





## ABSTRACT

### MEN, WOMEN, AND ITALIANS: THE MASQUERADE OF NARRATIVE AND IDENTITY IN RICHARDSON'S *SIR CHARLES GRANDISON*

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The chaotic masquerades that proliferated during the British long eighteenth century punctuated the period's preoccupation with order and categorization. The identity categories that the masquerade disrupted, the novel reinforced, or perhaps even created. It was in the middle of this period, in the political center of Britain, that Samuel Richardson published his third and final novel, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), a novel which centers England and was also centered *by* England, a national treasure entangled in literary and cultural history. Tracing the nexus of gender and nationalism in *Grandison* then becomes important given the novel's active entanglement in the debates that birthed the modern individual and the "private" sphere. In part because of its historical positioning, *Grandison* serves as a catalog of the period's identity debates. The *dramatis personae* divides characters into "men," "women," and "Italians," but at the same time that the structure attempts to relegate characters to their respective narrative and social spaces, they resist, for the paratext provides framing that the narrative subverts. In the *dramatis personae*, characters dress for a masquerade; the text, however, rejects these superficial trimmings, stripping the characters, structure, and plot of their masks. The blurring between man and woman, Briton and Italian, realism and romance create crises of category, and so *Grandison's* narrative uses disrupted generic modes and changeable character masks to imagine a

stronger community not *in spite of* but *due to* the permeable boundaries of narrative, nation, gender, and even the human body itself.

Literary conventions speak through the text, and in asserting arbitrary divisions remind us that boundaries in general are masquerades, that even genre itself simply apes order, protecting against the chaos that would unsettle what we believe about identity, community, and creation. The study of *Grandison*, a literary model for questioning binaries of all kinds, contributes to the field of cultural studies by providing a long scope of the identity debates which entangle the twenty-first century, and by suggesting that it is through the imaginative potential of fiction that we may begin to disentangle ourselves.

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For Bryan, whose holistic support has sustained me throughout this project.





















































































































































































sexual initiation (67). The paradox was that tourism had the potential to “pollute” the ruling class, whether with disease or with Continental values, yet to be considered educated enough to rule one was expected to tour (131). Touring was so woven into the British experience that Richardson, who himself never traveled, incorporated the Continent into each of his novels (297-299): In Richardson’s sequel to *Pamela*, the newlyweds travel abroad, where the heroine blends “French politeness” with “the English Frankness” for which she is known (2: 365). In *Clarissa*, Lamb points out, Lovelace goes to the Continent to engage in promiscuity but also to escape the repercussions of his domestic sexual licentiousness (311), and it is Lovelace’s Continental knowledge— of tourist attractions and languages— that acts as the cover for his ultimately clandestine and dangerous correspondence with the domestic heroine (313).

Of all of Richardson’s novels, the implications of Continental travel are discussed most explicitly and extensively in *Grandison*, beginning with Charles’s Grand Tour. His own libertine uncle proclaims that “nine parts in ten of those who go abroad, ought to be hanged up at their fathers doors on their return” (3: 40). The diplomatic Charles replies, “But thinking minds will be thoughtful, whether abroad or at home.” We are to understand that Charles’s own is one such “thinking mind.” As he reports, during his tour he “stood in high credit with [his] countrymen, to whom [he] had many ways of being serviceable”; he “kept the best company”; and he “avoided intrigues” (3: 116). We hear similar reports from many pens, including those abroad. Mrs. Beaumont, an English tutor living in Florence, reports:

His country has not in this age sent abroad a private man who has done it more credit. He is a man of honour in every sense of the word. If moral

rectitude, if practical religion . . . were lost in the rest of the world, it would, without glare or ostentation, be found in him. He is courted by the best, the wisest, the most eminent men, where-ever he goes; and he does good without distinction of religion, sects, or nation: His own countrymen boast of him, and apply to him for credentials to the best and most considerable men, in their travels thro' more countries than one: In France, particularly, he is as much respected as in Italy. He is descended from the best families in England, both by father and mother; and can be a Senator of it, whenever he pleases. He is heir to a very considerable estate, and is, as I am informed, courted to ally with some of the greatest families in it. Were he not born to a fortune, he would make one. (3: 169)

Clearly, Charles has made good use of his time abroad, yet because his libertine father, Sir Thomas, cannot “bear his own consciousness,” he forbids Charles from returning home (2: 322). As a result, Charles stays abroad seven years rather than the typical two or three, and despite longing for his “father’s arms, and . . . native country” (3: 117), he obeys and returns only after his father has died. Upon his return, Charles is disappointed in what he observes of his homeland, lamenting that “Englishmen are not what they were,” marked by a “wretched effeminacy” that has made marriage unfashionable (3: 10). In this reflection, Charles aligns “free living” with “wretched effeminacy,” indicating that stability and commitment are traits of his brand of masculinity. Perhaps this “wretched effeminacy” stemmed from abroad. After all, the rakes of whom Charles complains toured. Harriet muses, upon meeting Hargrave, that he “has travelled: But he must have carried abroad with him a great number of follies, and a great deal of affectation, if he has left any of them behind him” (1: 45). Charles’s work in the novel seems to be to reform his country to its moral glory, and in doing so, perpetuate its future as an Empire.

Charles is a new masculine ideal. He is productive— “one of the busiest men in the kingdom”— and domestic— “the most of a family-man” (2: 279). As he teaches his

peers and elders as well as executes departed friends' wills with grace and diplomacy, Harriet sees him "in a much more shining light than an hero . . . returning in a triumphal car covered with laurels, and dragging captive princes at its wheels. How much more glorious a character is that of *The Friend of Mankind*, than that of *The Conqueror of Nations!*" (3: 70). Jeremy W. Webster's argument in "Sentimentalizing Patriarchy: Patriarchal Anxiety and Filial Obligation in *Sir Charles Grandison*" (2005) is that Charles is a representative of a new kind of regulatory system in which obedience is "born out of love rather than compulsion" (426). In contrast, forceful men like Hargrave and Sir Thomas represent the inefficacy as well as the dangers of the "traditional patriarchy" (432), and thus traditional, forceful masculinity. Children might rebel against a cruel and harsh authoritarian, but they will strive to please a patriarch who wants only what seems to be in their best interest (427).

Charles's restorative actions after his father's death illustrate the succession of the sentimentalized patriarchy: Though he believes it an "impiety to fell a tree, that was planted by his father" (7: 273), that is exactly what he does upon his return from his Grand Tour, for as much as he wishes to preserve his father's legacy, sometimes it is "inconsistent with the alterations [Charles] has thought necessary to make" (7: 272). Thus he fells the timber of his father's estate, but only that which is "the worse for standing," and then "plant[s] an oakling for every oak he cut down, for the sake of posterity" (2: 379). An anonymous contributor advises in *Spectator* no. 589 that gardens should be populated with "Oakes" rather than "Tulips or Carnations," and that sons ought to preserve oaks, "the most glorious Monuments of their Ancestors Industry" (para. 7). It is true that Sir Thomas was no foppish flower, yet his oaks represent not

industry but profligacy, venereal rather than generative. Thus, in this symbolic action, Charles seems to be dismantling two hundred years in advance the “sturdy oak” expectation of masculinity popularized in the 1950s, which in 1957 Helen Mayer Hacker posed in opposition to the “new” desire that men be gentle and communicative (229). The masculine exemplar of the mid-eighteenth century invests in the future rather than threatening it; he is much more than a penetrative and destructive force, like the rake-heroes who proliferated earlier in the century (McGirr 269). Charles is practical, a steward of his father’s fortune, and generative, a sexual force used for procreation rather than pleasure (269). Charles not only castrates traditional patriarchy but replaces it, bringing it to heel in a more subtle, moderate version of the same masculine system, replacing oak for oak, phallus for phallus.

Perhaps Charles’s brand of masculinity requires a more encompassing metaphor than the phallus. In “Re-reading Masculine Organization: Phallic, Testicular, and Seminal Metaphors” (2015), Stephen A. Linstead and Garance Marechal provide three organizing metaphors of masculinity: The phallic, which disciplines; the testicular, which coaches; and the seminal, which inspires (1474). Each of these has the potential to become toxic: The phallic might control too rigidly; the testicular might misdirect the competitive drive; the seminal might colonize. We can see each of these negative variations in the rake, who misapplies his phallic masculinity through rape and sword, his testicular masculinity through in-fighting with other rakes, his seminal masculinity through venereal disease and illegitimacy. Applied properly, however, masculinity can be directed toward defense of home, mentorship, and legitimate generation.





more visit, would personally join in prayer with . . . me, a glimpse of comfort would once more dart in upon my mind. . . . Dear Sir Charles Grandison, my deliverer, my preserver, from those bloody Frenchmen, if you are the good man I think you, complete your kindness to him whom you have preserved; and say, you will be his Executor! (6: 143)

As his name foreshadows, Hargrave must die. Once again, as in the carriage confrontation, Hargrave inadvertently bestows power upon Charles, this time by handing him his fortune rather than his captive damsel. And, once again, Hargrave inadvertently brings Charles and Harriet together, Charles embracing his intended as she weeps over the epistle (6: 144). Hargrave's purpose in volume one, in accordance with the generic conventions of the adventure narrative, is to play the role of romance villain; by volume six, when the text has shifted to a courtship narrative, his role must be more ordinary. In *Grandison*, a character's behavior depends on the conventions of the narrative mode in which he finds himself: Though Hargrave is always a libertine, his libertinism in the romantic mode involves abduction, in the realistic mode languishing in a sickbed for his sins. Romance is entrenched in the past, in "once upon a time." The incorporation of romance in *Grandison's* first volume, and quickly dispatching with it—and the villain—places this type of story, and this type of figure, firmly in the past, a reminder of the outdatedness of the destructive rake figure. The cycle has moved onto a different type of masculinity, and to a different type of story.

Hargrave finally departs in the final letter of the novel, brought up again so that Harriet can compare the wretch to her superior husband. On the novel's final page, Harriet reports that Charles will dispense properly of the fortune Hargrave has left behind, which leads her to panegyric:

[C]ould HE be otherwise than the best of HUSBANDS, who was the most dutiful of SONS; who is the most affectionate of BROTHERS; the most

faithful of FRIENDS: Who is good upon principle, in every relation of life? What . . . is the boasted character of most of those who are called HEROES, to the un-ostentatious merit of a TRULY GOOD MAN? In what a variety of amiable lights does such a one appear? In how many ways is he a blessing and a joy to his fellow-creatures? And this blessing, this joy, your Harriet can call more peculiarly her own! (7: 462)

Hargrave's death seems almost an afterthought, a plot device that casts a spotlight on Charles's goodness. Further, Richardson added an appendix to address questions and criticisms he had received from readers, one of whom requested an additional volume for closure about, among other characters, Harriet's initial libertine admirers from volume one. Richardson brushes this off rather glibly: "As for GREVILLE and FENWICK, who cares for them?" (469). The world has moved onto a new model of masculinity, and the rake is not welcome.

Yet perhaps a glimmer of the rake lives on in the exemplary, the good, Sir Charles himself.

### **The Beast Within**

The narrative poses Charles's goodness as unimpeachable, but Richardson was conscious that a thoroughly good man might not be particularly attractive. On 10 April 1750, he lamented to William Lobb "the Difficulty of drawing a good Man, that the Ladies will not despise, and the Gentlemen laugh at" (Schellenberg 9). Neither should the good man be *too* good for fear of dullness. On 10 May 1751, Philip Skleton advised Richardson to make his male exemplar "a Christian hero"<sup>17</sup> rather than a "saint," for he should be "duly tempered" (Schellenberg 51). Indeed, Charles is no austere saint. He has an eye for beauty: His manner of dressing shows "that he [is] no Stoical non-

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<sup>17</sup> As the length of Richard Addison's treatise *The Christian Hero: Or, No Principles but Those of Religion Sufficient to Make a Great Man* (1701) corroborates, this is no straightforward task.

conformist to the fashion of the world" (6: 254), and he is "a great admirer of handsome women" (1: 182). Importantly, the ladies admire him in return. As Richardson's friend Elizabeth Carter wrote on 22 June 1753 after reading a draft, "I am undone for Sir Charles Grandison. A hundred questions have been asked me about him, to which I make no other answer but that I am in love with him, and shall have a very bad opinion of every lady who is not in love with him too" (Schellenberg 88). Shortly after her rescue, Harriet prays that she "shall not be undone by a good man!" (1: 223), and his sister, led by Charles into disclosing the secrets of her own love life, exclaims, "Had he been a wicked man, he would have been a *very* wicked one!" (2: 297).

When the hero and heroine finally express their love for one another and resolve to marry, Harriet is put off by his physical touch and his urgency for the wedding date. When she accepts his proposal, he "kisse[s her] hand with fervour" and "beg[s] an early day" (6: 99). In another instance, when leaving a visit to her family, Charles "hurrie[s Harriet] into the Cedar-parlour" alone. Harriet recalls the incident: "I am jealous, my Love, said he; putting his arm round me: You seemed loth to retire with me. Forgive me: But thus I punish you, whenever you give me cause: And . . . he downright kissed me— My lip; and not my cheek— and in so fervent a way" (6: 142). As the couple negotiates a date— Harriet wishing for months longer, Charles wishing for the soonest possible day— Lady G reminds Harriet that Charles is not the type "to dream over a Love-affair" and "gape over his ripened fruit till it drop[s] into his yaw-yaw-yawning mouth" (6: 114). She adds, "He'll certainly get you, Harriet, within, or near, his proposed time. Look about you: He'll have you, before you know where you are. By *hook*, as the saying is, will he pull you to him, struggle as you will (he has already got hold of you) *or by crook*; inviting,

nay, compelling you, by his generosity, gentle shepherd-like, to nymph as gentle.” And he does: Less than a month after Harriet officially accepts Charles’s proposal, the two are wed. Is Charles a good man, or is he a rake? He compels, he persuades, and he will have his pleasure.

According to Mary V. Yates in “The Christian Rake in *Sir Charles Grandison*” (1984), Charles is rakish in his “craftiness and erotic appeal,” and he has the potential to endanger all that he protects, including the virginity of the domestic heroine. Unlike *Pamela*’s Mr. B or *Clarissa*’s Lovelace, he has good intentions (546), yet readers should recognize the potential danger of this Christian rake, Lovelace “resurrected as a good Christian” (552). As Richardson learned with *Pamela*, attempting to reform a rake proves dangerous for the novelist, whose didactic attempts will, at least by some, be seen to encourage libertinism, and as he learned with *Clarissa*, attempting to reform a rake proves dangerous for the heroine, as well. Thus, Richardson’s final “rake” is no rake at all, one who never fell into temptation but who was tempted nonetheless, a man with animal appetites but the morality and masculine strength to restrain them (553). While Yates calls Charles the “Christian rake” whose craftiness is meant to remind the reader of even a good man’s potential to sin, Bonnie Latimer’s *Making Gender, Culture, and the Self in the Fiction of Samuel Richardson: The Novel Individual* (2013) positions Charles’s rakish qualities as the means to his goodness (121); though he is at times secretive, deceptive, and even duplicitous, his intentions are good, and situations resolve exactly as he had always intended (107-112). His “libertinism,” then, is actually what makes him the novel’s powerful masculine exemplar, someone who controls his own fate by controlling others (124). For example, when Charles first enters the

narrative after Harriet's abduction, Harriet and, it seems, the narrative would like us to believe that this is a romantic rescue, yet Latimer argues that the moment is less a rescue of Harriet and more a transferral of property from one man to another; after all, it is only after Charles asks Harriet if she is Hargrave's wife, and she answers in the negative, that Charles initiates the "rescue," in which he demonstrates his "superior masculinity" and "right" to Harriet as a prize (168). This introductory action establishes Charles as the monitor of marriages, the facilitator of "stable, prosperous, and generative" family units (168). Throughout the novel, Charles makes marital matches for himself but mostly for others, all in order to cement "male-male relations" (171). And as a proto-courtship novel, marriage (after marriage after marriage) is at the heart of *Grandison*, and the sentimental patriarch is at the center of that. The new masculinity can be read as gentle and guiding, or it can be read as manipulative and controlling: The results are the same.

Even the narrative suggests that our reading of Charles is a matter of perspective. After all, when a witness to the chariot confrontation between Hargrave and Charles recounts the tale, he describes the affair as "Nothing in the world . . . but two young rakes in their chariots-and-six, one robbing the other of a lady" (1: 142-143). Perhaps the rake-hero has not been vanquished, after all, but his energies have been redirected toward building, rather than destroying, the nation. Ultimately, *Grandison* reimagines the trope of a rake's reformation: The task still falls to the shoulders of the masculine exemplar, yet Hargrave as a rake is almost a red herring. Charles is unsuccessful in reforming Hargrave, but neither has Charles, to borrow from *Clarissa*, "touch[ed] pitch" and been "defiled" (1116). Though Hargrave is unreformed, his

profligacy ends, and his fortune goes to the responsible Charles's stewardship. Charles's masculinity manages Hargrave and Harriet, but perhaps more significantly, it manages *him*. Charles dominates all around him— and within him. Throughout the novel, the hero argues that, if one is “called upon to act a great or manly part, [he must] preach by action” (5: 575); a “Man” is “a rational and immortal agent,” and must “act up to the dignity of [his] Nature” (3: 141). Though on the surface Charles says that it is a man's innate nature to act a “manly part,” this emphasis on “acting” indicates that such behavior is not given; in fact, as the novel's rakes continually demonstrate, acting “manly” in the fashion of Charles goes against their lusty and violent instincts. Charles advocates for a conscious cultivation of self, one he practices as well as preaches.

The hero's task was never merely to vanquish external foes. His grand quest requires even more manly courage: to tame the beast within.

## **CHAPTER 2: POLLINATIONISM: BRITISH MASCULINITY, CONSUMPTION, AND PRODUCTION**

The Sexes have now little other apparent Distinction, beyond that of Person and Dress: Their peculiar and characteristic Manners are confounded and lost: The one Sex having advanced into Boldness, as the other have sunk into Effeminacy.

—*John Brown*

### **A Collection of Moths and Butterflies**

When print culture exploded in the long eighteenth century, medical experts, moralists, and anyone else with a mind to do so debated gender, sex, and sexuality in the public arena. A favorite topic of public discourse was the binary distinction between men and women, or “The Sexes,” and how they ought to behave. These tracts were

accompanied by repeated lamentations about the “transmutation of the sexes,” as presented in the comedic-intentioned cartoon in fig. 11, featuring a woman looking down on her husband while dressed in his naval hat and sword, while he sits daintily on the edge of a chair wearing her ruffled bonnet and wielding her delicate fan.



Fig. 11. John Collet. *A Morning Frolic, or the Transmutation of Sexes*. 1780. British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_2010-7081-3029](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2010-7081-3029).  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Perhaps masculinity was on display most vividly in the century's erotica. Archives abound with titillating engravings of heterosexual intercourse, typically centered around monstrously large male genitalia. John Cleland's bawdy *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748) verbalizes these erotic images, curating what seems to be an anthology of masculine virility: The protagonist, the courtesan Fanny Hill, describes in vivid detail the “engine[s] of love-assaults” (40), which throughout the novel are guilty of

“fierce tearing and rending” (41). Occasion after occasion, Fanny is “oblig’d to endure one more trial of . . . manhood” (64). At one point, however, between descriptions of florid manliness and exhausting escapades, Fanny provides a glimpse of another eighteenth-century male type in comparison to her typical vigorous lover:

[Mr. H] drove the same course as before with unabated fervour, and thus in repeated engagements, kept me constantly in exercise till dawn of morning, in all which time, he made me full sensible of the virtues of his firm texture of limbs, his square shoulders, broad chest, compact hard muscles, in short a system of manliness, that might pass for no bad image of our antient sturdy barons, when they wielded the battle-ax, whose race is now so thoroughly refin’d and fritter’d away into the more delicate modern-built frame of our pap-nerv’d softlings, who are as pale, as pretty, and almost as masculine as their sisters. (64)

When Fanny pits the “antient sturdy baron” against the “pap-nerv’d softling,” there is no question about which is meant to be her British masculine ideal. What the courtesan calls a “pap-nerv’d softling” would have been wider-known in the period as a milquetoast or milksop. Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) defines the milksop as a “soft, mild, effeminate, feeble-minded man.” He is not exactly a fop, which Johnson defines as a “simpleton; a coxcomb; a man of small understanding and much ostentation; a pretender; a man fond of show, dress, and flutter; an impertinent.”<sup>18</sup> There may indeed be overlap between the milksop and the fop, for both often enjoyed luxuries that were typically coded as feminine, but the fop is vain and false; the milksop is simply overly gentle. Each could be described as effeminate, but the fop embodies the vanity and ostentation associated with eighteenth-century femininity, the milksop the mildness. Thus, the fop we may loathe; the milksop, pity.

The milksop is an archetype defined less by his action than by his inaction: While Fanny’s Mr. H ravages her time and time again, the “pap-nerv’d softling” never gets the

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<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 1 for context on the eighteenth-century fop archetype.

opportunity; indeed, he does not appear in the flesh at all, but only in her mind for comparison with her masculine ideal. Likewise, in Richardson's more subdued first volume of *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), while the rake and the hero take up arms, the milksop cowers in the shadows— as Miss Barnevelt puts it, “your milk-sops, your dough-baked lovers, . . . stay at home and strut among the women, when glory is to be gain'd in the martial field” (1: 62). One of Harriet's initial three suitors, Robert Orme, is such a man. As Lucy writes in the novel's first letter, when Harriet has gone to London, “The gentle Orme sighs his apprehensions, and wishes you would change your purpose. Tho' hopeless, he says, it is some pleasure to him that he can think himself in the same county with you; and much more, that he can tread in your footsteps to and from church every Sunday, and behold you there” (1: 7-8). Unlike the blustering Sir Hargrave Pollexfen or the heroic Sir Charles Grandison, Orme dares not dream even of speaking to or touching Harriet.<sup>19</sup>

When Harriet arrives in London, she acquires yet another suitor, Mr. Fowler, who is so bashful that his uncle courts Harriet on his behalf. His uncle argues, “My boy may be over-awed by love, Madam: True love is always fearful: Yet he is no milksop, I do assure you” (1: 76); yet he certainly fits the cast. The libertine Greville wonders, between Orme and Fowler, “who should out-whine the other” (1: 103). When Orme meets Charles, the man who has finally won Harriet's affections, he “gushe[s] into tears” and runs indoors “to hide his emotion; but in vain; for when he [goes] in, he [weeps] like

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<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 1 for descriptions of Hargrave's and Charles's more aggressive behavior toward Harriet in similar circumstances.

a child!" (7: 259). Even without comparison with the exemplary hero, Orme is a figure who inspires pity, not lust, or even respect.<sup>20</sup>

Because these "dough-baked lovers" are inactive in the first volume of the novel, which is dominated by the rake and the hero, they do not contribute to the linear thrust of volume one. A milksop does not become a full-fledged character until the adventure plot resolves and the women's low mimetic comic mode takes over, beginning in volume two and spanning— except for the dark romantic interjections this project explores in Chapters 5 and 6— the remainder of the novel. It is at this point that Lord G becomes the novel's representative of the milksop archetype. Lord G is "a gay dressing man" (2: 399), admittedly "a little too finical in his dress" (2: 230); a collector of butterflies (2: 229); and a connoisseur in "nickknackatories" (5: 511). Lord G is the browbeaten suitor of Charles's saucy sister Charlotte, who scolds Lord G for daring to enter the study when she is there, "as stately as a princess on her throne" (4: 328). Lord G is humbled, and Harriet observes, "how *little* did she make him look!" (4: 329). His masculinity seems to be in question. Charlotte questions it further when she complains that Lord G seems more attracted to his "gaudy insects" than to her: "[D]o you think a Lover ought to take high delight in the painted wings of a Butterfly, when a fine Lady has made herself all over Butterfly to attract him?" (2: 229). Charlotte seems to doubt her Lord's sexual interest in her, and later, after they have married, she accuses him of "Femalities," having been "brought up to be idle and useless, as women generally are" (6: 237). Clearly, Lord G is not like his brother-in-law Charles, the novel's dominant representation of masculinity. While Hargrave's masculinity threatens and Charles's

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<sup>20</sup> The milksop would evolve into the "man of feeling" later in the century, yet at midcentury such passivity seems unacceptable in a man.

regulates, Lord G seems at first read to lack masculinity. Chapter 1 establishes *Grandison's* use of teeth as symbolic phalluses, so while the rake Hargrave loses his phallus via his teeth and the gentleman-hero Charles maintains his own phallus and corresponding "fine teeth" (1: 181) throughout the text, it seems that Lord G never has a phallus to begin with. To continue with the oral symbolism, instead, when Lord G has an ailment of the mouth, his wife says, "I am afraid, my Lord, something is breeding there, that should not. . . . Have I not told you a thousand times, my Lord, of your gaping? As sure as you are alive, your mouth is fly-blown" (7: 261). More like a female than a male body, Lord G's, at least in this joke, is host to a parasitic invasion. As a man and head of household, then, Lord G seems rather like the man in this chapter's introductory image: a threat to masculinity and masculine order, a laughingstock, almost one of the girls.

The British masculine ideal underwent dramatic changes during the eighteenth century, from the dashing rake-hero of Restoration comedy to a gentler patriarchal force, one that was neither coarse nor dainty.<sup>21</sup> Elaine McGirr's "Manly Lessons: *Sir Charles Grandison*, the Rake, and the Man of Sentiment" (2007) writes that *Grandison* includes a plethora of contrasting male types and that the hero lands somewhere in the middle (269). According to McGirr, the rakes receive poetic justice for their sins, often through castration (268-270), but *Grandison's* men of sentiment receive no rewards, either; they may be moral men, but their physical health is poor, they woo by proxy, and they win no hands in marriage (277). As the libertine Greville muses, "You ladies love men should whine after you: But never yet did I find, that where a blustering fellow was a competitor, the lady married the milksop" (1: 10). Yet perhaps we are not meant to

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 1 for a historical account of the transformation of the masculine ideal over the course of the long eighteenth century.

take Greville so seriously; after all, one of Richardson's most enduring warnings is to distrust a rake.<sup>22</sup>

Curiously, in the end of *Grandison* Lord G is not transfigured from an aficionado of trinkets, but rewarded with a fun and ultimately loving wife, a healthy baby, *and* the freedom to showcase his "nickknackatories" in all their glory. He is not the libertine tyger from Chapter 1, but instead a tamer animal, perhaps a fluttering moth or butterfly like those in his collection. If so, it is important to remember that these winged insects are not only ornaments of the natural world, but productive pollinators integral to the global ecosystem. Through Lord G, the novel presents a nuanced picture of eighteenth-century masculinities as entangled with love, family, economy, Empire, and Britishness itself.

#### **"Parrot and Paroquet"**

It is Charles, the sentimental patriarch from this project's first chapter, who is responsible for the match between his sister Charlotte and Lord G. Charles believes that the match will be complementary because Charlotte is a vivacious wit whose behavior might hurt another man, but will "*enliven*" Lord G (2: 400). The marriage, however, experiences a tumultuous start. As the couple leaves their April wedding ceremony, they engage in their first matrimonial squabble when Lord G, against the new Lady G's wishes, "gives himself airs" by joining his bride in her coach; when he kisses her hand, she "repulses [his] forwardness" with the other (4: 341).<sup>23</sup> Like the carriage squabble, the couple's first "mighty quarrel," which takes place less than a week later,

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 1 for an analysis of the figure of the rake, particularly in reference to Clarissa's trust in the vile Lovelace.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 4 for an analysis of the marriage of Lord and Lady G focusing primarily on the eighteenth-century woman's perspective.

begins with Lord G invading what Lady G considers her own space. Lord G enters his wife's chamber uninvited and "join[s] his sharp face to [hers], and presume[s] to kiss [her]" (4: 392). Lady G feels stifled, and everything Lord G does in an attempt to appease her backfires. When he accidentally rips her garment— for Lady G complains that he is "always squatting upon one's clothes, in defiance of hoop, or distance"— he buys her two more, each "worth twenty of that he so carelessly rent" (4: 434). Even this annoys Lady G, who considers a man buying women's clothes an embarrassment. Still, from Lady G's perspective, the marriage is fine, for the couple have "[n]ot above four quarrels . . . and as many more chidings, in a day" (4: 343).

Lord G, however, is miserable. Less than two months after their wedding day, the couple reaches a crisis point: On June 5, the mild Lord G is so unhinged by his wife's behavior that he turns to violence, knocking over and breaking her harpsichord (5: 502). Lady G's words have become so upsetting to the otherwise peaceful Lord G that he uncharacteristically—and inexcusably—destroys the closest thing he can to his wife's voice without actually harming her physical body. Still, Lady G continues to provoke her desperately angry husband. Lord G, on the other hand, has nothing to do but wordlessly "withdr[aw] in a wrath" (5: 504). Lady G's constant raillery both alienates and silences her husband; she eventually drowns him out altogether, leaving no space for him in the marriage. The marriage is unequal, for Lady G does not love her Lord and he "love[s] her] as [his] own soul" (5: 508). She admits that she does not have "a very profound reverence for him," but she does not "despise" him either (5: 505); in short, she is little more than indifferent to him. In some ways, Lady G's lack of passion for her husband would not have been undesirable. In *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774), Dr.

John Gregory writes, “A man of taste and delicacy marries a woman because he loves her more than any other. A woman of equal taste and delicacy marries him because she esteems him, and because he gives her that preference” (48); this is because “[v]iolent love cannot subsist . . . on both sides” (51). According to eighteenth-century standards, it is the husband’s place to choose a woman to love; it is the woman’s place to accept him. She should do so gratefully, yet she should not, writes Amanda Vickery in *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (2003), feel an “immoderate passion” for him, either (41). Eighteenth-century moralists worried about the danger of young women feeling “violent love” for a man, yet in the early days of marriage, Lady G represents the converse problem of a woman feeling too *little* passion for her husband; she is a type of virago who does not even “esteem” him.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, even Lady G recognizes that her marriage is in turmoil. The day that Lord G destroys her harpsichord, Lady G reports the beginning of her reformation, vowing to reserve “the first place in [her] heart” for her Lord (5: 509). She explains her rationale:

‘Charlotte, thought I, what are you about? . . . At present the honest man loves you. He has no vices. . . . A weak man, if you suppose him weak, made a tyrant, will be an insupportable thing. . . . My wit will be thought folly. . . . I will be good of choice, and make my *duty* received as a *favour*.’ I have traveled a great way in the road of perverseness. I see briars, thorns, and a pathless track, before me. I may be benighted: The day is far gone. Serpents may be in the brakes. I will get home as fast as I can; and rejoice every one, who now only wonder what is become of me. (5: 518-519)

In this passage, Lady G’s use of terms like “tyrant” and “duty” draws parallels between the marital and political contracts. Thinking, perhaps, of John Locke’s social contract theory, Lady G deliberately adopts the role of virago in the early days of her marriage in

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<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 4 for a fuller exploration of Lady G as a type of virago figure.

order to call attention to her agency, and her power to rebel, in the relationship. As Locke argues in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690), sovereigns derive their power from consent of the governed; if the sovereigns “*endeavour to grasp themselves . . . an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people*; by this breach of trust they *forfeit the power* the people had put into their hands for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty” (111). Yet if Lady G is, in this passage, referring to Locke’s social contract theory, now she recognizes that her overly-assertive behavior in the beginning of her marriage is unfounded and that she has unnecessarily driven a wedge between herself and her husband. Despite Lady G’s early accusations, Lord G has not attempted to hold “dominion over his bird” (5: 503); he is not a tyrant—but her unruly behavior may drive him to tyranny. In an attempt to claim power in the relationship, Lady G has herself, in essence, violated the contract. She now recognizes the seriousness of her situation; she must acknowledge that “[s]erpents may be in the brakes” and she must “retreat” to avoid disaster.

Lord G is a good man, one who, when unprovoked, does not seek to control his wife; as she realizes this, she begins to value his affection for her, even if she cannot yet reciprocate. Immediately after the harpsichord quarrel, Lady G invites her husband to go with her to visit Harriet at Northamptonshire. Lady G reports to her sister, “My Lord and I were Dear, Love, and Life, all the journey” (5: 514), and she realizes now that he is “a man of sense, a good-natured man, nay, would you believe it, a handsome man” (5: 544). Thus Lord and Lady G eventually form a meaningful companionship when

Lady G begins to reciprocate her husband's love, and her love for him is founded on her recognition of his goodness.

Less than two months after Lady G's proposed reformation, she provides proof of her true affection for Lord G. On 24 July, she hints of pregnancy to her sister: "In a few months time I shall be as grave as a cat, I suppose: But the sorry fellow knows nothing of the matter as yet" (5: 545). The fact that Lady G probably becomes pregnant after her early June declaration of reformation is especially important because of eighteenth-century notions of conception: In "Embarking on a Rough Passage: The Experience of Pregnancy in Early-Modern Society" (1990), Linda Pollock explains that the prevalent—though, of course, inaccurate—theory was that conception depended on the pleasure of *both* parties (40); Vivien Jones's *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (1990) corroborates the belief that penile penetration stimulated ovulation and that consequent female orgasm was necessary to conception (58). This was no newfangled notion: Robert Muchembled's *Orgasm and the West: A History of Pleasure from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (2008) reports that the common medical view as early as the sixteenth century was that both the male and female must orgasm to conceive (99). Within the storyworld of the novel, then, Lady G's pregnancy suggests her growing affection, perhaps even passion, for Lord G, reinforcing the notion that the couple has found marital contentment.<sup>25</sup> Lord G continues to dote on his wife, and now she cheerfully accepts, though not without a jolly quip or two. For example, she describes a moment of gift-giving:

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<sup>25</sup> This is precisely why Lovelace's hopes of having Clarissa are buoyed after he rapes her, for, despite her declarations that she abhors him and never will marry him, he suspects "that the dear creature is in the way to be a mamma" (1147). As he declares to Belford, "It would be the pride of my life to prove . . . the triumph of nature over principle, and to have a young Lovelace by such an angel." Clarissa's principles may require that she voice disdain for the vile libertine, but Lovelace believes that a pregnancy would prove that the rape was in truth an experience both parties enjoyed.

He came to me, just now, so prim, and so pleased— A Parrot and Paroquet— The Parrot is the *finest* talker! He had great difficulty, he said, in getting them. He had observed, that I was much taken with Lady Finlay's Parrot. Lady Finlay had a Marmouset too. I wonder the poor man did not bring me a Monkey. O! but you'll say, That was needless— You are very smart, Harriet, upon my man. I won't allow any-body but myself to abuse him. (5: 553)

Lady G's way is to tease, and Lord G's way is to please. In fig. 12, we see a parrot consuming a serpent; perhaps this is a fair representation of the colorful Lady G defeating the "[s]erpents . . . in the brakes" of her chaotic honeymoon days. All in all, Lord and Lady G are finally "on a foot of good understanding with each other" (5: 514) and have become a happy Parrot and Paroquet.



Fig. 12. Dorothea Graff. *Blue and Yellow Parrot*.  
1700-1710. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_SL-5279-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_SL-5279-1).  
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## The Marmouset

Even by eighteenth-century beliefs, impregnating his wife is not enough to deem Lord G an exemplar; after all, *Pamela*'s imperfect reformed libertine Mr. B, Richardson's previous exploration of fatherhood, manages that. The pivotal moment of Lord G's characterization occurs when he, without permission, enters his Lady's chamber once again— a habit he never does quite break. This time, Lady G is “[i]n an act that confessed the mother, the whole mother!” (7: 402)— nursing her infant, her “little Marmouset” (7: 403). The intrusion surprises Lady G, who had hidden from her husband that she nursed, “for,” she writes, “I intended that he should know nothing of the matter, nor that I would ever be so condescending. . . . I was half-ashamed of my tenderness” (7: 403). This moment is an exemplary instance of Richardson's psychological realism: Though more than nine months have passed since their reconciliation and her reformation, it would be unrealistic for her to comfortably allow her husband to witness her in such a vulnerable state; “reformation . . . cannot . . . be . . . a sudden thing” for her, as Richardson noted in a letter of 6 October 1748 to Lady Bradshaigh (Barbauld 4: 190). Lady G's initial discomfort at being witnessed nursing is apparent, and her response is in keeping with her former harsh treatment of her husband: “I was ready to let the little Leech drop from my arms—O wretch! screamed I—Begone!—begone!” (7: 403). Lord G, however, is ecstatic, and in his surprised happiness, says, “Let me see you clasp the precious gift . . . to that lovely bosom—The wretch (trembling however) pulled aside my handkerchief. I try'd to scold; but was forced to press the little thing to me, to supply the place of the handkerchief” (7: 403). The stripping of the handkerchief echoes Mr. B's rakish assaults upon Pamela, as when he “unpin[s her] Handkerchief,”

vowing to “strip [his] pretty *Pamela*” down to her “Garters” if that is what it takes to find the letters hidden amongst her clothes (2: 235). The circumstances, however, are quite different, as is Lady G’s response to her Lord’s intrusion, for from this point forward, she considers “[t]he infant . . . the cement between us” (7: 404). In *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft echoes this sentiment; she considers breastfeeding a “natural way of cementing the matrimonial tie,” as “[c]old would be the heart of a husband . . . who did not feel more delight at seeing his child suckled by its mother, than the most artful wanton tricks could ever raise” (214). Thus the “little Marmouset” represents the unity between Lady G and her “Monkey.”

It is important here to parallel Lord G’s response to the nursing scene with the only other representation of a father’s reaction to a similar circumstance: Mr. B, who in *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (1742) does not accept Pamela’s nursing because of the impact it would have on his own sexuality and comfort:

I cannot help looking upon the Nurse’s Office, as an Office beneath my *Pamela*. Let it have your Inspection, your Direction, and your sole Attention, if you please, when I am abroad: But when I am at home, even a Son and Heir, so jealous am I of your Affections, shall not be my Rival in them: Nor will I have my Rest broken in upon, by your Servants bringing to you, as you once propos’d, your dear Little one. (*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* 4: 35)

This is the one instance in which Pamela cannot peacefully comply with her husband. Neither will Mr. B yield, and further, he becomes increasingly angry with her for her resistance (4: 48). Mr. B’s unyielding behavior, if read in an eighteenth-century context, is unsurprising: In Mary Astell’s understanding as represented in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700), a wife “must follow all [her husband’s] Paces, and tread in all his unreasonable steps, or there is no Peace . . . for her, she must obey with the greatest

exactness, 'tis in vain to expect any manner of Compliance on his side, and the more she complies the more she may; his fantastical humours grow with her desire to gratifie them" (28). This is the blueprint Pamela's marriage follows. Yet Mr. B does not disagree with Pamela simply because he *can*. According to Toni Bowers in "'A Point Of Conscience': Breastfeeding and Maternal Authority in *Pamela*, Part 2" (1995), typical of an aristocrat of the mid-eighteenth century, Mr. B finds breastfeeding distasteful (139), and he claims that his stance against allowing Pamela to nurse lies in his "watchful Care over [her] for [her] own Good" (4: 46). He worries that, as a nurse, she would "be ingross'd by those Baby Offices, which will better befit weaker Minds" (4: 34). Mr. B's rationale, at first, seems to lie in his admiration of Pamela's intellect, yet more selfish desires lie beneath: Mr. B wants Pamela's attention for himself, he does not want his "Rest disturbed," and he fears his wife losing her "personal Graces" (4: 34). When he argues that nursing will degrade Pamela, he is not worried about her solely for her own good, as he claims. If, in fact, nursing would deteriorate Pamela's mind and beauty, it would, in effect, degrade the value of the aristocratic Mr. B's property—his prized wife—and disturb his sexual relationship with her in the process.

