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Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood—The Fair Triumvirate– authored incredibly popular tales of seduction in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Significant features of these texts, called amatory fiction, include seduction, female sexual desire, and virtue in distress. Contemporary and modern scholars often describe amatory fiction as antithetical to conduct literature because of the prominent seduction and sexual desire plots. Conduct literature includes books, sermons, letters, and essays consisting of rules or regulations, often religious, meant to keep people pure in body and mind and negate female sexual desire.

The Fair Triumvirate adapted and challenged their predecessors—authors of romance, poetry, tragedies, and conduct books—writing seduction stories that influenced succeeding authors of fiction novels and conduct literature, such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Frances Burney. Recent scholarship discusses the important role of amatory fiction in developing the English novel. Questions arise about whether these books of amatory fiction are some of the first English novels and the influence of amatory fiction on the formation of the English novel.

Literary conversation on amatory fiction focuses on the role of sex and the display of women's sexual desire. Considering that other works discussing sex, morality, and virtue cast a decidedly negative light on women's sexual desire, one might assume that amatory fiction operates inversely to conduct literature. Yet rather than functioning as anti-conduct books, most examples of amatory fiction reinforce the importance of proper conduct and morality— a counter-intuitive conclusion to those who sought to remove or exclude amatory works by women writers in the formation of the novel.

AMATORY FICTION AS BOTH NOVEL AND CONDUCT LITERATURE: THE FAIR TRIUMVIRATE'S REPRESENTATION OF CONDUCT AND SEDUCTION

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Kellyn P. Luna

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Dr. Christopher Hodgkins
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Kellyn P. Luna has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair

Dr. Christopher Hodgkins

Committee Members

Dr. Nancy Myers

Dr. Jennifer Feather

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Amatory fiction flourished in England during the late seventeenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries. The popularity of amatory fiction is surprising to modern readers because the significant themes of the amatory sub-genre include seduction and female sexual desire. As stated in many contemporary sermons and conduct manuals, social ideals dictated that young women remain virtuous and virginal. She should not put her physical or spiritual body in danger, nor should she sully her mind with tales of desire and seduction. Women's ideal roles in religious and conduct literature required them to deny physical desire and implied that truly virtuous women do not experience sexual desire at all. It is curious, then, that some of the most popular books of the time were amatory stories written by and for women. Women writing stories driven by sexual desire was certainly not deemed appropriate conduct, and it is certainly possible that reading the amatory stories allowed women a brief respite from the strict conduct roles of their daily lives; however questionable the act of writing or reading amatory fiction stories was considered, the content of those stories typically illustrated the same attitudes about which behaviors were and were not appropriate for women as in preceding conduct literature.

Describing amatory fiction as "sensational tales of sexual intrigue published by and for English women in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries," Toni Bowers explains they "were among the most widely read texts of their day, rivaling best sellers like *Gulliver's Travels* (Jonathan Swift) and *Robinson Crusoe* (Daniel Defoe) in popularity."[1] Works falling under the amatory category were largely written and read by women. Aphra Behn, Delarivier

[1] Toni Bowers, "Sex, Lies, and Invisibility: Amatory Fiction from the Restoration to Mid-Century," in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*. Author, John Richetti. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994: 50.

Manley, and Eliza Haywood, called "the fair triumvirate,"[2] especially influenced the genre. According to Jane Spencer in "Amatory and Scandal Fiction," amatory fiction—inspired by Italian *novelle*, seventeenth-century French romances, and the *Portuguese Letters* (1669)—are love stories that are not so explicit that they could be labeled pornography but are also not "so high-minded as romance."[3] Amatory fiction often includes themes of seduction and the female character as voyeur with the male as the displayed object.[4] Bowers describes the amatory fiction plot as typically following an innocent young woman seduced by an older, usually married, more experienced man. He promises her love and marriage in exchange for her honor but abandons her after his physical desires have been satiated.[5] In this way, amatory fiction does not follow the romance plot even though love might be included in the story. The amatory plot differs from romance because the lovers do not end up together and because the young woman finds herself worse off than before the union.

Authors of amatory fiction adapted and challenged their predecessors—authors of romance, poetry, tragedies, and conduct books—writing seduction stories that influenced succeeding authors of fiction novels and conduct literature. Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Frances Burney all write popular conduct novels in the mid-eighteenth century. Despite the popularity of amatory fiction, female authorship and sexually suggestive content written by women were largely considered inappropriate and immoral in seventeenth- and eighteenth-

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[2] Poet-critic James Sterling coined the "fair Triumvirate of wit" to describe Behn, Manley, and Haywood in a dedicatory verse to Haywood's *Secret Histories, Novels, and Poems* (1725). The dedication reads "Pathetic *Behn*, or *Manley's* greater Name; Forget their Sex, and own when *Haywood* writ, She clos'd the Fair triumvirate of Wit."

[3] Jane Spencer, "Amatory and Scandal Fiction" in Thomas Keymer (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750*, Oxford History of the Novel in English (Oxford, 2017; online edition, Oxford Academic, 21 June 2018): 500.

[4] Ibid., 501.

[5] Toni Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2009: 51-52.

century England. Authors contemporary to Behn, Manley, and Haywood are critical of the sexually explicit, and even political, content of the triumvirate's amatory works. For example, Alexander Pope criticizes what Ballaster calls Haywood's "textual promiscuity" in *The Dunciad* (editions 1729-1743).[6] Popular eighteenth-century authors Fielding, Richardson, and Jonathan Swift criticized amatory plots of seduction in political essays, periodicals, and poetry.

Recent scholarship on amatory fiction by critics like Toni Bowers and Ross Ballaster discuss the important role of amatory fiction in the development of the novel. Questions arise about whether these books of amatory fiction are actually some of the first English novels, making Aphra Behn a contender for the title "founder of the novel." Much of the literary conversation from eighteenth-century authors, and much modern academic conversation on amatory fiction, focuses on the role of sex and the display of women's sexual desire. Considering that other works discussing sex, morality, and virtue cast a decidedly negative light on women's sexual desire, one might assume that amatory fiction operates inversely to conduct literature.

Conduct literature itself includes books, sermons, letters, and essays consisting of rules or regulations, often religious, meant to keep people pure in body and mind. Early conduct books such as Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of the Ladies* and *The Treasure/The Book of the Three Virtues* (both 1405), Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1508), and Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman, Drawne Out to the Full Body: Expressing, What Habilliments Doe Best Attire Her, What Ornaments Doe Best Adorne Her, What Complements Doe Best Accomplish Her* (1631), describe how men and women are to negotiate love and passion without giving into bodily desires. Castiglione and Brathwaite's conduct books offer

[6] Ros Ballaster. *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992: 160.

advice and instruction to ladies concerning proper etiquette when speaking to men and how to portray an honest, chaste disposition. Christine's works offer examples of virtuous women in opposition to those behaviors women are often accused of naturally possessing. The paratexts– or framing texts surrounding a main text providing context and perspective– of conduct literature reinforce the idea of behavioral policing by inviting readers to examine their own behaviors and those of others. Conduct books are often titled sermons or prayers for young women. Invoking the term "sermon" implies that the guidelines described within are agreed upon by God and the men who wrote them. One might argue with men or women, but to argue with God is far more audacious.

Yet rather than functioning as anti-conduct books, most examples of amatory fiction reinforce the importance of proper conduct and morality— a counter-intuitive conclusion to those who sought to remove or exclude amatory works by women writers in the formation of the novel. Amatory fiction does not actually discount conduct literature, which seems ironic. While the authors of amatory fiction certainly do discuss sex and desire typically reserved for the private sphere, the triumvirate does not discount or contradict conduct books in their works. Rather, they reinforce established conduct, for women especially, while admitting that women do have curiosity about what it must be like to be sexually free—exciting and liberating perhaps, but a virtuous eighteenth-century English woman cannot both find out for herself and hope to maintain a socially acceptable reputation.

In many ways, amatory fiction seems to deviate from conduct literature in that both older, influential, and popular conduct literature of the time discourages women from thinking about or participating in sexually devious acts. However, when we analyze the narratives represented in amatory novels such as Behn's *Love Letters from a Nobleman to his Sister* (1684), Manley's *The*

Adventures of Rivella (1714), and Haywood's *Fantomina* (1725), and when we include paratext relevant to each novel, amatory fiction and conduct literature are not as opposed as they may first appear. Amatory stories written by the fair triumvirate reinforced gendered behavior described in popular conduct literature, both earlier and contemporary. Also, they developed readers' understanding of women's sexual desire illustrated through contemporary amatory fiction. Readers could understand the conduct element of amatory plots because the heroine typically ends in a far worse state than she begins. Perhaps the problem with amatory fiction and the fear of the critics is that it is inappropriate for women to write about or even to imagine sex and desire.

Bowers describes the power of the triumvirate as "problematic" because amatory fiction and the women who wrote it were not deemed respectable.[7] Was the seductive nature of amatory works a reason why female authorship of novels was not respectable? According to Vivien Jones, "to write, or at least to publish, was for the eighteenth-century woman a transgressive act. Though the gendering of mental qualities associated femininity with imagination and creativity, publishing exposed an essentially private activity to the public gaze, blurring the conduct-book delineation of separate spheres."[8] Amatory fiction represents an interesting shaking-up of public and private spheres in which questions arose concerning what was appropriate and moral for readers' consumption as well as what public roles were appropriate and moral for women to hold.

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[7] Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction," pp. 50-62.

[8] Vivien Jones, ed. *World and Word: Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity (1).* Florence, US: Routledge, 1990, pp. 140.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century readers were not unfamiliar with sexually suggestive works, many designed to be read aloud—Alexander Pope's *The Rape of Lock* (1712), for example. But, for women to show their own carnal knowledge and represent such experiences in the public sphere was controversial. Works written and designed to be read publicly or for public discussion, like periodicals and conduct literature, often reinforced appropriate social behavior for men and women. Both sexes were expected to conduct themselves morally, though the constraints were different for each. While the target audience for amatory fiction tended to be women, men also widely read in this genre, which brought women's sexual desire and men's and women's methods of seduction into the public sphere.[9] Amatory authors depicted intimate moments occurring in private through women's perspectives for public consumption. Kathleen Lubey discusses depictions of love and passion in amatory fiction as functioning to caution readers to control their passions rather than titillate and provoke them.[10] Amatory fiction operated as both an expression of women's sexual desire and a means of experimenting with desire for both women and men through reading, but most importantly, to inspire readers not to give into bodily passions that often have disastrous consequences.

Heroines in Behn's, Manley's, and Haywood's works seek out attention from men; they do not always necessarily seek out sex, but they do seek out amorous attention from men, which ends in damaging sexual encounters. Bowers explains that in amatory fiction, "love almost always brings fleeting pleasure to self-centered, fickle men and lasting misery to the women who trust them."[11] The idea of maintaining respectability in an amatory plot centered around sex and

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[9] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 31.

[10] Kathleen Lubey. "Eliza Haywood's Amatory Aesthetic." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 3, 2006: 313-14.

[11] Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction," p. 51.

desire for women becomes difficult—for our heroines and the women authors who created them. Bowers continues, "like the culture that produced them, amatory works placed women in a double bind: without sexual experience, they are the natural prey of experienced male predators; with sexual experience, they are whores."[12] Bowers explains that both fictional and real women could not experiment with men sexually and maintain a respectable reputation. A woman could not so much as have a private conversation with, receive a letter from, or be seen in public in the company of a man who was not related to her. She could, however, read amatory fiction and learn to avoid the fate of the women depicted.[13]

Amatory fiction, then, can be read as both expressions of sexual desire and as cautionary tales against non-marital sex and desire; hence, amatory fiction is a more daring kind of conduct literature rather than its antithesis. The idea that reading fiction was dangerous for women is exemplified by all the major titles in this project. Dr. James Fordyce explains in his *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) that reading fiction, in general, was considered dangerous for women, except for novels by Samuel Richardson. Women readers were particularly associated with novel reading, making amatory novels more dangerous. Fordyce writes that young women should only read material that could promote their religious beliefs and virtuous character.[14] Acceptable reading for women includes religious texts and sermons, like Fordyce's own, and works meant to inform women as a means of being supportive of and interesting to men. Bowers describes reading amatory fiction as a "controlled danger."[15] The author explains that reading about female

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[12] Ibid., 52.

[13] Ibid., 52.

[14] James Fordyce. *Sermons to Young Women, in Two Volumes.* 10th ed. London: Cadell, Dodsley, 1786. A facsimile reprint of the 10th edition, first published 1786. First edition published 1766. Introduction by Susan Allen Ford. Southampton: Chaton House Press, 2012: Vols. 1 and 2 Introduction, xix.

[15] Bowers, "Sex, Lies, and Invisibility: Amatory Fiction from the Restoration to Mid-Century," p. 62.

desire was exciting and sexy, something a virtuous woman would not experience in her daily life if she were conducting herself morally. Bowers writes, "to read amatory fiction was to engage in rebellious, scandalous activity," certainly not the pastime of a virtuous lady.[16] Women especially were told not to fill their time with reading imaginative tales like novels because, according to Fordyce, "instruction they convey none. They paint scenes of pleasure and passion altogether improper for you to behold, even with the mind's eye. Their descriptions are often loose and luscious in a high degree."[17] Fordyce would certainly not approve of seduction themes found in the works of each member of the triumvirate.

I discuss authors Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood chronologically to understand better how themes of seduction shifted or remained the same in the mid-eighteenth century. It is important to understand how the discussion of female desire and sexuality in literature developed leading into the mid-eighteenth century when we see the first conduct novels. My thesis began with the question of how female sexuality and agency are represented in conduct novels. Curious, I began to look to its predecessors and was surprised to see the many examples of women writing about desire and openly discussing sexuality and seduction in amatory fiction texts. Knowing the strong connection between conduct literature and conduct novels, I wondered if there was also a connection between amatory fiction and the conduct novel.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the definition of amatory fiction. A portion of the chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the English novel. Research covering the characteristics of the novel develops a conversation about several examples of amatory fiction, particularly Behn's *Love*

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[16] Bowers, "Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women," 52.
[17] Fordyce. *Sermons, Vol. 1 and 2,* Introduction, xix.

Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister, and whether it is appropriate to term these texts novels. To determine what amatory fiction is, we also must clarify what it is not. Amatory fiction has been considered something like pornography because of the sexually suggestive content. I look to examples of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pornography to compare characteristics between them and amatory fiction. Chapter Three examines conduct displayed in Manley's amatory texts and the lived experience of women through the perspective of Rivella, or Manley herself. Chapter Four provides an in-depth discussion of conduct literature and compares behavior protocol in conduct books and Haywood's amatory fiction. Chapter Five offers a look beyond amatory fiction to the conduct novel and the possible influences of amatory fiction on the conduct novel sub-genre.

Chapter Two: Behn and the Amatory Fiction Novel: *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-87) and the invention of novelistic amatory fiction.

Aphra Behn (1640-1689) was the first woman in England to make a living by her pen[18] and often wrote on amatory themes. Behn's work often bolsters her political allegiances. Behn was pro-Royalist, or pro-Tory—in particular, supporting Kings Charles II and James II against their critics—and she wrote political propaganda for the party. Her political writing, coupled with her non-marital relationships, garnered her a less-than-pristine reputation. Behn's profession as an author and the content of her work were considered too masculine or forward, implying that she was immoral sexually. The cavalier poets of the seventeenth century, such as Thomas Carew, also influenced her "masculine" style of writing, and she competed successfully with the often sexually charged Restoration drama of William Wycherley, George Etherege, and John

[18] Maureen Duffy, *The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn, 1640-89.* London: Jonathan Cape, Thirty Bedford Square, (1977), p. 96.

Dryden. The central focus of Chapter Two is Behn's amatory themes, particularly in *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684).

Chapter Two features a discussion defining the novel. Amatory fiction has not usually been included in critical histories of the creation or evolution of the English novel from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Using methodology from Ian Watt's *Origins of the English Novel* (1987) and Leonard Davis's *Factual Fictions* (1983), the novel as a form can be loosely defined as a longish, fiction prose narrative that incorporates paratext, formal realism, intimacy between the work and reader, in a changeable, discursive field. Paratext functions to provide a more realistic reading experience. Paratext is everything surrounding a text, excluding the main text of the novel. Most examples of paratext in this project are advertisements, dedicatory letters, and letters meant to provide a history of context for a book, all written for the purpose of enriching the story and making it more lifelike.

For Watt, Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) is the first English novel, circumventing the amatory authors. Watt gives no attention to romance, let alone amatory writers, in his *Origins of the English Novel.* Judith Gardiner interprets Watt's disregard for romance as a rejection of plots driven by romantic love because they create an ideology that romantic love is required within a family unit. The family unit fostered by romantic love perpetuates "male competition in the marketplace and female novel-reading leisure at home."[19] Romantic love plots are not essential for real life, says Gardiner, which does not require all men to be heroic and discourages women from reading material that excites the senses too much or fosters unrealistic expectations for love and relationships. Too much leisure was discouraged because those with nothing to do but

[19] Judith Kegan Gardiner, "The First English Novel: Aphra Behn's Love Letters, The Canon, and Women's Tastes." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 8, no. 2 (1989): 204.

wallow in fantasy tended to fall into immorality. Ultimately, for Gardiner, the novel is not a stable category.

Reading amatory fiction would have been considered a risky activity. Critics of amatory fiction did not want young women reading works like Behn's *Love Letters* for fear that the intimate reading experience of an epistolary seduction story would encourage girls to indulge in their passionate desires. *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* offers a fictional backstory of the real, scandalous trial of Ford Lord Grey in 1682. Letters between Grey and Lady Henrietta Berkley were used as evidence during the trial and probably inspired Behn to write in the epistolary form. The knowledge that *Love Letters* was based on a true story deepened the concern that girls would be inspired to indulge in physical gratification.

Stories of female sexual desire linked amatory fiction with pornography. Amatory fiction is definitely sexually suggestive, but to say graphic is too intense a description. Feelings of desire in pornography lead to explicit physical gratification, while amatory fiction does not focus on physical sex acts. Sometimes, desire leads to physical gratification in amatory fiction, but not always. Feelings of desire are admitted, and immoral behavior committed, but with the caveat that self-control over desire is shown to be essential. While similar themes do exist in pornography and amatory fiction, like eroticism, voyeurism, and the interplay between virtue and desire, the description of sex and the mode of delivering erotic scenes are very different.

The element of seduction and allusion rather than direct sex scenes is a key difference between amatory fiction and pornography. Amatory fiction offers seduction stories meant to build excitement, while pornography focuses less on internal feelings. Amatory fiction does not deny the feelings, and, at times, overwhelming desire experienced by women. Reading amatory

fiction often feels a bit like being seduced as the heroines are, allowing a vision of the crime without the consequences of the action.

Chapter Three: Delarivier Manley, Scandalous Biography, and Amatory Fiction

Delarivier Manley's (1663/70-1724) amatory texts represent the kinds of stories amatory critics feared. Her combination of autobiography and amatory fiction narrative creates a space for lived fantasy that could inspire other young women to seek out physical pleasures and become guided by desire instead of virtue. Chapter Three discusses scandal fiction and the interplay of biography and amatory fiction in Manley's *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714). *Rivella* reads as an explanation of events from alter ego Rivella's, or Manley's, perspective surrounding the time of Manley's libel trial.

The Adventures of Rivella; or, the History of the Author of the Atalantis (1714) discusses sex, politics, and the importance of fiction. Manley presents a discussion of conduct, particularly the role of the social sphere in policing accepted conduct. Like Behn's *Love Letters, Rivella* centers on the conduct of a young lady whose naivete gets her into trouble. Unlike *Love Letters*, *Rivella* does not offer a story of the heroine's loss of virginity but rather the ruin of her reputation from rumors of her having multiple love affairs and her role in several legal cases. Rivella only sometimes denies the love affairs. Also, unlike Behn in her *Love Letters,* Manley does not detail seduction leading to sex for Rivella. It is not until the closing scene of the narrative that the narrator describes a scene in which he and the reader are invited to a sensuous dinner with Rivella.

Manley incurred a scandalous reputation in her lifetime, both for her personal life and her writing. Political and personal issues that damaged her reputation are highlighted in her books

like *The New Atalantis* (1709) and *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714).[20] According to critics like Clara Reeves (eighteenth century) and Dolores Palomo (twentieth century), Manley's work was damaging for other female writers because her work associated female writing with immorality. A question that came up in this chapter was why female writers wanted to distance themselves from Manley and what were some of the consequences of that distancing?

Is it Manley's bad behavior detailed in these biographical books that makes later female authors want to distance their writing from other amatory authors, as well? Scandal and amatory writing being associated with women's writing generally is a problem because amatory authors played a distinguished role in the development of the fiction novel. It is so interesting that some of the first novels written by women are amatory fiction—it's not home management, fine crafts, piety, or many of the things required of a virtuous lady. Fiction resembling life implies that the first fiction novels would describe everyday lived experiences. I believe critics became incredibly concerned that the status quo would resemble narratives in amatory fiction rather than the biblical, demure instruction given by religious texts and conduct literature.

Chapter Four: Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina*, Sex, Virtue, and Conduct

Chapter Four focuses on Haywood's *Love in Excess* (1719) and *Fantomina* (1725). Both offer stories of female characters struggling with feelings of desire and seeking out sexual activities for the first time. In conjunction with themes of desire, this chapter also focuses on similar characteristics in conduct literature and amatory fiction. An essential question guiding this chapter is whether amatory fiction contradicts conduct literature. Considering that other works discussing sex, morality, and virtue cast a negative light on women's sexual desire, one

[20] Delarivier Manley and Katherine Zelinksy, *The Adventures of Rivella*. Broadview Literary Texts. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, (1999):12-13.

might assume that amatory fiction operates inversely to conduct literature. This chapter examines this question: is the problem with amatory fiction that it deviates from conduct literature and that it illustrates the raw, physical, and emotional nature of its female characters?

Conduct literature includes books, sermons, letters, and essays consisting of sets of rules or regulations, often religious, meant to protect morality and encourage virtuous behavior and thought. Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of the Ladies* and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies,* Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier,* and Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) describe how men and women are to negotiate love and passion without giving into bodily desires. These examples were chosen to demonstrate accepted conduct norms and shifting attitudes in popular conduct books from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Castiglione's and Brathwaite's conduct books offer advice and instruction to ladies concerning proper etiquette when speaking to men and how to present an honest, chaste disposition. Christine's works offer examples of virtuous women in opposition to women's supposedly corrupt natures. Reading conduct books popular in their time shows the mindset of gentlefolk immediately before the advent of amatory fiction and provides context for how and why themes of seduction were quite shocking to readers.

A major criticism of amatory fiction was that the behavior shown went against the advice of proper conduct detailed in conduct books. Yet even though amatory fiction features sexually suggestive content, it does not often contradict the advice of conduct books; thus, amatory fiction and conduct literature are much more similar than they might appear at first glance. Conduct literature preceding amatory fiction cautions against fantasies, especially sexual fantasies. Indulging in excessive daydreaming and occupying one's mind with "fancie" were to be avoided because fantasy is not grounded in reality. Haywood's *Fantomina* (1725) provides an example of

the dangers of indulging in "fancie" or fantasy. *Fantomina* deviates from the amatory plot because, rather than following an innocent young woman who is seduced by an older, unavailable man, the protagonist seduces and deceives the man. She disguises herself to seduce a man continuously. Fantomina as a character is not meant to be emulated but works to show what happens if you participate in casual sex for pleasure. Chapter Four provides a detailed comparison of conduct norms and the action of *Fantomina* to examine proper conduct shown and implied through violation in the narrative.

Haywood also wrote non-fiction, including *The Tea Table*, which is similar to Castiglione's *The Courtier*. *The Tea Table* offers clear examples of what behaviors are and are not virtuous. The discussion seems to suggest a hierarchy of virtues in that reason, honesty, and a contented demeanor are favored, and an authentic and sincere character is the most virtuous. Like *The Courtier* in form and content, *The Tea Table* discusses ideal virtues for men and women in the form of a conversation amongst friends. Writing *The Tea Table* in this way connects it to the great conversations about conduct and human nature from past centuries.

Chapter Five: From Amatory Fiction to Conduct Novels: Shifting Themes in Seduction Stories

Conduct novels and amatory fiction largely deal with navigating sexual relationships. While amatory fiction focuses on seducing and being seduced, conduct novels focus on maintaining self-control and virtue. The conduct novel arose in the mid-eighteenth century, immediately following the amatory fiction era. Examples of conduct novels include Richardson's *Pamela* (1741) and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782). Each of these novels follows a young woman learning to navigate social situations and finding herself to be an attractive young lady due to her moral comportment.

Conduct novels seem to build upon Christine's and the amatory writers' themes that a woman's agency lies in her ability to maintain self-control, concluding that female power stems from holding and keeping a virtuous reputation. Other people, including men, are more willing to trust those who consistently display virtuous, gentle, and logical behavior. Conduct novels focus less on seduction and more on female characters seeking an emotionally fulfilling life. A goal of this chapter is to consider why themes in conduct novels focus less on seduction than amatory fiction. What attitudes shifted to result in later literature discussing sexual desire far less often than its predecessors?

Ideas surrounding sex for men and women in the mid-eighteenth century are illustrated in conduct novels. Sex and sexuality are primary themes in Richardson's *Pamela,* even though the purpose of the story is about virtuous, chaste female behavior. Burney's *Evelina* does not discuss ideal virtue in the same way as *Pamela* but offers a narrative of a young woman learning how to navigate upper-class social circles. Like Pamela, Evelina's internal virtuous nature wins her the affection of many people she meets. *Evelina* offers a perspective of actively learning proper conduct. In each of these examples, there is an idea that one can learn the rules of popular social conduct, but virtue is something that lives within. Burney also published *Cecilia* in 1782 in which the heroine successfully seeks constancy, a loving family, and safety, much like Evelina. Themes in conduct shift focus from scenes of seduction to showing female characters seeking stability and contentment.

Research Questions and Limitations

The goal of my dissertation is to expand our understanding of amatory fiction as not solely a response to but as an example of conduct literature. One aspect of this project is to examine why amatory fiction is not represented as essential in the codifying of the English novel

as a literary form, continuing the academic conversations of Ros Ballaster, Kathleen Lubey, and Toni Bowers. Amatory fiction was deemed too salacious for writers of literary history to want to include these works. Some contemporary female authors actively tried to distance themselves from scandal and amatory writing. The aim of this project is to continue the conversation about the influence of amatory fiction by women and the role of amatory fiction in forming the novel, as well as what seventeenth- and eighteenth-century readers considered acceptable reading content.

While this project does discuss the role of amatory fiction in the creation of the English novel, a more thorough discussion is certainly needed for a full understanding of the influence of amatory fiction. Chapter Two discusses the novel and the exclusion of amatory texts in the canonization of the English novel, but I believe this topic to be a project in itself that could not be adequately treated in this dissertation. Thus, I do not discuss the early novel in detail nor closely consider the evolution of the novel as a form.

The scope of the project offers an analysis of amatory and other contemporary works from the late seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries in England. French and Portuguese examples feature briefly, but the focus of this project is on English literature in and around London. To limit the time frame of works discussed in this project, I do not analyze late eighteenth-century works about women's rights and sexuality by authors like Mary Wollstonecraft (eighteenth century) or Jane Austen (nineteenth century), who were inspired by amatory and conduct novel writers. Finally, I look only to amatory fiction written by the Fair Triumvirate in this project. This is not to suggest that other authors did not write amatory fiction.

Amatory fiction has much to offer twenty-first-century readers particularly interested in how discussions of sex and sexuality influenced the development of the early novel during the

Restoration and eighteenth century. How women talked about sex, desire, and sexuality in early novels influenced behaviors around those subjects and shaped real and fictional conduct. Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood faced backlash from contemporary authors who reflected negatively on their authorship and reputations as real people, so I will examine how and why these women continued to write about sex and desire. Despite the taboo nature of amatory fiction, later women writers like Frances Burney, Wollstonecraft, and Austen, though the latter two are not considered primarily conduct writers, continued to write novels discussing desire and conduct into the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. We will see what influence amatory fiction had on the evolution of the conduct novel during that time.

CHAPTER II: BEHN AND THE AMATORY FICTION NOVEL: *LOVE LETTERS BETWEEN A NOBLEMAN AND HIS SISTER* (1684-87) AND THE INVENTION OF NOVELISTIC AMATORY FICTION

Introduction

Aphra Behn's writing often includes themes of seduction and heightened emotions experienced in love. Her first novel, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684), features an incestuous, scandalous relationship between a teenage girl and her brother-in-law. Behn writes in epistolary form, allowing both characters to describe how each passionately desires the other. The plot is driven by elevated emotions and does not offer a sense of fulfillment between the characters at the conclusion of the novel. Aspects of female-led seduction and desire place *Love Letters* in the amatory fiction subgenre.

Toni Bowers describes amatory fiction as "sensational tales of sexual intrigue published by and for English women in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries."[21] Amatory fiction often includes themes of seduction and the female character as voyeur with the male as the displayed object.[22] The amatory fiction plot typically follows an innocent young woman seduced by an older, often married, more experienced man who promises her love and marriage in exchange for her honor, but abandons her after his physical desires have been satiated.[23] A key

[21] Toni Bowers, "Sex, Lies, and Invisibility: Amatory Fiction from the Restoration to Mid-Century," in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, author, John Richetti, 1994: 50.

[22] Jane Spencer, "Amatory and Scandal Fiction" in Thomas Keymer (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750*, Oxford History of the Novel in English (Oxford, 2017; online edition, Oxford Academic, 21 June 2018): 501.

[23] Toni Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2009: 51-52.

feature of amatory fiction is, Bowers notes, "the idea that love is an irresistible force: lovers are its victims, and escape is impossible."[24] Characters experience love much like fits, with bouts of madness and illogical thinking driven by the extremity of the desire felt. Though elements of love and fantasy exist both in amatory fiction and romance, heroic or chivalric elements and love driven by honor are not typically found in amatory fiction. Often, the amatory heroine falls victim to a seducer and her own desire to seduce, guiding her to a worse fate than expected before the union. Behn's *Love Letters from a Nobleman to his Sister* fits the amatory plot.

Amatory fiction was ousted from discussion of the novel in the later part of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Scholars in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries have been asking why amatory texts are excluded from the canon of "the novel." The answer appears to be that amatory fiction is far too emotionally driven, sensational, and immoral to be considered representational of the proper English novel. Amatory fiction was inspired by the Italian *novelle,* seventeenth-century French romances, and the *Portuguese Letters* (1669). Jane Spencer explains, amatory fiction comprises "love stories neither so explicit as pornography nor so high-minded as romance."[25] Amatory fiction was too close to the French romance to be emblematic of the English novel and too close to pornography to be appropriate reading material. This chapter is an analysis of the novel as a genre and what differentiates examples of amatory fiction, like *Love Letters,* from romance and pornography in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Behn wrote sexually suggestive material across several genres, most notably as a poet and playwright. Maureen Duffy provides an extensive biography of Behn in her book The

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[24] Bowers, "Sex, Lies, and Invisibility," p. 60.
[25] Jane Spencer, p. 500.

Passionate Shepherdess (1977), acknowledging that most of what we know about Behn's life results from careful research and educated guesses. Aphra, or Eaffry or Astrea, Johnson was most likely born to Bartholomew and Elizabeth Johnson, a barber and a wetnurse, around Canterbury in 1640.[26] Behn lived through the English Civil War (1642-1651) and saw Charles II restored to the throne (1660). Though disputed, it is possible that she traveled to Surinam in 1663 with her family. Duffy provides ample evidence suggesting that she and her family did go to Surinam, a trip that inspired Behn's short novel *Oroonoko* (1688).[27]

Oroonoko offers one of the first slave narratives, describing the terrible mistreatment of slaves in the colony. Modern scholars also look to *Oroonoko* for biographical evidence on Behn.[28] According to Duffy, it is possible that Behn met or was told of a slave in Surinam called Caesar, the name given to Oroonoko by the slave owner, and that he was executed. Though it is not proven that she witnessed his execution, it is possible that her family was in Surinam when Caesar was killed, considering that public executions were commonplace for Englishmen at the time.[29] Behn also writes herself into the story as the reputed narrator, a device she often uses in her work; because of this device, scholars of the twenty- and twenty-first-centuries have debated whether or not *Oroonoko* contains autobiographical accounts or if it is purely fiction.[30]

Behn was probably married sometime between 1664-65 but seems to have been widowed after 1666. Her husband's identity is unknown, but several possible, even probable, contenders have been found, including Hans Behn, a joiner from Luxemburg, and John Behn, possibly an

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[26] Maureen Duffy, *The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn, 1640-89.* London: Jonathan Cape, Thirty Bedford Square, (1977), pp. 18-23.

[27] Ibid., p. 32.

[28] Aphra Behn and Paul Salzman. *Oroonoko, and Other Writings*. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. x.

[29] Duffy, p. 39.

[30] Behn and Salzman, p. xi.

English merchant venturer.[31] By the age of twenty-six, Behn is widowed and never marries again. She lived another twenty-three years, during which marrying may have been the easier option, but she chose to remain unmarried. Behn encouraged several flirtations throughout her life that may have been sexual affairs, including William Scot, whom she later followed to Antwerp, but none were permanent relationships. According to Duffy, this demonstrates that Behn's failure to remarry was not for lack of suitors.[32] She made a distinct choice to remain single.

After her return to England from Surinam, she was sent to Antwerp as a spy by Charles II. Her mission was to convince William Scot to become a double agent for the Dutch and the English; however, she seems to have been unsuccessful and suffered greatly from lack of funds, even going to prison briefly for her debts.[33] Behn had pro-royalist, or Tory, political views that appear often in her writing across genres. Her friends also usually held pro-royalist views and included, as described by Duffy, "'the wits,' Buckingham, Rochester, and Etherege, and the dramatists Dryden and Otway."[34] Duffy quips that it was appropriate for her political views that she died in 1689, five days after the coronation of William III and Mary II, who were supported mainly by the Whig party. She is buried in Westminster Abbey.[35]

Scholars agree that Aphra Behn was the first woman in England to live by her pen, or to support herself financially by writing.[36] Behn describes herself as writing for her bread.[37]

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[31] Duffy, p. 49-50.
[32] Ibid., p. 64.
[33] Ibid., p. 16.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Note: Christine de Pizan (1364-1430) also lived by her pen. She was born in Italy and worked in France as a poet and court writer for King Charles VI.
[37] Ibid., p. 96.

Contemporary critics called her writing too masculine or too forward, also implying a sexual immorality. Though she was friendly with authors such as Dryden and had been patronized by James II, her eighteenth-century critics, such as Richardson, Fielding, and Pope, deemed her unwomanly due to her writing profession and the content of her writing. Themes of "condemned Restoration excess" associated Behn with salacious writing.[38]

Behn was certainly acquainted with authors of popular salacious writing, such as John Wilmont, the Earl of Rochester. Rochester was a courtier for Charles II and authored explicitly sexual poetry, "The Imperfect Enjoyment" (1680), for example, during the Restoration. As a teenager, Behn was probably introduced to literary women through her close family friend Thomas Colepeper. Through him and the Sidney family, Behn had access to writing by Edmund Waller, a Cavalier poet. According to James Todd, Waller was one of the Cavalier poets that Behn began reading as a teenager and valued throughout her life as a poetic model.[39] Cavalier poets such as Waller and Thomas Carew used "direct and colloquial language expressive of a highly individual personality, and their enjoyment of the casual, the amateur, the affectionate poem."[40] In their view, physical and romantic relationships are superficial and meant for pleasure. Heroines in cavalier poems are not perfectly chaste, goddess-like women but women to whom men can speak pointedly.[41] Carew is described by Robin Skelton in her book *Cavalier Poets* as having a "masculine fervor"[42] in terms of sexual themes and scenes of seduction. It is possible that the Cavalier poets influenced Behn's "masculine" writing, especially in her

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[38] Janet Todd, *Aphra Behn Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1996), p. 1.
[39] Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*, N.J.: Rutgers University Press (1997), p. 26, 155.
[40] Robin Skelton, "Introduction," *Cavalier Poets*. Liverpool University Press (1960), p. 7.
[41] Ibid., p. 8.
[42] Robin Skelton, "Thomas Carew," *Cavalier Poets*. Liverpool University Press (1960), p. 9.

frequent use of sexually suggestive themes in her poetry, plays, and prose. Pointed discussion about physical desire by women to men often appears in amatory fiction.

It is Behn's straightforward discussion of sex in her writing that makes her remarkable and is also the reason that her work is not often discussed by eighteenth and nineteenth-century critics and not in the context of the novel. Themes of sex and politics placed her too much in the boys' club to be fully acceptable by critics. Libertine values that featured in her work also seemed to be falling out of style in the mid-eighteenth century. In her first play, *The Forc'd Marriage* (1670), Behn shows that she discusses sex as a woman playwright just as the men did.[43] The title of the play also suggests that Behn had negative, or at least conflicting, feelings about the institution of marriage and power dynamics between men and women. Duffy comments that conservative audience members would have been shocked by the opening scene of Behn's second play, *The Amorous Prince* (1671), which shows two characters freshly coming out of bed. Her poems "The Disappointment" (1680) and "To the fair Clarinda, who made love to me, imagined more than a woman" (1688) have themes of female sexual desire and seduction. "The Disappointment" depicts female arousal and male impotence. "The fair Clarinda" features a non-heterosexual relationship and describes a hermaphroditic person. Duffy cites "To the fair Clarinda" as the "last time a woman was to write publicly and with witty eroticism about such a subject in English for two hundred years."[44] "The fair Clarinda" is especially interesting considering Behn's propensity to write herself as the narrator in many of her works. The unnamed narrator insinuates that Behn may have participated in a nontraditional intimate relationship, strengthening the resolve of her critics that Behn's work was too vulgar.

