Defoe’s characterization of Lady Credit as perhaps more redemptive. For McKeon, Lady Credit is like a “nubile woman, whose financially productive status on the marriage market” may leave her “dangerously comparable to that of the prostitute,” but whose status, McKeon stresses, Defoe “definitively distinguishes from prostitution” (*Secret History of Domesticity* 446). In the end, both Latta and McKeon conceptualize Lady Credit as one who is primarily seeking marriage. Like Sherman, Latta and McKeon seem to register anxiety over Lady Credit’s continual traversing between being a virgin or a whore — a tension, which for these critics, builds because of Lady Credit’s unsettled, thereby unsettling, sexual status.

fact freeing his lady from the strain of duality, even calling upon the very sexual strategies of both virgin and whore to do so. I believe we need to rethink the either/or “bivalent sexuality” that Sherman alleges and consider possibilities in what Sherman sees only as an “unresolved combination of both.” By doing so, the complexities of Lady Credit’s sexual character open up and reveal themselves to our deeper understanding of her mysterious nature. Instead of calling upon the erraticism of hysteria — although a common understanding of female sexuality during Defoe’s time — to help us think about why Lady Credit would conduct herself at times a virgin and at other times a whore, I believe viewing Lady Credit’s behaviour as a *concurrently* running virgin-whore sexual strategy — what I call a *whore’s stratagem*, where her ability and desire to *engage multiple men all at the same time* is precisely that which gives her value — serves to reveal Lady Credit’s political and economic potential. While Lady Credit may be “a device, the emblem of an impersonal market” (“Lady Credit No Lady” 186) as Sherman contends, I would insist that Defoe marketed her in a way that suggested how the early financial market absolutely required her personal, bodily engagement with the players within. In fact, as I will go on to detail, Defoe even suggests tradesmen’s engagement with this sexualized Lady Credit as a way of legitimizing their involvement with an increasingly feminized marketplace.

“A War of Parties”

Of course, during the time of Defoe’s writing of his *Review* — from February 19, 1704, to June 11, 1713 — the already strained relationship between the Whigs and Tories was becoming even more bitter. Historians like J. H. Plumb and Bruce Carruthers, for example, remind us that the late 1670s through to the early eighteenth century was a period

dominated by the “rage of party” (Plumb 128), when “[p]arty conflict became the chief organizing principle of English politics” (*City of Capital* 17). Party divisions were so disruptive, in fact, that between 1702 and 1714, five general elections were held as the warring sides fought over parliamentary power. Political turmoil escalated with the death of Queen Anne in 1714, and by 1715, a Jacobite uprising was led by James Francis Stuart, son of James II, who was aided by the French.⁷⁷

Within this acrimonious political climate, Defoe certainly would have felt he had to tread carefully. Only the year before the debut of Defoe’s *Review*, Defoe was arrested and imprisoned for libel.⁷⁸ As Richetti details in his biography of Defoe, the then Speaker of the House of Commons — Robert Harley — along with the Lord Treasurer of the time — Sidney, first Earl of Godolphin — arranged Defoe’s release. In return, Defoe offered to serve as Harley’s “secret agent” who would “gather intelligence...vet opposition journalism, and...write pamphlets supporting government positions” (*Life of Daniel Defoe* 26). And because Defoe was supported by alternating patrons in Harley and Godolphin, and then Harley again, Defoe’s reputation certainly suffered. According to Alan Downie: “By writing for successive governments between 1704 and 1714, Defoe earned his description as

⁷⁷ For more on the political history of this period, see J.H. Plumb’s *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725*; Carruthers’s *City of Capital*; Steven Pincus’s *1688: The First Modern Revolution*; John Spurr’s *England in the 1670s*; and Geoffrey Holmes’s *British Politics in the Age of Anne*.

⁷⁸ Defoe was arrested for publishing his *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), which was meant to be a satirizing account of the religious hardliners. As John Richetti explains: “Defoe intended his pamphlet as ironic mimicry of High Church polemics, a satiric exercise in which his rendition of the incendiary rhetoric of the conservative clerical antagonists of the dissenters such as the notorious Anglican firebrands, Dr. Henry Sacheverell and Charles Leslie, was meant to reveal its untenable extremism” (*Life of Daniel Defoe* 27).

a ‘thorough-pac’d true-bred Hypocrite, and High-Church-Man one Day, and Rank Whig the next’” (qtd. in *Life of Daniel Defoe* 126). Despite depictions of rigid party boundaries, however, both Harley and Godolphin were administrators who encouraged “moderation” within parliament as they each tried to assemble a “bipartisan government” (*Life of Daniel Defoe* 78). And according to John Brewer, these two men “were determined to minimize the impact of party strife on an administration whose resources were fully stretched in the struggle with Louis XIV” (74).

The need for bipartisan cooperation was urgent, and the obliging Defoe, in support of this objective, reflected this sense of urgency in his entries. In the midst of the especially heated election of 1710, Defoe writes of this as “the most Critical Time” (7.60 [1710]: 293) and of the crucial need for bipartisan cooperation. Although the “Government has made Alterations, the Queen...Changing Hands of the Administration” (7.60 [1710]: 293), which essentially handed control back to Harley after dismissing Godolphin, Defoe urges: “God forbid any Whigg should be found, that would not join with them, *because he did not like the Men*” (7.61 [1710]: 299). Defoe implores the Whigs:

I should be very sorry, to see a Tory Administration; ... — But were it to be so, if it must come to that hard Choice, I had rather see all this, than *France* Triumphant, the Queen Dethron’d, the Pretender Establish’d, and Popery Erected — I had rather the Queen...should TYRANNIZE over us, than the *Pretender* — I had rather a Tory Government, than a *French* Government... — In short, we have but one Interest, as *English Men*, whatever Interest we may have, as Party Men — ...yet when it comes to this, *England* or *France*,

the *Queen* or the *Pretender*, the Church of *England* or the Church of *Rome* —

The case quite alters, and the Choice is easie to an Honest Man.

(7.61 [1710]: 298)

With equal ardor, Defoe appeals to the Tories: “the *Whiggs* have as great a Share in the publick Vessel, the Government, as any Body has; they are Embark’d in the same Ship (the Nation) with you all — ...the Ship must be Sailed, the Voyage must be perform’d, *or else* all is lost — When she Springs a Leak, every Man’s Life is in equal Danger; the Sea if it comes in will Devour all alike” (7.61 [1710]: 299).

Defoe’s resolve is clear: “The Thing is plain, we are all in a Bottom; tho’ I don’t like the Crew, I won’t sink the Ship; tho’ I think I am Wrong’d, or Injur’d, I’ll rather be Oppress’d, than have all Drowned; I’ll do my best to save the Ship; I’ll Pump and Heave, and Haul, and do anything I can, tho’ he that pulls with me were my Enemy” (7.61 [1710]: 300). Rational appeals, however, are not always effective, and so Defoe looks to his Lady Credit. As O’Brien recognizes, Defoe creates such a seductive figure in Lady Credit that “any man can imagine himself her lover” (617). Indeed, “as Lady Credit, imagined as a young, virginal woman, [who] symbolizes values on ‘the Exchange,’ ...[she] thereby engages masculine loyalties that run far deeper than partisan identifications” (617). In an effort to bridge partisan interests, therefore, Defoe’s Lady Credit mobilizes a whore’s stratagem.

A Whore's Stratagem

*To come at a direct and clear Understanding of the Thing,
the best Method will be to describe its Operations, rather than define its Nature:
to show how it Acts rather than how it Exists,
and what it does, rather than what it is.
— Daniel Defoe, An Essay Upon Publick Credit*

In early installments of the *Review*, Defoe certainly attempts to offer an understanding of credit by defining “its Nature” and expanding upon “what it is.” But as we have already seen, descriptions of Lady Credit’s ethereal nature, however, do not necessarily offer better insight into “this extensive Thing call’d CREDIT” (6.31 [1709]: 168).⁷⁹ Defoe quickly turns to examining credit’s function, however, expounding upon how she “Operat[es]...Acts...and what it does” specifically. Indeed, as Defoe seems to suggest, Lady

⁷⁹ Described as having “a distinct Essence (*if nothing can be said to exist*) from all the Phaenomena in Nature,” this “substantial Non-Entity,” Defoe assures his readers, is a “perfect free Agent acting by Wheels and Springs absolutely undiscover’d” (6.31 [1709]: 168). Elaborating on credit’s qualities, Defoe writes:

it is in it self the lightest and most volatile Body in the World, moveable beyond the Swiftness of Lightning; the greatest Alchymists could never fix its Mercury, or find out its Quality; it is neither a Soul or a Body; it is neither visible or invisible; it is all Consequence, and yet not the Effect of a Cause; it is a Being without Matter, a Substance without Form. (6.31 [1709]: 168)

Interestingly, in a separate publication dedicated to examining the qualities and importance of credit, Defoe describes credit as: “*Like the Soul* in the Body, it acts all Substance, yet is it self Immaterial; it gives Motion, yet it self cannot be said to Exist; it creates *Forms*, yet has it self *no Form*; it is neither Quantity or Quality; it has no *Whereness*, or *Whenness*, *Scite*, or *Habit*” (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 51).

Credit's sexual status as either a "Virgin" or a "Whore" (*Eleven Opinions* 41) appears to matter less than what this female figure can *do*.⁸⁰ Of significance is what Lady Credit's illicit activities allow tradesmen, politicians, monarchs, and parliaments to accomplish. By her "strange Qualities," Defoe insists, "all our War and all our Trade is supported" (6.31 [1709]: 169). Lady Credit's value, therefore, emerges from how she serves and supplies "all her Friends and Followers" (6.32 [1709]: 176). After all, Lady Credit is a "publick" figure who "dwells in the Exchequer" (7.58 [1710]: 284) and who, "chiefly delighting in Business, apply'd her self to that part of the World, which is concern'd in Trade, Commerce, Merchandizing, and Manufacturing" (7.57 [1710]: 279). Importantly, she is not her cousin, Reputation, although they are alike.⁸¹ While Reputation maintains her worth by safeguarding her private virtue, Credit must demonstrate her value by "appl[ying] herself to publick

⁸⁰ Of course, this is not to suggest that such sexual labels did not matter at all to Defoe or his contemporaries, for such terms certainly held significance. I only mean to suggest that looking beyond labels can reveal much more about what Defoe thought about Lady Credit's specific role on the financial scene.

⁸¹ While critics like Latta have tried to equate Credit with Reputation, following Craig Muldrew's assessment of "[c]redit as a currency of reputation" (Muldrew 7), Defoe makes clear the distinction between the two cousins. Although Defoe acknowledges that both Credit and Reputation were "not [different] in the Nature of the Thing," they were, however, "adapted to two very different kind[s] of appearances in the World, [and] different in manner" (7.55 [1710]: 272). Indeed, the purpose and environment of each has significant consequences not only for the behaviour of each, but also for its value and utility. Latta's use of Muldrew's claims seems misplaced because his study focuses on a much earlier market economy. As Muldrew admits, "while the economy of early modern England" relied on "[c]redit as a currency of reputation...the means by which...[\"individual demonstrations of trust\"] became harder to maintain" and that "[s]ocial structures eventually changed over time to become more bureaucratic, abstract, calculable and utilitarian...[with] this process...[beginning] in the eighteenth century" (7). See Latta's "The Mistress of the Marriage Market: Gender and Economic Ideology in Defoe's *Review*" and Muldrew's *The Economy of Obligation*.

Affairs” (7.55 [1710]: 273), serving and supplying the men who use her. In other words, Lady Credit’s virtue — ironically — emerges from her desire and capacity to satisfy such men.

Undoubtedly, Defoe more than hints at Lady Credit’s sexual availability. Defoe relays how Lady Credit, “always Smiling and Pleased, Gay and in Humour...walk[s]...daily between the Bank and the Exchequer, and between the Exchange and the Treasury,” venturing out “always Unveil’d” (7.58 [1710]: 285). To Defoe, Lady Credit is “perfectly easy, unconstrain’d and free” (6.32 [1710]: 177) to consort with various men. She is happy to “stand...at his door” — he who is honourable and “pays punctually” — “court[ing]...he [who] shall have her Favour,” leaving herself open to serve him “whether he will use her or no” (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 54). Without question, if we find ourselves in Lady Credit’s favour, then she is “openly dispens’d to us” (7.58 [1710]: 285).

It is incumbent upon us to acknowledge, however, that while Lady Credit may play the “Whore,” she is in no way a “meer Common Strumpet” (*Eleven Opinions* 41). While Lady Credit is willing to “Sociate with the meanest Shopkeeper, Country Wooll-Comber, or petty Chapmen,” it is “to Encourage good Husbandry, Diligence, and Industry, for the general Improvement of Mankind” (7.57 [1710]: 279). And if a tradesman is willing “to Maintain her good Opinion,” “[s]he’ll support him, she’ll carry him through the World upon her Shoulders — When he walks, she leads him; when he sleeps, she awakes for him, and when he swims, she holds him by the Chin” (7.57 [1710]: 279). Although Lady Credit is “the strangest, coy, humorsome Thing that ever was heard of” who “made all the World court her, Jilted them all in their turn, and indeed was never constant to any of her Lovers” (8.38 [1711]: 196), “all the Money-Business in the Nation, is done in her Name” (7.58 [1710]: 285)

and she holds the ability to “suppl[y] the Room of Stock” (6.33 [1709]: 182) where there is none.

For Defoe, Lady Credit is unlike any common prostitute. Firstly, her very value and efficacy in the marketplace depend on her “vigorous Circulation” (6.33 [1709]: 183) and her continual and “Infinite” (6.33 [1709]: 182) “Motion” (6.33 [1709]: 181) among men — that is, Lady Credit is valued and effective because of her sexual mobility. If she were to come to a “Stagnation” (6.33 [1709]: 181) “where the circulating Credit is least,” then “dead Credit prevails” (6.33 [1709]: 182). Secondly, because Lady Credit must sustain her “rolling on” (6.33 [1709]: 181) through the various “Hands” (6.33 [1709]: 181) of her multiple lovers, she is crucially not “the sole property” of any one man, “singly intail’d upon his Family or his name” (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 55). And neither is she “dependent upon Persons, Parliaments, or any particular Men, or Sett of men” (53). In other words, Lady Credit must accommodate a multitude of suitors. Lastly, Lady Credit must have the capacity to serve multiple partners *all at the same time*. Indeed, not only must Lady Credit circulate and pass through a chain of transactions — from the “Merchant” to the “Rope-makers, Twine-makers, Ship-wrights, Anchor-smiths, etc” (6.33 [1709]: 181) — but crucially her engagements must be *synchronous* in that she must be present at the same time “in the Offices of every Fund” and “shew...her Face at every Call, and her Image...stamp’d upon every Fund” (7.58 [1710]: 284) so that there can be “Trade upon the credit of one another” (6.33 [1709]: 181), each using her simultaneously. Chiefly, Lady Credit’s capaciousness in her ability to serve and supply *multiple partners concurrently* is vital to the “Life of...[British] Commerce, and the

Foundation of its prodigious Extent” (6.33 [1709]: 180).⁸² This ability to circulate and engage with multiple partners concurrently (as opposed to consecutively) — a strategy I call a whore’s stratagem — is precisely that which makes Defoe’s Lady Credit an “unvaluable Treasure” (7.117 [1710]: 533). To abuse “a Lady of such Quality” (7.58 [1710]: 286), as the Whigs who “have endeavour’d to *Starve her*, and the *Tories to Ravish her*” (7.102 [1710]: 470), is to destroy the nation. It bears repeating that Defoe’s Lady Credit is no commonplace “Whore.”

While most prostitutes and their bawds often duped “poor Hunters after Maiden-heads,” as we saw in *The London Jilt*, even “los[ing] [their virginity] several times” until, as Cornelia says, “the Orifice became too large” (74) so that they had to settle on a decreased market price, Defoe’s Lady Credit stands in stark contrast to such women. Instead, her whore’s stratagem reverses this scheme so that Lady Credit’s value ironically increases the more she is used by various men.⁸³ Where Cornelia’s market value may drop the more she circulates, Lady Credit’s worth only increases the more she is exchanged.

To be clear, in arguing for the virtues of what I call Lady Credit’s whore’s stratagem, I do not mean to claim that Defoe is redeeming the figure of the prostitute — to which, indeed, his later, longer explorations of characters like Moll Flanders and Roxana will attest. And certainly, I do not intend to suggest that Defoe encouraged real women to adopt a

⁸² While Sherman comments on Lady Credit’s “multivalent inclinations” (“Lady Credit No Lady” 197), Sherman applies the term to Lady Credit’s numerous sexual partners. Sherman does not recognize that Lady Credit services such partners concurrently.

⁸³ Interestingly, a passage in *The London Bawd* that details a bawd’s schemes echoes Defoe’s description of Lady Credit’s elusiveness: “She’s a great Preserver of Maiden-heads; for tho’ she exposes ‘em to every new Comer, she takes care they shall never be lost; and tho’ never so many get it, yet non carries it away, but she still has it ready for the next Customer” (*The London Bawd* 4).

whore's stratagem for themselves. After all, Lady Credit is an allegory. Sherman rightly stresses that Lady Credit is "not ostensibly conceived as a red-blooded Moll or Roxana" who are more "fully fleshed" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 186) female characters. Cornelia, Moll, and Roxana experience aging, fall pregnant, give birth, contract diseases, suffer through physical and sexual violence, and face death. Undeniably, these life events impose tremendous biological costs on these whore figures, as well as their children, and ultimately dictate how these women progress in their respective novels. Roxana, for example, is eager to transform "from a Lady of Pleasure, [into] a Woman of Business" so that she can gain independence from men, into an "expert...She-Merchant" who "manag[es]...Business" herself, with plenty of her own "Credit in the Bank" (*Roxana* 155). As well, Cornelia and Moll ultimately aim for long-term security via the men with whom they engage, while being open to opportunistic short-term sexual encounters at the same time. Defoe's Lady Credit, however, does not suffer these costs in the same way as these other fictional women do. And yet, even while Lady Credit may not be as physiologically vulnerable as these other heroines, Defoe's specific conceptualization of Lady Credit as a female figure directs her to the same evolved sexual algorithms to which real women or more well-developed fictional women are subject.⁸⁴ That is, the horrors of being misused and debased, raped, thrown aside, and neglected are also Lady Credit's greatest fears. Therefore, despite Lady Credit's status as an

⁸⁴ Much like how modern technologies of birth control, more reliable prophylactics, safer abortion procedures, access to medical treatments for many sexually transmitted diseases, and other current tools of prevention have freed many women and men from the costly consequences of sexual intercourse, Lady Credit's allegorical nature frees her from reproductive and parental costs. However, our evolved psychological mechanisms are robust and still have great influence over our sexual preferences and behaviours. See, for example, David Buss's *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*.

allegory who does not endure the same corporeal costs, Defoe creates a female figure who behaves as guardedly and as sexually risk-averse as if she might, unsure of those suitors who seek to put her to use. In other words, despite her non-biological body, Lady Credit's risk-aversiveness results as if she were "fully fleshed." Hence, Lady Credit is only really interested in long-term security and devotion from investors. Even while her relationships are never exclusive, but rather necessarily multivalent and simultaneous (as her suitors would prefer), purely transient interactions are insupportable to her. Importantly, this is a key difference in how Lady Credit plays the whore. Lady Credit's polyandrous arrangement flourishes because she is not loaded down in the same way by reproductive investments and bodily costs as those in the whoring trade. And yet, this risk-averse Lady Credit is only willing to partake in such an arrangement if her suitors demonstrate their willingness to commit and invest in her.

For critics like Sherman, O'Brien, Brown, and Ami Hicken King, Roxana is a natural comparison to Lady Credit, as they claim that Roxana is a "redeploy[ment]" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 200) of Defoe's earlier female figure, heir to Lady Credit's wayward sexual legacy.⁸⁵ After all, they are both prostitutes. However, if we focus on the sexual conduct of both characters, we will see that while their behaviour might be similar, their strategies are importantly different because the *purpose* for which Lady Credit was created is very particular. Here, Roxana's question to herself is illuminating: "What am I a Whore for now?" (*Roxana* 218). Where Roxana engages in illicit sex initially for survival — then for security, self-promotion, and profit, even to the sacrifice of her own daughter's life — Lady Credit engages herself in homosocial exchanges, playing the whore, essentially, circulating in

⁸⁵ See Sherman's "Lady Credit No Lady"; O'Brien's "The Character of Credit"; Brown's *Ends of Empire*; and King's *Daniel Defoe's Erotic Economics*.

the market for the purpose of initiating bipartisan cooperation.⁸⁶ While security is a prerequisite for Lady Credit to stay, she does not engage men as Roxana does in order to be secure or for the purpose of self-promotion and profit.

For Defoe, a significant aspect of Lady Credit's "Quality," of course, is her ability to accentuate her sexual availability for the purpose of recruiting male interest in her well-being. Defoe's sexualized embodiment of credit intentionally plays upon the "monied interest[s]" (*Virtue, Commerce, and History* 48) of Whigs, the "landed interest[s]" of Tories, and the "trading interest[s]" (183) of the whole nation. Defoe's Lady Credit, then, personifies the yoking together of men's financial interests with their sexual interest — an integration of finance and sex that is very different from that exemplified by Defoe's other heroines Moll and Roxana. While Moll and Roxana certainly generate male sexual interest, their financial interests are purely one-sided and self-interested. Lady Credit, on the other hand, seeks to generate interest — sexual and financial — *in those she serves*. But in doing so, Defoe also capitalizes on Lady Credit's masculinizing influence on tradesmen, which stems from her desires for the kinds of suitors she favours. That is, because Lady Credit demands a particular kind of man, because she stipulates the type of suitor she finds desirable, she ends up prescribing, to a degree, a class of masculine behaviour. As Defoe makes clear:

⁸⁶ Again, Hrdy's argument in *Mother Nature* reveals much about Roxana's maternal behaviour: "Real-life" mothers were just as much strategic planners and decision-makers, opportunists and deal-makers, manipulators and allies as they were nurturers. The compromises mothers made and the tactics they employed were everywhere contingent on circumstances rather than being automatic, and might or might not result in nurturing behavior. (29)

If she lights of a Young Man full of Application, sober, sensible, and honest,
that lays his Bones to his Work, and his Head to his Business; that doats upon
his Shop, that has his Heart behind his Counter, whose Mistress is his
Counting House, and his Pleasure is in his Ledger — She'll set him up
without a Stock, marry him without a Portion. (7.57 [1710]: 279)

Indeed, “she will keep Company with none but the Industrious, the Honest, the Laborious, and such, whose Genius, and the Bent of their Lives, tends to Maintain her good Opinion” (7.57 [1710]: 279). As early as his *Review*, then, Defoe was already defining a brand of masculinity — a breed of manliness — that stood in contrast to the effeminate Whiggish fop and the rapacious Tory rake.⁸⁷

Lady Credit's masculinizing effect was, perhaps, especially appealing to early eighteenth-century men because of what many contemporaries observed as the problematic popularity of an effeminate lifestyle due to an increasingly feminized marketplace. As

⁸⁷ As Carolyn Williams makes clear, the eighteenth-century defined effeminacy as an “excessive attachment to women”: “Thus ‘effeminate’ may describe a man who resembles women, or who desires women. It may mean both at once: the use of *effeminacy* to denote both deficient masculinity and excessive heterosexual activity fosters a tendency to connect these phenomena” (qtd. in Clery 9).

See also Stephen H. Gregg's *Defoe's Writings and Manliness*, where Gregg explores in detail Defoe's conceptualization of masculinity and manliness. Gregg's argument, however, focuses on Defoe's definition of masculinity and manliness as arising from a direct comparison with the effeminate fop. Defoe's men, that is, arrive at masculinity by way of comparing themselves with other men who are most certainly not “manly”: “the tradesman who indulges his desires for outward show is aligned with the effeminate fop; the prudent tradesman, in contrast, is implicitly ‘complete’ and manly” (25).

In my analysis here, manliness is, instead, prescribed by the desires of a particular woman, Lady Credit, whose sexual nature necessarily makes available the issue of female desires in the evolution of masculinity and manliness.

Pocock writes, the eighteenth-century man “was seen as on the whole a feminised, even an effeminate being, still wrestling with his own passions and hysterias and with interior and exterior forces let loose by his fantasies and appetites” (*Virtue, Commerce, and History* 114).⁸⁸ Indeed, Defoe notes the luxurious tastes and extravagant spending habits of the “Effeminate Nation” (1.1 [1704]: 7) of France, with their “Dressing, ... Powdring, ... *Beau Monde*, and ... Impertinence ... all among the Men” (7.19 [1710]: 94). Defoe laments that English gentlemen have become weak as a result of their “effeminacy, ... toupee wigs, and powdered pates, ... tea, and other scandalous fopperies; and, above all, the disuse of noble and manly sports, so necessary to a brave people, once in vogue, but now totally lost among us” (*Augusta Triumphans* 36). Not until 1726 does Defoe publish *The Complete English Tradesman* and advise business-minded men— post-South Sea bubble, it should be noted — to be tolerant and accommodating of the effeminate attitudes and desires of their male and female clients in order to keep the nation’s economy afloat.⁸⁹ Because Lady Credit has the ability to counteract the feminizing influence of the marketplace, Lady Credit validates men’s participation within it — legitimizing men’s involvement by authorizing a mode of manly conduct. In this way, Lady Credit also makes available her transformative powers — those which allow her both to elevate the poor, but diligent, tradesman to riches and to restore a whore’s virtue, as Lady Credit, I have argued, does also for herself. As we will see, however, such powers reach even further into the very centre of how men would connect with one another.

⁸⁸ See also Barker-Benfield’s *Culture of Sensibility*; Brown’s *Ends of Empire* and *Fables of Modernity*; and E.J. Clery’s *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England*.

⁸⁹ My next chapter will explore the South Sea Bubble in more detail.

Homosocial Cooperation

Using the whore's stratagem, circulating and serving multiple partners synchronously, Lady Credit certainly facilitates a degree of cooperation between those men who use her. And perhaps to Defoe, this effect is more urgently needed for the purposes of his *Review* given, at the time, the "Violence of Parties, and the Ferment of the whole Nation" (3.1 [1706]: 7). For "the Trade of the Nation" (7.118 [1710]: 535) to survive, "Every Man has a Concern" (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 51) in each others' use, misuse, and abuse of Lady Credit: for "he that takes Credit, *gives it*; he that boldly runs into other Mens Debt lets other Men boldly run into his" (6.33 [1709]: 181). In this way, Lady Credit promotes homosocial bonds between all such men who *engage each other by way of their engagement with her*, relying on her "Capacity" (7.57 [1710]: 280) and ability to "generate...by [such] innumerable Mixtures" (6.33 [1709]: 181).