Mr. B sees not only his property and comfort but also his dominion at risk. Mr. B, conscious of the stakes involved in the debate, invokes highly political language to express his point. He says, "Ladies in your Way, are often like incroaching Subjects: They are apt to extend what they call their Privileges, on the Indulgence shewed them; and the Husband never again recovers the Ascendant he had before" (4: 46). This argument echoes John Dryden's translation of Louis Maimbourg's "The History of the League" (1684), which defends a king's complete authority over his subjects:

Every point which a Monarch loses or relinquishes, but renders him the weaker to maintain the rest; and besides, they so construe it, as if what he gave up were the *natural right* of the people, which he or his Ancestors had usurp'd from them; which makes it the more dangerous for him to quit his hold, and is truly the reason why so many mild Princes have been branded with the names of Tyrants, by their *incroaching Subjects*. (406, final italics mine)

To Mr. B, Pamela's defense of her maternal identity and rights is unreasonable and dangerous; she is, like a rebellious subject, taking advantage of her sovereign's goodness to her, acting as though nursing, the "privilege" he makes her give up, is actually a "natural right." It is, then, Pamela who is the villain, the "incroaching Subject" who, by her thwarted desire to nurse her child, brands Mr. B "unfairly" with the name of "Tyrant."

For her "rebellion," Pamela must be either punished or forgiven. Before Pamela finally acquiesces to forgo nursing, Mr. B threatens to punish her if she disobeys his wishes: if she follows the example of the "Patriarch Wives" by nursing her own child, Mr. B will follow the lead of the "Patriarch Husbands" by resorting to polygamy (4: 45)—a concept that he knows distresses his insecure wife, and a concept which the reader, aware of Mr. B's libertine past, might suspect is not entirely religious. Though Pamela is certain not to mention the point to Mr. B again, she dejectedly writes, "[W]e have heard of a good sort of Body, that is to be my poor Baby's Mother, when it comes" (4: 47). Pamela must, in keeping with Astell's observations, get used to the fact that it is her lot in life "to be denied [her] most innocent desires, for no other cause but the Will and Pleasure of an absolute Lord and Master, . . . whose Commands she cannot but despise at the same time she obeys them" (4).

Lord G stands in stark contrast against Mr. B, acknowledging and even celebrating the fact that his wife has chosen to make her body meaningful in ways that supersede sexuality alone— and that this is her choice entirely. Lord G's pleasure in Lady G's decision to nurse her "little Marmouset" suggests his progressive, selfless support for her, both as a woman with a decision-making capacity of her own and as a mother. He still, at times, "thrust[s] in (unsent for) his sharp face" (6: 218), yet where it counts most, Lord G is an obliging and considerate partner, no tyrant at all.

Lord G's gentle and domestic disposition may not be only acceptable, but an ideal in its own right. In *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), Lawrence Stone explores how English values during this three-hundred year period changed family and personal life. In Stone's estimation, the family underwent three phases during this time: Until the mid-seventeenth century, the "open lineage family" centered general lineage rather than the nuclear family (4); until the eighteenth century, the "restricted patriarchal nuclear family" centered a nuclear patriarch (7); and throughout the eighteenth century, the "closed domesticated nuclear family" centered individual freedom and "strong affective ties." The eighteenth-century home reflected these changes, becoming more private both architecturally and socially: Barriers were erected around the house, which kept the community out, and inside the house, rooms became smaller, more numerous, and connected via corridors, so even those living under the same roof had an easier time escaping one another's prying eyes— or retreating to an intimate space together (8).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Separate rooms are imperative to both the plot and the structure of Richardson's novels, as the "to-the-moment" narrative depends on the heroine's ability to escape to her "closet," a private place for her to express her most intimate, and perhaps experimental, thoughts: As Harriet explains, "Conjectural topics are reserved for my closet and pillow" (5: 555). Closets feature heavily as sites of privacy invasion, as

Within those walls, men and women enjoyed privacy, intimacy, and mutual affection that helped to achieve the public national reproductive agenda. Lisa Forman Cody's *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (2005) explores how eighteenth-century male medical authorities became invested in the birthing body, proclaiming it a human, not a women's, issue (9). Thus these men made reproduction, formerly the private business of women in the homosocial birthing chamber, a topic of public discourse. Cody argues that men-midwives were a paradox, masculine in their national heroism and scientific knowledge but feminine in their domesticity (12). Yet the man-midwife is not an anomaly, nor is he a paradox; he represents a specific version of eighteenth-century British masculinity. As Helen Berry's *Gender, Society, and Print Culture in Late Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (2003) and Gillian Williamson's *British Masculinity in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1731 to 1815* (2016) explain, popular periodicals of the period positioned gentleness and, to an extent, domesticity, increasingly as signs of masculine strength. The British gentleman, then, helps the woman through childbirth and helps her to create and to raise a new generation of Britons.

### **"A Shell and China Taste"**

Lord G is not simply a milder version of Charles: He is an alternative exemplar. Both men father children; in addition, while Charles defends his country through masculine violence, Lord G does so through the perpetuation of the British economy.

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well: See Sir Hargrave hiding a shorthand transcriptionist in his closet to record a meeting with Charles (2: 245); the Porretta parents hiding in a closet to eavesdrop on Charles and Clementina (3: 125); and, in a parody of these more serious examples, Lady G spying on her aunt and husband from her aunt's closet: "They are really talking of me--Complaining!--Abominable! . . . But, hush! Why don't he speak louder? He can't be in earnest hurt, if he does not raise his voice. Creeping soul, and whiner! I can't hear a word he says. I have enough against *her*!-- But I want something against *him*-- Duce take them both!" (5: 499).

Shortly after their marriage, Lady G wishes to “cure” Lord G “of his taste for trifles and nick-knacks,” for “who can forbear, sometimes, to think slightly of a man, who, by effeminacies, and a Shell and China taste, undervalues himself?” (5: 519). At the end of the novel, when Lord and Lady G are happily united in harmony, Harriet reports that Lord G finally appears to be “a manly, sensible man” (7: 412). Her perception is noteworthy because Lord G has not really changed: Though he donates at least some of his butterflies to a virtuoso friend and his shells to Charles’s ward Emily Jervois, he still, as his wife complains, “esteems” these sorts of objects; yet Lady G does not feel ruffled anymore because she sees that “he is capable of forgetting his butterflies, and *esteeming*” her as well (7: 419). A man who cares only for his hobbies is no masculine exemplar, but perhaps through Lord G *Grandison* illustrates that a man who is attentive to his family may— or perhaps even *should*— make room for “nickknackatories.”

The castigation of luxury was a common eighteenth-century theme. John Gay’s mock-epic *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716) satirizes commercial and urban culture in three books by advising how to walk the treacherous streets of London: Book one is dedicated to what to wear when walking, book two to walking by day, and book three to walking by night. The dangers of the city come from every citizen— from honest tradesmen to pickpockets and prostitutes— attempting to gain financial power over the others, and so a walker must be prepared. This begins, of course, with the right shoes, for the dangers of an ill-fitting shoe are tragic: “Should the big last extend the shoe too wide,/ Each stone will wrench th’ unwary step aside;/ The sudden turn may stretch the swelling vein,/ Thy cracking joint unhinge, or ancle sprain:/ And when too short the modish shoes are worn,/ You’ll judge the seasons by your

shooting corn" (35-40). A coat— warm, but cleanable, since the city is so filthy— and a sturdy cane, too, are non-negotiable, except to the fop, whose "cloak spatter'd o'er with lace" (54) and "amber tipt" cane (67) are "for empty show" (68); after all, "[i]n gilded chariots . . . [fops] loll at ease" (69).

The fop was an easy target, yet during the eighteenth century, as today, shopping and a desire for material goods in general was aligned with women; in fact, the fop was coded as feminine precisely *because* of his fashionable foibles. Though the men in the poem do not fare much better, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1714) targets the vanity, idleness, and consumption of women above all. The poem begins when Belinda awakens— at noon— painting a lazy image of a coquette beautified with the aid of sylphs and worldly treasures: Indian gems (1: 133), Arabian perfumes (1: 134), and combs made from "Tortoise" and "Elephant" (1: 135). Her pride, though, is in twin curls at her nape (2: 20), and the "rape" in this mock-epic is when a libertine Baron "ravages" one of the locks by stealing it: "Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,/ And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies./ Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,/ When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;/ Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,/ In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!" (3: 156-161). The poem depicts the London elite in general as frivolous, but it is Belinda who is hysterical over the loss of trifles.

Likewise, when in "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes" (1748) Thomas Gray eulogizes his friend Horace Walpole's feline companion, Selima, he lambasts women's desire for material goods. The poem narrates her death, which begins when the tabby gazes onto imported carp from a vase

decorated with “China’s gayest art” (2): “A whisker first and then a claw,/ With many an ardent wish,/ She stretched in vain to reach the prize./ What female heart can gold despise?/ What cat’s averse to fish?” (20-24). Selima falls into the water, “Eight times emerging from the flood/ She mewed to every watery god,/ Some speedy aid to send” (31-33). Aid never comes; Selima drowns. The poem concludes: “From hence, ye beauties, undeceived,/ Know, one false step is ne’er retrieved,/ And be with caution bold./ Not all that tempts your wandering eyes/ And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;/ Nor all that glisters, gold” (37-42). In employing the tragic language of oceanic drowning, the mock-heroic poem implicitly contrasts the materialistic, frivolous, feminine Selima with the masculine sailor drowned at sea: The greedy Selima can drown in her tub of goldfish only because the mighty Royal Navy has conquered the world for porcelain vases and glittering carp.

The eighteenth century’s distinction between feminine consumption and masculine production is a fabricated one. In *Material Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Nation of Makers* (2020), Serena Dyer and Chloe Wigston Smith remind us that though the Industrial Revolution positioned production as masculine, during the eighteenth century production was primarily the result of home crafts, meaning women as well as men were not only consumers, but producers, in their own right (1). Even aristocratic women, whose accomplishments included needlework, produced material goods for consumption; indeed, the making process itself was consumed, a practice observed by onlookers, whether in a dressmaker’s shop or in one’s own drawing-room (2). The binary distinctions between buyers and consumers, especially when gendered, were constructions, particularly because Britain was positioned as a nation of traders

and shopkeepers; this focus on the moment of material exchange obscures the fact that one must consume in order to make; a dress cannot be fashioned without, amongst many other material goods, needle and thread (7). Even buying this hat or those gloves constituted the making of an outfit and the making of one's image. Moreover, Catherine Hall's *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (1992) explains that, before the Industrial Revolution, the family was a productive unit with no clear distinction between women's and men's work: It was all the work of a household (44). With the Industrial Revolution, the family shifted from the site of production to the site of consumption, as labor moved outside of the home through professionalization and mechanization (51). In actuality, the eighteenth-century woman may have had more power than Dyer and Smith and Hall propose: In "Conjugal Capitalism: The Domestication of Public Space" (2016), Sally O'Driscoll examines the changes to the eighteenth-century shopping sphere. By the end of the eighteenth century, the new domestic woman was inextricably bound to capitalism, a relationship exemplified by her shopping habits (41). The streets, which hitherto had been purely public spaces, needed to be domesticated in order for this new entity to engage in shopping and hence bolster the British economy and, as a result, the nation (41-42). While Hall claims that it was the Industrial Revolution that birthed the woman as consumer, O'Driscoll's argument is the reverse: that it was largely thanks to the new domestic woman that London would have the economic power to birth the Industrial Revolution, and so, during this period, "shopping" went from the acquisition of goods to a social activity in its own right (46). Print culture helped to fuel "shopping" as gendered: Rosalind Ballaster et al.'s *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity, and the Woman's Magazine* (1991) argues

that women's periodicals, in particular, established women as a special market of consumption "as the ornaments of a class" (74). *Grandison* too seems to establish shopping as a peculiarity of women: Charlotte explains that on a day of visiting, "Of the ten visits, six of the ladies will be gone to sales, or to plague tradesmen, and buy nothing: Any-where rather than at home" (1: 191). She is voicing the common expectation that women ought to prefer domesticity to idle novelty, yet is the buying of goods the problem, or is the problem the idleness of viewing shopping as an activity rather than as a means to an end?

The link between shopping and the actual acquisition of material goods of home comfort cannot be overlooked. Though Lord G "values himself on his taste in houses and furniture"—a taste which he applies not only to his own home but to a home in the fashionable Grosvenor Square for Charles and Harriet (6: 123)—outfitting and maintaining the home are tasks that generally would have been relegated to women. Vickery's *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (2009) explores the relationship between gender and domestic consumer culture during the period. She explains that the beginning of a marriage was punctuated by hastily acquiring the appointment of a household, and that the end of a marriage—the death of one spouse—punctuated by dismantling that household (3). What happened in-between tended to be maintained and created by women, who saw themselves as homeowners, not their husbands' guests (9)—thus Lady G's chafing when Lord G buys a home without her approval, despite it being, as she admits, "a handsome house" (5: 501). The home was as much a wife's as a husband's, and her role as hostess in the culture of visiting required that she consume tasteful and fashionable commodities (21). But these

appointings must appeal to more than just the eye: Jon Stobart's "Material Literacies of Home Comfort in Georgian England" (2020) explores how during the period, homeowners began to prioritize physical comfort over ostentatious display (83). This is not to say that the aesthetic experience was no longer relevant, but more to say that the comfort and ingenuity of a piece of furniture was deemed elegant and attractive for those very features (87). Furnishing a home was not a passive and thoughtless act; it required a special savvy, an understanding of how materials interacted with each other, the body, and a home's architecture, in both a practical and an aesthetic sense (92). Further, it took a discerning eye to tell the difference between domestic and foreign goods. As Dyer and Smith explain, "Material literacy was essential to eyeing the bright, rich dyes that saturated Indian textiles, especially calicoes, in the early eighteenth century and to feeling the paper-thin muslins of the later eighteenth century. Did a piece of porcelain hail from China or was it manufactured in Chelsea?" (4).

Thus, in choosing and furnishing his home, Lord G demonstrates what might seem a feminine touch but what more accurately is a worldly acumen and masculine symbol of imperial conquest. One such appointing is the gift he presents to Lady G upon their marriage: a "fine set of old Japan China with brown edges" (4: 418). Lady G describes the scene:

Would you not have been delighted, Harriet, to see my Lord busying himself with taking out, and putting in the windows, one at a time, the cups, plates, jars, and saucers, rejoicing and parading over them, and shewing his connoisseurship to his motionless admiring wife, in commending this and the other piece as a beauty? And, when he had done, taking the *liberty*, as he phrased it, half fearful, half resolute, to salute his bride for his reward; and then pacing backwards several steps, with such a strut and a crowl see him yet!

In respect to porcelain not even Charles can compare to Lord G: Charles's "japan china, . . . [t]he finest . . . [Harriet] ever saw, except that of Lady G's, which she so whimsically received at the hands of her Lord, took particularly every female eye" (7: 270). If Charles's second-rate dishware can catch "every female eye," we can only imagine the attentions bestowed upon Lord G's. Lord G's collections, then, extend beyond the trinket chest; even if he keeps none of his butterflies or seashells, he has shaped the British domestic space, from choosing the home to furnishing it, thanks to a keen eye and discernment.

Lord G's gifts extend beyond the china cabinet into the menagerie, and his gift of "Parrot and Paroquet" is also deeply rooted in eighteenth-century material culture. In *The Georgian Menagerie: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century London* (2015), Christopher Plumb explores the trade and spectacle of exotic animals during the period. Exotic creatures could be purchased as domestic pets or observed in menageries and zoological gardens, all as part of the Enlightenment desire for better understanding the natural world (4). The land acquisitions from the Seven Years' War broadened the variety of exotic animals to be traded at mid-century; by the end of the period, animals traded in London hailed from wherever the Empire's reach extended: Africa, Asia, America, Australia (7). Parrots were a particular favorite, especially among women, throughout the century (22), and a pet's death did not signify the end of its use as a commodity: The beast might be taxidermied for personal display or for donation to a museum (49).

What may seem like women's and fops' frivolities and consumer excesses were indeed the backbone of the British economy. Yet the story of consumption is and was

more complex than waste versus thrift: The material goods on which Lord G spends his British pounds are both fueled by and the fuel of the Empire. Kathleen Wilson's *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2002) borrows a Caribbeanist lens when she argues that as an island, Britain was not truly insular, but instead its development as an empire depended on the fact that it existed in relation— to bodies of water, to other land masses— in short, as part of a larger oceanic and global network (5). Likewise, Joseph Addison's 19 May 1711 *Spectator* no. 69 describes his delight in visiting the Royal Exchange of London, shown in fig. 13, and seeing "so rich an Assembly of Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth" (1). He sees the Exchange not only as a place of trade, but an embassy where retailers "negotiate Affairs, conclude Treaties, and maintain a good Correspondence between those wealthy Societies of Men that are divided from one another by Seas and Oceans." Among the "different walks and different languages," Addison sees himself as "a Citizen of the World" and expresses a particularly positive view of international consumption:

Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffick among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of Dependance upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest. Almost every *Degree* produced something peculiar to it. The Food often grows in one Country, and the Sauce in another. The Fruits of *Portugal* are corrected by the Products of *Barbadoes*: The Infusion of a *China* Plant sweetned with the Pith of an *Indian Cane*. The *Philippick* Islands give a Flavour to our *European* Bowls. The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of a hundred Climates. The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the Torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of *Peru*, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of *Indostan*.  
(4)

Addison recognizes that Britain not only benefits from, but depends, on the products from the rest of the world, as it is “a barren uncomfortable Spot of Earth” (5). He poses the benefit as reciprocal, since, for example, British sheep clothe “the Inhabitants of the frozen Zone” (6). For Addison, global exchange is of mutual benefit; it is, perhaps, even the product of a Divine design.



Fig. 13. Thomas Bowles. *The Inside View of the Royal Exchange of London*. 1712. Yale Center for British Art, <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:4680>.

The nation and Empire blossomed from eighteenth-century trade. England's population doubled over the course of the century, and according to Donald Greene's *The Age of Exuberance* (1970), England enjoyed abundance, whereas its Continental neighbors, including France, had trouble stretching their resources (5). Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992), however, viewing all of Britain rather than only the more affluent England, argues that the common belief in prosperity by eighteenth-century Britons was in large part propaganda, as most *Britons* were impoverished; this propaganda of plenty served to strengthen morale if Britons believed that their French enemies were worse off (35). Britons linked France's apparent pecuniary shortcomings directly to its religion, believing Catholicism to be inherently wasteful and exploitative (36). Because of Britain's seeming economic success, Colley poses trade, in addition to religion, as another important driver in British identity: Britain and France were among the most powerful burgeoning empires, and one way to assure British power over France was to amass and exploit more of the world's resources. Consequently, publications urged Britons to support the endeavors of their tradesmen, both verbally and financially (64). And so it was: Charles seems to agree with Addison when he calls "[t]he merchants of Great Britain . . . the most useful members of the community" (2: 455), and Harriet's grandmother, the reverend Mrs. Shirley, notes that the lack of studying "the depths of science" or "polite literature" (6: 243) does not hinder the superiority of merchants over learned men, "as to public utility" (6: 244).<sup>27</sup> Colley explains that the capitalistic enterprise supported British nationalism in multiple ways: It took resources that might otherwise be acquired by the French; it supplied a continual

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<sup>27</sup> Of course, as a printer, Richardson was himself a tradesman; these exclamations by his fictional "betters" could certainly have been motivated by self-interest.

revenue stream that would fund a strong military; and it peopled the Royal Navy during conflicts with seamen trained in trade during times of relative peace (65).

The impact of international trade could be seen not only at the Royal Exchange but in the home. Johanna Ilmakunnas and Jon Stobert's *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries* (2017) explores the global nature of the everyday Early Modern home. During the period, luxury came gradually to be seen not as wasteful, but as supportive of the national economy (2). Even taste itself was politicized in being aligned explicitly with national identity and culture. What was described as Italian taste looked back toward the Renaissance, while French and English taste were defined in mutual opposition (4-5): French as opulent and ornate, English as modern and elegant (9). In the English taste, a moderate collector became a connoisseur; an excessive one, a "macaroni" (6). Likewise, Stobart's "Making an English Country House: Taste and Luxury in the Furnishing of Stoneleigh Abbey, 1763-1765" (2017) examines the global nature of a typical country house of the period, decorated with a domestic wool carpet, French chairs, Japanese cabinetry, Indian cotton, and Chinese porcelain (143), as well as domestic imitations (144). Once again, the line between producer and consumer was blurred because West Indian mahogany was essential to domestic furniture production (144). Thomas Chippendale's *chinoiserie* represents oriental-inspired European design (144); as the Victoria and Albert Museum puts it in their introduction to their *chinoiserie* collection, "At its height in Britain from 1750 to 1765, this fanciful style relied more on the designer's and craftsman's imagination than on accurately portraying oriental motifs and ornament." See fig. 14 for an example of a *chinoiserie* dressing table built in 1754, a table identical to one Lord G

may have used to furnish the house for his Lady. The integration of global goods signaled not only the elite's pecuniary reach, but also their taste, their ability to weave disparate items into a cohesive and elegant whole (144)– and, perhaps, a paradoxically *British* one.



Fig. 14. William Linnell. *Japanned Dressing Table*.  
1754. Victoria and Albert Museum, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/chinoiserie>.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

It is important to take a moment to note that, while in the best case scenario goods acquired abroad were the products of a mutual global trade relationship, at worst, they were the result of mercenary, violent ravaging. The fact that some goods were simply referred to by their country of origin– “China” in place of the word porcelain, “Japan” in place of lacquerwork– shows that to some extent the British distilled the foreign lands themselves into material commodities. The farther the Empire reached, the more commodities it acquired; the more commodities it acquired, the more funding it had to extend its reach farther.

When Gray's *Selima* falls from her China vase and drowns among vibrant imported goldfish, the mock-heroic poem borrows the desperate imagery of a sailor drowning at sea. On the one hand, this pokes fun at the international consumer culture of the period, but on the other, it reminds the reader of Britain's prominent position as a trading nation, the Royal Navy powering through the Seven Seas to establish the trade routes necessary for domestic consumption patterns. The eighteenth-century seashell mania further establishes this connection between domestic consumption and oceanic excursions. In "Learning to Craft" (2020), Beth Fowkes Tobin explores home crafts, such as shell-work. She reports that in 1762 a shop called the Shell Warehouse opened in London, selling shells acquired from the Pacific for use in private collections or in craft projects, like making artificial flowers or even subterranean shell grottos in private gardens (258-259).<sup>28</sup> Shells were marketed specifically toward women, who could engage in decorative craftwork either to sell or use in decorating their own homes (260-261). See fig. 15 as an illustration, featuring a tray from a box of shells— some fashioned into floral arrangements, some sorted for future use— likely arranged around the year 1800. The mighty Royal Navy has conquered the world, and Addison's "ambassadors" at the Royal Exchange have united it, in order to furnish a gentlewoman's whimsical hobby.

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<sup>28</sup> A stunning example, discovered in 1835, exists in Margate, England, as a [tourist attraction](#). The Shell Grotto's tunnels boast 2000 square feet of mosaic crafted from over four million individual shells.



Fig. 15. *Box of Shells*.

1800. *Victoria and Albert Museum*, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1227015/box-of-shells-unknown/>.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Yet we might not scoff so readily at what appears to be a rather silly hobby. In *Grandison* it is not only Lord G who collects shells, for the exemplary matron Lady Grandison, Charles's mother, was an expert in shell-works as well (7: 277). These trinkets of the sea link the British domestic space to British oceanic trade, and they also are mementos of global natural history. The study of natural history is yet another arena in which *Grandison* presents Lord G as a new type of masculine exemplar.

### **“A Connoisseur in Antiquities”**

Lord G is not only a consumer or a collector; he is a curator of British culture, or, as Harriet proclaims, “a connoisseur in Antiquities, and in those parts of *nice* Knowledge, as I, a woman, call it, with which the Royal Society here, and the learned and polite of other nations, entertain themselves” (2: 229). He collects moths and butterflies, as well as shells. On 26 August 1710, Addison's *Tatler* no. 216 criticized those who study insects as “whimsical philosophers” (177) who employ themselves “in gathering together the refuse of nature . . . and hoarding up in their chests and cabinets

such creatures as others industriously avoid the sight of" (178). Addison continued his criticism in *Spectator* no. 21 on 24 March 1711, complaining of idle scientific-minded men who waste their time "impaling . . . Insects upon the point of a Needle for Microscopical Observations . . . gathering . . . Weeds, and . . . Chas[ing] Butterflies" (para. 8), especially when these men could have used their talents more wisely as merchants, having been blessed to have been born to "a trading Nation" (para. 10). In short, Addison castigates the initiators of the Scientific Revolution as idle, wasteful, and borderline mad. This accords with Lady G's reading of Lord G's hobbies as silly: "Why, why is it the privilege of people of quality now, to be educated in such a way, that their time can hardly ever be worthily filled up; and as if it were a disgrace to be either manly or useful?" (5: 509). Fig. 16 shows a virtuoso, or naturalist, dressed in a nightcap and robe during the day as he examines a drawing of a housefly; a garish taxidermied crocodile hangs in the background. The message is clear: The study of natural history is the luxury of indolence and, perhaps, even depravity.



Fig. 16. Isaac Cruikshank. *Eccentric Excursions*, Plate 41.  
1796. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1927-0308-121](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1927-0308-121).  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

The naturalist was understood to be, specifically, an idle *man*. Indeed, the Royal Society, established in the seventeenth century, did not admit women until the mid-twentieth. Harriet uses the amphibians, arachnids, and insects that naturalists tended to study to make her own point about gender difference: “A frog, a toad, a spider, a beetle, an earwig, will give us [women] mighty pretty tender terror; while the heroic men will trample the insect under foot, and look the more brave for their barbarity, and for our *delicate* screaming” (6: 182). Lord G’s behavior is neither feminine terror nor masculine destruction; instead he preserves the corpses of and studies the creatures of earth and sky.

Addison and Lady G might think the naturalist’s study of insects frivolous, but naturalists played a vital role in the perpetuation of the nation. In *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (1987), Gerald Newman argues that the

period saw incredible efforts toward cultural preservation, including the birth of national monuments such as Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, the *Biographia Britannica*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Society of Antiquaries, and the British Museum (112). According to Newman, this effort at cultural preservation was in direct competition with France, which had already established its own versions of these institutions (112). This is not only preservation, but cultivation and creation; just as Lord G's butterflies have transfigured from living wonders to scientific displays, these institutions consciously curated the cultural elements that would, in turn, cultivate a national identity. If the nation wished to maintain its power over its own people, it needed to establish itself as a distinct and worthwhile culture, one preferable to fashionable "frenchification." Curated collections— of narratives, antiques, biological artifacts— helped to establish the idea of the nation through the guise of preserving, without bias, an already-existing culture.

As this project's first chapter argues, the eponymous hero is a masculine exemplar in part because he exchanges the senseless violence of the rake for the husbandry of the gentleman-hero, investing in the nation and family rather than threatening them. The symbolic representation of this husbandry is in his care for his father's oak plantation. Lord G too invests rather than threatens, but his curation of natural history artifacts and material goods may have an even wider symbolic scope than Charles's plantation: Despite their miniature scale, Lord G's collections of insects and molluscs contribute to Britain as a nation, preserving not only material objects but helping to establish cultural institutions. When he distributes his insects and seashells to

other Britons, Lord G establishes his collections as not only for private enjoyment, like Charles's oaks, but investments for communal benefit.

After reading *Grandison*, two young ladies, Celia and Aminta, wrote to Richardson on 23 April 1754, "if you can find a couple of Sir Charles's for us, then shall we be under the greatest obligations. but if this last request is too unreasonable & Mr Orme & Fowler, should not be engaged pray make a little interest with them for us" (Schellenberg 209). Perhaps the milksop in general is second-best to a hero, but Lord G is not an Orme or Fowler, despite their surface similarities. Lord G might not resemble the "antient sturdy baron" of Fanny Hill's erotic encounters, but neither is he an effeminate "pap-nerv'd softling" (Cleland 64). Lord G is not second-best, but instead an alternative figure of masculinity, a brother to Charles in more than one sense of the word. In volume one, the milksop can be only a pitiful figure of impotence as the hero and villain grapple over the damsel in distress, but unlike Orme and Fowler, Lord G is not introduced until the novel's second volume, when the romantic narrative has been resolved. Lord G is fully entrenched in the realistic mode directed by the novel's women, but his masculine thrusts incrementally propel the narrative forward: Each time Lord G "thrusts in . . . his sharp face" (6: 218) he demonstrates the permeability of narrative, architecture, and the human body, advancing a plot, "squatting upon . . . [the] hoop" (4: 434) of the narrative's otherwise repetitive spiral.

Like the butterflies of his collection, Lord G may flit and flutter, but he also pollinates, and each beat of his lacy wings influences the world around him. Just as Charles is the rake reimagined, Lord G is the milksop reimagined: He is a passionate husband, a doting father, *and* a "connoisseur in Antiquities": He is simultaneously a

preserver of British history and perpetuator of a British future, and he is a masculine exemplar in his own right.

## PART II

### WOMEN AND THE SPIRAL ASCENT

#### CHAPTER 3: THE HEROINE DETHORNED

The number of formes, Mazes and Knots is so great, and men are so diversly delighted, that I leave every House-wife to her selfe . . . lest I deprive her of all delight and direction, let her view these few, choyse, new formes, and note this generally, that all plots are square, and all are bordered about with Privit, Raisins, Fea-berries, Roses, Thorne, Rosemary, Bee-flowers, Isop, Sage, or such like.

—William Lawson

#### Landscape Gardening

In the seventeenth century, the French *parterre*— or ornamental ground-garden— proliferated, its blooms and foliage confined to orderly and carefully-designed square borders. William Lawson's *The Country Housewife's Garden* (1617) encourages creativity in its audience, "lest [it] deprive her of all delight and direction" (79), but provides diagrams for the general form of the garden: always tidy, always square, always symmetrical, and always contained behind a "strong and shrowding fence" (85). Scented blossoms are of particular importance in the housewife's flower garden, for an "aboundance of Roses and Lavender yeeld much profit, and comfort to the senses" (87), but they must remain separate from vegetables, which would "disgrace" their beauty (86). Gardening, of course, was not relegated only to women: Lawson also published *The Husband Mans Fruitful Orchard* (1623), which directs men to plant, tend, and harvest fruit.

By the eighteenth century, gardening philosophy was much altered. Joseph Addison's *Spectator* no. 477, published on 6 September 1712, describes his several

acres as “a Confusion of Kitchin and Parterre, Orchard and Flower-Garden” (para. 1). His plants “run into as great a Wildness as their Natures will permit. I take in none that do not naturally rejoice in the Soil, and am pleased when I am walking in a Labyrinth of my own raising, not to know whether the next Tree I shall meet with is an Apple or an Oak, an Elm or a Pear-Tree.” Recognizing that his is not the only method of garden design, Addison ponders the world’s variety of gardens:

I think there are as many kinds of Gardening as of Poetry: Your Makers of Parterres and Flower-Gardens, are Epigrammatists and Sonneteers in this Art: Contrivers of Bowers and Grotto’s . . . are Romance Writers. . . . As for my self, . . . my Compositions in Gardening are altogether after the *Pindarick* Manner, and run into the beautiful Wildness of Nature, without affecting the nicer Elegancies of Art.

Addison’s comparison of the parterre and sonnet is apt: Both are characterized by symmetry and structure, and both dominated their respective spheres in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In contrast, Addison sees his hodgepodge garden as akin to the Pindaric ode, a form noted for its loose and irregular verses.<sup>29</sup> All gardens, however, are rooted in a natural human inclination for verdure, for as Addison concludes, “A Garden was the Habitation of our first Parents before the Fall. It is naturally apt to fill the Mind with Calmness and Tranquillity, and to lay all its turbulent Passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the Contrivance and Wisdom of Providence, and suggests innumerable Subjects for Meditation” (para. 2). Addison here draws an explicit comparison to the biblical story of Creation, which John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) adapts in describing the Garden of Eden as the “fertil ground” (4: 216) of the famous

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<sup>29</sup> Like Addison, Lancelot “Capability” Brown, perhaps the most famous landscape gardener of the period, likened garden planning to writing. As he described to religious author and poet Hannah More, and she recounts in a letter dated December 1782, “Now there . . . I make a comma, and there . . . where a more decided turn is proper, I make a colon; at another part, where an interruption is desirable to break the view, a parenthesis; now a full stop, and then I begin another subject” (267).

Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as well as “Flours worthy of Paradise which not nice Art/ In Beds and curious Knots, but Nature boon” (4: 241-242). A fertile medley of strong trees and cascading floral arrangements make Milton’s Paradise a “happy rural seat of various view” (4: 247), as illustrated in the 1794 rendition of the scene in fig. 17.



Fig. 17. John Augustus Richter. *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*. 1794. British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1898-0520-85](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1898-0520-85). © The Trustees of the British Museum

Milton describes Paradise, and Addison describes his own garden, as meandering, varied, and contemplative, the very traits of the English landscape garden that took eighteenth-century Europe by storm. Mark Laird’s *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds, 1720-1800* (1999) explains that the English garden replaced the formal and symmetrical French garden, which is characterized by geometric and linear arrangements, with an idealized, picturesque

version of nature, characterized by irregularity of shape (3), variation of light and dark values of green (4), and graduation of low to high plantings (16). The English landscape garden, as in the representation of Stourhead in fig. 18, is an undulating and rambling experience.



Fig. 18. Francis Nicholson. *Another View of the Lake and Bridge on Left the Sun Temple on Right the Pantheon.*

1753-1844. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1944-1014-137](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1944-1014-137).

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The realistic novel that dominated the eighteenth century took a circuitous track similar to that of the English landscape garden. As Northrop Frye's *Secular Scripture* (1976) explains, the eighteenth-century novel has its roots in the romantic convention, simply modifying the structural conventions to adhere to a taste for "ordinary experience" (38). The result is a wandering tendency, as the realistic novel, with its ostensible rejection of unrealistic linearity has trouble reaching its romantic ending in a

realistic fashion (37). Inevitably, romance creeps into the realistic narrative: Just as the narrative structure is confused between romance and realism, so are the characters (39). This creates a tension, for these characters, often crafted carefully to adhere to realistic conventions, do not quite fit into the plot which, as fiction, is inherently romantic to some degree. Like the English landscape garden, the narrative is designed to be natural, yet by its very designedness can never be truly natural. Its designers cannot quite reconcile its form and content.

And so it is in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). After the resolution of the romance narrative of volume one, which features the conventional whirlwind abduction of the heroine, Harriet Byron, and her subsequent tumultuous rescue by the eponymous hero, the text rather explicitly tells the reader to expect a new kind of narrative moving forward: When Charles has deposited Harriet safely in the company of his sister Charlotte, Harriet's cousin asks her to tell him about the abduction. For a moment, Harriet begins to descend once more into the world of romance, her words "wild and incoherent" (1: 136). Charlotte interrupts— "My dear, . . . you shall not answer Mr. Reeves's question, if it be a question that will induce you to look backward. At present you must look only forward" (1: 134). Instead, Harriet begins to lament the worry she has caused her family— "O my poor Grandmamma— O my good Aunt Selby"— and Charlotte again interrupts: "I will have nothing said that begins with O" (1: 135). This moment is pivotal, for it presents an explicit shift from melodramatic romantic conventions to realistic ones. The narrative has been overtaken: It belongs not to the men and the retrospective linear thrust, but to the women and the "to-the-moment" spiral ascent. Even so, for the remainder of the novel, romance worms its way in:

Charles jokes that his “third sister,” Harriet, must have been “stolen from us in her cradle” (1: 148), and in the dreams Harriet describes, “[a]ll the Marvelous takes place,” for, as she admits, “dreams . . . make me a perfect romancer” (2: 285). The narrative ascends in a realistic spiral, yet this paradoxically makes room for deviating toward a romantic allusion or two.

Despite these deviations, the narrative is not without guiding structure. For example, the novel’s *dramatis personae* is an editorial intervention that, in listing the novel’s men on the left and the novel’s women on the right, signals to readers that men and women are distinct, belonging to opposite sides of the page. Here it would be an oversight to consider the guiding power of the “editor” in the novel without considering the gender implications of his editorship. The protagonists in the early British novel are typically women, but the authors and “editors” are men. As Madeleine Kahn writes in *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (1991), the earliest canonical English novels are narrated by women but penned by men, a phenomenon she refers to as “narrative transvestism,” where the author “cross-dresses” as a woman (2), but like transvestism, this is only a temporary and performative displacement of his masculine authority, which he resumes when, as editor, he directs the otherwise feminine narrative (20-21). The editor’s guidance, of both the narrative and of the reader’s interpretation of it, results in a patriarchal relationship between author/ editor and the typically female reader.

Construction under the guise of a woman’s pen helps to explain the novel’s epistolary structure; after all, as Ian Watt argues in *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957), letter-writing is perhaps the most domestic,

intimate, and feminine written form (187).<sup>30</sup> Richardson's "to-the-moment" narrative depends on the heroine's ability to escape to her "closet," a private place for her to express her most intimately wandering thoughts: As Harriet explains, "Conjectural topics are reserved for my closet and pillow" (5: 555).<sup>31</sup> After the brief abduction narrative in *Grandison's* first volume, the English women shape the novel's structure according to Frye's low mimetic comic mode. These women are good, but they are ordinary, and so their plot is the common, specifically, courtship and marriage. Out of the century's growing readership, it was women who read novels most voraciously thanks to what Watt deems their copious leisure time compared to that of men (44). An audience of women helps to explain why courtship was the central focus of the eighteenth-century novel, as courtship was central to their own lives, especially as marriage was being reshaped by the new reality of economic individualism (137). By the end of the century, the family was less an extended kinship network than a conjugal unit, so marriages created new families rather than extending existing ones (138-139). The new family system made a woman's marriage choice more important than ever before, as it dissolved her old identity and determined almost the entirety of her new social network (139). *Grandison's* Lady G voices a bride's sacrifices: "[A] change of condition for life! New attachments! A new course of life! Her name sunk, and lost! The property, person and will, of another, excellent as the man is; obliged to go to a new house; to be ingrafted into a new family; to leave her own, who so dearly love her; an irrevocable

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<sup>30</sup> For general analyses of Richardson's epistolary method, see Elizabeth Bergen Brophy's *Samuel Richardson: The Triumph of Craft* (1974) and Victor J. Lams's *Clarissa's Narrators* (2001).