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[43] Duffy, p. 99.
[44] Duffy, pp. 142-43.

The Novel and the Amatory Fiction Novel

The Novel

Defining the novel as a genre proves to be a complex task, which has placed many scholars into conversation asking, "what is the novel?" for centuries and especially in the last seventy years. While I cannot hope to encompass all forms of the novel in my definition, I add to the discussion here. Prose writing really shines in the novel. The combination of prose and imagination creates microcosms of moments in time that are something like life. The long-prose form of the novel allows a mode of storytelling that has time and space to describe situations and worlds in a detailed manner. Novels often incorporate more rising action and details surrounding the primary character or story to enrich the narrative in a way that short stories do not have space to execute. Dorothy Van Ghent comments on the lifelikeness of the novel, stating that "novels have their primary interest in the illumination they cast upon life, not life somewhere else and at another time, but immediately here, immediately now."[45] Realistic or life-like characters and situations are key characteristics of the novel. Curiously, the resemblance to life does not need to be plausible, of the earth, or from a human perspective; it needs only to seem real in the particular microcosm.

Paratext adds to the creation of the microcosm or the entering into a world within the world. The inclusion of paratext is often a component of the novel form. Gérard Genette, in his "Introduction to the Paratext," writes that the paratext of a book acts as the means through which the text expresses itself as such to the reader. The order of the elements, white space, images, etc., composes the paratext. Genette explains that paratext functions as the "threshold" of a text,

[45] Dorothy Van Ghent, *The English Novel, Form and Function*. New York: Harper and Row (1953), p. 7.

"rather than with a limit or a sealed frontier, we are dealing in this case with a *threshold*, or–the term Borges used about a preface–with a "vestibule" which offers to anyone and everyone the possibility either of entering or of turning back."[46] For *Love Letters*, the dedicatory letters act as paratext. Behn writes the letters in such a way that they are informational for the reader and the dedicatee. Genette says that the function of paratextual elements is to provide interpretive information about the subject matter and the intention with which it was written. The paratext requests of the reader, "please consider this book a novel."[47]

According to Ian Watt in his study, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), "formal realism" sets the novel apart.[48] For Watt, the "rise of the novel" is represented by authors Defoe, Fielding, and particularly, Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). The same is also true for Michael McKeon in his work *Origins of the English Novel* (1987). Watt describes formal realism as "a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself."[49] Broken down, this idea means a way of writing, both in form and content, that happens in similar patterns so frequently that those patterns come to identify the writing itself. Watt does not give particular attention to romance in his discussion of the novel. Judith Gardiner interprets Watt's disregard for romance as a rejection of plots driven by romantic love because they create an ideology that romantic love is required within a family unit. The family unit fostered by romantic love perpetuates "male competition in the marketplace and female novel-reading leisure at home."[50] Romantic love plots are not

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[46] Gérard Genette et al. "Introduction to the Paratext," *New Literary History* 22, no. 2 (1991), p. 261.

[47] Genette, p. 268.

[48] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. Cal 31. Berkeley: University of California Press (1957), as cited in Judith Kegan Gardiner, "The First English Novel: Aphra Behn's Love Letters, The Canon, and Women's Tastes." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 8, no. 2 (1989), p. 204.

[49] Watt, p. 32.

[50] Judith Kegan Gardiner, p. 204.

essential for real life, which does not require all men to be heroic and discourages women from reading material that excites the senses too much or fosters unrealistic expectations for love and relationships. Too much leisure was discouraged because those with nothing to do but wallow in fantasy tended to fall into immorality.

Addison and Steele in their journals *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* consider female readership specifically. Addison says of the female reader that he has truly considered diversions appropriate for women as tending to their appearance and enjoyments appear central to their roles.[51] Using an example from Addison's *The Spectator*, Ballaster explains the assumed link between femininity and fictionality: Addison's story of "Leonora's Library" shows books as commodities. In the story, a young woman collects books not for their content, but for their appearance. According to Ballaster, the story equates female reading with triviality, "conspicuous consumption, form without matter."[52]

Leonard Davis agrees that realism is a component of the novel but dislikes the idea of an evolution of the novel in his *Factual Fictions* (1983). Davis explains that an evolution of the novel suggests a slow growth out of some unnamed place.[53] Intentionality for Davis is the crux of most offered theories for the format of the novel. He asks why "longish, fictional narrative in prose" are the agreed-upon aspects that constitute a novel.[54] In *Factual Fictions,* Davis describes the "undifferentiated matrix" in which the "novel" formed from the division of the news/novel matrix. He explains that readership began interacting with news publications in the seventeenth

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[51] Ibid., p. 39.

[52] Ibid., pp. 48-9.

[53] Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press (1983), p. 5.

[54] Davis, p. 26.

century: writing opinion letters and questions, etc., and reading publicly to encourage conversation on events.

In the same way readers began interacting with journals like *The Tatler* and *The Athenian Mercury*, "the later novel of the eighteenth century would participate in this intimate relationship with the reader."[55] A closeness occurs between readers of the novels and the text. The author continues, "one thinks of Fielding cajoling his reader, Richardson giving the impression that we are voyeuristically reading a lady's letters, or Defoe preaching to his typographical gathered congregation."[56] Using Davis's theory, Behn's *Love Letter*s would also give the impression of reading someone's personal documents, affirming the closeness to the reader suggested in the novel form. In conjunction, Behn's work offered the added experience of fictionalized conversations surrounding true and scandalous events.

For both Davis and McKeon, the novel is not a stable category but rather a discursive field that is constituted through a complex interchange of socio-historical and formal factors.[57] In *The Origins of the English Novel* (2002), originally published in 1987, McKeon seems reluctant to tackle the role of gender in the development of the novel. He says, "both contemporaries and modern scholars remark on the role played by women in writing and reading novelistic narratives, and the narratives themselves, disparate though their plots may be, are nonetheless filled with self-conscious and suggestive attention to relations between the sexes."[58] According to McKeon, the ideology of the early novel was much less motivated by gender than in later

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[55] Ibid., p. 67.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740*. Oxford: Clarendon Press (1992), p. 12.

[58] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*, 15th anniversary ed., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, p. xxiv

novels. Inner virtue became strongly associated with the feminine in the eighteenth century, and we see plots driven by difficulties due to gender and relationships between men and women.[59]

As inner virtue becomes more associated with women, the idea of coyness and mystery are also associated mostly with women. Ros Ballaster discusses the thematic issue of "amatory intrigue," which has been associated with women writers of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries and is "consistently identified with female authorship." [60] Ballaster treats the amatory novel specifically in her work *Seductive Forms* (1992). We cannot solidify the origin of the novel, Ballaster says, not because we do not have enough evidence to define the novel but rather because of an over-abundance of evidence for what novels can look like. An important aspect of Ballaster's research for *Seductive Forms* is the role of gender in the rise of the novel. She examines specifically how sexuality works in prose fiction written by Behn, Manley, and Haywood.[61] Texts that were too sensuous or provocative were termed amatory fiction during the eighteenth century. Amatory fiction was often excluded by scholars who wrote the canon on the novel genre because it was considered immoral and too driven by emotion to be considered a proper English novel.

Mass market book production, at least in London, became possible for the first time in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is important to note that few men and women could read or, if they could read, afford to buy books;[62] however, the population of those who could buy books grew during that time. Dr. James Fordyce explains in his *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) that reading fiction, in general, was dangerous for women, except for novels by

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[59] McKeon, pp. xxvii-viii.
[60] Ballaster, p. 24.
[61] Ibid., p. 7.
[62] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

Samuel Richardson. Women readers were particularly associated with fiction reading, making amatory fiction novels more dangerous. Fordyce writes, "whatever kind of reading may contribute to your general improvement and satisfaction, as reasonable beings designed for society, virtue, and religion, will deserve your attentive regard."[63] Acceptable reading for women includes religious texts and sermons, like Fordyce's own sermons, and works meant to inform women as a means of being supportive of and interesting to men.

Bowers describes reading amatory fiction as a "controlled danger." The author explains that reading about female desire was exciting and sexy, something a virtuous woman would not expect to experience within a marriage to a gentleman. Critics of amatory fiction feared that it taught women about desire and might encourage them to seduce men or fantasize about seduction. Bowers writes, "to read amatory fiction was to engage in rebellious, scandalous activity," certainly not the pastime of a virtuous lady.[64] Women especially were told not to fill their time with reading imaginative tales like novels because, according to Fordyce, "instruction they convey none. They paint scenes of pleasure and passion altogether improper for you to behold, even with the mind's eye. Their descriptions are often loose and luscious in a high degree."[65] Bowers equates reading amatory fiction to tasting the forbidden fruit,[66] doubling down on the anti-religious sentiment critics of the novels feared.

Elements of the novel so far agreed upon are the inclusion of paratext, formal realism, or a sense of realism, a sort of give-and-take intimacy between the reader and the text, a longish,

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[63] James Fordyce. *Sermons to Young Women, in Two Volumes.* 10th ed. London: Cadell, Dodsley, 1786. A facsimile reprint of the 1oth edition, first published 1786. First edition published 1766. Introduction by Susan Allen Ford. Southampton: Chaton House Press, 2012: xix.

[64] Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women," p. 52.

[65] Fordyce, p. xix.

[66] Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women," p. 62.

fiction prose narrative that is a changeable, discursive field. According to scholars like Davis and McKeon, the English novel was not codified until 1740. However, Gardiner says that upon reading Behn's *Love Letters* for the first time, she believed that she was reading the first English Novel. Gardiner puts several novel scholars into discussion in her article, "The First English Novel: Aphra Behn's *Love Letters*, The Canon, and Women's Tastes," including Davis and McKeon to determine whether *Love Letters* is novelistic enough to be a novel. I believe that Love *Letters* is a novel and that it can further be classified as an amatory novel. While this is not a radical argument, it is important to define what *Love Letters* is to adequately describe what it is not. Classifying an amatory fiction text as a novel also raises the question of whether a text can be both conduct literature and a novel as conduct literature predates and influences the English novel.

The Epistolary Form

Behn writes *Love Letters* in the epistolary form. The epistolary novel was greatly influenced by the *Lettres portugaises* (1669), still praised for the realistic portrayal of emotions.[67] The letters are from the perspective of a nun writing to a soldier. The nun pines for the soldier who never responds to her letters, though she does receive information about him occasionally. Bowers calls the tones in which the nun writes as vacillating between "incredulous, tender, cajoling, longing, desperate, outraged, and resigned."[68] It is clear to see themes of desperation and something like love in the *Lettres portugaises* and in Behn's *Love Letters*. Behn's characters Silvia and Philander vacillate between fits of love and melancholy often in

[67] Bowers, "Epistolary Fiction," p. 405.
[68] Ibid..

their letters. They speak of madness after not receiving letters back from the other after only a short time has passed.

The epistolary form helps to move the plot along; the reception of letters indicates to the reader that we are privy to a small portion of this world. Sending and receiving letters shows that planning and secrecy are taking place with other characters colluding with Silvia and Philander that we only sometimes learn about. According to Bowers, Behn used "epistolary to develop the narrative situations and language patterns that critics have come to recognize as the calling cards of eighteenth-century seduction (or 'amatory') fiction: secrecy, deception and disguise, illicit love, elopement, abandonment and disillusion, and graphic sexual language and themes."[69] *Love Letters* certainly demonstrates secrecy, deception and disguise, illicit love, elopement, abandonment and disillusion, and sexual themes through the illicitness of the affair between Silvia and Philander and their mutual expressions of passion.

Many examples of amatory fiction are written in the epistolary form. The epistolary form is not a requirement for amatory fiction. *Rivella,* for example, is not written in the epistolary form. I do, however, think that the epistolary form is particularly well-suited for amatory fiction because the form insinuates intimacy between characters and between the text and the reader. Seduction and other amorous moments are kept private within the letters, allowing the reader a voyeuristic opportunity to metaphorically peek behind the bedcurtains. The reader also learns the inner thoughts of the main characters to more completely understand whether the characters' actions come from virtue or deceit. Understanding amatory heroines' motivations promotes the

[69] Ibid., p. 407.

didactic element of amatory fiction, showing readers through narrative the consequences of some ways of thinking and conducting oneself.

Amatory Fiction

Though later denied a role by critics in the formation of the English novel, the amatory fiction novel developed in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with inspiration from French romance, the epistolary form, and commentary on social ideas surrounding conduct and virtue. *Love Letters* is a longish, fiction prose narrative that incorporates paratext, formal realism, and intimacy between the work and reader in a changeable, discursive field. The amatory plot typically follows an innocent young woman who grapples with feelings of sexual desire and preserving honor. She is seduced by a man who promises her love and marriage in exchange for her virginity. Abandonment and disillusion occur after his physical desires have been satiated. The man typically moves on after a short time, and the lady realizes she is ruined.[70] Seduction, eroticism, secrecy, and deception play into the organization of an illicit affair. Often, the couple elopes or makes plans to run off together, but the lady is abandoned. Amatory fiction also stands apart from other subgenres for the use of sexually suggestive language meant, for the most part, for a female audience.

Amatory fiction is not necessarily scandal fiction, though one can argue that some texts certainly fall into both amatory and scandal categories. Often, amatory and scandal fiction are grouped together due to their very similar themes. As I have noted above, "'Amatory' serves to name love stories neither so explicit as pornography nor so high-minded as romance," explains Spencer, and "'scandal' to designate the exposure of corrupt behaviour whether in political

[70] Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women," pp. 51-2.

figures or merely people of the author's acquaintance."[71] Amatory fiction differs from scandal fiction because it does not require documented events. The difference is that while the intention of amatory fiction may be illustrating life-like scenarios, sometimes inspired by true events, the intention of scandal fiction is to expose real people under fictitious guises. It is perhaps because of their themes of sexual scandal, because their authors were female, and because the readership was mostly female that amatory fiction has been largely dismissed by critics from the canon of proper novels; however, as Spencer explains, "in recent years they have been accorded more serious critical attention for their narrative innovations, their interest in questions of subjectivity and gender, and the sophistication with which they intertwine private and public life."[72] Amatory fiction is particularly good at intertwining public and private life, and not only in the epistolary form. Amatory fiction brings public attention to intimate details concerning female desire and seduction not often discussed in public. While journals like the *Athenian Mercury* allowed space for inquiry on subjects related to sex, amatory fiction adds the element of fantasy in a realistic space.

I would not categorize *Love Letters*, or amatory fiction more generally, as "graphic" in the same way that pornography is "graphic." Amatory fiction is not graphic in descriptions of sex acts but does treat seduction and desire expressly. A plot centered around seduction with a female reader in mind makes amatory fiction unique. Seduction happens both in the content and the form of the amatory novel. As prose fiction, the novel allows for space enough to describe fantastical situations in high detail. We know through the *Athenian Mercury* that eighteenth-century readers were curious about sexuality, but amatory fiction offered extended examples of

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[71] Spencer, p. 500.
[72] Ibid.

the inquiries. While the reader knows the story to be fiction, elements of the novel create a realistic microcosm in which the reader is present during passionate scenes of seduction. For Spencer, the "theme of seduction: successful or thwarted…[is] carried out by the erotically powerful writer on the willing reader."[73] Spencer's statement points to the interplay of growing desire and disappointment within the novel and the willingness of the female reader to participate as a voyeur in a seduction scene. The "extravagant rhetoric of desire"[74] in amatory fiction creates tension-building narratives, exemplified by characters' growing frustrations grappling with their intense feelings and, of course, frustrations over whether to give in to those feelings or not.

Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister

Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister was published in London in 1684. The edition of *Love Letters* that I use for analysis is included in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, edited by Janet Todd. Todd's edition is the first scholarly edition of *Love Letters*. Behn's first novel was written in three volumes, published in 1684, 1685, and 1687, respectively; another full edition of *Love Letters* with all three parts was published in 1693, and at least six other editions were published from early to the mid-eighteenth century until "it fell foul of the later eighteenth-century moral arbiters…[and] was ignored by the Victorians."[75] *Love Letters* was then published twice in the twentieth century and has been the subject of much scholarly discussion since then. This project deals mainly with the first volume because Behn utilizes the epistolary form, and the amatory seduction theme is central.

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Ballaster, p. 34.

[75] Janet Todd, Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press (1992), p. xi.

The inspiration for the fictional story is the trial of Ford Lord Grey in 1682. Grey's trial created much public interest as he was charged with the abduction of Lady Henrietta Berkley, his teenage sister-in-law. The scandalous story played out again as transcripts of the trial were published after Grey was found guilty.[76] Letters between Grey and Berkley were used as evidence during the trial, which, Todd suggests, probably inspired Behn to use the epistolary form for her fictional letters.[77] The first and third parts of *Love Letters* are written in the epistolary form and the second in third-person perspective. French and Spanish epistolary novels translated to English were very popular in England during the 1660s and 70s. The most important of these, according to Todd, was *Lettres portugasises* (1669), which "influenced the development of the genre in English as an investigation of male and female passion."[78] The epistolary form allowed Behn to describe the emotions of the characters in a highly detailed manner and to demonstrate the growing attraction between Philander and Silvia during their correspondence. The reader also sees the characters' sophisticated understanding of their situation, the incestuous nature of their relationship, marriage, and virginity through their personal letters.

An agreed-upon element of the novel is the inclusion of paratext. Two dedicatory letters come before the main text in the first volume of *Love Letters.* The first, titled *The Epistle,* explains that the story of Silvia and Philander comes from a French book of letters titled *L'intregue de Philander & Silvia* and that the author seeks only to translate the story into English. This suggests to the reader that the story already exists and is true, and if any untruths

[76] Ibid., p. viii.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

exist, it is not the fault of the author. In fact, many believed the letters in the novel to be actual evidence from the trial.[79] Behn describes the French story of Silvia and Philander as "soft" and "amorous."

The letter is addressed to "Tho. Condon, esq.," or Thomas Condon, whom Todd identifies as a supporter of James II.[80] Support for James II aligns with Tory ideals rather than the Whig party ideals. Behn has been cited by all those who write about her life and work as aligning with the Tory party, so her writing to a staunch supporter of Tory ideals supports her political beliefs. The second and third volumes are dedicated to Lemuel Kingdon, Esq. and Lord Spencer, respectively, meaning all three volumes were given Tory dedicatees; however, none of these men had such a public role that association with Behn or her amatory writing would bring him harm.[81] It is possible, Todd explains, that the dedicatees resembled Philander in some of their behaviors and the letters to them are warnings.[82] The second letter, titled *The Argument,* gives an account of the story described in the subsequent letters and consequences ultimately faced by the characters.

Philander and Silvia discuss her honor frequently in their letters as well as the complexity of their situation, that being that he is married to her sister. In the first letter, Philander asks Silvia whether she would prefer the death of her honor or the death of him.[83] This reads as a false choice, yet Silvia is a willing participant in Philander's seduction. She laments, "with what regret I made you promise to prefer my Honour before your Love."[84] She grapples with wanting to

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[79] Gardiner, p. 203.
[80] Todd, Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p. 3.
[81] Ibid., p. xi.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., p. 12.
[84] Ibid.

relinquish her honor throughout the first volume despite knowing that losing her virginity would damage her reputation. A relationship with Philander is even more damning for Silvia because he cannot offer her marriage in exchange for her honor, and they are already in-laws. Silvia also cites Philander as the one who is in control of her honor, showing the reader that she is committed to the relationship and intentionally takes on a submissive role.

Following the much-condemned "amatory style," Silvia gives in to bouts of overt emotion. In a dramatic scene of lamenting, Silvia describes the hurt she experiences knowing that Philander is married to her sister: "yet, oh yet you are my Brother still,-- But why, oh cruel and eternal Powers, was not Philander my Lover before you destin'd him a Brother? Or why being a Brother did you malicious and spiteful powers destine him a Lover!"[85] Silvia curses the gods for compelling her to love her brother-in-law, removing accountability for her overt desire from herself. She calls their love destined, demonstrating to the reader that she believes the relationship to be clandestine or, as Bowers explained, an irresistible force, from which escape is impossible.

Philander often fantasizes about a physical relationship with Silvia. In one example, he describes a dream to Silvia in which their love "gave a loose to joys undeny'd by honor."[86] Philander, in delicate phrasing, describes a sex dream to Silvia in which he takes her virginity– "methought my Silvia yielded! with a faint struggle and a soft resistance; I heard her broken sighs, her tender whispering voice that trembling cry'd–Oh can you be so cruel.–Have you the heart.–Will you undo a Maid because she loves you? Oh will you ruin me because you may?"[87]

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[85] Ibid., p. 13.
[86] Ibid., p. 15.
[87] Ibid.

Yielding reads like dirty talk with the underlying idea that yes means yes and no means yes. What at first reads as predatory takes on a different tone when the maid, Silvia, admits that she is willing to yield to him. Silvia again charges Philander with the protection of her honor, though this time from inside Philander's erotic dream.

The fourth letter dwells almost entirely on Philander's discussion of the disadvantages of a wife and the goodness of having a mistress. Philander does not regret his actions in pursuing Silvia because, he claims, her sister Mertilla is having an affair with another man. Mertilla cuckolded and humiliated him within their marriage, so he no longer considers himself married to her, though they are legally married. Philander claims to hate Mertilla and her lover for making him a cuckold and cursed Mertilla's inconstancy; however, Philander seems unaware that he commits the same crime. He says:

> Appetite will expose her fame, without the noble end of loving on, she that will abuse my Bed, and yet return again to the loath'd conjugal imbrace…Curse on her, and yet she kissed, fawnes and dissembles on, hangs on his Neck, and makes the Sot believe:–Damn her, Brute…No I adore the Wife, that when the heart is gone, boldly and nobly pursues the Conqueror, and generously owns the Whore. (Behn and Todd, 18)[88]

Wording here is reminiscent of the Cavalier poet Thomas Carew's lines in "A Rapture" written in the mid-seventeenth century, "She hangs upon him like his Delphic lyre,/ Her kisses blow the old and breathe new fire;"[89] Carew's poem deals with villainized Honor that the narrator dismisses as he describes a scene of seduction. Carew's seduction poem was considered, according to Stephen Greenblatt, as probably the most erotic poem written in its era.

Behn certainly takes after the Cavalier poets in her, gently described, erotic themes and struggle with chastity in these passages. Philander describes his wife hanging from her lover to

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[88] Ibid., p. 18.

[89] Thomas Carew, "A Rapture," included in Stephen Greenblatt, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* Ninth Ed., Vol. B, New York and London, W.W. Norton &Company, (2012), p. 1778, lines 135-36.

insinuate that she lacks temperance or morality, casting doubt onto her reputation. Philander describes his wife's sexual appetite as something that will make her infamous when exposed. She humiliates his honor as a husband and a man for seeking a sexual relationship outside of the marriage. Perhaps it was less acceptable when women had affairs because of the idea that men are meant to have sexual prowess. In eighteenth-century England, men could divorce their wives for adultery, but women, effectively, could not divorce their husbands for the same without ample evidence of cruelty. As the feminine has been associated with emotionality and a nurturing countenance, so has the masculine been associated with heroic strength and energy. Mertilla's need for a lover negates the expectation that an honorable lady would not seek sexual relationships that did not produce happiness for her husband or children.

The relationship between Mertilla and her lover should not produce children because no one could be sure of their paternity, and therefore future estates or any titles received by Philander could be given to another man's family line. Secondly, her relationship is based on a physical sexual relationship. Love may play a part, but the physical relationship has not been sanctified by marriage and is immoral. Finally, the relationship calls Philander's masculinity into question, emasculating him to men and demonstrating his assumed sexual inability for women. He calls Mertilla a brute and a whore as he explains that he has no respect for a wife who gladly betrays her husband. Considering his name means a man who engages in casual sexual encounters,[90] we have no reason to trust his criticism of Mertilla. The irony is not lost that he colors himself as the victim in the passage while attempting to seduce the teenage sister of his wife. Philander likens himself in his pursuit of Silvia to the Roman Emperor Nero who had his

[90] "philander, n. 1". OED Online, March 2023. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uncg.edu/view/Entry/142392?rskey=Nw3JZX&result=1 (accessed June 02, 2023).

wife murdered to marry his mistress.[91] Philander metaphorically speaks of death again as he sighs "I dy to see you."[92] The characters refer to death and dying often in their letters as they attempt to elicit a sense of immediacy to their passions.

Silvia is not moved by Philander's blame of her sister. She gives us a detailed explanation of her complicated feelings. Silvia does not describe a particular closeness to her sister but does defend her against Philander. She admits to feeling jealous that it was her sister's good fortune to marry Philander and resentful because of her desire for him, which is then validated by his attempts to seduce her. In her letter, she claims to be impatient and "dying" waiting to receive a response from Philander. She explains their incestuous situation, lamenting that the law has decided he is her brother. Silvia details her emotional state, writing, "I was all despairing raging Love, jealous, fearful, and impatient; and now, now … your fine Letters have dispers'd those Damons, those tormenting Councellors, and given a little respite, a little tranquility to my soul."[93] Silvia describes vices of envy, lust, and anger in the passage. If love be a spiritual thing, why does it present itself only in vices rather than extolling the virtues? If a "love" is built on vice, the reader can expect that entering an immoral relationship will cause grief and discontent.

Though no change in the relationship occurs, Silvia finds herself in fits of despair and rage rather than believing herself to be contently loved and kept. The salve she seeks is also the poison. Silvia blames her discontent on honor preventing her present happiness rather than on Philander or her immoral thinking: "now that Traytor Honour heads the mutiners within; Honour whom my late mighty fears had almost famisht and brought nothing."[94] Still expressing desire

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[91] Todd, Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p. 19.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., p. 25.
[94] Ibid.

for Philander, Silvia admits that only fear of losing her honor and reputation prevents her from having a physical relationship with him. She calls honor "traitor" in that its purpose is to protect her safety and reputation, and thus, stopping her from fulfilling her physical desires. Silvia does show reason, though not gladly, and she says she wants to end their affair in the seventh and eighth letters, a proclamation she makes several more times in the first part of the novel.

Surprisingly, Silvia confronts Philander with his unfair description of Mertilla's affair in comparison to their own affair. In the following passage, Silvia describes what her love for Philander feels like. She is disappointed in his poor consideration of her position in the affair and consequences from neglecting her honor:

> was all for Love, fond and undoing love! But when I saw it with full Tide flow in upon me, one glance of Glorious Honour, makes me again retreat. I will–I am resolv'd–and must be brave! I can't forget I'm daughter to the Beralti, and sister to Mertilla, a yet unspotted maid, fit to produce a race of Glorious Hero's! and can Philander's Love set no higher value on me than base poor prostitution! Is that the price of his heart?–Oh how I hate thee now! Or wou'd to Heav'n I cou'd.–Tell me not thou charming Beguiler, that Mertilla was to blame, was it a fault in her, and will it be vertue in me; and can I believe the crime that made her lose your heart, will make me Mistress of it. (Behn and Todd, 25)[95]

Though she experiences waves of desire like a rising tide, she is fearful of losing her virginity and risking damaging her reputation. As Silvia lives presently, she is worthy of making a prosperous marriage and producing children with respectable positions, as well. She takes offense to Philander's desire for her maidenhead without the ability to promise her marriage, stability, or constancy in any way. She likens his view of his need of her to prostitution. She cannot help but love him even though she cannot trust him. Silvia reprimands Philander for his duplicitous explanation of the affairs asking how she gains honor in his eyes by beginning an

[95] Ibid.

affair with a married person when he calls her sister a whore for committing the same behavior. She calls out his hypocritical perspective, pointing out that he blames Mertilla for his unhappiness while he seduces another.

Philander's seduction and Silvia's wavering resolve also seduces the reader to continue reading. Silvia understands her position in society and in her family. She obviously understands moral versus immoral actions and knows the correct path to take for her protection; however, Silvia's seduction is so complete that her firm resolve, again and again, breaks down. She says only a fool would "expose her vertue to temptation, I see, I know my danger, yet I must permit it."[96] Silvia is a good example of an amatory heroine. She understands the necessity of keeping an honorable reputation and says that she sees and knows the danger around her actions. Amatory heroines, including Manley's Rivella and Haywood's Fantomina, are often aware of the dangers they place themselves in and continue to do so for their own gain, whether that be financially or sexually.

Silvia maintains her virginity longer than the reader might suspect upon her meeting with Philander alone in her rooms. Philander affirms that he will respect her honor and not force a sexual relationship when they meet privately. Silvia decorates her rooms, describing the action like decorating for the wedding night. She laments, "Oh Philander, I find I am fond of being undone, and unless you take a more than mortal care of me, I know this night some fatal mischief will befall me."[97] Silvia struggles to maintain her virtuous character at the thought of a night alone with Philander. Telling Philander pointedly, she betrays herself to him that she wishes she could deny her honor and allow herself to be fully loved by him. She again recognizes the danger

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[96] Ibid., p. 30.
[97] Ibid., p. 49.

she places herself in by inviting her brother-in-law to her rooms at night. Silvia also places the protection of her virginity on Philander. This is a curious move, considering Silvia has chastised Philander for not taking any responsibility for his marriage woes and not recognizing that he is guilty of the same crimes he accuses Mertilla of committing. Silvia shows consistently in the novel that she sees reason but chooses not to act on reason and rather on desire. She does not demonstrate the composed and careful thinking expected of a virtuous lady.

Philander becomes emasculated twice over as he describes their first evening together. In secrecy, Philander visits Silvia's rooms with no intention of protecting her virginity. Though he promised not to have sex with her, Philander attempts the act and fails:

> For yet my Silvia is a Maid; Yes, yes, ye Envying Power she is, and yet the sacred and inestimable treasure was offer'd a trembling victim to the o'rejoy'd and fancy'd Deity, for then and there, I thought my self happier than a triumphing God, but having overcome all difficulties, all the fatigues and toyles Loves long Sieges, Vanquisht the mighty Fantom of the fair, the Giant Honour, and routed all the numerous Host of Womens little Reasonings, past all the bounds of peevish Modesty: Nay even all the loose and silken Counterscarps that fenc'd the sacred Fort, and nothing stop'd my glorious pursuit: Then, then ye Gods, just then by an over transport, to fall just fainting before the surrendering Gates, unable to receive the yielding treasure! Oh Silvia! what Demon, malicious at my Glory, seiz'd my vigor? What God, envious of my mighty joy, render'd me ashameful object of his Raillery? Snatcht my till then, never failing power, and left me dying on thy Charming Bosom. Heavens, how I lay! Silent with wonder, rage and extasy of Love, unable to complain, or rail or storm, or seek for ease but with my sighs alone, which made up all my breath; my mad desires remain'd, but all unactive as Age or Death it self, as cold and feeble, as unfit for joy, as if my Youthful fire had long been past, or Silvia had never been blest with Charms. (Behn and Todd, 56-7)[98]

He calls her a trembling victim, offering connotations of both fear and excitement. The moment makes him feel godlike, fully in his power. With this statement, the reader more deeply understands that conquest is intrinsically related to power for Philander. As a god, he triumphs over honor. Reminiscent of the hero's journey he explains, "nothing stop'd my glorious

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[100] Ibid., pp. 56-7.

pursuit;"[99] by "nothing" he means neither honor, distance, privacy, or Silvia's resolve prevented his actions. In an unfortunate turn of events, he falls "fainting before the surrendering Gates, unable to receive the yielding treasure!"[100] Yielding again is offered to the reader as a form of seduction; the treasure is within reach, but Philander cannot take it and prevents the release of plot tension from occurring. Fainting is more often associated with women, fainting from overstimulation, for example. He takes on the feminine role demonstrated by Silvia in her letters. She is willing but unable to participate due to morality; he is willing but unable physically, possibly due to overstimulation. The element of power comes into play as he describes his "never failing power," suddenly leaving him though he was still full of desire but as one who is long past youth with a homely wife.

The second moment of emasculation occurs after he leaves Silvia. Philander is surprised by her father Beralti. Beralti believes Philander to be the maid Melinda in the dark as Philander is disguised in a woman's nightgown. Beralti tries to seduce Melinda and even pays her/him for the trouble of being accosted. Though Philander manages to escape before Beralti molests him, the payment brings to the reader's memory Silvia's accusation that Philander was aggressively pursuing her like a prostitute. Philander has been made impotent, dressed as a woman, and paid for sex by a man, though no sex at all occurred that night. His association with the heroic chevalier is tarnished for the reader through these comedic scenes. Philander says that he rages at such a frustrating culmination of their first night together. We also know that Philander never had any intention of protecting Silvia's honor because he laments that she is still a maid.

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[99] Ibid., p. 56.
[100] Ibid., pp. 56-7.

Even though he, in so many words, admits this to Silvia in his letter, she does not seem bothered by his unwillingness to protect as she is unwilling to protect herself. As Philander describes intense frustration, Silvia also experiences madness and rages of love, admitting again that she wants to abandon her virtue. She and Philander are rather repetitive in their confessions to the other. Repetition works here to reiterate that the characters understand the complexity of their situation, what actions they are expected to take, and strengthen the reader's resolve that the misguided love is, at least, genuine. The epistolary form allows for a conversation between characters that demonstrates the underdeveloped moral qualities of each. Also evident to the reader is the lack of reason that led to the series of events portrayed in the novel. Behn's repetitive use of languishing, raging, dying, desire, resolve to act morally, and eventual submission to desire makes the coming betrayal theme real for the reader.

Silvia and Philander's discussion in the passage echoes the language and struggle with honor in "A Rapture." Carew writes, "I will enjoy thee now, my Celia, come/ And fly with me to love's Elysium./ The giant, Honor, that keeps cowards out,/ Is but a masquer."[101] Honor is described as a giant, or a power, in both Carew and Behn's works that is meant to protect men and women, but especially women, from shame and dishonor. "A Rapture" deals with honor as an unnecessary obstacle to physical pleasure that the narrator takes little head of. Silvia also grapples with "that Traytor Honour" who incites useless fear against sex and desire.[102] Carew's narrator refers to "virgin treasure"[103] exposed for him; Philander also calls Silvia's virginity and/or honor "yielding treasure." In both Carew and Behn's works, virginity is a conquerable

[101] Carew and Greenblat, p. 1775, lines 1-4.
[102] Todd, Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, pp. 56-7.
[103] Carew and Greenblat, p. 1775, line 32.

treasure that desires to be taken. Carew's poem illustrates the irresistible nature of love and desire described by Silvia and Philander:

> We seek no midnight arbor, no dark groves/ To hide our kisses; there the hates name/ Of husband, wife, lust, modest, chaste, or shame/ Are vain and empty words, whose very sound/ Was never heard in the Elysian ground/ All things are lawful there that may delight/ Nature or unrestrained appetite. (Carew and Greenblat, 1777)[104]

Behn certainly may have been influenced by Carew in this work, which would not be implausible considering her admiration of Edmund Waller and John Wilmont, the Earl of Rochester; however, Behn's incorporation of shame deviates from the Cavalier poets. Irresistible, natural love is a theme of both "A Rapture" and *Love Letters*, with Carew taking a step further to say that all love that inspires pleasure is lawful and, therefore, unaffected by honor.

A letter from Mertilla to Silvia demonstrates amatory themes of secrecy and illicit love. Having been made aware that Philander and Silvia have some kind of inappropriate relationship, Mertilla writes in concern for her sister's reputation. Mertilla warns her sister to not mess with Philander saying that she will live in infamy as a prostitute who committed incest with a brother-in-law.[105] This letter offers foreshadowing for the reader and good council to Silvia. The letter continues reiterating the importance of virtue and chastity.[106] Seemingly repentant, Silvia tries again to break up with Philander. He, however, threatens to kill himself and she, again, concedes to him.[107]

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[104] Ibid., p. 1777, lines 105-14.
[105] Todd, Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, p. 74.
[106] Ibid., p. 76.
[107] Ibid., pp. 78-80.

Philander and Silvia eventually do have sex; however, the way each of the characters describes the moment is different. As noted in amatory fiction, special attention is given to the emotionality of the scene rather than the physical acts. Philander writes:

> such a bewitching Form, such soft, such glorious Eyes, where the Soul speaks and dances, and betrays Loves-secrets in every killing glance, a Face, where every motion, every feature sweetly languishes, a Neck all-tempting—and her lovely Breast inviting presses from the eager Lips; such Hands, such clasping Arms, so white, so soft and slender! No, nor one of all his Heavenly enjoyments, though promis'd years of fainting in one continued ecstasie, can make one moments joy with Charming Silvia. (Behn and Todd, 86)[108]

The attention he gives to her body, or bewitching form, is in direct relationship with the feelings it elicits. He likes the vision of her surrendering to him, returning to a sense of power. Philander's discussion of taking Silvia's virginity has nothing to do with her beyond her vessel. The passage demonstrates the amatory element of a man less interested in the woman and more interested in the physical relationship; however, in a letter titled "After the happy night," Silvia writes:

> I have known the time, the blest innocent time when but to think I lov'd Philander wou'd have cover'd my face with shame, and to have spoke it wou'd have fill'd me with confusion—have made me Tremble, Blush, and bend my guilty Eyes to Earth, not daring to behold my Charming Conquerour while I made that bashfull confession… never any Maid resolv'd so much as I to tread the paths of honour, and I had many precedents before me to make me carefull: Thus I was armed with resolution, pride and scorn against all Mankind, but alas, I made no defence against a Brother, but innocently lay expos'd to all his attacks of Love, and never thought it criminal till it kindled a new desire about me. Oh, that I shou'd not dy with shame to own it—yet see (I say) how from one soft degree to another, I do not only confess the shamefull truth, but act it too; what, with a Brother—Oh Heavens! A crime so monstrous and so new—but by all thy Love, by those surprising joys so lately experience'd—I never will—no, no, I never can—repent it: Oh, incorrigible passion, oh hardned love! At least I might have some remorse, some sighing after my poor departed honour; but why shou'd I dissemble with the Powers divine, that know the secrets of a Soul doom'd to eternal Love? Yet I am mad, I rave and tear my self, traverse my guilty chamber in a disorder'd, but a soft confusion; and often opening the conscious curtains, survey the print where thou and I were last night laid, surveying it with a

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[110] Ibid., p. 88.