The concept of homosociality — defined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a "neologism" "used in history and the social sciences" to describe "social bonds between persons of the same sex" (1) — has led scholars like Sedgwick herself to reinscribe such bonding "back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic" and "hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual" (1), which often recruits a mediating woman as part of men's homosocial negotiations. I, however, refrain from making such a claim here regarding Defoe's Lady Credit. While Sedgwick may argue that male homosocial desire, as negotiated via women in a kind of *ménage à trois* arrangement, is located in the *object of the other male partner*, Defoe's homosocial arrangement via Lady Credit locates desire, it seems to me, in the *outcome of such male alliances* — namely, mutual financial or political profit. For Defoe, therefore, homosocial cooperation is not about a homosexual

desire for the opposing male partner. Rather, such cooperation is about the mutual economic benefit of homosocial alliances. As Defoe says: “Your own launching out in Trade upon the Credit of one another, is the full and fair Foundation of raising your *Trade*” (6.33 [1709]: 181). To not utilize Lady Credit, one not only does not benefit from the homosocial alliances made through this obliging courtesan, but one risks losing any alliances one had, for “neither Friends will value you, Enemies fear you, or any Body regard you — Without this Lady’s happy Assistance...your Allies will forsake you, your Armies won’t Fight for you, nor your Enemies talk with you” (7.58 [1710]: 287). Indeed, “She made Nations Confederate with us” (7.58 [1710]: 285). Lady Credit is a global agent who has the power to “sen[d] in a great many of her Favourites...with their ready Money, sufficient to anticipate all the publick Taxes, and supply all the publick Occasions; some...from *Holland*,...some from *Hambro*’, some yet farther” (6.32 [1709]: 175). From individual tradesmen and politicians to parties of men to whole nations, they “are all concern’d” (7.118 [1710]: 536) with Lady Credit and implicated in her “endless *Circulation*” (7.118 [1710]: 535). And because of “their...Connection, and Dependance” upon one another, because “they ever Influence one another,” their fates are bound to “rise and fall together” (7.118 [1710]: 535). What critics like Sherman miss in their analyses of Defoe’s Lady Credit is that while she may be a whore, it is precisely the *capacity* “of this mighty Thing” (7.55 [1710]: 271) to satisfy and sustain *multiple men at the same time* that Lady Credit is valued as an “Angel” (6.32 [1709]: 175). In other words, it is precisely her willingness to play the “Whore” that she is valued a “Lady.”

Indeed, in creating such an agent for homosocial cooperation, Defoe seems to observe a change in the nature of economic relationships, akin to what Carruthers argues in *City of*

Capital. In his book, Carruthers makes the claim that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century saw a shift in sovereign debtor-creditor relations. Short-term, private, *bilateral* loans between individual “sovereign debtors — the kings, rulers, states, and governments” (4) — and independently wealthy “sovereign creditors” (4) began phasing into loans that were more long-term and publicly spread out. This now *multilateral* network of borrowing established the National Debt and found footing in newly established joint stock companies like the Bank of England, Royal Africa Company, and the South Sea Company.⁹⁰ The establishment of the National Debt and Bank of England, Carruthers reminds us, permitted parliament to extend its influence over increasingly strained bilateral debtor-creditor relations between the monarchy and private creditors, reflecting the immensely strained relations of bilateral debts more generally. With debt now being more diversified amongst a network of lenders from more varied social backgrounds — including widows and unmarried women — social relations between those within the credit system needed to be reconsidered.⁹¹ As Craig Muldrew states, there was a “complexity of these chains of literally

⁹⁰ Although Carruthers uses the specific terms “bilateral” and “multilateral” in a different context in *City of Capital* — namely, in his discussion of England’s political negotiations with France (46) as orchestrated by Harley — the editors of *Whom Can We Trust?* apply these terms in summarizing Carruthers’s chapter in their volume, “Trust and Credit.” See Karen Cook et al.’s “Introduction” page 10. *Bilateral* and *multilateral*, I believe, are very useful ways to think about the kinds of changes in economic exchanges happening during this time. They also align well with my claim about how Defoe perhaps shifts ways of thinking about women’s sexual alliances — as not necessarily bilateral and committed to one single partner as in marriage, but in the case of the “Whore” Lady Credit, a multilateral arrangement that benefits (and possibly exploits) all parties.

⁹¹ For more on the types of people who invested in stock companies, see Dickson’s *The Financial Revolution in England*; Helen J. Paul’s *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences*; Anne Laurence’s “The Emergence of a Private Clientele for Banks in the Early Eighteenth Century: Hoare’s Bank and Some Women Customers”; and Ann M. Carlos et al.’s

hundreds of thousands of intertwined and interconnected credit relationships” (3).

Furthermore, “the cumulative unity of the millions of interpersonal obligations...were continually being exchanged and renegotiated” (123). And according to such economic historians, including John Brewer, “the interlocking character of credit networks and the consequent interdependence of creditors made...[traders] likely to suffer for the economic misfortunes of others” (188). As Brewer explains further:

As more and more people were enmeshed in the web of credit and as markets grew in tentacular fashion, linking British provinces both with one another and with distant climes, so Englishmen increasingly perceived themselves as individually more and more affected by the circumstances which influenced national business confidence. Though the economy was not yet fully integrated, and though there were still those who might be relatively immune from the changing fortunes of specific trades and markets, economic interdependence was such that seismic disturbance in one part of the economy frequently produced eruptions elsewhere. (188-189)

In fashioning his Lady Credit as a kind of sexual go-between who is able to stimulate this new mode of social and economic exchange, Defoe observes this kind of shift in economic dealings — from bilateral to multilateral — and sanctions his Lady Credit as an intermediary who has the capacity to facilitate the plexus of such interactions. Indeed, this economic move to more multilateral transactions is certainly mirrored in Lady Credit’s own behaviour, with her capacious quality giving her the ability to accommodate and satisfy men multilaterally *and* all at once. As economic enterprises became necessarily more extensive

“Financial Acumen, Women Speculators, and the Royal African Company during the South Sea Bubble.”

and inclusive in this way, bipartisan cooperation was imperative. So important was this issue that, in Defoe's *The Complete English Tradesman* — again, an advice book published thirteen years after the last *Review* entry — we see Defoe continuing to push for “cooperation above competition” (Muldrew 156).

To be sure, Defoe could not overemphasize the importance of bipartisan, homosocial cooperation: “Such is the Iniquity of the Times, that Men will not be brought to join Hands in Things Universally necessary, because they differ in Things of less Moment” (7.119 [1710]: 538). Repeatedly, Defoe calls on the nation to “*all join Hands*” and “*use their joint help*” as “the safety of all their Lives” (7.62 [1710]: 301-302) depends upon an alliance: “If you will Fight and Scuffle, if you must jostle Parties, ...you'll certainly overturn the Coach, if you Quarrel now; let us keep steady till the War [with France] is over” (7.62 [1710]: 302). Over and over in his *Review*, Defoe pleads, insisting on the gravity of bipartisan cooperation: “Remember, Gentlemen, the *French* are upon us; call one another Rogue-Whig, and Rogue-Tory — ...But remember the House is on Fire — Credit is, and with it all is at Stake; Work Whig, Work Tory, join in this, if you join in nothing else, keep up Credit that *France* may not break in, for then you are all undone” (7.119 [1710]: 540).

Because of this imperative need for unity, Defoe stands firm on why Lady Credit is no dispensable whore, as she drives “all our publick Transactions” (6.31 [1709]: 169). Homosocial bonds are made possible only by way of this whore's stratagem. Because the nature of economic relationships have become more multilateral and spread out among more people, the commerce of the British nation has become entirely dependent on Lady Credit in order to function and further trade: “Our Credit once broken, as our Circumstances now stand, will not be so much like a Limb Broken, which may be reduc'd again, as like a Man

slain who cannot be restor'd to Life again" (7.48 [1710]: 237). Indeed, the fate of the British nation is bound up in the fate of Lady Credit. This is why Defoe implores: "what Party soever will keep up our Credit, be they *Turk, Jew, Pagan*, or *Presbyterian* whom you hate as bad — To them you must flie, ...for Credit is the Nations Life" (7.54 [1710]: 268-269). At the same time, however, Defoe reassures his readers that "Publick Credit [itself] is a perfect Neuter, Credit is neither *Whig* or *Tory*, *High-Church* or *Low-Church*, *Court-Party* or *Country-Party*, but the common Parent of the Nation's Prosperity, and claims the Homage and Duty of every Subject" (7.119 [1710]: 538). As Robert Markley has remarked, "credit transcends the divisiveness of partisan politics and temporal institutions" (226). The most significant obstacle to such cooperation, however, is the lack of trust between the parties. Mutual trust, Defoe realizes, is key. And it is to his lady and all her immense talents that Defoe, once again, applies.

"A Most Nice Punctual Preserver of Honour"

When the issue of credit is raised, often the issue of trust is implied. As Carruthers has explored, whenever the matter of credit is put forth, the "fundamental issues of uncertainty and vulnerability always appear. The basic elements of trust also happen to be basic elements of credit" ("Trust and Credit" 238). And according to Muldrew's study of credit and financial obligations in early modern England, "[c]ontemporaries often used credit and trust interchangeably" (129). Defoe himself equates the two and advises his readers that if there is no trust between trading partners, then no credit can be granted: if "no Trust was to be plac'd in them, ...by Consequence, no Credit to be given to them" (7.135 [1710]: 604). Given increasing "Party-Malice" (3.1 [1706]: 7) between the Whigs and Tories during the

early eighteenth century, the matter of sustaining credit was further jeopardized due to incredible distrust between the parties. As Defoe warns: “while you Divide, while Jealousies encrease, while you Distrust one another, Credit cannot Revive...Success cannot attend” (7.62 [1710]: 303). Indeed, the dangers of “Party-Quarrels and continual Feuds” (3.1 [1706]: 7), of “Party-fight[s]” (7.62 [1710]: 302) and continued lack of trust between the parties would put the whole nation at risk.

Perhaps, however, as critics like Sherman and Kimberly S. Latta insist, Defoe himself felt that the new credit system was untrustworthy and he did not have full faith in his “allegory,” despite urging his readers to trust in his “Charming Mistress” (7.116 [1710]: 527). Such scholars claim that because Lady Credit behaves more like “Air-Money, with Defoe as Chymist” (*Finance and Fictionality* 46), Lady Credit’s fickle and airy nature throws into contention the matter of trust: Because Lady Credit “embodi[es] the whimsicality of the market, her...’honesty’ is a punning, metaphorical register of the mercurial honesty of marketplace representations — i.e. texts in the market, paper promises written on stock certificates, annuities, the myriad instruments of financial credit” (40-41).⁹² And yet, while

⁹² Sherman maintains that “[Lady] Credit is fluid” and easily “disappears into ‘nothing’” (*Finance and Fictionality* 46). Akin to “congeries of bills, notes, stocks, annuities, reports on the National Debt” (1), Lady Credit is, to Sherman, forever “hovering in epistemological limbo” (47) and “floating beyond apprehension” (1). McKeon would agree with Sherman, observing that Lady Credit’s “highly consequential actuality is grounded in an insubstantial virtuality” (*Secret History of Domesticity* 444).

Exploring what she argues as Defoe’s gendered economic ideology — where Defoe’s conceptualization of the new economic system took on the architecture of an existing gender ideology — Latta claims that “[h]uman beings contracted and exchanged with one another based on trust, on their knowledge not just of the solvency but also the honor, or credit, of one another” (361). But because for Latta new systems of finance took on the structures of, specifically, women’s sexual delicacy and instability, credit itself became suspect because it was linked to women’s suspect sexual

critics may rightly question Lady Credit's substance and surefootedness given their position regarding her "Air-Money" nature, they perhaps exaggerate their claims that Lady Credit is, therefore, untrustworthy and that, ultimately, Defoe himself thought her unreliable. Indeed, Defoe makes clear that Lady Credit is a different kind of species compared to "Stocks," "Annuities, Tickets and Tallies," and "Lotteries" (8.60 [1711]: 290):

...will you call this Credit? Is the National Substance, on which your Estates are built, made up of this sort of Stuff? NO, NO, God forbid, for by the same Rule you may be blown up and blown down, till you are blown to...Old *Harry*, with every puff of *Exchange-Alley* Wind.

Credit is quite another Thing than this.... ...To call these Things Credit, is abusing Credit and our selves too; it is only calling a Whore by an Honest Woman's Name — These are no more Credit, that the Shell is the Kernel.... (8.60 [1711]: 290-291)

Defoe assures his readers that "Credit...is real — [while] all the rest is Whymisie, Apprehension, and meer Imagination, and is the Fruit of the Folly and Madness of the Times" (8.60 [1711]: 289). While we may be suspicious of Defoe's persistence, Lady Credit herself need not fall under suspicion. Although, as Defoe explains, Lady Credit may "not [be] the Sun" in her concreteness — like gold or Lady Credit's sister, Money — she is certainly "the *Sun-shine*" (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 53), whose force and impact need not become suspect or questionable because of her ethereal quality.

Lady Credit may shift allegiances, but this does not necessarily mean she is untrustworthy. She may leave many of her suitors and followers in the lurch, but this does

deportment. In the end, the unwillingness of such critics to trust Lady Credit undergirds their arguments.

not mean she is deceitful or undependable. Certainly, as McKeon admits: “Lady Credit has both ‘Jilted’ and ‘been jilted’; and if she ‘indeed was never constant to any of her Lovers,’ this is testimony to the magnitude of the stakes involved and not simply to her female fickleness” (*Secret History of Domesticity* 442). In addition to this, I would highlight that despite her *seeming* “fickleness,” it is because of the resoluteness of Lady Credit’s self-interest that she actually proves herself trustworthy. She may not be loyal to any one person or single party, but she is devoted to herself: “she was not so much a Votary to Statesmen, to despair upon every Change; That she could live with one Ministry as well as another, one Parliament as well as another, and with every one of these, while they preserv’d the Honour of a punctual Management of Affairs” (7.135 [1710]: 603). Indeed, her only interest is that she “dwell in Peace, ...be guarded by Property, defended by Law, and supported by Safety” (7.135 [1710]: 602-603). In fact, because she is willing to abandon environments that have become hostile to her or that endanger her well-being, Lady Credit assures us of her constancy and dedication to herself and her own value. After all, it is more important for her to be secure than for her to blindly follow those who, though at one time were her friends, would now exploit and abuse her. As Defoe advises:

Credit is too wary, too Coy a Lady to stay with any People upon such mean Conditions; if you will Entertain this Virgin, you must Act upon the nicest Principles of Honour and Justice; you must preserve Sacred all the Foundations, and build regular Structures upon them; you must answer all Demands, with a respect to the Solemnity, and Value of the Engagements; with respect to Justice, and Honour, and without any respect to Parties — If

this is not observ'd, Credit will not come; No, tho' the Queen should call; tho'
the Parliament shou'd call, or tho' the whole Nation should call.

(7.116 [1710]: 529-530)

Ultimately, Lady Credit's main allegiance is to herself. Moreover, Defoe's Lady Credit is vigilant about safeguarding her own interests. When Defoe has Lady Credit herself speak for the first time in his *Review*, she gives voice to her concerns and informs Defoe of her decision to leave England "to go directly for *France*" (7.134 [1710]: 599):

...why, What should I do here? I have staid too long here already; you know how I have been us'd, how I have been Mob'd on one Side, and Mob'd on t'other Side; Bully'd and Insulted by Parties and Factions, and yet I have born it all with more Patience than I used to bear such Treatment with; I have, in short, stay'd till I am quite Ruin'd; I have neither Money nor Trade, or Fund, to Act upon; and if I had, till you are better Friends with one another here, I can have no Satisfaction among you, and therefore I am just a going to take Shipping for another Country.... (7.134 [1710]: 598-599)⁹³

Importantly, unlike many other prostitutes, this "Incomparable Lady" (7.117 [1710]: 531) cannot be bought, for "no Funds will fetch her, large Interest won't tempt her, vast Masses of

⁹³ More than the abuses Lady Credit has suffered thus far, she forecasts that because of party-strife and lack of bipartisan cooperation, she will always remain "Poor Credit" (7.134 [1710]: 598) with no future in a country that does not protect her. Defoe furthers her point: "If the Parliament, or if the Government will restore Credit, they must Establish and Confirm Peace among us, I mean Party-Peace; Peace at Home, Neighbourhood, Confidence in one another, and quiet among one another; in Peace alone dwells Safety, in Safety Satisfaction, in Satisfaction Credit — No Peace, no Credit" (7.102 [1710]: 472). Without any such assurances, Defoe warns his readers, Lady Credit will "slip from you...and you'll be undone from that Moment" (6.31 [1709]: 170).

Money will not allure her” (7.58 [1710]: 287). So “[l]et no Man therefore, or Party of Men, flatter themselves, that they can either force her to stay, or fetch her back, if she be gone” (7.58 [1710]: 287).

So staunchly protective is Lady Credit that, in fact, her behaviour is risk-averse. This might be a bold statement to make given my claim that Lady Credit is playing a “Whore” — that in assuming a whore’s stratagem, Lady Credit would necessarily be taking great risks.⁹⁴ However, she prudently assesses her suitors, constantly scrutinizing their probity. As Defoe explains:

If a Tradesman neglect his Shop, a Handicraft grows idle, runs to the Alehouse; if a Dealer turns Sot, or a Gentleman Debauch’d — She’s gone, away she flies, they are sure to be forsaken of her Company, they may go on by meer Strength of Stock, and upon the help she formerly afforded them — But they must expect no more Assistance from her, till they take up, turn over a new Leaf, and reform the Crime. (7.57 [1710]: 279)

Defoe further reminds us that “Credit and Honour were inseparable; if they were not really Incorporated, they were born, and must die together, nor could they ever live asunder” (7.135 [1710]: 603).

⁹⁴ Interestingly, many critics like Susan L. Jacobsen and Jesse Molesworth have claimed the nature of a prostitute’s business requires such women to be more amenable to risk-taking ventures. In their explorations of Roxana’s behaviour, Jacobsen and Molesworth assume that Roxana’s work as a prostitute necessarily means that she is a risk-taker. However, just as Lady Credit is careful with the kinds of risks she takes on, so too is Roxana careful with the men with whom she engages. The risk-taking that happens here is not reckless or uninformed. Rather, it is controlled and prudent. Indeed, there is always a risk in engaging in trade, but the risks are not always rash or impetuous. See Jacobsen’s “A Dialogue of Commerce: Defoe’s Roxana as Mistress and Entrepreneur” and Molesworth’s *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*.

In the end, because Lady Credit prioritizes her own well-being and because we understand that she values most her own security, her behaviour is more predictable, more calculable, and therefore, perhaps, more constant and reliable than critics like Sherman would like to think. As McKeon observes, “there is something quite constant in her own desire — a desire for peace and quiet redolent of domestic retirement” (*Secret History of Domesticity* 442). If to “preserve Credit...one Essential is to be taken care of, *Viz.* A punctual, fair Performance of Contract, and Compliance with Appointments...something equivalent to what you call...the Honour of Trade” (6.33 [1709]: 182), if we know that Lady Credit necessitates “Flowing Cash, unquestion’d Funds, punctual Compliances, Faithful, exact Payments, Due Interest, and, which is the Foundation of all, Intrinsick Value” (6.32 [1709]: 177), then we can be quite certain of her course of action if these requirements are not fulfilled. Because Lady Credit is most faithful to herself, and her first concern is always for her own safekeeping, we can be confident in her tenacity to protect herself.

In fact, it is precisely Lady Credit’s primary concern for her own safety, influencing her risk-averse, predictable behaviour that there emerges a solution to the problem of partisan distrust. Put more simply, because Lady Credit is “a most exquisite Director, a punctual Dealer, an exact Accomptant [accountant], and a most nice punctual Preserver of Honour” (7.55 [1710]: 273) and that she, therefore, holds all those who engage her to such standards, Lady Credit is also an emblem of trustworthiness. Just as she safeguards her own interests, she also safeguards the trust we enact through her. Defoe’s Lady Credit comes to stand in for the possibility of that which is absent between the parties — trust — even despite, ironically, the possibility of distrust in the very credit system that she represents.

Trust Without Trust

*If one simple game is to be chosen as an exemplar
of the central problem of the social contract,
what should it be? Many modern thinkers have focused on
the prisoner's dilemma, but I believe that this emphasis is misplaced.
The most appropriate choice is not the prisoner's dilemma,
but rather the stag hunt....*
— Brian Skyrms

In his 2004 book, *The Stag Hunt and the Evolution of Social Structure*, philosopher and game theorist Brian Skyrms relays Jean-Jacques Rousseau's story, as published in his *Discourse on Inequality*, about a stag hunt to highlight problems associated with "mutual Engagements" (Rousseau 105) contracted between members of society: "Was a Deer to be taken? Every one saw that to succeed he must faithfully stand to his Post; but suppose a Hare to have slipt by within reach of any one of them, it is not to be doubted but he pursued it without scruple, and when he had seized his Prey never reproached himself with having made his Companions miss theirs" (Rousseau 105).⁹⁵ While Rousseau's narrative illustrates

⁹⁵ Skyrms also notes that David Hume constructs a similar narrative, however his being "a two-person stag hunt game":

"Two men who pull at the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, tho' they have never given promises to each other." Both men can either row or not row. If both row, they get the outcome that is best for each — just as, in Rousseau's example, when both hunt the stag. If one decides not to row, then it makes no difference if the other does or does not — they don't get anywhere. The worst outcome for you is if you row and the other doesn't, for then you lose your effort for nothing, just as the worst outcome for you in the stag hunt is if you hunt stag by yourself. (Skyrms 2)

the power of people's selfish motives, scholars like Skyrms have expanded on this story, devising a game theoretic model that illuminates issues surrounding social dilemmas of cooperation and trust. Skyrms stipulates the conditions of this "interaction that is now generally known as the stag hunt": "Let us suppose that the hunters each have just the choice of hunting hare or hunting deer. The chances of getting a hare are independent of what others do. There is no chance of bagging a deer by oneself, but the chances of a successful deer hunt go up sharply with the number of hunters. A deer is much more valuable than a hare" (1).

According to this game, the greatest payoff to all comes from the communal choice to cooperate. Defection or competition either leads to less benefit or actual loss. Skyrms goes on to explain that if all members of the hunt were to cooperate and wait for the opportune moment for all hunters to surround and capture a deer, then this would necessarily mean that each individual hunter would be making a choice to forgo pursuing the hare that happened to cross the hunters' vicinity. In this way, each hunter would be choosing to cooperate with the other hunters while trusting them each to also "stand to his Post." As well, each hunter would be making the choice to cooperate as a group rather than to default as individuals who pursue hare. Perhaps the hunters are additionally choosing to cooperate as a group who hunt deer as opposed to opting to compete with one another as individuals over a single hare or even to clash as separate groups over the same deer. Furthermore, this game highlights issues surrounding an individual's desire for instant fulfillment (catch a hare) or their ability to delay gratification (wait for a deer). Centrally, however, the stag hunt game underscores that "the viability of cooperation...rests on trust" (Skyrms 2). Because "players are pulled in one direction by considerations of mutual benefit...[and pulled] in the other by

considerations of personal risk” (Skyrms 3), at the heart of the choice to cooperate is the choice of risking whether or not to trust others.

The particular political-economic climate during Defoe’s promotion of his *Lady Credit* in the early decades of the eighteenth century can be viewed as experiencing a kind of stag hunt dilemma regarding the willingness of Whigs and Tories to work together to stabilize and manage their financial structure. As Defoe tried to convince his readers, the greatest benefit to the nation comes from bipartisan cooperation and from all working together to maintain the credit system. To continue to attack *Lady Credit*’s character or the necessity of credit itself, to threaten to abandon *Lady Credit* or to pull one’s money out of the scheme, to threaten to “Spunge” (7.134 [1710]: 600) clean *Lady Credit*’s face or default on debts altogether leads to everyone’s loss of wealth and stability. And yet, without the parties being able to have “Confidence in one another” (7.102 [1710]: 472) and trust that members of the opposing party will also see the venture through, the question remains whether or not such a joint enterprise, like that of the stag hunt, is attainable. After all, as Skyrms admits, while the stag hunt gives us a perspective, a way to think about the dynamics of social engagement, it “does not *solve* the problem of cooperation” (9) or lack of trust, for that matter. So, can there be cooperation without trust?

Sociologist Karen S. Cook and her political science colleagues Russell Hardin and Margaret Levi ask that exact question in their book titled *Cooperation Without Trust?* which explores the ways in which individuals, social and political groups, corporations, societies, and whole countries can bypass the problem of distrust and still cooperate. While some “social theorists claim that trust is required to produce cooperation on a large scale in order to make societies function productively,” they explain, Cook et al. argue that “given the long-

term change from small communities to mass urban complexes, mere coordination and state regulation have become far more important...[and] *the actual role of trusting relations has declined relatively*” (1). In fact, Cook et al. make the convincing argument that “trust is no longer the central pillar of social order, and it may not even be very important in most of our cooperative exchanges, which we manage quite effectively even in the absence of interpersonal trust” (2).⁹⁶ Instead:

...[w]here risks are high, the relevant knowledge about [another’s] trustworthiness is unobtainable, power is highly unequal, or distrust prevails, we are likely to turn to institutional arrangements and other devices to ensure the reliability of partners in our exchanges and interactions. In these circumstances, it is not trust (or more precisely, belief in the trustworthiness of others) that facilitate cooperation. ...Indeed, we may even know for sure that the other party has interests that conflict with our own. If we cooperate at all in such cases, we do so because we believe our partners have incentives to behave consistently with our interests. ...Incentive compatibility may make our partners reliable but not necessarily trustworthy. (Cook et al. 2-3)

Cook et al. call this particular view of trust the “encapsulated interest model of trust,” in that trust is based on aligned interests: “*we trust you because we think you take our interests to*

⁹⁶ While economic historians like Muldrew and Natasha Glaisyer would certainly agree that when more complex, modern systems of exchange were developed, interpersonal trust and modes of “credit...a currency of reputation” (Muldrew 7) may have become less fundamental, such scholars would highlight that until such modern devices were firmly established, distrust was a significant hindrance to cooperation more generally. See specifically Muldrew’s *The Economy of Obligation* and Glaisyer’s *The Culture of Commerce in England 1660-1720*. See also Niklas Luhmann’s *Trust and Power* and his argument for “system trust.”

heart and encapsulate our interests in your own” (5). And it is by way of aligning our communal interests, coordinating our common incentives, that we can be assured that our partners will cooperate with us even “in the absence of adequate trust, or even in the presence of substantial distrust” (Cook et al. 84).⁹⁷

For Defoe, Lady Credit becomes the “device...for managing and motivating cooperative behaviour” (Cook et al. 84) — she becomes the figure through which the opposing parties can coordinate and collaborate with each other. In this way, Defoe’s characterization of Lady Credit as a “Common Strumpet” takes on the meaning of being a shared resource and as belonging to the collective nation as a “Publick Good” (7.117 [1710]: 532) — that is, a “publick Benefit” to the “Common Interest” (3.6 [1706]: 37). As Defoe clarifies, in “Wounding the Credit, ...it Wounds the Nation, touches private Families, sinks your own Estates, discourages your Allies, revives your Enemies, weakens the Confederacy, and exalts *France*” (7.119 [1710]: 540). Defoe reminds party men that the whole of the nation’s interests are all encapsulated and tied to the fate of Lady Credit; they “would [only] stab their own Interests through her Sides” (7.135 [1710]: 602).