<sup>31</sup> See Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), which traces the ways in which changes to the family structure were reflected in eighteenth-century domestic architecture, specifically through erecting barriers around the house and walls between formerly-open rooms, which allowed for more privacy within the home (8).

destiny!" (6: 234-235). Whether as a means of escape or to better understand their own situations, the women whose lives were being determined by the new family system looked to the domestic novel.

Though Harriet's courtship and marriage are important plot points, it is her interiority that shapes the novel's structure. As she waits to learn more about the hero whom she loves, she reflects:

Him, I think, of all the men I know . . . I could soonest intrust with a secret. But, have I, Lucy, any to reveal? It is, I hope, a secret to myself, that will never be unfolded, even *to myself*, that I love a man, who has not made professions of Love to me. As to Sir Charles Grandison— But have done, Harriet! Thou hast named a name, that will lead thee— Whither will it lead me? (2: 386)

Harriet awaits Charles's proposal, so the narrative focus is what Harriet thinks and discusses as she waits. It is Harriet's *wondering*— over her own desires, over whether Charles is engaged, over whether or not she should confess her feelings to her friends— that forms the *wandering* structure.

The realistic mode in *Grandison* seems to present itself in virtuous opposition against the more direct and passionate romantic mode. Harriet is breaking domestic conventions when she engages in "fairy-schemes" (5: 546)— in other words, when she refuses to marry after believing herself estranged from Charles— and so her revered grandmother Mrs. Shirley uses her superannuated perspective to shine a light on the contrasting conventions:

The reading in fashion when I was young, was Romances. You, my children, have, in that respect, fallen into happier days. The present age is greatly obliged to the authors of the Spectators. But till I became acquainted with my dear Mrs. Eggleton, which was about my sixteenth year, I was over-run with the absurdities of that unnatural kind of writing. . . . That good Lady cured me of so false a taste: But till she did, I had very

high ideas of first impressions; of eternal constancy; of Love raised to a pitch of idolatry. (7: 398).

Perhaps one of the *Spectators* to which Mrs. Shirley alludes is no. 37, published on 12 April 1711, in which Addison describes with pity a widow named Leonora, who has chosen not to remarry and instead “has turned all the Passions of her Sex into a Love of Books”— particularly romances, which have shaped the entirety of her existence, including her garden, which she has formed as “a kind of Wilderness . . . a little Enchanted Palace” of “Artificial Grottoes,” trees “twisted into Bowers,” and “Cages of Turtles” (para. 5). Like the romances that entrance Leonora, her garden is artificial, a beautiful prison for her reptiles and for her own mind. Addison admits that for Leonora the influence of romance has been fairly innocent, yet “[w]hat Improvements would a Woman have made, who is so Susceptible of Impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such Books as have a Tendency to enlighten the Understanding and rectify the Passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the Imagination?” (6). Leonora is not worsening the world, but neither is she improving it. Kathryn Shevelow’s *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989) asserts that eighteenth-century ephemeral publications attempted to relegate women to their domestic duties (1), casting themselves as the remedy to women’s idleness, for instead of reading novels, women could use their time more wisely by reading informative and moral *Spectators* and *Tatlers* (53). Ellen Gardiner’s *Regulating Readers: Gender and Literary Criticism in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (1999) further analyzes the press’s attempts to replace women’s beloved fiction and poetry with moral edification. Imaginative literature may have been gendered feminine due to its private, domestic, and sentimental nature, but it was dangerous: An

overabundance of emotion was thought to lead to unregulated lust (18), and so conduct and devotional literature would serve to teach women proper reserve (19). In fig. 19, titled “The Romance,” we see an idling young woman, “[a]ttentive to the lovesick tale,/ That thrills the Soul, and fans the fire” (3-4); breasts bared and curls loose, she fancies herself “[t]he heroine of the sweet Romance” (6), at the expense of virtue and productivity.

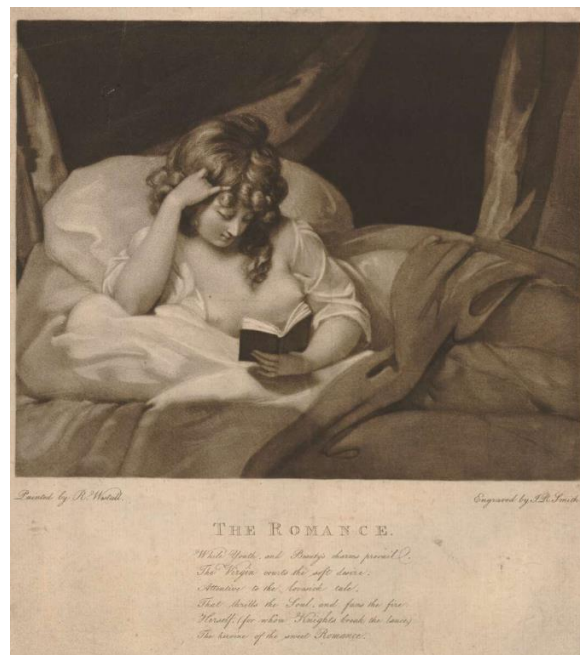


Fig. 19. Richard Westall. *The Romance*.

1791. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_2010-7081-3846](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2010-7081-3846).

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As *Grandison's* Mrs. Shirley explains, poets and romancers “set off [Love] with their false colourings,” misguiding young women into “opinions . . . a little heathenish” (7: 399), and so in youth she shook her love of romantic notions and embraced reality and moderation. Life after the Fall is an “imperfect state,” and so too is love: Only

“Esteem, heightened by Gratitude, and enforced by Duty” can be right for “this mortal state.” Lady G corroborates in her own colorful way, chastising “*constant* nymphs” who wish, “like the wives of some Pagan wretches, to be thrown into the funeral pile, with the dead bodies of their Lords” (7: 405). Lady G’s language recalls imagery of fairytales as well as eastern cultures, and colors them “incorrect,” for it is not the practical British way of “reasonable creatures.”

Too much romance is dangerous, and only a hefty, multivolume dose of realism can overpower it. The narrative is an English landscape garden, and it cannot be observed in only a glance: It must be traversed. Though the occasional cloud may obscure the path and rain shower sodden the ground, no passionate hurricanes or dangerous cyclones shall intervene. Neither will the garden be Leonora’s “Wilderness” of caged reptiles and “Artificial Grottoes.” We will spiral through shady grove and fragrant meadow, over a bridge and undulating hills, before reaching the terminus: The country house, where we will find man and wife properly wed, perhaps the closest representation of Eden since the Fall.

## English Roses

Just as the English landscape garden is incomplete without its iconic roses, an eighteenth-century domestic narrative cannot be complete without its heroine, the fictional emblem of the century’s feminine ideal. The feminine ideal of the period is what Mary Poovey, in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984), calls the “proper lady.” Though the “proper lady” was lauded as the “natural ideal,” such a woman is defined not by what she is, but by which aspects of herself she denies: She must “display no vanity,

no passion, no assertive 'self' at all" (21). According to an 11 May 1699 wedding sermon by John Sprint, a Dorsetshire clergyman, this is because of the folly of Eve:

Until that fatal Hour came, when the Woman seduced her Husband from his Innocency; and then the Nature of Man was sadly chang'd, his Temper grew harsh and severe, and Humours became troublesome and tedious; so that the Pleasing of him is now become a business that requires a great deal of Art and Skill, of Diligence and Industry; . . . which if it be, you may thank your Mother Eve for it, who, when she had gotten a good Natur'd and Loving Husband, that was easy to be pleas'd, could not then be contented, but must try Practices with him, till she had spoil'd him; which prov'd fatal, not only to her, but to her Daughters also; who, if they have Husbands, and have them good too, must take a great deal of Care and Pains to make them so. (7)

Sprint makes the role of a wife clear: to "be like a Mirrour which hath no Image of its own," shaped instead by all of her husband's emotions, whims, and desires. In the same vein, Richard Steele's *Spectator* no. 254, from 21 December 1711, quotes with admiration the newlywed Mary Home: "I am married, and have no other Concern but to please the Man I Love; he's the End of every Care I have; if I dress, 'tis for him; if I read a Poem or a Play, 'tis to qualify myself for a Conversation agreeable to his Taste" (para. 2). Surely Sprint would approve. Because the ideal of the "proper lady" was "prescription, not description," the conduct manuals which increased in popularity after the 1740s were used to reinforce the stereotype (Poovey 15). Perhaps the most notable of these is James Fordyce's popular *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), which advocates for women to be silent, "soft friend[s]" to men, rather than "self-sufficient prattler[s]" (193)—or their own independent entities. Fordyce's advice to women almost always refers to how men will perceive them; for example, "We [men] wish to see you often smile, but we would not have you smile always" (93). A woman who smiles, laughs, or speaks too often draws attention to herself; such behavior, therefore, conflicts

with “natural” female modesty. Wit, especially, was “dreaded in women” as a particularly unruly and critical form of speech (Fordyce 97).<sup>32</sup> Because men supposedly desire quiet, unobtrusive behavior in women, women should, paradoxically, consciously cultivate a demeanor in keeping with the “natural” feminine ideal by remaining silent most of the time; they should be pretty roses to be observed at men’s leisure rather than human beings who live for their own sakes.

The ideal of the “proper lady” was by no means a reality, for women exercised considerable power during the period. Susan Dwyer Amussen’s *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (1988) explains that the Early Modern family unit might more accurately be considered a “household,” considering the fact that until the mid-eighteenth century the home was the site of most agricultural as well as industrial production (68). This family model helps to illustrate the real power of wives, in particular. Household manuals typically divided the household sites of production into “outside (men) and inside (women)” (68), a division similar to what scholars today call the public and private spheres of influence. But these categories were not entirely distinct: Though women were affiliated with “inside,” they were responsible for what was produced, therefore going to the market to sell what they produced and buy what they needed for the continued maintenance of the household (68-69). Here rested a major contradiction in the gender dynamic: the need for a wife to be an independent manager of the household in her husband’s stead and equal economic contributor, and the prescription for her to be subservient and inferior to him (41-42). In fact, the entire marital enterprise depended on each partner’s economic contribution: From its

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<sup>32</sup> See Patricia Howell Michaelson’s *Speaking Volumes: Women, Reading, and Speech in the Age of Austen* (2002) for an exploration of the function of women’s wit during the long eighteenth century, but particularly during the Regency era.

beginning, the marriage united resources from husband and wife to create a new, single economic unit (76). In *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (1989), Bridget Hill analyzes how the shift from family economy to industrial economy developed the gendered division of labor and, consequently, the separate spheres of influence at the end of the century (6). It was not until men began to labor outside of the home that “housework” was associated primarily with women and, consequently, devalued (260). Hill sees the separation of husband’s and wife’s labor as the separation of a partnership, giving the husband patriarchal authority where before there was camaraderie (263).

Supposedly, when production left the household, women were granted more leisure time. In *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England* (1977), Lawrence Stone argues that the wife shifted from a figure of productivity to a “status ornament” (350); middle- and upper-class women supposedly became “idle drones” who wasted time playing cards, reading novels, visiting public entertainments, and, above all, gossiping (396-402). In fig. 20, we see “Life and Death Contrasted— Or, an Essay on Woman.” The illustration features, on the left, the aristocratic woman as Stone describes her: Dressed fashionably with playing cards, a book on “Gaming,” and a volume of “Romances and Novels” strewn haphazardly at her feet. In contrast, on the right, a skeleton stands before a funeral monument engraved with biblical quotations, including 1 Tim. 5.6: “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” The image perpetuates the eighteenth-century belief in women’s wasteful idleness.



Fig. 20. Robert Dighton. *Life and Death Contrasted– Or, an Essay on Woman*. 1784. British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1935-0522-3-54](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1935-0522-3-54).  
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In reality, eighteenth-century women of any class did not languish powerlessly or gossip idly in the comfort of a well-appointed parlor. Amanda Vickery, in *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (1998) argues that, though genteel women in particular may have spent much of their time at home, they were not confined there (285), and the families that genteel women maintained were considered public institutions whose marriages and births were of public importance, granting these matrons social power as a result (291). Just as the genteel family itself was both public and private, so too was the genteel home.<sup>33</sup> In *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in*

<sup>33</sup> Sir Charles Grandison's "welfare is the concern of hundreds, perhaps," the Grandison name of "public" rather than "private" concern (2: 307), but his claim to greatness is that he is "one of the busiest men in the kingdom, who [is] not engaged in public affairs; and yet the most of a family-man" (2: 279). His social status requires that he strike a balance between the two.

*Georgian England* (2009), Vickery delves more deeply into what actually happened in upper-class domestic spaces. A woman who could aptly maintain the home was important for a man not only for his own comfort, but for his ability to be mobile, a necessity especially for those holding government office (10-12); this benefitted the wife as well as the husband, since his social advancement had a direct impact on the comforts of her daily life and on the stability of the end of her life. But home maintenance was more than cooking and cleaning (though they too were of vast importance and difficulty); it involved the deft command of servants and the graceful direction of social behavior, especially when visitors came to call. The eighteenth-century home was where the elite carried out many of their social roles as landowners, employers, and government officials, and the hostess who presided over a tasteful parlor and generous table had practical, if not legal, power (*The Gentleman's Daughter* 9). In the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries, when manufacturing began leaving the home, visiting became a ritualized cultural institution organized and directed by married women (*Behind Closed Doors* 14-16). Stone brushes this off as "leisure," the "gossip" of "idle drones," but Vickery points out the work involved and the importance of the hostess: This organization of labor gave women a measure of control over their own lives and gave men social credit for their wives' hospitality when delegating negotiations to the parlor (16). Women advanced the family name beyond the threshold, as well, particularly through charity work (*The Gentleman's Daughter* 10). Manufacturing leaving the home changed the kind of work wives engaged in, but it did not change the fact that they contributed to the maintenance of the household as partners.

Though real women of the eighteenth century figured into the public sphere in varied and numerous ways, Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus's *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (1997) argues that scholars—like Stone—have tended to take what they read from the period's print culture as fact, assuming that those publications described what existed rather than prescribed an ideal; Barker and Chalus argue that the fact that eighteenth-century moralists were so vehement about “proper” gender roles indicates that those roles in reality must have been under threat (2). In fact, Faramerz Dabhoiwala's *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (2012) points out the century's plurality of views on sex and sexuality, which stemmed from debates about what counted as public or private. In earlier centuries, rigid Christian doctrine punished consensual extramarital sex (2), but the Enlightenment shifted thought about sex from a public matter to a private one (3). This is not to say that controversial acts like prostitution and sodomy were legalized in the eighteenth century, but between the urban explosion and Enlightenment beliefs about privacy, officials had much more trouble policing private conduct (78). Dabhoiwala posits that sex's shift from public issue to private desire is what created distinct private and public spheres (108), but these were more complex than rigidly distinct spheres of influence: For many debating voices, as long as it happened behind closed doors, even prostitution had its rightful place in modern society as a service that could protect “good” women from rape and seduction (110-112), managing rather than repressing men's “natural” sexual urges (114), and thus providing a public service in “private.” Yet because the primary goal of marriage in a patrilineal society is legitimate biological reproduction,<sup>34</sup> women's sexuality needed to be policed in some manner. Women of any

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<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 1 for context on the eighteenth-century patrilineal society's effect on the gender order.

social class were never truly private beings, as they were always considered the property of either a father or a husband, hence their “private” behavior was of public concern, their sexual indiscretion a blot on the public name of the men to whom they belonged and their bastards a burden on the social system (118-119). Many of the century’s most popular publications were didactic— Fordyce’s influential *Sermons to Young Women* comes to mind— yet Dabhoiwala’s argument is that the period was revolutionary nonetheless, and that this revolution was a direct result of the print culture explosion that implied that moral opinions were indeed subjective, numerous, and nuanced (321).

In fact, Richardson’s novels were viewed in dramatically different ways depending on reader perspectives. Ironically, in his *History of the Female Sex* (1788-1800), Christopher Meiners argues that single women, who are “fair enthusiasts of weak heads and soft hearts,” should not be allowed to read novels, especially Richardson’s, because of the texts’ supposed idolatry of unrealistic passionate love (4: 302)— the very type of love *Grandison* explicitly critiques for those same reasons. Such opposite reactions to his texts were not new to Richardson: Generally *Pamela* was applauded as instructive, as intended, but Antipamelists saw its detailed descriptions of the sexual encounters it warned against as pornographic (Keymer and Sabor 35). Varied opinions proliferated. For Dabhoiwala, what made the eighteenth century revolutionary was the ability and desire to debate issues of sex which, before the conception of the newly empowered reading public, had been impossible legally, logistically, and ideologically.

Despite the plurality of views and liveliness of debate concerning eighteenth-century sex, the result of the period’s sexual revolution was the heteronormative system

we today recognize as regressive and restrictive, particularly to women. In *Heteronormativity in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (2014), Abby Coykendall and Ana de Freitas Boe attribute the twenty-first century's pervasive heteronormative system to the emergence of print culture in the eighteenth century; it was then, and only through the dissemination of print, they argue, that heteronormative ideologies could "saturate" society (7).

The gendered public/ private dichotomy of the eighteenth century did not describe reality, but instead served as a regulatory ideology that would help to prescribe "proper" gender roles for centuries to come. Just as Eden was Paradise for Milton's Eve as well as for Adam, the eighteenth-century garden belonged to women as much as to men, yet the ideal would attempt to relegate women only to a corner of the garden as roses for men to prune and shape as they saw fit, long after the vogue of the eighteenth-century landscape garden had passed.

### **Climbing the Trellis**

Women who followed the rules outlined in conduct books like Fordyce's were deemed "proper ladies," ones worth admiring in a garden's borders; women who deviated in any way were, according to Fordyce, unmarriageable: "In a word, [men] will be mightily pleased with you as the companion for an hour. Companions for life . . . they will look out for elsewhere. . . . Having found them . . . they will endeavour to gain them by another sort of style and behaviour, than they used towards you" (56). Such women are flowers worth plucking for a night's boutonniere, not ones worth tending for a lifetime. Richardson too could at times voice remarkably conservative views about women, and in fact, Fordyce, though he disapproved of all other novels, recommended

Richardson's as particularly beneficial to women's education (74). Writing for Samuel Johnson's *The Rambler* on 19 February 1751, Richardson criticized women who often visit public places, like "routes, drums, balls, [and] assemblies" (248), as they "are not ashamed to show their faces wherever men dare go, nor blush to try who shall stare most impudently, or who shall laugh loudest on the publick walks" (248). Like Fordyce, Richardson argues that "[t]he companion of an evening, and the companion for life, require very different qualifications" (249).

Yet the qualifications were not so different after all. John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) presents its protagonist, Fanny Hill, as a domestic heroine not in spite of, but because of, her role as courtesan. Early in the novel she presents herself as a consumable, her "virgin-flower . . . yet uncrop'd" (40), and when her beau penetrates her, she recalls, "I stifled . . . my cries, and bore him with the passive fortitude of a heroine" (42). The men with whom Fanny consorts are "infinitely superior to the being touch'd with any glare of dress, or ornaments, such as silly women rather confound, and overlay, than set off their beauty with" and instead prefer "pure native charms": For they "would at any time leave a sallow, washy, painted dutchess on her own hands, for a ruddy, healthy, firm-flesh'd country-maid" (95). Fanny is one such wholesome beauty, which delights every man to whom she presents her "whole region of delight, and all the luxurious landscape round it" (76). It seems that both libertines and moralists sought an uncorrupted English rose— even if only for the opportunity of corrupting her himself. The virginity moralists prized was also a rake's foremost desire.

Richardson's fiction presents a struggle to present a woman who is more complex than Fordyce's prescription of a subservient, obedient, and mindless woman

“like a Mirroure which hath no Image of its own” (7) who, by this very quality, could, like the innocent country maids who populated London’s brothels, be molded into the wrong sort of woman by the wrong sort of man. In a letter from 24 December 1755, Richardson advises the accomplished young Margaret Collier that women should not hide their achievements and intellectual gifts; men who shun learned women are “[u]nworthy of such blessings” and should “enter into contract with women, whose sense is as diminutive as their own souls” (Barbault 2: 82). Richardson valued women’s intellect; much of his personal correspondence was with educated women, and he frequently asked for their input on his own fiction. Unlike his friend Lady Bradshaigh, who wrote in an undated letter that women of “great learning” are “masculine,” and that she “could fancy such an one weary of the petticoat, and talking over a bottle” (Barbault 6: 53), Richardson did not consider learning to be at odds with femininity—with a telling caveat: To Lady Bradshaigh in 1751, Richardson wrote, “[G]enius, whether in men or women, should take its course; . . . as a ray of the divinity, it should not be suppressed. But . . . the great and indispensable duties of women are of the domestic kind; and . . . if a woman neglects these, or despises them, for the sake of . . . learning, she is good for nothing” (Carroll 178).<sup>35</sup> Given Richardson’s complicated views of women, in other words, it is not surprising that his depictions of them in his three novels are anything but straightforward.

The serpentine landscape of Richardson’s fiction allows us to trace the development of his English roses as they climb the trellis of the eighteenth-century gender order. Richardson’s long-term grappling with gender begins with his first representation of female virtue, a precocious fifteen-year-old servant: the eponymous

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 2 for an analysis of how *Grandison* applies this same expectation to its men.

heroine of *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740). Initially, Pamela Andrews is the picture of innocence and overtly anxious to reform those less perfect than herself. Pamela, generally quite modest, is proud of her innocence, as it keeps her safe from temptation. When her master and would-be seducer Mr. B attempts to blame Pamela for his various attempts on her virtue, she writes, “[S]ee how a bad Cause and bad Actions confound the greatest Wits!—It gave me a little more Courage then; for Innocence, I find, in a weak Mind, has many Advantages over Guilt, with all its Riches and Wisdom” (1: 35). Pamela, in her exalted innocence and moral superiority, in a way pities her tormentor, who does not have her moral strength and whose mind has, at least temporarily, been demeaned by his passions. Aside from her innocence, one of Pamela’s most fundamental characteristics is her emotional responsiveness, the feminine trait that, according to eighteenth-century moralists, could lead a woman either to improper lust or to Christian benevolence (Poovey 18). After learning of would-be rapist Mr. B’s near-drowning, Pamela “could not . . . forbear rejoicing for his Safety; tho’ his Death would have ended [her] Afflictions” (1: 179). As her innocence, moral superiority, and unselfish joy demonstrate, Pamela is, despite her social rank, a “proper lady.” In fact, Pamela’s social position paradoxically *facilitates* her role as a “proper lady”: As Nancy Armstrong explains in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987), by the middle of the eighteenth century, conduct books had established women’s virtue as inseparable from productivity, so aristocratic women, for their supposed idleness, were inherently, to some degree, unvirtuous (68). This explains how Pamela, a servant necessarily uncorrupted by aristocratic taste, becomes Richardson’s first model woman.

Pamela recognizes her moral superiority to her “better” and spiritedly voices this

recognition. She may be a lowly servant, yet she argues, “O Sir! my Soul is of equal Importance with the Soul of a Princess; though my Quality is inferior to that of the meanest Slave” (1: 158). Finally, after several failed seduction attempts and Pamela’s continued imprisonment, Mr. B is morally transformed by her virtue and her spirited defense of it. He frees Pamela and his goodness, along with hers, is rewarded as she returns to him of her own accord. They are wed, and praises of Pamela’s mind overtake praises of her physical beauty; as Mr. B reports to Mr. Perry, “I do assure you, my *Pamela’s* person, lovely as you see it, is far short of her Mind; That first impress’d me in her Favour; but that only made me her *Lover*. But they were the Beauties of her Mind, that made me her *Husband*” (2: 404). By his own account, Mr. B appreciates his wife’s mental and moral being—her wit and her virtue.

The narrative thus “rewards” Pamela by allowing her to become Mrs. B, but to become Mrs. B is to take on a new role, one in which self-assertion dwindles to silent subordination. A woman’s loss of self in marriage would not, of course, have been a new concept; the influential and devout Christian Mary Astell had decades before argued for women to avoid marriage precisely because a husband’s dominance is scripturally-ordained. Therefore, according to Astell in *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700), a wife must be a woman “who can be so truly mortify’d as to lay aside her own Will and Desires, to pay such an intire Submission for Life, to one whom she cannot be sure will always deserve it” (89). Pamela is the embodiment of such a woman. When Mr. B gives his wife a list of rules to obey, she reports having “thank’d him for these kind Rules . . . and assured him, that they had made so much Impression on my Mind, that these, and his most agreeable Injunctions before given me, and such as he should

hereafter be pleased to give me, should be so many Rules for my future Conduct” (*Pamela Exalted* 2: 448). This is not sarcasm. True, she does chafe at several of his prescriptions. For example, the thirtieth rule states “[t]hat if the Husband be set upon a wrong Thing, [the wife] must not dispute with him, but do it, and expostulate afterwards” (2: 450). In response to this rule, Pamela writes to her parents, “*It looks a little hard, methinks!—This would bear a smart Debate, I fancy, in a Parliament of Women*” (2: 450). Yet such moments of spirited engagement have become increasingly rare, and note that Mr. B himself never reads her protest—it remains, within the world of the novel, silent. In order for her properly to fulfill her new role, Pamela must be stripped of her voice, despite its foundation in virtue.

Richardson further tames Pamela in revisions of the original novel. In his introduction to *Pamela*, Thomas Keymer focuses on the difference in Pamela’s behavior in the original version of the text versus the final 1801 edition, particularly in regards to the early, pre-marriage scene in which a Countess and three Ladies visit Mr. B and make lewd remarks about Pamela. In the original version of the novel, the heroine writes, “I know what I could have said, if I durst. But they are Ladies—and Ladies may say any thing” (1: 53). This comment rightly reflects Pamela’s knowledge that she is more naturally genteel than these “ladies,” yet Richardson removes this comment in his subsequent editions. In all editions, Lady Towers, tapping Pamela’s cheek, says, “O you little Rogue, . . . you seem born to undo, or to be undone!” In the first edition, Pamela spiritedly replies, “God forbid, and please your Ladyship, . . . it should be either!” (1: 53), but the sarcastic “and please your Ladyship” is later removed, as is Pamela’s critique that “it seems [Lady Towers] is call’d a Wit” (1: 52). In the final edition of the novel,

Pamela's righteous insolence has been tamed (Keymer xxxi-xxxii). These revisions were intended to assuage the criticisms of some of Richardson's readers, and thereby, in a sense, *Pamela* became less and less Richardson's own work and more a representation of mid-century cultural values (xxxii). One might also suggest that such changes represent a perversely retrospective application of the standards by which Mrs. B is forced to exist onto her former self—it is as if Mrs. B is now censoring Pamela Andrews.

*Pamela in her Exalted Condition* (1742), in spite of its title, subordinates the heroine further. For instance, when she comes to believe that Mr. B is having an affair, though heartbroken, she simply persuades herself to bear it and hold her head high; doing so is her duty as his wife. As Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes in her "Epistle from Mrs. Yonge to Her Husband" (1724), women have little recourse—and virtually no legal recourse—when faced with a husband's infidelity: "For wives ill used no remedy remains,/ To daily racks condemned, and to eternal chains" (23-24). No matter what, women "must sigh in silence—and be true" (31).

But Richardson's next English rose, the heroine of *Clarissa; Or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748), climbs a different course than her sister-rose, reworking "Pamela" before she becomes "Mrs. B." Like Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe is considered the paragon of virtue among her acquaintances. She is admired for her chastity and complaisance; she is often busy with either her needle or her pen, when she is not aiding the neighboring poor or delighting and improving others with her conversation. Despite her elevated social status, she is no less productive than Pamela. Indeed, she is so valued that her grandfather leaves her, the Harlowes' youngest child and a female, his estate.

Even when her jealous siblings' schemes push Clarissa out of favor, she remains uncompromisingly devoted to her family. She appears to be truly, unremittingly virtuous.

And, like Pamela, Clarissa's virtue is linked to her sharp tongue and lively spirit. For example, after the libertine Robert Lovelace forces Clarissa to meet his friends, he acts surprised when she calls them "low company" and says, "[L]et me but know whom and what [you] did or did not like; and, if possible, I would like and dislike the very same persons and things" (553). He is unlike Mr. B here, obliging rather than tyrannical, and consequently a much more attractive rake than Richardson's earlier attempt.<sup>36</sup> Lovelace's obliging facade, however, backfires: He recalls, "She bid me then, in a pet, *dislike myself*" (553). This witty response is Clarissa's way of dismissing Lovelace's artifice and, thereby, of asserting her own virtuous difference from him. Both Lovelace and Clarissa recognize that he relies on trickery and fabricated innocence in his attempts to overpower and corrupt her; Clarissa here cleverly asserts that she recognizes his deception and, therefore, that her virtue remains in her own power. Clarissa's ability to play this game helps to preserve her virtue, but it also makes her all the more attractive to the libertine, who eventually, upon realizing that he cannot persuade or deceive her into sin, resorts to physical violence when he drugs and rapes her.

Even after her rape, Clarissa uses her wit to protect her virtue— for her, a term that means so much more than mere virginity. On her deathbed, she sends a note to Lovelace, who has been threatening to force himself into her presence:

I HAVE good news to tell you. I am setting out with all diligence for my father's house. I am bid to hope that he will receive his poor penitent with a goodness peculiar to himself; for I am overjoyed with the assurance of a

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 1 for an analysis of the eighteenth-century rake figure, particularly in Richardson's novels.

thorough reconciliation through the interposition of a dear blessed friend, whom I always loved and honoured. I am so taken up with this joyful and long-wished-for journey, that I cannot spare one moment for any other business . . . . So, pray, sir, don't disturb or interrupt me—I beseech you don't—You may in time, possibly, see me at my father's, at least, if it be not your own fault. (1233)

This allegorical note to Lovelace demonstrates that the dying Clarissa is as sharp as ever, using her pen to keep Lovelace at a distance; she knows that he will read the note literally and obey in hopes of winning her favor, yet, virtuous as she is, she is not lying, either. It is not her fault that Lovelace is too wicked to see the religious overtones in the message—that, as Jesus had put it in defending his parables, he has neither eyes to see nor ears to hear (Matt. 13) that the father is God, the friend Jesus Himself. Unlike Pamela, Clarissa does not lose her wit, and therefore, retains her virtue. Of course, it would be remiss to neglect the fact that Clarissa dies.

Though Clarissa grows still more vocal and independent as death approaches, death silences her. She speaks to other characters through posthumous letters, but the most important posthumous document she leaves, her will, is violated. Though some of the wishes outlined in the will are fulfilled after her death, Clarissa is still powerless—still, whether in heaven or not, dead in the world of the novel. In her will, she states, “[I]t is my desire that I may not be unnecessarily exposed to the view of anybody” (1413). Yet her family satisfies their “melancholy curiosity” to see the corpse: Her cousin Morden recalls, “When [they] were told that the lid was unscrewed, they pressed in . . . , . . . as if by consent” (1400). At this point, the family is unaware that Clarissa wishes for a closed casket; they have not read her will because her executor, John Belford, does not provide them with it until after the funeral. Indeed, Clarissa's voice cannot be heard at all except at Belford's convenience, suggesting that a woman's will is dependent on

the authorizing voice of a man. Yet Clarissa, in a way, *chooses* silence; as with Mrs. B, her agency is demonstrated through an act of self-censorship. In “Richardson’s Girls: The Daughters of Patriarchy in *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*” (1996), Jerry Beasley argues that through Belford Richardson is able to maintain patriarchal authority over the heroine, and, conveniently enough, by her own request (44). Though Clarissa refuses to choose an “earthly husband” (1121), she chooses to marry Christ in heaven and to relegate the power of her voice to Belford below. Either way, her agency is mediated through male figures on whose authority her own rests. Like Pamela after her marriage, Clarissa loses control of her voice to a legally-sanctioned man of her own choosing. The beauty of Clarissa’s bloom cannot exist without the protection of her thorny wit.

Thus *Grandison*’s Harriet must bloom among the wilted and decaying blossoms of Richardson’s previous English roses, and if she is to maintain her virtuous wit, she cannot be dethorned. On 24 March 1750, Richardson wrote to Lady Bradshaigh, “I have designed [Harriet] to keep the middle course, between Pamela and Clarissa; . . . or rather, to make her what I would have supposed Clarissa to be, had she not met with such persecutions at home, and with such a tormentor as Lovelace” (Barbauld 6: 85). The novel’s first letter, written to Harriet by her cousin Lucy, establishes Harriet as the narrative’s heroine: “Your resolution to accompany Mrs. Reeves to London, has greatly alarmed your three Lovers. And two of them, at least, will let you know that it has. Such a lovely girl as my Harriet, must expect to be more accountable for her footsteps than one less excellent and less attractive” (1: 7). Lucy encloses a letter penned by Harriet’s libertine admirer John Greville, which dedicates pages to describing her “translucent

veins,” the “charming Carmine flush” of her cheek, her “delicate Arm,” her “extremely fine” hands “accustomed to the Pen, to the Needle, to the Harpsichord; excelling in all” (1: 12-13). And, of course, he must celebrate her eyes: “Good Heaven what a lustre; yet not a fierce, but a mild lustre! How have I despised the romancing Poets for their unnatural descriptions of the Eyes of their heroines! But I have thought those descriptions, tho’ absurd enough in conscience, less absurd . . . ever since I beheld those of Miss Harriet Byron” (1: 12). By the age of Jane Austen, this sort of beginning had become such a commonplace that the parodic *Northanger Abbey* (1817) begins:

No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be an heroine. . . . She had a thin awkward figure, a sallow skin without colour, dark lank hair, and strong features—so much for her person; and not less unpropitious for heroism seemed her mind. She was fond of all boy's plays, and greatly preferred cricket not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush. Indeed she had no taste for a garden; and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief— at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take. (8-9)

Not only does Catherine eschew her feminine responsibility of “watering a rose-bush,” but like her biblical mother, she plucks forbidden fruit; further, against all odds for a heroine of the domestic variety, Catherine does not care for books— “or at least books of information— for, provided that nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from them, provided they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all” (11). A true domestic heroine’s physical activities extend only to caring for tame woodland creatures and the blossoms of her garden, while her sedentary hours are spent reading books of instruction; Catherine, however, is a humorous perversion of this commonplace. In contrast, *Grandison’s* Harriet is the ideal from which Catherine

deviates, as the convention of a lengthy character sketch by a doting admirer makes clear.

Harriet's fecund femininity poses her clearly as the novel's future bride, and the narrative structure promises that this fertility will find function by novel's end. She is, as her uncle calls her, "the *Flower of the British world*" (6: 252), but she is not only a pretty ornament. As Charles says, "mere Beauty attracts only his eye, as fine flowers do in a gay parterre" (6: 138). Harriet must be more than this outdated model of French gardening formality. Her national identity is important here: As Addison writes of his garden in *Spectator* no. 477, he finds more pleasure in "a thousand nameless Pot-herbs, springing up in their full Fragrancy and Verdure, than to see the tender Plants of Foreign Countries kept alive by artificial Heats, or withering in an Air and Soil that are not adapted to them" (para. 1). A British flower is naturally elegant, generative, and virtuous: a modest beauty.

Indeed, Harriet must be both beautiful *and* modest. Like Fanny Hill, she rejects ornamentation, for "[h]umility becomes persons of some degree" and "[s]implicity only can be elegance" (6: 172). After all, her cousin Lucy observes, Harriet is so lovely that ornamentation of silks and jewels cannot "add grace to that admirable proportion, and those fine features" (6: 251). Likewise, Harriet continually argues for simplicity of communication: frankness, which was one of her revered grandfather's "rules to [her]," for "women should unlock our bosoms, when we [are] called upon, and [are] expected to give our sentiments upon any subject" (1: 19). When Sir Rowland, courting her on his nephew's behalf, asks if her heart is free, she responds, "I frankly own, that I am disengaged" (1: 37). Sir Rowland is in raptures: "Charming! charming! Mercy! Why now

what a noble frankness in that answer! No jesting matter!" Throughout the first volumes of the novel, Harriet is celebrated for her frankness, which Charles calls "that noble criterion of Innocence and Goodness" (2: 392). Ironically, candor is yet another parallel between Richardson's heroine and Cleland's. Fanny Hill, recalling her first orgy, writes that the group saw reserve as "the poison of joy" (112), but, although reserve was "banish'd in the transaction of these pleasures, good manners and politeness were inviolably observ'd" (120). Tita Chico's "Details and Frankness: Affective Relations in *Sir Charles Grandison*" (2009) explains that, in addition to polite communicativeness, eighteenth-century candor was also associated with promiscuity (56), and we see this in Cleland's Fanny Hill. Perhaps Montagu, who generally detested Richardson's work, had this in mind when in a 20 October 1755 letter to Lady Bute she wrote that Harriet's "whole behaviour, which [Richardson] designs to be exemplary, is . . . blamable and ridiculous. She . . . declar[es] all she thinks to all the people she sees, without reflecting that in this Mortal state of Imperfection Fig leaves are as necessary for our Minds as our Bodies" (Halsband, *The Complete Letters* 3: 97). Frankness may demonstrate innocence, like Eve's nakedness before consuming that fateful fruit, or it may demonstrate promiscuity, like Fanny Hill in her brothel. It seems that every quality an eighteenth-century woman might possess could be construed as superlatively virtuous or sinful, depending only on subjectivity, and both the brothel and the country house might share the same values.