> thousand tender sighs, and kiss and press thy dear forsaken side, imagin over all our solemn joys, every dear transport, all our ravishing repeated blisses, then almost fainting, languishing, cry—Philander! Oh, my charming little God! Then lay me down in the dear place you press'd, still warm and fragrant with the sweet remains that thou hast left behind thee on the Pillow, oh, my Soul's joy! My dear, eternal pleasure! What makes softness hast thou added to my heart within a few short hours? But oh, Philander—if (as I've oft been told) possession, which makes Women fond and doting, shou'd make thee cold and grow indifferent—if nauseated with repeated joy, and having made a full discovery of all that was but once imaginary, when fancy rendred every thing much finer than experience, oh, how were I undone! (Behn and Todd, 88-9)[109]

Silvia leads the letter with a discussion of her honor, her virginity still being the primary concern in the relationship for her. Though, she describes the acts of their physical relationship and his familial role as brother as shameful, she does not regret the actions. Critics who feared women reading amatory fiction probably feared immoral behaviors such as Silvia's because she shows an understanding of morality and then chooses to go against it. She does not recount the scene of physical lovemaking itself but does make voyeuristic reference to it saying she enjoyed "opening the conscious curtains, [to] survey the print where thou and I were last night laid."[110] The reader can imagine Silvia pulling back the curtains on her four-poster bed and looking intently at the disheveled scene of her bedclothes. She describes smelling him on her sheets and languishing in the memory, bringing the reader directly to the place of action but offering none of it.

The amatory plot is concluded for the first volume as they are eventually found out. Silvia and Philander make secret plans to run away to Holland together and elope. Philander encourages Silvia to marry his friend so that she can legally leave her father's household and they can be together. He does not seem to recognize the extreme similarities to the position he

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[109] Ibid., pp. 88-9.
[110] Ibid., p. 88.

was in with Mertilla for which he called her a brute and a whore. The first volume concludes as Silvia and Philander are reunited as they flee to Holland. The epistolary style must end at this point because there is no longer a distance between the characters that would necessitate letter-writing.

Volumes II and III are less inspired by the Grey trial. Behn switches to third-person point of view for the second volume and returns to the epistolary style in the third. A major theme of the second volume is betrayal. Philander and Silvia do run away, and Philander convinces Silvia to marry his friend, Brilljard. He believes Brilljard will help him to protect Silvia, give her the ability to leave London and allow him to continue a sexual relationship with her. The three travel together with another friend, Octavio. After Philander is brought to trial for seducing his sister and running away with her, he loses interest in Silvia. He seduces another lady, Calista, in the same form and words as he had seduced Silvia in the first volume. Silvia uses Octavio, who loves her, to try to make Philander jealous; however, Octavio brings to light the seriousness of Philander's actions because Calista is also his sister. Silvia is disillusioned as she realizes that Philander has abandoned her and unsuccessfully attempts suicide. Silvia makes real the threats she gave to Philander if she learned he ever truly loved another. She and Octavio create a revenge plan against Philander.

In the third volume, Behn returns to the epistolary form. The plot takes on a more political tone than the first and second parts. The letters that are focused on the amatory plot see Silvia run away to Brussels with Octavio. Calista leaves Philander due to his numerous affairs. Philander returns to Silvia, and she immediately abandons Octavio to leave with him. Calista and Silvia both give birth to Philander's children, who are not mentioned again in the story. Returning to Bowers' definition of amatory fiction, Philander and Silvia demonstrate love as an

irresistible force that the characters are powerless to deny. Silvia and Philander's relationship is ultimately unsuccessful, which the reader might have guessed because the relationship was built on vice. They both continue to have extramarital affairs, having learned nothing of reputation and honor. The end of the novel, in its totality, fulfills Bower's amatory plot elements of secrecy, deception, disguise, illicit love, elopement, abandonment and disillusion, and sexual language and themes.

I find it necessary to acknowledge that modern readers, like many in the seventeenth century, probably would be disturbed by Philander's pursuit of his teenage sister-in-law. Even if she enjoyed and reciprocated the attention, she might be chastised for putting herself in danger, but the fault lies with the married older man, who is also a family member with near-constant access to her. It is important to remember that they are characters representing ideas of the culture. Seventeenth-century readers would be more inclined to lay the blame equally on both parties. According to the trial transcripts, Ford Lord Grey was accused of "falsely, unlawfully, unjustly, and wickedly, by unlawful and impure ways and means, conspiring, contriving, practicing, and intending the final ruin and destruction of the lady Henrietta Berkeley, then a virgin unmarried, within the age of 18 years, and one of the daughters of the right honourable George Earl of Berkeley."[111] His crimes also included abduction and incest, besides the first crime.

He is further accused of convincing Lady Henrietta Berkeley to run away from her father "and to commit whoredom, fornication, and adultery, and in whoredom, to live with the aforesaid Ford Lord Grey…against all laws, as well divine as human, impiously, wickedly,

[111] Ibid., p.443.

impurely, and scandalously, to live and cohabit, did tempt, invite, and solicit."[112] The trial proceedings also make a point to include that Ford Lord Grey is married to Henrietta's older sister. A general search will show that Ford Lord Grey was accused of seducing her, and Todd states that he was accused of abduction. While both are correct, it reads to me that his most serious crime was taking her virginity and ruining her reputation. To be fair, Ford Lord Grey did indeed ruin Henrietta's reputation for the public, considering her loss of virginity to her brother-in-law still proves to be a topic of conversation 230 years later.

Amatory Fiction vs. Pornography

One of the most worrisome aspects of amatory literature for critics was the emphasis on women experiencing and giving in to desire. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a rise in discussions of sexuality due in part to an insurgence of "natural philosophy" texts and conversations. Public reading material became an important media for women. Periodicals like the *Athenian Mercury*, created by John Dunton, became forums for women to ask questions. Women were not allowed to join early modern scientific institutions, Barbara Benedict notes; therefore, "print became the only public venue for women's questions."[113] The *Athenian Mercury*, for example, became a venue for men and women to ask questions about the nature of love or physical aspects of sex. The social function of periodicals like the *Athenian Mercury* was to reassert public values and "urging the regulation of sexual (especially female) imagination and desire."[114] Though regulation of sexual imagination was the purpose, printed discussions about female sexuality and desire "made the 'female' inquiry into sexual issues a literary topic."[115]

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[112] Ibid., p.444.

[113] Barbara Benedict, "The Curious Genre: Female Inquiry in Amatory Fiction," *Studies in the Novel* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1998), p. 195.

[114] Ibid., p. 196.

[115] Ibid.

Special concern for female inquiry demonstrates the growing importance of female readership. Dutton still had to carefully censor what he published. Even though the *Athenian* was a forum to "satisfy all ingenious and curious Enquirers in to Speculations, Divine Moral and Natural, Etc. and to remove those difficulties and Dissatisfactions, that shame or fear of appearing ridiculous by asking Questions may cause,"[116] It was imperative to differentiate inquiry and pornography. The issue for most readers was differentiating moral and immoral inquiry.

How do we separate tales of sexual intrigue and more explicit content like pornography? Behn's amatory fiction certainly contains erotic scenes and makes clear what physical actions have transpired, even if the reader was not granted access to the moment it happened. The amatory style of Behn, Manley, and Haywood was considered, according to Ballaster, "distinctively different from both male pornography and didactic love fiction of other women writers of the period [referring to Penelope Aubin, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, and Jane Barker]."[117] I agree with Ballaster that the work of the triumvirate is distinctly different from didactic love fiction by contemporary women writers, but it is certainly didactic. Amatory fiction is also different from male pornography in that is not anatomically or sexually graphic; Ballaster states, "the primary anatomical, procreative and instructional emphasis of this literature bears little resemblance to the erotic-pathetic drive of the seduction and betrayal narratives of Behn, Manley, and Haywood."[118] Ballaster places the difference mainly in the physical illustrations of seduction and sex acts with an emphasis on the body in pornography that we do not see in

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[116] Ibid., p. 195 as cited in John Dutton, *Athenian Mercury*, vol. 1 (1690), p. 1.
[117] Ballaster, p. 32.
[118] Ibid.

amatory fiction. Amatory fiction is definitely sexually suggestive, but to say graphic is too intense of a description.

For example, the reader is made aware of Philander and Silvia's physical relationship immediately after it transpires; however, there are no detailed descriptions of either character's body parts or descriptions of physical actions taking place. There are many examples of passionate actions in *Love Letters*. Characters are said to be fainting, panting, swooning, etc., but there are no physical descriptions of lovemaking. The major difference between amatory fiction and pornography is pornography's inclusion of explicit scenes of sexual activity, including masturbation and group events. The Oxford English Dictionary defines pornography as "the explicit description or exhibition of sexual subjects or activity in literature, painting, films, etc., in a manner intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feelings."[119] Seventeenth and eighteenth-century pornography certainly offers explicit scenes of sex but also includes an element of emotionality like amatory fiction. It is perhaps the inclusion of emotion and love in conversation with sex that makes critics associate amatory and pornography so closely.

Kathleen Lubey agrees that pornography is the exhibition of sexual acts but disagrees that the intention is always to stimulate erotic feelings.[120] She pushes back against the idea that sexual arousal is the primary purpose of reading illicit literature. Philosophical and political concerns become important, even plot-driving aspects, in sexually explicit narratives; therefore, eighteenth-century readers would not expect arousal to be the only outcome of reading pornography.[121] The goal of pornography includes discussion on other topics. The inclusion of

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[119] "pornography, n.". OED Online. March 2023. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uncg.edu/view/Entry/148012?redirectedFrom=pornography (accessed May 06, 2023).

[120] Lubey, *What Pornography Knows*, p. 7.

[121] Lubey, "Making Pornography," p. 900.

comedy, politics, and the sciences was expected and would not have prevented a reader from enjoying the eroticism. This is also true of amatory fiction, further demonstrating the similarities.

Lubey explains that "within pornography, narrative descriptions of sex acts constitute a method for engaging or lampooning those other fields. These dialogic exchanges do not necessitate readers' arousal."[122] Lubey's argument gives an insight into what Restoration readers would have sought in the pornography they read; however, I do not want to deny that arousal is an integral aspect of pornography. It seems that the inclusion of other themes, such as seduction and emotionality, was thought too frivolous for the nineteenth century and beyond. The three-hundred-year trajectory examined by Lubey shows that pornography became more and more focused on the act of sex itself from the mid-seventeenth century through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[123] Inclusion of emotionality in eighteenth-century examples of pornography further strengthens the similarities of that genre to amatory fiction. Pornography in the nineteenth century and beyond looks markedly different from earlier examples.

One of the most popular pornographic books of its time was John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure: or Fanny Hill* (1748). *Memoirs* has been discussed by many literary scholars, including Lubey, and appears in several editions into the twenty-first century. Written in epistolary form, readers feel as though they are receiving a first-hand account of a girl's first experiences of erotic feelings and voyeuristic descriptions of sex. Readers are confronted with bodies, including detailed descriptions of genitalia. *Memoirs* is interesting because it begins similarly to many eighteenth-century novels. Fanny is a young girl, barely fifteen years old and

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., p. 898.

recently orphaned. She is a country girl, reminiscent of *Pamela* published earlier in the same decade. Pamela has the benefit, though, of not being orphaned and having guidance and moral protection from afar. *Memoirs* is also written in the epistolary form, which offers an aspect of realism and truth-telling in confidence, written to suggest a private conversation.

Fanny is taken in by a woman who we later learn is a madam. The women in the boarding house teach Fanny about sex and are the first to elicit passion in her. Fanny says, "I had been indebted only to the girls of the house for the corruption of my innocence: their luscious talk, in which modesty was far from respected, their descriptions of their engagements with men, had given me a tolerable insight into the nature and mysteries of their profession."[124] An element of mystery is introduced like in amatory fiction. Corrupting the innocence of a young girl is also firmly blamed on other immoral women and not the men who seek their skills. Fanny realizes that the boarding house she has been invited to live in is a brothel. She learns about the mechanics of sex from the other women and finds that she is excited by their conversations.

Fanny shares a bedroom with Phane, whom the madam makes Fanny's mentor. The first overtly sexual scene in *Memoirs* is between Fanny and Phane. Fanny explains the sensuous discussions of the other women "provoked an itch of florid warm-spirited blood through every vein; but above all, my bedfellow Phane, whose pupil I more immediately was, exerted her talents in giving me the first tinctures of pleasure."[125] Phane gropes Fanny and performs sexual acts on her; however, Fanny was never educated about sex and is a virgin. She was never given any sort of education about sex or sexual desire. She does not realize that the experience between her and Phane was a sex act until it was already happening. Fanny surprises herself by enjoying

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[124] John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, London: G. Fenton in the Strand (1749), p. 61.
[125] Ibid., p. 61.

the experience and continuing the encounter instead of experiencing fear, shame, or immodesty. Unlike female characters in amatory fiction, Fanny does not lament her honor or fear the loss of her virginity. The first sexual experience reads as less immoral because the encounter was between two women. Fanny also experiences a violent attempted rape scene in which the aggressor attempts to force open her thighs and bloodies her nose. Interestingly, Fanny says that she was afraid of his aggression and did not understand that he was attempting to have sex with her. Throughout the book, Fanny is not fearful of sex other than concern for pain but rather excited because she relates sex to pleasure.

Pornography of the eighteenth century gave prominence to genitalia, whereas in amatory texts, we do not find a focus on the genitals and outright sex, or at least not nearly to the same extent. An example of a particular pornographic focus on the body and genitals occurs when Fanny witnesses sex for the first time between an abbess and a man. She describes the man as a "tall, brawny, young horse-grenadier, moulded in the Hercules-stile."[126] Fanny gives a lengthy description of the abbess's breasts, which follows:

> Droll was it so see that clumsy fat figure of her's slip down on the foot of the bed, opposite to the closet-door, so that I had a full front-view of all her charms. Her paramour sat down by her: He seemed to be a man of very few words, and great stomach; for proceeding instantly to essentials, he gave her some hearty smacks, and thrusting his hands into her breasts, disengag'd them from her stays, in scorn of the whole confinement, they broke loose, and swagged down, navel low at least. A more enormous pair did my eyes never behold, nor of a worse colour, sagging, soft and most lovingly contiguous: yet such as they were, this neck-beef-eater seemed to paw them with a most unenviable gust, seeking in vain to confine or cover one of them with a hand scarce less than a shoulder of mutton. (Cleland, 65)[127]

[126] Ibid., p. 63.
[127] Ibid., p. 65.

More than a page of writing describes the abbess's breasts, and they are made out to be rather grotesque. The fondling of the breasts is the only moment of seduction or foreplay seen by Fanny and, therefore, the reader. The sex act begins almost immediately, with Fanny making mention that the abbess expresses no shame. She continues her unattractive description of the abbess as she examines the rest of her body. Fanny says, "her fat brawny thighs hung down, and the whole greasy landscape lay fairly open to my view: a wide open-mouth'd gap, overshaded with a grizzly bush, seemed held out like a beggar's wallet for its' provision. But I soon had my eyes called off by a more striking object, that entirely engross'd them."[128] The descriptive words "greasy," "wide gap," "grizzly," and "beggar" give the reader an image of an often-used, beastly thing, begging for more. I wonder if the body of the abbess is described roughly because she is supposed to be a virtuous character, being an abbess, or because she is no longer youthful or beautiful.

Focus on the genitalia continues as Fanny encounters a penis for the first time. Her description of the male member is much more agreeable than that of the abbess. "Her sturdy stallion had now unbutton'd, and produced naked, stiff, and erect," Fanny describes, "that wonderful machine, which I had never seen before, and which for the interest my own seat of pleasure began to ake furiously in it."[129] Fanny experiences arousal watching the two secretly, adding to the theme of voyeurism. As Fanny watches the scene unfold, she writes to the reader, offering him/her a secret view as well. She doubles down on her description of experiencing arousal, indicating that her entire body feels pleasure from the show. Fanny writes, "and now the bed shook, the curtains rattled so, that I could scare hear the sighs, and murmurs, and heaves, and

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., p. 66.

pantings that accompanied the action, from the beginning to the end; the sound and sight of which trill'd to the very soul of me, and made every vein of my body circulate liquid fires: the emotion grew so violent that it almost intercepted my respiration."[130] She experiences arousal while watching the abbess and man, including herself in the sex act (though the abbess and man are never aware of her watching). Fanny's character deviates again from the amatory heroine. While Silvia, for example, also takes pleasure through reading letters of love and promises of lovemaking, there are no instances of women practicing self-pleasure. Fanny's description of the act and the resulting masturbation exemplifies well Spencer's claim that amatory fiction is not so explicit as pornography.

The description of bodies, genitalia, and the sex act itself is treated with much more detail in pornography than in amatory fiction and leaves little to the imagination. Scenes of love in amatory fiction often feel like seduction. Seduction is present but not as elaborate in eighteenth-century pornography. Fanny's first sexual encounter with a man happens away from the boarding house, demonstrating to the reader her desire for the act itself rather than love, money, or convenience, etc. She is besotted with a young man called Charles. The description of Fanny's sentimental feelings towards Charles is similar to descriptions of love in amatory fiction. Fanny says, "my eyes were instantly fill'd with tears, but tears of the most delicious delight. To find myself in the arms of that beauteous youth, was a nature that my little heart swam in… all my powers of life were sufficient to bear the transport of without fainting: nor without the most tender embraces, the most soothing expressions."[131] Her description is gentle and reads like a young girl in love (which she is meant to be). They breakfast together before Charles takes her to

[130] Ibid., p. 67.
[131] Ibid., p. 101.

a room. They immediately begin lovemaking without any form of seduction or foreplay beyond showing her breasts and body. Fanny's description of her loss of virginity is very different from the description Silvia makes in *Love Letters*. Reference to the male member as machine-like begins the scene:

> being now too high wound up to bear a delay, he unbutton'd, and daring out the engine of love-assaults, drove it currently, as at a ready-made breach: then! Then! For the first time did I feel that stiff horn-hard gristle, battering against the tender part; but imagine to yourself his surprise, when he found, after several vigorous pushes, which hurt me extremely, that he made not the least impression. (Cleland, 105)[132]

Virginity is eroticized in this scene. Fanny invites the reader to imagine what making a sexual attempt on a virgin feels like. We also discover that Fanny and Charles have not spoken about their lives or situations at all, which demonstrates that they are not interested in the reputation or family of the other. The goal for both is clearly physical, and little conversation happens otherwise. They do not speak of Fanny's virginity until they are actively engaged in sex. This is unlike *Love Letters,* as the main topic in most of Silvia and Philander's letters is her virginity and their desire for one another; however, Fanny describes rapture and feeling as though she now belongs to Charles, which is similar to amatory plots.

The element of seduction and allusion rather than pointedness is a key difference between amatory fiction and pornography. Amatory fiction does not deny the feelings and, at times, overwhelming desire experienced by women. Reading amatory fiction often feels a bit like being seduced as the heroines are, allowing a vision of the crime without the consequences of the action. Amatory fiction lacks an element of abruptness that is highlighted in pornography. For example, Fanny does not spend ample time languishing or tearing at herself for desire of

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[132] Ibid., p. 105.

someone. She sees someone, makes herself available to him, and we are quickly brought to a scene of physical love. Pornography offers a directness that amatory fiction does not. For example, Fanny describes casual lovemaking: "I was sat in the arm-chair, my shift and petty-coat up, my thighs wide spread and mounted over the arms of the chair, presenting the fairest mark to Will's drawn weapon, which he stood in act to plunge into me."[133] Cleland's writing does not make the reader guess what transpires. The reader is brought to the center of the action with a full view of events and no frivolous or non-sexual actions. Nothing is abrupt in amatory fiction. Details are laid out in such a way to elicit emotion and connectedness from the reader. The reader needs also to be seduced; however, in pornography, seduction plays a much lesser role than the focus on the body and action.

Feelings of desire in pornography lead to physical gratification. Sometimes, desire leads to physical gratification in amatory fiction, but not always. Feelings of desire are admitted, and immoral behavior committed, but with the caveat that self-control over desire is essential. Fanny and Silvia differ, for example, because Silvia does not yield right away. Fanny yields immediately during her first sexual encounter, but she does resist the man who buys her maidenhead and is quite brutalized. Fanny readily yields to Phane and several boys throughout the book. She develops fleeting feelings for each boy but does not dwell long on heartbreak. Fanny describes her relationship with a man as having nothing to do with his character or position and claims she only appreciates his genitals. She says, "as love never had, so now revenge had no longer any share in my commerce with this handsome youth. The sole pleasures of enjoyment were now the link I held to him by: for though nature had done such great matters

[133] Ibid., p. 217.

for him in his outward form, and especially in that superb piece of furniture he had so liberally enrich'd him with."[134] Fanny likes the boy because of his member and the bodily pleasure she derives from it. She exhibits sex for the sake of sex and the gratification of desire, knowing she relinquishes her reputation as a virtuous person.

Where pornography seeks to make visible physical relationships between characters, amatory fiction reveals primarily the feelings of desire and veils physical acts themselves. In *Love Letters,* Silvia and Philander lie together alone; we know that they kiss–not just on the mouth; we know he touches her, but only have the description of his roaming hands and not explicitly where they roam. In *Memoirs,* the reader is privy to exactly where lovers touch Fanny and in what manner, among other things. We get intimate descriptions of bodies and bodily responses to sexual stimulation. While similar themes do exist in pornography and amatory fiction, like eroticism, voyeurism, and the interplay between virtue and desire, the description of sex and the mode of delivering erotic scenes differ greatly.

Conclusion

Amatory fiction, like Behn's *Love Letters,* is not pornography; *Love Letters* is an amatory fiction novel. The French romance and epistolary form clearly influenced amatory writing, but there is no evidence to support that pornography influenced amatory writing. An important feature of amatory fiction is that it was written by women, for women. The audience for pornography during the Restoration and eighteenth century was not primarily women. The element of seduction makes the amatory fiction novel special and differentiated from romance or pornographic writing. Seduction is important to the form and content of amatory fiction,

[134] Ibid., p. 217.

meaning that there is an element of seducing the reader. Seduction of the female reader is an especially interesting narrative technique because amatory fiction then, at once, demonstrates the dangers of seduction through the action itself. The treatment of seduction is a major difference in amatory fiction versus pornography. For example, there are only a few scenes of seduction in *Memoirs*, which are short and obviously will lead to intercourse. Seduction in amatory fiction often makes up much of the narrative and functions to drive the plot. If amatory fiction seeks to seduce, pornography seeks to pointedly show that which is private. There are no descriptions of physical lovemaking. The emphasis is more on the mind—feelings and emotions, rather than the body.

James Fordyce claims novels are not useful for instruction. Fordyce writes that readers should choose "whatever kind of reading may contribute to your general improvement and satisfaction, as reasonable beings designed for society, virtue, and religion, will deserve your attentive regard,"[135] like sermons. Amatory texts would certainly not be allowed, considering the focus on immoral mindsets, but there is certainly a didactic element to amatory fiction. Amatory fiction is deeply concerned with morality and reputation, giving readers an interesting opportunity to learn about vice without putting their virtue in danger. They would only find themselves in danger if readers did not take heed of the lessons presented by amatory heroines. *Love Letters* offers instruction required by Fordyce in that Silvia often explains the moral action she should take but chooses to fulfill bodily desire instead. Instruction on morality and an actual letter of warning from her sister make clear what socially acceptable behavior looks like. *Love Letters* also offers intimacy to the reader using private letters. The reader understands in detail

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[135] James Fordyce. *Sermons to Young Women, in Two Volumes.* 10th ed. London: Cadell, Dodsley, 1786. A facsimile reprint of the 1oth edition, first published 1786. First edition published 1766. Introduction by Susan Allen Ford. Southampton: Chaton House Press, 2012: xix.

how the characters' minds are working and the goal of the relationship for each character. Fiction prose and the epistolary style create a formal realism that allows for the closeness of reader and text. While critics of amatory fiction were concerned with erotic themes, it is the intimacy between the text and reader that allows for a didactic view of sexuality and seduction. The form of the novel itself refines the didactic role of amatory fiction.

Including *Love Letters* in the list of restoration novels also gives access to other amatory novels such as *Rivella* and *Fantomina.* If we can agree that *Pamela* is special and the origin of the classic English novel, I believe there is room for amatory writers on the list of novel makers and influencers. To include Behn as a restoration novelist would also place female readership as central to the rise of the English novel and the didactic element of amatory fiction concerning conduct and sexuality for the female reader. It is so curious that women writing for women about sex and sexuality would be so integral to the creation of the English novel when writings against lewdness in females was so prevalent. Behn has certainly been an inspirational figure for contemporary and modern female novelists, including Virginia Wolfe, who, in *A Room of One's Own,* calls Behn an icon for all women, especially women writers.[136]

[136] Behn and Salzman, p. ix.

CHAPTER III: DELARIVIER MANLEY, SCANDALOUS BIOGRAPHY, AND AMATROY FICTION

Introduction

Delarivier Manley crossed social barriers in politics, work, and sex, then used her own experiences to inspire her writing. The convergence of modes and styles in Manley's writing sheds light on the complex nature of amatory fiction and women writers. She combines elements of amatory fiction, scandal fiction, and biography. *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714) is the author's autobiography that she disguises as a biography written by a fictional biographer. Manley's (auto)biography combines elements of truth and fiction, making it difficult for the reader to know what is factual and what is not. This allows Manley to construct her own version of truth in her part scandal chronicle, part memoir, part biographical novel. Many events covered by Manley are true events, as in historical fiction, but not all events, and certainly not all conversations are provable. Small amounts of truth create discomfort for readers by exposing the loose morals of those around them—their friends, family, politicians, religious leaders, etc. The biographical elements of Manley's writing intensify the discomfort already found in amatory works because what is and is not fiction becomes blurred.

Biographical complexities exist in the novel, considering that the author's perspective, presented as truth, sometimes conflicts with verifiable historical truths. Manley uses her male narrator to chastise her own personal faults in the guise of "Rivella," to describe her own virtues, and to explain why she made the (sometimes) immoral decisions she did. Rivella, indeed, closely resembles the name of the author, Delarivier. Rivella seems as though it could be a nickname for Delarivier or even a literary counterpart. The similarity is made clearer by Erin Mackie, who

calls her "Mary de la Riviere Manley" or Mary of the River.[137] In the 1725 edition of *Rivella*, publisher Edmund Curll claims Manley was born at sea and given the name De la Rivier. The name could have been inspired by her birth at sea, if factual, or possibly after the French wife of Sir Thomas Morgan, Delarivier, under whom her father served as lieutenant governor of Jersey.[138] Katherine Zelinsky, editor of the academic edition of *The Adventures of Rivella*, calls Manley the "ultimate self-historian" and points out that Manley, as the author, "generates questions about biographical authority and truth."[139] It is sometimes difficult to know what the truth might be, considering not all perspectives are the same, meaning Manley offers multiple perspectives on the same events. It is not always clear if the perspective of Lovemore, the narrator, is that of Manley commenting on her own life or if Lovemore's description of events is meant to persuade or dissuade readers from Rivella's perspective.

Manley complicates the fiction barrier by combining biography, scandal, and seduction, increasing the perceived dangers of reading amatory fiction. While the role of fantasy made reading amatory works threatening to the morality of readers, the addition of truth makes the appeal to the scenes in amatory novels more menacing. Not only are some stories of immorality in the novel truthful, but the role of biography also tells the reader that stories of immorality are coming directly from a woman guilty of engaging in immoral acts, including seduction. *Rivella*, then, would have been an example of an amatory text that critics feared would be produced after

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[137] Erin Skye Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and the Spectator*. Edited by Erin Skye Mackie. Bedford Cultural Editions. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's (1998), p. 25.

[138] Delarivier Manley and Ros Ballaster. *The New Atalantis*. Pickering Women's Classics. New York, NY: New York University Press: 1992, p. vi.

[139] Katherine Zelinsky, ed. Delarivier Manley, *The Adventures of Rivella*. Broadview Literary Texts. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press (1999), p. 19.

the rise in popularity of seduction narratives because the book offers a new sensation: lived examples of immoral acts.

Manley's blending of amatory fiction and biography entwines her scandalous narratives with her personal reputation. According to Zelinsky, it is impossible to separate scholarship on Manley from themes of sex and scandal. "Inspired, in part, by Restoration and eighteenth-century identifications of woman writer and whore," she says, "such concerns with Manley's sexuality and veracity underscore the enduring authority with which culturally sanctioned equations of female textual and sexual practice have largely determined the parameters of Manley criticism."[140] The association of immorality with Manley's works is certainly one of the reasons why amatory fiction as a subgenre has largely been snubbed by academic conversation, particularly conversation about the novel.

While not all of *Rivella* is factual, we do gain an interesting insight into Manley's life based on what is verifiable and what the author might have fabricated. Manley was probably born in 1663, though dates of 1667-1672 are included as possible years of her birth due to the autobiographical nature of *The Adventures of Rivella* and the information provided there; however, inconsistencies are present throughout *Rivella* in relation to documented events. For example, the ages of Sir Charles Lovemore and Rivella are recorded as sixteen and twelve, respectively, in the introduction of *Rivella*. Lovemore is based on Major General John Tidcomb, according to Edmund Curll, publisher of the novel. Tidcomb would have been forty-three at his first meeting with Manley and Manley herself certainly older than twelve.[141] Zelinsky cites Dolores Duff, arguing that "Manley was born on the Continent in 1663, the third of six children.

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[140] Ibid., pp. 13-4.
[141] Ibid., p. 19.

Born to Sir Roger Manley and a Walloon gentlewoman."[142] Manley's mother died when she was young but precisely when is unknown. Lovemore says only that her children "had lost her when very young."[143] Manley's correct age at the publication of *Rivella*, according to Duff, would be fifty-one. If Manley was indeed born in 1663 and consistently lowered her age by ten years in her own publications and in accounts of other writers, she demonstrates how she crafts her personal character using the medium of biographical fiction.

Manley garnered widespread fame as a scandal fiction writer; but the author's reputation was criticized by contemporary and modern readers. Zelinsky places several modern and contemporary critics into conversation to build an understanding of Manley's readership and influence. According to Zelinsky, Gwendolyn Needham ("Mrs. Manley: An Eighteenth-Century Wife of Bath"), Jane Spencer (*The Rise of the Woman Novelist*), and Marilyn L. Williamson (*Raising their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750*), all argue that Manley broke new historical/literary ground with her scandalous and amatory themes.[144] She continues to say that Fidelis Morgan, Gwendolyn B. Needham, Dolores Palomo, and Jacqueline Pearson, for example, all cite Manley as widely read and popular in her time. They also comment on the political and personal problems that damaged her reputation which are highlighted in her books like *The New Atalantis* and *The Adventures of Rivella*.[145] According to Palomo, "Manley was an immoral woman who (therefore) wrote immoral books."[146] While I do not necessarily disagree with

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[142] Ibid., p. 21.
[143] Ibid., p. 53.
[144] Ibid., p. 12.
[145] Ibid., pp. 12-3.
[146] Dolores Palomo, "A Woman Writer and the Scholars," p. 38 in Zelinsky's *Rivella*, p. 13.

Palomo, themes of morality in conjunction with sensuality provide a unique space for understanding conduct and social roles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

John Richetti is unapologetic in his analysis of Manley and Eliza Haywood. Richetti echoes a sentiment similar to the previous authors in his critical survey of early fiction, *Popular Fiction before Richardson* (1969). He writes that if a reader approached the "enormously popular work of writers such as Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Haywood with the high-mindedness that literary history has traditionally required, our mood must change to dismay at the corruption of popular taste."[147] Richetti criticizes the taste of this wide readership, condemning the conduct found in the amatory works of Manley and Haywood. He marvels that the era that saw the consolidation of the English novel should also have such lewd taste. Manley's novels were not considered "high-minded" enough to be considered an "English novel."

Manley was concerned about her reputation, which was probably the catalyst for her writing *The Adventures of Rivella*. Her writing of *Rivella* stems from another author, Charles Gildon, beginning to write her biography. She reached an agreement with Gildon and Curll that she would write the biography herself; *Rivella* was the result. For Zelinsky, Manley's writing the biography "confirm[s] Manley's fears that the narrative would be, in the publisher's words, "a severe [sic] invective upon some part of her conduct.""[148] For Zelinsky, Manley feared the perspective from which Gildon would write about her. Ross Ballaster says, "Manley was no doubt obliged to admit her sexual indiscretions if she was to provide a satisfactory alternative to Gildon's Rivella, but she succeeded in making a virtue out of a necessity."[149] That Manley was

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[147] John J., Richetti, "The Rise of the Novel Reconsidered," *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700–1739*, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford, 1992, online edn, Oxford Academic, 3 Oct. 2011), p. 119.

[148] Zelinsky, *Rivella*, p. 9. But no footnote for the quotation.

[149] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 151.

inspired to write *Rivella* in order to compete directly with another author's version of her biography strengthens the idea that Manley's *Rivella* is the author's preemptive explanation and curated perspective on her life. The overall goal for *Rivella* is twofold: first, to prevent very damaging information from being published to a larger public, and second, to control the narrative of what was being said about her reputation. I do not attempt to argue that all events in *Rivella* are true or accurate; a more detailed discussion of Lovemore and the complex role of the narrator is offered in the fourth section of this chapter.

Manley's contemporaries Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Richard Steele, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote about her. Pope references *The New Atalantis* in *The Rape of Lock* as an allusion to scandal.[150] Manley often quarreled with Steele in their writings, though they must have reconciled because he eventually produced one of her plays.[151] She also worked with Swift on periodical and political writing.[152] Gildon wrote highly of her for being distinguished among her sex for her learning in his *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets,* published in 1699.[153] Considering Gildon wrote well of her, it is curious that Manley would be concerned enough about his biography to take over the writing of it herself. Though it is speculative to ask, I wonder if she feared that the general public would not receive personal information, like her affair with John Tilly or her bigamous marriage to John Manley, well and associate her even more closely with scandal. It is more likely, in my opinion, that Manley was

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[150] Alexander Pope and Robin Sowerby, *Alexander Pope: Selected Poetry and Prose.* London: Taylor & Francis Group, (1988), p. 76, line 165.

[151] Zelinsky, *Rivella*, p. 12. Note: Zelinsky offers an appendix with several letters and poems back and forth between Montagu and Steele. Appendix C in *Rivella*.

[152] Ibid., p. 12.

[153] Ibid.

not fearful of what Gildon would write but rather wanted authorial control over the biography in order to explain her role in the libel trial resulting from *The New Atalantis*.

Though criticized, Manley put descriptions of women's physical desire into long form. Perhaps the sex and scandal themes made Manley's works popular enough to allow her to make a living as a writer. Because the first female novelists often wrote about passionate themes, sexual immorality became associated with female authorship in the eighteenth-century mind. In her 1785 book, *The Progress of Romance*, Clara Reeve describes Manley's scandal writing and the negative influence of Manley's writing on female authors. Zelinsky calls Reeve's book a "quasi-fictional anatomy of literary history"[154], in which the commentator, Euphrasia, acts as a literary device to describe contemporary understandings of appropriateness and morality in literature. Euphrasia describes the content of Manley's writing as being all inspired by public and private scandals. The insinuation made by Reeve is that Manley's writing is not didactic or appropriate; rather, the scandalous content works to shock the reader and to generate popularity through the partial truths included and the lewd insinuations concerning those involved. Reeve's Euphrasia says, "I am sorry to say [her works] were once in fashion, which obliges me to mention them, otherwise I had rather be spared pain of disgracing an author of my own sex."[155] According to Reeve, the content of Manley's writing was damaging for other women writers, associating female authors with low-minded gossip, scandal, and inappropriate fantasy. Her feelings about Manley's writing persisted, considering that nineteenth- and twentieth-century reception viewed Manley and her writing as immoral.[156]

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[154] Ibid., p. 14.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., p. 15.

Ros Ballaster explains that Manley used the genre of the novel to make space for the female writer.[157] The long-prose form of the novel allows women to write about women's experiences. I am not arguing that women could not infuse their political, religious, sexual, etc. opinions in other genres of writing, but realistic narratives created in prose writing offer a more intimate glimpse into women's lives. Manley wrote about her perspectives on topics such as female sexuality, the female body, and Whig and Tory politics. Manley, unlike Aphra Behn, made no secret of her love affairs and often discussed her own sexual intrigues in her prose fiction; however, like Behn, the prose fiction novel also became a space for a woman to write about politics.[158] Manley enters another forbidden realm for women writers when she begins to write political pieces, including pamphlets, political journalism pieces, and politically infused books like *New Atalantis.*

Political and Scandal Writing—and a Libel Suit

From 1710 to 1714, Manley published no prose fiction and instead focused on political and periodical writing.[159] Manley authored much of *The Female Tatler* (July 8, 1709 to March 31, 1710),[160] though scholars believe that both male and female authors are responsible for many of the later pieces.[161] The *Female Tatler*, including its sometimes immoral content, was women-centered with its "concentration on women both in articles and advertising."[162] Under the penname Mrs. Crackenthorpe (a lady who knows everything), Manley wrote risqué pieces with

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[157] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms,* p. 120.
[158] Ibid., p. 119.
[159] Ibid., p. 120.
[160] Ibid., p. 121.
[161] DeMaria, "The Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay," p. 536.
[162] Ibid..

discussions of pre-marital sex and pregnancy.[163] Her periodicals also give evidence of the female authors whom Manley read, Aphra Behn, for example, and often contained some of the same questionable content as in her prose writing. Manley definitely read Behn because Mrs. Crackenthorpe, "classed Behn with the much admired and respectable Katherine Philips…and Anne Dacier."[164] Though focused on women, Manley's periodical writing often discussed politics and other topics considered indecent for women in public conversations. Her political writing demonstrates her struggles with the Tory party. Though her political writing aligned with Tory party ideals, she was not compensated by them, nor were her interests protected.