In establishing the necessity of credit and in making the case that the British nation must align its interests with, and by way of, Lady Credit — that she bridges the interests of all those who engage her — Defoe reveals how Lady Credit becomes the very *encapsulating* agent who brokers trust (if only to a degree) by aligning mutual interests. In a sense, trust can be said to emerge from the homosocial engagements that Lady Credit forges. As Defoe explains, “Credit enables a Tradesman to...trust others” (6.33 [1709]: 183) — “Trust to him

⁹⁷ Other behavioural researchers, like Toshio Yamagishi, have distinguished genuine trust from this type of “encapsulated interest model of trust,” which Yamagishi calls assurance. See, for example, Yamagishi’s *Trust: The Evolutionary Game of Mind and Society*.

that sells, enables him to trust another, and him a third, and so on” (6.33 [1709]: 181). In this way, trust emerges from Lady Credit’s multilateral circulation among a network of tradesmen. Just as Defoe claims that “CREDIT is a Consequence, not a Cause” (*Essay Upon Publick Credit* 53), the same could be said about bipartisan trust — namely, that it is a consequence, and not a prerequisite condition, of homosocial cooperation. Lady Credit is able to inspire enough trust — that is, enough encapsulated interest — so that cooperation is possible. As Defoe assures his readers, when Lady Credit “blews her Trumpet..., [and] sends over her Messengers to *Holland*, to *Hambro*’, nay to *France* itself, and tells all the Money’d Men, they may depend upon her, [it is because] she has given her Word, that here they may venture their Money, and be safe” (7.58 [1710]: 285). By virtue of her “Honour,” and because “all the Money’d Men...may depend upon her” and “her Word,” even if those investors in “*Holland*,” “*Hambro*” or “*France* itself” would not trust to do business with the English, they would trust Lady Credit and, therefore, be open to trade partnerships through her. With Lady Credit’s ability to “Encourage her Friends to venture their Estates upon her Recommendation” (7.120 [1710]: 544), Defoe reminds us that the power of “her Stamp upon your Paper” — of the trust that she effects — is what makes “it Circulate” (7.49 [1710]: 242) and the British nation flourish.

In the end, Lady Credit becomes a stabilizing force for Defoe. Where others like Addison and Swift were wary of the kind of influence she would have on the British economic system, Defoe displayed more confidence in Lady Credit’s transformative powers, in her ability to legitimize men’s engagement with a largely feminized market economy, and her capacity to stabilize and unify the nation despite deep-rooted political strife. Writing *The*

Life of Daniel Defoe, Richetti remarked that “Defoe was clearly much taken with this conceit” (151) of his Lady Credit. Sherman, too, observes that this lady “obsessed him the longest” (“Lady Credit No Lady” 185). Perhaps Defoe was indeed seduced by his own creation, captivated by the possibilities of her “regenerative hymen” and her “bivalent sexuality.”

Without a doubt, Defoe’s Lady Credit is a provocative female character who has generated much scholarship on how she uses her sexuality in her dealings with men in trade and in government. However, what has been missing in such scholarship is how such an alluring woman changes homosocial dynamics between men. As I have tried to demonstrate with careful detail throughout this chapter, Defoe intentionally exploits, as he explores, aspects of female sexuality in order to stimulate and induce men into aligning themselves for the purpose of cooperation, mitigating pervasive distrust in the new economic system, and mollifying the “rage of part[ies].” The seduction of credit is powerful, and Defoe’s Lady Credit serves to seduce and entice obstinate party men. Defoe draws on Lady Credit’s capacity to arouse such men into engaging in homosocial alliances despite their mutual distrust. Indeed, it has been my contention that Defoe calls upon Lady Credit’s sexual duality to secure his objective of bipartisan cooperation. And what Defoe reveals to his readers through Lady Credit is that opposing party members are more bound to each other than they realize. Not unlike what Carruthers claims in his study on debtor-creditor relations — where political devotion and party loyalty biases financial investment decisions — Cook et al.’s research on the effects of encapsulated interests makes clear that even opposing parties are, and can be, aligned. By way of Lady Credit, trading men, party men, opposing men are necessarily more involved with each other than before, even if their partnerships are

less personal than one-to-one interactions because they engage each other through Lady Credit's mediation. Centrally, then, Defoe's message via his most endearing Lady Credit is that cooperation must take precedence over competition. In order to secure the nation and stabilize the economy, each must trust that others will "stand to his Post." By aligning with each other through Lady Credit, each can be more assured that those others will. In the end, Lady Credit applies her "Power of Transmutation" to those very cooperative interactions, thereby changing those internal homosocial relationships.

In reconsidering much of the scholarship on Defoe's Lady Credit, I have questioned if focusing on her seeming fickleness and instability — the either/or "bivalent sexuality" of virgin or whore — if this characterization is the only way of understanding this figure. Instead, my main argument throughout this chapter has been that while Lady Credit's behaviour may seem flighty and volatile, her strategy has consistently been risk-averse and predictable. While we may choose to "[focus] on her sexual conduct" ("Lady Credit No Lady" 186), as critics like Sherman do, I believe we should not be distracted by Lady Credit's free, even seemingly "perverse[,] sexuality" (186). As well, I have insisted that there is a way to resolve what Sherman only sees as an "unresolved combination of both" Lady Credit's virgin-whore sexual status. In playing the "Whore" — adopting what I have called a *whore's stratagem* — Lady Credit has the ability, the capacity, to engage multiple men synchronously and forge homosocial cooperative alliances, even finding a solution to the problem of bipartisan distrust. Not only is Lady Credit clearly a lady, she is a lady *because* she is a whore; her virtue is restored every time men put her to use. And despite what Sherman might insist, it is not ironic that Lady Credit is a whore — it is compulsory to Defoe's purpose that she functions as one. While Defoe certainly exploited her to his own

propagandistic purposes — not just of pushing for bipartisanship, but staying in the good graces of his benefactors, Harley and Godolphin, so that one anonymous author even writes of Defoe's "'inconstancy and his veering round to all Parties'" (quoted in Novak 11) thereby linking Defoe himself to whoring — Defoe also redeems Lady Credit's sexual deportment. Just as Lady Credit can make "honest Women Whores, and Whores honest Women," Defoe in turn does this for Lady Credit herself — transforming this whore into an honest woman.

In the final publication of the *Review*, Defoe confesses that "Writing upon Trade was the Whore I really doated upon" (9.107 [1713]: 425), as he created another whore in Lady Credit to advance his intentions. True to his dedication to trade and his objective of bipartisanship, at the height of South Sea mania in June of 1720, Defoe commends the stock market scheme — despite criticisms against it — for "reconcil[ing] Whig and Tory; ...seal[ing] up the Mouth of Faction, and mak[ing] us all the Subjects of one Government, and one King George; thou Shalt have my Praise" (*The Commentator* 47, June 13, 1720). Again, while Defoe had defended Lady Credit in 1711 as distinct from "Stocks, all your Annuities, Tickets and Tallies," by the crash of South Sea stock a few months later in October of 1720, he comes to align the selling off of South Sea stock with the abandonment of Lady Credit, blaming directors for mismanagement and investors for the panic:

But 'tis the frightened People that are the mad People, and they are the People that have done all this Mischief; 'tis the Fright that has made the Necessity; it was the Fright that first brought the Stock to Market, and bringing the Stock to Market sunk the Price; sinking the Price, broke the Dealers; breaking the Dealers, ruin'd Credit; and all together has encreas'd the Fright, even to Madness and Distraction. Thus we have danc'd in a Circle of Jealousy and

Distrust, till we become Self-murderers, as I may say, and tear our selves to Pieces, for fear of being torn to Pieces, ruine our selves for fear of being ruin'd, and dye for fear of Death. (*The Director* no. 6 October 21, 1720)

As I will explore in the next chapter, the economic climate that Defoe sought to stabilize with Lady Credit shifts greatly with the arrival of this new financial scheme. And as I will argue, Eliza Haywood is perceptive to the impact of such a changed environment on women's sexual risk-taking.

Chapter 3

“How Dangerous It Is to Give Way to Passion”: Loss Aversion and Delaying Gratification in Eliza Haywood’s *Love in Excess*

In an early editorial piece from Eliza Haywood’s periodical *The Female Spectator* (1745-1746), Haywood warns her readers against the “Vice of Gaming” by denouncing the social fixation on gambling and bemoaning how it “should become the *Mode*” (*The Female Spectator* 43) by the mid-eighteenth century. In fact, she pinpoints a very specific incident that seemed to spur on this now very public preoccupation: “We may date this extravagant Itch of Gaming, which, like the Plague, has spread its Contagion through all Degrees of People, from the fatal Year 1720” (43). As any one of her readers would know, Haywood is referring to the South Sea scandal, when speculation drove the South Sea Company’s stock to skyrocket in early 1720 only to suddenly plummet by the fall of the same year, taking down with it the fortunes of countless investors. Haywood points out:

The alluring Prospect of making a great Fortune at once, and without any Labour or Trouble, so infatuated the Minds of all the Ambitious, the Avaricious, and the Indolent, that for a Time there seemed an entire Stagnation of all Business but what was transacted by the *Brokers* in *Change-Alley*. ...The great Bubble of the *South-Sea* dissipated, a thousand lesser ones, tho’ equally destructive to honest Industry sprung up: — New Modes of Ruin were every Day invented.... (43-44)

Certainly, Defoe had been an early advocate of the establishment of the South Sea Company in 1711 as Harley’s solution to England’s debt problem, writing in 1712 that:

“[The South Sea trade] is not only probable to be Great, but capable of being the Greatest, most Valuable, most Profitable, and most Encreasing Branch of Trade in our whole British Commerce, well worth all the Hazard, Adventure, Expence, and Pains of the Undertaking” (*An Essay on the South-Sea Trade* 51). By mid-century, however, many like Haywood could see that the popular desire for easy monetary gains through gambling — whether via lotteries, insurance schemes, or investment in the early stock markets — trumped the industriousness and more modest, yet steady, gains that Defoe suggested of “honest Profit that might be made of *Trade*” (*The Female Spectator* 43). Hunger for “Gain, sordid Gain,” it seemed, was “all that engrosse[d] the Heart” (45). And taking such risks with an eye only on potential gains, it seems to Haywood, fuelled a “public Frenzy” (44) of financial risk-taking, with most hoping that investing in the South Sea venture would, like: “One Night’s good Run at Cards, or a lucky Cast of the Dice, ...repair all that had been lost in other Ventures, and every one thought it worth his while to stake his last Remains” (44).

Revealingly, the publication of Haywood’s first novel, *Love in Excess; or, The Fatal Enquiry* (1719-1720), coincided with the dramatic rise and sudden crash of South Sea stock — one of the greatest financial events in England’s history. Yet scholars who have focussed much on Haywood have not considered this particular backdrop in their analyses of Haywood’s first novel.⁹⁸ Although Haywood does not *directly* comment on this economic event in *Love in Excess*, I believe the frenzied climate inspired by the South Sea events are

⁹⁸ Catherine Ingrassia comes closest in her *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit*. While Ingrassia does make the claim that the avaricious spirit of speculative markets aligned business and pleasure, she does not consider how this works particularly in Haywood’s *Love in Excess*. Moreover, Ingrassia does not consider how risk might be a factor working in a novel written during a time of much public willingness to engage in financial risk-taking.

sustained in this novel that focuses on women's fervent sexual fantasies and, as Haywood would see it, women's almost uncontrollable sexual desires. Indeed, Haywood lays bare the kinds of tensions and anxieties that arise in a climate that primes women to behave opportunistically and spontaneously. As I explore in this chapter, Haywood registers how frenetically competitive climates like the one inspired by the South Sea Bubble trigger people to behave in riskier ways, informing Haywood's characterization of women's sexual strategies when faced with increased intrasexual competition. In other words, just as the competitive economic niche instigated by the South Sea scheme primed investors to increase their financial risk-taking for fear of losing out to peers, the competitive sexual market in Haywood's *Love in Excess* primed women to increase their sexual risk-taking for fear of losing to their sexual rivals. More broadly, both Defoe and Haywood seemed to observe a link between resource conditions and its influence on sexual behaviour. Where Defoe saw promise in recruiting male sexual interest to align men's economic commitment, Haywood sees the aggressive early stock market spurring on women's competitiveness in the mating market. Where Defoe's *Lady Credit* was an emblematic centre of homosocial cooperation, her later descendant, *Lady of the South Sea*, conversely ushered in a renewed spirit of competition. Even if Haywood's narrative does not intentionally or consciously criticize the economic events of the time, I believe her *Love in Excess* subtly reflects and comments on the potential sociosexual effects of the bustling economic mood of the period.⁹⁹ As yet

⁹⁹ While Haywood's *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* (1725) makes a more direct and intentional response to the events of the South Sea scandal, the fact that this novel was published well after the main event leaves open the very real possibility that Haywood's intention in *Memoirs* was to join in on casting blame on those responsible for the debacle. For example, see William Warner's "Formulating Fiction: Romancing the General Reader in Early Modern Britain"

unexamined by literary scholars is how the “Frenzy” associated with the public’s fascination with speculative investment, gambling, and women’s own increased participation in such pecuniary markets and activities may provide insight into how Haywood interprets the effects of financial risk-taking on women’s sexual experiences, behaviours, and desires within her novels.¹⁰⁰

In this chapter, I consider why some female characters in *Love in Excess* engage in high levels of sexual risk-taking while others do not. More specifically, I consider the effects of increased sexual risk-taking on two of Haywood’s female characters — namely, Alovisa and Melliora. Here, I incorporate theories on how our human propensity not to be outdone by our sexual competitors often motivates our willingness to engage in riskier sexual strategies. For those like Haywood’s heroine Melliora, who do not engage in high levels of sexual risk-taking because the particular social and biological risks are too costly for their individual circumstances, Haywood encourages such women to delay sexual gratification. Indeed, this is a stark difference to her characterization of Fantomina. Even with such advice in *Love in Excess*, however, Haywood’s novel itself creates the possibility for her reader to gain erotic pleasure derived from her characters’ deferred sexual moments. Indeed, I argue that the deferred climactic moments in her narrative become climactic moments themselves

where he claims that Haywood’s main interest has always been about surviving as a writer and maintaining longevity in the market.

¹⁰⁰ Ingrassia investigates how both fictional writers and stock-jobbers relied on the speculative imaginations of their readers and investors to further gain literary and monetary “paper credit” of their own. While Ingrassia’s analysis of *The City Jilt* and *The Mercenary Lover* shows how Haywood was interested in depicting women as financially interested and savvy, my claim in this chapter is more about risk that is not necessarily financial in nature, but of which financial risk-taking is certainly a part. More specifically, while Ingrassia focuses on women’s financial activities, my focus here is on the effects of speculative markets on women’s desires and behaviour.

for her readers. In an environment that seems to increasingly push for instant gratification and reward risk-taking, Haywood makes imaginable erotic fulfillment that comes specifically from delayed sexual gratification. In this way, I will claim, Haywood creates narratives that convey to her audience “how Dangerous it is to Give way to Passion,” even as she manages to satisfy those passions by way of deferred moments. For this author who would become the “most prolific British woman writer of the eighteenth century” (Saxton 2), Haywood ingeniously composes erotic tales that serve as both risky and safe devices.

“Great Arbitress of Passion”

In his *The Dunciad*, Alexander Pope presents Eliza Haywood as the prized “Juno of majestic size,/ With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes” (II.155-156), holding her up as a worthy trophy for the publisher who could “best...send on high” (II.153) a “salient spout [of urine], far-streaming to the sky” (II.154). Pope’s inclusion of Haywood in his satire points to her tremendous cultural purchase by 1728. By this time, Haywood’s fiction came to stand in for the very kinds of books that the eighteenth-century public understood to be fraught with depictions of illicit pleasures — that is, the very “sort of books..., as it were,” in Haywood’s own words, that served as “preparatives to love” (*Love in Excess* 108). Since scholars like John Richetti, Mary Anne Schofield, Ros Ballaster, and William Warner began their work on establishing Haywood’s importance in the evolution of the novel, others like Catherine Ingrassia, Toni Bowers, Kathryn R. King, Kathleen Lubey, Scott Black, Tiffany Potter, and Joseph Drury have expanded the field of Haywood studies further to cement this “infamous,

scribbling woman” as unquestionably principal to the novel’s very form.¹⁰¹ Along with Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley — these three women who, as Ballaster has established, would become known as key authors of amatory fiction — Haywood wrote to highlight the workings of women’s sexual nature.¹⁰² And the best-selling status of her debut novel certainly set this stage for Haywood, who would go on in countless novels, novellas, and periodical pieces to explore more thoroughly women’s sexuality in terms of its physiological, psychological, and social aspects.

In her exploration of Haywood’s texts, Bowers reveals the nuanced political strategies that Haywood devises in works as early as *Love in Excess*.¹⁰³ Through what Bowers calls “collusive resistance” — that is, a strategy of political resistance through feigned sexual complicity — Bowers argues that Tory women like Haywood, along with her characters and readers, are better able to cope under duress of a Whig-dominated society.¹⁰⁴ Lubey’s study

¹⁰¹ To quote more fully, Jonathan Swift confessed to “have heard of [Haywood] as a stupid, infamous, scribbling woman, but have not seen any of her productions” (quoted in Blouch *Introduction* 8). See Richetti’s *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*; Schofield’s *Quiet Rebellion* and *Eliza Haywood*; Ballaster’s *Seductive Forms*; Warner’s *Licensing Entertainment*; Ingrassia’s *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*; Bowers’s “Collusive Resistance” and *Force or Fraud*; King’s *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*; Lubey’s “Erotic Interiors” and *Excitable Imaginations*; Black’s “Trading Sex for Secrets”; Potter’s “The Language of Feminised Sexuality”; and Drury’s “Haywood’s Thinking Machines.” See also Jonathan Kramnick’s “Locke, Haywood, and Consent” and Marta Kvande’s “The Outsider Narrator in Eliza Haywood’s Political Novels.”

¹⁰² See Ballaster’s *Seductive Forms*.

¹⁰³ See Bowers’s *Force or Fraud*. Although Ballaster initially claimed in *Seductive Forms* that Haywood’s texts lacked any political design, Ballaster later reconsiders her argument about Haywood in “A Gender of Opposition: Eliza Haywood’s Scandal Fiction.”

¹⁰⁴ See also Bowers’s “Collusive Resistance” and “Erotic Love.” Warner’s *Licensing Entertainment*, however, argues against Ballaster’s feminocentric view of Manley and Haywood’s novels, arguing instead that these two writers intentionally created and exploited the type of formulated fiction that

Excitable Imaginations makes the case for a different objective that inspires Haywood to look to erotic expression in her narratives. Lubey argues that not only does sex sell, but by purposely invoking ““warm”” (93) scenes, Haywood evokes erotic feelings to entice the reader into being more receptive to the ethical lessons embedded in the narratives themselves. In this way, the novel’s mandate to teach and entertain are both fulfilled as suggestive scenes are indeed “preparatives to love” that prime the readers’ minds to better receive ethical and moral instruction. And Black’s investigation in his article “Trading Sex for Secrets” of an infrequently discussed scene in *Love in Excess* reveals much of what constitutes the “textual game” (Black 224) central to the sexual interplay between two of the novel’s plot-driving characters who engage in completely self-serving schemes.

While such explorations of Haywood’s characters’ willingness to engage in, or choice to abstain from, sexual enjoyment may advance insight into Haywood’s own political, social, or authorial agendas working within this novel, what scholars like Bowers, Lubey, Black, and others have not considered is how sexual risk-taking is key to Haywood’s erotic design.¹⁰⁵ As in Bowers’s argument, for example, how might sexual risks involved in the political strategy of pretending to sexually comply build up erotic content in Haywood’s novels? Or for Lubey’s analysis, how might sexual risk-taking by female characters be integral to the creation of ““warm”” descriptions? Or for Black’s claim, how might sexual

made them so popular to the general reader. Far from being the type of fiction that was simply read by women, Warner claims that Haywood’s apolitical novels uniquely positioned their accessibility to the average, general reader.

¹⁰⁵ While Potter’s article “The Language of Feminised Sexuality” certainly discusses Haywood’s narrative design to argue that Haywood’s multiorgasmic plot structure seems intentionally to echo women’s physical sexual capabilities (more of which I will be discussing later), risk does not enter into Potter’s exploration.

risks involved in Alovisa's choices heighten the "textual game" she plays with Baron D'espernay? Indeed, such scholars have neglected to ask what role risk might play in women's sexual dealings with men. How do the female characters in *Love in Excess* specifically respond to risk? How do they gauge which moments to avoid risk and which instances to appropriate risk to their own purposes? How do such women manage risk and learn to balance risk at the precipice — all, in Haywood's words, while "Trembling and panting, 'twixt Desire and Fear" (*Lasselia* 119)?

In many ways, my chapter here pursues Ingrassia's point about the influence of the new market economy on women's sexual behaviour.¹⁰⁶ In *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Ingrassia highlights the impact of what P. G. M. Dickson called the Financial Revolution, and, more specifically, the effects of the South Sea Bubble on how authors like Haywood pursue credibility within the literary market by echoing strategies deployed in early speculative financial markets.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Ingrassia makes the claim that strong connections exist between women's conduct and the advent of

¹⁰⁶ Again, Ingrassia's study, more particularly, examines Haywood's *The City Jilt* and *The Mercenary Lover*, both published in 1726. Through these texts, Ingrassia argues that they represent the kind of "economic revenge" tale that was to "provide [Haywood's readers with] an instructive example of behavior to avoid" (*Authorship* 95).

¹⁰⁷ More precisely, Ingrassia considers Haywood's economic incentive to establish literary credit with her readers — what Ingrassia calls "paper credit" (*Authorship* 10) — via the imaginative investments that her readers commit to her stories. In her study, Ingrassia connects financial speculation (which always requires imagining about future possibilities) to Haywood's aim of earning "paper credit" in order to legitimize her status as a writer (who require readers to invest in the imaginative possibilities of their narratives). See Dickson's *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756*.

financial exchange markets founded on speculative investments.¹⁰⁸ According to Ingrassia, “the pleasure of business and the business of pleasure become mutually enabling and mutually reinforcing activities” (*Authorship* 20) for women during this time. Ingrassia, along with critics like Laura Brown and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, sees links between new financial economics and women’s sexuality, claiming women’s sexual behaviour to be mirroring the actions of early financial speculators — aligning the voraciousness of women’s sexual appetites with the avidity of general financial greed.¹⁰⁹

And yet, “the Frenzy of the Times” (quoted in *Authorship* 19) that even John Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, blamed for his own involvement in the South Sea scheme, I believe, was more than simply an incident fuelled by appetites for gain. The frenzy and feverishness of early eighteenth-century financial markets were also a momentum energized by a fear of loss — a fear that motivated increased risk-taking. As I will explore below, the speculative markets of the early 1700s seems to have primed the investing public with what psychologists and behavioural economists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky call a framing effect, inspiring many to take increased risks. Incorporating their theory on loss aversion into current literary scholarship will offer a new perspective via this biocultural approach to understanding how characters engage with risk in novels like *Love in Excess*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ See Ingrassia’s “The Pleasure of Business and the Business of Pleasure” and *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*.

¹⁰⁹ See Laura Brown’s *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace’s *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century*.

¹¹⁰ As I discussed in my introductory chapter, literary critics Jessica Richard and Jesse Molesworth have studied the impact of speculative markets, national lotteries, gambling, as well as theories of probability and chance on the eighteenth-century novel — namely, their influence on the kinds of narratives that were produced, the kinds of characters that were created, and the kinds of scenarios

“Alas! I Want It, At Least, Every Day!”

William Chetwood opens his 1720 comedy *The Stock-Jobbers; or, The Humours of Exchange-Alley* with five stockjobbers walking up and down Exchange Alley, each man selling a different kind of investment product — an assortment of lottery tickets, Bank of England annuities, East India Company bonds, Royal African Company stocks, insurance, and “South-Sea” (1). Of course, the only stock of interest to all the characters is the last. Throughout this play and Chetwood’s *South-Sea; or, The Biters Bit* (1720), men and women of all ranks are eager to know “how goes stock,” and “how Stocks are,” and “how much Stock do you sell,” even greeting each other with, “Good Day to you, Sir: Know you the Price of Stocks?” However, the only stock they really ask about — the only stock they want — is “South-Sea.”

Both of Chetwood’s plays attest to the South Sea Company’s clout in the financial market during this time. Founded in 1711, the South Sea Company was a joint-stock venture established primarily to assist Queen Anne’s government in dealing with its growing debt problem. As historians like Dickson, Henry Roseveare, John Carswell, Julian Hoppit, Carl Wennerlind, and Helen J. Paul have explained, Britain’s credit-based financial system was at a crisis point by the early eighteenth century.¹¹¹ According to Roseveare, the total National

that were imagined. However, their studies do not investigate how aspects of sexual risk-taking motivates character behaviour and engages readers in titillating ways. Again, see Richard’s *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* and Molesworth’s *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*.

¹¹¹ See P.G.M Dickson’s *The Financial Revolution in England*; Roseveare’s *The Financial Revolution 1660-1760*; Carswell’s *The South Sea Bubble*; Hoppit’s “Myths of the South Sea Bubble” and “Financial Crises in Eighteenth-Century England”; Wennerlind’s *Casualties of Credit*; and Paul’s *The South Sea Bubble*.

Debt was approximately £48 million by 1714 (52). In addition to exorbitant military expenses, which included “the unprecedented spending associated with the War of Spanish Succession” (Wennerlind 162) between 1702 and 1713, the British government was increasingly burdened by the variously negotiated interest rates attached to its numerous long- and short-term loans.¹¹²

In 1719, the South Sea Company proposed to take over the entire National Debt, converting the debt into equity in the company.¹¹³ In other words, the South Sea scheme was essentially a debt-for-equity swap that converted privately held debt into publicly owned credit in the form of stock (Wennerlind 12). This scheme offered the government a way not only to consolidate its debts at reduced rates of interest payable to a single creditor — the South Sea Company — but also to entice annuity holders to willingly swap out their

Indeed, as Dickson has argued in his study of the Financial Revolution of the 1690s, the founding of the Bank of England (1694) along with the National Debt (1694) were aimed at assisting the government with different methods of borrowing. With the Bank of England securing government loans, creditors most likely felt more comfortable lending money to the government. These were essentially checks safeguarding investors from government defaults.

¹¹² As Helen J. Paul informs us, interest rates for long-term annuities were close to 7%. Short-term loans, she reminds us, were paying rates as high as 9% annually (44). Especially troublesome were the irredeemable long annuities, which were fixed-rate contracted loans, some as long as ninety-nine years, from which the government could only be released at the pleasure of the annuity owner. Paul also reminds us that “the rate at which private loans (i.e. excluding loans made to the state) became usurious was 5 per cent from 1714” (44). As one can imagine, the locked-in rates of interest for irredeemable annuities were costly especially when interest rates dropped and the government was not able to pay off the loan immediately and incur another loan at a cheaper interest rate.

¹¹³ The company only managed to take on £50 million of the National Debt. The Bank of England and the East India Company were already managing a portion of the National Debt, and the South Sea Company was only allowed to take over a portion. For more, see Ingrassia’s *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England* page 17.

government debt for equity in the company.¹¹⁴ In the following year, the company offered three conversions — one in April, July, and August when annuity holders could either exchange their holdings for South Sea stock or cash — and four separate subscriptions — “two in April, one in June and the last in August” (Paul 46) when stock purchases could be made. And it is during this narrow window of time that the South Sea Company made history — seeing its stock skyrocket from about £130 early in the year to a staggering almost £1000 in June, only to plummet to around £200 by October (“Myths of the South Sea Bubble” 143).¹¹⁵ As I explored in the previous chapter, credit systems were moving away from personal, privately negotiated, bilateral agreements between people to more impersonal, publicly mediated, multilateral dealings between multiple and varying individuals. The South Sea scheme was a significant project that furthered the government’s aims of restructuring the terms and relationships of its debts.

Put on trial for his role in the South Sea debacle, John Aislabie admitted that he was ““visibly carried on with a Spirit very different from [his own]”” (quoted in *Authorship* 19) — testifying, Ingrassia observes, to the general frenzy of this period and Aislabie’s own “moment of temporary insanity and uncontrollable excitement” (19). Indeed, echoing Haywood’s sentiments, many historians like Dickson, Carswell, and Ingrassia view the South

¹¹⁴ And, of course, part of the reason why South Sea stock was attractive was because in 1713 the company was awarded the *Asiento*, which gave the South Sea Company a monopoly on trading African slaves to Spanish settlements in South America.