Her education is another of Harriet's traits that could be construed as proof of either goodness or corruption. After the heroine's beauty, modesty, and candor have been established, the narrative carefully constructs proof of her balance between

modesty and intelligence through a debate with a minor character named Mr. Walden, a pedant characterized by a “scornful brow” (1: 46). When the men begin to discuss learned languages, Harriet, ever-modest, is reluctant to engage, yet when the debate becomes heated, the heroine writes, “I thought it was not amiss, for fear of high words between them, to put myself forward” (1: 49). Harriet’s feminine peacemaking ironically casts her forward in the debate, and throughout, when she attempts to extricate herself, Walden declares that he “will not let [her] off so easily” (1: 50). Still, she demures, “I would rather . . . be an hearer than a speaker; and the one would better become me than the other” (1: 51). In “Love of Fame, the Universal Passion” (1726), Edward Young presents the century’s ideal of feminine intellect:

*Naked* in nothing shall a woman be,  
But veil her very *wit* with *modesty*;  
Let man *discover*, let not her *display*,  
But yield her *charms of mind* with sweet delay. (6: 107-110)

Like a rose obscured in the English landscape garden, the heroine must await discovery rather than displaying herself as in an ostentatious French parterre. Likewise, Harriet enacts the same modest conversation as was taught in the anonymous conduct manual *The Polite Lady; Or, A Course of Female Education* (1798), written by a “mother to her daughter,” which states that a proper lady’s subject of conversation should match her manner of speaking: “low, smooth, and gentle, an emblem of the inward softness and delicacy of her mind” (205); talking “in a positive or peremptory strain,” the author explains, “is scarce tolerable, even when you are talking of things that cannot be contradicted.” The conduct manual advises its reader to “talk with an air of diffidence, as if she proposed what she said, rather with a view to receive information herself, than to inform and instruct the company.” Montagu, aware of the difficulty women faced,

recommended on 28 January 1753 that her own granddaughter “conceal whatever Learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness” (Halsband, *The Complete Letters* 3: 22). Likewise, when Walden snidely asks if Harriet knows Greek and Latin, she responds, “Who, I, a woman, know any thing of Latin and Greek! I know but one Lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them” (1: 49). After all, Harriet laments in retrospect, “If we [women] have some little genius, and have taken pains to cultivate it, we must be thought guilty of affectation, whether we appear desirous to conceal it, or submit to have it call’d forth” (1: 51-52). Harriet, however, challenges this prevalent double-standard by holding her ground in the debate without sacrificing her modesty. The two debate Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, which Harriet claims is superior to the ancients Walden prefers, for it has been informed by the ancients’ teachings yet surpasses them, its “subject so greatly, so nobly, so divinely, above that mythology!” (1: 56). Harriet’s argument rests in praising the Lord, a sharp rhetorical move in an eighteenth-century British context, for who would dare refute it? Harriet’s religious argument thus underscores both her wit and her virtue. She is able to finally relinquish her place in the spotlight—much to her relief—after quietly demolishing Walden’s argument and receiving the hearty applause of the company.

This is quite an achievement for a domestic heroine, as female education was hotly debated throughout the century. The *Female Spectator* presents a progressive notion in response to a letter dated 12 January 1744-45, in which “Cleora” asks the editor her opinion on women’s education: The response is that, while men tend to argue

against women's education, "Men are ready enough to condemn those who had the Care of [women's] Education" when their wives are "loitering, lolloping, idle Creatures" (193). Likewise, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindications of the Rights of Woman* (1792) pities uneducated women, whose "faculties are cramped with worse than Chinese bands" (85). Generally, women cannot win: An unlearned woman is mocked as a fool, a learned one for her supposed vanity. Harriet seems to have achieved the impossible, straddling the middle ground between conduct models and progressive women of letters: She has beauty, modesty, virtue, accomplishment, and thus seems well on her way to becoming the prize rose in Richardson's literary garden. She is a blossom protected by her own thorns.

### **Rootbound**

The heroine's good-natured modesty, however, degenerates into timidity as the novel, and her relationship with Charles, progresses. Like Pamela, Harriet loses her distinct personality and becomes meek after her suitor's proposal of marriage; only after she falls in love with Charles does Harriet check herself, continually questioning her actions and words in order to ensure that she does not betray her secret love, and, during courtship, that her love is not over-eager. For example, when Charles visits the family, Harriet sends him to an inn, rather than inviting him as an overnight house guest, out of a misplaced sense of "propriety"; Lady G scolds her for this "parade" (6: 64), for Harriet is affecting what her Uncle Selby calls "femalities": conventions that cause love-stricken women, who become "apes of one another," to adopt "*dull and cold* forms" (6: 98). In attempting to *protect* her identity and modesty as she navigates her relationship with Charles, Harriet becomes distant and affected, essentially losing herself. She is

reserved, crippled by her “femalities,” her personality and her person both “thinner and paler” (2: 445) than before.

The narrative also becomes “thinner and paler,” but with little in the way of plot to hinder it, the meandering narrative allows characters to discuss and reflect on gender performance. Uncle Selby’s colorful critique of Harriet in courtship also can be applied to her narrative:

You must all of you go on in one *rig-my-roll* way; in one beaten track. Who the *duce* would have thought it needful, when a girl and we all were wishing till our very hearts were *bursting*, for this man, when he was not in his own power, would think you must now come with your *hums*, and your *haws*, and the whole *circum-roundabouts* of female nonsense, to *stave-off* the point your hearts and souls are set upon? (6: 97)

The “*circum-roundabouts* of female nonsense” refers not only Harriet’s coy reticence in courtship, but also to the coy reticence, the “*femality-path*” of the narrative, which “*stave[s]-off*” the inevitable marriage and bedding in order to explore the interiority not only of Harriet but of myriad characters in the *Grandison* storyworld. The marriage is inevitable, no matter how many “*femalities* and *forsooths*” (6: 98) the narrative throws in its path.

Uncle Selby’s word “femality” links the female body to feminine practice. The storyworld of *Grandison*, like our own, is bound by what R.W. Connell’s *Masculinities* (1995) terms “body-reflexive practice,” the pattern by which material bodies are controlled by, but whose actions also control, the social world (61). This pattern is clear in *Grandison*, a novel seemingly dedicated to a moral transcendence beyond the physical realm, but which pays special attention to embodied weeping, embracing, and kissing, almost to an erotic extent. What the narrative lacks in overt sexuality it compensates for in meaningful sighs and palpitations over an attractive “person”;

indeed, the text cannot quite call a body a body, instead substituting words in which the physical and the spiritual coalesce. Harriet's attempts to describe Charles's sex appeal, for example, intertwine his *person* and his *personality*: "In his aspect there is something great and noble, that shews him to be of rank. Were kings to be chosen for beauty and majesty of person, Sir Charles Grandison would have few competitors" (1: 181). The novel's most sentimental moments, too, intertwine the spiritual and the bodily, particularly in the many instances when "the two worthiest bosoms of the sex join as one" (1: 145); when a "glowing face seek[s] to hide itself in [another's] bosom" (2: 422); when two friends "wet each other's bosom with [their] tears" (7: 363); or when a love interest, "covered with blushes," puts her "hand to her throbbing bosom" (5: 596). The terms "person" and "bosom" have both bodily and spiritual meanings in the text, so that these erotically-charged moments can also be read with "person" meaning "self" as opposed to "body," "bosom" meaning "confidence" or "heart" as opposed to "breast." Physical human bodies control the world of *Grandison*, no matter how much the text might obscure this materiality. Lady G makes light of Harriet's bodily and mental antics when she laughs at the idea of hero and heroine meeting: "Hands shaking— Knees trembling— Lips quivering— Tongue faltring— Teeth chattering— I had a good mind to present you with an ague-dialogue between such a trembling couple.— I, I, I, I, says the Lover— You, you, you, you, says the girl, if able to speak at all" (6: 66). By the time of her engagement to Charles, Harriet's behavior has become not just laughable but threatening as she flutters and faints over the thought of kissing her intended. These bodily responses replace her personality and turn her into a shell of her former self. Like William Blake's "The Sick Rose" (1794), fig. 21, Harriet's "crimson joy" (6) has been

infected by an “invisible worm” (2). The innocence of her unaffected candor has been perverted into stagnant reserve, and significantly it puts her marriage at risk.

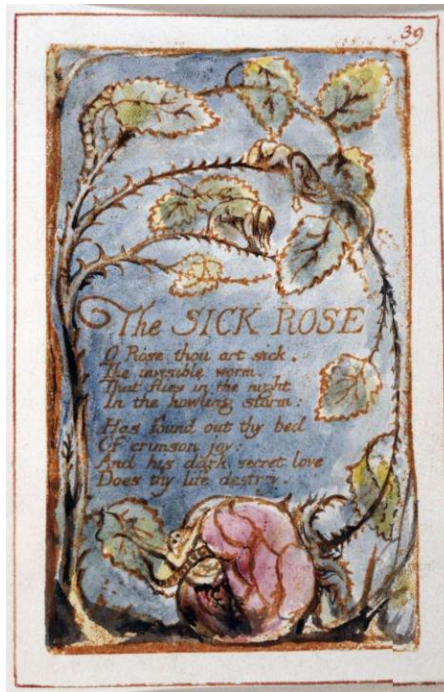


Fig. 21. William Blake. *The Sick Rose*.  
1794. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1856-0209-375](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1856-0209-375).  
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From the beginning of the novel, Harriet idealizes a marriage of honesty and mutual respect. She expresses concern over Charles’s reserve, because “friendship and reserve” are incompatible, and “marriage [is] the highest state of friendship that mortals can know” (1: 184). The model of marriage that Harriet admires is companionate, one based on mutual friendship or love, which by the mid-eighteenth century was increasingly prevalent in Britain (Stone 327). Long before their engagement, Charles opens his heart to Harriet, and during courtship, he hides nothing from her; yet, despite her earlier criticism of his reserve, Harriet becomes reserved

almost to the point of coldness in courtship, ultimately suppressing her identity, thoughts, and emotions. Like a “proper lady,” Harriet becomes a mirror of what she *thinks* Charles’s expectations are. Charles has not indicated that he desires a “proper” wife—in fact, as Lady G reminds Harriet, her “frankness of heart is a prime consideration with him” (6: 64)—but Harriet uses “propriety” to shield her identity and thoughts. As Charles complains during courtship, “I want her to have a will, and to let me know it. The frankest of all Female hearts will not treat me with that sweet familiarity which banishes distance” (6: 252).

By the time of her wedding, Harriet has become sullen and quiet. At the ceremony, Lady G observes that Harriet’s “hand was rather taken, than offered” (6: 226), and when it is time to sign the marriage contract, Harriet is unable to perform:

[W]hen the pen was given her, to write her name, she dropt it twice, on the parchment. Sir Charles saw her emotion with great concern; and held her up, as she stood. My dearest life, said he, take time, take time— Do not hurry; putting the pen each time, with reverence, in her fingers. She tried to write, but twice her pen would not touch the parchment, so as to mark it. She sat down. Take time, take time, my Love, repeated he. She soon made another effort, his arm round her waist— She then signed them; but Sir Charles held her hand, and the parchments in them, when she delivered them. (6: 216)

Harriet, whose pen once filled the pages of the novel, now cannot even sign her own name without Charles’s physical and emotional support. To perpetuate the nation, a wife must possess the physical fortitude to hold more than just a pen; she must reproduce. As Juliet McMaster asserts in “*Sir Charles Grandison: Richardson on Body and Character*” (1989), physical body and spirit are closely related in Richardson’s storyworlds. This is what makes it clear that Charles and Harriet are properly matched, for they are each superlatively beautiful in mind and body; yet Harriet’s mind weakens

her body as the novel progresses, and if she is to remain an exemplar after marriage, she must develop into a sexual being (93). In the world of *Grandison*, feminine propriety is important, but women, like men, must be able to achieve a productive balance that Harriet never manages.<sup>37</sup> This leaves the future of the Grandison family and, as a consequence, the English nation, in peril.

By the time Harriet has been transplanted into Charles's garden, which she describes as "boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance" (7: 272), she is, nonetheless, rootbound because she does not take the space she has been granted. Harriet becomes so reluctant to reveal her own opinions that, near the end of the novel, she expresses that all of her self-worth lies in her husband's opinion of her, that "she knows no other method of valuing herself than by his value of her" (7: 369). This is no path to equal, productive partnership, but instead what Maria Edgeworth satirizes in "An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification" (1795): "With an admirable humility, you are as well contented to be in the wrong as in the right; you answer all that can be said to you, with a provoking humility of aspect" (236). The narrative— and her actions— have spiraled into a chaotic mass that leaves no room for development, or even sustenance of self. She is lost on the "*femality-path*," the passive "*flower of the British world*" whom Charles has pollinated, and from whom he has reaped the procreative reward— a son—, by the novel's end. The heroine, however, never achieves the strength of spirit she had once, and for which she has throughout the novel been celebrated, for the narrative struggles to align wifely duties and virtuous strength.

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<sup>37</sup> See Chapters 1 and 2 for an exploration of Richardson's men achieving a similar productive balance.

Otherwise, there is no real sense of closure to this novel; the narrative spirals on until, finally, Harriet writes a final letter praising Charles's general merit: "What, my dear grandmamma, is the boasted character of most of those who are called HEROES, to the un-ostentatious merit of a TRULY GOOD MAN?" (7: 462). She need not answer; seven volumes of tribute suffice. And so, finally, she lays down her wobbling pen.

*Grandison's* ending was not particularly satisfying to eighteenth-century readers. After receiving letters wishing for an additional volume for closure, Richardson defended his ending in "A Letter to a Lady," inserted into the Appendix:

Permit me . . . to observe, that the conclusion of a *single story* is indeed generally some great and decisive event; as a *Death*, or a *Marriage*: But in scenes of life carried down nearly to the present time, and in which a *variety of interesting characters* is introduced, all events cannot be decided . . . All that can be expected therefore in such a work, if its ending is proposed to afford the most complete scene of felicity of which human life is capable, must be to leave the principal characters happy, and the rest with fair prospects of being so. (470)

Richardson seems to be blaming the realistic convention for the novel's shortcomings: The hero has married the heroine, and together they have produced a healthy heir. What more can be said for human happiness? In the General Introduction to the Cambridge Edition of *Sir Charles Grandison* (2022), E. Derek Taylor presents the novel's ending as an opportunity the genre provides rather than a constraint it imposes: "In his decision to leave so much undone at the conclusion to *Grandison*—to pause, as it were, at a particularly happy moment in time—Richardson reflects his keen awareness of the tension between narrative potential and human actuality" (lx). After the birth of their first child, the Grandisons might enjoy a continuation of the comic trope, or the genre might shift swiftly to tragedy. With realism, there is no way to know. Frye suggests that humanity craves a clear beginning and ending, a spatial top and bottom

(182), but if traced to its “end”—however that might be defined—realism cannot promise that the story will end happily. Perhaps *Grandison*’s conclusion demonstrates that once the soil is full of roots, nothing more can grow, the nutrients depleted, the soil, like the heroine, “thinner and paler” than it was once. Or perhaps instead it demonstrates the power of fiction to pause at a moment in time that is still ripe with possibility.

Sometimes the literary tradition satisfies us with an implied ending. Like *Paradise Lost*, *Grandison* does more than remind readers of the age-old trouble with women in the gardens of literary tradition: It reminds us that no story is ever complete. The ending to *Paradise Lost*, surely, is a momentous event, but as the original couple walk hand in hand from Paradise, the narrative reminds us that theirs is an open spiral:

Som natural tears they drop’d, but wip’d them soon;  
The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:  
They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,  
Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way. (12: 641-649)

This is, of course, not really the ending to that story of divine creation: If we look to Milton’s source material, the events of *Paradise Lost* span only a few pages in a famously voluminous tome. Likewise, *Grandison* leaves its spiral open. Whether this is a constraint imposed by or an opportunity granted by realism, the result is the same: *Grandison* reminds us that even in a Fallen world, free will guides us all, and like Adam and Eve, the exemplary couple of the eighteenth-century novel shall forge their own path. *Grandison*’s ending is but a moment in a lifetime, a moment in eternity.

Harriet is only a dissatisfaction if we look to her as an answer. Instead, like a garden rose, she is a subject of contemplation in the varied garden of Richardson’s design. The task of uniting all feminine virtues into one being is no easy one, and each

of Richardson's roses climbs higher than the last. The English landscape garden and domestic novel present, instead of answers contained tidily within symmetrical and rigid borders, a model to move forward contemplatively, united "hand in hand with wandering steps and slow."

#### CHAPTER 4: SUGAR AND SPICE; OR, A WITTY WIFE

Now fancy soars to future times,  
 When all extinct are Sappho's rhymes;  
 When none but cooks applaud her name,  
 And naught but recipes her fame.  
 When sweetest numbers she'll despise,  
 When Pope shall sing beneath minced-pies,  
 And Eloise in her tin shall mourn  
 Disastrous fate and love forlorn;  
 Achilles too, that godlike man,  
 Shall bluster in the patty-pan;  
 And many a once-loved Grecian chief  
 Shall guard from flames the roasting beef.

—Elizabeth Moody

#### Read the Recipe

Elizabeth Moody's poem "Sappho Burns Her Books and Cultivates the Culinary Arts" (1798) places domesticity and literature in diametrically opposed spheres when the speaker implores the "Goddess of Culinary Art" (17) to "take possession of [her] heart" (18). The salting of the ham (20), the baking of the plum-cake (26), the straining of the jelly (33)— these are the arts worthy of a woman's time, and if she has literary books at hand, their pages might be better employed keeping crust from sticking to pans and fire from burning meat. Likewise, in Mary Leapor's "The Epistle of Deborah Dough" (1751), the speaker compares her virtuous daughter Cicely to her learned neighbor Mary. Mary ". . . throws away her precious time/ In scrawling nothing else but

rhyme” (17-18); meanwhile, Cicely “Can make a pudding, plump and rare;/ And boil her bacon to an hair;/ Will coddle apples nice and green,/ And fry her pancakes like a queen” (25-28). Moody and Leapor use epicurean imagery to present their culinary queens as superior to women scribblers, yet we might question the earnestness of the argument when presented, by women, in such learned lyrical form.

Perhaps the moralistic *Spectator* presents a clearer view of mainstream eighteenth-century beliefs about a woman’s domestic role. Joseph Addison’s *Spectator* no. 57, dated 5 May 1711, suggests that “Men and Women ought to busy themselves in their proper Spheres, and on such Matters only as are suitable to their respective Sex” (para. 1). In *Spectator* no. 242, dated 7 December 1711, Richard Steele shares a vehement complaint from “Abraham Thrifty,” whose nieces’ heads are so filled with learning that they are useless— nay, even nuisances— in the domestic sphere:

Whilst they should have been considering the proper Ingredients for a Sack-posset, you should hear a Dispute concerning . . . the Pressure of the Atmosphere: Their Language is peculiar to themselves, and they scorn to express themselves on the meanest Trifle with Words that are not of a *Latin* Derivation. . . . In a late Fit of the Gout I complained of the Pain of that Distemper when my Niece *Kitty* begged Leave to assure me, that whatever I might think, several great Philosophers, both ancient and modern, were of Opinion, that both Pleasure and Pain were imaginary Distinctions[.] (para. 3)

Thrifty’s nieces philosophize instead of preparing a healing “Sack-posset” for their gouty uncle; consequently, Thrifty implores Mr. Spectator to use his influence to teach his readers “the Difference between a Gentleman that should make Cheesecakes and raise Paste, and a Lady that reads *Locke*, and understands the Mathematicks.” Assumedly, this role reversal is inappropriate, for as Steele argues in *Spectator* no. 342, dated 2 April 1712, “the utmost of a Woman’s Character is contained in Domestick Life; she is

blameable or praiseworthy according as her Carriage affects the House of her Father or her Husband. All she has to do in this World, is contain'd within the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother" (para. 5). By the 1750s, the Blue Stockings Society<sup>38</sup> would make a virtue out of the scribbling tendency of Deborah Dough's neighbor Mary and Abraham Thrifty's learned nieces, meeting informally to discuss and encourage one another's literary pursuits. As women, bluestockings were necessarily fringe to some degree, but celebrated learned men regularly joined them as guests. By the end of the period, though, the Blue Stockings Society would be an easy target to lambast for its supposed absurdity, as in the Thomas Rowlandson satire in fig. 22. We are meant to find humor, it seems, in the violence these women inflict upon one another, for their "unnatural" learning has transfigured them into a chaotic cluster of brutes.



Fig. 22. Thomas Rowlandson. *Breaking Up of the Blue Stocking Club*. 1815. British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1872-1012-5052](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1872-1012-5052).  
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<sup>38</sup> The list of noteworthy bluestockings overlaps considerably with the list of Samuel Richardson's correspondents, including Elizabeth Carter, Hester Chapone, and Catherine Talbot. In 1804, Richardson's correspondence was edited by bluestocking poet Anna Laetitia Barbauld.

Thus the period presented women's domesticity and learning in opposition. Sarah Harrison's practical *The House-Keeper's Pocket-Book; and Compleat Family Cook* (1738), which contains over a thousand recipes for the British home cook, from pickles to roasts and pies to medicines, begins with a prefatory rhetorical question:

How lightly soever Men esteem those Feminine Arts of Government which are practised in the Regulation of an Household, I may venture to assert, that they are of much more intrinsick Value than some admired Branches of Literature; for, to say the Truth, what can be really of greater Use, than, by Prudence, and good Management, to supply a Family with all Things that are convenient, from a Fortune, which, without such Care, would scarce afford common Necessaries? (A2)

Moralists might wish to relegate the woman to the hearth, yet Harrison presents this not as a position of inferiority but of one of utmost importance. It is the woman of the hearth who keeps the earthly senses delighted at the same time she provides practical sustenance— and it takes a savvy planner, shopper, and cook to achieve this. Most of Harrison's recipes contain few and common ingredients, but it is the process of preparation that turns these modest staples into wholesome and varied meals.<sup>39</sup> For example, the cookbook contains nearly a dozen recipes labeled merely "A Seed Cake," but each presents a slightly different process and ingredients to yield markedly different results. One reads, in its entirety:

Take a pound and a half of Flower dried before the Fire, a pound and a half of butter, a pound and a half of Sugar, nine Eggs, Whites and Yolks, three quarters of an Ounce of Carraway-seeds, and a Nutmeg grated; heat a Bowl very hot, work the butter with your Hands before the Fire till it is like thick Cream, then work in the Sugar by degrees, and then put in the

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<sup>39</sup> Modesty in cooking was linked not only to gender, but to nationalism: Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1747) aims to teach the "lower sort," because the French-laden cookbooks of decades past serve only to confuse (i) or even misinstruct, for French cooks are frivolous: "I have heard of a cook that used six pounds of butter to fry twelve eggs; when every body knows (that understands cooking) that half a pound is full enough, or more than need be used: but then it would not be *French*. So much is the blind folly of this age, that they would rather be imposed on by a *French* booby, than give encouragement to a good *English* cook!" (iv-v). The period's cookbooks seem to say as much about cultural tensions as they do about fricassées.

Eggs, being very well beat, and by degrees put in the Flower also, with the Nutmeg and Seeds; beat it well together, then put it into your Hoop. An hour will bake it, but the Oven must not be very hot. (107-108).

The ingredients are fairly minimal, but even in such an ostensibly simple recipe the work is extensive in an eighteenth-century kitchen; further, despite this being a popular cookbook of the period, it omits many details that today's home cooks would demand: How hot, for both the mixing bowl and the oven, constitutes "very hot"? What size baking hoop is required? Do we cool the cake, and for how long, after an hour's baking? How many servings does the recipe yield? How do conditions like temperature, humidity, and altitude change the baking requirements? In short, the eighteenth-century cook needed to understand the basics of both physics and chemistry, but she must remain femininely "unlearned," a rather obfuscated way of saying she must learn through practical experience rather than with written guidance.

This copious work in the kitchen was not for just the cook's own satisfaction, of course; it was meant to feed a family. The domestic expectation of women to reproduce and mother was certainly no less demanding than their other domestic duties, whether as the cook or as the genteel lady overseeing her. Addison's *Spectator* no. 81, dated 2 June 1711, argues that "Female Virtues are of a Domestic Turn" and, consequently, women must "distinguish themselves as tender Mothers, and faithful Wives" (para. 9). Likewise, the January 1738 issue of *The London Magazine* featured "An Apology for the LADIES," which exalts women based on their domestic achievements: "A Lady who has performed her Duty as a Daughter, a Wife, and a Mother, raises in me as much Veneration as *Socrates* or *Xenophon*" (32). In July 1738, the magazine printed an untitled essay that exalts marriage as an institution; after all, "Love and Affection are the

great natural Bands in which all the Links of social Being are secured,” and so “Institutions, which improve, and regulate them, are the most useful and necessary; and of these, Marriage is the first and the most essential,” since it supports those who participate in it, keeping men and women alike from engaging in “[t]he criminal Excesses” as well as allowing them to perpetuate the species (348). As Tanya Evans explains in “Women, Marriage, and the Family” (2005), this was a central argument in eighteenth-century print culture (57). Families were growing: People married earlier, and as a result, bore more children (59). The typical woman’s married life was consumed by pregnancy and childrearing: At this point, Englishwomen averaged six to seven live births (70). Paul-Gabriel Boucé’s *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (1982) links this proliferation explicitly with state goals, for the Empire required a robust labor force at home and a strong military abroad (29). Fig. 23 is a sharp contrast to Rowlandson’s presentation of the Blue Stockings Society: The viewer is to understand that learned women create chaos, while domestic ones generate harmony in the family circle.



Fig. 23. Lavinia Countess Spencer. *The Tender Mother*.  
1787. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1872-0511-309](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1872-0511-309).  
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It is in the context of these debates over a woman's societal role and responsibilities that Richardson published *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). This project's third chapter explores the heroine Harriet Byron's struggle, and subsequent failure, to maintain her wit and her virtue as she strives to embody the eighteenth-century feminine ideal, what in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984) Mary Poovey describes as a supposed paragon who buries her "self" so that she may reflect whatever her husband desires (21). The paradox is that the subservient sort of woman who can be molded into a "proper lady" can be molded into any other kind of woman, as well, depending entirely upon whose hands she is thrust into, because to be "proper" is to be a passive receptacle. Instead, this chapter presents an unexpected success in combining independence and domesticity through Charlotte Grandison, later Lady G. From the novel's beginning to end, Lady G maintains both her wit and her domestic virtue, and she even takes up the narrative when Harriet's pen— and witty virtue— stagnate. Lady G marks the occasion: "I believe I shall become as arrant a scribbler as Somebody else. I begin to like writing" (4: 433).

Like Harriet, Charlotte perpetuates what in *The Secular Scripture* (1976) Northrop Frye calls the feminine spiral ascent, and she does so masterfully, productively, as a Harlequin. According to Frye, the Harlequin "divide[s] himself into two people and hold[s] dialogues with himself. He also sometimes dresses up as a woman, and sometimes plays a mute part" (111). In a letter to Sophia Westcomb on 11 September 1753, Richardson attempted to summarize Charlotte as he saw her: "[A] Rogue of a Girl. . . . But not ungenerous at Bottom; tho' intolerably playful sometimes. Such Spirits as hers will not always be reined-in. . . . She is now pretty good, now

indifferent, now stark naught, but not criminally so, neither” (Carroll 241). To many, including Richardson himself, Charlotte is neither this nor that; her roguish spirit defies both classification and control. Ostensibly she is witty at times, and at others she “dresses up as a [virtuous] woman” (Frye 111), but like Feste from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (1602), she “wear[s] not motley in [her] brain” (1.5.349-350). Wisdom lies beneath, and even fuels, her jesting, facilitating a virtuous critique of society. Through Charlotte, *Grandison* provides a psychologically-rich dialectic on the conflicts the eighteenth-century prescription of women’s domesticity generated.

Like a failed attempt at Harrison’s seed cake, through Harriet the narrative fails to “work in the Sugar by degrees . . . and by degrees put in the Flower also” (108). Harriet’s wit and virtue separate, rather than being “very well beat,” and the result is a heroine who cannot rise to the occasion, but only flop, languid and unappealing, in the “Hoop” of the narrative spiral. This is after Richardson’s earlier heroines, Pamela Andrews and Clarissa Harlowe, fail as well. Like Harrison, Richardson provides a few different variations of the same basic recipe, but each of his heroines collapses. Yet beyond the novel’s centerpiece we see Elizabeth Moody’s “plum-cake”: The narrative must “. . . shake the compound sweets together,/ To bake it light as any feather,/ That, when complete, its form may show/ A rising hillock topped with snow” (27-30). Lady G rises high above Richardson’s heroines, a literary and philosophical feat of skill and experience.

### **Grease the Hoop**

Before Richardson managed to unite women’s wit and virtue in Lady G, he greased his hoop with Anna Howe, the vocal best friend of the eponymous heroine of

*Clarissa* (1748). Anna is no paragon of conservative virtue;<sup>40</sup> she spurns the idea of marital subjugation and vexes her suitor, Mr. Hickman, throughout their courtship, ridiculing his deportment and dress. In her usual “whimsical” style, she writes to Clarissa, “Only that all men are monkeys more or less, or else that you and I should have such baboons as these to choose out of is a mortifying thing, my dear” (210). Through Anna’s letters, the reader learns that her character is a playful and sharp one. From Anna’s perspective her behavior is warranted; she does not wish to marry Hickman, but he does not discontinue his suit when she refuses him directly. As she explains late in the novel, “I refused him again and again. . . . I told him my aversion to all men: to him: to matrimony—Still he persisted. . . . I tried him; I vexed him an hundred ways; and not so much neither with design to vex him, as to make him hate me and decline his suit” (1456-1457). Anna must, in order to end the courtship, induce Hickman to desist, since her resistance is not taken seriously.

The idea of a woman’s resistance in the eighteenth century was complicated because, as Toni Bowers explains in “Representing Resistance: British Seduction Stories, 1660–1800” (2005), there was not only a fine line, but an overlap, between seduction and rape, consent and resistance (141). In courtship, a woman’s resistance was sometimes interpreted as consent; this was because, sometimes, a woman’s “resistance” was consent: According to the politics of eighteenth-century courtship, if a woman says no, it might mean no, but it could just as easily mean yes, because a “proper lady” was expected to behave in ways that blurred the boundaries between assent and refusal. Society valued female reserve and indirectness and drew a fuzzy line between reserve and dishonesty; if a woman truly felt desire, she must disguise it

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 3 for an account of Clarissa’s virtue and downfall.

with feigned resistance. As Aphra Behn's Cloris demonstrates in "The Disappointment" (1680), a woman's true desire is sometimes veiled when in the posture of resisting a man: "Her hands his bosom softly meet,/ But not to put him back designed,/ Rather to draw him on inclined" (15-17). This is followed by Cloris's entreaty, titillatingly whispered in Lysander's ear:

'Cease, cease—your vain desire,  
Or I'll call out—what would you do?  
My dearer honour even to you  
I cannot, must not give—retire. . . .' (25-28)

Cloris must retain her position as "proper lady," yet her own desires conflict with this cultural restriction. After all, a woman who says "yes" to a lover would be considered overly-eager, direct, and improper. Because "proper ladies" rely upon indirect and even contradictory speech and actions, men are left to interpret—or to misinterpret, perhaps *deliberately*—what a woman's resistance really means. After all, only men may express desire and exercise the power of choice (Poovey 4). Therefore, when, of men, Anna complains, "Insolent creepers, or encroachers, all of you! To show any of you a favour today, you would expect it as a right tomorrow" (1454), her observation, though exclaimed dramatically, is astute. After all, every positive (or neutral, or even negative) bit of attention she pays to Hickman is considered an encouragement. Just as Cloris's body language, though it conflicts with her vocal "resistance," is all the reinforcement Lysander needs to pursue his own sexual desires (though they come to no end), a slight favor, or even a clear disfavor, encourages Hickman further.

Anna, understandably frustrated in attempting to navigate such perilous and confusing standards of courtship, laments that women are "cajoled, wire-drawn, and ensnared, like silly birds, into a state of bondage or vile subordination: . . . courted as

princesses for a few weeks, in order to be treated as slaves for the rest of our lives” (133). This heated passage directly echoes Mary Astell’s *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700):

[W]hat are all the fine Speeches and Submissions that are made, but an abusing [women] in a well-bred way? She must be a Fool with a witness, who can believe a Man, Proud and Vain as he is, will lay his boasted Authority, the Dignity and Prerogative of his Sex, one Moment at her Feet, but in prospect of taking it up again to more advantage; he may call himself her Slave a few days, but it is only in order to make her his all the rest of his Life. (23)

Thus Anna predicts, if she accepts Hickman, he will change his behavior accordingly, and her life will be directed by a helpless spiral: If, Anna argues, the wife ascends “in the matrimonial wheel,” it will be only “by fits and starts, like the feeble struggles of a sinking state for its dying liberty” (277). Like Astell, she recognizes the injustices of the treatment of women in courtship and in marriage; she recognizes that, by accepting a husband, she will be conquered for life.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps we are not meant to disregard Anna’s complaints; after all, on 15 December 1748, Richardson defended them to Lady Bradshaigh: “Half of Miss Howe’s lively Airs are given her from a Consciousness of Superiority over the greater half of [our sex]. . . . [T]he cause of the Sex is the Cause of Virtue” (Carroll 112). Yet because of the domestic convention, Anna cannot remain single.

Finally, the narrative unites—barely, cleverly—Anna and Hickman in matrimony. Anna is wrong about her notions of marriage and lives happily as Mrs. Hickman—sort of. In the “Conclusion” section of the novel, the “editor” steps in to offer concluding summations of the characters that readers had previously experienced and known directly through their own distinctive epistolary voices. We learn, for instance, that

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<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3 for *Pamela*’s explicit comparison between marriage and eighteenth-century politics.

Hickman's "behaviour to *Mrs Hickman* is as affectionate as it was respectful to *Miss Howe*," and "she seriously . . . confesses, that she owes him *unreturnable* obligations for his patience *with* her in her HER day, and for his generous behaviour *to* her in HIS" (1491-1492). On the one hand, Anna certainly sounds happy; but, on the other hand, this does not sound like Anna at all. The narrative takes a shortcut by claiming paratextually what the main body of the text cannot achieve because it cannot reconcile Anna's strong voice with the traditional role of wife.

In short, to continue our culinary conceit, dumping all of the flour into the batter at once, and through paratext only, results in an unworkable and inedible mass.

### **"Shake the Compound Sweets Together"**

"Upon my word, Lucy," writes Harriet Byron of Charlotte Grandison, "she makes very free with [Lord G]. I whisper'd her, that she did—A very Miss Howe, said I. To a very Mr. Hickman, re-whispered she" (2: 229). This intriguing intertextual moment invites readers, who were certainly familiar with Richardson's earlier masterpiece, to remember Anna's story and bear it in mind as they follow Charlotte's. *Grandison's* answer to the Anna Howe dilemma is no easy one and requires that the narrative, like Harrison's seed-cake batter, combine sugar and flour, "work[ing] in the Sugar by degrees," but "put[ting] in the Flower also" (108). We might say Charlotte's sugar is her liveliness, her flour her virtuous substance. Both Anna and Charlotte are petulant mistresses during courtship, but only Charlotte becomes a vivacious *and* virtuous wife. And this is precisely what makes Charlotte different, not only from Anna, but from Richardson's spirited, and ultimately silenced, heroines explored in Chapter 3. If Charlotte is to become an exemplar, the narrative must, to borrow from Moody's

description of a plum-cake, “shake the compound sweets together” (27). As the verbs in each passage— “work” and “shake”— indicate, this is not a smooth process.

Charlotte was a polarizing figure for contemporary readers. On 6 July 1754, Sarah Fielding wrote, “[W]hy should her wit and liveliness excuse her insolence? Even Lovelace had wit and liveliness remember! You could make him agreeable whenever we were not reading his heart” (Barbauld 2: 70). On 20 October 1755, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote to her daughter, Lady Bute:

[Richardson’s] Anna How[e], and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as Patterns of charming Pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like Dames, who mistake pert Folly for Wit and humour, and Impudence and ill nature for Spirit and Fire. Charlotte behaves like a humoursome child, and should have been us’d like one, and have had her Coats flung over her Head and her Bum well whipp’d in the presence of her Friendly Confidante Harriet. (Halsband, *The Complete Letters* 3: 96)<sup>42</sup>

Charlotte roused discomfort in Richardson’s audience, and perhaps the most disturbing aspect of her character is that she is likable despite her faults: On 9 November 1752, Anne Donnellan felt the need to note, before criticizing Charlotte’s “low mind and genius,” that she “like[d] her mortal spirit very well sometimes” (Barbauld 4: 76). Hester Mulso, too, disapproved of the character, and on 24 September 1754, Richardson responded to her criticism: “‘You don’t love her.’ There are many more that do not; and many more that do. Well, if you don’t love her; don’t” (Barbauld 3: 218). The range of

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<sup>42</sup> Montagu certainly claimed for herself the mantle of obedient, subservient wife, and her letters are, according to Robert Halsband, written in what she called ‘a proper matrimonial style,’ illustrating her supposed submission to her husband (*The Complete Letters* 1: xiii). Yet Halsband’s *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1960) points out that Montagu was herself an acerbic woman and a renowned wit, first loved by Alexander Pope and later attacked by him as “Sappho” (v). And while Montagu argued that “Charlotte acts with an Ingratitude . . . too black for Human Nature, with such coarse Jokes and low expressions as are only to be heard amongst the Lowest Class of People” (Halsband, *The Complete Letters* 3: 96), she was, after all, the author of “The Reasons That Induced Dr. S. to Write a Poem Called the Lady’s Dressing Room” (1734). The witty, scandalous poem uses language that is, by far, coarser than any Charlotte ever employs; after all, Charlotte certainly never declares, even under guise of an assumed character, “. . . ‘I’m glad you’ll write./ You’ll furnish paper when I shite” (88-89). Perhaps the traits that Montagu hated in Charlotte are not so different from the very traits for which she herself was known and criticized.

strong opinions about Charlotte tells us something important, not only about a particularly polarizing character from a historically polarizing novel, but about an emerging tension in eighteenth-century Britain between competing models of appropriate femininity.

The narrative introduces Charlotte after Harriet's rescue by Charles, when he delivers the heroine into Charlotte's care. Harriet, Charlotte writes, "was so full of terror, on every one's coming in her sight, that I would not suffer any-body to attend her but myself" (1: 136). Though a gentle caregiver, Charlotte expresses her natural vivacity while nurturing Harriet. The doctor orders Harriet to be kept calm, and cheekily, Charlotte threatens to "beat her" if she does not obey (1: 134). Though Charlotte's role in the novel begins as a vivacious yet attentive caregiver, it is easy to forget this domestic role as her raillery takes over, especially because she consciously separates these traits. According to Charlotte, she is a warning, but no matter: "Some of us are to be set up for warnings, some for examples: And the first are generally of greater use to the world than the other" (4: 264). Like a Harlequin, she cultivates a jesting persona, but so much more lies beneath that facade. As Harriet admits:

I am ready to question what she says, when she speaks any-thing that some would construe to her disadvantage. She pretends, that she was too volatile, too gay, too airy, to be confined to sedentary amusements. But I am told by her maid . . . that . . . she . . . is greatly admired for her wit, prudence, and obligingness. . . . And . . . she is an excellent manager in a family, finely as she is educated . . . : She knows every-thing, and how to direct what should be done, from the private family-dinner, to a sumptuous entertainment: And every day inspects, and approves, or alters, the bill of fare[.] (1: 179-180)

It may seem strange that she would cultivate an "improper" persona, but it is a choice that paradoxically facilitates her virtue: She uses her "very penetrating black eye" (1:

179) to “read [Harriet’s] heart in [her] eyes” (2: 272), and as Harriet affects reserves and employs “femalities” that undercut her own virtue, Charlotte explains, “[W]hen you convince *me*, that you will not *hide*, I will convince *you*, that I will not *seek*” (2: 282). As Harriet “struggl[es] to conceal what every-body sees”—her love for Charles—Charlotte teases a confession out of her so that “her native freedom of heart may again take its course” (4: 415). Harriet has descended into dishonest affectation. In another instance, Charlotte asks soothingly, “Is it such a disgraceful thing for a fine girl to be in Love?” Harriet, flustered, responds, “Who I, I, in Love?” Charlotte laughs and says, “So, . . . Harriet has found herself out to be a *fine* girl!—Disqualify now; can’t you, my dear? Tell fibs. Be affected. Say you are *not* a fine girl, and-so-forth” (2: 418). A “proper lady” would affect modesty and claim to be no “fine girl”—in fact, Charlotte recognizes, “proper ladies” hypocritically value themselves upon just this type of behavior. Thus Charlotte’s critique of affectation is a critique of the “proper lady” trope, and simultaneously enables truly virtuous, because honest, frankness among friends.