Manley makes no attempt to separate her political writings from those of her contemporaries, placing all emphasis on party politics. In fact, Ballaster points out that Manley's political journalism "was all published anonymously and is, in the main, indistinguishable from the pamphlet style of her contemporaries."[165] She became a political agent alongside writers such as Jonathan Swift with her political writing, though she was not compensated for her work. Aphra Behn also struggled to gain compensation for her political work and was imprisoned for a short while due to debts. Manley received almost nothing at all. Swift describes in *Letters to Stella*, a collection of published letters from Swift to his wife, Manley asking for compensation from Lord Peterborow and agrees that she should be compensated. In a letter dating June 30, 1711, he writes, " I met Mrs. Manley there, who was soliciting him to get some pension or reward for her service in the cause, by writing her *Atalantis*, and prosecution, etc., upon it. I seconded her, and hope they will do something for the poor woman."[166] It is evident from Swift's

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[163] Ibid..

[164] Janet Todd, *Aphra Behn Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1996), p. 3.

[165] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 121.

[166] Jonathan Swift and George Aitken. "The Journal to Stella by Jonathan Swift." Project Gutenberg (2003), p. 247. Referenced by Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 118.

letters that he knows Manley well. In a letter dating December 9, 1710, he corrects Stella's spelling in a previous letter to him, "R*e*diculous, madam? I suppose you mean r*i*diculous: let me have no more of that; 'tis the author of the *Atalantis's* spelling."[167] Swift playfully chastises his wife for using the same spelling of a word as Manley. This short quip from Swift shows that he is acquainted with Manley well enough to recognize an element of her writing style and that he, though in a teasing manner, does not wish his wife to resemble Manley.

Manley did run into trouble for libel from the contents of her work critical of the Whig party in her *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean* (1709). *Rivella* offers a detailed account of the libel trial, demonstrating the biographical elements found in *New Atalantis. New Atalantis* opens with Juvenal's satire "On Women" in which Justice and Chastity flee from the earth.[168] The opening of the book indicates immediately that the story is satirical in part and the interplay of *Atalantis* with *Atlantis* implies allegory. The story of *New Atalantis* follows Justice, or Astrea, who returns to Earth to reunite with her mother, Virtue. They travel to the island of Atalantis with Lady Intelligence in an effort to understand corruption and immoral behavior. Astrea must understand the corrupt behavior of humans to best instruct the prince of the moon.[169] Though given fictitious names, the story targets the Duke and Duchess of Marlboro to expose the corruption of the Whig party under rulers from Charles II to Queen Anne.[170] The story of Delia in the *New Atalantis* appears in the second volume and offers biographical elements of Manley's life. Readers would have picked up on the overt closeness of Delia with Delarivier. The *New*

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[167] Swift and Aitken, p. 92.
[168] Manley and Ballaster. *The New Atalantis*, p. v.
[169] Ibid., p. v.
[170] Ibid.

Atalantis combines discussions of political and sexual morality from the perspective of women, both as personified virtues and human women.

The title of *the New Atalantis* stems from several literary examples, including Sir Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1626), the legend of the Island of Atlantis described by Plato, and the classical heroine Atalanta. Bacon's *The New Atlantis* was published posthumously in 1626. Bacon's book details the utopian island Bensalem and is written in the style of a travel journal,[171] giving the story an element of realism like in the *New Atalantis*. *The New Atlantis* was probably inspired by Plato's "Atlantis." As described by Plato, Atlantis was a utopian society that gradually fell into ruin under a corrupt ruling class.[172] Manley aligns her book with both Plato's and Bacon's stories, demonstrating how even the most ideal societies will collapse under corrupt leaders. This is a pointed criticism of the Whig party made by Manley.

The name Atalanta also comes from Greek mythology. Atalanta is described as too "boyish" to be a girl and rejects the idea of marriage after an oracle claims that marriage would be her ruin.[173] Manley perhaps found similarities between herself and Atalanta, considering she does not speak highly of her own looks in *Rivella*. She honors her skills, mind, and soul over her physical body. Manley seems rather similar to Atalanta in that she is skilled in typically male-dominated areas as a professional writer and political writer. Manley also never marries after leaving her bigamous marriage to her cousin, John Manley. Manley's use of Astrea for the name of Justice also references the pseudonym of Aphra Behn. The title of the *New Atalantis*, then,

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[171] Francis Bacon and Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon.* Oxford University Press, 1996.

[172] Stephen Kershaw, *The Search for Atlantis: A History of Plato's Ideal State*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2018

[173] Thomas Bulfinch and Alberto Manguel. *Bulfinch's Mythology: The Age of Fable, the Age of Chivalry, Legends of Charlemagne*. The Modern Library: New York (2004), p.132.

places the book in the realm of utopia/dystopia and in the same field as the work of the first professional English female author and novelist.[174]

Rivella gives an account of the libel trial that culminated from the contents of *New Atalantis.* According to the narrator, Lovemore, Rivella (Manley) was accused of receiving information and writing seditious materials about real people, including Queen Anne. The defense used by Rivella (Manley) is that the work is fictional and any misunderstanding among readers was purely accidental:

> Her defense was with much humility and sorrow, for having offended, at the same time denying that any persons were concerned with her, or that she had a farther design than writing for her own amusement and diversion in the country; without intending particular reflections or characters. When this was not believed, and the contrary urged very home to her by several circumstances and likenesses; she said then it must be inspiration, because knowing her own innocence she could account for it no other way. (Manley and Zelinsky, 110)[175]

Rivella plays to the critics' concerns in her libel defense, saying that circumstances in her writing that are very close to truth are only inspirations (fiction) because she is too innocent to have defamed anyone purposefully. Though the modern reader understands that Rivella (Manley) is acting somewhat deceitfully, we still understand from this demonstration the importance of the fiction genre to female writers of Manley's time. Women were most often encouraged to write in nonfiction genres like prayers, poetry, and instruction on domestic skills. Yet the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the rise of women writing fiction prose and the often-hostile reception of that prose.

After the conclusion of her trial for libel, Rivella is released on bail. Lovemore assumes a critical voice against those who sought to damage the reputation of Rivella, asking, "Whether the

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[174] Manley and Ballaster, p. xv.
[175] Manley and Zelinsky, p. 110.

persons in power were ashamed to bring a woman to her trial for writing a few amorous trifles purely for her own amusement, or that our laws were defective, as most persons conceived, because she had served her self with romantick names, and a feigned scene of action?"[176] Lovemore uses the same logic as critics of women's writing and reading. If women's public roles are ornamental or without much consequence, then the courts should be embarrassed for taking so seriously the amatory and romantic writing of a female author. Moreover, Manley asserts that the contents of *The New Atalantis* were "inspired," meaning that she created the encounter. In so doing, Manley directs blame for revealing true events onto the courts. Bringing a libel charge against her meant that the plaintiffs thought the contents of her work to be taken as factually true, while she states that they were fictional. Thus, if anyone wanted to accuse her of libel, that person would have to admit that the character portrayed was him or herself. Manley used allegory to satirize the people who inspired characters for her stories. If any particular person wanted to claim that Manley wrote truths about them, they would have to admit to the exaggerated and untrue aspects of the character inspired by them also. Monsieur L'Ingrate (Richard Steele) in *New Atalantis* and Hilaria in *Rivella* (Barbara Villiers) are similar enough to their real-life counterparts to be identifiable to contemporary readers but would require, for example, Steele to accept the persona of "ingrate" if the story is totally factual. Lovemore calls the writing only "amorous trifles" to coincide with the inconsequential notion of Rivella's writing. The admission of her writing "amorous trifles," though, does confirm that Rivella's (Manley's) writing is within the realm of amatory and scandal fiction.

[176] Manley and Zelinksy, p. 111.

Letters from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Mrs. Frances Hewet discuss Manley's being taken to trial. In a letter dated November 12 [1709] Montagu writes, "But do you know what has happened to the unfortunate authoress? People are offended at the liberty she uses in her memoirs, and she is taken into custody. Miserable is the fate of writers: if they are agreeable, they are offensive; and if dull, they starve."[177] Montagu discusses Manley's trial, conduct, and content of her writing in this line. She describes Manley's arrest in a style that reads like gossip but notes that Manley was arrested for the liberty she uses in her memoirs. Montagu neither endorses nor critiques Manley for the kinds of information that she gives in *Atalantis;* rather, Montagu seems sympathetic to Manley's and other writers' grappling with the sorts of content one can write that is interesting without being, apparently, criminal.

Montagu continues, "I lament the loss of the other parts which we should have had; and have five hundred arguments at my fingers' ends to prove the ridiculousness of those creatures that think it worth while to take notice of what is only designed for diversion."[178] She believes that Manley's imprisonment is silly, harkening to the frivolous tone that Manley takes at the end of *Rivella,* commenting on the ridiculousness of the court becoming so offended by writing meant to entertain both writer and reader. Montagu is further annoyed that the lawsuit might discourage anyone from writing memoirs. She gives what reads as an insult to Manley, saying that she hoped her "faint essay would have provoked some better pen to give more elegant and secret memoirs; but now she will serve as a scarecrow to frighten people from attempting anything but heavy panegyric."[179] Though the correspondence between Montagu and Mrs.

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[177] Lord Wharncliffe, ed. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.* Vol. 1. London (1861), p. 146.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid., p. 146-7 and referenced in Zelinsky, *Rivella,* p. 12.

Hewet shows that they both had an interest in the *New Atalantis* and desired to read the second volume, Montagu criticized Manley's work as not elegant enough either in form or content. She calls *The New Atalantis* a faint essay, which might mean several things: perhaps that the essay was quiet in terms of real scandal or did not offer information not already well known; that the work did not live up to literary standards; or that the work could be easily eclipsed.

Scandal Fiction and Amatory Fiction

Manley does something interesting with the genre of scandal writing between publishing *The adventures of Rivella* and her previous work *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes. From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean* (1709). *The New Atalantis* was shocking in its time due to its political themes involving women and the public sphere. Manley discusses several prominent Whig Members of Parliament and gives a nod to Behn with the story casting "Astrea" as the character Justice. Manley was arrested for seditious libel due to her writing about the sexual and political corruption of the Whig party, Queen Anne, and the Duchess of Marlborough. Manley was acquitted because the work was intended to be read as fiction.[180] While many of the characters, though renamed, are real people, Manley avoided serious legal and criminal consequences due to the subjects of her writing being fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or events being coincidental or minimally influential. The major difference between amatory and scandal fiction for Manley is the exposure of corrupt sexual and political behavior. Combining scandal and amatory fiction allows Manley to bring public attention to intimate details concerning female desire and seduction not often discussed in public with real-life examples.

[180] Catherine Gallagher. "Political Crimes and Fictional Alibis: The Case of Delarivier Manley." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990), p. 502.

Manley and Eliza Haywood both wrote scandal fiction, using and adapting the genre of chronicle, or history, writing. Scandal fiction differs from amatory fiction in that it is meant to depict real people and events under pseudonyms to protect the identities of those portrayed and to protect the author from defamation, while amatory fiction, though sometimes inspired by true events, is pure invention. According to Gallagher, scandal chronicles offered a "history of the times" that exposed the larger social network that influenced politics and social hierarchies.[181] Considering that amatory fiction functions to caution readers against scandalous behavior, it cannot be considered the same as scandal fiction, which functions to reveal social happenings while concealing the identities of those involved. Manley, though, combines amatory themes with nonfiction scandal and biography. The combination increases the element of fantasy in a realistic space because readers are left to wonder what events or behaviors are factual. Manley breaks the fiction barrier by combining genres, increasing perceived dangers from reading amatory fiction.

We know that Manley's *The New Atalantis* and *Rivella* are both scandal fiction because some of the events are indeed verifiable, and the characters are disguised, real people. A key was written to identify characters for both *The New Atalantis* and *Rivella.* We know that a key was produced but not published in the first volume because Montagu promises to send Mrs. Hewet the second volume and key for *Atlantis* in their correspondence. A key was also produced for *Rivella* by Edmund Curll. It appears in some early editions of the text but would not have been included in the 1714 first edition. Zelinsky writes that Curll's key appears in the edition of the text she used to conduct her research. She says the key "appears at the end of my 1714 copy text,

[181] Gallagher, Noelle. "Narrative Personae: Delarivier Manley's Secret Memoirs and Manners and the Modern Chronicle." In *Historical Literatures: Writing about the Past in England, 1660–1740*, 94–110. Manchester University Press, 2012.

and which is an exact replica of the 1725 key…the 1714 key was obviously bound-in at a later date, since revealing the actual names of the fictionalized characters, on first publication, would have undermined the purpose of the *roman a clef*."[182] A *roman a clef* is, literally, a novel that appears with a key, indicating to the reader that the novel on its own might appear to be fiction, but the inclusion of the key demonstrates the conjunction of nonfiction with the text. Manley or her publishers would not have included the keys originally, considering her argument during the libel trial centered on her work being fiction.

Amatory themes in Manley's *Rivella* are not as straightforward as in Behn's *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*. As noted in Chapter Two, according to Jane Spencer, amatory fiction comprises love stories not so graphic as pornography but not as eloquent as romance, and scandal fiction requires "the exposure of corrupt behavior whether in political figures or merely of the author's acquaintance."[183] Certainly, amatory fiction contains scandal, but the distinction between amatory fiction and scandal fiction is the element of exposure. Bowers describes the amatory fiction plot as typically following an innocent young woman seduced by an older, married, more experienced man who promises her love and marriage in exchange for her honor but abandons her after they sleep together.[184] *Rivella* somewhat follows the amatory plot in that Rivella has relationships with married men; however, they do not seem to abandon her, but rather, the relationships tend to end organically or with Rivella leaving the suitor. Seduction, particularly female-initiated seduction, is an important theme for the amatory

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[182] Zelinsky, *Rivella,* p. 35.

[183] Jane Spencer, "Amatory and Scandal Fiction" in Thomas Keymer (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750*, Oxford History of the Novel in English (Oxford, 2017; online edn, Oxford Academic, 21 June 2018): 500.

[184] Toni Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2009: 51-52.

fiction subgenre. Rivella does indeed seek out attention from men and delights in their flirtatious conversations.

The novel does not follow the typical amatory plot, but the innocence and naivete of amatory heroines are found in Rivella's character. Manley, through the narrator, explains Rivella's conduct in such a way as to make any immoral choices seem out of her control. Love as fated and irresistible often plays a role in amatory fiction, supporting the idea that Rivella's immoral choices were out of her control. Often, the amatory heroine falls victim to a seducer and her own desire to seduce, guiding her to a worse fate than expected before the union. While we cannot say that one union in particular damages Rivella's reputation, the character does not find love with a rich, respectable gentleman at the conclusion of the novel. In fact, Rivella leaves a bigamous marriage and child, engages in several open affairs with married men, and continues to enjoy flirtatious behavior.

The adventures of Rivella; or, the history of the author of the Atalantis

Manley's *Rivella* combines biography, scandal, and amatory writing, which creates a narrative within the novel and a narrative concerning Manley's life. Zelinsky calls *Rivella* "(auto)biographical…with its intricate bricolage of discursive and cultural conventions, and in its tricky interweaving of fiction and history, fantasy and fact, Manley's own elusive 'biography,' *Rivella* still remains the truest memorial of her life."[185] The interplay of fantasy and fact deepens the connection between scandal and Manley as an author. *Rivella*, in essence, becomes a scandalous biography of the author, though not nearly as scandalous as perhaps it might have been. Zelinsky's text is based on the first edition of *Rivella* published by Edmund Curll in 1714.

[185] Zelinsky, *Rivella,* p. 15 and 18.

The book was published three more times: *The Adventures of Rivella; or, The History of the Author of the Four Volumes of the New Atalantis* (1715); *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Manley* (1717), and *Mrs. Manley's History of Her Own Life and Times* (1725). All four editions are identical except for minor typographical variations and Curll's preface included in the 1725 edition.[186]

The title of *Rivella* links Manley to her earlier text, the *New Atalantis*. For the third and fourth editions, the title has changed to indicate the biographical nature of the story. Manley's interplay with fiction and biography in the novel is an interesting device, even more so considering the inclusion of amatory themes. Perhaps Manley's works were so criticized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because of their biographical nature mixed with amatory themes. Amatory fiction displays but does not encourage sexual deviancy. Intertwining biography with amatory themes displays the fantasy and affixes it to the author, blurring the line between fantasy and fact. It becomes impossible to separate the reality of women's sexual desire and expression when an amatory plot is written to be biographical. The author of the work takes on a more complicated role because the reader is now subjected to the author, an open female writer, who might influence public opinion concerning liberality around women's sexuality.

The adventures of Rivella; or, the history of the author of the Atalantis (1714) discusses sex, politics, and the importance of fiction. Manley uses male characters in *Rivella* to describe a woman's conduct and to acquaint the listener with her life and virtues. Such a device is interesting because it lessens the possible accusation of gossip, which is forbidden in conduct literature like Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1528). Manley presents a discussion of conduct,

[186] Ibid., p. 35.

particularly the role of the social sphere in policing accepted conduct. Like Behn's *Love Letters, Rivella* centers around the conduct of a young lady whose naivete gets her into trouble. Unlike *Love Letters*, *Rivella* does not offer a story of the heroine's loss of virginity but rather the ruin of her reputation from rumors of her having multiple love affairs and her role in several legal cases. Rivella only sometimes denies the love affairs.

The novel contains a fictional translator's preface and an introduction to the novel proceeding the body of the text. A key containing the names of disguised characters was eventually included in the novel but was not included in the first editions to protect the people and Manley herself from further libel and from prosecution thereof. The translator's preface begins to set up the narrative, providing details for the reader that make it seem clandestine that we should have access to the written pages. We are told that the French publisher of the story happened to come into possession of the pages when he worked for the Chevalier D'Aumont in England and was charged with taking down the Chevalier's dictation. The pages remained in the publisher's possession upon the death of the Chevalier shortly after.

This supposed translator informs the reader the preface of the French edition is not included. Though fiction, the translator's preface sets up a history for the content of the novel. The preface explains that the work is a translation into French from an oral English telling and then back into English in print. Multiple translations give the work a historical element so that it can be read as a true story that may have been embellished with not entirely accurate additions. It also removes Manley from the immediate front of the work, meaning that the reader can almost forget that Manley is the author of the story. The reader, then, can enjoy the biographical elements of the novel without necessarily having to take into consideration that the content comes from the author's perspective. Removing Manley as the author, in a way, gives more

credibility to the story as the narrator offers a "true" account of Rivella's (Manley's) life and validates her perspective.

The introduction details how Sir Charles Lovemore recounted the story of Rivella to the Chevalier D'Aumount. The discussion takes place in Somerset-House Garden on a hot summer day. Lovemore is described for the first time as "a person of admirable good sense and knowledge."[187] The Chevalier asks Lovemore about the women of England. Lovemore first describes Anne Dacier, a contemporary author and translator (but who is actually French). Madame Dacier is described as having neither youth nor beauty but makes many conquests. It is insinuated that her conquests are sexual. Lovemore further describes Dacier as an "admirable scholar, a judicious critick," but says these characteristics have nothing to do with heart, or attraction.[188] Lovemore is saying that though she makes many conquests of the heart, he has no attraction to her other than for interesting conversation. As far as those "who do treat well of love," he references the author of *Atalantis,* meaning Rivella. When asked what he finds most attractive about Rivella, Lovemore says her soul.[189] It is important to note that he does not mention physical beauty or moral conduct. These passages and the inclusion of Anne Dacier align Rivella's character, and therefore Manley, with admirable writing rather than physical beauty. Manley implies here that her mind, soul, and sexual skill rather than her physical body are most desirable. Indeed, the story of *Rivella* is Lovemore's answer to Chevalier D'Aumont's question of whether "her eyes love as well as her pen?"[190]

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[187] Ibid., p. 43.
[188] Ibid., p. 44.
[189] Ibid., p. 48.
[190] Ibid., p. 47.

Lovemore and the Chevalier begin a fantastic conversation on sex, explaining that youth and charm are well enough, but nothing is as pleasurable as someone with practiced skill. The discussion is particularly interesting because we have male characters discussing sex and attraction in gentle language that was written from a female perspective. They discuss the Duchess of Mazarin, or Hortense Mancini (1646-1699) who left an abusive relationship and became a mistress of Charles II.[191] Behn and Manley both mention Mancini in their works. Behn dedicated her novel *The History of the Nun: or, the Fair Vow Breaker* (1689) to Mancini and Mary Astell's polemical *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700) was inspired by legal briefs from a lawsuit between the duchess and her estranged husband.[192] According to Zelinsky, Manley admired the duchess who also practiced self-fashioning and wrote the autobiographical *Memoirs D'Hortense et de Marie Mancini* (1676).[193] Lovemore and the Chevalier discuss that Madame Mazarin is said to never have lost her penchant for passion up to her death, even having men beg to be with her. The Chevalier comments that he believes her to be twice the age of Rivella. In 1712, two years before the publication of *Rivella*, Swift describes Manley as around forty years old, also homely and fat, in is *Letters to Stella*.[194] Rivella's (Manley's) age of about forty years old, given by Swift, corresponds to the later suggested dates of birth (1667-1672). If Rivella is half her age, Madame Mazarin is around eighty years old and still pursued for her sexual skills.

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[191] Ibid., p. 45.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., p. 20.

Though the duchess is "entirely mistress of the art of love" she never provided descriptions of her encounters "as has Rivella, by her writings."[195] Rivella's character is described as one with much experience in the art of love, giving the impression that any scenes of passion to come have elements of truth. The reader understands that writing on passion within the novel could provide actual descriptions of women's sexual desire, prowess, and pursuit of men for the sake of intimate relationships. To close, Lovemore tells the Chevalier that he has been an intimate acquaintance of Rivella for a long time, giving him the ability to relate particular aspects of her life and behavior.[196]

The body of the novel opens with Lovemore explaining that Rivella has many charms as well as vices. Lovemore, as the narrator, acts as a means through which Manley self-fashions her (auto)biography. He says he struggles to know what to share and what to conceal to demonstrate both truth and grace. Interestingly, Lovemore notes that if Rivella had been a man, no one would have criticized her behavior. He redirects blame onto Rivella's critics, turning the reader's attention to unfair societal standards rather than her indecent conduct. Manley does not deny participating in immoral behavior; in fact, Manley made her personal love affairs apparent in *Rivella*. Rivella's lover Cleander is inspired by John Tilly, a married London lawyer, with whom Manley openly lived for several years during his marriage.[197] Lovemore details several ways in which Rivella's reputation was ruined by her own actions, including her relationship with Hilaria,[198] the libel trial, and her relationship with Cleander.

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[195] Ibid., p. 46.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., pp. 82 and 86.
[198] Ibid., p. 47. Note: Barbara Villiers Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland. Mistress to Charles II.

Zelinsky says of the narrator, "Lovemore, in whom Manley both incorporates and repudiates cultural, social, and literary conventions, thus not only mirrors the discursively pluralistic 'history' and 'adventures' of Rivella, but also provides a complex narrative consciousness through whose visions and representations Manley inscribes as well as resists such conventions."[199] Manley uses Lovemore to describe her perspective through the words of another character and to make clear the rules of conduct that were socially appropriate in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Using another character supports Manley's perspective as an author, allowing her to highlight the virtues necessary to protect her reputation. Further weaving together fantasy and fiction, Lovemore says of Rivella, "she loves truth, and has too often given herself the liberty to speak, as well as write it."[200] Manley cannot help if the truth is shocking. She merely seeks to tell a fictionalized version of the story.

The Chevalier asks Lovemore to describe Rivella, to which he responds that she is "inclined to fat, whence I have often heard her flatterers liken her to the Grecian Venus." [201] Manley changes the negative connation understood in the tone of Swift's "very homely and very fat"[202] description. While not denying fatness, Manley redirects the tone to curvaceousness, like the goddess Venus infusing beauty in form rather than ugliness. She also speaks pleasantly and is not boastful. According to Lovemore, Rivella "was born in Hampshire. On one of those islands, which formerly belonged to France, where her father was governour."[203] Manley's father Sir Roger Manley was lieutenant governor of Jersey in the Channel Islands between 1667-1672,

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[199] Ibid., pp. 19-20.
[200] Ibid., p. 50.
[201] Ibid., p. 47.
[202] Ibid., p. 20.
[203] Ibid., p. 50.

providing the dates of birth after 1663; the accuracy of these dates is debatable. Ballaster dates Manley's birth as 1671.[204]

Lovemore describes falling in love with Rivella almost immediately when he is sixteen and she twelve. He says, "I loved her, but she did not return my passion, yet without any affected coyness, or personating a heroine of the many romances she daily read."[205] He mentions that Rivella often reads romances and would be familiar with heroic tales and love stories but never treated him in any such loving manner. Though she was four years his junior, he found her "the wittiest girl in the world. I would have kissed her, and embraced her a thousand times over, but had no opportunity."[206] Though he loved her in a gentlemanly manner, Rivella repeatedly rejects Lovemore's propositions throughout the novel. Unlike many amatory heroines, Rivella is protected by a loving father, sister, and a strict governess who does not allow Lovemore to enter her rooms.[207] She has guardians and, therefore, does not begin to diminish her reputation until she leaves home.

The first detailed bout of passion in the novel is Lovemore's description of Rivella falling in love with Lysander. Love is described as a fatal power or disease, "tho' she had read so much of love… she was utterly ignorant of what it was, till she felt his fatal power; nay after she felt it, she scarce guessed at her disease, till she found her cure."[208] Love in these lines is an actual illness and her folly, akin to madness.[209] Lovemore calls the love experienced by Rivella poison "she drank the poison both at her ears and eyes, and never took care to manage, or conceal her

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[204] Manley and Ballaster, *The New Atalantis,* p. xxiii.
[205] Manley and Zelinsky, *Rivella*, pp. 53-4.
[206] Ibid., pp. 52-3.
[207] Ibid., p. 53.
[208] Ibid., p. 54.
[209] Ibid., p. 54-5.

passion."[210] Rivella could "neither eat nor sleep; she became hectick, and had all the symptoms of a dangerous indisposition. They caused her to let blood, which joined her abstinence from good, made her but the weaker, whilst her distemper grew more strong."[211] Her emotional state makes Rivella truly ill to the point of blood-letting to relieve her distemper. Rivella's brother in-law warns Lysander to stay away from her, "not to give into the follies of the young girl" and calls her attraction towards him "madness."[212] This scene is reminiscent of *Love Letters* when Sylvia's sister warns her to stay away from Philander. Thankfully for the preservation of Rivella's reputation, Lysander is not inclined to engage her and is in love with someone else.

Lovemore says she has no freewill in the bounds of love: "possibly what she has since told me in that point was true, that she knew not what she did, as not having freewill, or the benefit of reflection; nor could she consider any thing but Lysander."[213] Amatory plots, like *Love Letters*, often characterize love as overpowering and fated. Silvia curses the gods for compelling her to love her brother-in-law, removing accountability for her overt desire from herself. She calls their love destined, demonstrating to the reader that she believes the relationship to be clandestine or, as Bowers explained, an irresistible force, from which escape is impossible.

After she is recovered from her love-induced madness, Lovemore offers her marriage. One might assume that a kind man of decent financial and social standing who loves a lady would be a desirable match for that lady. Lovemore, who admits to having loved Rivella since the age of twelve, did not seek to damage her reputation, and only sought to offer her love and protection throughout her life. She rejects his advances and eventual marriage proposal to keep

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[210] Ibid., p. 55.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid., p. 54.
[213] Ibid., p. 55.

herself free to pursue young men at the court of James II and Mary Beatrice of Modena.[214] Lovemore continues to explain to the Chevalier that, if she had agreed to marry him, Rivella would not have suffered all the misfortune that she met in her life. Moral conduct and a prosperous marriage were key aspects of a good and decent character for both men and women during the Restoration era and the eighteenth century, but especially for women. Rivella's rejection of an assured future of marriage, financial stability, and modest character, demonstrates to the reader her willingness to either engage in immoral behavior, or at least, put herself into morally dangerous situations.

Lovemore refers to Rivella as "Delia" in "her own story," the *Atalantis*[215]--indeed "Manley," "Rivella," and "Delia" all refer to the author herself. Lovemore's position as biographical narrator intertwines the perspectives of the narrator and the fragmented authors, demonstrating the unreliability of the narrator because he has a biased perspective. Several years of misfortune alter Rivella's character. According to Lovemore, "She was much impaired; her sprightly air, in which lay her greatest charm, was turned into a languishing melancholy; the white of her skin, degenerated into a yellowish hue, occasioned by her misfortunes, and three years solitude."[216] Not only has Rivella's demeanor changed, but her countenance as well has been affected by her misfortune. Immoral behavior and, likely, unchecked passion have damaged Rivella's temper and removed the charms she previously held. Unchecked passions, the inability to control one's desires, and overt emotionality are not desirable traits for women and here also damage the physical form of the woman rather than her immaterial reputation.

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[214] Ibid., p. 59.
[215] Ibid., p. 60.
[216] Ibid., p. 61.

At first, *Rivella* is dissimilar from an amatory plot in that the heroine loves a young man who is single and cares nothing for her; yet similar because she is consumed by her feelings and yields passionate ideation. Her guardians, including her father, protect her from engaging in immoral activities and feel the need to protect her due to her vulnerable nature. Their protection makes her very upset.[217] Rivella steals money from her father to give to Lysander. He does not ask her to do this. The dishonest behavior is all her own. "Nothing but love"[218] could have made her behave in such a way. Eventually, they part ways for a few years so that she can go to school and learn languages. Lovemore admits to the Chevalier that he never loved anyone but Rivella.[219]

Upon meeting again, Lovemore describes that her countenance was much sadder, though their company revived her spirit…but not her innocence."[220] The leading element of the novel is Rivella's ruin and misfortune. The goal of the novel is to tell how she became ruined and, more specifically, to give Manley's authorial perspective on her actions and their unfortunate results. Manley seems to want to tell the reader how she came to have an immodest reputation. *Rivella* is unlike some amatory works because the narrator is a suitor who has not had a sexual relationship with her. The plot of Rivella deals largely with the dangers of a lost reputation. The heroine's reputation and conduct, intertwined with the conduct of the author, create an interesting amatory space concerned with both the content of the writing and the contextuality of the author.

Women who are at first kind to Rivella are the first to spread information with the intent to damage her reputation, demonstrating the vice of inconstancy, which appears often in the

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[217] Ibid., p. 55.
[218] Ibid., p. 56.
[219] Ibid., p. 58-9.
[220] Ibid., p. 61.

novel. Lovemore criticizes Rivella for her flirtations and multiple relationships. She is accused of inconstancy in her feelings towards men, resulting in her having many partners. Hilaria, likewise, demonstrates inconstant feelings. She often changes who her favorite friend is and, therefore, who gets attention, loyalty, and lodging. Hilaria was not a kind person. Lovemore explains that no one, including her family, likes her due to her malice. She uses "slander and scandal"[221] to damage Rivella's reputation. Hilaria accuses Rivella of having an affair with her son. Rivella denies the affair and defends her innocence in the situation.[222] Lovemore has witnessed the encounter and says Rivella "went to take leave of her with such an air of resentment, innocent, yet good manners, as quite confounded the haughty Hilaria."[223]

Lovemore accuses Rivella of being overly flirtatious or familiar with men. He admits his own preoccupation with Rivella and says that it is his love for her that prevents Rivella from believing his appraisal of her conduct. In his most detailed description of her conduct with men and his feelings on watching the flirtations, he accuses Rivella of vanity and enjoying the company of inconstant suitors:

> I had still so much concern for Rivella, that I pitied her conduct, which I saw must infallibly center in her ruin. There was no language approached her ear but flattery and persuasion to delight and love. The casuists told her a woman of her wit had the privilege of the other sex, since all things were pardonable to a lady who could so well give laws to others, yet was not obliged to keep them herself. Her vanity was now at the height, so was her gaiety and good humor, especially at meat, she understood good living, and indulged her self in it. Rivella never drank but at meals, but then it was no way lost upon her, for her wit was never so sparkling as when she was pleased with her wine. I could not keep away from her house, yet was stark mad to see her delighted with every fop, who flattered her vanity. I used to take the privilege of long acquaintance and esteem to correct her ill taste, and the wrong turn she gave her judgement in admitting adulation from such wretches as many of them were, tho' indeed several persons of very good

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[221] Ibid. p. 64.
[222] Ibid., p. 66.
[223] Ibid., p. 67.

> sense allowed Rivella's merit, and afforded her the honor of their conversation and esteem. She looked upon all I said with an evil eye; believing there was still jealousy at the bottom. She did not think fit to correct a conduct which she called very innocent, for me whose passion she had never valued. I still preached, and she still went on in her own way, without any regard to my doctrine, till experience gave her enough of her indiscretion. (Manley and Zelinsky , 69)[224]

Part of the problem of Rivella's conduct is that she does not recognize her own "loose morals," or if she does, she pretends not to understand the inappropriateness of her constant correspondence and company with men. Lovemore says that it is her conduct with men that will be instrumental in damaging her reputation. He makes a point to say that she delights in being flirted with by these men. She seems to genuinely enjoy the attention and amorous conversation. Lovemore takes on the role of guardian, making himself often present when she entertains other men and vocalizing to her his distaste for her flirtatious manner with immoral men. He says that she often had men, including Lovemore, to dinner. She demonstrates wit, especially when drinking wine, though to her merit, Lovemore says that she never drank except for at meals. Lovemore admits that he could not stay away from her house. His need to be in her presence demonstrates his continued affection for Rivella and a need to protect her from committing immoral acts. Lovemore does not seem to want to protect her from other men but rather from her own inclination for vanity and a willingness to engage in sensuous activities.

For instance, Rivella becomes friends with Sir Peter Vainlove.[225] He is about fifty years old and is married to a good wife. Vainlove details a ten-year affair with another woman, even telling Rivella that he was "devoted to another." Ironically, he means his mistress Mrs. Settee, rather than his wife. Rivella and Vainlove's frequent conversations usually focus on his

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[224] Ibid., p. 69.

[225] Ibid., p. 70. Thomas Skipwith (1652-1710), also called the Knight.

relationship with his mistress. He makes note that "the lady had begun it herself (falling in love with him at the temple-revels) by letters of admiration to him."[226] Due to the inappropriateness of women expressing desire or physical attraction, it is implied that the relationship between Vainlove and Mrs. Settee is both immoral and her fault; he places accountability for the relationship on Mrs. Settee. Vainlove's displacement of responsibility for the affair onto Mrs. Settee challenges her character while coloring himself as the captured victim. Vainlove and his mistress provide another example of the female partner seeking out the male counterpart, as in Behn's *Love Letters* and Rivella's unrequited feelings for Lysander.

Also similar to *Love Letters*, Vainlove and Mrs. Settee exchange amorous correspondence, which acts as the foundation for their relationship. Their first meeting seems particularly risqué, Lovemore saying, "after some time, corresponding by amorous high-flown *billets*, she granted a meeting, but was three years before she would let him know who she was, tho' there were most liberties but that of the face allowed. Afterwards they met without any of that reserve."[227] Their intimate conversations instigated a masked affair, certainly exemplifying a relationship built upon fanciful words and physical pleasure. Their sexual relationship begins before their familiar relationship, which seems scandalous. Ultimately, Lovemore chastises Rivella for getting involved with people accused of such sordid behavior because she also implicates herself in an affair, though Lovemore's account works to show Rivella's innocence and naïveté rather than immorality.

Scenes of seduction and inclination of sex appear often in *Rivella*, though there are no scenes of explicit conversations or behavior specifically between Rivella or her paramours.

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[226] Ibid., p. 71.
[227] Ibid.

Lovemore's descriptions of her relationships make it obvious to the reader that Rivella indeed has several sexual relationships with men, who are often married, but the reader is not metaphorically brought to the bed chamber as witness to explicit acts as in Behn's *Love Letters.* This element is unique in terms of amatory fiction. Lovemore as the narrator acts as a screen of censorship. He was not present for any of Rivella's escapades, nor did she tell him details about her affairs that we know of. He says to the Chevalier, he "never saw any of Rivella's hidden charms."[228] Though he loved Rivella for years and offered her marriage, he never had sex with her. For this reason, the only scenes of passion given are Rivella's madness for Lysander and scenes from other works. Lovemore includes seduction scenes when he criticizes Rivella's (Manley's) overly sensual writing:

> She has carried the passion farther than could be readily conceived. Her Germanicus on the embroidered bugle bed, naked out of the bath: - her young and innocent Charlot, transported with the powerful emotion of a just kindling flame, sinking with delight and shame upon the bosom of her lover in the gallery of books: Chevalier Tomaso dying at the feet of Madam de Bedamore, and afterwards possessing her in that sylvan scene of the pleasure garden; are such representatives nature, that must warm the coldest reader; it raises high ideas of the dignity of human kind, and informs us that we have in our composition, wherewith to taste sublime and transporting joys. After perusing inchanting descriptions, which of us have not gone in search of raptures which she every where tells us, as happy mortals, we are capable of tasting. But have we found them, Chevalier, answered his friend? For my part, I believe they are to be met with no where else but in her own embraces. That is what I would experience, replied D'Aumont, if she have but half so much of the practice, as the theory, in the way of love, she must certainly be a most accomplished person. (Manley and Zelinsky, 44) [229]

The passage presents amatory themes as it incorporates scenes of seduction. The way in which the reader sees "Chevalier Tomaso dying at the feet of Madam de Bedamore, and

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[228] Ibid., p. 48.
[229] Ibid., p. 44.

afterwards possessing her in that sylvan scene of pleasure in the garden" is reminiscent of *Love Letters* as Philander lies at Sylvia's feet, in an attempt to make love to her. Lovemore couples the amorous scene by saying that raptures of all kinds can be found in her embraces. The narrator himself anticipates the theory of the critics as she says that if her writing on love be any measure, she should be most skilled physically. Rather than being called a whore, Rivella's loss of virginity and open relationships might be an attractive option for some men, as in the case of Madame Mazarin. At no point do we see Rivella grapple with feelings of sexual desire and or distress concerning the preservation of her honor.