¹¹⁵ As Paul informs us, “80 per cent of irredeemables and 85 per cent of redeemables had been converted” (47). Redeemable annuities were loan contracts where the government could call in the loans and pay them off anytime it wanted. These types of loans were more desirable for the government since it meant that when interest rates fell, it could pay off redeemable loans and contract new ones at a lower rate.

Sea scandal as a prime example of the type of gambling mania that took over Exchange Alley during these early days of the stock market.¹¹⁶ Investors behaved like the various characters in Chetwood's plays: seemingly addicted and obsessed, hungry for monetary gains, blindly following the swarm activity of the Exchange.¹¹⁷ The "alluring Prospect of making a great Fortune at once, and without any Labour or Trouble," to repeat Haywood once again, offered a promise of quick and easy profits too tempting for most to ignore. Writes the anonymous playwright of *Exchange Alley; or, The Stock-Jobber turn'd Gentleman* (1720):

Even *Smocks* are deposited to help make up the Security for Cash; *Jewels* pawn'd to raise Money for the Purchase of Ruin — and, perhaps, *Wives* and *Daughters* have been Mortgaged for the very same purpose — To that Degree of Lunacy are the People of this Age arriv'd, that they'll be no where eased of the Burthen of their Cash, but in *Exchange-Alley*....

(Preface to *Exchange Alley*)

¹¹⁶ Indeed, gaming schemes exemplified by the South Sea Company did not emerge from, and corrupt, already reputable and established financial institutions. Instead, Jessica Richard observes, such enterprises sprang from the dubious origins of gambling. Considering this economic and cultural provenance, gambling and, I would add, risk are elemental to the very nature of ventures like the South Sea Company.

¹¹⁷ Economic historians like Hoppit, Paul, and Wennerlind, however, have argued against the view of investors as unthinking or irrational agents. Instead, these scholars put forth claims that South Sea investors behaved rationally, realized that investing in the scheme was not entirely hazard-free, and understood that they were taking on calculable risks. See Hoppit's "Myths of the South Sea Bubble" and Paul's *The South Sea Bubble* for their arguments that counter the conventional claim —made by historians like Dickson and Carswell, and literary critics like Ingrassia — that the South Sea Bubble was the cause of manic frenzied market behaviour. See also Ann M. Carlos et al.'s article "Financial Acumen, Women Speculators, and the Royal African Company during the South Sea Bubble."

The immense possibilities made imaginable by the scheme were far-reaching. And as Ann M. Carlos et al. insist, its effects on women were prodigious:

The emergence of capital markets by the end of the seventeenth century provided women with a set of opportunities not previously available. The market allowed them the opportunity to act as independent investors not only to buy shares which would provide a steady dividend stream but also to buy shares as speculative investment. Such activities are to a large extent anonymous and it is this very anonymity which allowed individuals, especially women, to act outside the constraints imposed socially and culturally. (“Financial Acumen” 228)

Whether legally identified as independent *femes sole* (often widows and single women) or as dependent *femes covert* (married women), female investors were active participants in the early stock market.¹¹⁸ “Between the 1690s and 1754,” Ingrassia tells us, “women held on average 20 percent of the stock holdings in annuities and major funds such as the East India or South Sea Company” (*Authorship* 20).¹¹⁹ By the end of 1720, Carlos and Larry Neal have determined, “[w]omen comprised 20 percent of the shareholders of Bank of England stock, owning 10.8 percent of the capital stock at the end of the Bubble period” (223). And Anne Laurence claims that by 1723, “women were about one-fifth of the proprietors of South Sea stock, owning 12 per cent of its value” (“Women Investors, ‘That Nasty South Sea Affair’”

¹¹⁸ *Femes sole* and *femes covert* were legal categories assigned to women for purposes of property litigation, according to historian Amy Louise Erikson. Although Erikson makes clear that while *femes sole* traders may have had the “status of married women...they [was] treated as unmarried to the extent of any business they run [were] separate from their husbands” (238). See her *Women and Property in Early Modern England*.

¹¹⁹ Here, Ingrassia gets this statistic from Dickson.

251), having doubled their percentage of participation from three years earlier.¹²⁰ Because logistics of exchanging stocks were still in their early days, “stocks were not taxed and were [considered] a form of property a married woman could retain as personal estate” (*Authorship* 20), like a woman’s pin money. Therefore, married and unmarried women alike could freely buy and sell stocks as they wished. It is no wonder, then, that trading on the stock market was desirable for women as it offered them the opportunity of financial independence. This financial independence, in turn, offered women the possibility, at least, of increased mating choices as their livelihoods were disentangled from a complete dependency on the monetary funds that husbands or fathers accommodate. As Chetwood’s Lady Pawn-Locket, Lady Love-Pickett, and Mrs. Figg all agree, “this Stock-jobbing, ’tis better than a Turn to the Park in Hackney-Coach,” “Better than Pin-Money,” and “better than an Evening at Cards with agreeable Company” (*The Stock-Jobbers* 20). Trading in stocks being “the most agreeable Amusement in Nature,” these female characters illustrate that women refused to let men “monopolize” this “Pleasure...to themselves” (20).¹²¹

¹²⁰ I think it must also be acknowledged that not all women intentionally invested in the South Sea company, but rather that for many of them their annuities were converted into South Sea stock. In this way, although many did not voluntarily invest in the company, many were ushered into this new mode of finance. See Carlos et al.’s “Financial Acumen”; Carlos and Neal’s “Women Investors in Early Capital Markets, 1720-1725”; and Anne Laurence’s “Women Investors, ‘That Nasty South Sea Affair’ and the Rage to Speculate in Early Eighteenth-Century England,” and “Lady Betty Hastings, Her Half-Sisters, and the South Sea Bubble: Family Fortunes and Strategies.”

¹²¹ For Ingrassia, as women became increasingly involved in the early financial market, business and pleasure became so closely aligned for women that “[s]tock-jobbing provide[d] erotic *and* economic gratification” (*Authorship* 35 — emphasis mine). Indeed, “the very language used to describe women’s reaction to financial success is subtly coded with the language of sexuality” (35-36). Like Mrs. Figg’s proclamation that playing with stocks “’tis better than a Turn to the Park in Hackney-Coach” — suggestive of the “illicit sexual encounters” (*Authorship* 36) that often occur during such

The mania surrounding the South Sea scheme, however, need not be entirely viewed as motivated by pure hunger for “Gain, sordid Gain.” In one way, investors were very much motivated by the fear of losing an opportunity for easy profits. Not only did the staggered issuance of stock drive anticipation in potential investors as they had to wait for the next date of conversion or subscription, but secondary markets also ensured the liquidity of stocks, enabling shareholders to quickly and easily sell their stocks without having to wait for the crown or government to repay lent money or issue annuities. As economic historians like Neal, Carlos, and Wennerlind have argued, the staggered issuance and the secondary market were two strategies that kept the South Sea Company’s stock prices high. With daily reports

outings — Mrs. Cravemore’s exchange with Cheat-all in *Exchange Alley; or, The Stock-Jobber turn’d Gentleman* (1720) is laced with sexual innuendoes:

CRAVEMORE.	You’re the Person I want — pray how is Stock to Day?
CHEAT-ALL.	Low at present, Madam.
CRAVEMORE.	But, I suppose, it will Rise again.
CHEAT-ALL.	And you crave More —
CRAVEMORE.	To tell ye the Truth, I should not venture to commence <i>Stock-Jobber</i> , were it not occasion’d by my mercenary Spouse, who at this time allows me nothing for Pin-money — and alas! I want it, at least, every Day.
CHEAT-ALL.	I don’t question it — and perhaps he may not supply ye, at most, once a Week. (<i>Exchange Alley</i> 20)

As Cheat-all observes, women like Mrs. Cravemore are eager for both fiscal and sexual gratification, and they demand that their needs be satisfied “at least, every Day.” So rapacious is their appetite for gain that their tolerance for financial risk-taking becomes merged with an increased sexual risk-taking, as ladies of quality like Chetwood’s Ladies Pawn-Locket and Love-Pickett openly accost their stockbroker, Mr. Noodle, demanding to be “satisf[ied]” (*The Stock-Jobbers* 22) with the South Sea stock he has acquired for them, indifferent to decorum even as Mr. Noodle would remind them. See also Richard’s *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel*, especially chapter 4 on the lady’s last stake where she aligns sexual wagering with bets made at gaming tables and women’s pleasure at gaming.

on stock prices giving the impression that there would always be plenty of buyers, hopeful investors would understandably take on greater risks in order to avoid losing such an opportunity.¹²² As Elizabeth Molesworth writes in her letter to Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk: “I cannot, without great regret, reflect that, for want of a little money, I am forced to let slip an opportunity which is never like to happen again.” At the time of Molesworth’s letter of June 25, 1720, South Sea stock was valued at £1000 — seven times its value in January, when the South Sea company first offered stock for conversion by those holding government annuities. Molesworth’s confession, then, is understandable: “To tell you the truth, I am almost South-Sea mad.” Even while she “heartily rejoice[s] at [her friend’s]...success in the South Sea,” Molesworth is anxious about losing her one opportunity to invest in the company herself.¹²³

Furthermore, investors were also, most likely, very much motivated by the socially competitive aspects of the market. How one fared in comparison to one’s social peers spurred the desire of many not only to enter the market, but also to engage in riskier strategies in order to outcompete (and/or not to be outcompeted by) one’s equals. Revealingly, Plowshare in Chetwood’s *South-Sea* infuriatingly chastises his nagging wife who is cautious about investing: “why, did not you see Mr. Bubble-boy (that half a Year ago was not worth a crack’d Groat) come down with a Coach and Six Horses, and a Blackamore at his Tail[?]” (11). Plowshare’s wife, it seems, lacks her husband’s imagination and ambition. And yet, while those like Molesworth and Plowshare did not want to be bested by

¹²² On the daily reporting of South Sea stock prices, see Richard Dale’s *The First Crash: Lessons from the South Sea Bubble*, for example.

¹²³ For more, see Ingrassia’s *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, pages 17-20. For the source of Molesworth’s letters, see *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk, and her second husband, the Hon. George Berkeley: 1712-1767*.

their peers and give up on the prospect of easy gains, others like Plowshare's wife warn that "[i]ndeed we hear of Folks that get Money, but no Body tells us of thosen that loose" (*South-Sea* 12).¹²⁴ Plowshare's wife expresses real fears of putting all their faith in the success of the South Sea scheme and over-investing in a company that they know very little about, pleading with her husband: "I am sorely afraid, that instead of going down in a Booby Hutch of our own, we mun be forc'd to Trudge it on Foot" (*South-Sea* 12).¹²⁵ Like Haywood's argument in her *Female Spectator* article years later, Plowshare's wife pleads with her husband to "go home and mind our Harvest, for that I believe will turn to the best Unaccount" (*South-Sea* 12). And so, I would stress, while "mad" and "frenz[ied]" behaviour of speculators may have been born of greed for gain, this impetus perhaps later came to be motivated more by a fear of missing opportunities or of being outcompeted by one's social peers. In this way, I believe what began as a gain-focussed mode of action — a high-stakes game many mocked as "Lunacy" because of its basis on "imaginary Profit" (Preface to

¹²⁴ Ingrassia makes this observation especially with Molesworth's letter, that she was disappointed in the loss of prospect and advancement simply because she could not secure any more funds in order to purchase more stock.

¹²⁵ Indeed, the blind faith that investors of "all Degrees, from Stars and Garters down to wooden Shoes" (*South-Sea* 16) had in the South Sea scheme is ridiculed by playwrights like Chetwood, as he has Plowshare inquire about what the company actually does well after he has already invested all his money into the scheme: "But pray, Sir, where is this same South-Sea, that all this Riches come from? it's no where in England is it?" (21). Plowshare is so eager to buy into the scheme that he is even willing to invest all he has, "but Five Hundred Guineas in the World, beside a small Farm ith' Country, which...[he is willing to] well as soon as...[he] can" (17). The Irish Mackdonald of the same play also claims to have "sold aw my Patatoe Beds in Ireland, and have brought my Money to put into the South-Sea, indeed, or some Bubbles" (13). Such characters were so concerned about not losing out on the opportunity to make money, they were easily duped by cheating stock-jobbers — the sharpers and "Biters" of Chetwood's title.

Exchange Alley) — becomes by mid-year a very rational, loss-prevention strategy to avoid being outdone.

“Losses Loom Larger than Gains”

Considering what seemed to many during the South Sea Bubble, and perhaps seem to us still, to be the public’s uncontrollable propensity for gambling and financial risk-taking, it would prove illuminating here to consider more in depth Kahneman and Tversky’s Nobel Prize-winning theory regarding loss aversion.¹²⁶ According to Kahneman and Tversky, many of our decisions and behaviours are influenced by cognitive heuristics that have evolved over time. That is, human beings oftentimes conveniently fall back on built-in problem-solving algorithms in order to make time-sensitive decisions. Interestingly, and indeed most relevant to my exploration in this chapter, Kahneman and Tversky have discovered that the type of decision an individual makes in a particular situation is often strongly affected by how the proposition is framed. Even when the probabilities are the same, if the language used in presenting the choice-scenario is framed in terms of potential gain — that is, an increase to benefits and/or resources — individuals are less likely to take on great risks in order to achieve such gains. However, if a situation is couched in terms of loss — that is, a decrease in the existing resources that one has — then human beings tend to be more willing to take on greater risks in order to avoid such losses. In other words, how

¹²⁶ Kahneman and Tversky’s Prospect Theory is centrally a theory about how people make decisions. Developed as a theory which countered the prevailing economic theory at the time, Kahneman and Tversky proposed that people make decisions not simply based on the overall outcome of a decision, but predictably based on how the choices are presented — in terms of gains or losses. See “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk.”

individuals perceive the situation at hand — which is very much dependent upon how circumstances are framed and understood — influences how much risk they are willing to tolerate.

An effective example that Kahneman and Tversky offer to explain this phenomenon is outlined in their seminal 1979 paper, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk.” After subjects were first rewarded with 1000 Israeli pounds, subjects were then given the choice between a 50% chance of gaining another 1000 Israeli pounds (with the potential for a 2000 pound total) or 100% chance of gaining 500 Israeli pounds (with the potential here for a 1500 pound total). Eighty-four percent of subjects chose the second option which offered them certain gains, even though the reward was the lesser amount.¹²⁷ However, when subjects were presented the option of either a 50% chance of losing 1000 Israeli pounds after having been given 2000 (the net gain being 1000 Israeli pounds) or a 100% chance of losing 500 after, again, having been accorded 2000 (the net gain here being 1500 Israeli pounds as in the first scenario), subjects overwhelmingly preferred the riskier first option which — although exposed them to the possibility of losing half of their 2000 Israeli pounds — offered them a chance to avoid losing any portion of that 2000. From such experiments, Kahneman and Tversky found strong evidence for the impact of how a scenario is presented — that is, how it is framed in terms of a potential gain or a potential loss — on how human beings think about risk-taking and whether or not we are more willing to take on risk. Of course, as Kahneman and Tversky go on to make clear, the “reference point” (274) for such gains and losses can be shifted depending upon how gains and losses are “coded”:

¹²⁷ Another one of Kahneman and Tversky’s theories in this paper was to establish the validity of what they call the certainty effect, where subjects tend to choose the more certain option over the probable one.

[T]here are situations in which gains and losses are coded relative to an expectation or aspiration level that differs from the status quo. For example, an unexpected tax withdrawal from a monthly pay check is experienced as a loss, not as a reduced gain. Similarly, an entrepreneur who is weathering a slump with greater success than his competitors may interpret a small loss as a gain, relative to the larger loss he had reason to expect. (286)

Ultimately, what Kahneman and Tversky's theory highlights is that human beings are strongly motivated to avoid loss, even choosing riskier options and tolerating increased risks in order to avoid potential loss.

Advancing this theory further, psychologists Sarah Hill and David Buss have considered Kahneman and Tversky's theory in relation to social competition — that is, how one behaves with regard to risk-taking in scenarios of gains and losses when such scenarios include the known actions and payoffs of one's social competitors. In their article, "Risk and Relative Social Rank: Positional Concerns and Risky Shifts in Probabilistic Decision-Making," Hill and Buss tested possible amendments to Kahneman and Tversky's theory by "reword[ing their questions] such that they would be more likely to activate decision-making procedures designed to reason about social competition for access to resources" (222). Hill and Buss claim that accounting for peer competition would "be more ecologically valid" (222) and would reflect a more accurate account of real-life decision-making. What Hill and Buss found was that, indeed, "individuals are increasingly willing to choose risky outcomes when doing so offers the possibility of outperforming their social competitors" (224). Further still, Hill and Buss argue, "preferences for risky paths to success may reflect contextually-specific risky shifts occurring in response to the threat of being out-competed.

This insight has important implications for understanding risk in a variety of domains, especially in domains related to mating success” (225). Indeed, as Angela G. Pirlott and David P. Schmitt have explained: “Both men and women become more unrestricted [in their sociosexual attitudes] in cultures with female-biased sex ratios [i.e. more females], and because effects [of unrestricted sociosexual attitudes] are greater among women [relative to men], the size of sex differences in sociosexuality is smaller in female-biased sex ratio environments” (195). In other words, in populations where women must compete more aggressively with each other in order to secure a mate, women become more willing to engage in short-term sexual engagements and take on associative risks to win a male partner.¹²⁸

As I explained in my introductory chapter, because of differences in biological costs and risks that men and women incur with regard to mating and reproduction (again, for example, differences in the degree of parental investment; asymmetry in the life of men’s and women’s reproductive years; the extent of paternity certainty; differences in reproductive variability), we have evolved many distinct strategies to manage such costs and risks (i.e. in general, a higher degree of female choosiness versus a higher degree of male competitiveness; different standards of mate selectivity in women compared with men; variations in mate-switching and mate-guarding behaviour; and differences in the propensity to resort to violence and coercion). Intrasexual competition for mates within a specific ecological niche can further compel strategies used against sexual rivals. And as I will explore below, intrasexual competition between women figures heavily in Haywood’s debut novel.

¹²⁸ See Campbell’s *A Mind of Her Own* and Hrdy’s *Mother Nature* on female intrasexual competition.

Specifically, taking into view the socio-historical context of early eighteenth-century markets together with Kahneman and Tversky's theory on loss aversion and Hill and Buss's extended findings on social competition, I believe, casts new light on a key female character in *Love in Excess*. Indeed, Alovisa may be one of Haywood's most compelling female characters — one who behaves boldly and aggressively all to pursue the prize, Count D'elmont. Alovisa is unrelenting in her tactics to not lose him to any sexual "rival" (*Love in Excess* 41). Instead of interpreting Alovisa as a troublesome female character who is overly desirous and overly sexual, driven to madness by her seemingly uncontrollable passion for D'elmont, I believe it is possible to consider her conduct to be a response to the particular kind of sexually competitive environment of which D'elmont is the centre — an environment which Haywood's readers would have recognized as similar to the competitive frenzy that South Sea stock instigated.¹²⁹ While it is certainly not my intention to argue that D'elmont represents South Sea stock, I believe the real-life events of the South Sea Bubble itself and the thinking inspired by the event potentially reveal much about the competitive sexual market that Haywood depicts in her first novel. To state plainly, I argue that much of Alovisa's actions stem from her fear of losing D'elmont to her rivals, and her desire to avoid losing her prize compels her to engage in higher risk sexual strategies.

¹²⁹ For critics who insist that Alovisa's behaviour is due to her excessive sexual appetite, see Ballaster's *Seductive Forms*; Bowers's "Collusive Resistance" and *Force or Fraud*; Black's "Trading Sex for Secrets"; Potter's "The Language of Feminised Sexuality"; and Lubey's "Erotic Interiors" and *Excitable Imaginations*.

All to Pursue a Name

Haywood opens *Love in Excess* with the return of Count D'elmont to Paris after having demonstrated great "valour" (37) and bravery during the War of the Spanish Succession — feasibly gesturing to the beginnings of South Sea mania. In the world of this novel, of course, D'elmont represents the perfect specimen of male achievement, not only having established his military value in the war, but also being one who possesses "beauty," "gaity," "and the unequalled charms of his conversation, making him the admiration of both sexes" (37). Indeed as Haywood makes clear using language of Exchange Alley, "whilst those of his [D'elmont's] own [sex] strove which should *gain* the largest *share* of his friendship; the other [sex], vented fruitless wishes, and in secret, cursed that custom which forbids women to make a declaration of their thoughts" (37 — emphasis mine). From the very beginning, then, Haywood's readers are to understand that D'elmont represents the ultimate prize, causing a whirlwind of sexual, conjugal, fraternal, social, even pecuniary desires as he enters the novel.

Alovisa, the central female character in the entire first part of Haywood's novel, is one among the many desirous women who aim at "gaining" such "a conquest" (38). Importantly, Alovisa is a *feme sole* free from any authority over the management of her half of her inherited estate, of which she is co-heir with her sister, Ansellina. D'elmont, however, is indifferent to Alovisa's beauty and charms and affords her no more affection than he does other women. Insulted by this indifference, Alovisa decides to compel D'elmont into action by enticing him with a love letter she sends to him anonymously. Being anonymous, however, D'elmont mistakenly attributes the authorship to another — the young and innocent Amena — and decides to pursue this ingénue, believing the letter guarantees a sexual conquest. Driven by sexual jealousy and the fear of losing D'elmont to Amena, Alovisa

quickly decides to take further action, even risking her identity being exposed by writing yet another letter in order to “direct his erring search” (43). Despite admitting to herself that “even the vilest of my sex would blush at” (44) the boldness of her conduct — that behaviour which would put at risk her very “honour” (44) — Alovisa refuses to lose D’elmont to her “rival’s happiness” (45). It is her ultimate intention, as she again anonymously informs D’elmont, to “sacrifice all to purchase the glorious trophy” (45) that is D’elmont.¹³⁰ Indeed, it is the very intensity of Alovisa’s desire to “gain” D’elmont that drives forward much of Haywood’s story in Part I. After a series of narrative twists packed with emotional turmoil, especially on Alovisa’s part, this heroine’s identity is eventually revealed to D’elmont. Attracted not so much to the quality of Alovisa’s person, but seduced by the rank and riches of her station — “Alovisa’s quality and vast possessions, promising a full gratification” of his “Ambition” (76) — D’elmont agrees to marry Alovisa, ending the first part of this novel with Alovisa’s happy conquest: “secure of that” — “the possession of her charming husband” (84). However, as Haywood’s narrator informs her reader, “Fortune...now...turn[s] her wheel” (84). As we prepare for Alovisa’s downfall, a new heroine rises — Melliora steps into Haywood’s narrative and manages, unlike all others, to capture D’elmont’s very heart.

Daughter of Monsieur Frankville — D’elmont’s guardian during his youth — the young and beautiful, “the matchless Melliora” (85) becomes D’elmont’s temporary ward upon Monsieur Frankville’s death. Importantly, having taken “her education in a monastery”

¹³⁰ It is not surprising that Haywood’s language here echoes that of Elizabeth Molesworth and Chetwood’s Plowshare in their willingness to go to extremes to find enough funds to purchase stock: “but I have but Five Hundred Guineas in the World, beside a small Farm ith’ Country, which I’ll sell as soon as I can get a Chapman, so that I have not enough to buy” (*South-Sea* 17).

(85), Melliora is different from women like Alovisa who populate Haywood's novel. As Haywood explains to her reader, Melliora is "intirely unacquainted with the gayeties of a court, or the conversation of the beau monde" (85). Understandably, D'elmont is meant to protect Melliora from "fall[ing] into those snares which are daily laid for innocence" (85). In other words, he is meant to protect Melliora from the very likes of D'elmont himself.

More than ever, Alovisa views her husband to be in her possession. When D'elmont begins to behave with indifference to her conjugal affections, she once again suspects another "rival" and is driven not only to seek out her identity, but also, as she insists, to "have the satisfaction of dragging with me to perdition, the vile, the cursed she that has undone me. I'll be revenged on her..." (155). The loss of D'elmont would be much more considerable to Alovisa now after marriage. And as Part II of the novel advances, Alovisa becomes increasingly obsessed with finding out whom D'elmont really loves. Just as D'elmont begins to create his own schemes of securing Melliora's person — even scheming with his co-conspirator, Baron D'espernay, to steal into Melliora's bedchamber one evening in order to rape her — Haywood adds further intrigue by giving D'elmont yet another female admirer, the Baron's own sister. Melantha is a coquette who wantonly pursues D'elmont by intentionally taking Melliora's place the night of the intended rape, hoping to seduce D'elmont into submitting to her charms instead. In yet another twist, Alovisa begins seducing the Baron himself in order to encourage him to reveal D'elmont's secret love. Although Alovisa intends all along in such scenes to renege on her promises of sexual exchange — again, as Black observes, of trading sex for secrets — what is most revealing is that Alovisa is so afraid of losing D'elmont that she is willing to take on tremendous risks. Indeed, Alovisa uses the promise of sex to lure an entirely self-serving man in order to avoid

letting a sexual rival steal away her husband. Of course, the Baron sees through Alovisa's "game[s]" (Black 217) and so does not easily agree to reveal Melliora's identity.¹³¹ Seeing that Alovisa is driven to an "impatience...raised to the highest degree" (*Love in Excess* 147), the Baron makes a fateful attempt to persuade Alovisa into fulfilling their agreed upon sexual contract — which, again, seems to mimic the language of Exchange Alley: "do not, oh charming Alovysa think me mercenary, if I presume to set a price upon it [the name of Alovisa's rival], which I confess too high, yet nothing less can purchase'" (147). And in her last bid "to win him to her purpose" (147), Alovisa replies: "No price...can be too dear to buy my peace, nor recompence too great for such a service'" (147). Alovisa's burning desire to learn her rival's name in order to prevent the loss of her husband ultimately sets her behaviour at an unsustainable level of risk. In the end, her dangerous activities cost Alovisa her life and at the very hands of the husband she risked all to avoid losing.

Alovisa is tormented over thoughts of having to relinquish D'elmont, especially when she perceives her rivals as "rob[bing] [her] of him" (141). This distress prompts her to act quickly on her desires, gratifying them immediately, regardless of the extreme costs she will bear. "[T]he impatient Alovisa" (38) behaves rashly as she cannot tolerate "delay" for even "a moment," believing "a moment is too much; the smallest particle of undivided time" that leaves open the opportunity for her "rival" to gain the advantage (141). From the start, unwilling to wait for D'elmont to approach her, Alovisa initiated their affair by engaging in the risky act of "mak[ing] a declaration" of her desires even though

¹³¹ Importantly, Black has argued that the Baron and Alovisa engage in a bargain which on the surface may seem like a simple agreement of exchange of sex for knowledge, but that is actually about a far more complex contest of wills between two knowing, clever, and savvy individuals who try to outwit each other as they edge towards the brink from which there is no return.