Charlotte’s nemesis is not Harriet, but the “proper lady” who has possessed her. Charlotte uses her penetrating eye and sharp tongue to challenge and correct the absurd, and even damaging, eighteenth-century concept. Pushed to its extreme, this model for women’s behavior serves only to suppress natural emotions and thereby to deter communication and the formation of happy relationships. For example, when Harriet is too punctilious at the outset of her courtship, Charlotte scolds her: “Our Sex is a foolish Sex. . . . Lord help us! Were it not that we must be afraid to appear over-forward to the man *himself*, the world is a contemptible thing, and we should treat it as such. . . . Harriet, I write to charge you not to increase your own difficulties by too much

parade" (6: 64). Though, as Harriet writes, Charlotte's "kittenish disposition" and "love of playfulness" sometimes cause her to "regard . . . not whether it is a China cup, or a cork, that she pats and tosses about" (4: 330), these instances of Charlotte as wise councilor demonstrate that she is much more than just a vivacious wit; wisdom lies beneath, and even fuels, her roguery. She "wear[s] not motley in [her] brain" (Shakespeare 1.5.349-350), but in order to give herself leverage to comment on the behavior of the "proper lady," Charlotte affects to be worse than she is. While the façade of the "proper lady" is intended to mask natural aspects of self by conforming to a restrictive standard, Charlotte's mask both protects her and enables her ability to speak out. She must carefully control her image, in other words, in order effectively to deliver social commentary.

Most of her social commentary relates to courtship and marriage, and no wonder, since these are the center of the eighteenth-century domestic narrative. Charlotte's own courtship and marriage are punctuated by her resistance to the typical marriage plot, her pen sharply critical of what seems to be a woman's only life option. Charlotte from the beginning expresses her reluctance to marry Lord G. In addition to her objection to his intellectual inferiority, awkward appearance, and silly hobbies, Charlotte objects to the unnatural shortness of the courtship period; after all, she wants to spend at least a month to modulate her flippancy with kindness, "to give him by degrees some fairer prospects of happiness with me, than hitherto he has had" (4: 317); in short, she has not been given the chance to "shake [her] compound sweets together." Yet Sir Charles insists that Charlotte marry Lord G as soon as possible. As Bonnie Latimer explains in "Apprehensions of Controul': The Familial Politics of Marriage, Choice and Consent in

*Sir Charles Grandison*" (2009), patriarchal control and women's marital autonomy were at odds during the period, and Charles's repeated coercion of women into marriage—from minor characters to his own former paramour Clementina della Porretta and his sister Charlotte—illustrates the power of patriarchal control while asking that the reader question this standard (16). Resistance is futile when Charles, Charlotte's closest living male relative, asserts his authority, insisting that she marry immediately (4: 302). Charles names even the day himself: "Let it be Tuesday next" (4: 316). Charlotte's ultimate response is unhappy but inevitable acquiescence: "Unprepared in mind, in cloaths, I am resolved to oblige the best of brothers. Do you, Sir, dispose of me as you think fit" (4: 317).<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Charlotte sees this as a disposal, allowing the "matrimonial noose" to be "fitted to [her] . . . neck" (4: 322). As her choice of metaphors might indicate, her sauciness does not disappear.

As the couple leaves the church after their wedding, they engage in their first matrimonial quarrel when Lord G enters the new Lady G's coach and kisses her hand; with the other, she "repulses [his] forwardness" (4: 341). Though Harriet proves to be a more docile bride, as explored in the previous chapter, both women face the same problem at the outset of marriage: Just as Harriet distances herself from her husband by keeping her hand and spirit lifeless at the altar, Lady G, always more lively than her friend, literally pushes *her* new husband away. The first coach ride Lord and Lady G take as a married couple marks the beginning not only of a potentially rocky marriage, but also of a change in Lady G. This change extends beyond her new name. From the beginning of the marriage, in an effort to retain her identity, Lady G attempts to carve out space for herself by alienating her husband, both physically by pushing him away,

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<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 1 for an exploration of Charles as sentimental patriarch.

and emotionally by publicly belittling and embarrassing him. But, paradoxically, instead of retaining her identity, Lady G loses the virtuous deployment of wit that characterizes her early in the novel; in doing so, she is in danger of becoming yet another in the list of Richardson's women characters who lose themselves in marriage.

The couple's next reported quarrel, less than a week later, begins with Lord G invading Lady G's private chamber; in presence of the maid, Lady G reports, he "joined his sharp face to mine, and presumed to kiss me" (4: 392). They fight and she chases him away. Lord G sends for his wife, and she recalls, "I, all obedience . . . obeyed, at the very first word: Yet you must think that I (meek as I am naturally) could not help recriminating. He was too lordly to be expostulated with" (4: 394). Lady G has a chance to sooth Lord G, but instead further fuels the quarrel: "He would have made it up with me afterwards; but, no! there was no doing that, . . . after he had, by his violent airs, exposed us both before so many witnesses. In *decency*, therefore, I was obliged to keep it up." The language of the shrew in the George Moutard Woodward image in fig. 24 echoes Lady G: "[N]ever was so Mild so Meek a Temprd Woman so Ill used as I am, & all because I'm the most Tender Affectionate Wife living, but I wont be treated so I wont no, I'll tear your Eyes out first." We are meant to see Woodward's shrew as wrong; so too, in this instance, is Lady G.



Fig. 24. George Moutard Woodward. *The Flesh and the Spirit*.  
1794. British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1935-0522-8-68](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1935-0522-8-68).  
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This quarrel continues until Harriet visits the pair. Lord G, distressed by his wife's supposed "lamblike peaceableness" (4: 394) while he is so upset, asks Harriet to help resolve the matter. In character, Lady G flippantly owns her fault and insincerely promises to be a "proper lady":

My Lord, . . . Miss Byron has been telling me more than I knew before of my duty. She proposes herself one day to make a won-der-ful obedient wife. . . . She seems to say, that, now I am married, I must be grave, sage, and passive: That smiles will hardly become me: That I must be prim and formal, and reverence my husband. . . . For the future, if I ever find myself disposed to be very light-hearted, I will ask your leave before I give way to it. (4: 400)

Here, overtly-facetious Lady G mocks the trope of the "proper lady," whom in *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) James Fordyce advises not to "smile always," lest they offend the men to whom they belong (93). Instead, Lady G acts the part of the titular figures in Audrey Bilger's *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen* (1998), a woman whose comedy is a vehicle to critique the social systems that attempt to confine her (61-62). Women's laughter, Bilger

explains, is important because the “proper lady” is silent and sullen; she shows her pleasure only through her submissive smiles, and only, as Dorsetshire clergyman John Sprint warned in a wedding sermon on 11 May 1699, if it “mirrours” her husband’s emotions (7). To laugh, therefore, is to break the silence and, in effect, to break from that passive role. Bilger argues that women’s laughter threatens the social structures that demand women be quiet, because it is immoderate, aggressive, and insubordinate (23-24). And one of Lady G’s favorite pass-times is laughing—when not at silly societal affectations, then at her husband. This laughter has the potential to be productive; laughter, after all, is a universal language that surpasses words and established ideologies. And yet, as Hélène Cixous argues in “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976), such expression from a woman is “volcanic”; it has the potential “to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the ‘truth’ with laughter” (357). In the early days of her marriage, Lady G’s laughter certainly “smash[es] everything,” yet to no constructive purpose; even a volcano, after wreaking havoc, becomes a mountain. Lady G has retained her pre-marital biting wit, but she no longer uses her wit for virtuous purposes; she uses it instead to assert herself at the expense of both her husband and, perhaps, her own future happiness.

Lady G’s goal is not to silence Lord G, but to maintain her own voice. She has become excessively provoking and vocal because she is afraid of losing her identity in marriage and being silenced, like the “proper” Harriet. As Lady G puts it, a bride’s “name [is] sunk, and lost,” for she is now “[t]he property, person and will, of another” (6: 234). It was understood that an eighteenth-century woman would sacrifice, at least in large measure, her pre-marital identity when she became a wife. As Astell proclaims, a

woman “has no reason to be fond of being a Wife, or to reckon it a piece of Preferment when she is taken to be a Man’s Upper-Servant” (89). A woman who chooses to marry, says Astell, “suffers a continual martyrdom,” and her first sacrifice in marriage is of her identity; she is known only by her marital status and the identity of her husband, as the feminine ideal of the period prescribed. Lady G, rebelling against this prescriptive ideal, uses her voice to ensure that she is seen not as her husband’s vassal but as an ungovernable woman with an identity of her own, but in doing so, Lady G unwittingly impersonates the other popular female stereotype of the day: the shrew.

The poetical essay “To N— —, Esq; on his MARRIAGE,” published in *The London Magazine* in April 1738, warns men against marrying shrews. The speaker, a bachelor lamenting the marriage of a friend, presents marriage as a battle—one that, once married, a man can hardly win:

Know then, the heat of battle over  
 Man grows a tame, and quiet lover;  
 When honey-moon is in the wane  
 Its joys will ne’er return again;  
 When kisses cold and tasteless grow,  
 And loath’d we are with what we do;  
 We toil and sweat with endless pain,  
 Imaginary bliss to gain.  
 Lock’d to the oar, like galley slaves,  
 We often tug ‘gainst wind and waves;  
 And when we’ve tow’d the best we may do,  
 We’re recompensed with tongue strappado. (5-16)

Published just a couple of pages later is “The LADY’S Triumph: A POEM.” Clodio, sounding much like the bachelor in the earlier poem, condemns Hymen, the representation of marriage, because of his own disdain for wives: “*Hymen*, says *Clodio*, source of human ills,/ With plagues the palace and the cottage fills;/ Wed, and be d—n’d— to be confin’d for life,/ O hell! To that domestic fiend— a wife” (58-61). It is not only

bachelors and rakes who criticize the shrew: Fordyce warns that wit “is especially, I think, dreaded in women. . . . Need I tell you, that men of the best sense have been usually averse to the thought of marrying a witty female?” (97). According to Fordyce, this is because “domestic happiness” depends on ease and safety, and “[w]e are never safe in the company of a critic” (98). The period’s literature and artwork alike warn against marrying shrews. The violent image in fig. 25, surely intended to be humorous, presents “The Cobbler’s Cure for a Scolding Wife.” A woman who speaks against her husband’s will is perceived as a violent threat and must be subdued by any means necessary.

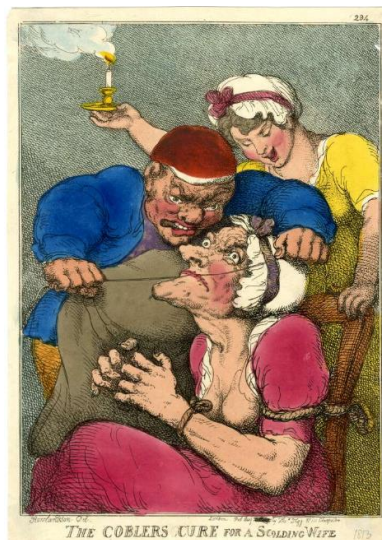


Fig. 25. Thomas Rowlandson. *The Cobbler's Cure for a Scolding Wife*.  
1813. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1872-1012-5083](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1872-1012-5083).  
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A nagging wife is no advertisement to marry, and in allowing her wit to shape her into one, Lady G loses touch with other aspects of her identity, like her wisdom and good-nature. Her efforts at self-*protection*, in other words, result in a type of self-*parody*,

as her constant raillery alienates her not only from her husband, but from her true self. Directly after the couple's marriage, their first squabble occurs in the coach, when the new Lady G pushes her husband's hand away; the first moment of the couple's true union also takes place during a journey. Immediately after a particularly tumultuous quarrel, Lady G, Harlequin-like, holds a dialogue with herself to work out the problem: "Charlotte, thought I, what are you about? . . . At present the honest man loves you. He has no vices. . . . My wit will be thought folly. . . . I will be good of choice, and make my duty received as a favour" (5: 518). Consequently, she invites her husband to go with her to visit Harriet at Northamptonshire. Lord G is astonished by her inclusive gesture, yet while being what she, in her words, "ought to be" in reaching out to her husband, Lady G couples her kindness with a pointed caveat: "I must have my jest" (5: 509). In reforming, she has decided to over-emphasize of her agency, but she has not forfeited her raillery and wit. Instead, she simply wants Lord G to understand that it *is* raillery and wit—and that it is, or at least will be in the future, good-natured. Lady G reports to her sister: "My Lord and I were Dear, Love, and Life, all the journey," and that the two are finally "on a foot of good understanding with each other" (5: 514). She must teach her husband—and remind herself—that wit and virtue are not mutually exclusive, and, indeed, that her wit is *necessary* to her virtue.

But, like a cake needs time to work in the sugar and flour, and plenty of time to bake, Lady G needs time to reconcile these seemingly disparate traits. After dedicating herself to matrimonial harmony, she displaces her frustration from her husband to her Aunt Nell. This may seem unrelated to the conflict between man and wife, but in this struggle *Grandison* demonstrates how a married woman's resistance to her role can

create tension between herself and women who have escaped the “matrimonial noose.”

Lady G’s primary target is her Aunt Nell’s aged body. For example, she reports:

Aunt Nell met us . . . with Cicely Badger, her still older woman, whom she keeps about to make herself look young, on comparison— But a piece of bad news, Harriet: Our aunt Nell has lost two more of her upper fore-teeth. . . . We pray for long life; and what is the issue of our prayers, but leave to outlive our teeth and our friends, to stand in the way of our elbowing relations, and to change our swan-skins for skins of buff; which nevertheless will keep out neither cold nor infirmity? (5: 550)

Conceptions of agedness in the eighteenth century depended less on chronological age than on outward signs of infirmity. In *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004), Susannah Ottaway explains that sixty was generally considered the threshold of old age, but appearance was a more important and more obvious marker (7). This was especially true for women, whose old age was seen as cause for devastation rather than pride (27). In fig. 26, an old maid uses her curling tongs to inflict violence upon the mirror that reflects her agedness and consequent “disgrace.”



Fig. 26. *The Looking Glass in Disgrace*.

1810. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1935-0522-7-233](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1935-0522-7-233).  
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Lady G's ridicule of the bodily deterioration of the "stale virgin" (5: 519) may be her own attempt at reclaiming some power. She may have legally lost her body in marriage, she seems to suggest, but at least her body still functions, and, presumably, will for many years to come. Further, Lady G's old age will be less rife with social consequences, for ageing was especially dramatic for a single woman, whose social and even economic circumstances were determined by when she began to look "old," since her status was distinguished by whether she was "marriageable girl" or "old maid" (Ottaway 44). A woman "past her bloom" risked a lifetime of solitude, along with the criticism and teasing of her own relations and of printed texts. For example, in January 1778 *The Lady's Magazine* published an untitled story warning of the case of "Miss Partlet, who is grown an absolute old maid . . . [and] hoped to make a conquest [of a young flutterer]. . . .; but he had no eyes . . . for . . . the withered, battered old maid" (9:

306). In that same volume, “The Alarm” notes in passing that “maid[s] o’ergrown with age,/ With youth and beauty war they wage” (9: 493). Periodicals not only presented old maids as objects of pity, but as threats to the nation. Consider the titles of the following texts meant to encourage matrimony: “The Levellers: A Dialogue between two young ladies, concerning matrimoney, proposing an act for enforcing marriage, for the equality of matches, and taxing single persons, with the danger of celibacy to a nation” (1703); Defoe’s “A method to make women useful” (1739); and *Single life discouraged, for the publick utility* (1761).

Thus, not only are we to understand that Aunt Nell is inferior in body; she is inferior socially, too. In fact, when recalling her list of visitors, Lady G writes, “O, but aunt Nell was also present!– Poor soul! I had like to have forgot her!” (5: 657). Lady G depicts her aunt as a pitiful creature who clings to the few loose ties she can claim:

[Charles] writes now-and-then a Letter to aunt Nell, and she is so proud of the favour– Look you here, niece; Look you here!– But I sha’n’t shew you *all* he writes.– On go the spectacles– for she will not for the world part with the Letter out of her hands.– She reads one paragraph, one sentence, then another– On and off go the spectacles, while she conjectures, explains, animadverts, applauds; and so goes on till she leaves not a line unread: Then, folding it up carefully in its cover, puts it in her Letter or Ribband-case, which shall I call it? For having but few Letters to put in it, the case is filled with . . . intermingledoms . . . which she dispenses occasionally very bountifully, and values herself, as we see at such times by a double chin made triple, for being not unuseful in her generation. (6: 114-115)

Aunt Nell is so socially isolated that she has few letters in her letter box, and she is so desperate for inclusion that she “dispenses” with her trifles “bountifully.” Despite her attempts to be useful, Aunt Nell, according to Lady G, is more a burden than a help; for “these old virgins . . . only serve to make bustle and confusion, where else would be order and regularity” (5: 654). Not only are old maids decrepit and useless creatures,

but they are actually troublesome, upsetting “proper” order. This is an unexpected sentiment in Lady G, who Harlequin-like herself is fond of creating disorder. It seems, at least, that she is beginning to take pride in the power she may wield as a matron, for as Amanda Vickery explains in *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (2009), it was married women who directed a great deal of social interaction during the period, for visiting became a ritualized cultural institution— for both men and women, for business and for pleasure— organized and directed by matrons (14-16).

At first, Lady G’s mockery of Aunt Nell is a displacement of her own marital frustrations, but over time, the mockery fuels self-realization: Through marriage, she has the potential for social power that she would otherwise have no opportunity to experience. Yet mixing ingredients does not make a cake; baking it does. Likewise, simply marrying does not fully unite Lady G’s wit and virtue, for she must overcome the eighteenth-century wife’s trial by fire: pregnancy.

### **“Bake It Light as Any Feather”**

With the help of a bit of heat, Lady G begins to transform into a “plum-cake,” or as Moody puts it, a “fair rotundo” (26). In other words, the next logical step in her journey as an eighteenth-century woman is pregnancy, a physical sign of her unity with Lord G, for as Chapter 2 explores, a common medical view during the period was that both partners must orgasm in order to conceive. *Grandison* is fiction, so biological accuracy is superfluous; the point is that Lady G’s pregnancy is an implicit declaration of the heat of mutual enjoyment and, perhaps, love.

Lady G seems so eagerly contrarian for much of the novel that it is difficult, at first, to imagine her adapting to motherhood. In point of fact, however, a natural

caregiver and domestic manager is the first impression of her that the novel offers. This is not to say that Lady G's transition to motherhood is a smooth one, for she expresses a reasonable fear of pregnancy. One in one hundred pregnancies resulted in maternal mortality, Linda Pollock writes in "Embarking on a Rough Passage: The Experience of Pregnancy in Early-Modern Society" (1990), and childbirth would have inspired fear of the potentially catastrophic unknown, in regard to the mother's mortality as well as the infant's (47). This was especially true of first births, which were even riskier (Evans 69). Richardson's correspondence provides ample evidence of the anxiety real women experienced during the period. For example, after four years of infertility, Meta Klopstock wrote to Richardson on 26 August 1758, "I am in full hope to be mother in the month of November. The little preparations for my child and child-bed (and they are so dear to me!) have taken so much time, that I could not answer your letter . . . . When I have my . . . child, I will write you more (if God gives me health and life)" (Barbauld 3: 156-157). On 21 December 1758, Richardson received a letter informing him that Mrs. Klopstock "died in a very dreadful manner in child-bed" (Barbauld 3: 158). Childbed mortality was not the only hazard of childbirth, as Richardson knew well. Not only did Richardson lose six sons and two daughters from early deaths, but he also lost his first wife after she gave birth. In *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children Over Three Centuries* (1987), Pollock reminds us that, even if a woman survived childbirth, she still must overcome the risks of infection and hemorrhaging (19)— and, of course, the likelihood of many future pregnancies, which would start the cycle over again.

Lady G's pregnancy is fraught with ill-veiled terror. Though her sister "begs and prays" of her to stay with her during her own delivery, Lady G refuses because, she

writes, “I can . . . only increase my own apprehensions, if I am with her” (6: 199). This, despite comforting herself that her own “evil day is at a distance; Who’s afraid?” (7: 261). Instead of vocalizing her fear, Lady G retaliates against her husband by manipulating him to fear a parasitic invasion of his own:

He was complaining to me just now . . . that he had a troublesome disorder in the inside of his mouth. I looked very grave; shook my careful head. I am afraid, my Lord, something is breeding there, that should not. . . . God forbid!—said he— afraid of nothing less than a cancer. Have I not told you a thousand times, my Lord, of your gaping? As sure as you are alive, your mouth is fly-blown. (7: 261)

Lady G uses this as an opportunity to, once again, emasculate her husband: As grotesque an image as it is, perhaps to be “fly-blown” is as close to being pregnant as the eighteenth-century male body could be. But Lady G is not just jesting; she is displacing temporarily her own terror. Lady G cannot impregnate her Lord, but for a moment, she can cause him to feel the disgust and dread of fertility that she will feel for the duration of her pregnancy (and the half dozen or so other pregnancies she, as an Englishwoman, is likely to experience throughout her life). Perhaps there is even envy in Lady G’s criticisms of Aunt Nell’s deteriorating body: If a fly-blown mouth represents a full womb, toothlessness might represent an empty one.

No matter the century, no matter the availability of effective and reliable medical care, the pregnant body is a paradox, for the host is both herself and Other. As Simone de Beauvoir explains in *The Second Sex* (1949):

[P]regnancy is above all a drama playing itself out in the woman between her and herself. She experiences it both as an enrichment and a mutilation; the fetus is part of her body, and it is a parasite exploiting her; she possesses it, and she is possessed by it; it encapsulates the whole future, and in carrying it, she feels as vast as the world; but this very richness annihilates her, she has the impression of not being anything else. A new existence is going to manifest itself and justify her own

existence, she is proud of it; but she also feels like the plaything of obscure forces, she is tossed about, assaulted. (538)

As the pregnancy progresses, the woman goes farther “beyond self,” which “is also the prefiguration of her death” (615). This death is both literal and figurative; even if she retains her physical life, she sacrifices her identity for “a polyp born of her flesh and foreign to it.”

Beauvoir’s macabre comparison is not unique to a twentieth-century perspective. On 4 March, twenty-five days before her 29 March delivery, Lady G frantically, though in her “usual stile,” writes a note to Mrs. Selby announcing her impending labor. When a woman is planning to be married, Lady G writes, she is most envied among her unmarried friends. Yet, she continues:

Ah silly maidens! if you could look three yards from your noses, you would pity, instead of envying, the milk-white heifer dressed in ribbands, and just ready to be led to sacrifice. Well, then, what comes next? Why, poor soul, in a few months, by the time perhaps her gratulatory visits are half paid her, begins to find apprehension take place of security. Then are she and all her virgins employed in the *wretchedest* trifles— . . . And the poor fools, wrapping up their jewels in cotton, . . . cover the decked-out milk-white bed with their baby things. . . . And to this is your Charlotte reduced!—Aunt Selby, Lucy, come early, that I may shew you my *baby-things*!—O dear! O dear! O dear! (7: 358).

When Charlotte first meets and cares for Harriet, she bans any exclamations “that begin with *O*” (1: 135), marking a shift from the romantic narrative of volume one to the realistic narrative that follows. In the romantic tendency, a heroine is nearly sacrificed in a narrative marked by lust and bloodlust (Frye 81), as Harriet is in volume one, but women in the realistic tradition, too, face sacrifice, through marriage and maternity. Lady G’s “O dear! O dear! O dear!” align her plight with romantic tragedy, but this is simply the “gothic” reality eighteenth-century women faced.

The end of her letter is even more macabre, for she jestingly requests that her friends come to her delivery to “testify, that [she has] no design to overlay the little Marmouset” (7: 358). This is a jest born from the grim reality that a mother very well may desire, on some level, to smother her infant. As Beauvoir puts it, if we consider “how many desires, revolts, pretensions, and claims she secretly harbors, one is frightened that helpless little children are given over to her” (632). Lady G may joke about infanticide, but the fact that the notion resides in her mind at all, no matter how fancifully, demonstrates how heavily her ordeal weighs on her spirit as well as on her body.

Lady G’s letter announcing her impending labor is imbued with apprehension, but it is also an exploration of identity as a matron developing experience that the virgins surrounding her lack. When Richardson acknowledges the morbid possibility of maternal death in *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition*, the heroine gives Miss Darnford a letter, “seal’d with black Wax,” to deliver to Mr. B “if she dies” during labor (4: 125). Unlike Pamela’s note, however, Lady G’s note is written in her “usual stile,” witty and darkly humorous as she reflects on this change in her life—and the potential for this to be the *end* of her life. Remember that by this point in her own story Pamela had sunk into a “proper lady,”<sup>44</sup> so the fact that Lady G has maintained her distinctive voice is no small thing. Further, Deborah D. Rogers posits in “Eighteenth-Century Literary Depictions of Childbirth in the Historical Context of Mutilation and Mortality” (1993) that, though pregnancy was a time of fearful anticipation, it was also a time for self-reflection and self-definition (317). In this way, Lady G uses the fear in her note to explore the

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<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 3 for an analysis of Pamela’s fall from precocious wit to “proper lady.”

new, maternal facet of her identity while she simultaneously expresses her characteristic wit. This is one of Lady G's most honest passages.

As Lady G suffers her lying-in, her anger intensifies. She is, "like any common woman, confined to [her] chamber, while every other mouth sang O be joyful" (7: 402). Lady G might not mind her pregnancy so much if she alone were not confined, yet her biology has betrayed her. Sparrows, she observes, "sit hour and hour, he's and she's, in turn," and when the male returns to the nest after too long abroad, the female scolds him "in an unforgiving accent," flies away, "and return[s] to relieve him— when she [thinks] fit" (6: 117). In human beings, Lady G laments, the burden of pregnancy is not shared, for Lord G cannot, sparrow-like, sit on an egg for his wife. But this is not only a matter of biological gestation, for besides carrying the progeny, the woman must endure isolation imposed by society. During pregnancy, the mother-to-be was expected to take care not to over-exert herself— physically or emotionally— for fear of miscarriage. This meant that any activity that jostled her body— like riding in a carriage— or excited her emotions— like stimulating conversation— must be avoided. After the delivery, she would have been occupied with the precarious life of her infant and still could not go abroad. At minimum, the mother following medical advice was relegated to bed for two weeks and to the house for another two (Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship* 20). As Lady G puts it, a mother "has no variety before her! All one dull chamber-scene, hourly acted over again" (6: 254).

In this light, pregnancy and motherhood may seem more like punishment and social erasure than emotional enrichment, more like gothic parasitism and confinement than domestic bliss. But a cake's raw ingredients alone do not inspire hunger; the cake

must be baked “light as any feather” (Moody 28), and carefully. As Harrison warns, “[a]n hour will bake it, but the Oven must not be very hot” (108). If Lady G can overcome the mortal and spiritual dangers associated with this precarious time in her life, she may, rather than sinking like her predecessors, ascend into a confectionary “rising hillock” (Moody 30).

### **“Show a Rising Hillock Topped with Snow”**

As Lady G disappears from her social circle during confinement, she almost entirely vanishes from the text, as well. This is like Frye’s Harlequin, who sometimes plays a mute part, but to a purpose. If Lady G’s narrative were to end with the silence of her confinement, it would be safe to assume, as Tassie Gwilliam does in *Samuel Richardson’s Fictions of Gender* (1993), that Lady G’s pregnancy is punishment for her wit (121). Though Lady G is confined during the early days of motherhood, she soon breaks free, and indeed, she uses her earlier mutedness to make a critical point: Shortly after childbirth, she writes to Harriet, “I AM very well—What’s the matter with the women!—I *will* write!—Fifteen days controul and caudle—Why surely!—They are impertinent, my dear; and would take my pen and ink from me!” (7: 402). During delivery and the weeks that followed, mothers were expected to be passive, controlled by the midwife and birthing circle who “supported” her (Rogers 310). Lady G is precisely the exception and voices criticism of a practice that would deprive her even of sedentary engagement. Against everyone else’s wishes, the “Ungovernable Charlotte!” even travels to visit her friends soon after her lying-in (7: 412). Yet Lady G is unapologetically happy to see her friends, and moreover, the astounded Harriet reports, “She is all vivacity, as heretofore; but no flippancy. Her liveliness, in the main, is that of a sensible,

not a *very saucy* wife, entirely satisfied with herself, her situation and prospects”; she is simultaneously herself and “one of the most obliging of wives, tenderest of mothers, and amiable of nurses” (7: 412). This description at the end of the novel echoes Harriet’s first description of Charlotte from volume one as simultaneously “airy” and “prudent” (1: 179). Though Lady G temporarily disappears from the text in the late days of her pregnancy, she returns after delivery as lively as—nay, happier than—ever. The batter may not have looked promising, but the cake that emerges from the oven has risen with majesty.

It may come as a surprise that Lady G chooses, despite her class and without her husband’s knowledge, to nurse her infant (7: 403).<sup>45</sup> According to Beauvoir, breastfeeding is simply an extension of the child’s parasitism, for “the baby’s mouth hurts [the breasts]: he seems to be sucking their strength, life, and happiness from them” (626). Likewise, twentieth-century literary critics have tended to see Lady G’s nursing as an act of subservience. In “Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England” (1991), Ruth Perry argues that Lady G’s breastfeeding is a “lowly task” meant to demonstrate her reproductive obedience (230), yet nursing need not be understood as a “lowly task,” and in choosing to nurse, Lady G gains a new type of power, defying social expectations in doing what she thinks is right. To take a striking contemporary example, Mary Wollstonecraft—sometimes called the “mother of feminism”—would have been perplexed by the anachronistic arguments against nursing by twentieth-century feminists like Beauvoir. Wollstonecraft found in a woman’s capacity to nurse her child the biological grounds for her own arguments on behalf of her sex. In

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 2 for an analysis of this event focusing on the perspective of an eighteenth-century husband.

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she argues that maternal affection “scarcely deserves the name, when it does not lead [a mother] to suckle her children, because the discharge of this duty is equally calculated to inspire maternal and filial affection” (165). A woman who sends her infant to a wetnurse rejects “one of the grand duties annexed to the female character by nature” (227). According to this later and politically resistant argument, in nursing, Lady G embraces a biologically natural part of her identity. She is able to use the body that was confined during pregnancy to expand her own identity, range of experience, and even influence over her child’s character and behavior, for a common eighteenth-century belief was that the breast milk itself granted mothers the power of influence. Medical practitioners believed that breast milk contained the woman’s essence of self, and thus breastfeeding transmitted it to her child, shaping their character (Perry 222)—hence Pamela’s fear for her child’s character when Mr. B insists upon hiring a stranger as a wet nurse (4: 47). While Pamela does not have the opportunity to influence her child through breastfeeding, Lady G does; thus, embracing this facet of maternity is empowering rather than limiting.

Perhaps Lady G is a good mother, not *despite* her wit, independence and voice, but *because* she is a powerful acerbic woman. In advocating for women’s education, Wollstonecraft argues that women of independence and understanding make better mothers and wives than “proper ladies,” the more passive, sometimes ignorant wives favored by society:

To be a good mother—a woman must have sense, and that independence of mind which few women possess who are taught to depend entirely on their husbands. Meek wives are, in general, foolish mothers . . . [U]nless the understanding of woman be enlarged, and her character rendered more firm, by being allowed to govern her own conduct, she will never

have sufficient sense or command of temper to manage her children properly. (165)

While women with “early imbibed notions of passive obedience” do not have “sufficient character to manage a family or educate children” (36), the learned and witty woman, with her independent identity and strong understanding, has the potential, Wollstonecraft argues, to “be a good mother,” precisely because her personality does not depend on her husband’s. She is a stable force who will rely on her own understanding and will, not only her partner’s, when making decisions about her child. Lady G is making a choice that would still be controversial even when voiced by Wollstonecraft fifty years later.

Charlotte’s predecessor Anna Howe correctly predicts that after she marries, she will resemble “the feeble struggles of a sinking state for its dying liberty” (277); on the other hand, Harriet’s farfetched hope that, when Charlotte marries, “the over-lively mistress will be sunk in the obliging wife” (4: 316) does not come to fruition. It does, however, happen to Harriet, and this is no good thing. When Harriet herself sinks in marriage, she loses her virtue by losing her *self*. Two of the most common reasons for a cake to sink include underbaking and undermixing: Underbaking leaves the cake too wet and heavy to support itself, while undermixing never activates the glutenous supportive structures of flour. Harriet’s facade of “proper lady,” like wet batter, is heavy, and her wit and virtue are not mixed properly. Harriet cannot support herself, and the result is her inevitable sinking after marriage.

In 1858, a century after the novel’s publication, William and Robert Chambers of *Chambers’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* offered a description of *Grandison* to their contemporary audience, who, they argue, try to read the novel

beloved by their “great-grandmothers” but fail because of the length. The Chambers brothers argue that Richardson’s last literary effort is a worthwhile read in large part because of Richardson’s portrayal of Lady G. They write, “With all her haughtiness, Lady G is the most bewitching and lovable personage in the book—worth a dozen Harriet Byrons” (9: 194-195). Lady G is not only an entertaining character: She is an edifying one. In the feminine spiral ascent, she reworks, rethinks, and revisits the conflicting emotions eighteenth-century women experienced. Like a cake, Lady G’s ascent requires time and diligence, and as a result, she is so much more than the sum of her parts. Adopting the role of Harlequin allows Lady G to become an eighteenth-century miracle: a woman who manages to juggle a multifaceted identity of self, wife, and mother.

Significantly, Lady G has named her infant Harriet, after the novel’s heroine, of course. This is Lady G’s final opportunity to rework the narrative: As Lady Grandison, the heroine has lost herself and her voice, but Lady G will direct the new Harriet a new way. Little Harriet represents the potential for revision of the novel’s heroine in the narrative’s open spiral. Perhaps if Lady G were portrayed in fig. 27, featuring a mother cradling her infant, she might sport a wink and a few inkstains on her fingers besides. This Harriet, she seems to say, will be no “proper lady”: The influence of her mother will help her develop her wit and virtue in equal measure.



Fig. 27. Peltro William Tonkins. *He Sleeps*.  
1789. *British Museum*, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1912-1219-35](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1912-1219-35)  
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## PART III

### ITALIANS AND THE DEMONIC DESCENT

#### CHAPTER 5: NUN OF THE ABOVE: THE SPECTER OF HEROINE, PARADISE, AND NARRATIVE

The *Alps*, which are broken into so many Steeps and Precipices, . . . fill the Mind with an agreeable kind of Horror, and form one of the most irregular mis-shapen Scenes in the World.

—*Joseph Addison*

#### Maggots of the Mind

By the end of the long eighteenth century, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) was still a household name, but the novel was no longer as fashionable as it was once. Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817), a novel as much about novels themselves as about the heroine's development into a wife, puts the waning popularity of *Grandison* into perspective. When the heroine's new friend Isabella Thorpe expresses surprise that she "should never have read *Udolpho* before" (33)—Ann Radcliffe's gothic sensation by that time over two decades past its publication date—Catherine Moreland admits that "new books do not fall in our way." Her mother, however, "very often reads *Sir Charles Grandison*." The conversation continues:

"*Sir Charles Grandison*! That is an amazing horrid book, is it not?— I remember Miss Andrews could not get through the first volume."

"It is not like *Udolpho* at all; but yet I think it is very entertaining."

"Do you indeed!— you surprize me; I thought it had not been readable." (34)

This conversation, embedded into a novel simultaneously a parody of and an homage to the gothic, on the surface highlights the differences between Richardson's prose and the titillating bestsellers, like *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), that gained prominence

by the end of the period. Young readers like *Northanger Abbey's* Isabella Thorpe spurned Richardson; meanwhile, like any element of popular culture, gothic novels were at once consumed voraciously and condemned vigorously.

The condemnation could be scathing. In June 1806, a critic of Charlotte Dacre's gothic novel *Zofloya; or, The Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century* (1806) wrote that gothic novelists "have the seeds of nonsense, bad taste, and ridiculous fancies, early sown in their minds. These having come to maturity, render the mind putrid and corrupt, and the consequence is the formation of millions of the strangest maggots that one can conceive" (*Literary Journal, a Review of Domestic and Foreign Literature* 631). This is quite different from how the domestic novel was perceived. *Northanger Abbey's* narrator uses free indirect discourse to channel Catherine's distinction between the gothic and domestic novels:

Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for. Of the Alps and Pyrenees, with their pine forests and their vices, they might give a faithful delineation; and Italy, Switzerland, and the South of France, might be as fruitful in horrors as they were there represented. . . . But in the central part of England there was surely some security for the existence even of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age. Murder was not tolerated, servants were not slaves, and neither poison nor sleeping potions to be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist. (158)

While it is difficult to imagine the mild Richardson's harshest critics accusing him of something so grotesque and provocative as maggots of the mind, each of his novels contains reverberations of the same dark romance that Austen's Catherine cannot imagine existing in England and that Dacre's critic deplores. For example, the many abductions and escapes in *Pamela* (1740) contain a whisper of what later in the century

would develop into the gothic, and the sentimental *Clarissa* (1748) surely displays a tinge of the gothic when the wilting heroine receives a delivery of new bedroom furniture— what her friends are horrified to discover is actually a coffin. As she explains, “Some of you must have seen *this* in a few days, if not now; perhaps have had the friendly trouble of directing it. And what is the difference of a few days to *you*, when *I* am gratified, rather than discomposed by it? I shall not die the sooner for such a preparation” (1304). Readers who, unlike Austen’s *Isabella*, are intimately acquainted with Richardson’s novels will recognize just how macabre, provocative, and “very entertaining” they can be.