About forty percent of the novel details events and situations surrounding the real Albemarle trial. According to Lovemore, Rivella is an instrumental character in the precursory happenings of the trial. According to Zelinsky, it is telling that the reader is offered such a detailed account of a lawsuit that did not directly involve Rivella. Manley would have needed much information to write the "fundamentally true to the facts" account to the trial.[230] Zelinsky continues to say that Manley's detailed knowledge of the Albemarle trial counters the gendered realms of politics and the private sphere.[231] Manley again seems to comment on the narrative of her character. Through Rivella, the reader understands that Manley considers herself deeply involved in the situation, breaking the private sphere by entering the political domain. Though offering explanations, Manley does not deny the charges brought against her character but rather tries to persuade the reader to her perspective.

The novel ends with a fantasized erotic dinner. Lovemore tells D'Aumont that he has recounted part of Rivella's story, admitting that he has omitted the worst parts of her history. The

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[230] Ibid., p. 28.
[231] Ibid.

narrator admitting having eliminated pieces of the story harkens back to Manley's role as author and biographer. She seeks to explain how she came to be involved in the affairs she was, both legal and love affairs. Lovemore says that of all things, he wishes to gather with Rivella and their friends around a table. Ballaster explains that the scene echoes Germanicus awaiting his Duchess in *The New Atalantis.*[232] Lovemore says to the Chevalier he wishes he could bring him to her table to be well served and then brought to bed:

> Thus generous D'Aumont, I have endeavoured to obey your commands, in giving you that part of Rivella's history, which has made the most noise against her; I confess, had I shown only the bright part of her adventures; I might have entertained you much more agreeably, but that requires much longer time; together with the songs, letters and adorations, innumerable from those who never could be happy. Then to have raised your passions in her favour; I should have brought you to her table well furnished and well served; have shown you her sparkling wit and easy gaiety, when at meat with persons of conversation and humour. From thence carried you (in the heat of summer after dinner) within the nymphs alcove, to a bed nicely sheeted and strowed with roses, jessamins or orange-flowers, suited to the variety of the season; her pillows neatly trimmed with lace or muslin, stuck round with *junquils* or other natural garden sweets, for she uses no perfumes, and there have given you leave to fancy your self the happy man, with whom she chose to repose her self, during the heat of the day, in a state of sweetness and tranquility. From thence conducted you towards the cool of the evening, either upon the water, or to the park for air, with a conversation always new, and which never cloys; *Allon's* let us go my dear Lovemore, interrupted young D'Aumont, let us not lose a moment before we are acquainted with the only person of her sex that knows how to live, and of whom we may say, in relation to love, since she has so peculiar a genius for, and has made such noble discoveries in that passion, that it would have been a fault in her, not to have been faulty. (Manley and Zelinsky , 113-4)[233]

This is a striking passage, though not meant to be taken literally. For the reader, though, the insinuation of being well-fed at dinner and invited to pleasures with nymphs feels much like seduction. Leonard Davis describes the passage as a "colossal autoerotic reverie the likes of

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[232] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms,* p. 150.

[233] Manley and Zelinsky, pp. 113-4.

which had probably never occurred so directly between author and reader in the history of narrative up to this point."[234] The reader is being seduced by the author, placing *Rivella* in the amatory fiction subgenre. The author invites the reader into the fantasy with the insinuation that the fantasy is based on fact. The passage goes beyond what amatory critics feared as the reader is invited into the author's sexual space. Moreover, Lovemore concludes that her faults are what make her special, and misconduct is celebrated.

Conclusion

Manley's *Rivella* was so sensational because of the combination of scandal, amatory fiction, and biography that ultimately creates an intimate relationship between author and reader. This relationship becomes sexualized in the ending scene of *Rivella*, as the author seduces the reader by inviting him/her into a romanticized scene based on real events. It feels like being invited into the author's bedroom. Whether Manley was guilty of all the things that Rivella did in the novel or not becomes partially irrelevant, considering the admitted biographical nature of the text. Through the narrator and the scandal fiction subgenre, it becomes impossible to separate the reality of women's sexual desire and expression when an amatory plot is written to be (auto)biographical. It becomes more sensational considering that the person involved is also the author, a female, and a public writer who might influence public opinion. Such sensationalized moments of seduction led to amatory fiction's decline after the second half of the eighteenth century and its condemnation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Readership seemed to

[234] Leonard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press (1983), p. 50. Referenced in Ballater's *Seductive Forms,* p. 150.

prefer conduct and sentimental novels like Richardson's *Pamela* and Burney's *Evelina*, for example.

The association of women writers with amatory fiction and with their inherent immorality were obstacles for women writing later in the eighteenth century and beyond. Amatory fiction is accused of commending immoral conduct. Admittedly, Manley lives up to her scandalous reputation and gives a pointed view of female sexuality in *Rivella*; but Rivella also gives a detailed illustration of socially acceptable conduct, as well. What seems to have begun as Manley's effort to prevent even more damaging information from being published to the larger public and to control the biographical narrative about her reputation eventually resulted in a long sidelining of her works.

Manley's use of passion and unrequited love aided in the novel's discussion of the physical and emotional effects of love itself. Eliza Haywood also writes of unrequited love in her amatory fiction, which provides a space for women writers to discuss sex, desire, and conduct. While women writers often wrote on conduct, virtue, and love, women wrote on the intricacies of experiencing desire less often. Unrequited love was certainly a familiar theme for eighteenth-century readers, but the use of prose fiction creates a realistic view and the retelling of possibly true events. Thinking that any noble young woman might, at any moment, fall into unbridled fits of passion or have secret experiences adds mystery and excitement to the reader's ordinary life. Fits of passion will be discussed further in Chapter Five with a discussion on Burney's *Cecilia* and Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. Manley's use of seduction in her novels opens an interesting discussion of the role of seduction and conduct in amatory fiction. Where Manley differs in her discussions of seduction and conduct is in her willingness to bring the reader into her seduction scene, creating an intimacy that critics feared.

CHAPTER IV: ELIZA HAYWOOD, *FANTOMINA*, SEX, VIRTUE, AND CONDUCT

The Amatory Subgenre and Eliza Haywood

Amatory fiction was considered scandalous in the eighteenth century because of the focus on women's sexual desire. Not only did amatory fiction focus on women's desire, but often depicted female characters actively seeking sexual experiences. Though thematically centered around female sexual desire, amatory fiction does not operate to incite women to engage in sexual liaisons. Instead of functioning as anti-conduct books, most examples of amatory fiction reinforce the importance of proper conduct and morality. Amatory fiction does not actually discount conduct literature, which is a counterintuitive conclusion to those who sought to remove or exclude amatory works by women writers in the formation of the novel. While the authors of amatory fiction certainly do discuss sex and desire typically reserved for the private sphere, Behn, Manley, and Haywood do not typically discount or contradict conduct books in their works. Amatory fiction, then, can be read as both expressions of sexual desire and as cautionary tales against non-marital sex and desire.

Considering that other works discussing sex, morality, and virtue cast a decidedly negative light on women's sexual desire, one might assume that amatory fiction operates inversely to conduct literature. Conduct literature includes books, sermons, letters, and essays consisting of sets of rules or regulations, often religious, meant to protect morality and encourage virtuous behavior and thought. Early conduct books such as Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of the Ladies* and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (both 1405), Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1508), and Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) describe how men and women are to negotiate love and passion without giving into bodily desires. I have chosen these texts because they specifically discuss proper social and moral conduct for both

men and women. They represent European conduct literature from the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, demonstrating subtle changes in the genre over time. Christine was an exceptional Renaissance author who broke traditional gender roles to write her conduct books. Her works offer examples of virtuous women in opposition to those evil qualities that women are often accused of naturally possessing. Castiglione wrote for the noble class and Brathwaite wrote for the emerging middle class and the aristocracy. Both authors' conduct books offer advice and instruction to ladies concerning proper etiquette when speaking to men and how to portray an honest, chaste disposition. I turn to these sources often, seeking best to explain attitudes surrounding conduct, virtue, and, specifically, chastity when comparing these same things in amatory fiction. Conduct literature reinforces the idea of behavioral policing by inviting readers to examine their own behaviors and those of others. Conduct books are often titled sermons or prayers for young men and women. Invoking the term "sermon" implies that the guidelines described within are agreed upon by the men who wrote them and God. One might argue with other people concerning proper conduct, but to argue with God is far more audacious.

Heroines in Behn's, Manley's, and Haywood's works seek out attention from men; they do not always necessarily seek out sex, but they do seek out the attention of men, which ends in damaging sexual encounters. Haywood's characters Alovisa and Fantomina both drive the amatory plots in the novels *Love in Excess* (1719) and *Fantomina* (1725) by actively attracting men. Alovisa and Fantomina experience mental anguish, not because they experience desire but, because they cannot control their own desires and their actions resulting from an inability to control desire. Toni Bowers explains, in amatory fiction "love almost always brings fleeting

pleasure to self-centered, fickle men and lasting misery to the women who trust them."[235] Not only do Haywood's heroines seek out attention from men with fleeting or inconstant feelings for them, but they themselves are also guilty of self-centered thinking. Alovisa and Fantomina seek out sexually explicit encounters, though not necessarily sex itself, knowing that their actions would be damaging to their reputations in society. The idea of maintaining respectability for a female character in an amatory plot centered around sex and desire becomes difficult. Bowers continues, "like the culture that produced them, amatory works placed women in a double bind: without sexual experience, they are the natural prey of experienced male predators; with sexual experience, they are whores."[236] Bowers explains that both fictional and real women could not experiment with men sexually and maintain a respectable reputation. A woman could not so much as have a private conversation with, receive a letter from, or be seen in public in the company of a man who was not related to her. She could, however, read amatory fiction and learn to avoid the fate of the women depicted.[237]

Eliza Haywood wrote in multiple genres between 1719 and 1755. Many examples of her writing deal with conduct and themes of passion. She was one of few women who earned their wages through writing in the early 1700s. Haywood was certainly married but the exact identity of her husband or what happened to him is unknown. According to Patricia Spacks, Haywood alleges in one letter that her husband and father died leaving her with financial need. Haywood and many of her contemporary female writers chose to live in the public eye to support

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[235] Toni Bowers, "The Achievement of Scholarly Authority for Women: Trends in the Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Fiction." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2009: 51.

[236] Ibid.

[237] Ibid.

themselves financially even though they faced criticism for their profession.[238] She also had two children to provide for some time around 1724.[239] By that year, Haywood had written fourteen novels, two plays, a periodical, a translation, and a short book of poems.[240] Spacks details, Haywood "acted in numerous plays and wrote plays of her own. She wrote novels, political pamphlets, periodicals, conduct books (addressed variously to servants, wives, and husbands), and poetry and made translations from French."[241] According to Margaret Case Croskery and Anna C. Patchias, "Haywood's preference for exploring the psyche under duress and for creating characters shaped by the power of experience (instead of by overtly didactic moral precepts) would become hallmarks of the novel as a genre."[242] That certainly does not mean that Haywood's novels were not didactic. Croskery and Patchias explain that Haywood indicates that a story is most interesting and instructive when passion overtakes good judgment.[243] Her first novel, *Love in Excess* was printed in four editions and attracted huge audiences. It became one of

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[238] Eliza Haywood, *Selections from the Female Spectator*. Patricia Meyer Spacks, eds. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999: x.

[239] Christine Blouch. "Eliza Haywood," *Miscellaneous Writings*, 1725-43, ed. Alexander Pettit, set I, vol. I of *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood.* London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000: xxxv. As referenced in *Fantomina and Other Works.* Alexander Pettit, Margaret Case Croskery, Anna C. Patchias, eds. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004: 11.

Note: "Haywood and Savage had a romantic relationship between 1720 and 1724, though the reasons it ended are unclear. Haywood's few remaining papers confirm the existence of two children, probably illegitimate; one of them may have been fathered by Savage. The other was perhaps fathered by William Hatchett, a minor playwright and actor with whom Haywood became involved after 1724 and with whom she evidently shared a domestic and professional relationship until her death (Blouch, pp. xxxii-xl)."

[240] Christine Blouch. "Eliza Haywood," *Miscellaneous Writings*, 1725-43, ed. Alexander Pettit, set I, vol. I of *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood.* London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000: xxxv. As referenced in *Fantomina and Other Works.* Alexander Pettit, Margaret Case Croskery, Anna C. Patchias, eds. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004: 11.

[241] Haywood, *Female Spectator*, p. x.

[242] Eliza Haywood, Fantomina and Other Works. Alexander Pettit, Margaret Case Croskery, Anna C. Patchias, eds. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004: 16.

[243] Ibid.

the best-sellers of the eighteenth century along with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, published the same year, as did many of her novels published in the 1720s.[244]

Surely Haywood's themes of passion and unrequited love aided in the novels' popularity. Amatory fiction provided a space for women writers to discuss sex, desire, and conduct. While women writers often wrote on conduct, virtue, and love (Christine de Pizan, Francis Lynch, Jane Collier, Mary Wollstonecraft), women wrote on the intricacies of experiencing desire less often. Unrequited love was certainly a familiar theme for eighteenth century readers, but the use of prose fiction creates a realistic view and telling of possible events occurring in the same moment. Thinking that any noble young woman might, at any moment, fall into unbridled fits of passion or have secret experiences adds mystery and excitement to the reader's ordinary life. Haywood discusses conduct and virtuous character often in her fiction and non-fiction. Her amatory novels *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina* feature female characters who cannot control their desires to the point of putting themselves in physical and mental danger.

In 1725, Haywood published a conduct essay titled *The Tea Table,* written in the same format as *The Courtier,* and reminiscent of the conduct literature by Christine de Pizan. She also wrote the conduct novel *Anti-Pamela* (1741) in response to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). Haywood discussed improper conduct, that is, conduct driven by pleasure and political essays in *The Female Spectator* (1744-46). She provides multiple genres for discussing political and social expectations in the early to mid-1700s—specifically, conduct and proper conduct surrounding passion. While *Love In Excess* describes rivalry and melancholy brought on by unrequited love, *Fantomina* adds to this achievement, effectively describing

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[244] Haywood. *Selections from the Female Spectator*. Patricia Meyer Spacks, eds. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999: x.

desirable virtues for men and women, the inconstancy of love, artifice, deceit, and the importance of self-preservation in one's society. Themes of *Fantomina* (1725) include desire, seduction, a didactic element of proper conduct, and how to deal with feelings of passion. A key feature of Haywood's amatory novels is the virtuous heroine's need to express her passionate feelings and learn how to control desire. Part of the heroine's lesson is also the consequences of acting on sexual desire. Behaviors stemming from passion (lust, deceit, mistrust, etc.) should be well-managed. To be virtuous in action also means to be virtuous in private character.

Love in Excess

Haywood wrote *Love in Excess* in sections, or chapters, often broken apart by letters between characters. The letters build tension between characters because important information, like the identity of the author, is often omitted or details concerning relationships between characters is incorrect or misrepresented. Deceit, though intended to be artful, plays a role in bringing several characters together accidentally. Alovisa falls deeply in love with Count D'elmont. The narrator describes D'elmont as successful man of battle and a popular man in the French court– "The Beauty of his Person, the Gayity of his Air, and the unequal'd Charms of his Conversation, made him the Admiration of both Sexes."[245] D'elmont's charm, quality conversation, and reputation as a war hero made him exceedingly desirable to women and men, though platonically for the latter. Men wanted to be his friends and women his lovers or, at least, the objects of his desire. Many women were attracted to D'elmont but, because it was improper for a virtuous lady to speak to man about her desires for him, they suffered internally. The

[245] Eliza Haywood. *Love in excess; or the fatal enquiry, a novel*. London: printed for W. Chetwood, at Cato's-Head in Russel-Court, near the Theatre-Royal; and R. Francklin, at the Sun against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street; and sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane, M.DCC.XIX. [1719]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, 1999: 2.

narrator explains, "the *other* vented fruitless Wishes, and in secret, curs'd that Custom which forbids Women to make a Declaration of their Thoughts."[246] Women were forbidden to speak freely or to make a declaration of their physical desire for affection from men or their fantasies.

Fantasies, especially sexual fantasies, were to be avoided when possible because fantasy is not grounded in reality. Richard Brathwaite discusses fantasy, or "fancie," in his 1631 conduct manual *The English Gentlewoman, Drawne Out to the Full Body: Expressing, What Habilliments Doe Best Attire Her, What Ornaments Doe Best Adorne Her, What Complements Doe Best Accomplish Her*. Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman*, published in London, is titled and organized to imagine an ideal English gentlewoman. Brathwaite offers instruction for building and maintaining one's virtue, sometimes through chastity to protect one's health and reputation, and sometimes through education. The manual is written in chapters titled with character attributes necessary for a virtuous person. Also included in the manual are detailed tables describing each chapter's argument, wise sayings paired with each argument, and major points for both in-depth and referential reading. Brathwaite's annotated argument on fancy that "is to be with Deliberation grounded; with Constancy retained; wanton Fancy is a wandring Frency;"[247] Fantasy should be used as a method of planning with foresight to put one's thoughts into action. The desired outcome of the action should be constant and based in reality, meaning not easily changeable depending on one's emotions or mood. Fancy remains moral when a person does not easily lose themselves in delusions or irrational thinking. Unrestrained, or wanton, fantasy causes frenzy, or irrational, possibly manic, thoughts and actions.

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[246] Ibid.

[247] Richard Brathwaite, The English Gentlewoman, Drawne Out to the Full Body Expressing, what Habilliments Doe Best Attire Her, what Ornaments Doe Best Adorne Her, what Complements Doe Best Accomplish Her / by Richard Brathwaite, Esq. London: 1631, An Abstract or Summary of all such Principall Points, p. xxii.

Alovisa allows herself to become lost in fantasy, believing her anonymous letter evidence enough of her expected possession of D'elmont's affections. As Brathwaite cautions, Alovisa's fantasy causes delusional thinking. She experiences fits of rage and insecurity because D'elmont does not give her attention more than he gives every lady. She cannot control her own desires. Though many women at court are attracted to him, "her Pride, and the good Opinion she had of her self, made her the less able to support it; she sigh'd, she burn'd, she rag'd, when she perceiv'd the Charming D'elmont behav'd himself toward her with no Mark of a distinguishing Affection."[248] Alovisa does not act from reason, instead acting only from desire and then feels affronted by D'elmont though he remains unaware of her attraction. Alovisa's vanity–her pride and the good opinion she had of herself–allows her to believe that D'elmont would make a clandestine offer to her, forsake all other women, and love her because she loves him. Instead of using reason, she acts only on emotion, ripping her hair and scratching her face. Her effort to excite D'elmont with a bit of mystery by sending him a letter anonymously, hoping to ignite his curiosity, ends in great disappointment as he believes the note to be written by another lady. D'elmont pursues the other lady, Amena, causing a rivalry between the women. When D'elmont pursues Amena, Alovisa's suffering grows exponentially.

Though she is not well acquainted with the man, Alovisa believes herself to be in love with D'elmont. Love and desire seem to be confused by all three characters, each grappling with giving into their desires in different ways. Alovisa, D'elmont, and Amena admit to acting as they do because of passion they feel. Believing Amena to be the author of the letter Alovisa sent,

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[248] Haywood, *Love in excess*, p. 2.

D'elmont approaches Amena with declarations of love. Though she did not write the letter, Amena enjoys the attentions she receives from D'elmont:

> 'Tis certain this way of Fooling rais'd Desires in him little different from what is commonly call'd Love; and made him redouble his Attacks in such a Manner, as Amena stood in need of all her Vertue to resist; but as much as she thought her self oblig'd to resent such Attempts, yet he knew so well how to excuse himself, and lay the Blame on the Violence of his Passion, that he was still too Charming, and too Dear to her not to be forgiven. (Haywood, 13)[249]

This passage explains several things to the reader: First, D'elmont believes that the desire he feels was something like love, though he is not acquainted with the author of the letter, other than that he believes she is attracted to him. He confuses lust or desire for love. Secondly, Amena tries to resist his advances because she is "in need of all her virtue" to remain physically unharmed, to uphold her reputation, and make a good marriage to a nobleman. Though she resists for fear of damaging her reputation, Amena enjoys D'elmont's flirtation and does not fault him for pursuing her even though she faces repercussions from her father and community. Finally, D'elmont does not find fault in himself, but rather blames passion as an outside source acting upon him.

Constancy in thoughts and actions was an important virtue for both eighteenth-century men and women. A contemporary reader probably recognized D'elmont as a rake character. The rake demonstrates the morality of men, the struggle to remain virtuous for men, and of being master of his own body and being. According to Richard Steele in his June 11, 1709 *Tatler* essay, "a Rake is a Man always to be pitied…his faults proceed not from Choice or Inclination, but from Strong Passions and Appetites, which are in Youth too violent for the Curb of Reason,

[249] Ibid., p. 13.

good Sense, good Manners, and good nature."[250] Thinking of D'elmont as a rake, the reader understands that the character will give in to his desires even at the risk of damaging his or others' reputations. His desire to pursue different ladies demonstrates his inability to control his passions and use reason, "good sense," and "good manners." The reader also assumes that he will make many conquests and face a bit of strife because of the women he abandons. The noble women, though, need their virtue. D'elmont tries to persuade Amena to meet him alone. A young woman meeting a man alone was a dangerous activity because there was no way to prove that she remained chaste during the meeting.

Without a chaperone to ensure that the lady exhibited respectable behavior and witness that her chastity was not broken, the lady could not uphold her reputation. It is Alovisa who betrays the plan to Amena's father designing to remove the lady from D'elmont's attentions. Though Amena does not have sex with D'elmont, the mere notion that she would meet with a man alone was enough to cast doubt on her character. Amena's father sends her to a monastery to teach her self-control and to remove her from D'elmont. D'elmont continues his rakish behavior by immediately pursuing Alovisa when Amena is removed. Alovisa even confesses she loved D'elmont "with a kind of madness from the first moment she beheld him."[251] Her desire for D'elmont rather than reason and virtue guide her actions.

D'elmont and Alovisa are married but Alovisa's fate is not a happy one. Because she has placed all her happiness into an inconstant husband, he soon loses any moderate feelings he had for her. Almost immediately after they are married, Monsieur Frankville on his deathbed entrusts D'elmont to act as guardian of his daughter Meliora until his son returns to care for her.

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[250] Erin Skye Mackie, ed., The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and the Spectator. Bedford Cultural Editions. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998: 471.

[251] Brathwaite, The English Gentlewoman, p. 44.

D'elmont falls in love with Meliora at first sight and becomes cold and distant to Alovisa. Meliora is a virtuous girl. Her father explains that she has been educated at a monastery and is "unacquainted with the Gayeties of a Court, or the Conversation of the *Beau Monde*."[252] Monsieur Frankville asks that D'elmont protect her innocence. Though he endeavors to fulfill Monsieur Frankville's wishes, marriage has not changed D'elmont's character. He laments that he was ever married: "What wou'd he not have given to have been Unmarried? How often did he Curse the Hour in which Alovisa's fondness was discover'd? And how much more his own Ambition, which prompted him to take Advantage of it, and hurry'd him Precipitately to a Hymen, where Love, (the noblest Guest) was wanting?"[253] He wonders why he married someone with the virtue of virginity and the social bonus of an estate when he should have married someone he loved. He implies that Alovisa was a virgin when they married, but that virtue alone was insufficient to counteract her divisive and deceitful actions. Alovisa conspired with Amena's father to send her away and D'elmont finds this manipulative. D'elmont considers Alovisa's behavior to be spiteful but does not consider himself responsible for Amena's banishment even though he was the one who conspired to meet with her alone.

Alovisa's jealous temperament caused her to experience manic episodes and to betray her friend. She allowed desire and emotions to guide her actions rather than morals and reason. According to Brathwaite, it is not virtuous behavior for a woman to pursue a man, and to ensure marrying a constant husband, he must pursue his intended. Brathwaite writes, "the way to winne a Husband is not to woe him, but to be woe'd by him."[254] Though Alovisa and D'elmont do

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[252] Haywood, Love in excess, p. 53.
[253] Ibid., p. 59.
[254] Ibid., p. 106.

marry, she cannot hope that he will remain a constant husband because he did not pursue her. Meliora, however, does not show artifice and is much more able to control her desires. Meliora does experience desire for D'elmont, but she practices self-discipline and attempts to remove herself from the source of her desire, rather than draw the source to her. The distinction is important because it shows that to be truly virtuous, one must resist the source of desire. The character of Meliora demonstrates Brathwaite's lessons on honor well. According to Brathwaite, "Honour, if truly grounded, can looke in the face of terrour, and never be amated…She that makes virtue her object, cannot but make every Earthly thing her Subject."[255] Those who are honorable and virtuous can resist temptation or danger and never consider giving in to desire. Those who are truly virtuous make all those around them instrumental in protecting their virtue, as well.

It is feigning virtue to call the temptation to you and permit desire to dictate actions. Allowing one's desires to determine behavior or action and the risk of falling into a despondent temper was an undesirable trait. Meliora removes herself back to the monastery she lived in previously when she feels desire for D'elmont. In a surprising turn of events, D'elmont accidentally kills Alovisa while running through a dark hallway with a sword. D'elmont also learns that Meliora has been kidnapped from the monastery by an "unknown ravisher."[256] He accidentally lodges in the house of her kidnapper while attempting to rescue her. Meliora has not been harmed in any way by the ravisher. She has influenced her kidnapper's behavior because, even though the reader knows him only as the ravisher, she has somehow remained virginal while in danger. It is her virtuous character that changes the ravisher's mind. D'elmont and

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[255] Ibid. p. 198.
[256] Ibid., p. 229.

Meliora marry. The story concludes with the couple happily together, leaving the reader to assume that Meliora's perfect virtue alone can remedy D'elmont's rakish behavior.

Meliora is the admirable heroine in the story because she exhibits the necessary qualities to build and maintain a virtuous character. To be an honorable lady in character rather than title requires charity, chastity, and humility.[257] Meliora shows herself to be kind and gentle, humble, and ignorant of the flamboyant nature of the English courts by her ability to resist her desire for D'elmont though she feels desire. Brathwaite cites estimation, or praise-worthy reputation as "a gentlewoman's highest prize" [258] and estimable ladies are "absolute commanders of their owne affections."[259]Meliora values her reputation above the desire she experiences. Her desire to be virtuous above all else grants the ability to control her desires. She will be victorious and granted the constant husband where Alovisa failed. Alovisa was the pursuer of D'elmont and felt entitled to his unwavering love before he was even made aware of her feelings. According to Brathwaite, "loves purity is to be discussed, before it be entertained"[260] to determine if the individuals involved are led by desire or the purity of love. Ladies who, like Alovisa, become infatuated with a man and allow themselves to become possessive and delusional from their desires do not seek a relationship founded in love. "The difference betwixt a wife and wilde Love," writes Brathwaite, "consists in this: the one ever deliberates before it loves; the other loves before it deliberates."[261] Alovisa, then, demonstrates wild love even though she remained a virgin until marriage. She may have been chaste physically but was not chaste in character and thought. Meliora will be the

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[257] Brathwaite, The English Gentlewoman, p. 202.
[258] Ibid., p. 101
[259] Ibid., p. 104.
[260] Ibid., p. 131.
[261] Ibid., p. 151.

successful wife because she remained chaste in her thoughts and actions, not allowing the desire she experienced to cause her madness or to cloud her sound judgment.

Fantomina

Like Alovisa, Haywood's heroine Fantomina allows her desire to dictate her actions. Unlike Alovisa, Fantomina does not experience madness but does practice artifice and seduction to lure her intended to her. Haywood's *Fantomina, or Love in a Maze* (1725) certainly falls under the amatory category due to the emphasis on sexual desire felt by a female protagonist, the pursuit of attention and actions that are sexual in nature, and the role of unrequited love between the protagonist and her love interest. The lovers do not end up together and the young woman finds herself worse off than before the union, exemplifying themes of scandalous virtue, virtue in distress, and the consequences of female desire. Deceit, identity, gender, and class are also prominent themes in this novel. The novel was originally published in a collection of works by Haywood in London, which is also the setting of the story. Haywood writes *Fantomina* in the third person omniscient point of view. The narrator is a character outside of the story and we get thoughts and perspectives from multiple characters. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate conduct of men and women are highlighted in the novel with an emphasis on the suffering endured by those who cannot maintain control over their desires.

However, *Fantomina* deviates from the amatory plot because, rather than following an innocent young woman who is seduced by an older, unavailable man, the protagonist seduces and deceives the man. He does not offer enduring love or marriage at any time because the characters have an understanding that their sexual relationship is not a permanent arrangement. Due to the protagonist's deceit, the man involved has no reason to believe that he needs to offer marriage in exchange for her honor. She does not intend to become physically intimate with him,

but she presents herself as someone experienced in sexual relationships. He does not believe her when she tells him that she is a virgin and only pretended to be a prostitute to speak freely with him. The novel returns to the traditional amatory plot in that Fantomina loses her virginity outside of marriage and her lover eventually abandons her after his desires have run their course.

The novel follows an aristocratic young woman whose real name we never learn. Hiding her name works as a literary device to suggest that the story may have actually happened, but the author wishes to conceal the protagonist's identity for the protection of some individuals. Concealing her name also adds to the air of mystery. For the purposes of this chapter, I refer to the protagonist as Fantomina like Haywood and other scholars have done. We, like the man whom Fantomina seduces, do not know the identity of the heroine. We know only that she is a wealthy young lady, newly come to town "of distinguished Birth, Beauty, Wit, and Spirit."[262] Fantomina lodges with her aunt in London but this aunt does not take charge of her welfare or act as a chaperone. The narrator says, "She was young, a Stranger to the World, and consequently to the Dangers of it; and having nobody in Town, at that Time, to whom she was oblig'd to be accountable for her Actions, did in every Thing her Inclinations or Humours render'd most agreeable to her."[263] She had no guardian who might suffer from her actions or to caution against the possible dangers that could result from her behavior, which typically leads to tragedy.

It is proper that a young woman have a guardian to accompany her around town. Conduct books offer the idea that women, especially young women, cannot be left to their own devices. Christine de Pizan, in her conduct book *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (1405) discusses the

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[262] Haywood, Fantomina p. 41.
[263] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

importance of virtuous counsel, or guardianship, of young ladies by moral individuals with some stake in the lady's reputation. The virtue of Prudence personified in *The Treasure* tells Christine, as she writes herself into the story as the narrator, that if a lady "is so lacking in knowledge or constancy that she is unable, does not know how, or does not wish to resist the appeals of the man who is trying his best to attract her by various signs and gestures…the chaperon will deplore this state of affairs with all her heart."[264] The chaperone must admonish the lady's attraction to the man and her willingness to humor his advances. She, the chaperone, must have a serious conversation with the lady to make the lady renounce her behavior. If the lady still ignores such virtuous council, the chaperone should step down from her position and continue to entreat the lady to see the foolishness and dangerous consequences for herself, her family, and her household should she continue to entertain salacious behaviors.

Virtuous and immoral behaviors are described by Christine in her conduct books *The Book of the City of Ladies* and *The Treasure of the City of Ladies.* Both are written from Christine's perspective as the narrator. In *The Book,* Christine is visited by the three virtues Reason, Rectitude, and Judgement. Reason says it is her job to "Bring back men and women when they drift away from the straight and narrow."[265] Rectitude says it is her job to "visit those who are just, [to] encourage them to do good in all things, to strive as far as possible to give each person his or her due, to speak and preserve the truth, to protect the rights of the poor and the innocent, to refrain from stealing from others, and to uphold the good name of those who are wrongfully accused."[266] She is the defender of the just and the virtue that protects the reputations

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[264] Pizan, The Treasure of the City of Ladies, p. 74.
[265] Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies, p. 10.
[266] Ibid., p. 13.

of moral people, even in conflict. Judgement says that she and God are one and the same. It is she who teaches good conduct, and it is her job to reward or punish individuals based on their thoughts and actions, but nothing else.[267] They ask Christine to build a city–to write the books–to combat negative writing about women by turning disparaging stories to show the advantages and strengths of women.

The virtues indicate that women need a champion.[268] Obviously, they do not mean a male champion or a Medieval romantic knight. They say those who should be defending women have been "negligent in their duty and lacking in vigilance, leaving womankind open to attacks from all sides,"[269] which is immoral behavior for gentlemen. Reason, Rectitude, and Judgment instruct Christine to build a city where only women "of good reputation and worthy of praise will be admitted."[270] Rosalind Brown-Grant cites Christine as the first woman to write conduct literature to confront misogyny in texts. Christine bases her discussion on virtuous women from classical literature and the bible to female French royalty.[271] *The Book* and *The Treasure* use personified virtues to combat misogyny while Christine's character plays devil's advocate. Authoritative figures, like the virtues, present important character attributes that a lady should adopt to keep her thoughts and behaviors respectable. According to Nancy Myers, Christine does not attempt "to present women with a paradox impossible to reconcile in that *The Book* offers social transgression and *The Treasure* social conformity. Rather, her goal is to reconcile transgression

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[267] Ibid., p. 14-5.
[268] Ibid., p. 11.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.

and conformity because in that reconciliation lies agency."[272] A woman's agency, then, lies in her ability to maintain self-control and, thus, control over her reputation.

It is her reputation that will allow the lady to move in respectable society, to seek education and wisdom, to act charitably, and practice piousness. Self-control and virtuous behavior keep the lady safe physically and mentally or spiritually. Important virtues for women include wisdom, reason, generosity or charity, empathy, and piousness. Devotion to God is extremely important and highlighted often in *The Book* and *The Treasure*. Vices include pride, arrogance, vanity, idleness, and desires of the body in excess. The reader knows that Fantomina demonstrates virtues fitting with her noble birth. She is described as having distinguished birth, beauty, wit, and spirit. Each of these character aspects are indeed virtuous if the lady also acts respectably and modest in private thoughts and actions. The narrator tells the reader, though, that because Fantomina has no guardian, she begins to indulge in any behaviors she finds entertaining. The reader rightly begins to suspect that Fantomina's virtuous conduct in the presence of others does not translate to her inward thoughts or private behavior.

Though, as noted, Fantomina lodges with her aunt while she is in town, the aunt does not seem overly concerned with Fantomina's behavior or whereabouts. Those who ought to be holding Fantomina accountable for her behaviors leave her without council. Fantomina lies to her aunt on several occasions about whom she is with and where she is staying in order to continue her masquerade and relationship with a young man, Beauplaisir. Haywood's choice of names for her characters indicates to the reader major character tropes of each character– Fantomina and her later guise, Incognita, each offer the idea of disguise, mystery, and secret

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[272] Nancy Myers, "Purposeful Silence and Perceptive Listening: Rhetorical Agency for the Women in Christine de Pizan's The Treasure of the City of Ladies," p. 58.

plans, as the names play on the words phantom and incognito. Beauplaisir is a portmanteau word from the French *beau* and *plaisir*. *Beau* means "handsome" and indicates a man who loves a young woman or who is concerned with dress and decorum. The French *plaisir* translates to "pleasure." Beauplaisir's name, then, designates the character as a handsome, charming, passionate man who loves a woman and who seeks pleasure with and from her. Passion and desire are assuredly key aspects of the character.

As the story opens, Fantomina sits in a box, or private compartment, at a playhouse. Though plenty of young, beautiful women are part of the company, some of the gentlemen prefer to speak to the ladies in the Pit. The Pit had less-desirable seating in the playhouses and facilitated lower-class and working people and prostitutes. Our heroine admonishes the men who prefer to spend their time with prostitutes rather than aristocratic ladies; however, she begins to wonder what it feels like to be spoken to without the pretense of manners. The reader does not yet know the temperament of the heroine, but we might assume that she is expected to exhibit virtuous behavior and subscribe to those ideals that determine what constitutes virtuous behavior. Her dislike of the attention given to the ladies in the pit by the gentlemen in her party tells the reader that she is aware of correct moral behavior, which excludes overt sexual behaviors or conversations leading to such. The first indication that our heroine might not be entirely in control of her own desire is her decision to pursue flirtatious conversation after watching the gentlemen at the playhouse solicit the ladies in the pit. "A little Whim,"[273]or fancy, inspires Fantomina to dress like a prostitute and go to the playhouse with the intention of seducing a gentleman and experiencing a freely passionate conversation. The narrator's calling the heroine's

[275] Ibid., p. 42.

decision “a little whim” demonstrates that her actions stem from fancy, or fantasy, and are not based in reality. She is experimenting with desire—what it feels like to be desired sexually, to seduce and be seduced—but she does not intend to participate in any sexual activities. Readers, especially women, are often cautioned against bouts of fancy and actions brought about by whimsy. Fantomina’s actions inspired by whimsy are precisely the actions feared by critics of amatory works.