“custom...forbid...women” (37) to do so. Impatient to discover the identity of D’elmont’s secret love, Alovisa played at seducing the Baron in a dangerous game of “unwilling willingness” (147). And in one of the final scenes we have with this character, Haywood’s reader is confronted with an Alovisa in extreme desperation. Indeed, she cannot think past being outdone by her romantic rival. Before hatching the plan that ultimately leads to her demise, Alovisa makes her final bargain with the Baron, agreeing to have sex with him as long as he first discloses the identity of her adversary. However, immediately after agreeing to the terms of their arrangement, she thinks about what she has just agreed to and instantly feels regret. During this short but revealing scene, Alovisa struggles with what will happen. She understands very clearly that she is putting her reputation and honour at risk: “Shall I forgoe my honour — quit my virtue, — sully my yet unspotted name with endless infamy — and yield my soul to sin, to shame, and horror, only to know what I can ne’er redress? If D’elmont hates me now, will he not do so still?” (155) And yet, as Haywood tells her reader, “when she had been a minute or two in this temper” (155), a stronger force pushes her to defy the dangers:

“What must I tamely bear it then? — Endure the flouts of the malicious world, and the contempt of every saucy girl, who while she pities, scorns my want of charms — Shall I neglected tell my tale of wrongs...’till my despair shall reach my rival’s ears, and crown her adulterous joys with double pleasure. — Wretch that I am! — Fool that I am, *to hesitate....*” (155 — emphasis mine)

During her final moments of contemplation, Alovisa remains determined not to allow her sexual rival to win. Resigned to the possibility that she has already lost D’elmont for herself, she is determined not to lose him to another; reconciled to the fact that her husband does not

love her, she is determined that he shall not love anyone else. And this is key to understanding the degree to which Alovisa will go in order not to lose to a sexual competitor. Indeed, Alovisa weighs the avoidance of loss to a rival more heavily than the value of her own “honour” and “virtue” (155). In this way, her behaviour is centrally motivated by intrasexual competition.

While critics like Ballaster and Bowers have focussed on Alovisa’s sexual desire as the motivating force behind her increasingly aggressive conduct throughout the novel — namely, that Alovisa’s rapacious passion for D’elmont is what drives her to recklessness — my argument here takes together Kahneman and Tversky’s theory on loss aversion with perspectives on how people’s behaviour changes when confronted by sexual rivals to reveal new complexities to this key female character. Indeed, without considering how loss aversion and intrasexual competition affects our behaviour, women like Alovisa can only (and falsely) serve as a cautionary example of what overly sexual women may become. Instead, these theories help clarify how the risks we knowingly and willingly take up may actually be quite rational.

And yet, the impulsiveness of characters like Mrs. Cravemore, Chetwood’s ladies of quality, and Alovisa is still problematic because their fervent desires for instant gratification — whether from financial, sexual, or social conquests — overrides the importance of safeguarding their integrity. While it is indeed thrilling for Haywood’s reader to be absorbed in Alovisa’s adventures, Haywood recognizes that there is more at risk than just losing to a competitor. The real costs of engaging in risky sexual behaviour — in this case, engaging in sex with a man who does not commit — is ruinous, as Haywood illustrates with Alovisa’s consequential death. In a similar circumstance to Haywood’s Fantomina, Melantha, too, is

literally left holding the baby after her veiled tryst with D'elmont. Melantha's fate could have fallen on Melliora as Melantha was Melliora's proxy — her actual stand-in during a moment of sexual gratification. Melantha's resulting pregnancy highlights for Haywood's reader the very real threat of not only engaging in sexual risk-taking, but also the potentially ignominious consequences of being motivated to gratify one's desires without hesitation.

“Warm and Full of Amorous Desires”

Three short years after the publication of *Love in Excess*, Haywood wrote another novel, *Lasselia; or, The Self-Abandoned*. By the time of its release, Haywood's infamy perhaps necessitated her to preface this work with an explanation about why she writes amatory fiction: “My Design in writing this little *Novel* (as well as those I have formerly publish'd) being only to remind the unthinking Part of the World, how dangerous it is to give way to Passion” (*Lasselia* 105). In one of the first private exchanges between D'elmont and Melliora, the two characters debate the nature of love. Here, Melliora insists “how little reason has to do in the affairs of love” — namely, “that sort of love...which hurries people on to an immediate gratification of their desires, tho' never so prejudicial to themselves, or the person they pretend to love” (109). It is precisely this unwillingness of most people to soberly “think” (109) and give “way to due reflection” (109), Melliora believes, that lead them on to the path of regret. Upon being repeatedly accosted by D'elmont, Haywood has Melliora plead again and again with him to take pause and “think” (117) through how “a moments joy” (117) will impact her life — “a crime” (110) of his “cruel, fatal passion” (117) that “would justly render [her]...contemptible to mankind” (110).

Undoubtedly, purely lustful female characters like Melantha and the Italian widow

Ciamara (who enters the novel after Alovisa's death) represent "the unthinking Part of the World" who serve as harbingers of the kinds of fates that lay waiting for women who demand immediate sexual satisfaction. While Ciamara certainly echoes sentiments expressed by Alovisa about not willing to wait a "moment" longer to be sexually fulfilled, through Ciamara, Haywood creates a character who does not afford authority or credit to any kind of social or legal code that would bind her. Ciamara is seemingly careless and fearless of the kinds of risks to which she exposes herself. As she tries to seduce the now celibate D'elmont:

"Is this an hour to preach of virtue? — Married, — betrothed, — engaged by love or law, what hinders but this moment you may be mine, this moment, well improved, might give us joys to baffle a whole age of woe; make us, at once, forget our troubles past, and by its sweet remembrance, scorn those to come".... (224)

As one "wild to gratify her furious wishes" (225), Ciamara perhaps represents the future Melantha, as they both pursue a "passion which aims chiefly at enjoyment" and "fleeting pleasure," disregarding any "stings of guilt and shame [that] remain" (224). And yet, Haywood would remind her readers of the dire fates of those who not only refuse to consider the risks to which they expose themselves, but those who also scoff at women for affecting an "unbecoming demureness" that moves "directly opposite to the *beau-monde*" (120). Haywood especially cautions her female readers to "think" beyond the immediate "moment" and consider the strategy of suspending sexual gratification. Stressing this point, Haywood concludes Ciamara's narrative by having her commit suicide because of her unrequited passion. More generous with Melantha's fortunes, Haywood seems to draw to a

close Melantha's coquettish adventures by allowing her the "good fortune" of being married off to an unsuspecting husband who does not question the birth of Melantha's "child...seven months after her wedding" (159).

Through a character like Melantha, Haywood especially highlights — in this, her first novel — the social and biological costs of unconsidered sexual congress. This female figure underscores how important it is for women to curb their inclination for immediate sexual gratification. After all, Melantha's pregnancy is a result of her decision to steal Melliora's identity under cover of night — "resolving to supply her place in the other" (140) — the very evening D'elmont acts upon the Baron's "contrivance" (136) to finally overcome Melliora with a scheme that, the Baron is convinced, "cannot fail to render all her peevish virtue frustrate and make her happy in her own despite" (136). Via Melantha, Haywood suggests that unrestrained and reckless pursuits of lustful desires with little regard of the perilous path on which such sexual risk-taking sets women, in essence, enables such women to become complicit in their own ruin. As Bowers has pointed out, Haywood does not criticize women for having erotic feelings, nor does she deny women sexual fulfillment. Rather, what is central for Haywood is "the way desire is expressed" ("Collusive Resistance" 49).

Of course for Haywood, the ways in which Alovisa, Ciamara, and Melantha all express their sexual impatience is severely problematic as a model of representation to other women. While the aristocratic status held by both Alovisa and Ciamara clearly represent *femes sole* who have the financial and legal means to act on their own — and while a woman like Melantha may have the rank and monetary resources to persuade another man to assume the place of a husband — young women like Melliora, her predecessor Amena, and many of Haywood's female readers do not have the luxury of affording such "a mighty price for ruin"

(91). And yet, what are these women to do at those precise “moments” when “a guilty pleasure rises” (91) and they find themselves aroused? How are women supposed to prevent yielding to desire when “all nature seem[s] to favour” (58) their seduction? As Haywood proposes early on in the novel: “What now could [a woman like] poor Amena do, surrounded with so many powers, attacked by such a charming force without, betrayed by tenderness within? [When] Vertue and pride, the guardians of her honour fle[e] from her breast, and...[leave] her to her foe” (58)?¹³² And how can women refuse sexual fulfillment when their bodies are eager, signalling to them with a “panting heart beat[ing] measures of consent, ...heaving breast swell[ing] to be pressed by his, and every pulse confess[ing] a wish to yield” (58)? In short, what is a woman to do when there is “but a moment betwixt her and ruine” (58)?

As I explore in the following section, Haywood’s solution to this dilemma is revealed through the central heroine of Part II, Melliora. Through this character, Haywood refocusses her readers in the second half of the novel and directs them to a strategy of not acting impulsively. Haywood does so by reframing women’s choices — resetting the narrative — so that the possibility of delaying gratification is not only viable and necessary, but desirable and pleasurable. While at one end our intense sexual desires push us to act upon our inclinations, and at the other end the “thinking” (109) part of us compels us to halt, I believe that from this tension emerges the erotic possibility of the deferred moment itself becoming climactic. That is, at the moment a woman finds herself “Trembling and panting, ’twixt Desire and Fear” (*Lasselia* 119) arises the prospect of locating erotic pleasure in the suspended moment. Where Alovisa cannot think past immediate fulfillment, Haywood

¹³² We must remember that Amena only narrowly escapes the same possible fate as Melantha, who is left unwed and pregnant.

constantly defers Melliora's gratification — and therefore her readers' gratification — drawing out the pleasure of the moment so that those deferred moments become climactic ones for her reader. By building suspension upon suspension of sexual gratification through continuous delays and hindrances — a sustained campaign of continual deferrals — *Love in Excess*, I insist, serves to satisfy its readers' sexual desires even while this narrative strategy in many ways supplants the experiences of actual sexual engagement itself. Through delaying gratification and employing reading as a deferring device, Haywood draws out the erotic experience. Haywood's story, therefore, reveals the possibility of a more controlled, deliberate realization of desire. Through her narrative deferrals of the sexual moment, Haywood not only highlights the importance of deferral because of the tremendous biological and social costs to women, but also suggests the erotic potential of deferral itself. Even as Haywood warns against impulsive sexual risk-taking, Haywood appropriates the thrilling aspects of risk to imagine another way for women to achieve sexual fulfillment.

Forever at the Brink of Ruin

What scholars like Bowers, Lubey, Potter, and Drury generally refer to as the dream scene is undoubtedly the most erotic passage that Haywood's readers encounter in *Love in Excess*. In this episode, D'elmont is driven by his uncontainable passion for Melliora and sneaks into her room one night with his thoughts "bent on...gaining Melliora," resolved on "whatever method he should make use of to satisfie it" (114). Essentially, this dream scene verges on being a rape scene. Coming upon her that evening, D'elmont finds Melliora asleep. However, "gazing on her as she lay" he cannot bring himself to violate and "wrong such innocence" and was resolved to "leave her as he found her" (116). And yet, we are told

by the narrator, “whatever dominion, honour and virtue may have over our waking thoughts, ’tis certain that they fly from the closed eyes”: “Desire, with watchful diligence repelled, returns with greater violence in unguarded sleep, and overthrows the vain efforts of day” (116). To be sure, for Melliora, “[i]magination at this time was active, and brought the charming Count much nearer than indeed he was” (116). While asleep, Melliora dreams about satisfying her sexual desires with D’elmont. Just as he is set to leave Melliora untouched, we are told Melliora suddenly “throw[s] her arm (still slumbering) about his neck and in a soft and languishing voice, cr[ies] out, ‘Oh D’elmont, cease, cease to charm, to such a height — Life cannot bear these raptures. — And then again, embracing him yet closer, — O! Too, too lovely Count — extatick ruiner!’” (116) Hearing Melliora articulate her latent desires, her uninhibited expression of passion, D’elmont is shocked (as is Haywood’s reader, no doubt).

Although resolved earlier not to advance upon Melliora, D’elmont now finds encouragement in her unconscious confession and, as Haywood’s narrator tells us, can see no reason why he should not proceed with satisfying their mutual lust: “for I believe there are very few men, how stoical soever they pretend to be, that in such a tempting circumstance would not have lost all thoughts, but those, which the present opportunity inspired” (117). But just at the moment of consummation, however, Melliora wakes. Confused about where she is and what has happened, Melliora finds D’elmont dangerously close to seizing upon her “virtue” (117). When she begs him to stop, he asks her why he should not stake his claim, given her “equal wishes,” with her “love confest, and every thought, desire”: “I know thou art mine! All mine!” (117). Although Melliora urges D’elmont to “hold...[and] forbear,” even imploring “by that love you plead, before my honour, I’ll resign my life!” D’elmont

persists and is only further stimulated to pursue his lust: ““By Heaven...I will this night be master of my wishes, no matter what to morrow may bring forth”” (117). Only by chance, and Haywood’s narrative skill, is Melliora saved by a knock at the door when D’elmont “was just on the point of making good what he had vowed” (118).

As moments like these illustrate — that is, when women are pressed to recognize a tension within themselves, “a racking kind of extasie” (122) — we can imagine a kind of erotic pleasure surfacing in a manner perhaps unexpected for both Haywood’s heroine and her reader. Importantly, Haywood continually interrupts such impassioned episodes in *Love in Excess*. This dream scene is the second time carnal intentions are thwarted, in fact reaching a total of five deferrals before D’elmont and Melliora actually consummate their love — and only after being married — at the end of the novel.¹³³ Haywood delays sexual union between these two characters in scene after scene, escalating eroticism to a seemingly crowning moment that is again interrupted, again foiled, again disappointed. Erotic potential becomes heightened in this way through a building up of anxiety and anticipation, suspense and speculation, waiting and wanting. Indeed, this is felt by the novel’s characters and readers alike — an arousal sustained, a temptation emboldened. Where characters do achieve gratification through sexual intercourse, where suspense does not prolong the sexual experience — as in the couplings of D’elmont and Alovisa, D’elmont and Melantha, and even the honourable pairing between D’elmont’s brother, Brilliant, and Alovisa’s sister, Ansellina — Haywood’s audience does not gain the same kind of reading pleasure as when Haywood’s reader is imaginatively engaged in the continually frustrated episodes between D’elmont and Melliora. Undeniably revealing is when D’elmont and Melliora finally come

¹³³ Haywood’s intention is not for women to opt out of the mating market altogether like Amena. Melliora, after all, does fulfill her desires for D’elmont in the end.

together at the end of *Love in Excess* — surely, a moment that motivated both characters throughout most of the novel. The event is nothing more than a throwaway instant for Haywood. Indeed, the ultimate union between D’elmont and Melliora fails to serve as the apex of arousal or pleasure in Haywood’s erotic tale.

In claiming that it is possible to find delayed sexual fulfillment climactic, I realize, seems perhaps confounding since deferring climactic moments cannot logically then be climactic moments as well — that while delayed moments may be pleasurable, they cannot stand in for the kinds of gratification we get at the very peak of narrative or sexual engagements. However, we must remember, Haywood does not in fact locate the height of female sexual gratification at the moment of consummation. This detail certainly supports one function of her erotic narratives — namely, to convince her female readers that sexual pleasure can be found outside the final sexual act of intercourse. For Haywood’s reader, it is precisely the drawn out moments, the agonizing delay of consummation between characters — even the tortured anticipation of pleasure — that offers Haywood’s readers orgasmic possibilities. Certainly, as Potter rightly emphasizes, Haywood does not adhere to conventional developments of narrative that are perhaps seen as more masculine — that is, the structure of most plots which abide by the “introduction-conflict-suspense-climax-denouement form” where “single-climax” (“Language of Feminised Sexuality” 175) narrative models reflect more male orgasmic experiences. Haywood, Potter suggests, offers a more “feminised structure of multiple climaxes” as evidenced in the “many completed sexual encounters in the narrative” (175) as enacted by Frankville and Camilla, and D’elmont and Melliora. However, Potter goes along with Richetti and Ballaster in assuming that these numerous sexual episodes — while they may be climactic for the characters themselves —

inherently then also serve as climactic episodes for Haywood's reader, culminating in a shared experience of the "female orgasm" (176). On the contrary, I would argue, such events are only secondary to the erotic pleasures of those delayed sexual moments in *Love in Excess* — those impeded amorous instances that hang on a character's pulsating eagerness.¹³⁴ While such moments are tortuous for characters like D'elmont and Melliora, they are ultimately most rewarding for Haywood's readers.

Haywood certainly reconceptualizes conventional narrative plot structures, as Potter claims. However, I would insist, Haywood does so not only by way of *Love in Excess's* "multiclimactic structure" ("Language of Feminised Sexuality" 176). By relocating the pinnacle of the erotic moment to the delayed event — in effect, *shifting conventional climactic moments back and embedding them in acts of deferral* — Haywood restructures the reading experiences of her erotic tales. Essentially, Haywood allows her reader to achieve heights of pleasure even before her characters do; her reader's enjoyment precedes her character's gratification. Hence, Haywood manages to satiate her audience's desires because she uncouples their experiences from those of her inflamed yet tormented characters. For

¹³⁴ While a number of couples do engage in sexual intercourse — like Frankville and Camilla, as do D'elmont and Melantha, as well as D'elmont and his wife Alovisa — Potter's and Ballaster's readings of Melliora's dream scene assume that this female heroine reaches orgasm in her sleep. While it is clear that Melliora is experiencing an erotic dream in this episode, it is perhaps questionable whether Melliora actually reaches full orgasm. Even if Melliora does reach orgasm, I would argue that it is more important to note that Haywood in fact directs her readers' attention in this scene to focus on D'elmont's behaviour, not Melliora's. That is, Haywood's reader is meant to be absorbed by D'elmont's choice of whether or not to take advantage of a clear sexual opportunity in the scene, and not fixated on Melliora's supposed afterglow. Because Haywood intends her reader to take up D'elmont's perspective in this scene — as she has us follow her hero, "hot and foaming as he was" (115), into Melliora's bedroom to discover with him this sleeping, vulnerable figure — our feelings of sexual impatience are shared with him, not her.

Haywood, reading erotic tales ultimately serves to quench those needs that would be indecorous for most women to act upon in real life.

In an early private encounter between D'elmont and Melliora, D'elmont catches Melliora reading Ovid's poetry after having emerged from her bath, "lying on a couch in a most charming dissabillee" (*Love in Excess* 107), unguarded and unaware that D'elmont is watching her. Coming upon her, D'elmont asks how it is that she can "trust...[herself] with so dangerous an amusement" (108) given that she had made arguments the evening before about how "these sorts of books were, as it were, preparatives to love, and by their softning influence melted the soul, and made it fit for amorous impressions" (108). Indeed, the popular social concern that Haywood conveys here is that "once the fancy is fixed on a real object, there will be no need of auxillary [sic] forces, the dear idea will spread itself thro' every faculty of the soul, and in a moment inform us better, than all the writings of the most experienced poets, could do in an age" (108). By way of this dialogue, notes William Warner, Haywood seems to acknowledge the concern that:

the popularity of novels produce a new specter within discourses of cultural criticism: that of the reader as pleasure-seeking automaton, liable to an imitative acting-out of novelistic plots — through rash elopements, erotic intrigue — or the displacement of these passions into a debilitating masturbation. (*Licensing Entertainment* 126)

Novel reading itself, of course, has been controversial from the start. As scholars like G.J. Barker-Benfield, Warner, Ballaster, Bowers, and Lubey have explored, women's reading of novels during this period, in particular, set off fears of the visceral, fleshly,

stimulating effects of reading practices awakening women to the pleasures of the body.¹³⁵ As Kate Williams states: “Declarations that fiction possessed the power to arouse the reader into a form of sexual pleasure permeated the marketing of the early eighteenth-century novel” (309). For Haywood — again, one of the Fair Triumvirate, along with Behn and Manley, who would later be implicated in the production of novels that seemed to purposely encourage readers to experience the erotics of reading, as we have seen with Pope’s scathing depiction in *The Dunciad* — the controversy surrounding women’s reading is not something Haywood shies away from, as Warner has observed. Even in her debut novel, Haywood seems to give voice to the kinds of people who would read novels like hers, as Warner claims, “allow[ing] her heroine [Melliora] to become a figure for the general reader she would seduce” (*Licensing Entertainment* 119).

However, as Haywood clarifies in her preface to *Lasselia*, her “Design” in novel writing is to “*improve* the Minds of...Readers” and, as such, hopes that they will:

excuse the too great Warmth, which may perhaps, appear in some particular Pages, for without the *Expression* being invigorated in some measure

¹³⁵ See G.J. Barker-Benfield’s *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*; Warner’s article “Formulating Fiction” and *Licensing Entertainment*; Ballaster’s *Seductive Forms*; Bowers’s “Collusive Resistance” and *Force or Fraud*; Lubey’s “Erotic Interiors” and *Excitable Imaginations* for studies on the impact of reading novels. See also Rebecca Tierney-Hynes’s “Fictional Mechanics: Haywood, Reading, and the Passions”; Adrian Johns’s chapter “The Physiology of Reading: Print and the Passions” in his *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*; Michael McKeon’s *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*; Jacqueline Pearson’s *Women’s Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation*; and Carrie Shanafelt’s “Vicarious Sex and the Vulnerable Eighteenth-Century Reader.”

proportionate to the *Subject*, 'twou'd be impossible for a Reader to be sensible how far it touches him, or how probable it is that he is falling into those

Inadvertencies which the Examples I relate wou'd caution him to avoid. (105)

While critics should be suspicious of how genuine Haywood is here, I think Haywood does gesture at another purpose to reading novels. Even as Haywood warns against impulsive sexual risk-taking, urging her female readers to delay actual gratification because of dire social and physiological costs, Haywood understands the natural compulsion of women's sexual desires and so supplies gratification through her amorous narratives. Haywood suggests that novel reading is a way to manage real-life sexual risks by allowing women to explore these natural feelings in a contained and controlled space. In other words, Haywood seems to intimate the possibility that amorous fiction can serve as a deferring device. Just as she envisions the possibility of finding pleasure in delay, Haywood authorizes the use of erotic narratives as devices of delay in order to find pleasure, allowing her readers to imaginatively engage in the thrilling pleasures of risky sex itself, all the while safeguarded from actual erotic engagement. Indeed, reading permits more control over the speed with which we engage with erotic content. Because we can pause, stop, even linger upon amorous scenes — reading and re-reading those most rapturous moments — repeating and sustaining our indulgence with the narrative, Haywood's female readers perhaps would feel more power over their erotic experiences, a degree of control and ownership of sexual encounters that many women likely were not afforded in real-life as passions were often rushed to consummation.¹³⁶ Perhaps more importantly, time spent reading about sexual affairs is time

¹³⁶ See p. 821-822 especially of "Emotion and Narrative Fiction: Interactive Influences Before, During, and After Reading" where Raymond A. Mar et al. discuss experiments on how people engage emotionally with literary fiction during reading.

not spent in the pursuit of real-life sexual adventures.¹³⁷ As Melliora's dream scene illustrates, the power of the female sexual imagination demands engagement. Haywood's novels, then, become both safe and indulgent mechanisms. Just as Haywood found in Melantha a proxy for Melliora, Haywood finds in Melliora a proxy for her readers. However, while Melliora may find sexual delay tormenting and, crucially, must necessarily bear the cost of any carnal dealings with D'elmont, Haywood's readers are meant to find Haywood's depiction of Melliora's deferred moments rewardingly indulgent, yet without the grave costs of actual indulgence. Indeed, for Haywood's audience, "imagination shall supply that want" (*Love in Excess* 51).

As I have explored in this chapter, the specific socioeconomic conditions during the peak of the South Sea Bubble can be seen as informing the atmosphere of risk and competition in Haywood's *Love in Excess*. The fierce competitiveness of early speculative markets echoes in Haywood's depiction of how aggressive sexual contests can become between rivals. Looking to Kahneman and Tversky's theory on loss aversion as well as Hill and Buss's study on the effects of social competition, I discover new dimensions in a forceful character like Alovera, identifying the motivations behind her actions that go beyond a

¹³⁷ Some literary scholars who have argued for an adaptive function of literature see this practical purpose of consuming fiction as a reason for its success. As Judith P. Saunders has claimed:

A product of imaginative and aesthetic energies, literature offers special insight into universals of human nature. In the arena of literary make-believe, characters confront choices and difficulties mimicking those in real life, enabling readers to rehearse behavioral options, ponder social complexities, and study hypothetical life histories. From problem-solving to wish-fulfillment, art consistently engages deep-seated human concerns. ("Darwinian Literary Analysis of Sexuality" 29)

See also Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works*.

voracious female sexual desire. As a character who is alert to the presence of sexual competitors, Alovisa is primed to engage in riskier sexual strategies in order to avoid losing her sexual conquest. As a character who cannot afford the high stakes of sexual intrigues, however, Melliora is Haywood's central heroine who is meant to promote the pleasures of delaying sexual gratification to Haywood's readers. As I argue, by allowing narrative fantasies to stand in for actual sexual fulfillment, Haywood plays upon women's imaginative capabilities of deferring climactic moments, shifting erotic enjoyment to the suspended moment, and finding reward in the delay.

Where Eliza Haywood is an author who grants her female characters a degree of self-awareness to recognize their own erotic desires, the same cannot be said about Samuel Richardson — one of the most famous novelists who explores women's responses to desperately dangerous situations. And yet, as my next chapter will explore, while Richardson's purpose may have been to draw more attention to the importance of women safeguarding their sexual virtue (i.e. virginity) in the face of all circumstances, Richardson lacks an awareness of women's sexual nature, leading him to create one of the eighteenth century's most famous literary heroines who is much more deceptive and sexually risk-taking than critics thus far have acknowledged. And as Haywood would underscore through her own characterization of Richardson's Pamela, women's sexual intentions are much more complex and nuanced than Richardson realizes.

Chapter 4

The Subtle Game: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Sexual Risk-Taking Through Self-Deception

When the anonymous writer of *Pamela Censured* published his tract within six months of Samuel Richardson's initial publication of *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, it was an indignant response meant to expose Richardson's innocent claim that his *Pamela* would "cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes."¹³⁸ Agreeing with an already growing number of critics, the anonymous author writes:

...interspersed throughout the Whole, there are such *Scenes of Love*, and such *lewd Ideas*, as must fill the Youth that read them with *Sentiments* and *Desires* worse than Rochester can, and for this Reason, they will start at a gross Expression, which if nicely and artfully convey'd they'll dwell on with Rapture. Therefore I think it wholly *unfit* for *Youth*, and declare freely I would by no Means trust my *Daughters* with reading it.

(*Pamela Censured* 21)

And yet, as scholars Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor have put succinctly, *Pamela Censured* is really "pornography disguised as the moralizing exposure of pornography in moral disguise" (34).¹³⁹ Keymer and Sabor's remark here peels back the layered moral facade that

¹³⁸ According to Richardson's title page.

¹³⁹ This is certainly apparent in paragraphs like the following:

The Advances are regular, and the amorous Conflicts so agreeably and warmly depicted, that the young Gentleman Reader will at the best be tempted to rehearse some of the same Scenes with some *Pamela* or other in the Family, and the Modest

envelops both texts and gets at the heart of the “Pamela controversy” (1) — namely, the moralization of women’s sexual behaviour.