One such instance of *Grandison*’s adventure is the abduction so pivotal to volume one. This scene would be at home in a gothic novel: The impassioned Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, under guise of his masquerade costume, abducts the lovely heroine but is thwarted when the damsel is rescued by the titular hero. Harriet is in a garish costume, so her primary fear after rescue is that the brother and sister, Charles and Charlotte, will think ill of her for her “vile appearance” (1: 132).<sup>46</sup> The pseudo-gothic *Northanger Abbey* recreates this abduction scene twice with John Thorpe playing a less malicious Hargrave against the unsuspecting heroine. In the first instance, rain seems to keep the Tilney brother and sister from a walking engagement with Catherine. The Thorpes want her to join them for an excursion to Bristol, so John Thorpe lies to Catherine and says that the Tilneys have left Bath for the day. Catherine agrees to go with him, but as they leave, Catherine sees the Tilney siblings just arriving at her residence to retrieve her (70). Catherine begs John Thorpe to stop the carriage, but he only laughs and drives faster. Catherine is powerless against her captor and is mortified

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 1 for a detailed analysis of the abduction and rescue.

by her social *faux pas*, and like Harriet, she wonders what the exemplary brother and sister must think of her (71). The next instance of abduction is when the Thorpes insist on Catherine's coming with them to Clifton. Once again, she has a prior engagement with the Tilneys, so she declines, yet John Thorpe attempts to use trickery to abscond with her. First, the Thorpes try to persuade Catherine to lie to the Tilneys, saying that theirs is the prior engagement. But, like a Richardsonian heroine, she is all goodness and refuses, declaring, "If I am wrong, I am doing what I believe to be right" (80). When the Thorpes cannot persuade Catherine, John Thorpe finds the Tilneys and once more lies to them, claiming that Catherine sent him to cancel on her behalf. Catherine, breaking free of her friends' physical restraint, rushes to the Tilneys, her parting words to the Thorpes a reproach: "If I could not be persuaded into doing what I thought wrong, I never will be tricked into it" (81). Despite the fact that the novel's overarching theme involves Catherine's overactive imagination entombing her in a gothic narrative, her behavior and interactions are firmly ordinary.<sup>47</sup> How could they be otherwise in moderate England? In *Grandison*, even Harriet's primary concern after her scandalous abduction is not her injuries, but how she appears to the upright Grandison siblings. As long as the setting is England, the narrative must adhere to its domestic conventions. It may be sentimental, it may descend the heroine into the darkness for a single night, but it cannot be the uncontrollable, boundless, and chaotic world of the dark romance.

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<sup>47</sup> For example, when she first arrives at the Abbey, she spies a chest near the fireplace of her bedroom: "This is strange indeed! I did not expect such a sight as this!— An immense heavy chest!— What can it hold!— Why should it be placed here?— Pushed back too, as if meant to be out of sight!— I will look into it— cost me what it may, I will look into it— and directly too— by day-light.— If I stay till evening my candle may go out" (129). When she lifts the trunk with bated breath, she is shocked to find, instead of a gothic horror, only a folded bedspread.

That is, not until the introduction of the Italian letters. After her rescue, Harriet spends a happy month with the Grandisons, befriendng the hero's amiable sisters as she falls in love with the hero, until she discovers that Charles has another love interest: Clementina della Porretta. When Charles receives word from Italy that his former flame, whom the reader has never heard of, has fallen into a madness brought on by love melancholy, he sits the heroine down to tell her the tale.

The tale begins a few years prior, during Charles's Grand Tour, when he brought his friend, the Italian Jeronymo della Porretta, home after injury in a bloody attack by libertine rivals.<sup>48</sup> It was then that he met Jeronymo's parents and two older brothers, as well as his only sister, the family's youngest child, Clementina. As Charles describes her to Harriet, "She is lovely in her person, gentle in her manners, and has high, but just, notions of the nobility of her descent, of the honour of her sex, and of what is due to her own character. She is pious, charitable, beneficent" (3: 119). Jeronymo wished, in gratitude to his savior, for Charles to be rewarded with Clementina as his bride (3: 123). Charles did not pursue the match, thinking it ungrateful after having been honored "by [her] whole family, with the appellation of a fourth son, a fourth brother" (3: 146), and the rest of Clementina's relations refused the connection due to the difference in nationality and religion. Yet when Clementina fell ill, and all physicians consulted "pronounced her malady to be Love" (3: 126), the family, worried about their favorite child's despondency, agreed to the match— *if* they could reach a compromise with the young Englishman. Despite the fact that Charles, upon departing for his Grand Tour, resolved to "never . . . marry a foreigner" (3: 176), he entered into negotiations, but could not accept the Porrettas' terms: "For I was to make a formal renunciation of my religion, and

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<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 6 for an analysis of Jeronymo's castration.

to settle in Italy; only one, in two or three years, was allowed, if I pleased, for two or three months, to go to England; and, as a visit of curiosity, once in her life, if their daughter desired it, to carry her thither, for a time to be limited by them" (3: 129). In response, Charles offered a compromise of his own: to alternate residences annually if Clementina were to join him, otherwise to visit England solo for only one season per year; in addition, he explains, "I proposed to leave her entirely to her liberty, in the article of religion; and, in case of children by the marriage, the daughters to be educated by *her*, the sons by *me*" (3: 130). Worrying both about their reputation as a great house and about the souls of their potential Protestant descendents, the Porrettas refused. Negotiations over, the family commanded Charles to leave, and he obeyed (3: 130).

Now, in the to-the-moment realistic narrative, Charles has received a letter from the Porrettas "to make them *one* more visit at Bologna!— Unhappy Clementina!— To what purpose?" (1: 131). Here Charles's story to Harriet ends, as he has now provided the necessary context so that he might in good conscience leave Harriet (before either he or she has confessed their love for the other), and return to Italy in hopes of a happy resolution with Clementina.

Here the dark romance begins.

The Italian letters serve to complicate the courtship narrative, unmiring the novel from the tedious life of its ordinary English heroine and introducing the dark romance. They function as an inset tale, which according to Northrop Frye's *The Secular Scripture* (1976) has "a narrative movement opposite to that of the main story," which "establish[es] the main story as one of a category of stories, giving it a broader significance than it would have as an isolated story" (12). In unhitching the narrative

from its formulaic structure of letters to and from Northamptonshire, the Italian letters allow the text more freely and more experimentally to explore identity construction. Clementina is the embodiment of *Grandison*'s conflict between individual desire and nationalist duty, and the conflict has implications beyond just Charles and Clementina, and even beyond Harriet, because it is in the Italian letters where characters can debate identity in practical terms as they consider the possibility of creating human life across national and religious boundaries. Due to the perpetual eighteenth-century conflict between Britain and the Continent, the stakes are high: Will the children be realistic Britons or romantic foreigners? Due to religious difference, the stakes are even higher: Will the children be blessed in Heaven or damned to Hell? In the *Grandison* storyworld, Charles's choice between the domestic Harriet and the foreign Clementina will decide the future for generations to come— in this life and in the next.

Thus, even in this domestic novel, the dark romance remains at the edge of the page, foreign life wriggling in the wound, jostling the bandage that keeps chaos under wraps.

Eventually, the wound must air.

### **Necrotic Nationalism**

The fear of foreign contagion permeates the long eighteenth century, and *Grandison* is part of a long tradition of Richardson working out nationalist anxieties, on both a personal and a societal level. His writing career was plagued by Irish piracy, and on 4 August 1753, after the piracy of the first volumes of *Grandison*, Richardson lambasted “the Invaders of his property” as having made “a NATIONAL CAUSE” of the matter (Schellenberg 103). His printing career was in some ways a nationalist war

against the encroaching and pilfering foreigner, even if that foreigner was close to home, and it was a war that his English correspondents fought defensively. For example, on 4 September 1753, David Garrick assured Richardson, who had just lent him a copy of two volumes of the unpublished *Grandison*, that they would “only Move from the Scrutore to my hands, & from my hands back again to their Concealment under Lock & Key” (Schellenberg 138). He may not have been able to “as Easily procure [Richardson] Justice & Reparation from the matchless Villains who [had] plunder’d [him] of [his] Treasure,” but he could assure that these volumes were safe “from their infernal Clutches.” In “Printing like a Post-Colonialist: The Irish Piracy of *Sir Charles Grandison*” (2000), Kathryn Temple calls *Grandison* “an emblem of the English nation,” noting its distinct status as the first and only novel in the national library’s collection prior to 1780 (158). Consequently, Richardson’s nationalist response further reinforced the divide between the Irish and English, casting the Irish as villains who needed to be controlled.

But control was impossible. Not only were Richardson’s exact words pirated, but his novels were victim to numerous unauthorized sequels. After realizing he could not rein in the unauthorized sequels to *Pamela*, Richardson wrote a sequel of his own, *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (1742), in which the heroine is faced with a potentially disastrous masquerade outing which she abhors:

I never desire to be present at another. Mr. *B.* was singled out by a bold Nun, who talk’d *Italian* to him with such free Airs, that I did not much like it . . . ; for I thought the dear Gentleman no more kept to his *Spanish* Gravity, than she to the Requisites of the Habit she wore: When I had imagin’d, that all that was tolerable in a Masquerade, was the acting up to the Characters each Person assum’d: And this gave me no Objection to the Quaker’s Dress; for I thought I was prim enough for that naturally. (4: 365)

Pamela finds herself accosted by and leered at by a “Cardinal” and a “Presbyterian Parson,” but all is well, for she escapes at three in the morning with no regrets but that of a wasted evening. John Kelly’s unauthorized *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life* (1741), on the other hand, sees the heroine abducted at the masquerade, a plot point that, interestingly enough, Richardson borrowed (pirated?) for *Grandison*’s first volume. Thus Richardson himself blurs the line between his and theirs, parasite and host, plagiarism and inspiration, and where *Grandison* attempts to instill rigid order, it blurs boundaries, becoming a masquerade in its own right.

The masquerade’s Italian origin frames it as the Continental antithesis to British domesticity and sense, and consequently, in *Grandison*, Harriet’s abduction serves to build a distrust of the foreign early in the novel, two volumes before the first mention of the Italian characters. Harriet’s Uncle Selby calls masquerades “the most profligate of all diversions” (1: 119), and as Harriet reproaches herself, “[S]urely, I was past all shame, when I gave my consent to make such an appearance as I made, among a thousand strangers, at a Masquerade!” (1: 183). After all, those strangers were “a croud of Satyrs, Harlequins, Scaramouches, Fauns, and Dryads; nay, of Witches and Devils; the graver habits striving which should most disgrace the characters they assumed, and every one endeavouring be thought the direct contrary of what they appeared to be” (2: 427). This is the crux of the masquerade’s ideological danger: One can disguise their national identity, their occupation, their social status, even their biological sex, simply by changing their clothes. In a society of labels and ranks, such digressions are deeply subversive and borderline gothic because they incite disorder and lawlessness.

*Grandison*’s masquerade conflict reflects the cultural conflicts of the time. The

eighteenth century was marked by conflict with foreign foes, from numerous wars with France to the Jacobite Rebellion, whose aim was to return the Catholic Stuarts to the British throne. The leader, Charles Edward Stuart– or “Bonnie Prince Charlie”– was born and raised in Italy and launched his attack on England with a Highland Army in August of 1745. Without internal support, the rebellion failed, but it struck fear in the English population. Conflicts such as the Jacobite Rebellion helped to cement both an English cultural identity against the Catholic Irish and Scottish, and a British national identity against the Continent,<sup>49</sup> and were debated throughout print culture.

When the hero visits Italy, the domestic plot is disrupted in favor of the dark romance, and in generic accordance, *Grandison*’s dark romance is characterized by illicit sexual trysts, murder schemes, and mutilation. As *Northanger Abbey* playfully suggests, Italy “might be as fruitful in horrors” as presented in gothic novels, but such cannot be found “in the midland counties of England”– or, at least not in a narrative set there. This is why *Grandison* must break entirely with the realistic narrative, leaving the domestic heroine in her cedar parlor and traveling to the passionate, sensational, and romantic Continent. Once there, we find the narrative, and even the heroine herself, doubled.

### **The Fester Abroad**

In popular culture of the time as well in *Grandison*, Italy was used as a space for working out nationalist anxieties. The foreign worms its way into *Grandison* using the same pattern that foreign commodities and entertainments, like the masquerade, supposedly “infested” British culture. As Harriet frets over her possibly unrequited love

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<sup>49</sup> See the Introduction for a more detailed account of Britain’s eighteenth-century international conflicts.

for the hero, the dark romance “infests” the narrative through letter packets delivered from Italy. These letters are in stark contrast to the letters penned by the heroine and her domestic circle, embodying the romantic tragic mode, a dark mirror of volume one. *Grandison’s* dark romance, to borrow from Frye, “proceeds toward an end which echoes the beginning, but echoes it in a different world” (49). This alternative world is one we read not from the “horizontal continuity” of realism (50) but from a vertical perspective, which provides the necessary space to recognize “the bottom of the action as a demonic parody of the top” (52). We can read the letters of the dark romance from two levels of vertical perspective: The first is what Frye describes as a plot “scrambling over a series of disconnected episodes” to a “top” (50); the other is the literal vertical perspective of Harriet and the other British readers in *Grandison’s* storyworld, who look down as they read the riveting Italian letters. Ironically, it is the novel’s formal realism—the dark romance’s interjection through bursts of letter packets—that emphasizes the romance’s “scrambling” structure. The minutiae that envelop Harriet’s reading of the letters, and which interrupt them, highlight the contrasts between Britain and Italy, realism and romance.

The Italian plot is a dark doubling of the adventure narrative from volume one, and the doubled narrative is best understood through the figure of the doubled heroine. The doubled heroine is a common romantic device. Typically, one heroine is fair and gay, the other dark and grave; one is destined for marriage, the other for stagnated virginity (Frye 142-143). In generic accord, through her lovesick promise to “marry” Christ and join the convent, Clementina is the sterile parallel to the fecund Harriet. As Charles so often says, in compliment to either of his lovers, “Exalted creature! Angelic

goodness! You are Clementina and Harriet, both in one: One mind certainly informs you both" (6: 191). At other times, Charles calls Clementina "the Miss Byron of Italy" (6: 53), or Harriet's "Sister-excellence" (7: 420). These repeated exclamations reflect a binary important to romantic narrative structure. The structure of the Italian letters mimics the psychological realism of Harriet's English letters in continually reworking the same ideas as the two parties attempt to come to a compromise, trying to choose an identity for future children by first exploring and then rejecting the binaries of religion and nation: Will the children be Protestant or Catholic? English or Italian? Damned to Hell or blessed in Heaven? These are binaries that construct identity, both in this life and the next.

Unlike *Grandison's* low mimetic comic mode, featuring the eventual courtship and marriage of Charles and Harriet,<sup>50</sup> its romantic tragedy cannot be resolved through quiet courtship negotiations in the cedar-parlor, because the problem is unsolvable: Neither Clementina nor Charles can renounce their religion and remain the exemplars they are; it would mean defying their own consciences, families, and nations. This is typical of romantic tragedy, which is characterized by an inability to resolve the conflict between love and loyalty to family or community (Frye 137). Clementina is deeply conflicted over her love of family and her love of Charles. Just as Harriet loses her spirit to "femalities" after falling in love with Charles, so too does Clementina. As Harriet pines over her love for Charles, she reports that her godfather says "that I look thinner and paler than I used to do. That may very well be. My very *soul*, at times— I know not how I am" (2: 445). Similarly, Clementina muses, "I used to be a very sprightly creature: I used to talk, to sing, to dance, to play; to visit, to receive visits; And I don't like to do any of

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<sup>50</sup> See Chapters 1 and 3 for an analysis of the relationship between the novel's hero and heroine.

these things now. I love to be alone: I am contented with my own company. Other company is, at times, irksome to me; and I can't help it" (3: 151). If Clementina's descent had ended here, it would seem domestic, like Harriet's, yet her disquiet descends into extremes. As Clementina's caretaker reports:

She now talks: She raves: She starts: She neither sits nor stands with quietness— She walks up and down her room, at other times, with passion and hurry; yet weeps not, tho' she makes every-body else weep. She speaks to herself, and answers herself; and, as I guess, repeats part of the talk that passed between Father Marescotti and her: But still, *To be despised!* are the words she oftenest repeats.— *Jesu!* once, said she— *To be despised!*— And by an English Protestant! Who can bear that? (3: 185)

Upon the confirmation that she cannot marry Charles, Clementina wishes to be "added to the dust of [her] ancestors" (3: 152), "lost to the joys of this life" (3: 172). In true sentimental fashion, Clementina explains that "there is a pleasure, as well as pain, in melancholy" (3: 180), yet in her heartbreak she is prone to fits of madness. As Clementina herself admits, she suffers from the malady of melancholy, a condition Richardson would have been familiar with, particularly as his printing house published two influential medical texts that dealt with the condition: George Cheyne's *The English Malady* (1733) and Robert James's *Medical Dictionary* (1743) (Harris 493). Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) uses these texts to define melancholy as a "kind of madness, in which the mind is always fixed on one object" (2), or a disease "known to arise from too heavy and too viscid blood: its cure is in evacuation, nervous medicines, and powerful stimuli" (1). Accordingly, Clementina's family orders her bled by leeches, described in more detail than it could be in an English context (3: 189). There is an irony here: The title of Cheyne's medical text, *The English Malady*, may seem surprising, but, indeed, he linked nervous disorders in general to

England due to the polluted air of London, “the greatest, most capacious, close and populated City of the *Globe*” (55). Even Charles, upon dispatching English surgeons to Italy to help Clementina, explains that English surgeons are superior in part because of their greater experience in treating nervous disorders (4: 313). While the narrative admits the prevalence of English madness, it does not describe the condition, and certainly not in gory detail, except in the romantic narrative of Italy. Thus, the text becomes more bodily than it could when set in England, the melodramatic Clementina escaping her doctors and exposing “her lovely arm a little bloody” for all, including Charles, to see (3: 190). Clementina asks Charles, “Will it, will it, comfort *you* to see me bleed?— Come then, be comforted; I *will* bleed: But you shall not leave me. You shall see that these doctors do not kill me quite” (3: 193). The bodily suggestions of melancholy go beyond even the bloodiness stated explicitly in the narrative. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*’s third edition (1797) explores the connection between mind and body under the “Melancholy and Madness” entry, asserting that melancholy, which can descend into madness, is caused by “an excessive congestion of blood in the brain”; by “violent love in either sex, especially if attended with despair”; by “hereditary disposition”; or even by “profuse evacuations of the semen” (150). The entry provides a detailed account of the mental and bodily results of the condition:

When persons begin to be melancholy, they are sad, dejected, and dull, without any apparent cause; they tremble for fear, and are destitute of courage, subject to watching, and fond of solitude; they are fretful, fickle, captious, and inquisitive; sometimes niggardly to an excess, and sometimes foolishly profuse and prodigal. They are generally costive, and when they discharge their excrements, they are often dry, round, and covered with a black, bilious humour. Their urine is little, acrid, and bilious; they are troubled with flatulencies, putrid and fetid eructations. Sometimes they vomit an acrid humour with bile. Their countenances become pale

and wan; they are lazy and weak, and yet devour their victuals with greediness. (150)

This is reminiscent of the language Frye uses to describe the narrative descent in parallel with the human body: “At the bottom of this macrocosmic world we find the organs of generation and of excretion,” for “[d]evils are associated with blackness, soot, and sulfurous smell, besides having the horns, hoofs, and tails of the sort of fertility spirit that is close to the sexual instinct” (119-120). Richardson’s delicacy does not allow him to mention excreta, even in the romantic portion of the novel, yet surely the savvy reader would have been familiar with the bodily connotations of such a commonly discussed malady.

One reason the narrative must descend Clementina into the madness of melancholy is because she is Catholic. In “Demonic Possession and the Historical Construction of Melancholy and Hysteria” (2014), Herman Westerink connects melancholy and religion because the “sadness, fear and despair” indicative of melancholy were also seen as “the first sparks of faith” (342). The two were confused not only because they had similar symptoms, but because religion, in inspiring fanaticism and a pessimistic worldview, could cause the malady (344). Catholics, in particular, believed that the “lower appetites” were responsible for sin, and thus the entrypoint for demonic possession, most often expressed through convulsion, a sign of the fight between body and soul (346). But to be a good Catholic also meant to put emphasis on the corporeal body— the Crucifixion, the blood and flesh of Christ, the blood and flesh of His followers— to the point that there was a fine line between faith and madness (347). Even at its best, as a nation of religious virtue, Italy was a night world of Catholic superstition and fanaticism for eighteenth-century British Protestant readers.

Clementina's madness sinks her to the underworld, where a protagonist is imprisoned, an object, rather than a subject, of knowledge (Frye 123). Throughout her melancholy, Clementina is unwittingly spied upon by her priest and her family, who hide in closets to eavesdrop on her conversations with Charles (3: 125). More extreme romantic subversions follow: Her cousin Laurana, jealous of the Count of Belvedere's affection (7: 434), locks her away and ties her into a "Straight Waistcoat" (4: 298); later, when the Count follows the escaped Clementina to England, Laurana commits suicide (7: 446), an act far too gruesome for the English pages of the novel. Such familial complications and calamities are typical of romantic tragedy (Frye 137). Cruelty and ritual, too, are features of the night world (113-115), and it is no coincidence that these are traits British Protestants would have associated with Catholics like the Porrettas. Because the descent, with its imprisonment and subsequent escape, is such a common romantic convention, the night world may seem an illusion, a nightmare, "bound to turn into a womb of rebirth sooner or later" (134). The inevitability of the escape may reassure the reader, yet, as haunting as nightmares may be, they fascinate. As Clementina explains, "there is a pleasure, as well as pain, in melancholy" (3: 180). The dark romance is titillating, compelling, and contradictory: a delightful terror to experience.

The romantic night world conjures a perception of the sublime, a concept important to philosophical and aesthetic movements of the long eighteenth century. The sublime depends on an ability to imagine. Joseph Addison's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, published in *The Spectator* in 1712, argues that the imagination is an essential defense against vice, a space where one "may retire . . . with Safety" rather

than falling into “Folly” (no. 411, para. 6). Further, the “Delightful Scenes” of the imagination “have a kindly Influence on the Body, as well as the Mind, . . . [and] are able to disperse Grief and Melancholy” (para. 7). But not all scenes of the imagination are apparently pleasant: “There may, indeed, be something so terrible or offensive, that the Horror or Loathsomeness of an Object may over-bear the Pleasure which results from its *Greatness*, *Novelty* or *Beauty*; but still there will be such a Mixture of Delight in the very Disgust it gives us” (no. 412, para. 1). The human mind appreciates escaping “Ordinary Entertainments” and thus “bestows Charms on [even] a Monster” (para. 3). Likewise, there is refreshment for the reader even in the terrors of *Grandison*’s romantic pages simply because they serve as a reprieve from the “Ordinary Entertainments” of the realistic mode; in other words, for *Grandison*’s readers, the titillating Italian letters serve as an escape from the cedar parlor. This is no coincidence, for Addison associates the sublime with Italy in particular when he writes, in *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy &c. In the Years, 1701, 1702, 1703* (1718), “The *Alps*, which are broken into so many Steeps and Precipices, . . . fill the Mind with an agreeable kind of Horror, and form one of the most irregular mis-shapen Scenes in the World” (260-261). In a letter to Richard West on 16 November 1739, the Romantic poet Thomas Gray— on his Grand Tour with the father of the British gothic novel, Horace Walpole— made similar observations:

In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining: Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day: You have Death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frightening it. . . . Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission

mountains have of being frightful rather too far; and its horrors were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. (Tovey 44-45)

Addison and Gray's conception of terrible greatness, as embodied by the Alps, is the version of the sublime that would have been most familiar to Richardson's contemporary audience. Fig. 29 illustrates the passage of Mount Cenis, an essential component of the Grand Tour. When Charles travels to Italy to re-negotiate with the Porrettas and to bring the surgeon Mr. Lowther to attend to Clementina, Lowther describes the "palpable darkness" and "dismal weather" of the passage, the town beyond not much better, the "cheering rays of the sun" obscured by the imposing mountains, "[e]very object which . . . presents itself . . . excessively miserable" (4: 445).



Fig. 28. J.M.W. Turner. *The Passage of Mount Cenis*. 1820. *Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*, [https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/explore-art/items/1953P409/snowstorm-mont-cenis?search\\_terms%5Bcollections%5D%5B%5D=turner+passage+of+mount+cenis](https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/explore-art/items/1953P409/snowstorm-mont-cenis?search_terms%5Bcollections%5D%5B%5D=turner+passage+of+mount+cenis).

Addison's *Pleasures of the Imagination* inspired later works on the sublime. Shortly after the publication of *Grandison*, Edmund Burke published the influential treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). For Burke, "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger . . . whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*" (51). Beauty and sublimity are mutually exclusive (157), but each produces its own kind of pleasure. Beauty's pleasures are obvious, while the sublime's pleasure is more paradoxical: A sublime object is horrific in its obscurity, yet one's own position in the safety of reality when considering the sublime allows its horrors to become, "not a pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror; a sort of tranquility tinged with terror; which, as it belongs to self-preservation, is one of the strongest of all the passions" (168).

In *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Immanuel Kant argues that Burke makes "psychological observations . . . without aiming to understand them" (118) and intends to finish the task. Here Kant distinguishes between two forms of the sublime: mathematical and dynamical. For Kant, as for Burke, the beautiful and the sublime are distinct, beauty being "mathematical" and coming from an object's form, and the sublime being "dynamical" because it is formless and boundless (86). Though Burke emphasizes that the sublime produces terror, for Kant a sublime object can produce fear in a subject without that subject "being afraid of it" (100). Beauty can be understood by the senses and imagination, but the sublime goes further, understood only by superior "Reason," which "*shows a faculty of the mind surpassing every standard of Sense*" (89).

The sublime in literature appears in those texts which focus on the internal, hence its affiliation with the Romantics, whose works use individual perception to understand more sublime subjects. William Blake's "The Tyger" (1794) asks of the Asiatic beast, "What immortal hand or eye,/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" (3-4). The imagery of a night world permeates the poem: "When the stars threw down their spears/ And water'd heaven with their tears:/ Did he smile his work to see?/ Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (17-20). The foreign, exotic, and powerful tiger, that maneater of the night, opens the Romantic mind to the sublime question of the origin of existence itself. For the Romantics, the sublime is the gateway to enlightenment.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the mental monsters that Clementina must battle in her descent do not merely create a "delightful terror" but enlighten. Clementina represents all three of Addison's qualities of the imagination (282): the *greatness* of the Alps Charles must cross to reach her and the *novelty* of her Italian nationality, in addition to the *beauty* of her person. It is through Clementina and her descent that the narrative can work out the problem of her love for Charles, his love for her, and the identity implications that follow.

The connection between Clementina and the sublime is underscored by her study of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), that famous retelling of the Fall— what we might call the original descent— to which Addison, Burke, and even Richardson look as the height of sublime art. For Addison, *Paradise Lost* is the height of imagination because it contains all three of the qualities that excite the imagination: vastness, uncommonness, and beauty (296). For Burke, Milton's "sublime description" of "infinity

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<sup>51</sup> The Romantic sublime inspired Sigmund Freud's theory of "sublimation," in which the libido is transfigured into more socially-acceptable achievements. In "Civilization and Its Discontents" (1930), Freud writes that sublimation is "an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an 'important' part in civilized life" (80).

and eternity” is unparalleled (105), and in *Grandison*, Harriet praises Milton for the “grandeur of his sentiments” on his superlatively “sublime subject” (1: 56). In fact, Harriet attributes her stance on Milton to “a very learned man”: Addison. Significantly, it is *Paradise Lost* that draws Charles and Clementina together: First, Charles uses Milton to help two of Clementina’s brothers learn English (3: 122),<sup>52</sup> then he uses the “sublime poet” to help Clementina improve her facility with what she calls the “hard and crabbed” English language (3: 144). In a letter to Lady G, Harriet uses *Paradise Lost* to frame the dilemma between Charles and Clementina:

Do you think, my dear, that had he been the first man, he would have been so complaisant to his Eve as *Milton makes Adam* [So contrary to that part of his character, which made him accuse the woman to the Almighty] To taste the forbidden fruit, because he would not be separated from her, in her punishment, tho’ all *posterity* were to suffer by it?— No; it is my opinion, that your brother would have had gallantry enough to his fallen spouse, to have made him extremely regret her lapse; but that he would have done *his own duty*, were it but for the sake of posterity, and left it to the Almighty, if such had been his pleasure, to have annihilated his first Eve, and given him a second— But, my dear, do I not write strangely? (5: 609)

Harriet rather explicitly aligns Clementina with Eve, the original temptress whom, out of love for her, the Adam of *Paradise Lost* follows into descent. As Adam himself explains, “Should God create another *Eve*, and I/ Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee/ Would never from my heart; no no, I feel/ The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,/ Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State/ Mine shall never be parted, bliss or woe” (9: 911-916). Yet Harriet believes that Charles is no Adam, but instead superior: an Englishman who can resist the temptation of sublime downfall.

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<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 6 for the narrative implications of Charles using *Paradise Lost* to teach English to the wounded Jeronymo della Porretta.

Here the plot totters on the “agreeable kind of Horror” of a precipice as dangerous as Addison’s Alps: Will Charles fall with his first Eve, or ascend with his second?

### **A Putrid Expulsion**

Clementina’s sublime plight is moving. Even Harriet, Clementina’s rival for Charles’s love, proclaims to her cousin, after learning of Clementina’s madness, “O Lucy! you will be delighted with Clementina: You will even, for a while, forget your Harriet; or, if you are just, will think of her but next after Clementina! . . . [S]he *must* be rewarded with a Sir Charles Grandison! My reason, my justice, compels from me my vote in her favour” (3: 163). This, of course, cannot be, but leaving the beloved Clementina to her madness does not work, either. Faced with this problem, Richardson toyed with the idea of bigamy for the hero, joking with a favorite correspondent, Lady Bradshaigh, on 8 December 1753 that Charles should split his time equally between an English and an Italian wife, an arrangement that, due to Charles’s many perfections, would be “glorious for both Ladies” (Carroll 253). Faramerz Dabhoiwala’s *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (2012) explains that during this period polygyny was under debate, an option for the man who wanted to enjoy sex with multiple women and in exchange grant them a comfortable home and an untarnished public name (215). Political arithmetic supported the concept of polygamy as a method with the potential to increase the population legitimately (224). Still, we may be assured that Richardson’s suggestion was only in jest. After all, even the idea of the hero marrying an Italian, let alone an Italian *and* an Englishwoman, was controversial.

On 26 December 1753, an anonymous reader wrote to Richardson an epistle of disgust over Charles's consideration of the Italian Clementina: "one would imagine while the good Author Slept, some insinuating Jusuit had penned this part" (Schellenberg 171). They continue denouncing the foreign in England, blaming foreigners, or "implacable enemies," for England's pecuniary and moral difficulties (171). The letter claims that "a work of this nature shou'd have discouraged these crying evils, the Religion, the follies, the gewgaws, the trifles, with which the nation is so infatuated, to have opened their eyes & endeavoured at least, to restore them to their senses" (172). Another anonymous letter from 11 January 1754 expresses similar sentiments:

Sir Charles Grandison is a Charming Man! But some envious Demon, desirous to sully his Character, has spread a dark Cloud over his Excellencies, by supposing a true Englishman (which in the strongest manner implies a Lover of his Country, I'm sure *my* first temporal Wish is its Preservation) could take a zealous Papist, National irreconcilable Enemies! And by his Vows make her a Part of himself! Wicked absurd Supposition! Always attended with uneasy Disputes. Could a true Protestant think of setting a part any Place in his House as an idolatrous Chappel? An undermining Priest! (the Nation, perhaps is on the Brink of Ruin with the numbers already here) always inflaming, always plotting. . . . I have wished to extract the Venom; but the Poison is spread through every Page. (Schellenberg 173)

Yet on 30 January 1754 James Leake, Jr. claimed that the novel was "the subject of universal praise . . . the world is confined to perpetual panegyrick" (Schellenberg 178); clearly, that was not quite accurate. Though the novel was an immense success, reviews were mixed; some readers found "Poison . . . spread through every Page," while others, like Thomas Newcomb, were moved to verse. The second stanza of his 23 August 1754 "An Ode to Mr. S. Richardson" reads, "The moving story you have writ/ Instructs, delights, improves and warms;/ *France* taught by thee that *Britains* wit,/ Is

strong, and matchless as her arms” (Schellenberg 249). No matter the perspective, it seems *Grandison* stirred patriotic feeling in its readers.

Perhaps the novel’s final volume reinforces Newcomb’s patriotic claim of a strong Britain, one with transformative power. Charles and Clementina cannot reconcile their religious differences without sacrificing their consciences, and to do that would make them unworthy of the other— an unsolvable paradox. Quite conveniently for our hero, Clementina urges him to marry an Englishwoman: “If you marry, Sir, I shall, perhaps, be allowed to be one in the party, that will make you a visit in England . . . You and your Lady, and perhaps your Sisters and their Lords, will return with *us*. Thus shall we be as one family” (5: 630). Thus, two volumes after Charles tells Harriet of his entanglement with the Italian beauty, he begins the trek back to England and declares, “Now, at least, is the day approaching, that the writer of this will be allowed to consider himself wholly as an Englishman” (5: 640). Later, Lucy writes to her cousin Harriet, who by now is Lady Grandison, that, despite Charles’s role as “a Citizen of the World,” marrying an Italian would have destroyed his happiness, for, “see we not, that his long residence abroad, has only the more endeared to him the Religion, the Government, and Manners of England?” (7: 263). Charles and Harriet, the novel’s British exemplars, are happily united. No foreign wedge can divide them.

The threat, however, is present, because in the novel’s final volume, the Porretta family land on British soil. The potential danger is staggering. Many of Richardson’s contemporaries viewed Continental influences as deeply subversive and dangerous, and not only in terms of British culture. Italy may actually have posed an incredible threat to the burgeoning British Empire through the potential of the Catholic Church to

support and finance the Jacobite Rebellion, whose success would have devastated England as well as the concept of Britain. Charles recalls to Harriet his perspective of the attack, which occurred during his Grand Tour during his initial visit to the Porrettas:

[T]he troubles, now so happily appeased, broke out in Scotland: Hardly any thing else was talked of, in Italy, but the progress, and supposed certainty of success, of the young invader. I was often obliged to stand the triumphs and exultations of persons of rank and figure; being known to be warm in the interest of my country. I had a good deal of this kind of spirit to contend with, even in this more moderate Italian family; and this frequently brought on debates which I would gladly have avoided holding: But it was impossible. Every new advice from England revived the disagreeable subject; for the success of the rebels, it was not doubted, would be attended with the restoration of what they called the Catholic religion: And Clementina particularly pleased herself, that then her *heretic tutor* would take refuge in the bosom of his holy mother, the church: And she delighted to say things of this nature in the language I was teaching her, and which, by this time, she spoke very intelligently. (3: 124)

How Charles negotiates the Rebellion while in Italy is of utmost importance. As Susan Lamb explains in *Bringing Travel Home to England: Tourism, Gender, and Imaginative Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (2010), though English society generally supported the Grand Tour, there was also an underlying anxiety about the possible conversion and corruption of Britons abroad (108). Though Charles is recalling this as a memory when he is safely in England, the arrival of the Porrettas not only offers an opportunity for international community, but also plants the darker worry of a Catholic overthrow that would invite in the fester from abroad.

Ignoring the fester abroad will not heal it, so the narrative must confront it. This is a particular affordance of romance, and in *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824* (2002), Toni Wein argues that the gothic, the popular form of romance particular to the late eighteenth century, flourished after the Seven Years' War due to its unique ability to reimagine and recover the communal British past and,

consequently, an endangered British national identity (3-4). The gothic's setting in a Continental past allows the content to reimagine present domestic concerns from a safe distance (9). While many gothic novels exalted cultural Englishness over the Continental— for example, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was praised for not contributing to the fashionable "Frenchification of the English language" (10)— the gothic novel was often written by those, whether women or Scots, who wrote from the margins of British literary culture (17), demonstrating an effort to bring all of Britain into alignment against the potentially villainous Other. In *Grandison*, the romantic Italian letters allow for the transgression of time and space, blurring the line between past (when the letters were written and sent from Italy) and present (when the letters arrive and are read in Britain). Just as the realistic and romantic blur, so too do the past and present. This makes sense with the Italian setting: Just as Clementina represents a bittersweet part of Charles's past, the Italy of the eighteenth-century represented for the British a bittersweet part of Europe's past as the host of Classical splendor, but also of Catholicism and Jacobitism. As Dr. Bartlett tells Harriet, "Italy in particular is called, The Garden of Europe; but it is rather to be valued for what it *was*, and *might be*, than what it *is*" (4: 325). Italy is a past and a place that must be at once embraced and contained, a treasured part of European history but simultaneously a warning against foreign passion. Frye poses the association between romance and history as emotionally evocative, an opportunity for reflecting on what "we know we have survived" (176). Within the storyworld, Charles's past with Clementina is presented as a personal history he has survived, as well as a Jacobite history that Britain has survived.

The narrative's blurring of time goes beyond warning, allowing the text not just to *recount* but to *reimagine* the past. The tendency to reimagine is at the heart of romance: In bringing the past into the present, romance explores not only what could have been but what could be in the future (Frye 179). Accordingly, Margaret Anne Doody's "Richardson's Politics" (1990) argues that *Grandison* is a reimagining of the Jacobite Rebellion. Charles declares himself opposed to the rebellion, but he also refuses to denigrate the cause (124). He shares a name with Bonnie Prince Charlie, and in a way, so do each of his sisters, Caroline and Charlotte; even the last name of Grandison "has Royalist connotations" (124), and each Charles is twenty-five years old when he returns to Britain to claim his respective inheritance (125). For Doody, these parallels indicate that Richardson's hero "is a sort of redrafting of possibilities, idealized": He is temperate and tolerant of others' politics and religions, but he remains distinctly British; like his namesake, he falls in love with an Italian Catholic named Clementina, but unlike Charles Stuart, he corrects his course and marries a proper Briton. Back in England, he begins "a rule of justice and equity," extending his kinship network and uniting Britain through matchmaking (126). In short, *this* Charles unites the nation rather than dividing it.<sup>53</sup>

Charles and Britain save both Clementina and the narrative from the horrors of

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<sup>53</sup> For an alternative argument, see Patricia Bruckmann's "Men, Women and Poles: Richardson and the Romance of a Stuart Princess" (2003), which claims that Charles sharing a name with an exiled monarch does not an allegory make; in order to do so, the entire novel must fit this allegorical reading, but the Jacobite rebellion is mentioned only in passing (43). Further, Bruckmann does not see the allegory as useful or politically relevant, since by the time Richardson was writing *Grandison*, the Stuart threat had for several years been annihilated (43). Instead, Bruckmann argues that Richardson invokes these names to infuse additional drama into his novel: "He was a novelist, not a propagandist, nor a coded supporter of any cause, won or lost. His Italy, complicated as the home of a group proscribed in his own country, was a romantic place; Sir Charles was as attracted as his creator" (44-45). According to Bruckmann, if indeed Richardson named his hero for Charles Stuart, it was for the artistic flair and nothing more. After all, Italy was considered a site of passion and adventure, a fabulous location for the hero's sidequest. Either way, Italy is representative of romance, adventure, and danger, and this has significant narrative implications.

the dark romance, which ends when Clementina is pursued by her family, who wants her to marry the Count of Belvedere, the Catholic aristocrat of their choosing; she “ascends” into the safety of Britain, transforming from “a goddess in a lower world” (Frye 86)—Italy—to a mere mortal in the ordinary one. As a whole, the romantic tragic mode in *Grandison* shows Clementina reversing Harriet’s trajectory into a demonic double narrative: Clementina *begins* by falling in love with the hero whereas in the *end* of the romantic comedy Harriet has done so; Clementina descends into hysterics when she *cannot* marry a suitor whereas Harriet does so when she is nearly *forced* to marry one; and in the *end* of the romantic tragedy Clementina *escapes* her family whereas in the *beginning* of the romantic comedy Harriet is *abducted* from hers.