When she appears in her new guise, many men compliment her wit and beauty at the playhouse. The reader questions Fantomina’s self-control and virtue, considering her plot to seduce Beauplaisir. She admits that she is vain as she enjoys their praise and the comparisons of her beauty with that of her aristocratic self.[274] Fantomina immediately abandons them when Beauplaisir approaches her:

> She had often seen him in the Drawing Room, had talk’d with him; but then her Quality and reputed Virtue kept him from using with her that Freedom she now expected he wou’d do, and had discover’d something in him, which had made her often think she shou’d not be displeas’d, if he wou’d abate some Part of his Reserve.—Now was the Time to have her Wishes answer’d. (Haywood, 42)[275]

This passage works in several ways. Fantomina and Beauplaisir are already acquainted though he would not speak to her about topics of desire or sex and reconfirms her reputation as a woman of quality and virtue. She desires that he would speak to her in the same way that he speaks to the ladies in the pit. Both Fantomina and Beauplaisir know that she cannot speak of or act on physical desire; therefore, he will not approach her with the intention of seducing her. In this way, Fantomina and Beauplaisir act virtuously, at first. She will not risk her reputation–as

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[274] Haywood, *Fantomina*, p. 42.
[275] Ibid., p. 42.

herself–and he will not provide a stumbling block for her. Fantomina wants to know what it feels like to be desired, equating desire with love, and to be seduced.

Disguising herself as a prostitute and positioning herself with the ladies in the pit, she seduces Beauplaisir and allows him to speak passionately with her. Beauplaisir, however, assumes that she is a prostitute and expects physical intimacy. Realizing that she will lose her virginity to him, that she will become unchaste, she tells him that she only pretended to be a prostitute and was a virgin; however, due to their passionate conversation and her willingness to serve him privately in her rooms, he believes she is lying:

> Thus much, indeed, she told him, that she was a Virgin, and had assumed this Manner of Behaviour only to engage him. But he little regarded, or if he had, would have been far from obliging him to desist;—nay, in the present burning Eagerness of Desire, 'tis probable, that had he been acquainted both with who and what she really was, the Knowledge of her Birth would not have influenc'd him with Respect sufficient to have curb'd the wild Exuberance of his luxurious Wishes, or made him in that longing,—that impatient Moment, change the Form of his Addresses. (Haywood, 46)[276]

The narrator describes Beauplaisir's desire as a burning eagerness. His desires are so strong that he loses reason. We know that he is no longer capable of reason because he disregards Fantomina's resistance to become physically intimate with him. Though she does not tell Beauplaisir her real identity, the narrator informs the reader that, having been brought to a point of burning eagerness that he could no longer control, he would have forced the act even if he did know she was aristocratic. Fantomina acts in an immoral manner by deceiving and seducing Beauplaisir. He acts immorally by forcing Fantomina to engage sexually with him though she protests. The virtue that prevented him from speaking about desires with the protagonist before she disguised herself as Fantomina fails and he becomes an active player in her undoing:

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[276] Ibid., p. 46.

> In fine, she was undone; and he gain'd a Victory, so highly rapturous, that had he known over whom, scarce could he have triumphed more. Her Tears, however, and the Distraction she appeared in, after the ruinous Extasy was past as it heighten'd his Wonder, so it abated his Satisfaction:—He could not imagine for what Reason a Woman, who, if she intended not to be a Mistress, had counterfeited the Part of one and taken so much Pains to engage him, should lament Consequence which she could not but expect, and till the last Test, seem'd inclinable to grant; and was both surprise'd and troubled at the Mystery…Is this a Reward (said she) for Condescentions, such as I have yielded to?—Can all the Wealth you are possess'd of, make a Reparation for my Loss of Honour?—Oh! No, I am undone beyond the Power of Heaven itself to help me!...No, my dear Beauplaisir, (added she) your Love alone can compensate for the Shame you have involved me in; be you sincere and constant, and I hereafter shall, perhaps, be satisfy'd with my Fate, and forgive myself the Folly that betray'd me to you. (Haywood, 46-7)[277]

Fantomina loses her virginity at the hands of Beauplaisir. Though Fantomina is being deceptive about her identity, Beauplaisir believes her to be deceptive in another way; however, he cannot understand why a prostitute would lure him to her residence and then deny that which she promised. He becomes increasingly confused, though seems to go along with it, when Fantomina demands a constant love from him in reparations for her loss of honor. They part the next day, and she gives instructions to the woman of the house that if the man she was with that night returned, to tell him she had been staying there for a few weeks and that her name was Fantomina.

Fantomina experiences shame after having sex with Beauplaisir and confidently speaks to how the loss of her virginity, forcibly or not, damages her reputation. Modern readers experiencing distress by Fantomina's rape scene demonstrates an empathy with the character that probably did not exist with the eighteenth-century reader. Haywood's contemporary readers would not have reacted with distress because Fantomina's behavior isn't something they would have understood or condoned. Fantomina was not a character to emulate, which creates an

[277] Ibid., pp. 46-7.

emotional distance. Readers would have habitually read thematically and developed skills for reading mimetically. Eighteenth-century readers would not expect to identify with Fantomina because of the idea that if you identify then you stop thinking. Intellectual critique becomes suspended if one is feeling.

If the purpose of the work is to teach, the reader must have an intellectual distance from the characters. Kathleen Lubey, for example, discusses depictions of love and passion in amatory fiction as functioning to caution readers to control their passions rather than titillate and provoke their passions.[278] Amatory fiction operated as both an expression of women's sexual desire and a means of experimenting with desire for both women and men through reading, but most importantly, to inspire readers not to give into bodily passions that often have disastrous consequences. Critics of amatory fiction seemed to fear that women used their idle time to develop erotic fantasies; however, it is very unlikely that eighteenth-century readers would be encouraged to identify with the protagonist because of the protagonist's sexually explicit behavior. Haywood explains the purpose of her amatory works in the dedication of her novel *Lasselia: or, the Self-Abandoned* (1725):

> 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, will, I hope, excuse the too great Warmth, which may perhaps, appear in some particular Pages; for without the Expression being invigorated in some measure proportionate to the Subject, 'twould 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. (Haywood and Lubey, 419)[279]

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[278] Kathleen Lubey, "Eliza Haywood's Amatory Aesthetic." Eighteenth - Century Studies 39, no. 3, 2006.

[279] Eliza Haywood, The Injur'd Husband and Lasselia, ed. Jerry C. Beasley (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1999) in "Eliza Haywood's Amatory Aesthetic." Kathleen Lubey. Eighteenth - Century Studies 39, no. 3 (Spring, 2006), pp. 309-322, 419.

Haywood wants to caution readers against over-passionate behavior and confronts the explicit nature of her amatory novels in the dedication. If the purpose of *Fantomina* is indeed didactic, the reader must not seek to imitate the protagonist.

The reader understands Fantomina's behavior as cautionary and emblematic of inappropriate behavior. Harkening back to the notion that a lady should be pursued and not the pursuer, female readers especially would understand Fantomina's persistence in seeking out Beauplaisir as inappropriate and far too sexually forward. Fantomina continues her questionable conduct as she is determined to keep Beauplaisir's attention. She seeks him out again and again as different characters. As the setting shifts from London to Bath, Fantomina also shifts into a "new" character by disguising herself as Celia the maid. By the end of the novel, she has adopted the identities of Fantomina, Celia, Mrs. Bloomer, and Incognita each to seduce Beauplaisir. Bath is nearly 120 miles away from London, a very far distance considering the traveling was done by horse-drawn carriage. This shift from London to Bath and Fantomina's new disguise as Celia not only gives us a new character but also shows us the extent to which she will go to be with Beauplaisir. Her determination is two-fold. Fantomina must keep the relationship with Beauplaisir and, ideally, marry him out of disguise to prevent ruining her reputation and future marriage prospects. He is her undoer and, though he does not know her true identity and her community is not aware of her misconduct, Fantomina is aware that virtuous conduct requires her to refrain from sexual activity with all but her husband. Therefore, she must make him her constant lover.

Fantomina's seeks out Beauplaisir to maintain her respectable reputation, but her methods of seeking his attention to manipulate him into a constant relationship dismantles the virtues she seems to be trying to protect. She also desires his attention, though it is not clear if

she enjoys the sexual relationship. The novel seems to warn against seeking out passionate exchanges or discussion of desire for the protection of women. Fantomina's loss of virginity does not necessarily damage her reputation because she acted under disguise. She is not punished until her deception is found out when she becomes pregnant, and she is sent away to a monastery in France by her mother. A chaperone finally emerges in the character of her mother who has been away in a foreign country. Her mother, who the narrator describes as "severely virtuous,"[280] does not like that Fantomina has been carrying on mostly alone in London and away with friends.

yFantomina, though, is able to hide her pregnancy from her mother for a time. She might have been able to engage in explicit activities in disguise, but her body eventually gives her away. While attending a ball at court, Fantomina goes into labor. Having been able to conceal her pregnancy from everyone around her, the onset of active labor reveals the truth of her behavior. While it may appear to imply that acting deceptively prevents one's ruin, we see that this is not entirely the case. Though it is her deception that prevents the public from becoming aware of her transgressions sooner, Fantomina still placed herself in physically and emotionally dangerous situations. Becoming pregnant out of wedlock and being sent to a monastery works to protect her from her own misconduct rather than as a punishment—punishments often being ostracism by society, abandonment, and sometimes death.

Fantomina chose to disguise herself to participate in actions inspired by desire. She uses disguises to protect her honor. Christine discusses honor specifically in *The Treasure,* explaining that virtuous women choose to lose one's life before one's honor.[281] Brathwaite explains that

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[280] Haywood, Fantomina, p.68.
[281] Pizan, The Treasure, p. 29.

honor requires charity, chastity, and humility.[282] Christine seems to agree in *The Treasure* explaining that honor comes from sobriety and chastity. Sobriety prevents sloth, gluttony, avarice, too much extravagance, focus on the body, and too much talking.[283] The greatest treasure for a woman is her honor. Christine states, "Oh, what a very great treasure a princess or any other lady has who possesses an honorable reputation."[284] Humility and discretion support honor because these virtues discourage women from sharing in explicit conversations or allowing themselves to spend their idle time creating fantasies.

Discretion is the mother of virtues because "she guides and sustains the others."[285] The character of Fantomina complicates discretion. When not in disguise, her character is that of a reserved young woman with a good reputation who does not participate in any explicit conversations or actions. We know that Fantomina shows discretion in her conversation and behavior because Beauplaisir nor any other gentleman speaks freely with her. Beauplaisir also shows confusion when it is found out that she was the same lady with whom he had several relationships resulting in the birth of a child. Yet, Fantomina does not show discretion or moral behavior when disguised. The disguise itself functions as a kind of discretion to protect her reputation; however, her actions are deceitful and, therefore, harmful to her physical body and character. Fantomina cannot be considered a virtuous character because she chose to seduce Beauplaisir, loses her virginity and, therefore, honor. Her reputation, one must assume, is damaged as well because the proof of her misconduct is discovered in public, and she is sent

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[282] Brathwaite, The English Gentlewoman, p. 202.
[283] Pizan, The Treasure, pp. 28-32.
[284] Ibid., p. 29.
[285] Ibid., p. 16.

away to a monastery. Immoral conduct results in, not only the loss of her honor, but also the loss of her freedom and forces her into a setting designed for contemplation.

Non-fiction

The Female Spectator

Haywood discusses conduct, virtue, and love in non-fiction as well as her fiction prose. The author published twenty-four installments of her periodical *The Female Spectator* from April 1744-May 1746. Croskery and Patchias call the periodical enormously popular and successful. *The Female Spectator* is also considered to be "the first periodical written for women by a woman."[286] The periodical essays were published in separate books but also individually before the original print run ended. *The Female Spectator* was published in nine editions over thirty years and was translated into several languages. According to Spacks, Haywood dedicated each volume of *The Female Spectator* to a member of the nobility. The dedication to Book 1 is to "Her Grace, the Duchess of Leeds." Spacks explains that the dedications were often made, presumably, for financial advantage from the patron.[287]

In the dedication, Haywood says that when publishing monthly essays, it is important to rectify errors that, though they seem small, could develop into vices unless the writing be under the protection of a lady of conduct. Haywood says that she puts her writing in the protection of a lady with "unblemish'd conduct" and "exalted virtue…herself a shining pattern for others to copy after, of all those Perfections I endeavor to recommend."[288] In the first page of the dedication, Haywood is giving her reasoning for dedicating this edition of *The Female Spectator*

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[286] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[287] Eliza Haywood, Selections from the Female Spectator. Patricia Meyer Spacks, eds. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999: 3.

[288] Ibid., p. 3.

to the Duchess of Leeds, to recommend her readers to model their own conduct on someone considered to be extremely virtuous. Part of the purpose of the dedication is to extol the virtue of the patrons, giving examples of their virtues and lineage. Dedications give examples of (publicly) well-behaved people and supports the author by insinuating some kind of working relationship with or the support of a virtuous patron.

Haywood discusses reason and virtue in *The Female Spectator* on several occasions. "So gross an Abuse of the Faculty of Thinking is indeed, turning the Arms of Heaven against itself, and forcing that sacred Reason, which was given us for a Guide to *Virtue*, to accompany us in the Paths of *Vice*."[289] Haywood makes several claims in this statement: that it is immoral to misuse the ability to think, that the ability to think comes from God and provides us with reason. Reason, therefore, is also God-given; Reason was given to us by God to guide us to a virtuous life and to protect one when tempted. Haywood also writes, "Hypocrisy is detestable to both God and Man…When once the Mask of Benevolence and Sincerity is pluck'd off from the Face of the seeming Angel, and the grim treacherous Fiend appears in his native ugliness, by so much the more that our Admiration before was of him, and will be our Abhorrence of him afterward."[290] Insincerity is a vice because it involves deceit for self-promotion or self-preservation regardless of the truth. Feigning virtue does not make one virtuous or moral; rather, feigning virtue is loathed by God because those pretending to be virtuous deceive others into thinking that they are using the divinely given gift of reason to live virtuous lives. However, such hypocrites might lead others to commit immoral acts. Virtuous behavior includes kindness and showing a generally happy temperament. If one is discovered pretending kindness but thinking inhospitable

[289] Ibid., p. 61.
[290] Ibid., p. 61.

thoughts, others will discover one's immoral mode of thought and as popular as one was, one will be as equally hated by men and God. Appearing godly in public but living an immoral life and misusing the ability to think and reason is not permitted by God.

The Tea Table

While the emphasis on morality remains, piousness is not necessarily highlighted in *The Tea Table. The Tea Table* (1725) is a conduct book written in a similar style to Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier (Il Cortegiano,* c. 1508- 1528*). Love in Excess* and, especially, *Fantomina* portray women navigating or violating expected social behaviors through the narratives, but *The Tea Table* describes the behaviors themselves. The title insinuates a comfortable, safe discussion in that private parties often communed around a tea table. Larger, public conversations are often depicted as coffee house discourse. *The Tea Table* offers clear examples of what behaviors are and are not virtuous. The discussion seems to suggest a hierarchy of virtues in that reason, honesty, and a contented demeanor are favored. That which is authentic and sincere is virtuous. That which is affected or exaggerated, much less so. The company includes the lady of the house–Amiana, an accomplished gentleman–Philetus, the lovely and witty Brilliante,[291] Dorinthus–a man of good sense and judgment, and the narrator. The speakers each have a story to share that exemplifies the virtue or misconduct the company is debating. Christine and Castiglione both do this, as well. Each speaker has some kind a of written piece and reads aloud to the group. The stories offer examples of the follies of love and heartbreak caused by inconstant persons.

[291] Haywood. Fantomina and Other Works, p. 77.

The first description of an agreeable character is that of Amiana. The narrator describes her as having a "sweet disposition" and tends to bring out the best of those in her company.[292] Dishonesty or affectation inspires the conversation. A lady visiting Amiana's home earlier had begun loudly complaining and exaggerating the effects of a headache. The narrator begins to express concern for the lady when another says that it is all affectation: "She fancies…that it gives her an air of delicacy."[293] The narrator shows us the inability of both ladies to practice discretion. The first exaggerates her ailments in an effort to appear delicate while the second gossips negatively about the other. The interactions cause the narrator to muse alone on virtue. Her musings lead to a discussion among a group of five people of "real wisdom, or had wit sufficient to enable them to conceal that deficiency,"[294] after the troublesome company has gone. Virtues given by the company include good judgment, entertaining and agreeable conversation, good sense, and discretion.[295]

Brilliante describes the differences between the necessity of virtue for men and women. She says, "no ruin of character, no loss of fame, glare in your face, and stop the progression of your passion."[296] She admits here that even virtuous ladies feel passion, but a truly virtuous lady understands that to indulge in passions is ruinous to one's character, and therefore reputation. She continues, "religion is all that can defend you from the joint assaults of love, and vanity, and nature. But it's not so with us; a thousand different, dread ideas strike us with horror at but the thought of giving up our honor."[297] Brilliante echoes Brathwaite and Christine in this statement

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[292] Ibid., p. 74.
[293] Ibid., p. 75.
[294] Ibid., p, 77.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid., p, 79.
[297] Ibid.

about honor. Many examples of women unwilling to lose their honor over the prospect of death are offered in conduct books discussed earlier. Christine also offers a secondary problem that men are often aggressive in their pursuits of some ladies. Brilliante continues, "When woman falls prey to the rapacious wishes of her too dear undoer, she falls without excuse, without even pity for the ruin her inadvertency has brought upon her."[298] She explains in this passage that, even if she is manipulated to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage, no pity will be given to her for she tempted herself by allowing an explicit relationship to begin. A virtuous lady removes herself, if she can, from repeated affronts by an inconstant pursuer. Amiana strengthens Brilliante's point by saying that it is important for women to remember that she might share joy and remorse with her undoer should she give into desire, but grief, shame, and heartbreak she will experience on her own.[299]

It goes against reason, then, to put oneself in the position of possibly damaging one's honor. Giving into passions for women, explains Brilliante, goes against reason, good sense, and the instinct to protect oneself.[300] Lack of self-control and willingness to engage in passionate actions or thinking goes against reason because it only results in discontentment. Having a disagreeable character that allows oneself to indulge in chaotic, emotional thinking goes against religion and reason. Philetus says, "Discontentedness of disposition, which we ought by no means to indulge; because, in the first place such a habit of mind is the direct opposite to religions."[301] Religion teaches the practitioner to trust in their creator and to be happy in the knowledge that, if one seeks God and conducts themselves virtuously, they shall live happily on

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[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid., p. 80.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid., p. 85.

Earth and hereafter. Philetus continues, that discontentedness is also "a manifest contradiction to good sense; for who, with the right use of that, wou'd lose the enjoyment of a present comfort, to lament a misfortune only in supposition."[302] To lament in self-pity for actions either past, or not even come to pass, goes against the will of God and reason. One who wallows in shame or madness caused by over-strong desire has allowed themselves to react to fantasy rather than reality and suffers for no reason other than that which they have imagined.

Brilliante offers a story of *Beraldus and Clemena: Or the Punishment of Mutability* to the group. The story is about a young girl, newly come to court named Clemena. She is seduced by a courtier with a rakish reputation. She allows herself to be seduced, believing his impassioned speeches of constancy to her. The story demonstrates the immorality of artifice, scheming, and deceit. It is not virtuous behavior for a gentleman to lie to vulnerable young women, making promises of everlasting love in an effort to have sex with them. Inconstancy is a form of deceit. Beraldus cares nothing for Clemena's reputation and honor. When confronted about his misconduct by the Princess, who Clemena has a close relationship with as her lady in waiting, Beraldus places the blame on Clemena.[303] Beraldus cannot be considered a virtuous courtier because of his deceitful behavior, both in his desire to have sexual relationships with many women at court, but also because he lies to the Princess, the lady's court who he is meant to strengthen and protect. By humoring himself with the young ladies of the court instead, he brings dishonor to the Princess's court.

The roles of the courtier and court lady are explained in detail in Baldassare Castiglione's manuscript on courtly behavior *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il Cortegiano*). Castiglione began his

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[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid., p. 92.

manuscript on courtly behavior *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il Cortegiano*) in 1508; the final version was published in 1528. The manners the author prescribes for aristocratic men and women demonstrate expected behavior, particularly for women. Castiglione sets his text in the form of dialogue that allows for flexibility of the conversation, multiple viewpoints, and no need to come to any definite conclusions. Dialogues were also fashionable in the Renaissance as dialogue texts revived classical forms of the genre, such as Platonic dialogues.[304]

In *The Courtier*, as in *The Tea Table*, speakers use storytelling to reiterate the points made to the group in conversation about proper conduct. Castiglione references Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero, Horace, Virgil, Quintilian, Ovid, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poliziano, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the neoplatonist Francesca Cattani da Diaccento. According to Peter Burke, Castiglione wrote during the high Renaissance, the phase in the movement centered in Rome in the early sixteenth century, in which most emphasis was placed on rules–whether rules for art, rules for language, or rules for behavior.[305] While writing *The Courtier*, Castiglione was probably influenced by two works of Pietro Bembo, a Venetian patrician, inspired by the works of Plato and Cicero particularly. Bembo composed two dialogues in 1505 and 1525. The *Asolani* or *Discussions at Asolo* consists of a three-day conversation about love between three young men and three young women. One young man speaks against love, another in favor of worldly love, and the last in favor of divine, platonic, spiritual love, that is, of love and beauty. Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua*, or *Writing in the Vernacular*, is a fireside discussion between four men in a Venetian home lasting three nights.

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[304] Peter Burke, The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 20.

[305] Ibid., pp. 24- 5.

These two dialogues provided models of form and content for *The Courtier*.[306] Castiglione's dialogues offer historians a glimpse at what people of Renaissance courts were reading and attempting to emulate. According to Burke, the treatment of the Court Lady ignited a female interest. Castiglione presented nine noble ladies, including Emilia Pia, with a copy.[307] Emilia is made a character in the conduct book, further exemplifying the author's emphasis on women's conduct.

The setting of *The Courtier* is the ducal palace of Urbino, in the court of the Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga. There are more than twenty *dramatis personae* present in the dialogue although Castiglione gives main roles to several speakers in particular: Count Lodovico di Canossa, a nobleman from Verona and relative of Castiglione in part one discussing court life and the perfect courtier; Federico Fregoso, a Genoese patrician, in part two discussing virtues and examples of good courtiers and court ladies; Giuliano de' Medici, also called Magnifico Giuliano, who was the son of Lorenzo 'Il Magnifico' de' Medici, in part three specifically discussing the court lady; finally, Ottaviano Fregoso and Pietro Bembo who concludes the discussion, highlighting important aspects from the earlier parts, in part four. All those present are friends, relatives, and/or acquaintances of the author.

The primary speakers are interrupted with questions by other participants continuously. The most brash of these questioners is Gaspare Pallavicino whom the ladies jokingly refer to as their enemy. Other main participants include the Duchess herself, Lady Emilia Pia, who was a close friend of the Duchess and a relative of Duke Guidobaldo. The Duchess has appointed Emilia and Castiglione's cousin Cesare Gonzaga, a military and diplomatic ally of the Marquis

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[306] Ibid., pp. 21-2.
[307] Burke, Fortunes of the Courtier, p. 48.

of Mantua and the Duke, to direct the speakers and theme of the conversations. The perfect courtier is noble, gracious, does not use affectation, and is honorable in deeds and defense of the court. Castiglione's key characteristic of his courtier was a term he coined, *sprezzatura*, meaning easy grace or calm assuredness, and also the perfect performance of nonchalant conduct executed effortlessly. *Sprezzatura* means that all public actions become statements. For the Court Lady, public actions and/or statements were not for her individually but rather for the status of the court or her family.

The third book discusses the ideal Court Lady, *la donna di palazzo*. The discussion centers on the knowledge of literature, music, and painting necessary to a lady of the court, as well as on the way in which she should walk, gesture, talk, dance, and present herself. She should have "knowledge in letters, music, painting, and … know how to dance and make merry; accompanying the other precepts that have been taught the courtier with discreet modesty and with the giving of a good impression of herself."[308] A successful court lady should decorate the court and celebrate men with her presence. The discussion of the Court Lady leads to a debate about the merits, equality or "dignity" of women as compared to men. Gaspare argues that "imperfections of women are the fault of nature."[309] Faulty nature is a theme in *The Courtier* as well as Christine's *The Book* and the *Treasure.* Women are marked, like in the case of Gaspare's statement, as imperfect or evil creatures; however, Castiglione states that nature is not wrong, and no mistake was made in the creation of women.[310] Christine also reminds the reader that Christ loves women. Personified Reason tells Christine in *The Book* that Christ loves women. He

[308] Castiglione, The Courtier, pp. 169-170.
[309] Ibid., p. 172.
[310] Ibid., p. 219.

was born of a woman who he loved, and his resurrection was announced by women. Christine asks, as the ladies in the courtier, why some men write badly about women. Reason explains,

> Some of those who criticized women did so with good intentions: they wanted to rescue men who had already fallen into the clutches of depraved and corrupt women or to prevent others from suffering the same fate, and to encourage men generally to avoid leading a lustful and sinful existence. They therefore attacked all women in order to persuade men to regard the entire sex as an abomination. (Pizan, 17)[311]

According to Reason, disparaging stories about women are meant to protect men from women who have little self-control and indulge in inconstant desires. Believing all women to be harbors of evil desire is damaging to the character of women, causing women to prove and protect themselves to maintain their reputation. Christine asks Rectitude why if women inhabit "all forms of goodness and virtue"[312] so many men believe that few women are truly chaste. Christine continues, "If this were true, all other qualities would be worthless because chastity is the supreme virtue in a woman."[313]

Rectitude explains that chastity does exist in women and is demonstrated numerous times in literature. Rectitude gives many examples of biblical ladies, who "prefer to die rather than lose their chastity, bodily integrity, and good conscience,"[314] including but not limited to Susanna, wife of Joachim, Sarah, wife of Abraham, and Rebecca, mother of Jacob and Esau.[315] Rectitude also instructs Christine that many chaste women are beautiful, but it is their chastity that makes them the most appealing.[316] Giuliano de' Medici echoes the statements found in Christine's books and counters Gaspare's remarks that women have an imperfect nature with the classic

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[311] Pizan, The Book, p. 17.
[312] Ibid., p. 141.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid., p. 142.
[315] Ibid., pp. 142-44.
[316] Ibid., pp. 145-46.

examples of feminine achievement (Artemisia, Cleopatra, Semiramis, etc.) as well as contemporary examples, such as Isabella d'Este and Queen Isabella of Spain.

The most important virtue for a court lady is chastity. According to Castiglione in *The Courtier,* it is for women's own good that they should remain chaste and virtuous to preserve their minds and the well-beings of all those around them. Castiglione gives several reasons for the necessity of women remaining chaste– to ensure that offspring of noble men are, indeed, theirs and, therefore, noble, and to protect them from their own incapable minds. The argument seems to be an effort to protect women from themselves. Castiglione continues in conversation with the Duchess (of Mantua) using a male character called Signor Magnifico to argue that women should seek to protect themselves against men and non-virtuous other women. People who are not virtuous include those who do not speak discreetly, women who gossip, or men who accost them with explicit attention. For example, Cesare Gonzaga describes men who beg women for women's attention and harass women endlessly. This is not appropriate behavior for a virtuous gentleman.[317] The discussion concludes, however, that the value or goodness of a woman is always in relation to her virtues, chastity, and loyalty to her husband and God.

Castiglione dictates that women must learn enough proper skills (music, sewing, dancing, etc.) to be interesting in conversation and to be able to direct a conversation to moral topics. She should not leave a conversation, however, if it moves to inappropriate topics to not appear prudish or to give the impression that she may be hiding secret immoral attitudes under a demure appearance. From Castiglione's directions for proper conversation, we can see that amatory authors did indeed break the rules of speaking on topics like sex and desire. While Guiliano

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[321] Ibid., p. 216.

claims that females can understand as much as men, Cesare Gonzaga declares that their function is to "inspire male achievement and that the joy and splendor of courts depend on them."[318] In a near refutation of the proper roles of Ladies, the author gives the job of deciding who speaks to Emilia; however, the women only offer conversational influence or encourage the men in attendance.

Joan Kelly-Gadol explains that the occupation of Castiglione's Court Lady was charm. The text at times may speak favorably of the Lady and might even appear to make her the courtier's equal. Further reading shows that the Lady only appears to be the courtier's equal at times. Castiglione's *Courtier* engaged in "aestheticizing the lady's role."[319] She is not to participate in unbecoming masculine behaviors, such as riding or handling weaponry, to preserve her image. She is the visual accessory of the court meant to accentuate the prowess of the courtier.

Though some contemporary authors deemed the noble lady as an accessory, Castiglione, Christine, and Brathwaite all speak to the goodness of women's education. The necessity of a good education is meant to aid her in holding interesting conversations and, more importantly, to maintain a virtuous, witty mind. Castiglione says the ideal court lady should demonstrate affability, modest behavior, candor, and wit. She should practice discretion, knowing what information to offer and withhold.[320] It is the court lady's intelligent conversation and discrete modesty[321] that makes her an asset to the court. Beginning in the Renaissance, many women had access to a humanist education– grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy–

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[318] Burke, Fortunes of the Courtier, p. 28.
[319] Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance," p. 187-88.
[320] Castiglione, The Courtier, pp. 212-13.
[321] Ibid., p. 216.

alongside male family members but few were able to continue their educations or expand their intellectual influences beyond adulthood. Historian Dr. Holly Hurlburt explains that sixteenth-century Italian humanists, Giovanni Caldiera and Francesco and Ermolao Barbaro for example, granted women narrow influences, mostly within the family. Caldeiera and the Barbaros "categorized women by their sexual role, male intellectuals urged obedience and virtue, and championed marriage and procreation as the primary duties of women."[322] Humanist author, artist, and poet Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) wrote, "beauty in a woman must be judged not only by the charm and refinement of her face, but still more by the grace of her person and her aptitude for bearing and giving birth to many fine children…In a bride…a man must first seek beauty of mind (*le bellezze dell'animo*), that is, good conduct and virtue."[323]

In the Renaissance court, a woman may be intelligent, but her intelligence should enhance the bravado of the nobleman rather than her individuality or philosophy. Young women of the nobility eventually were pressured to marry or to enter convents, either "despite their intellect or because of it."[324] Isotta Nogarola is acclaimed as one of the most accomplished female humanist writers of the time. According to Hurlburt, Isotta's public intellectual persona caused her to be the object of ridicule and assumed to adopt unchaste morals by male humanists and female nobility. Isotta went into a self-imposed exile where she embraced a Christian humanism, deemed more appropriate for women. During exile, she began writing on Eve, linking her intellectual desires with the pursuit of understanding the assumed weakness of

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[322] Holly S. Hurlburt. "A Renaissance for Renaissance Women." Journal of Women's History 19, no. 2 (2007), p. 195.

[323] Leon Battista Alberti. "I libri dell famiglia," Opere volgari. Translated in The Family in Renaissance Florence, Renee Nei Watkins (trans). Patricia Simons, "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture," History Workshop, No. 25. Oxford University Press (1988), p. 12.

[324] Hurlburt, "A Renaissance for Renaissance Women," p. 194.

women. Her scholarship on Eve and female weakness, coupled with her willing isolation, made her desire to seek education in the male domain more acceptable.[325]

Isotta is an intriguing person because of the similarities found between her and women authors of the eighteenth-century. Haywood, for example, was ridiculed by Alexander Pope for her profession as a writer and dramatist. Pope criticized Haywood's writing and wrote slanderous lines about her character insinuating Haywood was immoral and sexually deviant. In his poem, *The Dunciad* (1742), he describes her: "See in the circle next, Eliza plac'd, / Two babes of love close clinging to her waist."[326] Many scholars state that the two babes of love reference Haywood's two children, possibly born out of wedlock, indicating her promiscuous lifestyle; however, a note on *The Dunciad* reads, "Eliza Haywood; this woman was authoress of those most scandalous books called the court of Carimania, and the New Utopia,"[327] seeming to indicate that the two "babes of love" are scandalous writings of Haywood's rather than children born out of wedlock. Haywood as an author seems to exhibit ideas of valuing non-domestic education for women and entering one's conversation into the public sphere.

Christine cites Boccaccio in her discussion of education. Personified Reason offers Boccaccio's argument that it is "a great honour…for a woman to put aside all feminine things and to devote her mind to studying the works of the greatest scholars."[328] Haywood does this

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[325] Ibid., p. 195.

[326] Alexander Pope. The Dunciad: To Dr. Jonathan Swift. In The Dunciad, in Four Books. Printed According to the Complete Copy found in the Year 1742. with the Prolegomena of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum. to which are Added, several Notes Now First Publish'd, the Hypercritics of Aristarchus, and His Dissertation on the Hero of the Poem; the Dunciad, in Four Books. Printed According to the Complete Copy found in the Year 1742. with the Prolegomena of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum. to which are Added, several Notes Now First Publish'd, the Hypercritics of Aristarchus, and His Dissertation on the Hero of the Poem, London, 39-208 p. London, 1743. https://login.libproxy.uncg.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/dunciad-dr-jonathan-swift/docview/2148125598/se-2: lines 157-60.

[327] Ibid., lines 157-60.

[328] Pizan, The Book, p. 59.

with her work and the amatory genre functions to show reason and chastity are important for women to practice. Education helps to combat desirous thoughts and bouts of fanciful thinking. Reason continues that women discredit themselves if they think that their only purposes are chasing after men and bearing children. Reason continues,

> God has given every woman a good brain which she could put to good use, if she so chose, in all the domains in which the most learned and renowned men excel. If women wished to study, they are no more excluded from doing so than men are and could easily put in the necessary effort to acquire a good name for themselves just as the most distinguished of men delight in doing. (Pizan, 59)[329]

Haywood's most virtuous character, Meliora in *Love and Excess* is the only heroine in the novels presented in this chapter who is explicitly described as having an education. An education might well fortify the mind and teach self-control, which protects ladies' honor. Chastity remains the most important virtue and education works to reinforce it.

Conclusion

Chasity is the most important virtue and amatory fiction does not discount this. Amatory fiction, though written for a different reading experience, recapitulates the importance of virtue and, especially, chastity. It is highlighted in amatory fiction because the main female protagonists show fictionalized scenarios of what one may encounter should she not practice great self-control. It is the larger discussion of chastity presented in conduct books and reimagined in amatory novels that leads to the development of the conduct novel. Chastity was considered one of the most important and necessary feminine virtues. Unchaste women cause men to question the legitimacy of their heirs and dissolve his love for what he has produced. According to Gaspare, "it is wisely made the rule that women are allowed to fail in everything else, and not be blamed, so long as they can devote all their resources to preserving that one

[329] Ibid.

virtue of chastity."[330] Gaspare explains without chastity men and women have no way of determining paternity of children. A woman's chastity maintains the bond between father and children and is necessary in keeping a loving family. Moderation and purity of body linked women as closely as possible to the Virgin Mary, an emblem of perfect femininity, who venerates man. Women who devote themselves fully to remaining virtuous and chaste like the Virgin uphold manhood and masculinity by means of ensuring paternity and, therefore, fiscal, and titled power which passed to sons from fathers among the nobility. Any woman accused of explicit behavior did not honor her husband or family properly and was considered immoral and susceptible to evil.

The feminine virtue of chastity among all others exemplified the glory of the Lady's husband and the Court. As demonstrated by Castiglione and Christine, a truly virtuous female chooses death over loss of virginity. A Renaissance woman's virtue is explicitly identified with virginity. This is not the case for the (male) courtier. There can be no real female form of *cortigiano* (*cortigiana*) because the feminine form of the word means courtesan (prostitute). The truly virtuous courtier chooses death over loss of pride, power, and country. The same continues to be true in the eighteenth century as virtue and conduct are still very popular themes in many genres of writing. The virtuous lady will also not read indecent books.[331] Christine decides not to read a particular book in *The Book* because it contains slander and immoral language not meant for someone who wished to pursue virtue and improve their moral standards. She also wonders why so many men, particularly, write awful things about women.[332] It is curious, then, whether

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[330] Castiglione, The Courtier, p. 241.
[331] Pizan, The Treasure, p. 31.
[332] Pizan, The Book, pp. 5-6.

or not Christine and Castiglione would have found the explicit, though didactic, themes of amatory fiction suitable for ladies' reading.

Though Haywood's work presents understandings of social conduct similar to those in authors like Christine and Castiglione, Haywood's heroines certainly did not adhere to correct conduct rules. Alovisa allows unchaste thoughts to drive her actions, leading to her unhappy life and death. In contrast, Meliora is a chaste character who has a good education and a gentle temperament. Her chastity results in her safe, contented future and inspires D'elmont to become virtuous in character as well. Fantomina certainly understands social conduct rules and finds herself slipping in and out of appropriate behaviors depending on her environment. She pursues a lover repeatedly, not necessarily seeking marriage from him, but genuinely desiring his romantic and physical attention. Her unchaste behavior results in a pregnancy and banishment.

In Haywood's *Reflections on the Various Effects of Love, According to the Contrary Dispositions of the Persons on Whom it Operates*, published in London, 1726, the author describes the downfall of women as "that Fate which all Women must expect, when to gratify their Passion they make a Sacrifice of their Honour, that of being slighted and forsaken."[333] Amatory fiction speaks directly to "that fate" and offers a didactic experience of sex and seduction that allows for readers to play with fantasy and to understand the detrimental consequences of immoral behaviors on their reputations. Fancy, or fantasy, does come into play but with a didactic element. Haywood's amatory fiction allows one to play with fancy and vicariously learn how explicit thoughts and actions might affect them. Reading amatory fiction allows the female reader to create agency for herself in learning about how to control desire.

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[333] Haywood, Reflections on the Various Effects of Love, p. 17.