As Bradford Mudge points out, this first of Richardson’s novels was, to say the least, “popular”: “[*Pamela*] went through five editions in eight months, appeared on the stage in numerous adaptations, became both an epic poem and an opera, caused several spin-off ‘biographies’ and numerous sets of illustrations, and of course was translated into French” (186).¹⁴⁰ While *Pamela* was first published anonymously in 1740, with Richardson assuming the guise of an editor of the letters that form the bulk of the narrative, its instant success spurred Richardson on. By the end of 1741, Richardson releases his sequel *Pamela, Part II*, mostly due to his desire to exert control over the fate of his popular heroine.¹⁴¹ While *Pamela* certainly had many supporters from the moment this novel debuted, its heroine’s

Young Lady can never read the Description of Naked Breasts being run over with the Hand, and Kisses given with such Eagerness that they cling to the Lips; but her own soft Breasts must heave at the Idea and secretly sigh for the same Pressure; what then can she do when she comes to the closer Struggles of the Bed, where the tender Virgin lies panting and exposed, if not to the last Conquest, (which I think the Author hath barely avoided) at least to all the Liberties which ungoverned Hands of a determined Lover must be supposed to take? If she is contented with only wishing for the same Trial to shew the Steadiness of her Virtue it is sufficient; but if Nature should be too powerful, as Nature at Sixteen is a very formidable Enemy tho' Shame and the Censure of the World may restrain her from openly gratifying the criminal Thought, yet she privately may seek Remedies which may drive her to the most unnatural Excesses. (*Pamela Censured* 21)

¹⁴⁰ See Mudge’s *The Whore’s Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830*.

¹⁴¹ Mostly instigated by John Kelly’s follow-up, titled *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life* (1741), Richardson felt compelled to write his own sequel to *Pamela*, censuring Kelly’s narrative as a “spurious Continuation,” and promising his own readers that he was well on the way “to assert his Right to his own Plan, and to prevent such an Imposition on the Publick” (Keymer and Sabor 218).

prized virtue stirred much suspicion and distrust. In fact, Richardson's novel initiated a storm of responses and derivatives that rally their pro- or anti-Pamelist positions. As one 1750 review of Richardson's novel summarized:

There are Swarms of Moral Romances. One, of late Date, divided the World into such opposite Judgments, that some extolled it to the Stars, whilst others treated it with Contempt. Whence arose...two different Parties, *Pamelists* and *Antipamelists*. ...Some look upon this young Virgin as an Example for Ladies to follow.... Others, on the contrary, discover in it, the Behaviour of an hypocritical, crafty Girl, in her Courtship; who understands the Art of bringing a Man to her Lure. (quoted in Keymer and Sabor 8)¹⁴²

With *Pamela*, Richardson had certainly entered the debate over women's sexual conduct, with much of the pro- and anti-Pamelist rhetoric circling around Richardson's model of female sexual behaviour. And as affirmed by endorsements from figures like Aaron Hill — whose praising of Pamela as an exemplar for his daughters (Mudge 190) was most likely that to which the author of *Pamela Censured* was alluding — and Reverend Benjamin Slocock — who even espoused Richardson's image of female virtue from the pulpit (Keymer and Sabor 23) — Richardson seemed to have succeeded in his aim of creating a “new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, ...[and] promote the cause of religion and virtue” (84). However, where Richardson and his supporters saw in *Pamela* an edifying tale of feminine courage, many anti-Pamelists found a female example of one who was self-serving and duplicitous. From its first appearance, *Pamela* has been a site of

¹⁴² While this review was “published in English in 1750,” Keymer and Sabor tell us, it was in fact a “plagiarized report” that is “traceable to a Danish work of 1744” (8).

contention.

Where early critics saw Richardson's heroine as crudely ambitious, consciously using deceptive tactics to win over her master, more modern scholars, as I will explore, see the actions of a woman motivated by her repressed sexual desires for her master. I draw on such critiques to consider, instead, how Pamela's behaviour might be an unconscious strategy of self-deception that allows Pamela to pursue high levels of sexual risk-taking even while self-deception allows her to suppress the very reproductive desires that compel her risk-taking. Pamela, I claim, is not sexually ambitious but unconsciously seeks to gain an advantage in the sexual market in which she has been thrust. In other words, I argue that while Pamela herself is not sexually desirous, she unconsciously exploits her sexual appeal in terms of her mate value in order to secure an advanced social position. And Pamela's very success in winning marriage to her master, I believe, hinges on her ability to self-deceive. In this final chapter, then, I explore how Pamela engages an unconscious strategy of self-deception which allows her to increase the level of sexual risk-taking she pursues with Mr. B, without the threat of parental punishment or social ridicule. I argue that, ultimately, Pamela is self-deceived about her risk-filled situation, thereby allowing her to take on higher risks. While she and others (including Richardson's readers) may think of Pamela's specific behaviour as low risk, this iconic heroine actually engages in very high-risk sexual behaviour, with the real danger of rape at first and then the risk of having engaged in a sham marriage.

To ground my inquiry into Pamela's conduct, I primarily look to Robert Trivers's theory of self-deception in order to take into account a yet overlooked way of understanding what Pamela has managed to attain. I look into why Pamela would need to self-deceive before examining how she does so. From there I consider what self-deception as an

unconscious strategy allows her to do — that is, the ultimate function of her own deception as she faces a constant threat of rape. Indeed, it is my contention that Pamela's self-deception is not simply about an unconscious awareness of the dangers that surround her. Rather, self-deception becomes a strategy that in fact allows Pamela to compete intrasexually by affording her a conscious deniability regarding the motives behind her own behaviour that both allows her to increase the sexual risks she takes while not hazarding parental blame or disappointment, social scorn, judgement, or shame. A comparative study of Pamela with Eliza Haywood's own anti-Pamelist heroine, Syrena — who, for Haywood, is the embodiment of her scathing critique of Richardson's feminine hypocrisy — does much to reveal why Pamela would unconsciously turn to self-deceptive tactics. Indeed, not much analysis has been written that directly compares Haywood's Syrena with Richardson's Pamela. My hope, then, is that such a comparison brings back into the fold the importance of Haywood's influence on Richardson (and, in turn, Richardson's influence on Haywood) and their treatment of women's sexuality. While Richardson certainly wanted his readers to sympathize with Pamela and her ordeal, as her letters and journal expose “all his [Mr. B's] Stratagems, Attempts, Contrivances, Menaces, and Offers” (*Pamela* 374) — indeed, the torrent of sexual scheming on Mr. B's part — we must remember, however, that Pamela also seems to enact her own “pretty Counter-plottings” (374) to ward off this sexual predator. And while we are meant to focus on Pamela's defensive moves, we must not overlook Pamela's own responses to Mr. B's designs which, although seemingly innocent, ultimately serve Pamela well in securing her in a position of opportunity. As the last section of this chapter considers, Lady Davers's confrontation intends to expose Pamela's deceptive tactics as Pamela must face the threat of having fallen for a sham marriage in the second half of the

novel. While Pamela's actions do not seem to be premeditated from the beginning, I believe there is a certain development of a strategy, an unfolding of unconscious intention, poised just under the surface of Pamela's conscious realization.

Cunning Virtue

At its core, *Pamela* is a story about a fifteen-year-old servant girl who writes letters and journal entries to her parents, documenting the harrowing trials she endures at the hands of her young master, Mr. B, who becomes sexually fixated on her. After a series of assaults where Pamela escapes the clutches of the increasingly aggressive Mr. B — even enduring a kidnapping and attempts at rape — Richardson's heroine is rewarded with marriage to a converted Mr. B — a reformation that comes about after he reads Pamela's letters and journal that serve as evidence of her virtue. Her subsequent rise in rank and economic status, her reader is to understand, is a result of the steadfastness of Pamela's virtue.

Indeed, Richardson's depiction was informed by the kinds of characterizations that had come before, particularly in amatory fiction written by women like Haywood.¹⁴³ For Richardson, the expressly arousing content of narratives like Haywood's *Love in Excess* must be curtailed because of the sexual license many of her female characters modelled for her

¹⁴³ As Keymer and Sabor clarify: "Richardson's debt, in all of his novels, to amatory fiction...is obvious, yet it was a source he always refused to acknowledge. ...[Indeed] Richardson took pains to promote his work as one of an entirely different order from the novels of his predecessors, including Haywood" (84). As Catherine Ingrassia recognizes, Margaret Doody was the first to identify Haywood as a source for Richardson's writings. See Doody's *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*. See also Deborah J. Nestor's "Virtue Rarely Rewarded: Ideological Subversion and Narrative Form in Haywood's Later Fiction"; John Richetti's *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*; and William Warner's "The Elevation of the Novel in England: Hegemony and Literary History."

young readers. Where Haywood's *Melliora* resists the sexual advances of her guardian, D'elmont, by confessing her own ignited passion for him, Pamela is able to resist the sexual pursuits of her master in part, I believe, because Richardson has denied his heroine sexual feelings entirely. The moral weight of his novel, pronounced in *Pamela's* very title page, assures his readers that it "is intirely divested of all those Images, which, in too many Pieces calculated for Amusement only, tend to *inflamm*e the Minds they should *instruct*." And yet, what many of Richardson's critics have taken exception to from the beginning, including Haywood herself, is Richardson's idealized "fantasy of the chaste maiden; his fantasy of the moral novel" (Mudge 196) — his mendacious young heroine with made up modesty.

Of course, many of Richardson's readers have focussed on what they believe to be Richardson's false and deceptive depiction of genuine female virtue. For example, one of Richardson's contemporary critics, an Irish author J—— W——, observes in his poetic mockery — titled *Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor. A Poem. In Five Cantos* — that Pamela's talent is in trickery and careful management of seeming innocence:

With deeper Art yet acts the cautious Fair,
Nor bids him hope, nor bids him yet despair:
Throws forth those Lures so seldom known to fail,
Yet doubtful holds the Ballance of the Scale.
Sudden she darts the Lightning of her Eyes,
Calls forth her Charms, and bids her Colour rise;
Then looks with meek Confusion on the Ground,
While glowing Blushes give a deeper Wound:

With vary'd Arts she plays the subtle Game,

And ev'n her Frowns but fan the rising Flame. (II.34-43)

For J—— W——, men too easily fall for the “practis'd Wiles” and “bewitching Charms” (I.35) of beauties like Pamela, unaware of “their subtle Art,/ To lure Mankind, and captivate the Heart” (I.1-2).

As Mudge has explored, perhaps Richardson's most scathing critic was Henry Fielding and his 1741 sardonic recasting of Richardson's Pamela as a shameless conwoman, Shamela, whose “unrepentant selfishness, ...gross lies and crass manipulations, ...horrible manners and appalling ignorance” “exposes Pamela as an artful fake” (Mudge 196). Richard Gooding also makes this observation, claiming that the “Pamela-as-hypocrite interpretation arose with *Shamela* and was adopted by almost all subsequent anti-Pamelist works” (122), ultimately “present[ing] Pamela as a hardened hypocrite” (123). What Fielding's *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* makes plain to both their readerships is that Richardson is seduced by his own fantasy of this young girl — that is, duped by the deception of his own creation. But what such early responses emphasize is that Pamela is intentionally, even *purposefully*, deceptive and, therefore, far from virtuous.

What is important to remember, however, is that deception need not always be looked upon negatively or through a moral lens. Indeed, as evolutionary biologist Robert Trivers has stressed, deception, the act of “misleading others,” “is a very deep feature of life” and “occurs at all levels,” from viruses and bacteria to plants, insects, and animals (“Deceit and Self-Deception” 374), selected to accrue some biological advantage.¹⁴⁴ In other words, deceptive tactics are simply competitive strategies. Camouflage, for example, is a common

¹⁴⁴ See also Trivers's *The Folly of Fools: The Logic of Deceit and Self-Deception in Human Life*.

deceptive strategy that is woven into the evolution of many life forms. Stick and leaf insects survive predation because they have the ability to blend in and hide from birds that would prey on them. And just as those preyed upon use camouflage, those that hunt them also take advantage of this adaptation in order to better conceal themselves from the prey they hunt. Mimicry, as another example, is an adaptive strategy used by many species of moths. Such moths have evolved to produce patterns on their wings that mimic bats, “cats and monkeys” (*Social Evolution* 398), those natural predators of birds that would pursue these moths. Specifically, sexual mimicry in the bluegill sunfish, for example, grants smaller males access to females by pretending to be females themselves, thereby deceiving their larger male sexual rivals (407). For us human animals, deception can also bring about social, financial, and political advantages in addition to any biological leverage. Our use of language for the purpose of lying augments our ability to mislead. And because of this feature of nature, at all levels there evolves an arms race in strategy between the deceiver and the deceived: “there is induced a co-evolutionary struggle between deceiver and deceived that is frequency-dependent: as deception increases in frequency, it intensifies selection for detection, and as detection spreads, it intensifies selection on deceit” (395). This is why social dealings at all levels often hinge on participants seeking out what biologists call *costly signals* that suggest a more honest indication of another’s condition because such traits or behaviour are difficult to fake — like the quality of a peacock’s plumage for a peahen that is looking for a quality mate, or the lack of a rising blush in a young girl who claims to be embarrassed by the sexual advances of her master.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Another variation of the term is *honest signals*. See especially Amotz and Avishag Zahavi’s *The Handicap Principle: A Missing Piece of Darwin’s Puzzle*.

While deception is ubiquitous throughout the natural world, only human beings attach any moral judgments on such behaviour. Indeed, for most other life forms, evolutionarily speaking, deception is simply a functional part of various maneuvers in the “subtle Game” to which notions of virtue and righteousness are not bound. In this way, I agree with David Livingstone Smith’s definition of deception — namely, as “*any* form of behavior the function of which is to provide others with false information or to deprive them of true information” (14).¹⁴⁶ This sense of deception intentionally excludes the notion of moralistic intent; in evolutionary terms, other life forms do not complicate deception by moralizing. Smith recognizes that deceit is: “essential to our humanity but disowned by its perpetrators at every turn. It is normal, natural, and pervasive. It is not, as popular opinion would have it, reducible to mental illness or moral failure. Human society is a ‘network of lies and deceptions’ that would collapse under the weight of too much honesty” (2). To claim that the good or the virtuous do not engage in deceptive ways, therefore, is disingenuous. And yet, many societies do insist upon the expectation that good people should not lie. As Richard D. Alexander claims in his *The Biology of Moral Systems*, such insistence may have evolved as a way for us to more easily monitor those who would purposefully cheat against members of society and members of our community. We moralize deception not so that we do not deceive, but so that others will not deceive us. In this way, to moralize behaviour serves as a counter-strategy to oppose deceptive tactics perpetrated against us. This, Alexander concludes, is “at least part of the virtues of moralizing” (122). So while the purpose of Pamela’s trial is certainly to verify her duty to virtue — as Mr. B puts *her* honesty and

¹⁴⁶ More specifically, Smith applies this definition to “lying,” however he uses the terms “deception” and “lying” interchangeably. See Smith’s *Why We Lie: The Evolutionary Roots of Deception and the Unconscious Mind*.

goodness to the test — Pamela's moral resoluteness to uphold virtue also better ensures *his* probity in the end.

Indeed, Mr. B's continual trials of Pamela that are meant to catch Pamela out through betrayals of honest signals ultimately do not discover any. Because Pamela's behaviour is so heavily scrutinized as she adheres to her virtue, if Pamela is indeed to engage Mr. B in the "subtle Game" of baiting his sexual interest, then she would need to more cleverly consider ways of avoiding being detected in any deceptive strategies she might take on. With the weight of moral expectation bearing down on Pamela, then, this heroine would have to find a workaround. And according to Trivers, this need to avoid detection of one's deceptive ways led to the evolution of unconscious self-deception. For Trivers, self-deception is a direct offshoot of our evolved capacity for deception:

With powers to deceive and to spot deception being improved by natural selection, a new kind of deception may be favored: self-deception. Self-deception renders the deception being practiced unconscious to the practitioner, thereby hiding from other individuals the subtle signs of self-knowledge that may give away the deception being practiced.

(Social Evolution 395)

Put another way, "self-deception evolves in the service of deception — the better to fool others" (*Folly of Fools* 4). Because deception "can be cognitively demanding," as Trivers explains, where we often "must suppress the truth and construct a falsehood that is plausible on its face and does not contradict anything known by the listener, nor likely to be known" in addition to telling "it in a convincing way" that we also "must remember," intentional deception "takes time and concentration, both of which may give off secondary cues and

reduce performance on simultaneous tasks” (10). Indeed, an overtaxed cognitive load possibly leaves the deceiver vulnerable to being exposed. Self-deception, therefore, masks such signs of falsehood because the deceiver is not consciously aware of her own dishonesty. As Trivers explains further:

...the hallmark of self-deception in the service of deceit is the denial of deception, the unconscious running of selfish and deceitful ploys, the creation of a public persona as an altruist and a person “beneffective” in the lives of others, the creation of self-serving social theories and biased internal narratives of ongoing behavior, as well as false historical narratives of past behavior that hide true intention and causality. The symptom is a biased system of information flow, with the conscious mind devoted (in part) to constructing a false image and at the same time unaware of contravening behavior and evidence. (27)

Trivers’s logic here certainly makes clear Pamela’s conduct, given the moral pressures she weathers to uphold her virtue. As Mr. B’s liberal use of vulgar epithets like “sawcy Slut” and “Sauce-box” (*Pamela* 63) to address Pamela illustrates, Pamela’s behaviour is under suspicion, and Mr. B is out to detect deceit, calling into question Pamela’s real motives: “she is an artful young Baggage; and had I a young handsome Butler or Steward, she’d soon make her Market of one of them, if she thought it worth while to snap at him for a Husband” (39). As Trivers puts forward, self-deception is not simply about naïveté or self-delusion, or about one’s inability to face the truth of one’s circumstances. Often, it is unconsciously deployed as a strategy of persuasion like any other. And just as deception is not necessarily a violation of moral codes, self-deception need not be an indication of moral weakness.

“Certain Ruin if I Stay”

Being so much under his Command, and obliged to attend him at any Hour, and at any Place he is pleased to call you, will lay you under Difficulties to avoid his Importunities, which it must be confessed are not easy to surmount yet a steady Resolution will enable you; and as a vigorous Resistance is less to be expected in your Station, your persevering may, perhaps, in Time, oblige him to desist.... It is a Duty, however, owing to yourself to endeavour it.

...if, by your Behaviour, you convert the base Design he had upon you, into an Esteem for your Virtue! Greater Advantages will accrue to you from the Friendship he will afterwards have for you, than you would ever have obtained from the Gratification of his wild Desires.... But if you fail in this laudable Ambition, if he persists in his Importunities, and you have Reason to fear he will make Use of other Means than Persuasions to satisfy his brutal Appetite, (as what may not Lust seconded by Power attempt,...) you have nothing to do, but, on the first Symptom that appears of such a Design, *to go directly out of his House....*

(A Present for a Servant-Maid 44-46 — emphasis mine)

In 1743, Haywood published this advice for servant girls in her conduct book, *A Present for a Servant-Maid; or, the Sure Means of Gaining Love and Esteem*, making her suggestion clear to those young female servants whose masters accord them too much sexual attention. Indeed, such a manual would have been helpful to a servant girl like Richardson's Pamela, where heeding Haywood's warning to leave Mr. B after his first sexual attempts on

her would have saved Pamela from the torment she felt she endured. But even without Haywood's lessons, Pamela should have left Mr. B's employ if she in fact felt her virtue was in danger. And yet, even when presented with multiple opportunities to escape, Pamela stays.

Rightly, many of Richardson's critics have challenged the author on this point, claiming the actions of his heroine duplicitous because she chooses to stay when she can leave. Indeed, as Ian Donaldson has noted, in Richardson's own *Familiar Letters on Important Occasions* (1741), the author advises that when a "serving-maid" is "propositioned by her master," "she should return home at once" (quoted in Donaldson 30). Donaldson further comments that "Pamela does not leave at once.... Instead, Pamela keeps putting off the day of her departure, finding excuses about work that must be done" (30). After violation upon violation, Pamela finds ways to rationalize her staying with Mr. B and begs her parents not to "be angry [she has] not yet run away from this House" (*Pamela* 36). Writing to her mother after being accosted for the first time in the summer house, Pamela reminds her parents that they would have her "take her [Mrs. Jervis's] Counsel in every thing" (33), and so justifies to Mr. and Mrs. Andrews their daughter's continuance with her employer even though they would have her "leave every thing behind" (28) and return home at the first signs of any inappropriate behaviour from her master. In fact, Pamela makes excuses repeatedly for why leaving Mr. B's house would prove more difficult than simply abandoning her post, even when Mr. B warns Pamela that rape is imminent, "oblig'd to yield to a Force [she] cannot withstand" (42). Early in the novel, Pamela asserts that material logistics hold her back, as she tries to figure out "whether to take away the Things he had given [her] or no, and how to take them away," claiming that "being pretty well dress'd, [she] might come to

some harm, almost as bad as what [she] would run away from” and that it would “be reported, [that she had] stolen something, and so was forc’d to run away; and carry a bad Name back” (36) to her parents. Again, she reminds Mr. and Mrs. Andrews that:

...as you order’d me to take her [Mrs. Jervis’s] Advice, I resolv’d to tarry to see how things went...altho’, in your first Letter, you order’d me to come away the Moment I had any Reason to be apprehensive. So, dear Father and Mother, it is not Disobedience, I hope, that I stay; for I could not expect a Blessing, or the good Fruits of your Prayers for me, if I was disobedient. (37)

In this way, Pamela tries to make the case that she should be absolved from any blame for her inaction, but we can also see that Pamela is artfully coy even with her own parents.

When Pamela’s father and mother address the approaching threat head on and instruct their daughter that she “had best come home to share our Poverty with Safety, than to live with so much Discontent in a Plenty, that itself may be dangerous” — “that it may be presumptuous to trust too much to [her] own Strength; and that [she is] but very young; and the Devil may put it into his Head to use some Stratagem, of which great Men are full, to decoy [her]” (38) — Pamela still decides to remain even after she herself reasons with Mrs. Jervis that she must leave:

I am sure it is certain Ruin if I stay. After such Offers, and such Threatenings, and his comparing himself to a wicked Ravisher, in the very Time of his last Offer; and making a Jest of me, that we should make a pretty Story in Romances; can I stay, and be safe? Has he not demean’d himself twice? And it behoves me to beware of the third Time, for fear he should lay his Snares surer; for may-hap he did not expect a poor Servant would resist her Master so

much. And must it not be look'd upon as a sort of Warrant for such Actions, if I stay after this? For I think, when one of our Sex finds she is attempted, it is an Encouragement to a Person to proceed, if one puts one's self in the Way of it, when one can help it; and it shews one can forgive what in short ought not to be forgiven. Which is no small Countenance to foul Actions, I'll assure you. (47-48)

Although Pamela is determined not to become Mr. B's "Harlot" (49), her behaviour is inconsistent with her proclaimed belief that she must escape, explaining to her parents with a silly amendment: "O! I forgot to say, that I would stay to finish the Waistcoat; I never did a prettier Piece of Work" (51).

Even as the threat of her situation builds throughout the novel, Pamela finds reason not to leave. While her initial explanations to her parents may seem obviously insincere, Pamela's later explanation for an inability to get away from her prison in Lincolnshire under the monstrous supervision of her warden, Mrs. Jewkes, slips into imagined obstacles. Indeed, in a pivotal moment during the novel where the threat of sexual violence looms closer, Pamela sees a real chance to escape the walls of her confinement, admitting to herself that "if any thing should go bad afterwards, I should never forgive myself, for not taking this Opportunity" (136). During this rare occasion when Pamela is not closely guarded or observed, Pamela's plan is thwarted by her own imagination that conjures up a "nasty grim Bull," a "horrid Bull, [that] stare[s] [her] full in the Face, with fiery Saucer Eyes" (136). Although she is "resolve[d]" to try again — as she proclaims: "[f]or if I never should have such another Opportunity, I could not forgive myself" (136) — the phantom Bull (now multiplied into two) stops her cold:

...frighted like a Fool, out of all my Purposes! O how terrible every thing appears to me! I had got twice as far again, as I was before, ...and I looked, and saw the Bull, as I thought, between me and the Door; and another Bull coming towards me the other way: Well, thought I, here is double Witchcraft, to be sure! Here is the Spirit of my Master in one Bull; and Mrs. Jewkes's in the other.... (137)¹⁴⁷

Surely, informing her parents of her frightening vision — although the bulls turn out to be “two poor Cows, a grazing in distant Places” (137) — validates her decision to remain under her master's control. Of course, Pamela adds further that, even if those bulls did not scare her into staying: “I know not one Step of the Way, nor how far to any House or Cottage; and whether I could gain Protection, if I got to a House: And now the Robbers are abroad too, I may run into as great Danger, as I want to escape from; nay, greater much, if these promising Appearances hold: and sure my Master cannot be so black as that they should not” (136). Furthermore, she insists, without money or friends who will protect her, she would only be risking greater danger if she leaves.

Scholars like Maria K. Bachman, Stuart Wilson, and Sheila C. Conboy have interpreted this bull scene as revealing Pamela's repressed sexual desires for Mr. B — that, as Lady Davers (Mr. B's sister) suspects, Pamela has “love[d] him all the time” although she “did not know that it was Love” (*Pamela* 373). However, I believe Pamela's desires go beyond repressed sexual feelings here.¹⁴⁸ If Rebecca Tierney-Hynes is correct in her claim

¹⁴⁷ The bull scene foreshadows the near-rape that Mr. B later undertakes with the help of Mrs. Jewkes, with each on either side of Pamela, holding her down on the bed (*Pamela* 175-176).

¹⁴⁸ Bachman reads this manifestation of the bull in Pamela's imagination as signifying Pamela's own “disruptive” and “base desires” (20) that are trying to express sexual resistance to patriarchal norms.

that by the 1740s, female characters within novels themselves were practiced in reading “the romances of other...characters” (167), then for one like Pamela, the only way to better hide her intentions from women like Lady Davers and Pamela’s own mother (or her father and Mr. B) is by deceiving herself as well.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, where most critics maintain that this bull scene is evidence of Pamela’s latent sexual desires, I believe this scene is more indicative of the degree to which Pamela is unconsciously self-deceived.

Certainly, while the argument for repressed sexual feelings is also based on the idea of self-deception, and while critics have touched upon why Pamela’s desires might need to be repressed given the social constraints of her circumstances, such arguments hinge on the assumption that Pamela herself is sexually desirous. This leap of argumentation stems from the tradition of bulls representing the male libido, as Stuart Wilson explains in his paralleling claim that the prominence of “keys” in the novel also figure sexually (85-87). However, I believe it is presumptuous to claim that the aggressive and phallic spirit of the bull represents

Terry Castle, however, has argued that Richardson sets up Pamela’s course of sexual discovery along Freudian lines of a realization that comes after exposure to more strained negotiations between male and female authorities — that is, an oscillation between male figures like Mr. B and Pamela’s father and female characters like Lady B, Pamela’s mother, Mrs. Jervis, Mrs. Jewkes, and Lady Davers — so that the two bulls represent aggressive masculinity on the one hand and Mrs. Jewkes on the other. See Bachman’s “The Confessions of *Pamela*: ‘A Strange Medley of Inconsistence’” and Castle’s “P/B: *Pamela* as Sexual Fiction.” See also Wilson’s “Richardson’s *Pamela*: An Interpretation” and Conboy’s “Fabric and Fabrication in Richardson’s *Pamela*.”

¹⁴⁹ To be clear, Tierney-Hynes more specifically argues for this change in Haywood’s work — namely that while in “the 1720s, Haywood’s readers had stood outside the novels, as addressees, as moral critics, and as potential authors” (167), that by the 1740s, Haywood’s female characters themselves became more sophisticated readers of women’s feelings and stories, reflecting Haywood’s own more cultivated female reader. See Tierney-Hynes’s “Fictional Mechanics: Haywood, Reading, and the Passions.”