This reversal is reflected in the narrative, in Clementina’s interactions, and even in Clementina’s body. In “‘Her lovely arm a little bloody’: Richardson’s Gothic Bodies” (2006), Judith Broome uses Clementina’s melancholia and subsequent bleeding as a prime example to trace the bodily nature of *Grandison*’s proto-gothic. Broome’s argument is that, unlike the gothic genre proper which later would locate the gothic in the Italian landscape, Richardson’s proto-gothic is entombed in the bodies of his Italian characters (19). While the bodily is undeniably intertwined with *Grandison*’s dark romance, I argue that the mode is not located in the Italian body. When Clementina leaves Italy, she—and her body—undergo a transformation.

Once Clementina withdraws herself from Italy and, consequently, from the romantic pattern, she spends her days as a realistic heroine strolling through the garden arm-in-arm with her fair double, who by now has married the hero herself. The titillating bleeding does not cure Clementina; instead, she is cured of her melancholy only when

she renounces her beloved and he takes the English Harriet as his wife, because this is necessary for her to land on English soil: She can visit her “brother” Charles only after he and Harriet are married and Harriet is pregnant, future Englishness thus secured. According to romantic convention, the light-haired heroine dominates over the dark (Frye 85), and if nabbing England’s— maybe the world’s— most eligible bachelor is not a victory for an eighteenth-century heroine, nothing is. Meanwhile, Clementina is able to benefit from British moderation. She has, at least temporarily, escaped the Italian underworld, with its perversions of comic themes and tropes, to don a mask: While in the novel’s first volume Harriet’s disguise consists of gaudy Continental feathers,<sup>54</sup> Clementina’s disguise is that of an elegantly simple domestic heroine. After months of terror and pain, Clementina’s mind and body are at ease.

The rest of Clementina’s family soon arrives in Britain, where they too escape their romantic tragedy and are rewarded with ordinary experiences. We are left with a new world, one in which the British and Italian, light and dark, are intertwined, represented by the friendly unity between Charles, Harriet, and Clementina in fig. 30. Finally, the end of the novel restores the “unity of place” (Frye 169) that makes a narrative feel seamless, which had been disordered by the romantic letters, and which, of course, must be Britain.

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<sup>54</sup> See Chapter 1 for an examination of Harriet’s masquerade costume.

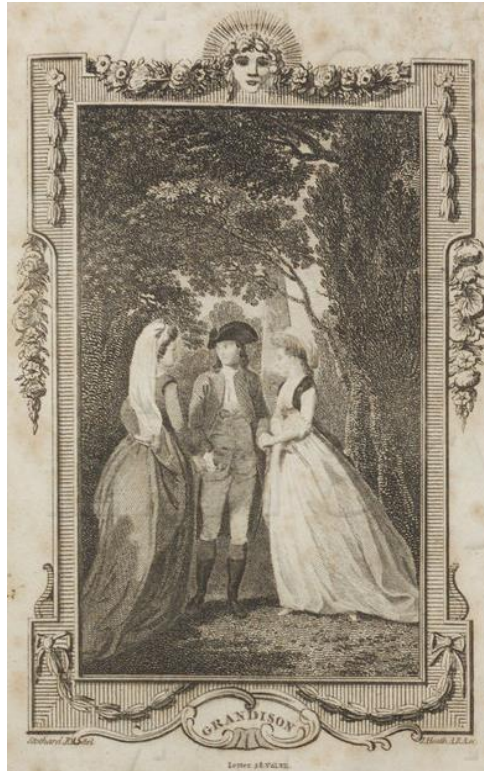


Fig. 29. James Heath. *The Interview between Sir Charles, Lady Grandison, and Lady Clementina, in the Garden.*

1811. Victoria University Library & Archives Digital Collections,  
<http://digitalcollections.vicu.utoronto.ca/RS/?r=15415>.

The vision of a healing, corrective Britain was essential to the shaping not only of *Grandison's* narrative but to eighteenth-century British identity, thus unifying the nation is imperative to Charles's function as the novel's primary exemplar. Ewha Chung's *Samuel Richardson's New Nation: Paragons of the Domestic Sphere and "Native" Virtue* (1998) argues that the Grandison community represents Richardson's imagined England, and that in order to maintain the nation's purity, the Italian characters must be cast out (2). Chung sees Richardson's imagined community as one that is flexible only within the boundaries of England; other British nations (14), and certainly Italy, are excluded (17). The narrative sends the Porrettas back to Italy after their visit, and Chung claims that Richardson does this because the very existence of the Catholic

family in Britain poses a threat to the Protestant “oneness” of the Grandisons (89). This “oneness” is what Teri Doerksen’s *Sir Charles Grandison: The Anglican Family and the Admirable Roman Catholic* (2003) calls Charles’s “moral community.” Doerksen explores how the traits associated with Italy— passion, adventure, drama— are at once romanticized and kept safely away from the English family. Doerksen recognizes that *Grandison* is unique among its contemporaries in its positive portrayal of the Catholic Italian characters (539-540), but it still very clearly divides them from the English ones (541). The characters gather around and are transformed by the exalted Sir Charles, forming a moral community (542-543), and because this moral community revolves around Anglicanism, so there are no native Catholics, even though Catholicism was alive in England and certainly in the rest of Britain (544). But unlike Chung, Doerksen sees the Porrettas as part of the Grandison moral community. They are, however, the only Catholics permitted, which for Doerksen is a superficial acceptance, one that works only if the Other is displaced elsewhere (544). Lamb adds that this is “a move that makes the actual Catholic and actual Jacobites who might have been Sir Charles’s English neighbors imaginatively impossible” (340). According to Lamb and Doerksen, for Richardson, to be English means to be Protestant, and those within the moral community from within the British Isles must adhere to Protestantism, as well; by the novel’s end, the kinship network includes Protestant men of influence not only from England, but also one from Scotland (Doerksen 556). This is Lord L, the husband of Charles’s sister Caroline, representing the smoothing of the tension between England and Scotland after the latter’s role in the Jacobite Rebellion. Still, none of Richardson’s Irish “pirates,” the religious outliers within the Isles, are welcome, though the Porrettas

are embraced. In the end, everyone in the *Grandison* moral community has been “colonized”; though the Porrettas do not renounce their Catholicism, they name Charles one of their family mediators when their Catholic passions blind them from logic (7: 447). In the end, Charles has built a utopian “moral empire” of Europe, with himself, Britain, and Protestantism at its center (558). Whether the narrative excludes the Porrettas from the moral community or contains them within its periphery, it seems that Britain is centered, and that Britain’s rationality is posed to cleanse the fester acquired abroad.

Perhaps, however, the fester of the wound was never from the flesh, never an infection creeping from the Continent to a pure Britain. Perhaps it was an infection with a deeper origin, the horror simply displaced from the source.

After all, the horror of a maggot creeping on the flesh is more palatable, though more visible, than one wriggling deep in the native bone.

### **Medicinal Larvae**

The intermixing of the British and Italian characters and narratives suggests something more revolutionary than the expected centering of Britain. Frye explains that literary history comprises a cycle of different literary modes, and when a period’s conventions have been exhausted, literature transitions to the next mode in the cycle (28). The emergence of the British gothic at the end of the eighteenth century is one such transitional phase (29). *Grandison* foreshadows this literary transition within its own pages, the realistic narrative being interrupted and temporarily displaced by the romance. This tactic is possible not in spite of, but due to, the novel’s adherence to what had by then become the standard epistolary structure. It is due to the novel’s grounding

in letters read in the British parlor that the domestic novel can explore the dark and wild trysts and schemes of Italy. After all, a domestic female moral exemplar certainly cannot explore the Continent on her own, but she may read letters; in fact, it is essential to the convention. It is *Grandison's* adherence to its realistic conventions that allows for social and cultural transgressions. As long as the novel adheres to the generic convention of letter exchanges, it can experiment with the dark romance and even with embracing Italians. As Steve Neale explains in *Genre and Hollywood* (2000), every genre is characterized by its own unique balance of generic and cultural verisimilitudes (30). By definition, the realism of Richardson's domestic plot adheres to a great extent to cultural verisimilitude, or reality, whereas the gothic plot does not. Consequently, the Italian letters allow for cultural transgressions that otherwise would seem incongruent with the rest of the novel.

In *Grandison*, the realistic and romantic grapple with one another, and eventually the realistic mode dominates, but it is transformed by the dark romance. Romance is inherently revolutionary in its resistance of reality, whereas realism is inherently conservative (Frye 164). This allows a realistic novel of the comic mode to end with a celebratory community, typically represented by a marriage ceremony, while the romantic community is a mere intimation (172). *Grandison's* juxtaposition, and then merging, of romantic and realistic narratives allows the novel to end with a community whose creation required imaginative, revolutionary effort, and hence a community stronger than it could have been if the realistic mode had never been undercut.

Thus, a major cultural transgression that *Grandison's* dark romance introduces is cosmopolitanism; in this way, the novel is ahead of its time. Though cosmopolitanism's

roots are Ancient Greek (*kosmopolitês*), the concept was repopularized by Kant as a late-eighteenth-century ideal of a universal community. In *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), Kant argues that states should not interfere with one another, but also that individuals should have the right to visit, though not permanently inhabit, any part of the world they choose (137). Through cosmopolitanism, Kant argues, humanity can achieve the natural ideal of world citizenship (139), resulting in “perpetual peace” (142). Forty years before the publication of *To Perpetual Peace*, the eponymous hero of *Grandison* embodied cosmopolitanism. Sometimes his admirers, entrenched in their own imperialist mindsets, attribute their ideals to the exemplary Charles; enthralled by the hero’s morality, Harriet writes, “The Indies . . . ought to be his! What a king would he make!” (1: 446). Yet as she learns more about him, she recognizes that Charles presents himself not as a “*Conqueror of Nations*” but as “the *Friend of Mankind*” (3: 70), one who instead of claiming superiority over others engages respectfully as “a Citizen of the World” (7: 263). As he explains himself, “[T]he religion of my country is the religion of my choice. . . . But good manners will make me shew respect to the religion of the country I happen to be in, were it the Mahometan, or even the Pagan; and to venerate the good men of it” (3: 155). Charles experienced a particularly long Grand Tour of seven years; unusual for a young British gentleman, Charles even extended his tour beyond Europe, into “some parts of Asia and Afric” (2: 461). He is no conqueror but instead a cosmopolite, a friend, and the novel goes to great lengths to clarify this distinction. Charles is exemplary not despite, but because of, his extended time abroad. Lamb argues that Charles is the exception to the common eighteenth-century belief that Continental tourism replaced English masculinity with

French femininity, proving that the Tour was an opportunity either to be corrupted by the Continent or to dominate it (46). The Tour certainly had masculine potential, since cities and landscapes were used as metaphors for female bodies, and vice versa (56), and in a more literal sense, aristocratic men were expected to use the Tour as their sexual initiation (60). In *Grandison*, to be an exemplar of English masculinity is to strike a balance: An aristocratic man must Tour, but in a way that allows him to penetrate the Continent without suffering the pox of Continental castration.<sup>55</sup>

*Grandison* suggests that there is potential for Italy to blossom alongside Britain. When Clementina first arrives in Britain, she continues to enact the romantic binary of doubled heroine, Harriet following the trajectory of marriage, Clementina “virginity and devotion to a cause” (Frye 143) when she declares lifelong celibacy by preparing to “marry” Christ (7: 425). The Grandisons and Porrettas urge Clementina to marry an earthly husband; after all, as Charles expostulates, she “would not wish to be a better woman *in the convent*, than her mother has always been *out of it*,” having raised four devout children of her own (7: 431). At this point, through Clementina’s wish to be cloistered, the text continues to portray Italians as predisposed against moderation, stagnant, a relic of the past. This is not ascendancy; entering the convent assures not only that Clementina will not reproduce biologically, but that she will not maintain family ties at all, renouncing her family and nationality for a “higher” cause of isolation. For Clementina, this is a “false paradise,” a demonic illusion that traps a character by

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<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 1 for a detailed analysis of eighteenth-century masculinity.

presenting a pseudo-ascent (Frye 123). In order to reach the height of her ascent, Clementina must accept her position as part of a family.<sup>56</sup>

Upon British soil and unmarried, Clementina continues to parallel Harriet, which, after a brief period of novelty, becomes problematic. As Lady G complains:

We are obliged to call both her and Harriet to order; or they would never be asunder. The garden and park are the places in which they most delight to walk. . . . Their walks are too long. [Harriet] comes in, and throws herself sometimes into a chair so tired! Yet, chidden for her long walks, *such* engaging conversations! she cries out. *Heroines* both, I suppose; and they are mirrors to each other; each admiring herself *in* the other. No wonder they are engaged insensibly by a vanity, which carries with it, to each, so generous an appearance; for, all the while, Harriet thinks she is only admiring Clementina; Clementina, that she's applauding Harriet. (7: 418)

This is another reproduction of volume one's masquerade, the heroines wearing masks of one another. But the narrative cannot support two heroines perpetually. In the romantic convention, the virginal doubled heroine is often killed off, her role in the narrative obsolete once the hero has married the fair one (Frye 83). Harriet and Clementina's garden is no Eden, but instead a false paradise, and the excursions cause Harriet to almost miscarry, or perhaps even die, when she becomes "over-fatigued with a walk," is caught by a "violent" storm (7: 419), and faints with fever (7: 420). Birth is associated with the ordinary world, not the idealized Garden of Eden, and the continued mingling of realism and romance nearly has disastrous consequences. Charles may not have chosen Clementina as his bride, but her presence still threatens his British lineage. In order to escape this "destructive vision," both Harriet and Clementina must reconcile their national spirits with their bodies if they are to perpetuate their own families. The narrative must re-align the Italians with romance and the British with

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<sup>56</sup> Though generic conventions require Clementina to marry, marriage and procreation are not the only family roles *Grandison* offers, as Chapter 6 argues.

realism, dividing them as it does in the *dramatis personae* in order to restore order. There is still potential for *Grandison's* romantic tragedy to become comedy. Clementina's marriage would undouble her, allowing her to escape stagnation. Instead of joining Harriet for disastrous walks in the garden of Grandison-Hall, Clementina must forge her own path back in Italy; as in Kant's vision of perpetual peace, Clementina may— should!— visit Britain, but she must not stay.

By the end of Clementina's visit, the new Grandison couple has persuaded their "adopted sister" to achieve moderation, to consider marrying an Italian, and to cede to a reproductive agenda. After discussing with Sir Charles and his Lady, Clementina assures her parents that she will not, after all, join the convent, and will take a year to consider the Count's proposal of marriage (7: 448). Finally, Clementina sees herself, and her fate, clearly. The self-recognition she gains through Britain is Clementina's ascent from the night world, reversing the doubled cycle, which romance typically achieves through marriage as the earthly symbol of the ideal, a world united, a soul complete (Frye 54). This ending to *Grandison* reinforces the idea that the strength of the British nation depends on domestic security through the family, but also on alliances with other strong nations. As Charles says to comfort the "Sister-Excellencies" upon parting, "Friendship . . . will make at pleasure a safe bridge over the narrow seas; it will cut an easy passage thro' rocks and mountains, and make England and Italy one country" (7: 454). It is only Richardson's final novel that goes beyond the domestic marriage plot in order to imagine the potential of linked international communities. What may seem like a conservative ending has revolutionary potential.

The fact that Charles does not marry Clementina should not devalue the importance of their kinship. Each of Richardson's novels has underscored the power of language, letters, and long-distance correspondence. Each of Richardson's novels, but especially *Grandison*, has emphasized the idea that kinship is flexible, and the Grandisons have after all adopted Clementina and Jeronymo as siblings. When Clementina asks if her "sister" Harriet will visit her in Italy, Harriet responds, "I should rejoice in such a tour . . . Love me but in your Italy, . . . as I do you in our England, and I shall be happy in so fine a country" (7: 377). The Catholics pose no threat to the Grandisons as long as they remain *Italian* Catholics; the novel seems to advocate for a moderate but cosmopolitan middle ground. The ideal British man must travel abroad but come home a Briton; understanding of the rest of the world contributes to the formation of his British character. Charles and Harriet, as well as their children, will visit the Continent, and when they do, they will most certainly visit the Porrettas. Like all of Richardson's novels, *Grandison* places marriages at its center, but it also celebrates other relationships, in some cases even an uncoupled life.<sup>57</sup> Relationships with parents, adopted or otherwise; siblings, adopted or otherwise; aunts and uncles; grandparents; and friends are discussed, teased out, and placed on a pedestal as the sources of lifelong joy. Chung claims that *Grandison* is based on "radical separatism" (145), yet the novel is a mid-eighteenth-century outlier for its radical *unity*. The Britons do not reject or even merely tolerate the Porrettas: They accept, love, and admire them. Merging the

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<sup>57</sup> An important distinction is that the Protestant and Catholic families function differently: A Catholic nun, for example, is cloistered away without contributing to the perpetuation of the family or nation, whereas *Grandison's* Britain allows for "old maids" as part of the family network. As the exemplary "old maid" Lady Gertrude explains, "Women of large and independent fortunes, who have the hearts and understanding to use them as they ought, are often more beneficial to the world, than they would have been had they bestowed them on such men as look for fortune only. Women who have by their numerous relations many connexions in the world, need not seek out of their own alliances for protection and defence" (7: 408).

domestic and foreign narratives, bringing the Italians to Britain, invites the positive potential of international permeation. As Frye writes, in its deviation from reality and its embracing of imagination, “an element of social protest is inherent in romance” (76); consequently, the “mysterious world” of romance “is where [our] own ultimate freedom lies” (166). The romantic convention creates the binary of the doubled heroine, and the realistic mode uses this binary to tease out the nuanced possibilities and dangers inherent in such simplistic prescriptions.

Together, romance and realism allow *Grandison* to present a new imagined community. Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation* (1992) parallels the relationship between the different British nations with the Holy Trinity, “both three and one,” a cluster of nations separated culturally, historically, and sometimes even linguistically (14), yet their oneness as Britons superseded all, creating “a patchwork in which uncertain areas of Welshness, Scottishness and Englishness were cut across by strong regional attachments, and scored over again by loyalties to village, town, family and landscape” (17). If we take the definition of “foreign” from Johnson’s *Dictionary*—“Alien; remote; not allied; not belonging; without relation”—then by the novel’s end, the Porrettas are not foreigners. Perhaps Richardson’s imagined community is also three and one: European, British, and English. (Despite the undercurrent of cosmopolitanism, there is too little commentary on “Asia and Afric” to assume the entire world is part of this community.) Britain cannot be an island separated from the Continent. Permeation is inevitable, but in *Grandison*, the question is not about how to reinforce borders but instead how to grow stronger from their natural porosity. Just as Richardson expanded his corpus by “borrowing” the masquerade from John Kelly’s unauthorized sequel to *Pamela*,

*Grandison* takes advantage of, rather than resists, the transgression of boundaries by modeling the strength of an international kinship network. This imagined community is a patchwork whose colors and patterns differ but harmonize.

The critic who accused Charlotte Dacre of maggots of the mind expressed a sentiment common in the long eighteenth century, and even today's scholars tend to view the gothic as representative of degeneration or as a space where novelists worked out their own anxieties. Perhaps this is so, yet maggots are also used medicinally; they are the treatment rather than the cause of infection, and likewise, the dark romance offers not a source of corruption but of healing and progress. Like flesh, the narrative is disrupted, and it can fester or it can heal. This project reorients the dark romance, and *Grandison*, as a space not only for expressing nationalist anxieties but, more importantly, as a space to enact a healing that, like maggots on necrotic tissue, is simultaneously abhorrent and vital. Though we may avert our eyes, displacing the fester abroad, nothing but the wriggling larvae can so precisely preserve living tissue while consuming the rot. *Grandison* uses medicinal maggots to eat through the necrotic nationalism at its own core, destabilizing Britain as a concentered space, opening the wound for true healing. *Grandison* leaves us with larvae, but as the wound begins to transfigure into scar tissue, the larvae are sure to develop wings and ascend from the night world. Where they go, only romance can imagine.

## CHAPTER 6: THE RAKE RESEWN

[O]ne may say of Eunuchs the same that is usually said of Bastards, that for the most part they are very bad, but that sometimes we may chance to find one that may prove good for something.

—Charles Ancillon

## Macabre Needlework

The gothic is rich in imagery of mutilated bodies, and perhaps the most infamous is that of the creation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Victor Frankenstein, whose “workshop of filthy creation” births a creature from anatomical parts found in “[t]he dissecting room and the slaughter-house” (49), recalls the appearance of his creature:

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!— Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips. (51)

Despite being formed from attractive components, the creature inspires visceral fear, despair, and contempt in all who set eyes upon him, including his creator. Blood-curdling screams upon the sight of the morbid creature, and the creature's consequent agony, attend each retelling of what has become a gothic legend.

Yet a body need not be the ghastly amalgamation of dismembered corpses in order to serve as a chilling reminder of the changeable, permeable nature of the flesh, nor need it be only the result of an author's morbid imagination. Perhaps mortal reanimation is still firmly in the realm of fantasy, but other bodily mutilations of the period's fiction were inspired by real wounds in material bodies. This chapter will explore a mutilation referenced frequently in eighteenth-century print culture, a cut that raised and, in the twenty-first century, continues to raise questions of identity and purpose: castration.

Charles Ancillon's *Eunuchism Display'd: Describing all the different Sorts of Eunuchs* (1718) provides four categories of eunuchs: those born without external genitalia; those who "have been despoiled of all that which makes Man and his Virility" (14); those who have had only the testicles, and not the penis, removed; and those who are otherwise "incapable of Generation" (17). No matter the cause, according to Ancillon, the eunuch is "neither Male nor Female, but a Prodigy of Nature," with "a squealing languishing Voice, a Womanish Complexion, and a soft Down for a Beard," along with "no Courage or Bravery of Soul"— "In a few Words . . . entirely effeminate" (8). For Ancillon, castration changes a man's very essence.

At first glance, castration may seem like little more than violence, the voluntary or involuntary mutilation of a body. Indeed, this was the prominent British view in the eighteenth century. And no wonder: As a "pretty fair-faced man" in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) tells the protagonist, in Naples "they make eunuchs of thousands of children every year; some die of the operation; some acquire voices far beyond the most tuneful of your ladies" (101). This may have been an exaggeration, but Katherine Arens's "When Performing Gender is Nonconforming" (2019) asserts that historical records show that, "[a]s the demand for high voices in male bodies outstripped supply, the church in Italy and Spain turned to the systematic castration of young orphans" (206). That this practice affected physiological development is unquestionable. As John Marten explains in *Gonosologium Novum* (1709), "by the loss of [his testicles], Man is very much injur'd, not only as to the Strength, Activity, and Vigour of his Body, Acuteness of his Reason and Judgment, &c. but is the sole hindrance as to Procreation, which perfectly un-Mans him"; the result is a creature "effeminate and Womanish . . .

and thereby despis'd, especially by the Women" (4). Likewise, Pierre Dionis asserts in his *General Treatise of Midwifery* (1719) that eunuchs are despised across the animal kingdom: "[E]ven in a Hen-house, Capons and Pullets are chas'd up and down, and peck'd by all other Fowls, that have an Aversion to them, tho they know not what moves them to it. Thus, by the Appointment and Instinct of Nature, every Animal that cannot engender, or bring forth, is defective and contemptible" (62). It seems that castration affects not only the castrated, but everyone around him.

Though castration may seem a Continental problem, or perhaps because of its role on the Continent, some Britons saw it as a potential solution to their own problems. It could, for example, serve as a radical solution to the tension between Protestant and Catholic, as demonstrated by the titles of the essays "Reasons Humbly Offer'd to Both Houses of Parliment, for a Law to Enact the Castration, or Gelding of Popish Ecclesiastics, in This Kingdom, as the Best Way to Prevent the Growth of Popery" (1710) and "The Priest Gelded: Or Popery at the Last Gasp. Shewing from Scripture, Reason and Solid Arguments, the Absolute Necessity of Passing a Law for the Castration of Popish Ecclesiastics in Great-Britain, as the Only Means Not Only to Extirpate Popery, but to Prevent All Future Rebellions and Invasions" (1747). Castration was seen as a potential, though certainly extreme, form of national preservation, but paradoxically, as Continental pleasures infiltrated British culture, it was also glorified in the form of the castrato, a male castrated in youth in order to maintain a high voice for a choral or opera career. Of one popular castrato, the conservative Richard Steele writes, in "On Nicolini's Leaving the Stage" (1714):

Begone, our nation's pleasure and reproach!  
Britain no more with idle trills debauch,

Back to thy own unmanly Venice sail,  
 Where luxury and loose desires prevail;  
 There thy emasculating voice employ,  
 And raise the triumphs of the wanton boy. (1-6)

Of course, such a condemnation could be birthed only by the immense popularity of Nicolini in Britain. The castrato was, perhaps, the most respected role for a castrated European in the eighteenth century, a figure who may have originated as a replacement for women in papal choirs (Arens 205) but who ascended into a universal type, a neuter who could don any role without sacrificing the otherworldly quality of his voice (207).

Undeniably, castration affected those who underwent the procedure, but opinions on its results varied. Ancillon sees a gentle beauty in eunuchs, whose “soft Strains” are “not unlike the gentle Fallings of Water . . . somewhere in *Italy* often heard,” which “lull the Mind into a perfect Calm and Peace” (31). Yet in *Castration, Impotence, and Emasculation in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2019), Anne Greenfield reports that castrati were sought not because they sounded like women but because they had a higher, sharper, and louder tone than women; they were powerful, forceful, and masculine (5). Their bodies, too, had a masculine appearance; though the stoppage of sex hormones in youth kept them from developing dense body hair and large muscles, it also meant their bones continued to lengthen, resulting in long limbs and barrel chests. In *Southern Baroque Art: Pairing, Architecture and Music in Italy and Spain of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (1924), music critic Sacheverell Sitwell describes the famous castrato Farinelli as “of disproportionate size, tall beyond the normal, and with that ample enlargement of the chest that you find in a prima donna, and that, at the same time, looked manly and truculent under the breastplate that a warrior’s role imposed” (169). Farinelli’s stage presence is “as if he were a general and not an actor. He must

be, at the same moment, quicker than Mercury and more stern than Caesar” (195). This parallel is not unexpected, as eunuchs also served as war leaders and advisors to sultans farther east (Greenfield 6). Further, though they may not be able to procreate—perhaps *because* they were unable to procreate—eunuchs had plenty of sexual companions (5). In many ways, they were masculine exemplars.

Yet there was a gentleness even to Farinelli. In *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1773), the musical critic and collector Charles Burney documents his Grand Tour, including a meeting with Farinelli. Burney writes that Farinelli “has a sister and two of her children with him, one of whom is an infant, of which he is doatingly fond, though it is cross, sickly, homely, and unamiable; yet this is a convincing proof, among others, to me that he was designed by nature for family attentions and domestic comforts” (221). The castrato is not an outcast, but a flexible figure, whether on stage or in the family home.

Even in this view of eunuchs as respectable, their inability to reproduce posed a glaring problem. In a society of titles, estates, and patrilineage, the importance of procreation cannot be overstated, so a man incapable of biological reproduction becomes not only a symbolic threat to the national order but a literal threat, as well (Greenfield 9). Consequently, the popularity of opera, in addition to open discussion about sex, the population crisis, and reproductive legitimacy,<sup>58</sup> popularized the castration trope (11). For eighteenth-century readers, eunuchs are simultaneously monstrous and beautiful, unnatural and natural, neither man *nor* woman, yet both man *and* woman. The eunuch’s bodily mutilation allowed him to occupy the seemingly narrow space of the sharp divide in the eighteenth-century gender dichotomy.

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<sup>58</sup> See the Introduction for context on the eighteenth-century discourse on population and legitimacy.

This chapter presents an alternative to the British rake whose presence is such a danger that ultimately he must die.<sup>59</sup> In the alternative presented by the dark romance, the rake may be truly reformed, but the journey is gruesome indeed. *Grandison's* Jeronymo della Porretta, an aristocratic young Italian rake, is castrated and figuratively re sewn into, not an archetypical reformed rake, but a superlatively feminine figure: First, as his fresh wound bleeds, a hysteric, then, when the gash begins to heal, a sort of mother. To borrow from J. Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* (1998), Jeronymo's "skin must be re sewn" (127), his transformation illustrating the flexibility of identity, kinship networks, and the flesh itself. In short, this chapter explores the imaginative potential of the castration trope— and how we in the twenty-first century can harness this imaginative power to build a better world of our own.

### **Ripping the Seam**

Jeronymo della Porretta is the youngest son of a family that "boasts its pedigree from Roman princes, and has given to the church two cardinals" (3: 119). When Charles, on his Grand Tour, first meets Jeronymo, the young Italian has "a disposition to benevolence, charity, generosity" (3: 139) and is "exceedingly beloved by his father, mother, sister, for the sweetness of his manners, his affectionate heart, and a wit so delightfully gay and lively, that his company was sought by every-body" (3: 121). No matter his virtues, Jeronymo is a libertine in practice. Charles attempts to extricate Jeronymo from "a set of dissolute young men of rank," yet they "prevailed over his good-nature. He had courage, but not enough to resist their libertine attacks upon his

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapter 1 for an analysis of poetic justice for the eighteenth-century libertine using Sir Hargrave Pollexfen as a case study.

morals" (3: 120). Like Hargrave, Jeronymo's particular vice is that he "ruins" young women, enacting a toxic masculinity that threatens not only virginity but the foundation of the nation through illegitimacy. Charles writes to him, "What, were the examples set by you and your acquaintance, to be *generally* followed, would become of public order and decorum? What of national honours? How will a regular succession in families be kept up?" (3: 141). To go a step further, Charles censures the rake for his hypocrisy: "You, my Lord, boast of your descent, both by father's and mother's side; Why will you deprive *your* children of a distinction in which *you* glory?" Just as in his homeland, Charles pushes a reproductive agenda that would preserve national and familial integrity, employing what Jeremy W. Webster's "Sentimentalizing Patriarchy: Patriarchal Anxiety and Filial Obligation in *Sir Charles Grandison*" (2005) calls "an obligation born out of love rather than compulsion" (426).<sup>60</sup> Charles manages his own domestic family in this way, but he also becomes a father-figure to Jeronymo: As in Britain, his influence over Jeronymo is gentle, in the form of requests rather than commands, but this strategy is not effective immediately; Charles pleads the cause of morality, yet Jeronymo "resent[s] the friendly freedom" and cuts ties (3: 120).

Despite Charles's attempts to teach Jeronymo, Charles is not the one who literally castrates him, as he does symbolically to his disciple Hargrave. By the time of Jeronymo's castration, he and Charles are no longer in contact. The next time Charles sees his friend, the Italian is in a dark alley, stabbed by bravoos hired by a rival over the favor of a "Lady, less celebrated for virtue than beauty" (3: 120). The bravoos do not kill Jeronymo, yet as they leave, Charles overhears them say, "Let us make off; we have done his business" (3: 120). What business has been "done"? Though Jeronymo has a

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 1 for an analysis of Charles as a domestic sentimental patriarch.

wound in his shoulder and one in his chest, each bandaged by the loving hands of Charles himself, one in particular gives our hero cause for concern: that in Jeronymo's "hip-joint," which does not kill him but, as Charles recounts to Harriet later, "he never will be the man he was. . . . Excuse this particularity, madam. The subject requires it; and Signor Jeronymo now deserves it, and all your pity" (3: 121). I read this as a literal castration, softened by Richardson's delicacy. Anthony Easthope's *What a Man's Gotta Do* (1986) provides a psychoanalytical perspective for understanding the implications of the relationship between Jeronymo and Charles during the castration scene. According to Easthope, men are simultaneously masculine and feminine, yet "the myth [of masculinity] demands that they should be masculine all the way through" (19). In order to achieve this appearance, males traditionally move from submission to a father, whom they fear will castrate them for their sexual desire of the mother, to a challenge of him; this challenge moves him from passively feminine to a masculine force (25). A man must face the threat of castration, not run from it, if he is to challenge the father, therefore Jeronymo's masculine development requires that he challenge Charles, yet this is not the young Italian's trajectory: He avoids Charles rather than challenging him, and this results in a literal castration by his peers, one that stunts his masculinity rather than leading to ascension.

Not all is lost. The injury brings Jeronymo back to his sentimental patriarch, whom he proclaims "the director of [his] future life" (3: 121). Charles reflects that, bedridden after the injury, Jeronymo "frequently called for a repetition of those arguments which he had, till *now*, derided. He besought me to forgive him for treating them before with levity, and me with disrespect, next, as he said, to insult: And he

begged his family to consider me not only as the preserver of his life, but as the restorer of his *morals*" (3: 122). Still, Jeronimo's condition worsens before it improves. No bedside catechism or sentimentality can prevent bodily infection, and after French and Italian surgeons botch their attempts, an English doctor, Mr. Lowther, steps in to perform a "dreadful operation" (3: 249). In "Manly Lessons: *Sir Charles Grandison*, the Rake, and the Man of Sentiment" (2007), Elaine McGirr argues that "penile amputation" is only the beginning of Jeronimo's "indignity," "replac[ing] his penis with an infected gash— a diseased vagina— that continues to suppurate"; his body, "dressed only in bandages and bedclothes," offers "voyeuristic titillation" (272). While Richardson certainly describes his heroines in voyeuristic detail, "his most intimate revelations are of the disfigured, deformed, and decaying bodies of his male warnings" (273). The plunge from virility to decay is particularly striking in the aristocratic rake figure, conjuring images of narrative descent. Frye aligns the mythological universe with the human body: Images of ascent involve the sky and represent the brain, or creativity and intelligence, whereas images of descent involve devils and darkness, the sulfurous odors of excreta (119-120). In the rake's descent, he cannot generate; he can only excrete pus and tears. In a fairly typical representation of the rake figure's moral and physical descent, the final plate of William Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress*, fig. 31, presents Rakewell languishing on the floor of Bedlam, driven insane by venereal disease and observed by aristocratic women who visit the asylum for amusement, or perhaps for education. There is no other purpose for the rake decayed.



Fig. 30. William Hogarth. *The Rake's Progress*, Plate VIII.  
1735. Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/403220>.

McGirr asserts that in Richardson's fiction, castration is poetic justice (268). At a glance, this seems to be the case for Jeronymo, whose castration leaves him physically and emotionally weakened. When his sister succumbs to melancholia months later,<sup>61</sup> he weeps on the sidelines. Charles recalls the "fresh gush of tears [that] broke from his eyes" and "mingl[ed] with" his mother's, and Clementina's hand, "wet with a brother's tears" (3: 192). Charles attributes Jeronymo's weeping to the "unhealed wounds [that] had weakened him" (3: 191). Jeronymo still feels his native Italian passion, but that passion has become passive, harmless— even hysterical.

Naomi Segal's "Witnessing through the Skin: The Hysteric's Body as Text" (2009) reminds us that the Greeks aligned hysteria with the womb, which might break free and drift up the body, blocking the airways in its attempt to seek sufficient moisture

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter 5 for a detailed analysis of Clementina's melancholy.

(76). In eighteenth-century Britain, Heather Meek explains in “Of Wandering Wombs and Wrongs of Women: Evolving Conceptions of Hysteria in the Age of Reason” (2009), “hysteria” went by many names, such as spleen, nerves, and vapors— vapors because air “rose from the uterus and disturbed the brain” (107). Its many names affirm the condition’s many manifestations. Dr. Thomas Sydenham, also known as the “English Hippocrates,” explored hysteria in depth in a 20 January 1681 epistle to Dr. William Cole, in which he admits that “women are oftener attacked with [hysterical] disorders than men; not indeed because the womb is more indisposed than any other part of the body” (272), but— lest we become too impressed with his progressive mentality— because “kind nature has given them a finer and more delicate constitution of body, being designed for an easier life, and the pleasure of men” (277). Hysteria is unique not because it is rare— indeed, Sydenham calls it the most common health malady— but because it “resembl[es] most of the distempers wherewith mankind are afflicted” (272).

During the Renaissance what Sydenham calls “hysteria” would have been considered “witchcraft.” Herman Westerink’s “Demonic Possession and the Historical Construction of Melancholy and Hysteria” (2014) explores hysteria’s roots in witchcraft “diagnoses,” pointing to Johan Weyer’s *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563) as an early argument that supernatural possessions were in fact mental illnesses to be treated medically (337).<sup>62</sup> Thanks to texts like Weyer’s, Sydenham was able to develop his own theory of hysteria as neither supernatural nor reproductive. In “‘A Strange Pathology’: Hysteria in the Early Modern World, 1500-1800” (1993), G.S. Rousseau attributes Sydenham’s theory to the Restoration’s efforts at understanding human anatomy

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<sup>62</sup> In fact, Weyer was one of the sources that shaped Sigmund Freud’s early work on hysteria (Westerink 338).

because these efforts “demystif[ied]” the female body (141). This demystification helped Sydenham to recognize hysteria as an inclusive malady. In his view, women were more likely to be hysterics because they were less likely to be physically robust, but sedentary aristocrats, no matter their gender or sex, were at risk (142).

By the eighteenth century, hysteria had become more closely associated with women. Hysteria served as a convenient confirmation of women’s “inherent pathology”—any weakness attributed to women, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual, could be blamed on their reproductive organs (Meek 107)—and semen could keep women’s inherent chaos in check (117). Accordingly, Robert James’s *Medical Dictionary* (1743), printed by Richardson himself, proclaimed that “Women fit for Marriage, and as yet strangers to Matrimonial State” often experience “the most violent Delirium” (qtd. in Meek 118), and so a life of matrimony, maternity, and general domesticity was key to the “cure.” As a skeptical Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes in “A Receipt to Cure the Vapours, Written to Lady I—n” (1748):

I, like you, was born a woman,  
Well I know what vapors mean:  
The disease, alas! is common;  
Single, we have all the spleen. (13-16)

The first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1768-1777) emphasizes the sexed connotations of the malady, defining “hysteric passion” as “a spasmodico-convulsive affection of the nervous system proceeding from the womb” (146); accordingly, the symptoms are innumerable, but generally include headache, weeping, and “a loathing of all things”; some patients “break out into immoderate laughter, and, regaining their voice, say a great many silly things,” while “some have continued in a fit so long that they have been laid out for dead, and have been even buried.” The cause: the stoppage

of blood, whether the “sudden suppression of the menstrual flux” in youth, during pregnancy, or after menopause (147).