Amatory fiction was an extremely popular genre in the eighteenth century because it allowed the reader to experience the downfall of women brought about by engaging in immoral or sexually explicit behaviors by proxy. Haywood's amatory stories about conduct, like *Fantomina*, begin the development of the conduct novel. Modern scholars credit Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* as the first conduct novel written in 1741, which offers themes of chastity, the need for women to maintain virtuous, humble reputations, and reward for virtuous judgment. Elements of excitement and drama certainly exist in amatory fiction, which is one reason why it was so popular. Novels focused on conduct, like *Pamela,* continued to be extremely popular in the mid-and late eighteenth century. The role of conduct exemplified with virtue in distress stories offers a didactic experience for self-possessed readers and is precisely what makes amatory fiction so exciting.

CHAPTER V: FROM AMATORY FICTION TO CONDUCT NOVELS: SHIFTING THEMES IN SEDUCTION STORIES

Introduction

Conduct literature was a popular genre in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Most examples of conduct literature champion chastity above all other virtues. Amatory fiction deviated from usual discussions of conduct found in conduct literature and introduced an audience of men and women to seduction narratives meant to titillate the senses but also to maintain established conduct norms in Great Britain at the time. Modesty and chastity were necessary for a good reputation, and maintaining a virtuous reputation was the only way to move into more prosperous social circles. As described in many examples of conduct literature, chastity was considered one of the most important and necessary of feminine virtues; however, not all readers considered amatory fiction appropriate reading material, especially for women. Themes of chaste, feminine virtue were considered more appropriate reading material than seduction and female voyeurism stories. Amatory fiction and conduct novels are not as different as, perhaps, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century critics boasted. Amatory fiction and conduct novels largely deal with navigating potentially sexual relationships.

The major difference between amatory and conduct novels is that scenes of seduction, which certainly feature in both types of fiction, are usually negative in tone in conduct novels. The female characters in conduct novels are often pursued by several men through whom these women face lessons on social conduct. The heroine learns how to approach sexual situations and confirms the importance of a chaste reputation if a young lady is to make a good marriage. Like women in amatory fiction, heroines in conduct novels also do display passionate feelings, even

veiled discussions of sex, but only when it is appropriate to do so (once married, for example). Women in amatory fiction often experience fits of madness, fainting spells, and dying when in love; women in conduct novels, however, experience the same fits from modesty. As Aphra Behn's Sylvia in *Love Letters Between and Nobleman and his Sister* languished and dyed, Pamela in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1741) faints and believes she shall die when being aggressively seduced by her employer. While the sentiments of the characters are quite different in the scenes, the language remains the same. Primary themes in *Pamela*, an extremely popular conduct novel, are chastity, navigating feelings of sexual desire, and appropriate sexual relationships. Both amatory and conduct literature highlight the role of sex and sexuality.

One of the most distinguishing qualities of conduct novels is their idealization of women's conduct coupled with the willingness to show faults and mistakes made by female characters. Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) showcases a virtuous female main character whose "natural" father has never claimed her, leaving her with limited social mobility, no income, no title, or even a last name. She acquires friends with good reputations and a good marriage on the richness of her virtuous nature alone. The conduct novel includes several moments in which Evelina places herself (her reputation and her physical self) in danger. The narrative also describes moments of indecorum, though innocent, as Evelina attempts to thrive in high society for the first time. Evelina is frequently reminded by her guardian Mr. Villars to focus on her virtuous character. He reminds her not to put herself in danger, either physically or mentally. Evelina does show loving feelings for Lord Orville but does not lose her senses with passion for him or outwardly pursue him. Because she waits for his appropriate advances, she is awarded with a love match and financially comfortable husband.

Similarities between amatory texts and conduct novels include women in danger, the fear of mental promiscuity, and the admission that even virtuous women experience sexual desire. Female mental promiscuity is considered truly problematic in the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries as demonstrated in the preceding chapters. In Chapter Two, I discuss that critics feared romantic stories leading to too much leisure. Leisure time was discouraged because those with nothing to do but wallow in fantasy tended to fall into immorality. As discussed in Chapter Four, fantasies, especially sexual fantasies, are to be avoided because they are not rooted in reality. Immodesty in thought is a concern displayed by many characters in conduct novels. Notably, in her eponymous conduct novel, Pamela does not sink too deeply into fantasy. Her character demonstrates a modesty that does not allow her to recognize feelings of desire. In contrast, Catherine Morland, the heroine in Jane Austen's 1817 satirical novel *Northanger Abbey*, displays well-meaning but dangerous naïveté when a potential match proposes marriage. She had not noticed the young man's insinuations because she had already developed strong feelings for someone else.

Burney's *Cecilia* (1782) is perhaps the most indicative of both the active and the overactive female imagination. *Cecilia* combines the necessity of virtuous character found in conduct literature and reinforced in amatory fiction while also demonstrating an independent-minded heroine who reads for pleasure. One of the conditions of her inheritance is that she finds a husband who will adopt her last name instead of taking his after marriage so that her familial wealth stays within her family. The novel praises imagination and curiosity, which is something I have not come across before without the inclusion of some sort of permission-giving (the introductory letters in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, for example). However, while imagination and mental fortitude are highlighted, madness that stems from fantasy also is

present. Cecilia experiences a mental breakdown when she believes she has lost her lover and will remain in her living agreement forever. Yet a prosperous marriage is finally bestowed on Cecilia after her recovery from insanity.

In this chapter, in addition to such questions of active versus overactive female imagination, I also consider the question of power gained by women writers immediately following the first women stepping into that profession. What did women authors want their power to be? Some female authors wanted to distance themselves from women writers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By the later eighteenth century, Clara Reeve argues in *The Progress of Romance* (1785) that Delarivier Manley's scandal writing had a negative influence on female readers, and thus damaged the reputation of female authors. For Reeve, Manley's writing is not didactic or appropriate; rather, the scandalous content works to shock the reader and to generate vulgar popularity through lewd insinuations; Reeve wonders at how scandal stories were once in fashion.

A modern reader might expect that texts with sexually suggestive elements, especially written by women, would become more overt moving into the second half of the eighteenth century as readers were desensitized, publishing laws shifted, and texts about women's desires were printed more often. During the reign of William of Orange (William III 1689-1702), publishing censorship laws, called prior restraint, were not renewed. Prior restraint forbade the printing of certain categories of writing and made only the works of certain select authors available for publication, which limited the content of works read, and the audience for those works to the aristocracy. Under prior restraint, most legally published works contained themes of moral conduct and religion. The elimination of prior restraint laws gave rise to an influx of alternately themed materials (natural philosophy, Newton's *Optics*, human sexual desire, etc.)

and writing by women. Availability of women's writings to much larger portions of the population made evolving women's desires more visible than before. These desires previously had been much circumscribed; conduct manuals of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and earlier seventeenth centuries determined that women's only social or political desires should be to enhance their husbands' or fathers' reputations and that a moral woman would have little to no understanding of physical, sexual desire. Writers of the eighteenth century, but especially women writers, complicated the idea of women's social and sexual desires by demonstrating that they indeed experienced sociopolitical and sexual desire at all; but, as we move deeper into the eighteenth century, conduct books that combined stories dealing with women's desire in a refined, moral way surpassed the amatory texts that first discussed women's desire.

Dynamics of Sex and Sexuality in Richardson's *Pamela*

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) provides an example for a truly virtuous, chaste woman. Pamela Andrews is honest, gentle, and compassionate. She is the ideal example of protecting one's virtue. Pamela is a devout Christian and seeks to please God and her parents in her actions. During the course of the novel, Pamela's virtue is endangered repeatedly by her employer, but her modesty protects her. The reader is meant to understand that it is Pamela's virtuous nature that changes the predatory nature of others and guards her virginity. Pamela is regarded by supporting characters in the novel as a pillar of virtue and, other than her working-class status, is what women should aspire to replicate.

Richardson's novel is written in epistolary form, which supports Richardson's desire for his novel to be educational for readers in the ways of conduct. According to Jane Blanchard,

"Richardson intended his work to be an engaging source of education and edification."[334] Like earlier writers of conduct literature, Richardson intended his conduct novel to instruct. Blanchard points out the Pamela as a character performs self-reflection in the process of writing and re-reading her own letters. The author gives as an example Pamela writing to her parents that she is excited to know that they have kept her letters both because it shows love and because she can read her own correspondence to best examine her own thoughts and behavior.[335]

The epistolary form brings the reader closer to the narrator as the reader has a sense of reading personal, private material as in Behn's *Love Letters*. According to Stuart Wilson, the epistolary form in *Pamela* allows the reader to know the narrator closely.[336] Pamela is the main character and author of most of the letters making up the novel. The reader receives a first-hand account, single perspective of events only sometimes broken by letters from Pamela's parents. To understand the internal complexity of the character, the reader must know her.[337] Pamela is described as a deeply virtuous and religious girl of fifteen. Her virtues include physical beauty, enjoying needlework, writing, and reading; however, her reading material is chosen for her based on what is deemed suitable for someone of her sex and station to read. Materials given to her by her mistress include the Bible and Aesop's Fables. She is not permitted romances because they

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[334] Jane Blanchard. "Composing Purpose in Richardson's 'Pamela.'" *South Atlantic Review* 76, no. 2 (2011): 93.

Note by Blanchard: In a letter to Aaron Hill, Richardson recollects his hope that 'Pamela "might possibly introduce 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 dismissing the improbable and marvellous [sic], with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue" (*Selected Letters*, 41).

[335] Ibid., 96-7.

[336] Stuart Wilson, "Richardson's Pamela: An Interpretation." PMLA88, 1 (1973): p. 79.

[337] Ibid.

support the idleness of the mind. Wilson points out that Pamela is an innocent, but she knows enough to understand bawdy jokes and sexual innuendo.[338]

It is important for the reader to know Pamela, or to understand her character, to appreciate the dichotomy of her honest character and feelings for her master. She demonstrates a separation of body and mind[339] in which her virtuous nature compels her to protect her reputation; however, her feelings for Mr. B– compel her to excuse his behavior and strengthen her desire to remain in his employment. Mr. B– attempts to seduce and rape her on multiple occasions, putting Pamela's virtue and future prospects in danger. Pamela's tender feelings for Mr. B– demonstrate to the reader that, though extremely virtuous and religious, Pamela experiences desire. Wilson contends that the character of Pamela is mature of body and mind and, therefore, would certainly respond positively and appropriately as a wife by gladly participating in a sexual relationship within a marriage.[340] This proves to be true as Pamela and Mr. B– eventually marry. Pamela's fear and anxiety about sex do not reappear in the novel after her marriage. Though no longer a virgin, Pamela is seen in a more positive light than before because it was her modest reputation and not any sort of fortune that begot her relationship with Mr. B–. Wilson continues that the complexity of Pamela's internal character is demonstrated in her ideas about goodness. For Pamela, being good and virtuous means being obedient.[341] Though she wants to please Mr. B–, she does not condone the sexually aggressive behavior towards her before she is married. Her morality requires she remain chaste in thought and deed and yet she

[338] Ibid., p. 80.
[339] Ibid., p. 80.
[340] Ibid., p. 81.
[341] Ibid., p. 82.

struggles to remove herself from danger. She even calls Mr. B– "the best of Gentleman" in the first letter to her parents and again after they are married.[342]

Though described as the best of gentlemen, Mr. B– also exemplifies the rake character as he demonstrates both an insatiability for physical love with women and a determination, or even a sense of proprietary right, to have his needs met by the woman of his choice. Pamela is a model of Christian virtue. The novel centers on her virtue and how the other characters, no matter their social status, cannot help but to fall in love with her. Mr. B– becomes Pamela's employer after the death of his mother, who previously employed Pamela and taught her to write. Pamela does write to her parents that Mr. B– repeatedly tries to seduce her and she fears for her safety. While some of the characters try to help Pamela escape the advances of Mr. B–, most of them seem to accept his behavior because of his nature, described by the housekeepers and his sister Lady Davers, as a spoiled boy.

Richardson exemplifies the rake character by pairing him with the deeply devout and virtuous Pamela. The more Mr. B– attempts to force her to have sex with him, Pamela becomes more resolved to virginity and to an unsullied life by Christian standards. Pamela's virtue eventually causes Mr. B– to admit that he loves her and desires to atone for his past moral offenses. She, in turn, is so moved by his denouncing his behavior that she falls in love with him, as well. In an attempt to prevent Mr. B– and Pamela from marrying, Lady Davers explains the seriousness of Mr. B–'s past behaviors and herself calls him a rake. She continues telling of his reputation for having sex with young women, including an affair with a noble lady that produced a child.

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[342] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (2006): letter I, paragraph 4, and letter XXXII.

Although the novel centers on Pamela as the main character and on her virtue, the rake character also drives the plot forward. Had Mr. B– simply acquired Pamela after his mother's death and she continued to live chastely without interruption from him, Richardson would have produced a survey of working-class life, rather than the epistolary-style conduct guide in his *Virtue Rewarded.* The title of the novel, as well, demonstrates the possibility that if a young woman seeks to remain chaste and gentle in nature, all her suffering will be rewarded. The rake, then, must exist to demonstrate the extreme and unyielding affront to the lady's honor. His lustful feelings drive the plot. Pamela's vacillation when deciding if she should return to her parents' house demonstrates that she has at least some reservations about leaving Mr. B–'s employment. Though she is an extremely reserved and virtuous character, she displays feelings of love for Mr. B–. She is happy to receive his proposal of marriage when he promises to love her virtuously despite his previous actions. Pamela's character represents an ideal of virtue so sincere that Mr. B– eventually repents his immodest, sexually aggressive behavior and vows to live virtuously. Pamela does still experience desire for Mr. B– demonstrating virtue and desire can and do coexist. Richardson's conduct themes, which follow suggestions from conduct literature predating *Pamela*, retain the element of amatory fiction that acknowledged female sexual desire, which first sparked a public discussion of female sexuality.

For Wilson, Pamela exemplifies the conjunction of a virtuous nature and an appropriate sexual life at the resolution of the novel. Terry Castle contends that, while Wilson is not wrong, he limits himself to a discussion of Pamela's relationship with Mr. B—and does not examine the role of Mrs. Jewkes. Using a passage in which Pamela encounters two bulls blocking her escape from Mr. B—'s house and she imagines that the bulls are Mr. B— and Mrs. Jewks. According to Castle, Pamela is more than a story of one female character's coming of age but also a space to

examine the "eroticized situations" Pamela endures with Mr. B—and Mrs. Jewks together.[343] The author calls Pamela's character "a sexual myth"[344] of female coming of age and the ideal of feminine virtue.

As Wilson points out, scholars have often formed camps of "pamelaists" versus "antipamelaists." Eliza Haywood wrote the conduct novel *Anti-Pamela* (1741), and Henry Fielding wrote *Shamela* (1741) in response to Richardson's Pamela character who some said was too perfect. These books respond to idea that Pamela is the ideal female character to emulate for female readers. Each novel satirized Pamela and offers different perspectives of Richardson's events. Wilson argues that the debate between camps has too often eclipsed other, more relevant, aspects of the developing novel genre. The author contends that heroines are often depicted as either salacious characters meant to demonstrate inappropriate behavior or piety personified to teach ideal morality and acceptable behavior.[345] In *Pamela,* the plot is driven by a moral, virtuous heroine who also struggles to understand her complex feelings for her employer. Mr. B– has a kind reputation and is often polite with Pamela; however, he also exhibits sexually aggressive behavior towards her and makes more than one attempt to have sex with her.

Satire and Façade

Satire in Restoration and eighteenth-century British literary works relies on humor and sarcasm to discuss political and social injustices. Many conduct books in the eighteenth century used satirical elements to discuss male and female virtue. Satire, or the use of humor or irony to shame bad judgment or vice, is particularly effective for authors discussing contradictions within

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[343] Terry J. Castle. "P/B: Pamela as Sexual Fiction." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 22, no. 3 (1982): 472.

[344] Ibid., p. 471.

[345] Wilson, p. 79.

socially approved conduct norms. Discovering the façade concealing the immoral behavior of an outwardly socially superior character is a reoccurring theme in conduct books.

Satire was considered a masculine mode of writing because it requires the author to be well versed in political and social behaviors and to have the capacity to reason whether social behaviors and expectations are justifiable. However, however, authors Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, and Frances Burney demonstrate through their own satirical writings that they, as women, have the ability and mental fortitude to compose satire. They offer the commentary that men may not be the only sex disappointed in the nature of the opposite sex or in the institution of marriage. Behn, Defoe, Swift, Haywood, Fielding, and Burney all write satirical works commenting on the expectations surrounding feminine and masculine virtue. Swift and Fielding wrote satirical works commenting on the role of women in marriage and on expected social conduct. While Swift and Fielding focus on the lie of feminine sexual chastity in their works "The Lady's Dressing Room" and *Shamela,* respectively, they do not discuss in depth any other virtue, like kindness, courage, or honesty. Behn and Burney examine the shortcomings of masculine prowess. Burney at least offers male characters who demonstrate masculine virtues such as dependability, stable temperaments, and respect towards others.

Behn begins the conversation by describing male impotence in her poem, "The Disappointment" (1680). The lovers in the poem are the virgin Chloris and a young man Lisander. The narrator likens Chloris's virginity to the spoils of war to be won. One line describes Lisander's lust for Chloris as not allowing for modesty. Chloris gives in to passion. While giving in to passion and taking part in immodest acts is not problematic for Lisander, one might assume that a contemporary reader would be surprised by a virgin's willingness to lose her virtue as it equates to virginity; although, according to Swift, we should not be surprised, because

all women show only a modest façade and are truly sullied underneath their show of virtue. It seems, however, that Behn's Lisander cannot achieve an erection. Chloris places her hand on his penis, demonstrating her grasp of masculine "virtue," and finds it flaccid. "The Disappointment," then, is an ironic depiction of a flaccid male figure and a female figure taking control of the sex act. Behn's work implies that men adorn themselves with machismo only to leave their partners wanting when the emblem of their manhood cannot function. In this poem, Behn calls attention to a male character's inability to perform his manly duty and implies that women not only experience sexual desire but expect to be satisfied. Behn uses similar satirical elements in *Love Letters* showing scenes of male impotence and emasculation.

Defoe's *Moll Flanders* has satirical elements commenting on the British justice system and female misconduct. *Moll Flanders* (1722) follows a woman who engages sexually with men often and describes the difficult life she leads resulting from her immoral behavior. Moll, which is not her birth name, is born to a criminal and raised by a foster family. She is coerced into her first sexual relationship and tricked into her second. Her succeeding sexual partners come from her desire for a partner or to fulfill a financial need. Her decisions throughout the novel often stem from the need for money, food, and shelter. She does engage in sexual behavior to secure her necessities. Moll gives birth to at least ten children, not all of whom live, with five different men, and she cares for none of them. She chooses to live an immoral life. Defoe does not suggest that if she were to live a virtuous life, she would become rich and married to a nobleman; however, we can assume that if she chose a more virtuous lifestyle and practiced self-control, she would not have lived such a harsh life ending as it began, in prison.

Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" (1732) dismantles the façade of a lady of the evening. A male customer, Strephon, details the items he finds in the room of Celia and implies

that she, and all women, are disgusting creatures who cover their imperfections to fool men into loving them. He enters her room while she is away and is horrified to see her makeup and dirty clothes. The poem is humorous as Strephon exclaims in horror to find traces of dental plaque, dead skin and hair lodged in brushes, and clothes reeking of feces and urine. The smell of excrement and filth traumatizes Strephon so that he believes he may never enjoy another woman because they are all deceitful creatures. Women only appear to be virtuous and gentle, but they are actually soiled– literally and figuratively. Both Defoe's Moll and Swift's Celia engage in sexual behaviors to provide financial stability for themselves. Neither text directly describes the behavior as prostitution, but both portray how women engaging in sexual activity brings about hardship. Defoe centers his narrative on Moll's mistakes and ill-fate, but Swift suggests that all women are guilty of deceit in an effort to allure men.

Many eighteenth-century comedic works, such as John Dryden's *Marriage-a-la-Mode* (1673) and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), describe marriage as a means to cuckold men. Similar to Behn's poem in which the female character takes hold of Lisander's flaccid penis, wives are demonstrated figuratively to emasculate their husband, rendering them limp. Wives do this by being less interesting and willing to please their husbands physically in marriage. Husbands, therefore, often seek mistresses to compensate for the toll of dealing with a dull wife.

Anti-Pamela

Eliza Haywood wrote the satirical novel *Anti-Pamela: or Feign'd Innocence Detected* (1741), just one year after Richardson's *Pamela*. The title also includes *In a series of Syrena's Adventures.* Haywood's use of the word adventure has sexual connotations. According to Catherine Ingrassia, Haywood's readers would have recognized her use of adventures from her

earlier fiction. Ingrassia also notes that adventure appears twenty times in the text and almost always has a sexual connotation.[346]

Syrena Tricksy is a young woman of meager means who takes an apprentice job in the home of a gentlewoman. The story is written in epistolary form and is composed mostly of letters between Syrena and her mother. The goal of the apprenticeship understood by mother and daughter is that Syrena should find a wealthy husband or lover who can bestow a settlement upon her as mistress. Her mother cautions her from being ruined as such a thing would destroy Syrena's prospects. Early in the texts, the mother described as a "woman of intrigue."[347] A woman of intrigue is someone who has a questionable reputation and someone who might use sexuality to manipulate. Considering Syrena's guardian does not display virtuousness, it is unsurprising that Syrena turns to the same means of increasing her social mobility and finances. Her mother's actions are a better teacher of how she learns to conduct herself than the many warnings against desirous behavior given to Syrena in her letters.

Syrena does not heed her mother's warnings. Her first sexual encounter takes place in a tavern with her neighbor, Vardine. They take refuge in the tavern from heavy rain. Syrena already knows that taverns are not places respectable women visit. She even comments that coming to the tavern with Vardine is scandalous, which he vehemently denies.[348] He encourages Syrena to drink mulled wine. She becomes drunk and he rapes her. The narrator takes this opportunity to speak on the dangers of women drinking to excess because behaviors that a respectable woman would never engage in become more tempting with alcohol:

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[346] Catherine Ingrassia, ed. Haywood, Eliza and Henry Fielding. *Anti-Pamela; or Feign'd Innocence Detected* and *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews,* Broadview Press (2004), p. 60.

[347] Ibid., p. 55.

[348] Ibid., p.74.

> The example before us of a Girl train'd up in Precepts directly opposite, to giving Way to any tender Inclinations, and taught that the only thing she had to avoid was the bestowing of any Favours but where Interest directed; now by the meer Force of Liquor, betray'd to yield to the Impulse of Nature, and resign that Jewel, on which all her Hopes of living great in the World depended, to a Person from whom she could have no expectations, and for what she felt could not justly be called Love; this, I say, may be a Warning to all of what Principles and Station whatever; since there are Dangers arising from the pernicious Custom, as well in the Closet as in the Street, tho' perhaps of a different Nature. (Haywood and Ingrassia, 76)[349]

According to Ingrassia, Haywood cautions women against drinking in several texts, such as *A Present for a Servant-Maid* (1743).[350] Syrena's mother warns that men often say many pretty things to young women to seduce them. She knows the dangers of entertaining men, and though she promises her mother she will not encourage Vardine, she finds herself in a dangerous position. Vardine promises Syrena that he means her no harm yet takes advantage of her at his first opportunity. The character of Vardine displays unvirtuous characteristics like Behn's Philander, Haywood's Beauplaisir, and later Burney's Sir Clement, who all promise the heroines that they intend to protect her virtue and instead destroy it.

Pamela and Syrena use their virginity or sexuality as a kind of bargaining chip to increase their social class or mobility. Pamela's case is intended to seem unintentional so that the reader understands that she gains a higher social class because of her virtue. Part of Pamela's virtue includes her unwillingness to relinquish her virginity to Mr. B. Syrena intentionally seeks out men to increase her social standing. Her efforts are unsuccessful because of her deceitful, unvirtuous actions. Ingrassia notes that the narrator uses the phrase "resign that Jewel" in

[349] Ibid, p. 76.
[350] Ibid., p. 74.

reference to Pamela, who describes her virtue as a jewel.[351] Readers of both texts probably would have picked up on the allusion.

Syrena uses her initial loss of virtue as a motive to seek out sexual adventures. Like *Fantomina*, Syrena takes on different characters to seduce men. She does not tell Vardine the whole of her identity and eventually takes on the guise of a gentlewoman, a married woman, a libertine, a mistress, and a wealthy widow to engage in sexual activity with multiple suitors. While Fantomina seeks the attention of only one man, Syrena seduces several men and, eventually, damages her reputation and social prospects. Syrena's scheming is what leads to her downfall.

Shamela

Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741) details the scheming performed by women to become wives and snuff out their husbands' masculine power. Fielding responds to Richardson's *Pamela* by offering the implied truth of Pamela's character. He renames the heroine Shamela to indicate the falsity of Richardson's character. Richardson's Pamela is chaste, demure, kind, and subservient. Fielding's Shamela is unchaste and a trickster. The full title of Shamela reads "An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews. In which many notorious Falshoods and Misrepresentations of a Book called *Pamela* are exposed and refuted."[352] The title claims that the novel gives an accurate account of Pamela's story, and that Pamela was not the model of virginal morality she claimed to be. Shamela tries to trick her employer, now called Booby, into marrying her, trapping him into a marriage for her own financial and social gain. Fielding

[351] Ibid., p. 76.
[352] Ibid., p. 229.

communicates the ridiculousness of believing that a character like Pamela could exist. According to Fielding, all virtuous Pamelas only fain to be so in order to trick men into marriages.

Fielding sets the tone of *Shamela* immediately in the first editor's note, preceding the letters of the epistolary style story. The editor writes to Fanny, to whom *The Life of Shamela* is dedicated.[353] Fanny was and is and slang term for female genitalia in British English. The text implies that Shamela, and perhaps all women, seek to gain financially or in social class through their behavior towards men. Unlike Pamela, Shamela resists Booby's advances, not because she is so moral, but because she hopes he will offer her marriage in exchange for her virginity. Her scheming is successful. Ironically, Shamela is discovered to have had a baby with Parson Williams before her employment with Booby, and the two eventually begin an affair. In stark contradiction to Richardson's Pamela, Fielding shows the duplicity associated with female nature disguised as emblematic virtue.

Swift, Haywood, and Fielding portray the faults of women through satire, claiming that their virtue is dishonest, and that an honorable man shall not be tricked by their lasciviousness. Behn and Burney demonstrate that women are just as able to show the faults of men and create works that show the fragility of masculinity. Chloris is disappointed by Lisander's lack of virility, inverting masculinity's dominance over femininity. Evelina has the mental fortitude to see through Sir Clement's advances and protects her virtue. Satire written by Behn and Burney speak to the injustices surrounding the expectation that women to be simultaneously both virginal and willing to the right buyer, while being accused of wantonness if men feel injured by their denials. The works of Behn and Burney invert the irony of satirical literature by men, like

[353] Ibid., pg. 231.

Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" and Fielding's *Shamela,* which accuse female characters of being immodest and scheming; although, Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* da;sp emonstrates a female character who definitely is immodest and scheming, engaging in sexual adventures in hopes of some kind of reward, either financial or social mobility. Richardson's *Pamela*, however, describes the importance of feminine virtue. Indeed, feminine virtue largely drives the plot of the novel and is the most valuable aspect of the main character, Pamela.

Evelina; or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.

In Frances Burney's (1752-1840) works, it is often the male characters scheming to become married. In her novel, *Evelina* (1778), Burney creates a character who could come to fortune if her natural father claims her as his daughter. Evelina is introduced to London society while staying with family friends. Her unknown social status and parentage create curiosity and several men attempt to seduce her. She laughs at Sir Clement when he attempts to be witty and calls him a fop in a letter to her guardian. Laughing at his advances would be considered incredibly rude; perhaps Burney is calling attention to the rudeness blamed on women who do not play along in the farcical behavior of men attempting to woo them. Evelina denies Sir Clement repeatedly and escapes an attempted kidnap and rape. Burney is commenting on the atrocious behavior of men who pretend to be gallant.

Sir Clement unjustly tries to force himself into Evelina's social circle to coerce her into a relationship. Evelina, however, injures his masculine prowess when she laughs at his mock-chivalric performance. His knightly status should communicate his masculine virtues, like physical prowess and an adherence to the morals dictated by the knightly code; yet he only wants to have sex with her. He might be interested in marriage if she has a fortune, but sex is his primary motivation for pursuing Evelina. She shows that she is not fooled by his façade and

escapes his pursuits. Evelina subverts his masculine power by denying sex, leaving him much as Behn's Chloris left Lisander unmanned. The major difference between Behn's and Burney's unmanning scenes is that Chloris wants to have sex with Lisander but he is physically unable; Evelina, a virgin, does not want to have sex with Sir Clement inside or outside of marriage. She denies his seduction and escapes his attempted rape.

Burney creates space in *Evelina* for women's perspectives on virtue and how social class affects expected conduct. *Evelina* offers an ideological critique of eighteenth-century modes of considering a lady's virtue as inexorably linked to one's familial class. Though satirical, Burney still offers a serious view of conduct and the fragility of virtuous reputations. Burney uses satire to demonstrate the idealized way women were expected to conduct themselves and how others, regardless of class, often treated them. Evelina must navigate high class social functions without the education necessary to prepare her for the many rules of conduct orchestrating such events. Lack of decorum results in being thought to be, if not physically, then mentally promiscuous. Rather than being simply a comedic examination of female conduct and delicacy,[354] or a showcase of comedic characters for the reader's entertainment, Burney's *Evelina* opens a conversation about class and conduct expected of both men and women.

In his essay, "Narrative Discourse, Literary Character, and Ideology," James Phelan discusses the relationship between using a particular narrative technique and the ideology communicated in a work. He asks if one can appreciate the narrative form while disagreeing with the ideology communicated therein.[355] *Evelina* provides readers with an excellent example of

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[354] Language of "female delicacy" discussed in Staves's and is referenced in Burney's novel *The Wanderer*.

[355] James Phelan, "Narrative Discourse, Literary Character, and Ideology." *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology*. Ohio State University Press (1989), p. 132.

Phelan's narratological inquiry. The novel represents characters who speak to issues within the social construct by allowing readers to experience them both mimetically and thematically. Phelan explains that characters operate in several ways– mimetically, meaning that the character is "like a possible person," and thematically, meaning that the character is "transindividual and ideational, sometimes representing a group, and sometimes representing an idea."[356] The mimetic and thematic spheres together allow the reader to understand the potential of each character to be meaningful.[357] Evelina's gentle and knowledgeable identity, coupled with her narrative of her own character flaws and social follies, as well as an account of how other characters present themselves, functions mimetically as allowing a reader to consider her and other characters as real people. Evelina and Pamela are similar characters in that both protect their reputations by resisting unwanted sexual advances. Both make fortunate marriages that provide them with stability and loving husbands; however, Evelina's ability to enter wider social circles gives her clarity about the behaviors of some people. Evelina recognizes the immodest characters of the Branghtons and Sir Clement. She is not fooled by Sir Clement's advances towards her, whereas Pamela does marry the man who attempted to seduce and rape her.

Evelina's identity functions thematically as a critique of social conduct and expectations, and of the ways in which a lady's virtue appear to be bound up in her familial connections.[358] Other characters, such as Lord Orville and Sir Clement, function mimetically, to demonstrate to readers the differing behaviors one might see and experience from a gentleman or a knight based upon each man's virtue and morality. These two characters also function thematically to

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[356] Ibid., p. 134.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Note: Language such as "mimetically functions" and "thematically functions" is taken from Phelan's discussion of his model for analyzing character.

demonstrate the repercussions of assuming that all behavior is appropriate so long as one carries a high station. Mr. Villars works nicely to parallel these ideas, as one might read him as a sound and moral father-figure, but also as a demonstration that one has the capability to be virtuous without a high station. Mr. Villars's position as a reverend and his connections to people of the upper-class place him in a flexible echelon of social ranking. Evelina occupies this same peculiar ranking, as she is well educated (even if she is not so in the decorum surrounding social events), gentle, and kind. She attempts always to conduct herself with grace and poise. Her lack of familial name, however, places a question mark over social ranking for those who come into contact with her.

Evelina is written in the epistolary form and features mostly letters from the heroine and narrator. Burney develops the identity of Evelina through her personal conversations. The reader is able to see Evelina's perspective as well as others' perspectives of Evelina through trustworthy characters like Mr. Villars. The Reverend Mr. Villars describes Evelina as a kind and innocent soul, inviting the reader to empathize with her. Evelina describes both her joys and follies in her letters to Mr. Villars, providing the reader with proof that we might expect an accurate account of her feelings and interactions with other characters. In her letters, she describes her time spent in London and episodes of severe embarrassment due to her never having learned social customs. One such event occurs when she attends a ball with the Mirvans (the household with whom she resides while away from Berry Hill during the first half of the novel). It is on this occasion that as noted above, she meets Lord Orville and they dance. Before being introduced to Lord Orville by her party, an unnamed "foppish" man approaches her and begs that she dance with him. Evelina refuses, rightly so, as it would be considered indecent to dance with someone with whom she has no acquaintance: "It is easiest as well as the safest *Method* of doing it, is in *private*

Companies, amongst *particular friends*..."[359]After she and Lord Orville dance, the foppish man returns. He interrupts Lord Orville and Evelina's discussion to scold her:

> I humbly beg pardon Madam,– and of you too, my Lord,– for breaking in upon such agreeable conversation– which must, doubtless, be more delectable– than what I have the honour to offer– but–"
>
> I interrupted him– I blush for my folly,– with laughing; yet I could not help it; for, added to the man's stately foppishness, (and he actually took snuff between every three words) when I looked around at Lord Orville, I saw much extreme surprise in his face…Lord Orville actually stared at me. (Burney, 26)[360]

Evelina's laughing out loud at the behavior of the man takes Lord Orville by surprise. He has not heard Evelina laugh until now, and he is also surprised that she would be open, maybe brave, enough to laugh at the man.

The foppish man desires to know what accident prevented Evelina from dancing with him, for it must be an accident for her to "be guilty of such ill-manners."[361] While Evelina was correct to refuse to dance at a large event with a man she had not been acquainted with, she openly mocked his ridiculous behavior. When dealing with the opposite sex, women are expected to be passive and delicate. Burney writes: "The same degree of active courage is not to be expected in woman as in man; and, not belonging to her nature, it is not agreeable in her; but passive courage, patience, and fortitude under sufferings–presence of mind, and calm resignation in danger, are surely desirable in every creature."[362] Evelina writes to Mr. Villars that she was "tired, ashamed, and mortified" to have conducted herself so in front of Lord Orville. Understanding Evelina's correct and incorrect decorum through her own words allows the reader

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[359] Stewart Cooke. "Conduct Books." In Fraces Burney's *Evelina, or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Stewart J. Cooke. New York: W.W. Norton and Company (1998), p. 345.

[360] Frances Burney, *Evelina, or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Stewart J. Cooke. New York: W.W. Norton and Company (1998), p. 26.

[361] Burney, *Evelina,* pp. 26-27.

[362] Burney, "Conduct Books," p. 341.

to consider these events as cautionary moments. Evelina believes that she was correct for not dancing with a man she was unacquainted with, but she should not have laughed out loud at his advances. Her laughing at his performance, though warranted in this reader's modern opinion, emasculates the man trying to become closer to her. Evelina's description of his behavior demonstrates to the reader that he may be trying too hard to impress the party but making her acquaintance is what the man is expected to be doing at a ball or other social occasion with eligible young ladies.

The eighteenth-century reader would also understand the virtue and conduct displayed in Evelina thematically because of the familiarity of medieval chivalric tales. The twenty-first century-reader also has the ability to recognize common tropes, such as the knight and lady who must both be virtuous and moral. It is the duty of the knight, however, to protect the virtue of the lady. *Evelina* discusses female virtue, as well as male virtue, underscoring the importance of maintaining a moral countenance, regardless of sex and station. Eighteenth-century readers would be familiar with Arthurian texts, such as "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," which would help them to understand virtue thematically. Gawain had to prove his virtue as well as his bravery in protecting virtue. Having controlled his own desire, politely refused the lady, and fulfilled his challenge at the Green Chapel, Sir Gawain returns to Camelot with his knighthood intact—unlike Sir Clement.

The reader can recognize the theme of conduct and virtue using such tales to analyze characters such as Evelina, Lord Orville, and Sir Clement to see better how virtue and conduct function within the novel. Throughout the book, Evelina becomes increasingly anxious when encountering an acquaintance while in impolite company. Evelina attends an opera with her relatives, the Branghtons and Madame Duval, who is her grandmother. The polite and

fashionable society at the opera juxtaposes the chaotic Branghtons. The Branghtons are dressed inappropriately and unwilling to pay for decent seating. Evelina is spotted by Sir Clement, and allows him to take her to her friends, the Mirvans, terrified that her relationship with ill-mannered characters might come to light. Sir Clement feigns having difficulty returning Evelina to the Mirvans and begs to drive her home. Lord Orville overhears Sir Clement's proposal and Evelina's uneasiness. Lord Orville offers his own coach to conduct Evelina home, while he takes a chair, to maintain decorum and protect her reputation. Sir Clement becomes angry and more forceful in his proposal. Evelina, having no other reason than that Sir Clement makes her uneasy, cannot verbally refuse. Thus, Sir Clement accompanies Evelina, purposefully telling his drivers to go the wrong way. She tells Sir Clement that she believes the coachmen have taken them to the incorrect street:

> "And can you think me so much my own enemy?– if my good genius has inspired the man with a desire of prolonging my happiness, can you expect that I should counter-act its indulgence?" I now began to apprehend that he had himself ordered the man to go the wrong way, and I was so much alarmed at the idea, that, the very instant it occurred to me, I let down the glass, and made a sudden effort to open the chariot-door myself, with a view of jumping, but he caught hold of me, exclaiming, "For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?" (Burney, 83)[363]

In this moment, Sir Clement endangers much more than Evelina's physical welfare. He does not protect her virtue as he should as a knight. Sir Clement fails in his knightly duties to protect Evelina though he begs to take charge of her and is dishonest about how they become separated. She finds herself alone with a man at night, on an unfamiliar street, with no one around, save the coach driver who, obviously, would not step in to defend her honor if he has already been willing to be involved with a scheme to trick Evelina. Sir Clement cares not for her

[363] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 83.

wellbeing, but wants to be alone with her, no matter the inappropriate nature of a young man and woman being secluded alone together without a chaperone. Dishonoring his knightly title, Sir Clement ignores his chivalric duty to protect a lady's virtue, and instead, takes advantage of Evelina's gentility.