Pamela's *own* sexual desires. It is one thing to claim that there exists male sexual interest in the novel, or that such attention is not only directed at Pamela but that Pamela is fully aware of this interest. However, it is another assertion entirely to then conclude that this sexual attraction is therefore *hers* or that the presence of this interest necessarily triggers an erotic response in *her*. Indeed, outside of this interpretation of male sexual metaphors, there is little evidence of real sexual desire in Pamela herself. Critics like Gooding and Ruth Bernard Yeazell more accurately assess that Pamela herself is not yet sexually curious at age fifteen. As Gooding writes, Pamela maintains an "adolescent skittishness about sex" (127) throughout the novel. Yeazell, too, acknowledges that Pamela is "sexually knowing" yet "modest" in that Pamela witnesses "a neighboring squire 'has had three lyings-in in his house' in as many months — 'one by himself, and one by his coachman, and one by his woodman'" and does not want to end up pregnant as well by being "her master's 'harlot'" (93).¹⁵⁰ Although Pamela may be cognizant of the acts of copulation and reproduction, there is little indication that Pamela ever really feels sexual desire rising from within. While there is no doubt that Mr. B lusts after Pamela — so that perhaps the bull might represent Pamela's psychological awareness of Mr. B's lust — Richardson's heroine herself does not once exhibit any erotic inclinations towards her master or any other man, though she might express an overall concern and general softheartedness towards Mr. B's character. Even while the earliest edition of the novel hinted at Mrs. Jewkes's same-sex desire towards Pamela — leading writers like J— W— to mock in his last canto of *Pamela; or, The Fair Impostor* that "Jewkes u[p]braids him, for not having done, / What she'd have wish'd, had

¹⁵⁰ Deborah J. Nestor perhaps goes to an extreme in characterizing Pamela as "Richardson's ideal of a sexless heroine" (580). See her "Virtue Rarely Rewarded: Ideological Subversion and Narrative Form in Haywood's Later Fiction."

been the Case her own” (82-83) — Pamela herself does not intimate a modicum of venereal longing. Instead, this bull scene illustrates the degree to which Pamela feels she must deceive herself for the purpose of engaging in riskier sexual strategies. In other words, the bull represents how far Pamela’s mind will go — a trick of the mind — in order to stop her from leaving and justify her decision to stay, even as Pamela’s pursuance of a riskier sexual strategy exposes her to the real possibility of rape.

Pamela’s self-deception, of course, is primarily driven by the edifying imperative for which Richardson creates *Pamela*. After the opening letter that Pamela sends to her parents, in which she relays the “great Trouble” (*Pamela* 25) she finds herself in due to the death of her mistress, Richardson’s heroine quickly realizes that she must assuage their tremendous “Fears” (27). Their fears, indeed, concern their daughter’s behaviour — namely, that Pamela “should be *too* grateful [to her new master, Mr. B], — and reward him with that Jewel, [her] Virtue, which no Riches, nor Favour, nor any thing in this Life, can make up to [her]” (27). They stand firm, “charg[ing] [Pamela] to stand upon [her] Guard” (28) and not be enticed by any “Price” in exchange for being “ruin’d and undone” (27). Pamela writes back, persuading them that they need not “mistrust the Honesty of [their] Child” and that both parents can “be assur’d” that their daughter would rather die “than be dishonest any way” (28). Time and time again, Pamela is cautioned to “*be virtuous, and keep the Men at a Distance*” (174) — made aware of the great danger to which her highly-desired virtue makes her vulnerable.¹⁵¹ The message to this fifteen-year-old girl is clear: “Virtue [is] Rewarded” if one keeps watch and does not squander its worth. By relaying to her parents that she has, in fact, been

¹⁵¹ From the very start of Richardson’s novel, Pamela is made aware of the need to stay away from male attention. On three consecutive pages, this detail is not only highlighted (*Pamela* 29, 30, 31) but culminates as the most important “Lesson” her late “good Lady” (174) passes onto Pamela.

repeatedly advised to be watchful, she indirectly reassures them of her own vigilance.

The parental and social pressures for Pamela to stay honest and chaste prove fierce. And yet, as Richardson's story proceeds, Pamela comes to see — even beyond what Richardson himself, perhaps, envisions for his narrative about virtue — that the edict her parents would have her follow is much more flexible than they or Richardson would have her realize. Indeed, Pamela admits that one's virtue is determined mostly by what other people think. As she tries to convince Mr. B after he, with the help of Mrs. Jewkes, unsuccessfully attempts to rape her:

...do you think, if I was to stay, when I could get away, and be safe, it would not look, as if either I confided too much in my own Strength, or would tempt my Ruin? And as if I was not in earnest to wish myself safe and out of Danger? — And then, how long am I to stay? And to what Purpose? And in what Light must I appear to the World? Would not that censure me, altho' I might be innocent? And you will allow, Sir, that if there be any thing valuable or exemplary in a good Name, or fair Reputation, one must not despise the World's Censure, if one can avoid it. (178-179)

Pamela recognizes that women's virtue is not simply confined to definite terms anchored in the either/or of one's virginal status. Social perception, or to use Pamela's words, the "Light" in which one "appear[s] to the World" is often more important than whether or not she "might be innocent." For indeed, as Corrinne Harol highlights in her article, "Faking It: Female Virginity and Pamela's Virtue," Pamela cannot absolutely be certain that Mr. B did not rape her, given Pamela's frequent fainting spells: "When Mr. B attempts rape by hiding in Mrs. Jervis's closet, Pamela faints and Mrs. Jervis must tell her what occurred. Even

given the reliability of this witness, whom Pamela trusts unquestioningly, Pamela reports to her parents that she ‘believes’ Mrs. Jervis saved her from ‘worse,’ and that she ‘hope[s]’ that she is ‘honest’” (207). Indeed, “it is impossible for Pamela herself to know whether she is still a virgin,” with Pamela later even having to “rely on Mr. B’s assurance that he did not rape her” (207). All she has is Mr. B’s word that “he had not offer’d the least Indecency” (*Pamela* 177). And yet, if Pamela believes that her virtue is strictly defined by her chastity, then it is telling that Pamela is not as distressed as she should be about not knowing if Mr. B raped her. Plainly, Pamela’s constant fainting affords her a conscious deniability: “Your poor Pamela cannot answer for the Liberties taken with her in her deplorable State of Death” (177). Pamela’s inability to bear witness to her own violation gives Richardson’s notion of virtue wider clearance. Denying responsibility, Pamela claims: “I hope, as he assures me, he was not guilty of Indecency; but have Reason to bless God, who, by disabling me in my Faculties, enabled me to preserve my Innocence; and when all my Strength would have signified nothing, magnify’d himself in my Weakness” (177). Indeed, as Trivers would insist, the ability to deny responsibility — and, therefore, culpability — is partly embodied in the unconscious strategy of self-deception. This point seems especially clear given that Richardson omits Pamela’s line about “preserv[ing] my Innocence” by his last edition.¹⁵² As well, the empathic response that Pamela has upon meeting Mr. B’s illegitimate child, Miss Goodwin, and listening to Mr. B relay the story of the child’s mother, Sally Godfrey, is designed to demonstrate Pamela’s compassion and generosity, to be sure. However, Richardson (perhaps unwittingly) also expands the boundaries of virtue by making available redemptive possibilities with compromised virtues. That is, just as Pamela demonstrates her

¹⁵² See Peter Sabor’s edited edition of Richardson’s 1801 revision of *Pamela*, page 243.

compassion towards Sally Godfrey's fate, thereby verifying once and for all the "high-meriting" (5) quality of Pamela's virtue, Pamela's esteem for Sally Godfrey's atonement also demonstrates that virtue is redeemable even when initially lost.

In the same vein, much of one's virtue, Pamela comes to realize, is determined by how one is valued against others. As Pamela's letters to her mother reveal, despite the risk of "look[ing] more like a vain Hussy, than any thing else," there is "a secret Pleasure one has to hear one's self prais'd" and being assessed "the prettiest Wench [Lady Davers] ever saw in her Life" (29). While Pamela understands the need to safeguard her virginity — and certainly makes this evident to her parents — she also offers flashes of the private thrill she experiences from increased sexual attention: "one of our Men, Harry...call'd me his pretty Pamela, and took hold of me, as if he would have kiss'd me; for which you may be sure I was very angry.... And indeed I am sure I am not proud...but yet, methinks I can't bear to be look'd upon by these Men-servants; for they seem as if they would look one thro'" (30). While Pamela pays lip service to the principles her parents extol, her sentiments here betray a much more coquettish attitude. Virtue, it seems, is also determined by how one is assessed by the opposite sex and in comparison with one's own sex — that is, virtue also embodies comparative mate value.

From the start of the novel, Pamela is advised to "take care to keep the Fellows at a Distance," and instructed to "keep herself to herself" and not encourage male sexual attention. But Pamela is also counselled, of course, that by doing so, she would "be more valu'd for it, even by [those men] themselves" (29).¹⁵³ Although Pamela's interest

¹⁵³ As Judith P. Saunders has observed, Pamela is a narrative that highlights how "men test women by pressing for intimacies, then penalize those who yield, making serious courtship only to the staunch few who pass the test" (49). See Saunders's article "Darwinian Literary Analysis of Sexuality."

throughout the novel is not about her own sexual desire, Pamela is certainly learning about how others' sexual interest in her elevates her sexual valuation. Most of Pamela's "Trouble" from the beginning, of course, stem from Mr. B's assessment of Pamela as another "Hussy," believing his maid-servant to be the kind of trickster-whore that Fielding and Haywood are convinced Pamela to be. While Pamela certainly fights hard against this sexual characterization, she also comes to understand the specific sexual category into which she has been slotted. She endeavours throughout the novel to prove to skeptics like Mr. B and Lady Davers — and to Pamela's own author's critics outside the novel, like Fielding and Haywood — that Pamela has been wrongly grouped into a market for sexual exploits and short-term opportunity rather than the marriage market in which her honourable virtue should rightly win her a place. With seeming humility, Pamela attempts to reassure her parents that there is no reason for Mr. B to pursue her when he could have any pick of the best ladies of the country: "For I am sure my Master would not demean himself so, as to think upon such a poor Girl as I, for my Harm. For such a Thing would ruin his Credit as well as mine, you know: For, to be sure, he may expect one of the best Ladies in the Land" (30). Furthermore, Pamela reasons, "for what Good could it do him to harm such a simple Maiden as me? Besides, to be sure, no Lady would look upon him, if he should so disgrace himself" (32). While her parents, of course, recognize that Mr. B's intentions need not be entirely pure and honourable for their daughter to be pursued, what Pamela also intimates in her expression of self-effacement is her own recognition of the high level of intrasexual competition that exists for Mr. B's attention. That is, in learning about her own mate value, Pamela also comes to realize Mr. B's mate value. And with Mr. B's eventual commitment to Pamela, his choice of

her confirms to Pamela and all others that her mate value, like her virtue, stands independent of her social rank.

“To Him That Looks Behind the Scene”

Perhaps the severest criticisms of Richardson’s characterization of female virtue come in the form of satirical pieces from writers like Fielding and Haywood. Of course, Fielding’s Shamela is a laughable and lustful opportunist who easily dupes Squire Booby (Fielding’s iteration of Mr. B) into marriage as she continues her affair with the parson Williams. And Shamela has no problem adhering to her lover’s advice that she now maintain “two Husbands”: “one the Object of your Love, and to satisfy your Desire; the other the Object of your Necessity, and to furnish you with those other Conveniences” (*Shamela* 270). While Shamela may have pretended to resist Mr. Booby’s advances at first, arguing: “I value my Vartue more than all the World, and I had rather be the poorest Man’s Wife, than the richest Man’s Whore” (259), Shamela’s loutish “Vartue” is also rewarded with a lucky end, arriving at being both a rich man’s wife and a poor (yet more sexually-skilled) man’s whore. For Haywood, however, Pamela deserves a more thoughtfully-crafted treatment — specifically, one that exposes what Haywood sees as the much more sinister qualities of Pamela’s behaviour as Haywood does with her own heroine, Syrena Tricky.

Where Richardson may have hoped, as Natalie Roxburgh has commented, that the “formal quality of ‘writing to the moment’ implies that Pamela cannot be duplicitous” and that “merely report[ing] the facts of her subjectivity as they occur” (413) attests to Pamela’s candor, Haywood’s 1741 adaptation questions the integrity of this heroine’s self-narrative. Pamela’s reconstruction of an early letter that shared with her mother Mr. B’s first sexual

attack on her — a letter that had mysteriously gone missing — is certainly Richardson's way of insinuating the risk of surveillance in the novel and of the real exposure that Pamela takes on through her narrative accounting. As Pamela informs her mother:

I have not been idle; but have writ from time to time how he, by sly mean Degrees, exposed his wicked Views: But somebody stole my Letter, and I know not what is become of it. It was a very long one. I fear he that was mean enough to do bad things, in one respect, did not stick at this; but be it as it will, all the Use he can make of it will be, that he may be asham'd of *his* Part; I not of *mine*. For he will see I was resolv'd to be honest, and glory'd in the Honesty of my poor Parents. (*Pamela* 34)

However, where Richardson's aim here might be to highlight Pamela's vulnerability and the degree to which she is monitored, Haywood twists this vulnerability around to point out the possibility of Pamela using such surveillance to her own advantage. Because Pamela knows she is being "watch'd, and such-like, very narrowly" (*Pamela* 34) and that her letters are being read by her master-seducer, Pamela is able to influence Mr. B's perception and understanding of her through those very letters. And certainly, Haywood brings this to light as her own Syrena repeats the same false history of her experiences a total of five times, recycling the same fraudulent backstory with slight variations to adjust for the particular proclivities of those she would seduce. In this way, Syrena capitalizes on the sexual desires of each individual man she seeks to exploit. Syrena first convinces the good-hearted Mercer and his wife that Syrena's situation is dire because of her status as "a Wife, and no Wife" (*Anti-Pamela* 153) — fabricating a heartbreaking tale of being a young girl who was forced by her mother into marrying an heir to a vast estate, only to be abandoned by him three days

after their nuptials because his friends and family did not approve of his marriage. While she tells the Mercer that her estranged husband supports her financially, she tells the aristocratic Lord M that she is a poor widow, and relates to the wealthier Mr. W that she is a widowed gentlewoman without money, yet one who is responsible for a dependent mother. Not knowing Mr. P's particular financial standing, Syrena relays the same history but "keep[s] him ignorant of hers, till time should discover, if it were best to affect Poverty or Riches" (201). Haywood ends Syrena's adventures with exile, as the wife of Mr. E is shrewd enough to see through Syrena's exhausted narrative. In this way, Syrena resells her fabricated virtue just as Cornelia had resold her virginity in *The London Jilt*. And Syrena circulates her counterfeit virtue just as Pamela's virtue is distributed amongst her readers. In the end, Syrena's repetition of the same history serves a similar function as Pamela's writings — namely, drawing in her audience through her sympathetic circumstances, as each retelling (and each reading, in the case of Pamela) highlights narrative's capacity to refine and sustain seduction.¹⁵⁴ And where Haywood allows Syrena to be more fully cognizant of the purpose and effects of her repeated narrative, Haywood's satirical rendition of Pamela at the same time highlights Richardson's own blindness not only in terms of female sexual manipulative behaviour, but also how deeply such artifice can go. In other words, for Haywood, not only has Richardson's male blindness for a feminine ideal made him susceptible to being seduced himself by his own creation, he has also created a heroine who is much more deceptive and wily than she seems.

¹⁵⁴ Critics like Catherine Ingrassia have investigated Pamela's (and thereby Richardson's) increase and assurance of paper credit via the circulation of their narrative — that is, a currency that assures Pamela's and Richardson's relevancy and value. Ingrassia rightly highlights the spreadability of paper credit. However, Ingrassia misses aspects of reusability and recyclability of narrative credit.

Being a “perfect...Mistress...in the Art of Dissimulation” (*Anti-Pamela* 155), Syrena often primes her victims by first “pretend[ing] Illness,” growing “pale, and ready to faint (which she could counterfeit whenever she pleased)” (152), a performance of helplessness that encourages potential lovers to advance upon her. Where Pamela’s readers would take her constant fainting as a testament (or honest signal) of her virtue, Haywood casts doubt on this assumption as Syrena perverts the very real threat of rape into an opportunity for exploitation and advancement. In this way, Haywood (like *The London Jilt*’s Cornelia) exposes the kinds of violations women can commit against men. Where Pamela had experienced real terror at the prospect of being sexually forced upon, Syrena capitalizes on Mr. L’s inexperience by making accusations of fraudulent rape in order to compel him to marry her. Employed as a companion to Mr. L’s grandmother, Syrena is eventually pursued by both the young Mr. L — with pleas of love and devotion — and his own father, Sir Thomas, who is practiced in pouncing on his female servants, tempting Syrena with proposals of money and security. Through this father-son pair, Haywood divides the single character of Richardson’s Mr. B, with the lecherous Sir Thomas representing the older version of what Mr. L would likely later become. Because Mr. L refuses to promise marriage to Syrena, she and her mother decide to force his hand by plotting a pretend rape in order to extort marriage from the family. Indeed, Syrena’s talent at playing the victim is central to understanding how Haywood understood Richardson’s heroine. With “a well-acted childish Fondness, mingled with a shame-faced Simplicity,” the “young Deceiver” allows “her expected Lover” to “gain[] the utmost of his Desires” (*Anti-Pamela* 114), after which she puts her plan into action:

He had no sooner left the Chamber, than she tore her Hair and Cloaths, pinch'd her Arms and Hands till they became black; pluck'd down one of the Curtains from the Bed, and throw'd it on the Floor, and put her self and everything in such Disorder, that the Room seem'd a Scene of Distraction — Then having watch'd at the Window Mr. *L*—'s going out, she rung the Bell with all her Strength, and the Maids below came running up, surpriz'd what could be the meaning, but were much more so, when they saw *Syrena* in the most pity-moving Posture imaginable — She was lying cross the Bed, her Eyes rolling as just recover'd from a Fit — She wrung her Hands — She cry'd to Heaven for Justice — Then rav'd, as if the Anguish of her Mind had deprived her of Reason. (114)

Threatening to stab herself with “a Penknife that lay upon the Table” if the maids “offer'd to detain her” (115), *Syrena* is taken to her mother's house. *Syrena* performs this scene so convincingly that her mother “highly applauded her Management in this Affair, and gave her fresh Instructions for the perfecting their most detestable Plot” (115), which entailed a “Warrant [be brought] against him [Mr. *L*], on account of a Rape and Assault” (116). In the end, a letter written by Mrs. Tricky to *Syrena* is discovered and exposes the whole scheme, absolving Mr. *L* of the heinous crime.

Throughout this episode, Haywood's reader is made to realize that for all of Mr. *L*'s and Sir Thomas's constant sexual harassment of *Syrena*, they ultimately gave her a choice whether or not to accept their conditions and contracts. To be fair, the actions of Haywood's father-son pair do not come close to the taunting and aggressive tactics of Richardson's Mr. *B* who unceasingly threatens Pamela with rape if she will not agree to his terms. However,

for Haywood this plot devised by mother and daughter, “these pernicious Creatures” (117), is far worse than the individual, lust-driven pursuits of both father and son. To Haywood, the actions of the Tricksys bring home one of the key criticisms made about Richardson’s Pamela — namely, that it is contemptible that a servant should be so puffed-up as to marry into the gentry.¹⁵⁵ For Haywood, this was “an unspeakable Horror...which...involved Sir Thomas and his noble Family” (117). Here, the scheme devised by Syrena and her mother goes beyond the, ironically, honest business practices of prostitutes like Cornelia or Mother Creswel, as I had explored in my first chapter. For Cornelia and Mother Creswel, sex is simply a transaction of flesh for money or a pastime for one’s own libidinal satisfaction. The Tricksys, however, overstep as they leverage their bodies as a way into the ranks of titled families and lineages: “Mrs. Tricksy congratulated her Daughter in Iniquity, as well as Blood, for the Success of their Enterprize: Now, Child, said she, you will be Lady L—, the proud Puppy will be glad to marry you now to save his Neck; and marry you he shall, or come down with a Sum sufficient to entitle you to a Husband of as good an Estate as he will have” (*Anti-Pamela* 117). Where Fielding’s Shamela may have beguiled the dimwitted Mr. Booby with her “Vartue” to make inroads into the upper ranks, even Shamela did not stoop to blackmail.

Developing her criticism of Richardson’s heroine further, Haywood begins her satire of Pamela with Syrena undergoing an abortion and ends with Syrena committing incest. To be fair, Syrena does not realize she has committed this atrocious crime. Employed as a housekeeper, Syrena has hopes of seducing the elderly, yet reserved, gentleman Mr. W in a

¹⁵⁵ Indeed, many in the anti-Pamelist camp — including Fielding, of course — made this point. See also Scarlett Bowen’s “‘A Sauce-box and Boldface Indeed’: Refiguring the Female Servant in the Pamela-Antipamela Debate.”

long con. When Syrena becomes restless because she has “liv’d like a Nun for three Months,” she seeks satisfaction from a “*young* Lover, [hoping it] may not be fatal to...Designs on the *old* One” (182). Immediately preceding her marriage to Mr. W, however, they all discover that the younger man is in fact Mr. W’s son. Although to us modern readers this would have only been legal incest had Syrena actually married Mr. W, their union would have been very shocking to Haywood’s readers at the time: “Good God! cry’d he, what a Fiend must this be under an Angel’s Form! She knew herself a Prostitute to the Son, yet would have marry’d the Father! Monstrous incestuous Strumpet!” (196-197). Repeatedly, Haywood demonstrates how deeply destructive Syrena’s conning ways are compared to more conventional tricks of the whoring trade. The severity of Syrena’s wicked ways escalates with the progression of *Anti-Pamela*, bearing out how Syrena’s schemes go much deeper to affect the fabric and future of such families than the quick and dirty scams of trickster-whores like Cornelia and Mother Creswel. For Haywood, this strikes at the heart of a corrupt behaviour that is motivated by greedy opportunism — a reprehensible ambition that stands outside of behaviour motivated by sexual, erotic female desire that Haywood would defend.

Ultimately, with each one of Syrena’s trysts, Haywood emphasizes the damage that conniving women like Syrena can leave in their wake. And Haywood does not allow her heroine to triumph in the end with a successful marriage like Pamela’s (or even Shamela’s) because, for Haywood, intentional deception enacted by women like Syrena does not deserve reward. While for Haywood, Syrena’s awareness of her tactics precludes her from reward, Pamela’s ignorance of her own tricks perhaps makes more possible the reward she secures in the end. That is, because Pamela is naïve about her own artifice, her elevated end is sanctioned. Between social and parental expectations for Pamela to maintain her virginity

and her own tacit, nebulous objective, Pamela must reconcile this internal strife. Through self-deception, Pamela works to ease any cognitive dissonance she may experience under the control of her seducer. Through self-deception, Pamela both legitimates her actions and absolves her own behaviour to herself. But also through this very cunning and fundamentally self-serving strategy, Pamela engages in higher risk sexual schemes to gain an advantage in intrasexual competition, all while avoiding punishment by those like her parents and Lady Davers who would police the sexual conduct of young women like Pamela.

“How Finely Thou Canst Act the Theatrical Part”

She had not reach'd her thirteenth Year, before she excell'd the most experienc'd Actresses on the Stage, in a lively assuming all the different Passions that find Entrance in a Female Mind. Her young Heart affected with imaginary Accidents (such as her Mother, from time to time, suggested to her might possibly happen) gave her whole Frame Agitations adapted to the Occasion, her Colour would come and go, her Eyes sparkle, grow Languid, or overflow with Tears, her Bosom heave, her Limbs tremble; she would fall into Faintings, or appear transported, and as it were out of herself; and all this so natural, that had the whole College of Physicians been present, they could not have imagin'd it otherwise than real. (*Anti-Pamela* 54)

In her satire of Richardson's depiction of personified virtue, Haywood touches on one of the tricks that allow her version of Pamela to slip easily into a mindset for deception. By envisioning “imaginary Accidents” and holding such “possib[ilities]” in her head, Haywood's Syrena is able to fool her own mind into initiating a cascade of biological

responses “so natural” that her “Agitations,” change in complexion, “Languid[ness],” “Tears,” exaggerated exhalations, “trembl[ings],” and “Faintings” would all read more convincingly as honest signals of her innocence and virtue. In other words, Syrena must willingly engage in self-deception in order to trigger the physiological proof of “real” merit to which she knows her suitors will be attuned.

While Pamela may not obviously engage in such bodily maneuvers, Richardson’s heroine certainly engages in deception in other ways. Largely, Pamela’s communication to her parents is meant to track her time with Mr. B, narrating her suffering at the hands of her master. Those letters and journal entries, however, also serve to reassure Pamela’s parents of her commitment to virtue. But we must remember that while Richardson himself would like his readers to believe that Pamela’s writings are proof of his heroine’s virtue — as Richardson has Mr. B and Lady Davers eventually conclude — an expression of commitment to virtue is not evidence of actual virtue. And Pamela may recognize this distinction herself as she actively censors specific content in her writings from judgement.

Beginning with a seemingly cursory remark that Pamela’s “Father should not see this shocking Part” (*Pamela* 176), Pamela later turns to a more considered plan of withholding content from Mr. B. When her master commands her to give over all her “Scribbling[s],” she tries to shield them from scrutiny by insisting that she can no longer “write so free, nor with any Face, what must be for your Perusal” (208).¹⁵⁶ When Mr. B then directs her to continue, she confesses to her parents that “for fear of the worst, I will, when they [her writings] come to any Bulk, contrive some way to hide them [from Mr. B]” (208). Later, when Pamela

¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, Richardson edits this statement out of Pamela’s conversation with Mr. B by *Pamela*’s last edition. However, this comment certainly attests to Pamela’s awareness of how different readers impact the content and expression of writing.

finally realizes her romantic feelings for Mr. B without yet knowing if he is sincere, she leaves herself a note to possibly edit out her confession of love for him: “I must either not shew you [her parents] this my Weakness, or tear it out of my Writing — *Memorandum*, to consider of this, when I get home” (215). Similarly, as their wedding day approaches and Mr. B asks consent to read Pamela’s letters, enlisting her desire for transparency, claiming a “Pleasure I take in reading what you write,” Pamela pleads, “let me write over again one Sheet, I will, tho’ I had rely’d upon your Word, and not wrote them for your Perusal” (237). By the end of the novel, too, when Pamela is secured in marriage and happiness, she freely admits to censoring her writings from those like Lady Davers. When her sister-in-law makes a request to read Pamela’s journal, arguing that doing so “will intirely reconcile [Lady Davers] to the Step he [Mr. B] has taken” (374) in marrying his maid-servant, Pamela reassures Lady Davers that after Pamela’s parents and Mr. B “have done reading them”: “I will shew them to your Ladyship with all my Heart” (375), indicating her willingness to fully disclose her behaviour and character. However, Pamela later informs her parents: “I intend to let Lady Davers see no further of my Papers, than to her own angry Letter to her Brother; for I would not have her see my Reflections upon it; and she’ll know, down to that Place, *all that’s necessary* for her Curiosity, as to my Sufferings, and the Stratagems used against me, and the honest Part God enabled me to act” (388 — emphasis mine). These examples demonstrate Pamela’s awareness of her readers’ reactions to what and how she writes, intimating the powerfully persuasive and manipulative qualities of her self-narrative. For Richardson and his heroine, Pamela’s written account serves to act as a kind of virtue signalling mechanism to his and her readers — that is, readers both inside and outside the novel — testifying to Pamela’s fortitude, allowing readers to bear witness to her credibility.