By the *Encyclopedia Britannica*’s eleventh edition (1911), the publication reported that hysteria may be due to “a hereditary predisposition, sex, age and national idiosyncrasy” or due to trauma caused by exhaustion, fright, pregnancy, injury, or disease in general but especially uterine (211). The entry does not relegate hysteria only to the female body, though it states that the disease is “much more common in the female than in the male—in the proportion of 20 to 1.” The eleventh edition also includes an entry for “neurasthenia,” the version of “hysteria” more likely to be associated with men, defined as “the general medical term for a condition of weakness of the nervous system” (428). Symptoms are similar to those of hysteria, including headache, impaired vision, weakened memory, mood swings, malaise, chills, hot flashes, muscular weakness, and “loss of sexual power”—specifically “nocturnal pollutions and premature ejaculations.” In addition, the eleventh edition establishes that other dichotomies, not only that of sex, play a role in hysteria: Race was also a factor, as hysteria was diagnosed more commonly in “the Latin races” and “Jews” than in “Teutonic stock, and in more aggravated and complex forms” (211); national identity, too, played a role, as “[h]ysterical fits in their fully-developed form are rarely seen in England, though common in France.” And, as in the long eighteenth century, this edition emphasizes the influence of idleness, hence the higher number of cases among the upper rather than lower class.

For context, the *Encyclopedia*’s eleventh edition was published during Sigmund Freud’s career. Indeed, his work with Josef Breuer, *Studies of Hysteria* (1895), was a

major source for the “hysteria” entry and served as a foundation for the field of psychoanalysis, contributing significantly to the institutionalization of hysteria. To jump ahead to the twenty-first century, hysteria no longer exists because its symptoms now fall under other diagnostic categories; as a result, our institutions for treating “hysteria” too have changed. We now treat our hysteria in gyms, beauty salons, and shopping malls (Rousseau 100)— or, to use more timely examples, shopping apps and social media platforms. Rousseau argues that these locations are “where modern hysteria— what our vocabulary calls stress— has learned to disguise itself as health” (100). Note that these are informally homosocial spaces, whether the apps themselves are gendered or the audience creates its own gendered spaces by using hashtags or groups. While in the eighteenth century the dominant prescription for hysteria was heterosexual marriage and intercourse, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was psychoanalysis— in the case of Freud and Breuer, men treating women— today sufferers treat their “hysteria” through homosocial bonding. This is significant in reference to the eighteenth century because Jeronymo’s homosocial bond with Charles is what makes him a singular case, a truly reformed rake *and* cured hysteric. Charles is a sentimental patriarch— perhaps not unlike Freud— but the fact that his “patient” is a fellow male has deep symbolic implications.

When Jeronymo is first injured, Charles attends tenderly to his wounds, serving as both father-figure and wartime comrade. As Easthope explains, a martial context allows for men to bond in ways taboo elsewhere, sharing caresses, tears, and words of love: “In this special form the male bond is fully legitimated” (66). Because Charles is the novel’s sentimental, rather than outwardly authoritarian, patriarch, in this violent

scene he is able to nurture Jeronymo as a father *and* as a friend, reinforcing their male bond, which is essential and fundamental to Jeronymo's ultimate ascension. His mutilation could have had detrimental consequences, for he could have been a typical warning of the rake's progress. Instead, the male bond nurtures and improves him. Castration and subsequent male bonding allow Jeronymo to ascend beyond libertinism and to be re sewn into an alternative male exemplar.

Characters who face similar injuries without bonding with a patriarchal figure do not embody this same potential. Elsewhere in the novel, Charles rescues two other libertines facing roadside castration: Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and his Portuguese companion Solomon Merceda. Hargrave's literal near-castration follows his symbolic one, as he flees England for France after suffering Charles's moral expostulations. Charles encounters the rakes prostrate and groaning on a French wayside, where their assailants explain that the two "made a vile attempt . . . on a Lady's honour at Abbeville," and so they wished "to give them reason to remember their villainy as long as they lived; and to put it out of their power ever to be guilty of the like" (4: 431). Later, Lady G commends the concept as a "very proper punishment . . . for all Libertines," yet the attempt is a failure: Merceda, for example, has "two or three gashes, which, but for his struggles, would have been but one" (4: 433). The "one gash" intended for Merceda is clearly a castration. Charles reasons with the foreigners to accept the rakes' apology without further violence, then sees the two to safety in Paris before continuing on his own journey. Their safety, however, is short-lived. A few weeks later, Merceda writhes on his deathbed, suffering from "a wound in his thigh" which "was designed for a still greater mischief" (4: 443). According to McGirr, such mutilations are designed to reflect

the character of each rake in physical form, as poetic justice requires (272). Yet Hargrave and Merceda are not given “a gash” but instead “two or three”; in addition, they have no Sir Charles to tend lovingly to their wounds and to their spirits. They die of their injuries, Merceda about four months after the confrontation though he thought himself “pretty well recovered” (5: 665), and Hargrave after more than half a year of suffering, his death reported in the novel’s final letter, where Harriet reports that on his deathbed, “he warned his surrounding friends, and made comparisons between Sir Charles’s happiness, and his own misery” (7: 461). Hargrave and Merceda never ascend from libertinism, and so they must descend to the grave.

The rake’s castration is a stitch that runs through the fabric of the eighteenth-century novel. Libertinism is a faulty seam that must be ripped for a fresh garment to be sewn, but libertinism can go too far. In that case, a rake becomes a warning, a rotten fabric worn and tattered by vice. If the body of the fabric has decayed, not even the sturdiest seam can save it. Jeronymo’s castration, however, gives him another chance; his fabric is cleansed by the male bond so that he may be repurposed, and the sentimental patriarch is the needle that sews a new seam that better fits the social garment.

### **Threading the Needle**

In spite of his “shrivelled complexion,” “straight black lips,” and “yellow skin” covering a cadaverous patchwork (Shelley 51), Frankenstein’s creature is not inherently monstrous; he demonstrates affection and tenderness for a humble family of cottagers and hopes that, if he approaches them carefully and shows his good intentions, they will befriend him (104). He yearns for family, as he had overheard the cottagers speak ““of

the birth and growth of children; how the father doated on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child; how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapt up in the precious charge; . . . of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds” (97). The cottagers, however, reject him for his terrible visage, which sparks his rage. As he laments to his creator, alluding to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), “God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid from its very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested” (104). The creature is rejected not only by the cottagers but by his own father, which sets into motion his perpetual solitude. Without the loving guidance of a sentimental patriarch, the creature is wracked with a desire for vengeance and drawn to murder.

If Frankenstein will not serve as his sentimental patriarch, the creature’s only hope is for Frankenstein to create a family for him in a more gothic way: by sewing “a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself,” a fellow “monster . . . cut off from all the world” (115). Frankenstein agrees to the macabre needlework, but he cannot follow through with the horror and destroys the half-sewn creation. In retaliation, the creature murders Frankenstein’s bride and, ultimately, Frankenstein himself. Afterward, the creature vows to destroy himself, “consum[ing] to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch, who would create such another” (171). Not only does the creation not reproduce, but he represents the extinction of a species and of possibility. The true monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is not the

creature but his abandonment, his solitude, his purposelessness; his atrocities are the result of individual and social irresponsibility.

In short, there is no hope for a creature with no family bonds. Jeronymo, though he too is incapable of reproduction, has a much different fate. In fact, it is *Paradise Lost* that helps to bind him to his savior; the same book that reminds Frankenstein's creature of his solitude is the one that Charles uses to teach Jeronymo the English language as he heals from his surgery (3: 122).<sup>63</sup> Like Frankenstein's creation, Jeronymo is mutilated and re sewn, yet he enjoys the family life and community made possible by the domestic courtship narrative he enters by crossing the Channel— begun, perhaps, as he lies in bed learning the language spoken there. The patchwork of Jeronymo's body is not ghastly but adorned as well as productive, an embroidered pocket open to possibility.<sup>64</sup>

At the end of the novel, Jeronymo is a feminine man. This is not an essentialist claim, because it is not simply Jeronymo's castration that makes him a feminine figure. After all, the castrati and eastern generals are examples of castrated masculine exemplars, but they have been castrated by father-figures and raised in a homosocial bond. Jeronymo, castrated not by his patriarch as part of his masculine psychoanalytic trajectory but by his peers in an act of destructive violence, becomes effeminate to the point of hysteria. This requires a discussion of masculinity and femininity, which are relational concepts: Masculinity is rigid, assertive, and competitive, while femininity is flexible, passive, and cooperative. Surely many, if not most, people express both

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<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 5 for an analysis of the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and *Grandison's* demonic descent.

<sup>64</sup> Castration as treatment of toxicity may seem extreme or even absurd, but today chemical castration is used in treatment of tumors that require sex hormones to develop, such as breast and prostate cancers, and in treatment of sex offenders, especially as a condition of parole for those whose victims were children.

masculine and feminine traits, but typically, individuals express one more than the other, deeming them generally masculine or feminine. For example, Charles is *Grandison's* masculine exemplar, yet as a sentimental rather than authoritarian patriarch, he is less masculine than his libertine father, Sir Thomas, whose toxic masculinity destroys him.<sup>65</sup> In this understanding, masculinity and femininity are opposite ends of the same spectrum, so each is always in relation to the other.

When he first meets Charles and enters the narrative, Jeronymo is a figure of masculinity. In *Masculinities* (1995), R.W. Connell explores “masculinity” in plural, through “relations of alliance, dominance and subordination” (37). Each masculine type benefits from the dominating masculinity that subordinates women (77). Importantly, Connell distinguishes: “This is not to say that the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are always the most powerful people. They may be exemplars, such as film actors, or even fantasy figures, such as film characters. Individual holders of institutional power or great wealth may be far from the hegemonic pattern in their personal lives” (77). Charles is simultaneously *Grandison's* “most visible bearer of hegemonic masculinity” and an “individual holder of institutional power,” but not all masculine figures in *Grandison* fit this type: The rakes are subordinate to Charles yet still enjoy institutional power as masculine figures, and as Chapter 2 establishes, even Lord G the milksop holds institutional and narrative power as part of the hegemonic pattern. Violence is the central trait of masculinity and is used to maintain power against women as well as between men (83). Charles, Hargrave, Lord G, and, pre-castration, Jeronymo are masculine in their violence against each other and in their dominion over feminine figures. The men in *Grandison* are at war simultaneously with their male peers, their

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<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 1 for the evolution of the patriarchal and masculine ideal in the eighteenth century.

female targets, and themselves. A masculine figure of “manly politeness” (1: 181) might engage in “a continual warfare with [his] passions” (3: 157), whereas others might engage in literal warfare, a heroism that uses “the foolish heads” of “milk-sops” and “dough-baked lovers” “to fill their cannon with, when they batter in breach, by way of saving ball” (1: 62), or even by abducting and raping the women their politeness could not woo. The narrative cannot escape descriptions of bodily violence when attempting to define masculinity.

Connell sees the modern gender order as having been shaped by four developments in the West: individualism, empire, commercial capitalism, and large-scale European civil war (*Masculinities* 186). At the center of these developments was the eighteenth-century gentleman (190). Sir Charles Grandison is a model fictional representative. The patrilineal economy of gentry masculinity depended on the subordination of women on a large scale, extending beyond the home by framing the state and military system (190-191). With empire, this hegemonic gender order pervaded the globe (243).

The result can be seen clearly in the twenty-first century. In “Arms and the Man: Using the New Research on Masculinity to Understand Violence and Promote Peace in the Contemporary World” (2000), Connell points out that men are more likely than women to engage in risky behavior, such as committing crimes and initiating armed conflict, at home and abroad (21); even a favorite form of men’s entertainment, contact sports, is violent (22). Of course, while most violence is perpetuated by men, most men do not directly perpetuate violence, but they are often part of masculinized institutions, ones not only populated by men but organized according to masculine principles of

dominance and combat (22-23). Georg Tillner's "The Identity of Dominance: Masculinity and Xenophobia" (2000) presents masculinity as the root of the world's trouble, both at the small and large scale, because it is defined by the practice of dominance; though it begins as dominance over women, it influences power dynamics in general (58).

Though masculinity is not inherently synonymous with maleness, the gender system aligns the phallus and penis in what Kaja Silverman's *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (1992) calls the "dominant fiction" (2). The dominant fiction shapes the gender system, which in turn creates binary oppositions (34) that shape everything beginning with the family and extending into "community, town, and nation" (42). Part of the reason the hegemonic gender order is so pervasive is precisely because, as Easthope argues, the "myth of masculinity" depends on the invisibility of masculinity, the feminine and female visible in their difference while the masculine and male paradoxically escape notice (1). This invisibility is the source of masculine power (14), but in order to maintain this power, men must deny their femininity (19). Thus, the masculine myth's primary opponent is the feminine side of each man, one's true contradictory nature (40). It is the phallus, not the literal penis, from which masculinity derives its power, and this power extends beyond the male body; indeed, masculinity must deny not only man's inherent feminine side, but also vulnerable parts of the male anatomy: The masculine body is hard and angular, tightening to close holes (52), "[d]efying gravity in the high jump or the pole vault, puffing itself up like a bullfrog in weightlifting," all in order for "the masculine body [to] impersonate the phallus" (54).<sup>66</sup> Todd Reeser argues in *Masculinities in*

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<sup>66</sup> These descriptions are rather similar to Sitwell's descriptions of Farinelli as "of disproportionate size, tall beyond the normal, and with that ample enlargement of the chest that you find in a prima donna, and that, at the same time, looked manly and truculent under the breastplate that a warrior's role imposed" (169).

*Theory* (2009) that the gender binary actually creates sex identity, rather than the reverse. For Reeser, we can see this because first, we identify the traits of masculinity, then, we associate male anatomy with those traits: If masculinity is strength, virility, activity, we map the male body to fit those traits (150). The penis, in consequence, becomes the epitome of maleness and masculinity, but its strength is a construction.

*Grandison's* Lord G serves as an illustrative example of a man who expresses some feminine traits but whose aggression and phallus deem him, ultimately, to be a masculine figure in the narrative. Lord G is known for "his taste for trifles and nick-knacks" (5: 519), having been "brought up to be idle and useless, as women generally are" (6: 237). Yet in his relationship with his wife, he demonstrates masculine violence: During the honeymoon period, Lady G complains that he "joined his sharp face to [hers], and presumed to kiss" her (4: 392); when he kisses her hand, she fears he will "devour" it (5: 508). He is a penetrating force, "always squatting upon one's cloaths, in defiance of hoop, or distance!" (4: 437), and at one point, in retaliation against his wife's masculine banter, "he whisked his hat from under his arm . . .; and silenced, broke, demolished, [her] poor harpsichord" (5: 502). Perhaps Lord G commits the most penetrative of acts when, in accordance with the typical masculine trajectory, he impregnates his wife. His masculinity is not absolute, but neither is that of Charles, the novel's masculine exemplar. It is Lord G's assertive violence that poses him ultimately as a masculine figure. In a truly masculine figure, the phallus need not be a literal penis: Even Lord G's nose becomes phallic when used with masculine force, as when he attempts to kiss his wife but instead runs "his sharp nose" into her eye (4: 444) or when he intrudes into his wife's chamber, "thrust[ing] in (unsent for) his sharp face" (6: 218).

Masculinity is performative, not biological, but Lord G demonstrates that the body certainly can serve as a prop in the performance.<sup>67</sup>

Masculinity is inherently a violent force, but that violence can be productive: a needle that pierces flesh to bind a wound penetrates, but in so doing stops loss of blood and reduces risk of infection. In the end, Jeronymo loses his masculinity and only his femininity remains; he is neither a needle misapplied nor one that sews a seam. James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) claims that an "effeminate fellow . . . is an object of contempt and aversion at once . . . the transformation . . . must ever be monstrous" (1: 104), yet it is Jeronymo's pre-castration libertine masculinity, which destroys rather than creates communal bonds, that poses him as "monstrous." Paradoxically, his femininity is what allows him to permeate national borders, as he can visit Charles in Britain only when he no longer represents the threat of toxic masculinity in the forms of illegitimate reproduction, venereal pox, and general violence. This is a necessary excursion, because escaping the Italian dark romance to Britain helps Jeronymo heal from hysteria into moderate femininity. When the other Porrettas return to Italy, Jeronymo remains behind, as Charles wants "to try what our English baths may contribute to the perfect re-establishment of his health" (7: 453). Jeronymo's restoration comes from the purity and benevolence not only of the novel's masculine exemplar, but of Britain itself.

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<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 2 for an analysis of Lord G's masculinity and role in the narrative's linear thrust.

## An Embroidered Pocket

Jeronymo benefits from his visit to Britain, but the benefit is reciprocal. Jeronymo is cured by Britain, and in return, he improves the domestic space, helping the overwhelmed new parents manage the next generation.

Perhaps an unexpected possibility for Jeronymo, even as a feminine figure, is that of motherhood. So far, this dissertation has explored motherhood only in relation to women and the female body, but the term “mother” has varied meanings and connotations, some of which can be applied to those inhabiting male bodies. For example, as a noun “mother” may refer to “maternal affection” (*OED* 1f); a “medical condition thought to arise from a disorder of the uterus” (9), otherwise known as hysteria; or even an “effeminate homosexual man . . . who acts as a mentor to a younger man” (2g). “Mother” is also a verb: to “protect, as with maternal care” (4b). When Jeronymo is healed of his hysteria, his femininity becomes moderate and maternal. He is a metaphorical pocket, stitched by the phallic masculinity of Charles. Jeronymo is vulnerable: Pockets are structural weaknesses in garments. He is also nurturing: A pocket, of course, protects what it contains. The eighteenth-century pocket in fig. 32 illustrates this duality, for the textile’s appearance is at once scrotal and vaginal.



Fig. 31. Pocket.

1700-1725. Victoria and Albert Museum, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O107973/pocket-unknown/>.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Jeronymo expresses a desire to encapsulate both the Grandison and Porretta families in one embrace as soon as he arrives in England. He proclaims, “We will rejoice with the Chevalier in his England— And he, and all who are dear to him, shall accompany us to Italy. We will be all one family” (7: 383). Jeronymo falls into natural step with the Grandisons, even to the point of spending his days in the nursery, quite out of character for a man in the mid-eighteenth century, unless in the role of the man-midwife, a respected figure in the period whom Lisa Forman Cody’s *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (2005) poses as feminine in his domesticity but, ultimately, masculine in his scientific knowledge and authority (12). Jeronymo, on the other hand, is thoroughly domestic. In the novel’s penultimate letter, Harriet paints a picture of his domesticity: “He rejoices that he is with us, and is in charming spirits. He is extremely fond of children,” particularly Lady G’s infant— the new Harriet— whom, like Lady G, he calls “HIS *Marmouset*, hugging it twenty times a day to his good-natured bosom” (7: 460). It may seem radical to say that he is

mothering the infant, but in terms of the eighteenth-century gender binary, he is crossing a sharp divide.

Perhaps this is rather a sharp divide in the twenty-first century, as well. Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) explores the potential of male motherhood, challenging the assumption that only women, and all women, mother, meaning they bear children but also "take primary responsibility for infant care" and "sustain primary emotional ties with infants" (3). Even when the biological mother does not "mother" a child, the expectation is that another woman, not a man, will take her place. Chodorow explains this assumption in the context of industrialization: In the west a couple of hundred years ago, marriage was synonymous with parenthood, and it was such an important part of a woman's life that she would likely die during childbirth (4). Yet before industrialization, there was more to a woman's marriage than mothering. When the public and private spheres were more closely integrated, public work happened from the home, and so the wife was part of a "cooperative producing unit" (4).<sup>68</sup> With industrialization came the centrality of maternity: No longer did a woman need to weave cloth, churn butter, or contribute to the family business; instead, her business was the family (5). In addition, industrialization isolated the nuclear family and, in sending paid labor outside of the home, further removed the father figure from family life (5). While the father became part of the sphere of production, the mother became the source of reproduction, not only of bodies but of gender roles in general (7).

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<sup>68</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4 for a historical account of a woman's role in marriage during the early modern period. Notable sources include Susan Dwyer Amussen's *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (1988); Bridget Hill's *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (1989); Catherine Hall's *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (1992); Hall and Leonore Davidoff's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (2002); and Amanda Vickery's *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (1998) and *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (2009).

Chodorow's psychoanalytic approach argues that gender and mothering are reproduced through cyclical psychological processes.

The first stage of development, primary identification, is characterized by dependence on the maternal figure for both sense of self and physical sustenance (Chodorow 60); in the following stage, the symbiotic (ages four to twelve months), "the infant oscillates between perceptions of its mother as separate and as not separate" (62).<sup>69</sup> These early stages are fundamental, because when the mother departs, the infant may lose a sense of self. This must happen eventually in order for the infant to "achieve a differentiation of self" (69), which ultimately will lead a toddler to have developed "a sense of identity and wholeness" (73). In order for that sense of self to be healthy, there must be continuity in the early stages, whether from a lone mother or a group (75).

These early developmental stages shape not only a sense of self, but a sense of the gender system. When only women mother, children recognize their (relatively absent) fathers, and consequently men in general, as separate beings with their own independent identities and desires (80); meanwhile, they learn that women are uniquely and inherently self-sacrificing (83). This perpetuates a cycle in which girls conflate their own identities with self-sacrifice and care while boys, whose maternal identification stage is cut short, learn independence (91). Girls are more inclined toward motherhood than boys are because they are used to conflating themselves with another being (110) and, in the complete oedipal process, do not switch love object from mother to father, but maintain both in a triad (127), learning that their identities are flexible and interrelated with others (169). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's*

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<sup>69</sup> What Chodorow calls the symbiotic stage parallels Beauvoir's description of pregnancy.

*Development* (1982) by Carol Gilligan stresses that a masculine bias toward independence and assertiveness frames women's development—into collaborative and community-oriented— as failure to develop at all (7-9).<sup>70</sup> Boys tend to view relationships as an hierarchy, whereas girls view them as a web, and this distinction helps explain how they deal with conflict, choice, and self-identification (62). Gilligan concludes that what women bring to the table is a tempering of masculine fairness with feminine care (174).

In *Joining the Resistance* (2011), Gilligan goes further: The ethic of care is feminine in a patriarchal society, and those who care, male or female, are gendered feminine (19); yet in a democratic society, care is simply human (22):

The different voice, then, is identified not by gender but by theme. Its difference arises from joining reason with emotion, self with relationships. Undoing patriarchal splits and hierarchies, it articulates democratic norms and values: the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully, and heard with respect. The association of a care voice with women was an empirical observation, admitting exceptions and by no means limited to women, but . . . women are more apt to resist separating themselves from relationships. (24)

When children see masculinity as reasonable and femininity as emotional, they reject the parts of themselves that do not align with where they see themselves in the gender binary (26), internalizing these “structures of domination” (28). Gilligan stresses the social construction of this difference: Girls are taught to question their judgment, and as a result, their refrain is “I don’t know”; boys, taught instead to suppress their empathy, repeat, “I don’t care” (174). Gilligan concludes, “As long as human qualities are divided

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<sup>70</sup> Gilligan provides an illuminating example from her own practice: In studying eleven-year-olds Jake and Amy, Gilligan notes differences in their responses: Jake works within the questions to enact justice, whereas Amy works around the questions to look for better solutions that help everyone involved; the interviewer sees Amy's responses as illogical, whereas Amy sees the question as illogical (31). The two children also identify themselves differently: Jake “places the world in relation to himself” while Amy “places herself in relation to the world” (35).

into masculine and feminine, we will be alienated from one another and from ourselves” (178). From a perspective of cultural anthropology, Gayle Rubin’s “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” (1975) draws a similar conclusion: Kinship systems create gender expectations (1670), and because kinship systems are founded on heterosexual marriage, they create complementary genders out of two sexes (1674), resulting in the faulty assumption that men and women are opposites (1675). This means that to be a man is to deny one’s innate femininity.

This has consequences that reach far beyond the individual. If half of the population takes responsibility for all feminine care and mothering, there is bound to be a breaking point. In *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir points to a mother’s active retaliation against her reproductive role: Socially-stunted, repressed, and angry, the mother will lash out against her children (632), unable to create more than “cannon fodder, slaves, victims” of the patriarchy (645). In *Grandison*, the pregnant Lady G points to another maternal danger when she asks her friends to bear witness that she has “no design to overlay the little Marmouset” (7: 358). In her “mortified” (pregnant) state, Lady G laments that men are not like the sparrows who “sit hour and hour, he’s and she’s in turn,” enjoying equal freedom and equal responsibility (6: 117). Perhaps this kind of equality would prevent the stress that inspires Lady G’s fantasies of infanticide.<sup>71</sup>

After gestation, there is no reason that only those inhabiting female bodies should mother. If everyone, regardless of gender or sex, experiences maternal identification, anyone should have the ability to take on a maternal role (Chodorow 88). An infant who internalizes flexible, inclusive relationships will in turn grow up to

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<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 4 for an account of Lady G’s conflict with motherhood.

reproduce flexible, inclusive relationships. There is never just one image of family life, just as there is no inherent blueprint for personality; instead, in each of our psyches we have a memory of intimacy to recreate (57). Consequently, Chodorow sees great potential in “flexible . . . ego boundaries”: Moderation of gender extremes would allow anyone with a healthy maternal relationship to mother, meaning sexual choice and, in turn, the structure of kinship networks, would be more flexible (218).

Biological reproduction by no means needs to shape our entire society. Feminist Adrienne Rich’s “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980) uses the term “compulsory heterosexuality” to describe the politically constructed institution that shapes our world. Rich makes the radical proclamation that, while there may indeed be a biological imperative to reproduce, it does not necessitate heterosexual or heteroromantic attachment (17). In “Sex in Public” (1998), Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner further develop Rich’s notion of compulsory heterosexuality and its role outside of sexual relationships, identifying heteronormativity as a site of confusion where heterosexuality is unnecessarily and unnaturally conflated with romance, kinship, and community as a whole (1726-1727). Compulsory heterosexuality restricts identity to the point that anyone who falls outside of it is deviant not just sexually, but as a member of society. Hundreds of years before the articulation of these feminist and gender theories, *Grandison’s* Lady G laments “the matrimonial noose” (4: 322) for similar reasons, though certainly she does not state them in such theoretical terms. Heteronormativity and counter-reactions prevail in the publications of the eighteenth century, where not just gender but also national identity and inclusion required one’s participation in the

heterosexual matrix.<sup>72</sup> Berlant and Warner's proposal is that we establish a "queer world" where intimate relationships do not depend on sexuality or adherence to sex and gender categories (1729). In some ways, *Grandison* is a reflection of the heterosexual matrix in which it was produced; in others, *Grandison* is Berlant and Warner's "queer world," with Jeronymo as its representative.

*Grandison* presents a unique picture of gender similarity: The novel's exemplary men and women alike are celebrated for their ability, to borrow from Gilligan, to both "know" and "care." The novel imagines a community in which men and women of varying degrees of masculinity and femininity and of different national origins unite to perpetuate a legitimate future. As Harriet describes Charles, surrounded by his British and Italian family, "How does his benign countenance always shine, when he finds himself surrounded at table by his friends! The larger the circle, the more diffused is his cheerfulness" (7: 445). The future of Britain rests not only in the hands of British parents, but in the hands of foreign and domestic friends. Gender role flexibility is essential to creating an international community where everyone's desires and aptitudes can be accommodated. There are even wider implications to upsetting the gendered parenting dichotomy. In the conclusion of *What a Man's Gotta Do*, Easthope imagines a radical future, neither patriarchy nor matriarchy but something new:

To remake the new third term, the new signifier of sexual difference, into a real symbol, active at the deepest levels of the unconscious, would presuppose wholly new forms of human culture. Sexual relations must be remade, and so must the institutionalized forms of marriage and family life,

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<sup>72</sup> For background on the connection between gender and nation in the eighteenth century, see Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus's *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (1997); Lisa Forman Cody's *Birthright the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (2005); Abby Coykendall and Ana de Freitas Boe's *Heteronormativity in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (2014); Faramerz Dabhoiwala's *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (2012); and Kathleen Wilson's *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2002).

possibly through the development of more widely dispersed and looser forms of kinship groupings, groups perhaps based on something more than friendship and less than blood relationship. But the implications carry further. . . . patriarchy finds a forceful and aggressive expression in the idea of the nation state. It is hard to foresee the end of patriarchy before the nation state has been absorbed by some form of genuine world government. Possibly then the function of the third term . . . might be performed by a symbolic representation of 'The United Nations.' Even to speculate along these lines makes clear the scale of change that will have to occur. (173)

The cosmopolitan Grandisons and Poretas,<sup>73</sup> whose relationship is “more than friendship and less than blood,” hint at this radical future that more than two centuries later Easthope imagines.

*Grandison* merges domestic and foreign narratives, and domestic and foreign families, to provide a model for individual identity expression and simultaneous strengthening of the greater community, the beginning of a “queer world” whose strength *relies* on deviations from identity expectations. *Grandison* uses Jeronymo's body, in particular, as a representation of permeation, transformation, and productivity, transfiguring his mutilation and vulnerability into the strength of care. Through Jeronymo, the novel pieces a patchwork of bodies, of gender, of nations. It is Jeronymo's otherwise infertile body that births a stronger and more inclusive world.

The dark romance allows Jeronymo, like Frankenstein's creature, to be re sewn, brought back from death— or, at least, from the inevitable demise of the libertine. The fundamental difference is that unlike the solitary creature, Jeronymo is then woven into the domestic fabric of *Grandison* as a functional and beautiful component of the communal garment. Jeronymo is part of a long history of rakes punished and reformed, but he is singular in his rebirth; his gash weeps, but these are fertile tears. Cut by men

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<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 5 for a discussion of *Grandison*'s Kantian cosmopolitanism.

and subsequently soothed by the male bond, he is resewn into a romantic alternative. Perhaps traditional methods cannot reform a rake; perhaps, as Clarissa laments, one cannot “*touch pitch, and not be defiled*” (1272). Yet Jeronymo demonstrates the potential of an attractive fabric in a useless fit: A snip here and a stitch there can create an embroidered pocket, a beauty for all to admire, but, more importantly, a productive capacity to hold the treasures of peace and possibility in its embrace.

We have cast aside our eighteenth-century costumes, but perhaps a pocket remains intact, a keepsake of the event: It is both past and present, scrotal and vaginal, masculine and feminine, itself and Other—part of the garment yet distinct from it. The pocket has been transformed into a souvenir, into a memento of the spiral of human creation.

## CONCLUSION

### ONCE UPON A TIME ONCE MORE

'Once upon a time': the formula invokes, out of a world where nothing remains, something older than history, younger than the present moment, always willing and able to descend again once more.

—Northrop Frye

In 1790, a fifteen-year-old scribbler began to pen an homage to her favorite novel, *Sir Charles Grandison*. It would take her ten years to complete the work, which she titled *Sir Charles Grandison: Or, The Happy Man*, and which converts the lengthy narrative into a sparse script of five acts. The content has been boiled down to trivialities, to the point that it omits entirely what might be considered the most essential plot points: the meeting of hero and heroine, their eventual marital union, and the conflict of the Italian love triangle that nearly nullifies the match (in fact, the script makes no room for the Italians at all). Instead, the play is a recapitulation of the novel's most mundane interactions, its humor rooted in the fact that it is somehow even more banal than its source. The heroine's primary role is to be sent to bed by the peevish Charlotte Grandison, or, if the heroine is feeling particularly spritely, she might ask about the condition of the roads. As in the source material, all characters recede into the background when Charlotte is on stage (which, for this rendition, is most of the time). In fact, while other characters are hollow shells of their epistolary selves, Charlotte is still herself, right at home in the comedy. For example, in the fourth act, she remarks, "Law! Lady L, you are so afraid I shall not take care of [Harriet]. Why, she is just as she always is— languid at three o'clock. I believe it is because Lord G always comes about

at that time; and she is so sorry to see her poor Charlotte plagued so!" (51)—economically lambasting both her own milksoppish suitor and the withered heroine in one go.

The precocious fifteen-year-old who was able to channel the roguish Charlotte's humor so aptly was Jane Austen, wearing the rather absurd masquerade costume of a pithy Richardson. Of course, Austen is not an end-point, nor is Richardson a beginning. The realistic novel itself, as Frye reminds us, is "parody-romance," a displacement of the older romance form using a different narrative technique (*Secular Scripture* 39). This explains the confusion among *Grandison's* characters when they fall into romantic assumptions, or when the narrative itself is split between realism and romance time and time again. The point is not that one text influenced another, but that these texts exist in a larger literary tradition that asks us to interpret what the conventions are saying through them. What is the convention of realism saying in *Grandison* when it is interrupted by romance? What is the convention of parody saying when filtered through the lens of homage to a favorite novel? For that matter, what is the convention of adaptation saying through *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) when it interrupts the classic Austen courtship novel with flesh-eating Undead? My project argues that narrative conventions suggest that boundaries are always permeable and tenuous, for crises of category— or, to use the eighteenth-century trope, masquerades— are at the heart of fiction, human creation, and social interaction, and so time and time again, we return to once upon a time once more.

This dissertation has used Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, a text central to eighteenth-century Britain, to trace the ways in which narrative communicates and

enacts the permeability of boundaries and the destabilization of relational identities. Chapter 1 explores the trajectory of the rake figure, who vacillates from hero to scoundrel to hero again over the course of the long eighteenth century, but who, I argue, is an inherent element of the masculine psyche, and without whom the masculine exemplar cannot exist. Chapter 2 considers an alternative masculine type, one whose habits as consumer and collector render him essential to the linear thrust of the burgeoning Empire; though he appears in lace hat and gaudy trimmings, he is no less a masculine exemplar than the hero, for he thrusts the Empire into being. The project's third chapter shifts to the novel's heroine, whose passivity leaves her wilted and weak, a warning rather than an example, and the following chapter provides a contrast: the harpy turned mother, whose sharp wit paired with gentle care pose her as a productive model of womanhood, and whose strength persists in part because her husband is the sort of masculine type to embrace the rhythmic alternation between masculine linear thrust and feminine spiral. In turning to the Italian Other, Chapter 5 examines the doubled heroine, through whom the narrative at once reinforces and rejects the concept of binarism. The *dramatis personae* indicates that the domestic heroine is "woman" and her double "Italian," yet throughout the final volume we are reminded that each is "Clementina and Harriet, both in one: One mind certainly informs . . . both" (6: 191). The acknowledgement of the Italian as Other creates a binary, but her union with Harriet blurs the boundary, creating a crisis of categories. The project's final chapter uses the novel's most gruesome example of permeation to illustrate the positive potential of transgression, for castration at once mutilates and opens the flesh to new possibilities: of identity, of kinship networks, and of the human body itself.

Combining realistic and romantic structures, as well as comic and tragic tendencies, allows *Grandison* to explore the world from various perspectives: descending and ascending, active and passive, linear and spiral, masculine and feminine, domestic and foreign, Self and Other. These binaries, though, are not so rigid as this list might suggest, for their very existence necessitates a third term, a neither/both distinction. This has led to my conclusion that the most important masquerade in *Grandison* is not the plot point from volume one, but instead a masquerading paratext and structure that ape clearly-defined categories, creating the illusion that identity categories and power dynamics are contained within stable borders.

This project began as a close reading of *Grandison*, but in tracing the novel's spiral, it formed a spiral of its own. As a narrative itself, this dissertation has necessarily interrupted a reading of Richardson with other texts: sometimes with other novels, but often with texts outside of the scope of fiction altogether, including plays, poems, essays, caricatures, furniture guides, gardening manuals, cookbooks, medical encyclopedias, and music histories. This research embodies the interconnections between literature and all the material elements of life. Eighteenth-century readers did not read only novels. They, like those of us in the twenty-first century, read cookbooks; they analyzed political cartoons; they pored over furniture and paint sample catalogs. The audience that read novels interacted with innumerable other genres that shaped their perspectives. The eighteenth-century novel is quite open about this permeation of genres, explicitly and repeatedly invoking Milton, Mr. Spectator, Dr. Johnson, and even the exemplary Sir Charles Grandison himself. Our interests, like our narratives, are shaped by serpentine modulations. The question for *Grandison* as well as for my own

project is about how to put these meanderings to use. After all, in preemptively voicing and embodying the identity debates that consume us in the twenty-first century, *Grandison*'s characters blur the lines not only between Self and Other, but between then and now, between question and answer.

It is important to recognize that crossing boundaries is not inherently productive: Boundaries are, after all, meant to be protective. The British Empire's crossing of geographic borders, for example, can be read as enriching cosmopolitanism or as invasive colonialism, depending on context and perspective. Like *Grandison*, this project is not just about identifying the permeability of barriers, but about how to use such transgressions for the benefit of *all* individuals and communities involved.

*Grandison* meanders in more ways than I could explore in this project. Important avenues for future research include inter-British national identities (Charles's sister Caroline is married to a Scottish noble, Lord L), non-Catholic religious Others (Sir Hargrave is accompanied in his libertinism by Merceda, a "Portuguese Jew"), and the working class (the novel presents servants as little more than props for the use of their "betters"). Important too would be a deeper exploration of the kinship model, particularly in regard to guardianship (Charles is guardian to Emily Jervois) and unmarried life (Aunt Nell represents a not-insignificant population of "superannuated virgins" of the period—and perhaps of our own). In addition, a full exploration of British identity would require traveling with Charles beyond his standard Grand Tour, into "Asia and Afric." *Grandison* Hall is central to the novel, just as London was central to the British Empire, yet its position as a concentered space depends on the framing of a larger global network. The narrative fabricates a barrier between Britain and its imperial reach even as the setting

extends beyond the British Isles. This barrier that the narrative constructs says as much as the barriers it blurs. Exploring these geographic wanderings necessitates the study of innumerable genres interwoven into the concept of Empire. Travel narratives and maps, in particular, would be of utmost importance in exploring *Grandison's* entanglements outside of Europe. In addition, the trope of masquerade across the globe would be a particularly fruitful avenue of research, for the masquerade so popular in eighteenth-century Britain was by no means native or unique to it. Cultural reactions to different iterations of masquerade would speak volumes to the construction and destabilization of identity.

In *Grandison*, women direct a spiral ascent. I would like to believe that, through this project, I too have contributed to an exploratory and rich feminine narrative spiral.

And that this spiral is an open one.

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