Inversely, Lord Orville does demonstrate a sincere concern for Evelina's safety and maintenance of her virtue. When finally arriving back at the Mirvan's residence, Lord Orville is already there. Interpreting Evelina's uneasiness caused by Sir Clement, Lord Orville goes at once to the Mirvan's residence to ensure that she arrives safely and to inform the Mirvans of Sir Clement's misconduct should she be delayed. His intentions were to confirm that Evelina's character had not been treated immorally, nor had her honor been compromised. Though he attempted it, Evelina is not raped by Sir Clement because she is able to flee before he forces the act. Lord Orville is correct that she was treated in a foul manner, tricked and accosted, because Sir Clement has a duty to protect her honor which he purposefully puts at risk; however, Evelina was able to defend her own virtue on the journey. Joanne Cutting-Gray argues that Burney's patriarchal society constructs female virtue in such a way as to promote its innocence, only then to assault the innocent.[364] Evelina has been led astray by innocence and naïveté in how she should handle the request of a gentleman to drive her alone. Her innocence is placed in danger; however, in this scene, Lord Orville acts as the overseer to the lady's virtue as knights are expected to behave. He is the protector of our heroine, much like Sir Gawain is the protector of the lady's virtue and misconduct.

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[364] Joanne Cutting-Gray, "Writing Innocence: Fanny Burney's Evelina." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Women Writing Autobiography, 1990), p. 47.

The novel's epistolary format with detailed personal accounts functions as a discussion about conduct of both male and female characters. As explained by Sabine Augustin, Mr. Villars's letters to Evelina form a sort of conduct book, covering topics such as affection, artifice, coquetry, and imprudence.[365] Using the work of John Richetti, Augustin comments that Evelina's character exists on the edge of other social circles, allowing her to experience alternate social constructions and comment freely upon them in her letters to Mr. Villars. Augustin continues that rank, or social class, are not dependent upon virtue and birth. For example, Mr. Villars cautions Evelina against trusting even Lord Orville completely, due to his seeming freedoms and ill manners in a letter to her, later discovered to have been forged by Sir Clement. Mr. Villars writes, "long, and with the deepest regret, have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind.– You will start at the mention of his name, –you will tremble every word you read;– I grieve to give pain to my gentile Evelina, but I dare not any longer spare her."[366] In Mr. Villars' view, a bad character, formed from taking too many liberties with anyone, or speaking freely without consent of the hearer, taints even an illustrious rank like Lord Orville's. Susan Staves writes that, according to the social cost of Burney's world, the smallest error in decorum makes even a virgin little better that a prostitute.[367] Mr. Villars reminds Evelina, "nothing is so delicate as the reputation of woman; it is, at once, the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things."[368]

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[365] Sabine Augustin, "Frances Burney– *Evelina: or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778)," *Eighteenth-Century Female Voices: Education and the Novel*. A note included in Augustin's text references epistolary topics from Jonathan Deitz and Sidonie Smith, "From Precept to Proper Social Action: Empirical Maturation in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*," *ECL*, 3 (1997), p. 86.

[366] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 254.

[367] Staves, ""Evelina;" or, Female Difficulties," p. 375.

[368] Burney, *Evelina*, pg, 126. Also cited in Staves, ""Evelina;" or, Female Difficulties," p. 375.

Evelina must navigate her new surroundings in London, so opposite to her upbringing in the country. Another such event in which Evelina's character risks being called into question occurs after watching fireworks with the Branghtons. The finale creates such a large show and noise that many spectators run. Evelina is accosted by several groups of drunken young men before finding two ladies walking together. She asks to walk with them, not realizing that they are prostitutes. Being seen alone in the company of prostitutes could place serious dark marks on Evelina's reputation should she be discovered in such a position. She does happen to walk past Lord Orville, but he does not recognize her due to her company. They walk past a second time, and Lord Orville observes that Evelina is in a precarious position. He ensures that she is returned to her company, even though the other ladies join the company. He does not accost or chastise her. His concern is in seeing that Evelina be returned to safe company without her character becoming sullied.

Evelina has no familial name and, therefore, no social rank, and yet Lord Orville seeks to protect her. Sir Clement, a knight akin to the lord, has a title meant to communicate his chivalric behavior. He does not seem to behave morally, however, stressing that a gentleman's title does not guarantee his morality. We are not given much information concerning either Lord Orville's or Sir Clement's familial connections when Burney introduces them; yet the reader is allowed to assume that they ought to be of gentle countenance and moral character. It is not until we experience them as characters that we understand that their titles do not guarantee chivalrous behavior. The same can be said for women in the novel; Lady Louisa, for example, is rude and quarrelsome. She does not speak to one of whose station she is unaware. Evelina writes that she is quite surprised that a lady such as Louisa can be Lord Orville's sister. She says, "how strange, that such near relations should be so different to each other! There is, indeed, some resemblance

in their features, but in manners, not in the least."[369] Just as for men, a woman's station does not guarantee that she will conduct herself according to her noble rank.

When considering how a lady is supposed to act concerning the company of others, I recall Alberti's statement, "beauty in a woman must be judged not only by the charm and refinement of her face, but still more by the grace of her person and her aptitude for bearing and giving birth to many fine children…In a bride…a man must first seek beauty of mind (*le bellezze dell'animo*), that is, good conduct and virtue."[370] Having beauty of the mind meant portraying a controlled demeanor. It seems that Evelina as narrator seeks to demonstrate that how one treats others informs one of another's character, with station being little involved. To Evelina, gentleness "seems so essential a part of the female character,"[371] judging not by the appearance of refinement, but rather the contents of one's mind and character reveal one's virtue.

Perhaps the reader assumes that Evelina should be moral and virtuous, because her natural father is a baronet, placing her in the upper echelon; unfortunately for Evelina, her father does not accept paternity, placing a large question mark over her familial history. As demonstrated above, Evelina's familial connections have little to do with her behavior and desire to act morally with correct social decorum. Evelina is introduced to the reader without a paternal name, and yet, we find that it is not needed to determine Evelina's character. According to Amy Pawl, Evelina's lack of name creates an existential crisis that may result in her ceasing to exist. The author expresses a concern that Evelina may become a nobody, meaning, her father may not claim her and/or she may not make a good marriage. She cannot hope to make a good match or

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[369] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 230.

[370] Alberti, p. 12.

[371] David Oakleaf, "The Name of the Father: Social Identity and the Ambition of Evelina." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol 3, No 4 (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 348.

dwell in high society so long as she has no familial name attached to her. She needs evidence of her identity, or she may cease to exist.[372] To maintain not only a proper place in society, but to exist at all, Evelina must be claimed or possessed by another. Evelina describes confusion in her lack of name in a letter to Reverend Villars, who calls her Evelina Anville– "I am, With the utmost affection, gratitude, and duty, Your Evelina. I cannot sign to *you* Anville and what other name may I claim?"[373] Burney's mimetic and thematic narratological method allows the reader to understand the importance of a familial name, especially for the other characters within the novel, without needing that name him/herself. Thus, Evelina struggles with how to sign a name to the guardian who conjured that name. She also has difficulty in conversing with Lord Orville who asks for her name after asking her to dance. Evelina becomes distressed at the question for she truly does not know how to answer the nobleman; however, for the reader, whether Evelina signs Anville, or her first name only, changes not how the reader experiences Evelina as a mimetic character because we are given information concerning her confusion but, also, of her sincere character.

Pawl also argues that Evelina's identity becomes further confused because of the nearly identical situation of her mother, Caroline Evelyn. Both Caroline and Evelina experienced the death of a parent, were raised in Berry Hill by Mr. Villars, and were both rejected by Sir Belmont. Caroline also died at the age of eighteen, placing her at about the same age as Evelina, who is seventeen when she leaves Mr. Villars' care.[374] Sir Belmont destroyed the evidence of his marriage to Caroline, forcing her back into the care of Mr. Villars. He effectually denies

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[372] Amy J. Pawl, ""And What Other Name May I Claim?": Names and Their Owners in Frances Burney's Evelina." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol 3, No 4 (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 286

[373] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 19.

[374] Pawl, ""And What Other Name May I Claim?": Names and Their Owners in Frances Burney's Evelina," p. 291.

Caroline's claim to the name "Belmont," resulting in a claimless child. Upon Caroline's death and Madame Duval's ascertaining that she was unaware of Evelina's birth until years later, Evelina is left without any one person who can offer her possession in the form of a familial name, either paternally or maternally.

The evolution of our main character describes the grievances caused by her having no one secure relation. Mr. Villars acts as her most trusted and loved relation, but he is not her father. Evelina faces much rejection at the hands of her grandmother, Madame Duval, who demands her paternity be proven. Through each tense event that leaves Evelina flustered, the reader gains knowledge of her desire to be secure and happy, not to be considered foolish or idiotic concerning her upbringing. One such account concerns Evelina's grandmother, Madam Duval. Learning of their similar residences during trips to London, Madame Duval invites Evelina to spend time with her. During the time, Madame Duval expresses resentment towards Mr. Villars rearing Evelina with the air of a country bumpkin. The reader may determine that Madame Duval cannot be trusted, for she claims to have been unaware of Evelina's birth for several years but made no attempt to assist in her upbringing. In conjunction, Madame Duval openly mocks Villars and Evelina's lack of patronage. Madame Duval also introduces Evelina to the Branghtons during this visit, her first look at biological relations; these relations, however, display a studied confusion as to Evelina's identity. They seem shocked to hear of her situation and enquire about seeing the opera and whether the country is not so boring. Even though these are the most closely related characters to Evelina, they offer no ownership of her, nor do they offer the reader any information that might allow one to consider Evelina's identity differently than already constructed.

Many seek to take advantage of Evelina due to her fluid social station. Sir Clement eventually tells her that he might love her but can't actually marry her because of her indistinct familial connections. Sir Clement admits to Lord Orville, "My intentions ... are hardly known to myself..... were I a *marrying man*, she, of all the women I have seen, I would fix upon for a wife: but I believe that not even the philosophy of your Lordship would recommend to me a connection of that sort, with a girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency."[375] In these lines, Sir Clement admits that he never has had any intention of marrying Evelina, because of her "obscure birth." How are we to consider his kidnapping her when offering to accompany her home from the opera? Sir Clement, it can be concluded, is only interested in Evelina for the physical pleasures she can bring him. He admits to enjoying her company, but knowing he cannot, or does not wish to, marry her, we might conclude that he was only ever a danger to her virtue.

Lord Orville, however, admits he loves Evelina because of her goodness before she is accepted by her father. David Oakleaf explains that, thematically, Lord Orville represents the social order, publicly acknowledging Evelina's "unique private merit." He proposes to her before her father acknowledges paternity, making her an heiress, and providing her with a fortune and title. Lord Orville declares his love "in the language of esteem and admiration," rather than familial promises.[376] The reader relates to Lord Orville's sentiments.

It should be recognized, however, that while title does not equate to virtue, Evelina does, in fact, become acknowledged by her father, Sir Belmont, marries Lord Orville, and becomes titled. Kristina Straub and Samuel Choi discuss the ending of *Evelina*. Straub writes that the

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[375] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 287. Also cited in Oakleaf, "The Name of the Father: Social Identity and the Ambition of Evelina," p. 346.

[376] Oakleaf, p. 349.

novel details the conventional notion that marriage is the quickest, most efficient route to happiness for a woman, when, in Straub's view, it creates a socially inescapable trap.[377] Choi states that the novel's conclusion does not promise any sort of rebellion by Evelina against her ill-treatment; rather, the ending seems to place Evelina within the social order and shows her established and belonging to it.[378] I disagree, however, because Evelina's marriage and titling were not the results of a fairy tale plot, her happiness earned by beauty or gentleness. By necessity, Evelina must be restored to her aristocratic standing because Sir Belmont must realize that he did not fully understand, nor appreciate her mother's character. Evelina does not require a title to be virtuous and demonstrate gentle conduct. Lord Orville loves her before she is acknowledged because he understands her character as encompassing morality. Her gaining a title is not from an excess of virtue or character but from birthright. She would still have been as virtuous, and gentle had she returned to Berry Hill unmarried and unclaimed. The reader does not require that Evelina be acknowledged nor married to understand and appreciate her character, as Lord Orville does; yet I concede, I believe most of us experience feelings of joy for her in the romantic conclusion of the novel.

The reader understands that Burney's intentions are to create a commentary on social decorum and expectations from her introductory letter, "To the Authors of the Monthly and Critical Reviews." Burney uses the same mimetic and thematic language she incorporates in Evelina's letters; language that, according to Guyonne Leduc in his work, "The Dramatic Import of Letters within Letters in Frances Burney's Evelina," was fitting for women authors of the

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[377] Kristina Straub, Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press,1987), p. 55. And Samiel Choi, "Signing Evelina: Female Self-Inscription in the Discourse of Letters." *Studies in the Novel* 31, no. 3, (1999), p. 261.

[378] Choi, "Signing Evelina: Female Self-Inscription in the Discourse of Letters," pp. 260-1.

early modern period.[379] Burney writes, "without name, without recommendation, and unknown alike to success and disgrace, to whom can I so properly apply for patronage, as to those who publicly profess themselves Inspectors of all literary performances?"[380] She admits that she has much to learn within the writing social sphere, and does not ask for patronage because they should give her a chance, but implores them to attempt to understand the social constructions that place her in the position of an unknown female author.

Burney continues, "let not the anxious solicitude with which I recommend myself to your notice, expose me to your derision. Remember, Gentlemen, you were all young writers once, and the most experienced veteran of your corps, may recollecting his first publication, renovate his first terrors, and learn to allow for mine."[381] In these statements, she expresses much more than fear of criticism but of rejection without attention to the work at hand. Burney's creation of Evelina's character evolution without an ancestral name constructs her identity for the reader as, simultaneously, a mimetic representation of a virtuous person in, to use language from the novel, a "peculiar situation," and a thematic representation of conduct working within social classes. Her letter to the "gentlemen" functions in the same way as her novel. As explained by Augustin, the "female difficulties" Evelina encounters require her to overcome the lack of education concerning social etiquette in particular settings while defending her reputation.[382] Burney's narratological approach allows the reader to view both the writing itself and the characters within the novel through a larger social lens, calling for morality and an appreciation for the written

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[379] Guyonne Leduc, "The Dramatic Import of Letters within Letters in Frances Burney's Evelina." *Etudes Anglaises: Revue Du Monde Anglophone* 67, no. 1 (2014), p. 36.

[380] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 4.

[381] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 5.

[382] Augustin, "Frances Burney– *Evelina: or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778)," p. 95.

word without implications casting the wielder of the pen into particular categories determined solely by one's title of male or female.

Cecilia: Madness and Inspiration

Burney published *Cecilia, Memoirs of an Heiress* in 1782, four years after the publication of her first, and renowned, novel *Evelina.* The novel follows Burney's heroine, Cecilia Beverley. She is an heiress from Suffolk, who has been left with a large fortune; however, due to a clause in her inheritance, she can only keep her fortune if her future husband consents to take her surname. Control of her fortune has been bequeathed to three men who act as her guardians, whose society she must traverse. Cecilia is faced with rumor and scandal as one of her guardians vies for her fortune. She eventually falls in love with a social superior, an heir to a prestigious title and fortune. Cecilia must decide if her fortune and position in society are worth risking the pursuit of her passion.

Spanning nearly twice the length of *Evelina, Cecilia* introduces the reader to several main characters whose actions significantly affect the heroine. Cecilia must navigate the terrain of the nobility while searching for a suitable mate who is willing to take her name upon marriage. She must balance her interactions with her guardians–Mr. Harrel, with whom she lives (along with his wife), Mr. Briggs, who has been charged with managing Cecilia's fortune, and Mr. Delvile, who is an arrogant man, difficult to placate. She falls in love with the son of Mr. Delvile, Mortimer; however, his parents entreat Mortimer to quit Cecilia, lest he abandon the esteem attached to the Delvile name. Beyond Cecilia's confessions of love for Mortimer, Burney displays the inner quarrel of Cecilia as she tries to reconcile her disgust at the actions of her guardians with her desire to be independent, her obligation to exhibit proper conduct for single women (meaning, she should not travel nor live alone, without the presence of a male guardian

or husband), and her love for a man with whom she would be destined to a tension-fill life filled– because she agreed to marry him without the consent of his parents.

In Burney's letter to a friend, Samuel "Daddy" Crisp, on 14 March 1782, she justifies including a graphic scene in *Cecilia* depicting an argument between Mrs. Delvile and Mortimer. Mrs. Delvile becomes so upset that she bursts a blood vessel. Burney writes, "The conflict scene for Cecilia, between the mother [and] son, to which you so warmly object, is the very scene for which I wrote the whole Book! [and] so entirely does my plan hang upon it, that I must abide by its reception in the World, or put the whole behind the Fire' (EJL, 5:30)."[383] Burney cites this particular scene, visually immodest as it is, as the crux of the novel. Conflict, then, is the underlying theme throughout *Cecilia*. In this scene, Mortimer tells his mother that he is intent on marrying Cecilia, even though their union would result in the loss of his prestigious surname. Believing he is making a mistake in pursuing a coupling that would damage his legacy, Mrs. Delvile becomes so perturbed that her blood vessels burst in one of her eyes. Burney communicates that it is this tense moment, in which one character insists on pursuing his passion, that results in the disappointment and trepidation of those closest to him.

Burney also defends the novel's conclusion in another letter to Crisp on 6 April 1782. She writes, "I think the Book, in its present conclusion, somewhat original, for the Hero [and] Heroine are neither plunged in the depths of misery, nor exalted to unhuman happiness,— Is not such a middle state more natural? more according to real life, [and] less resembling every other Book of Fiction? (EJL, 5:44)."[384] The author explains that her conclusion communicates a reality to which the reader might relate. Her heroine is neither socially, nor financially ruined at the

[383] Havens, p. 537.
[384] Havens, pp. 537-8.

conclusion of the novel; however, the turmoil Cecilia experiences in maintaining her reputation despite Mr. Harrel's salacious rumors, and her inability to consent fully to matrimony with Mortimer for such a length of time, removes any illusion of easily achieved felicity for the reader. Burney asks, is not a middle ground– an acceptance of one's passions and recognition of social and familial obligations– more similar to reality? Burney uses Cecilia to illustrate the constant negotiation of a female to submit to the call of the creative genius, displaying intimate, details of the woman's countenance, and the social anxiety of one's position and work to be accepted.

Cecilia does not seem to rebel against the society in which she lives, only the mistreatment she suffers within it. There is never a question of why she does not establish her own residence or demand control over her own estate. She acquiesces to the desires of others, in as much as she follows proper decorum, so as not to sully her reputation. She does, however, speak her mind against harmful allegations that might affect her awaited union. Meghan Jordan states, "*Cecilia* centers on consent, duty, propriety, and choice. The novel argues that its heroine needs to reevaluate and revise her notions of duty and stability in order fully to participate in and understand society and social relations."[385] Jordan continues that Cecilia is motivated in her actions by a "strong sense of duty."[386] She is unwilling, even terrified, to cause upset through her actions; nevertheless, Cecilia is still surprised that her manner and money make no difference to the Delviles.

According to Jordan, "she is shocked to find that her sense of duty (and her money) makes no difference to a family bent on marrying their son to someone of the same 'ancient'

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[385] Meghan Jordan, "Madness and Matrimony in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 55, no. 3 (2015), p. 564.

[386] Ibid.

rank. Cecilia's mercantile ancestry is a mark against her, as much an 'eternal blot to her character' in the eyes of the Delviles as her consent to a clandestine marriage is to her own principles of right."[387] Cecilia might have a modest character and fortune, but her mercantile ancestry that begot that fortune are not high bred enough for the Delviles to consent to the marriage.

In the novel, Cecilia tries very hard to disguise passionate feelings. For example, Cecilia is susceptible to blushing. Her friend, and cousin to Mortimer Delvile, Lady Honoria enjoys provoking Cecilia as she blushes crimson and falls pale repeatedly. Cecilia is particularly grieved when she discovers that the Delvile household know of her feelings for Mortimer. Lady Honoria has written Mortimer a letter describing Cecilia's tell-tale love for him. Discovery that the Delvile family know her secret causes Cecilia to fall into a fit of mortification. Lady Honoria writes, "at the sound of your name, she blushes; at the mention of your illness, she turns pale; and the dog you have given her, which I recollected immediately, is her darling companion. Oh happy Delvile! yet so lovely a conquest you abandon." Her affections exposed, Cecilia weeps from embarrassment. She now knows that her fondness for Mortimer has been branded across her face at the mere mention of him.

Cecilia suffers a bout of catatonic insanity after losing everything: her love, her home, and her fortune. She seeks out her guardian, Mr. Delvile, who is also Mortimer's father, to inquire for assistance. He refuses to see her as punishment for her misconduct in surrendering to her love for Mortimer and agreeing to marry him, without the consent of his parents. Upon

[387] Ibid., pp. 564-5.

seeing her deprived of all happiness, Mr. Delvile realizes that his refusal to consent to Mortimer's and Cecilia's marriage is largely responsible for Cecilia's madness:

> Mr. Delvile regarded her with the utmost horror: the refuge he so implacably refused her on the night when her intellects were disordered, he would now gladly have offered at the expense of almost similar sufferings, to have relieved himself from those rising pangs which called him author of this scene of woe. His pride, his pomp, his ancient name, were now sunk in his estimation; and while he considered himself the destroyer of this unhappy young creature... (Burney, 912)[388]

Cecilia loses all self-consciousness and ability to communicate. Ironically, it is her inability to communicate verbally that causes Mr. Delvile to realize the sincerity of her feelings and virtuous character. Mr. Delvile notes that it was Cecilia's depressed and unhealthy demeanor that proved her virtuous nature to him. As bouts of madness indicate love in amatory works, so too do they indicate Cecilia's deep love for Mortimer.

Clandestine love features as a theme in many conduct books. Though their social classes should have forbidden it, Pamela and Mr. B– marry as do Cecilia and Mortimer. Jane Austen utilizes the theme of clandestine love and fantasy in her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1817). Fear and fantasy mix in the novel to create a didactic experience for understanding fantasy. Conversely to most conduct novel heroines, Catherine Morland is described as plain with no extreme fortune or impressive skills. She does love to read, especially the gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* Catherine allows herself to become lost in fantasy. Upon arriving at the gothic villa Northanger Abbey, she finds herself disappointed that it does not display the dark and depressing atmosphere that she expected from a gothic structure. She scares herself on her first night in the abbey due to delusions of ghosts and bumps in the night though nothing sinister occurs. Eventually her fantastical thinking drives her to believe her host, General Tilney,

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[388] Burney, *Cecilia, Memoirs of an Heiress*, p. 912.

murdered his wife. Catherine is chastised by the son of her host, Henry, for working herself up too extremely. He cautions her against putting oneself into fits of fantasy.

Ironically, Catherine has also fallen in love with Henry and imagines being with no one else romantically. From their first meeting, Catherine develops strong feelings for Henry. Though Henry's lecture cautioned against becoming lost in one's fantasy, the conclusion of the novel indulges in romantic fantasy. Henry also develops feelings for Catherine and his father approves of the match. Austen, like Burney before her, creates a story that both teaches and portrays the importance and necessity of a virtuous character while partly indulging in behaviors that it criticizes, like reading romances and engaging in fantasy. The idea that fantasy should be feared and, particularly, women readers should not partake in fantasy reading occurs often in conduct narratives. Catherine allows her psyche to be influenced by gothic tales. Cecilia enjoys reading fiction and requests her own funds to purchase books when she is told women should not trouble themselves with idle pastimes like fiction reading. Pamela also enjoys reading, but her reading material is chosen for her, and she is not allowed to read romance or fantasy narratives. Again and again, fear of fantasy comes up in criticism for fiction books in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Critics were concerned that women readers would adopt the behaviors of overly emotional, irrational heroines who toss self-control aside to experience sexual desire and sexual experiences.

Conclusion

Amatory fiction and conduct novels have similar goals. However, the ways in which amatory and conduct fiction achieve their goals differ. The subgenres are more similar than contemporary readers and scholars have yet observed or examined. Authors of conduct novels adapt amatory themes to demonstrate the negative aspects of living an immoral life while

nevertheless playing with elements of seduction and fantasy. Amatory and conduct novels highlight sexual thoughts and activities, particularly of women, that are not necessarily cast in a strictly negative light. Narratives about sex and female sexual desire exemplify that sexual thoughts and activities are natural, even celebrated, when done within the bounds of an appropriate relationship, like marriage. Conduct novels display marriage as a mode of protection for women's physical and financial safety and a safe realm to engage in sexual behaviors; conduct novels, though, do not typically contain scenes of sex acts, whether appropriate or not.

Frances Burney particularly deals with questions of female independence. *Cecilia* introduces an inverted theme of a man abandoning his last name to maintain a woman's fortune and familial line. Burney's character, Cecilia, desires to take charge of her own fortune and affairs; however, she receives her fortune if her husband agrees to take her name. Burney's scenes create a criticism of women's default subordinate role, even in the case when it is she with the fortune or aristocratic heritage, both socially and legally. Samuel Richardson provides earlier context for the revolutionary subversion created by Burney in his novel *Pamela*, where Lady Davers expostulates that a man may marry someone below his social class because it is the woman who adopts her husband's social class and fortune. She, in essence, becomes part of his holdings; if a woman were to marry someone of lesser social ranking, she debases herself by becoming the property of someone far less superior in social class than she. While Cecilia is not attempting to marry far outside of her social class, the idea formulated by Burney is that her intended would be consenting to invert tradition and become lesser or a subordinate to his wife. Burney's *Cecilia* provides a scenario in which the woman has much more of a claim as the head of the household due to her domestic and social power.

Conduct novels, like amatory fiction, offers first-hand accounts of virtue being tested for both men and women. The actions performed by each character represent his or her specifically *moral* character; however, where amatory and conduct novels seem to deviate the most is that conduct heroines maintain self-control until the moment when they can express their desires appropriately. At no time, however, do conduct heroines deny that they experience sexual desire. In fact, most conduct novels end in happy, productive, sexually compatible marriages; such conclusions point to a celebration of women's sexuality rather than an ousting of the notion. I believe that the popularity of amatory and then conduct fiction comes from a narrative showing the contradictory roles of willing seductress and pillar of virtue that women must play to align themselves with prosperous people. It is the larger discussion of chastity presented in conduct books and reimagined in amatory novels that leads to the development of the conduct novel.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION– AMATORY FICTION: NOVEL OR CONDUCT LITERATURE?

At the onset of this project, I was curious about the amatory fiction genre and thought that the trajectory of the conduct book, to the amatory text, to the conduct novel seemed counterintuitive. Considering the speed at which social norms change in the twenty-first century, I assumed that texts would gradually become more and more scandalous or sensual over time; however, this has not proven to be the case. According to critics of Behn, Manley, and Haywood, the behaviors of their amatory female protagonists are unsuitable for ladies and chaste women to read about or emulate; however, reading amatory fiction does not require or suggest that the reader participate in scandalous behaviors. Amatory fiction is troublesome because it plays with the boundaries of "acceptable" and "respectable." One of the most exciting aspects of amatory fiction, in my opinion, is that amatory authors manage to discuss sex, seduction, and intimate relationships propelled by women without ever actually depicting sex acts at all. While the authors of amatory fiction certainly do discuss sex and desire reserved for the private sphere, Behn, Manley, and Haywood do not typically discount or contradict conduct books in their works. Amatory fiction, then, can be read as both expressions of sexual desire and as cautionary tales against nonmarital sex and indulging in passionate feelings. Amatory fiction works to achieve the same goal as conduct literature rather than its antithesis.

Conduct literature includes books, sermons, letters, and essays consisting of sets of rules or regulations, often religious, meant to keep people pure/safe/moral/virtuous, etc. Conduct literature predates and influences amatory fiction and the later conduct novel. Can amatory

fiction in the classification of conduct literature include novels? Perhaps, amatory books that merge into the genre of the novel offer a foundational step on the way to the conduct novel.

Amatory fiction connects the genre of the novel with the genre of conduct literature and precedes the conduct novel. Amatory heroines understand proper conduct but choose to behave differently. Conduct heroines understand and desire to have virtuous characters despite faults. The distinction between the motives of amatory and conduct heroines places them in different subgenres of conduct literature. If some amatory books can also be classified as novels, these works show moments of the shift into writing novels about conduct and the rise of the conduct novel.

Amatory fiction was arguably more salacious than earlier conduct literature and later conduct novels. The sexually suggestive content caused critics and historians to exclude amatory fiction and its writers from the developing canon of the English novel, but amatory texts still assumed—if implicitly—agreed-upon social conduct rules codified in fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century conduct literature. If amatory fiction did not disregard acceptable conduct ideals, then the reason for its exclusion from the novel canon lacks foundation. Not only is amatory fiction not the antithesis of conduct literature, but it also directly inspires and influences the conduct novel. Amatory fiction provides key texts for discussion in the creation of the novel and is directly linked to conduct literature.

We also have seen that amatory fiction, excluded from the novel's canon, has not normally been included in the larger critical discussion of the English novel, even though these works anticipate novels like Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* (1747), and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), which have been read through the centuries as primary sources for that canon. Amatory fiction has been intentionally excluded

from the conversation for its seduction themes and their recognition of and commentary on female sexual desire. Without the developmental contributions of amatory fiction writers, we would not have some of the most popular novels of all time; moreover, the conduct novel would not exist in the same form. Including amatory fiction texts as novels necessarily changes the trajectory of the creation of the English novel canon. To include Behn—much more recently canonized for *Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave* (1688)—and also Manley and Haywood as restoration novelists would place female readership as central to the rise of the English novel. Perhaps, then, modern readers would learn about authors like the Fair Triumvirate before graduate school.

In their journals, The Spectator and The Tatler, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele consider female readership specifically. Addison says of the female reader that he has truly considered diversions appropriate for women as tending to their appearance and enjoyment appear central to their roles.[389] Using an example from Addison's *The Spectator*, Ballaster explains the assumed link between femininity and fictionality: Addison's story of "Leonora's Library" shows books as commodities. In the story, a young woman collects books not for their content but for their appearance. According to Ballaster, the story equates female reading with triviality, "conspicuous consumption, form without matter."[390] Considering women writers and women readers as foundational in the rise of the English novel works to counteract this triviality prescribed to novel reading and women readers generally.

Amatory fiction like Behn's *Love Letters*, for example, was accused of being too similar to, if not an actual example of, pornography; yet *Love Letters* is not pornography. While there is

[389] Ballaster, *Seductive Forms*, p. 39.
[390] Ibid., pp. 48-9.

clear evidence that the French romance and epistolary form influenced amatory writing, there is no evidence to support that pornography influenced amatory writing. If amatory fiction was influenced by pornography, I would expect to see far less seduction and more focus, graphic or not, on intimate sexual acts. I also would expect to see more non-heterosexual relationships or insinuations of self-pleasure. Though the influence of romance is clear on amatory fiction, its predominately female authorship, female readership, and its element of seduction make these novels special and differentiate them from romance or pornographic writing.

Amatory fiction did test the social waters for discussing women's sexuality. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the rise of common people, not only doctors and scientists, interested in the science of sex. Pornography offers physical descriptions of sex and bodies in action, while amatory fiction offers detailed descriptions of sexual feelings and desire. Amatory fiction does not give detailed descriptions of the sex act like pornography but does give detailed descriptions of experiencing desire, something pornography often ignores with its focus on the physical. Pornography focuses on the sex act, while amatory fiction focuses on desire and seduction. Critics of amatory fiction classify it as like pornography and thus unlike conduct literature. However, as noted above, it is not pornography and more closely resembles a daring type of conduct literature.

These emotionally explicit amatory novels began the discussion of what is the English novel, which twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars continued. Seduction in amatory fiction often makes up much of the narrative and functions to drive the plot. If amatory fiction seeks to seduce, pornography seeks pointedly to show that which is private. There are no descriptions of physical lovemaking. The emphasis is more on the mind—feelings and emotions, rather than the body, seducing the reader, particularly the female reader. This type of seduction is

an especially interesting narrative technique because amatory fiction then, at once, demonstrates the dangers of seduction by representing the action itself.

Seduction tales came to be seen as too extreme as succeeding authors adapted conduct and amatory themes to make the more restrained conduct novel. The rise of the conduct novel shows a redirection of how authors wrote about seduction. Conduct literature required women to avoid being seduced and suggested harsh punishment for any mistakes. Like conduct literature, amatory fiction speaks directly to the fate of women described by Haywood that if women sacrifice their honor, "their reputations will be forsaken."[391] The novels of the Fair Triumvirate offer didactic experiences of sex and seduction that allow readers to play with fantasy and to understand the damage to their reputations that such behaviors would cause. Amatory fiction focuses the plot on seduction and what it feels like to be desired—and misled. Seduction provides most of the rising action in amatory texts, operating as seduction of the reader. Seduction happens both in the content and the form of the amatory novel.

Manley's use of seduction in her novels opens an interesting discussion of the role of seduction and conduct in amatory fiction. Where Manley differs from her predecessors in her discussions of seduction and conduct is in her willingness to bring the reader into her seduction scene, creating an intimacy that critics feared. Such sensationalized moments of seduction led to amatory fiction's decline after the second half of the eighteenth century and its condemnation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Readership seemed to prefer conduct and sentimental novels like Richardson's *Pamela* and Burney's *Evelina*, for example.

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[391] Haywood, *Reflections on the Various Effects of Love,* p. 17.

Conduct novels do not have an element of seducing the reader like amatory fiction. In fact, the overt seduction scenes in conduct novels are often predatory on the male character's part. Conduct novels incorporate virtue in distress like in earlier conduct literature examples. Virtue in distress features in amatory fiction, but the female character is unable or, more usually, unwilling to protect her virginity. She does not think or act chastely and therefore provides an instructive moment showing the consequences of actions driven by physical desire. Where amatory fiction and conduct novels are similar in terms of seduction stories is that in both examples, the stories offer teaching elements of how not to behave (in the case of amatory fiction) or how more positively to protect (in the conduct novel) one's mind and body in the dangerous scenario of seduction. It seems that one of the overarching lessons of the conduct novel is that virtuous conduct provides safety and the idea that when a woman is provided physical and moral safety, she is free to experience physical sexual desire.

Amatory fiction also becomes more problematic when incorporating biographical elements because it brings reality and fancy far too close for comfort. Manley's *Rivella* was so sensational because of the combination of scandal, amatory fiction, and biography that creates an intimate relationship between author and reader. The reader is invited to know the author's confidential thoughts and feelings. Through the narrator and the scandal fiction sub-genre, it becomes impossible to separate the reality of women's sexual desire and expression when an amatory plot is written to be biographical.

Conduct novels offer examples of virtue being tested for both men and women. The actions performed by the characters represent their moral character. The most important difference between amatory fiction and conduct novels is that conduct heroines maintain self-control until the moment when they can express their desires appropriately. Their actions

demonstrate reason and self-control. At no time, however, do conduct novel heroines deny that they experience sexual desire. Most conduct novels end in happy, productive, sexually compatible marriages, which points to a celebration of women's sexuality rather than an ousting of the notion.

It is the larger discussion of chastity presented in conduct books and reimagined in amatory novels that leads to the development of the conduct novel. Chastity is the most important virtue for conduct literature, amatory fiction, and conduct novels. Amatory fiction, though written for a different reading experience, recapitulates the importance of virtue and, especially, chastity. It is highlighted in amatory fiction because the main female protagonists show fictionalized scenarios of what one may encounter should she not practice great self-control. Conduct literature and amatory fiction seem to agree that chastity is the most important virtue because it keeps both men and women morally safe. Haywood's amatory fiction, then, allows one to play with fancy and vicariously learn how explicit thoughts and actions might affect them. Reading amatory fiction allows the female reader to create agency for herself in learning about how to control desire. Amatory fiction was so popular because it allowed the reader to experience the downfall of women brought about by engaging in immoral or sexually explicit behaviors by proxy.

Stories of self-control and learning sexual agency through reading makes amatory fiction exceptional among other genres of writing. Other scholars have enriched the discussion of amatory works being included in the novel canon and cite the reason for its ousting as the sexual, seductive content. This project sought to understand the seductive content and role of sexual desire in amatory fiction and conduct novels. While themes of sex and desire and the negative association of immorality and women's writing are indeed the reason for excluding amatory

works from the novel canon, it is incorrect to consider amatory fiction in opposition to conduct literature. Through this work, I have come to understand that it is more appropriate to title amatory fiction as a type of conduct literature and hope to clarify that amatory fiction could be used to inspire agency in women readers. It is particularly exciting for me to consider that books with didactic elements meant to teach women agency through reading about sexual desire shaped women's readership of the novel. I have many other questions to pursue about the role of reading and female sexual agency, but that discussion must be a project of its own.

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