Yet what such examples of Pamela's appeal to edit and rewrite also show — and certainly, Richardson's own continuous editing, revising, and issuing of ever newer editions of *Pamela* certainly reveal — is that at a deeper level there is both an uneasiness and suspicion of how well Pamela's writings do at signalling her virtue, as well as an anxiety over how Pamela's writings potentially unmask her true quality and motives.

Indeed, while the bulk of Pamela's writings are addressed to both parents, there is a handful of correspondence early in the novel that Pamela sends only to her mother, suggesting an ulterior purpose to Pamela's letters apart from simply quelling their fears over Mr. B. In Richardson's first edition, Pamela forwards a total of five pieces of correspondence to her mother only.¹⁵⁷ And interestingly, in comparison to those addressed to her father or to both parents, these initial letters Pamela writes to her mother seem to assume a very different tenor. The first, as we have explored above, confesses Pamela's private pleasure in being admired by her superiors, displaying a kind of pubescent giddiness as she shares with her mother the particulars of the profuse praises bestowed on this "very pretty Wench" (29). In Pamela's next letter to her mother, however, she confides the first sexual attack she suffers from Mr. B in the summer-house. Where previously Pamela had expressed her admiration for her young master, likening him to "an Angel" (31) because of his generosity with money and gifts, Pamela says she now views him as a predator who steals her letters and "watch[es] [her]...very narrowly" (34), pouncing on her in the summer-house "as if he would have eaten [her]" (35). And with subsequent violations, Pamela singles out her mother as her reader.

¹⁵⁷ Specifically, letters numbered IV, X, XI, XII, and XV. Although in subsequent letters, like letter XVI, she does parenthetically address her mother as well when she wants to highlight a point.

While we can be certain that Mrs. Andrews would share this information with her husband — and, indeed, her mother never writes back to her directly, but only through Pamela's father — it is revealing that Pamela feels she can only first share with her mother such amatory encounters. Pamela's decision to write only to her mother about Mr. B's early behaviour certainly leaves open the question of what Pamela hopes will happen. By not deferring to her father's authority — an authority that would surely extract her from her dangerous circumstances, as Mr. Andrews does later in the novel just after Pamela is whisked away to Mr. B's Lincolnshire estate — Pamela seems to want to prolong her time with Mr. B. By articulating her experiences to her mother, she perhaps feels more freedom to explore the intimate details of each sexual incident without embarrassment. But perhaps more interestingly, Pamela seems to realize from the start the power of her narrative over her reader, especially drawing her mother into the potential romance she details in her early letters — piquing a particular female interest, perhaps, in the amorous sub-plot that sits alongside the slight indignation our heroine claims to experience. By choosing to first confide in this female reader, Pamela draws her mother into reading the romance that would seduce Richardson's reader, perhaps secretly hoping that her mother will also be taken up by the seductive potential of her situation, trusting her mother to identify with being a young woman who first comes to realize the kind of opportunities her "Virtue" affords. And just as Pamela challenges virtue's fixed parameters, pushing against its seemingly rigid frames, she quickly learns the persuasive power of the particular "Light [she] put[s] Things in" (207).

In the end, Pamela's written account captivates Mr. B, the neighbouring gentry, and Lady Davers as Pamela's record, for them, serves as evidence of her true virtue. While Pamela's writings may have begun innocently to demonstrate our heroine's accountability to

her parents, her narrative has also seduced these other readers, winning over their admiration and approval. Pamela witnesses the effects of her written accounts when she watches Mr. B read about her attempted escape and sees his physical and emotional response to her distress: “He was very serious at my [written] Reflections, on what God enabled me to escape. And when he came to my Reasonings, about throwing myself into the water, he said, walk gently before [me], and seem’d so mov’d, that he turn’d away his Face from me; and I...began not so much to repent at his seeing this mournful Part of my Story” (208). And yet, what has not been considered by scholars writing on this novel is how Pamela has possibly seduced herself by her own narrative. As she writes and rewrites her narrative because of letters gone missing, she re-experiences her encounters with Mr. B: “I struggled, and trembled, and was so benumb’d with Terror, that I sunk down, not in a Fit, and yet not myself; and I found myself in his Arms, quite void of Strength, and he kissed me two or three times” (35). She experiences again each amorous incident with her master as she narrates to those around her like Mrs. Jervis, who “could not help mingling Tears with my Tears; for I cry’d all the Time I told her the Story” (37). And especially when recounting how she very closely came to being raped, Pamela interjects that she “tremble[s] to relate it” (176). And yet, Pamela admits to anticipating her own pleasure at reading over her “most dreadful Trial” (177) one day, and so is insistent that she “will continue...Writing still, because, may-be, I shall like to read it, when I am with you, to see what Dangers God has enabled me to escape” (85). This anticipation of her future self being seduced by her own story suggests that Pamela is already thinking about easing any anxiety such a future self may experience, thus requiring her to already persuade herself of the virtuousness of her own actions via the story she is telling herself. Pamela’s declaration to Mr. B assures him as much as it assures herself when she

says: “since you will, you must read them; and I think I have no Reason to be afraid of being found insincere, or having in any respect, told you a Falsehood; because, tho’ I don’t remember all I wrote, yet I know I wrote my Heart; and that is not deceitful” (200). Part of Pamela’s self-deception, then, is played out in her own self-seduction — a self-deception achieved through convincing herself through her own writings.

Where Pamela may have had to defend herself from intersexual aggression from Mr. B before their secret marriage ceremony, afterwards Pamela has to defend herself from intrasexual judgement and ridicule — even violence — from Mr. B’s sister, Lady Davers. At first, Lady Davers expresses concern over Pamela’s situation:

Why, *Pamela*, I did indeed pity you while I thought you innocent; and when my Brother seiz’d you, and brought you down hither, without your Consent, I was concern’d for you. And I was still more concern’d for you, and lov’d you, when I heard of your Virtue and Resistance, and your virtuous Efforts to get away from him. But when, as I fear, you have suffer’d yourself to be prevailed upon, and have lost your Innocence, and added another to the Number of the Fools he has ruin’d, ...I cannot help shewing my Displeasure to you. (319)

But as Lady Davers’s sentiments here bluntly reveal — perhaps to Pamela’s conscious awareness for the first time — Pamela is not the first among Mr. B’s sexual victims. This tactic of highlighting other sexual conquests of a romantic partner is a common intrasexual strategy of mate competition, evoking sexual jealousy and doubts about sexual investment. Indeed, as researchers like Anne Campbell explore, intrasexual competition need not be confined to sexual rivals for the same mating partner, but rather includes mothers and sisters,

for example, who are supported by the same pool of resources of which potentially new female members would take a share.¹⁵⁸ Here, Lady Davers means to force Pamela to confront what Lady Davers sees as a misguided understanding of her brother's intentions. Again she warns Pamela, this time with less compassionate regard: "He is no Fool, Child; and Libertine enough of Conscience; and thou art not the first in the List of his credulous Harlots" (325). If Pamela believes she has won a champion spouse, Lady Davers is quick to reduce Pamela down to sexual prey. Her anger, in fact, soon escalates to a violent impatience and hostile derision after Pamela offers an endearing letter from Mr. B for Lady Davers to examine:

I saw her Eyes began to sparkle with Passion; and she took my Hand, and said, grasping it very hard, I know, confident Creature, that you shew'd it me to insult me! — You shew'd it me, to let me see, that he could be civiller to a Beggar-born, than to me, or to my good Lord Davers! — You shew'd it me, as if you'd have me as credulous a Fool as yourself, to believe your true Marriage, when I know the whole Trick of it, and have Reason to believe you do too, and you shew'd it me, to upbraid me with his stooping to such painted Dirt, to the Disgrace of a Family, ancient and untainted beyond most in the Kingdom; and now will I give thee One hundred Guineas for one bold Word, that I may fell thee at my Foot. (328)

For the last half of the novel, Lady Davers is the final stronghold — a last bastion of rank — that Pamela must convince in order to be fully rewarded. Of course, Lady Davers's actions serve as Richardson's definitive way of authenticating Pamela's new status, as Mr.

¹⁵⁸ See Campbell's *A Mind of Her Own* pages 217-218. Also see Hrdy's *Mother Nature*.

B's ultimate admission to his sister conclusively verifies the legitimacy of their marriage: "swear to me, that Pamela Andrews is really and truly thy lawful Wife, without Sham, without Deceit, without Double-meaning" (348). Indeed, Lady Davers sees that her brother may have been blinded by his sexual interest in Pamela. When Mr. B exclaims, "O Lady Davers! Were you a Man, you would doat on her, as I do," Lady Davers retorts snappily, "Yes, ...so I should, for my Harlot, but not for a Wife" (356). Lady Davers's entrance at this concluding point in the novel certainly highlights the socio-economic divide that critics like Fielding and Haywood identify — that perhaps Richardson sees as the necessary last hurdle that Pamela must overcome if she is to be accepted as a social equal and to fully integrate into the gentry. Because Lady Davers accepts and admires Pamela by the end, Richardson's readers are meant to trust that Pamela's "Virtue is...[indeed] suitably rewarded" (374) with her new station. That is, Pamela's success is not simply a result of having seduced and secured a Mr. B, but having won over women of the upper ranks. However, Lady Davers's trial of Pamela, I believe, is the true test of Pamela's intentions and whether Pamela's claim to virtue should be rewarded. In fact, I would insist that Lady Davers's confrontation with Pamela regarding a sham marriage is really a forced confrontation of Pamela's engagement with self-deception.

With her interrogation of Pamela, Lady Davers begins more gently with the key question that began Richardson's novel — namely, why Pamela has still not left Mr. B: "Why are you here, when you are at full Liberty to go whither you please?" (319). She even offers Pamela multiple options to escape: "I will make one Proposal to you, and if you are innocent, I am sure you'll accept it. Will you go and live with me?" (319). And again: "Well then, said she, I'll put you to another Trial. I'll set out this Moment with you to your

Father and Mother, and give you up safe to them. What do you say to that?" (320). And finally, with her patience exhausted, Lady Davers attempts to pay off Pamela with "One hundred Guineas" (328) to leave, even bludgeoning her with threats:

Confess the Truth, said she, that thou'rt an undone Creature; hast been in Bed with thy Master; and art sorry for it, and for the Mischief thou hast occasion'd between him and me; and then I'll pity thee, and persuade him to pack thee off, with a hundred or two of Guineas, and some honest Farmer may take Pity of thee, and patch up thy Shame, for the sake of the Money; and if nobody will have thee, thou must vow Penitence, and be as humble as I once thought thee. (330)

At this apex of terror, Pamela manages to jump out the window to escape this captor. While Richardson's reader knows that Pamela and Mr. B are genuinely married, as do Pamela's own parents, Lady Davers's questions here remind us to question again, at this latter part of the novel, Pamela's original intent and the integrity of her virtue if she was insistent upon staying.

Incredulous, Lady Davers repeatedly accosts Pamela, forcing her to confront the feasibility of a sanctioned union with Mr. B: "Dost thou think thyself really marry'd? ...Dost thou think thou art really marry'd?" and "But canst you have the Vanity, the Pride, the Folly, said she, to think thyself actually marry'd to my Brother?" (325). Unwilling to accept the veracity of the marriage, Lady Davers eventually accuses Pamela of trickery and being knowingly complicit in plotting a sham marriage, as she repeatedly hammers away: "I know the whole Trick of it; and so, 'tis my Opinion, dost thou. It is only thy little Cunning, that it may look like a Cloak to thy yielding, and get better Terms from him" (329). For Lady

Davers, Pamela is a fraud who, as both Fielding and Haywood would agree, knows how to play the part of deception: “thou hast made a fine Exchange, hast thou not? Thy Honesty for this Bauble! And I’ll warrant, my little Dear has topp’d her Part, and paraded it like any real Wife, and so mimicks still the Condition! ...how finely thou canst act the Theatrical Part given thee!” (322).

The broader issue that Lady Davers’s repeated question here poses to Pamela and Richardson’s audience, of course, is whether or not Pamela’s intention all along has been to secure a sexual alignment with Mr. B. While Lady Davers’s sentiments do not seem to resonate with Pamela as deeply because she is confident in the legitimacy of her marriage to Mr. B, Richardson’s readers once again will question Pamela’s behaviour in the lead up to this union. To accusations of willing deception, Pamela defends herself: “if you think I am deceived, as you was pleas’d to hint, I should be more intitled to your Pity than your Anger” (319). Pamela reasons: “It will be Time enough for me to know the worst, when the worst comes. And if it will be so bad, your Ladyship should pity me, rather than thus torment me before my Time” (325).

Ultimately, Pamela fails to really confront her own deception — that is, her own unconscious deception about her interest in Mr. B, the integrity of her virtue, and her own motives for not leaving. This is why Pamela is allowed success in the end. Along with a more flexible understanding of virtue, self-deception situates Pamela more convincingly as someone who deserves reward in comparison to one like Syrena. For Haywood’s heroine, a constant alertness of her own deceptive ways made her more aware of the purpose and aims of her behaviour. Always playing a role to seduce her victims, Syrena could better separate the trick from the truth. Initially, Lady Davers’s visit may have been to rescue Pamela or

expose a sham marriage — unmasking both Mr. B and Pamela as either having knowingly entered a fraudulent union or uncovering the deception that Pamela has fallen under.

However, Lady Davers's interrogation of Pamela becomes an attempt to awaken the disillusioned Pamela from a trick that Lady Davers believes our heroine has played on herself. While first accusing Pamela of falling "into Fool's Paradise" (*Pamela* 318) and pitying Pamela for being taken up by "a Fairy-Dream" (321), Lady Davers finally charges Pamela with having too much "Vanity" to "suffer herself to be deluded and undone" (325).

Richardson may have sought to introduce a model of female virtue with *Pamela*.

However, we must question Pamela's apparent resolve and seeming incorruptibility, as I have aimed to do by casting new light on our understanding of his heroine. As I have argued, Pamela's unconscious ability to engage in a high level of sexual risk-taking, even as she convinces herself of the probity of her conduct, reveals a category of sexual cunning present in this well-recognized heroine. Self-deception has proven to be a very advantageous sexual strategy for a young woman like Pamela — indeed, perhaps a kind of refined deceptive tactic that both Haywood's Syrena and Fielding's Shamela were too sexually cognizant to adopt. By affording Pamela a conscious deniability about her own intentions as she unconsciously makes herself sexually available to Mr. B, Pamela's self-deception is a robust intrasexually competitive approach that proves triumphant for her — she who is ever keenly aware of the surrounding social pressures of her "hopeful Situation" (*Pamela* 279).

Conclusion

Even by “eating little, lacing prodigious strait, and [with] the Advantage of a great Hoop-Petticoat” (*Fantomina* 68), Fantomina’s “Intreague” (71) comes to a halt when she suddenly goes into labour while at a ball. In the end, no matter how much she tried to conceal her pregnancy, this heroine could not avoid the costs of parental investment and the attention her labouring body demanded of her. For all the sexual license she afforded herself, Fantomina’s body intervenes and she must confront the constraints biology sets on her. In the midst of giving birth to her daughter, Fantomina’s mother demands to know the name of he who caused Fantomina’s “Undoing” (70). And after Beauplaisir is summoned to her bed, the young heroine “relate[s] the whole Truth” of the intrigue to them both: “And ’tis difficult to determine, if *Beauplaisir*, or the Lady, were most surpris’d at what they heard; that he should have been blinded so often by her Artifices; or she, that so young a Creature should have the Skill to make use of them. Both sat for some Time in a profound Resvery [reverie]” (70). Ultimately, Eliza Haywood leaves Fantomina to a “Monastery in France” while Beauplaisir, Haywood informs her readers, is left puzzled and “full of Cogitations, more confus’d than ever he had known in his whole Life” (71) as to why a woman like Haywood’s young heroine would need to resort to such an elaborate game of deception. This dissertation has been my attempt at delving into why.

Throughout my dissertation, I have looked to the explanatory and revelatory power of the biocultural perspective to inform my study and further my thinking about the role of risk, the function of risk-taking, and women’s sexual behaviour as represented in the key texts I have taken up in my four chapters. Primarily, my study involved the application of various theories from the behavioural sciences to my critical analyses of British narratives published

between 1683 and 1740, with an aim of gaining more clarity and better insight as to why certain female figures are motivated to engage in specific sexual risk-taking behaviour. And just as the biocultural perspective offers illumination as to why these heroines act as they do, the approach has also made possible our recognition of emergent features of women's sexual nature when women are faced with the dangers (and opportunities) that risk-taking presents.

With my topic being squarely focussed on risk-taking and women's sexual activity, through my analyses of heroines like Cornelia, Lady Credit, Alovisa, Melliora, Pamela, and Syrena I came to realize how their sexual behaviour was at times unexpected and paradoxical. In Chapter One, I demonstrated how *The London Jilt's* trickster-heroine, Cornelia, is a *prosocial whore* who utilizes altruistic punishment as part of her strategy for managing intersexual conflict. Viewing Cornelia's risk-tolerant attitude as motivated by her deep-seated sense of fairness and justness — certainly, as I observed, a sense that develops reliably in social beings cross-culturally — I proffered the argument that even a disruptive, seemingly corrupt character like Cornelia can emerge as a socially-minded figure, even as she teeters unsteadily between corrigibility and opprobrium. By integrating theories on altruistic punishment with our understanding of intersexual conflict, I challenged literary interpretations by scholars like Melissa M. Mowry who more readily accept Cornelia's actions as only politically and socially factious and self-regarding. In this way, taking a biocultural view of human behaviour gives me access to a deeper understanding of Cornelia's motives, allowing me to recognize how Cornelia's prosociality emerges — indeed, conduct most unexpected and paradoxical from this trickster-whore figure. My hope is that my particular reading of this neglected novel serves to exhibit the complexity of its heroine.

As well, in Chapter Two, I argued that Daniel Defoe created a sexualized emblematic representation of the early credit system in order to promote investment in the government-sponsored scheme and garner bipartisan support from warring political parties. His Lady Credit adopts what I call a *whore's stratagem*, giving license to her sexual mobility, capacity, and plurality, thereby seducing party men into economic partnership. Through Lady Credit's sexual activity and availability, I argue, homosocial cooperation is made possible despite the lack of trust among such divided men. And what I maintain throughout this chapter is how — again, most unexpectedly and paradoxically — Lady Credit maintains her worth as a desirable lady because she conducts herself like a whore. Thus, I reexamined Sandra Sherman's influential claim regarding Lady Credit's either/or “bivalent sexuality” and made the case for how Lady Credit's function is necessarily both. And even while Lady Credit's stratagem of servicing multiple men synchronously is a seemingly high-risk enterprise, I demonstrated how her commitment to her own value necessitates her risk-averse attitude, as Lady Credit is ever cautious and wary of those who are allowed to use her.

In Chapter Three, I looked to Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's Prospect Theory, with their specific findings regarding our attitudes towards loss aversion, in conjunction with Sarah Hill and David Buss's arguments on risk-taking and social competition to probe further into Haywood's *Love in Excess* and this author's characterization of women's risk-taking behaviour. As I argued, intrasexual competition and the fear of losing a potential mate to one's rivals are significant factors that can escalate one's tolerance for risk. And while female figures like Alovisa, Melantha, and Ciamara may demonstrate more willingness to pay the biological and social costs of aggressively pursuing D'elmont — indeed, I observe, primed by the kind of competitive market that Haywood herself observed with the frenzied

effects of South Sea stock in 1720 — I asserted that Haywood imagines an alternative scheme for women like Melliora who will not pay such a high price for sexual indulgence. Instead, as Haywood illustrates through Melliora's narrative in the second half of *Love in Excess*, climactic possibilities are made attainable via the delay of sexual gratification. Indeed, new dimensions to women's sexual nature are realized in Haywood's popular novel. By way of deferred moments of sexual pleasure, I made the case for how sexual pleasure emerges still. Even while critics like Toni Bowers, Kathleen Lubey, Scott Black, and Tiffany Potter have made important contributions to our understanding of Haywood's conceptualizations of women's sexuality in *Love in Excess*, I offered an analysis here that goes deeper into the psychology of why these characters act as they do, made available through my application of a biocultural approach.

Lastly, in Chapter Four, I argued that Samuel Richardson's seemingly virtuous heroine Pamela is, in fact, more ambitious than she (or Richardson himself) realizes. I claimed that through an unconscious deployment of self-deception, Pamela is able to increase her capacity for sexual risk-taking, even though she is not sexually desirous herself. Indeed, Pamela's self-deception is a sexual strategy that affords this heroine a conscious deniability of her own motives. In this way, I claimed, Pamela cleverly avoids parental punishment and social ridicule all while competing successfully for the sexual attention of a most cunning man and, ultimately, securing for herself an advantageous marriage. Through a comparative reading of Richardson's *Pamela* with Haywood's *Anti-Pamela*, I argued that Richardson's heroine is more complex than even her author realizes as, I claimed, Richardson is seduced by his own creation. Thus, in my interpretation, seemingly risk-averse actions — once more, unexpectedly and paradoxically — turn out to be risk-seeking behaviour. Indeed, the

either/or debate regarding Pamela's virtue is intervened and undercut by this unexpected revelation.

As with many scholars who take up the biocultural approach, I, too, wanted to avoid the kind of scant or starved, flattened or theoretically-superimposed analyses that critics like Elizabeth A. Wilson fear to be "vulgarly literal" (*Gut Feminism* 32). And to this, I would add the "vulgarly" biological, as my study builds on evidence about women's evolved sexual nature. However, along with proponents of "second-wave" consilience, as I explored in my introductory chapter, I believe giving primacy to a biocultural framework does not entail sacrificing richness and complexity of interpretation. Again, after all, we literary scholars hold in high regard the nuanced and the fine-grained. As I aimed to demonstrate with the four case studies I have presented in this dissertation, such qualities indeed are not lost and, in fact, can find new avenues of development via the biocultural perspective. And as I also aimed to demonstrate, the biocultural perspective often raises new and different questions about how human behaviour interacts with, acts against, is shaped by specific cultural environments, leading to the possible discovery of certain emergent qualities of human nature. As I revealed, erotically climactic moments can emerge from intentional delays of sexual gratification. As well, unconscious self-deception might realistically be taken up as an intrasexual competitive strategy that allows one to increase one's sexual risk-taking in environments that discourage, or are hostile to, more explicit tactics. And as I hope my specific application of the biocultural perspective to literary study has made manifest, risk and risk-taking bring out new facets and dimensions of women's sexual nature thus far overlooked and undiscovered.

Imagining Future Directions

While my case studies are not empirical studies themselves, I hope some of my analyses can spark new lines of behavioural research. For example, my argument that Cornelia takes up altruistic punishment as a strategy for dealing with intersexual conflict is not only a new way of thinking about the conduct of this character, but the strategy itself is a testable notion. To my knowledge, social scientists have yet to consider how third-party punishers might penalize defectors, cheaters, or free-riders differently or more severely when intersexual conflict is at the centre of exploitation. Also testable would be the role of self-deception as an intrasexually competitive tactic, as I proposed in Chapter Four.¹⁵⁹ Or how delay of sexual gratification might be differently experienced by women compared to men because reproductive costs are so much higher for women. While my proposition regarding Lady Credit's whore's stratagem is, to say the least, an extreme example of women's sexual conduct that is improbable and unsustainable for many real-life women, and therefore unlikely to be put to human subjects, the theory itself might contribute to research on the quality and nature of male coalitions that are formed through female sexual exchange, for example.

Because my study focussed specifically on risk and women's sexual risk-taking, I intentionally limited my scope of investigation, thereby putting aside factors like men's engagement with sexual risk-taking behaviour. Indeed, I could have delved into how male sexual risk-taking and female sexual risk-taking are played off each other. For example, in Chapter Three, I might have also looked at how D'elmont's brazen attempts to rape Melliora affects her attitudes towards risk. Or in Chapter Two, I might have investigated more at

¹⁵⁹ See Trivers's *The Folly of Fools*.

length how Defoe exploits male intrasexual competition through his particular characterization of Whig men versus Tory men — all negotiating and validating their masculinity, as I claimed, through their sexual engagement with Lady Credit. Additionally, I might have considered male interest in long-term sexual investments by comparing D’elmont, Mr. B, and the Tobacco Merchant.

Possible future studies of Restoration and eighteenth-century literature could take up narrative explorations of women’s risky engagement with rape more specifically, for instance, especially as rape in amatory fiction of the eighteenth century often straddles terror and pleasure. From a biological viewpoint, because rape is such an immense threat to women’s reproductive resources, rape fantasies run counter to this logic, and so erotic possibilities that lie therein should not emerge. And yet, as many social psychologists have found, the fantasy of rape is a real erotic phenomenon among many women.¹⁶⁰ By incorporating biocultural theories on women’s evolved sexual psychology into eighteenth-century literary studies, we may be able to trace an early subgenre of rape fantasies and, importantly, discover the parameters such narratives entail. Doing so also offers critics a way to approach questions of how and why authors like Haywood may intentionally manipulate the evolved sexual psychology of her female readers through erotic rape fiction — thereby inducing sexual, physiological arousal — while other authors like Richardson intentionally do not.

Yet another avenue of research could examine how reading erotic narratives may alter neurocognitive connections in consumers, possibly affecting their experience of sexual desire

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, Joseph W. Critelli and Jenny M. Bivona’s “Women’s Erotic Rape Fantasies: An Evaluation of Theory and Research”; and Bivana, Critelli, and Michael J. Clark’s “Women’s Rape Fantasies: An Empirical Evaluation of the Major Explanations.”

and sexual gratification. This experience may even be differently encountered by female, versus male, consumers. Beyond sex and mating, the biocultural perspective can offer important avenues of inquiry and pose yet unconsidered questions about parent-offspring conflict in works like Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, for example. Literary critics might also consider using life-history theory to examine the over eighty literary works Haywood produced over her forty-year writing career, mapping out transformations in outlook and attitudes as she ages, perhaps. Or scholars might examine Whig and Tory party politics, for instance, in terms of the psychology of in-group/out-group dynamics and coalition formation.

As Edward Slingerland and Mark Collard recognize, adopting a biocultural approach for many humanities scholars will involve "an important shift in [our] overall interpretative framework" (25). And indeed, such a shift may lead us to examine questions about our evolved nature that do not (again, as Anne Campbell notes) simply "stop[] at the neck" (*A Mind of Her Own* 19). While, undoubtedly, findings from a biocultural framework will converge with political, economic, or sociosexual theories and ideas that literary and cultural critics have claimed all along, importantly, there will also be points of divergence. As science and humanities scholars, we must insist that our preferences for certain analytical outcomes do not foreclose our exploration of such points of divergence, or censor certain findings or plausible conclusions. Indeed, throughout my dissertation and within each of my case studies, I might have taken up a conceptual frame that deliberately aligned with a feminist socio-political purpose, for example. And indeed, a feminist-leaning theoretical approach would have worked well in Chapter One (where I identify the prosocial whore), or Chapter Two (where I map out the details of a whore's stratagem), or Chapter Three (where I delineate a possible deviating trajectory of women's erotic experience), or Chapter Four

(where I outline another unconsciously activated sexual strategy for women). However, I believe scholarly adherence to specific socio-political agendas will only deprive us of what we are allowed to ask and how we are allowed to know. Indeed, we must not let our interest in a specific outcome override due diligence to the study of our chosen topics. And so, while I ventured into a topic that centred on risk, risk-taking, and women's sexual behaviour, informed by biocultural theories on women's evolved sexual psychology, I set aside specific socio-political aims in order to consider questions that seem still pushed aside and to risk other ways of knowing.

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