

DANGEROUS MEN: THE CRISIS OF MASCULINITY
IN ROMANTIC WOMEN'S FICTION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

My dissertation establishes a pre-history of the Byronic and Austenian hero, contributing to larger discussions of masculinity, women's writing, and feminist literary studies in the Romantic period. I address a gap in Romantic-era scholarship by interrogating how proto-Byronic and Austenian heroes reflect societal and authorial attitudes toward men and often incompatible masculine forms of behavior. Keen observers of their social environment, novelists Frances Burney, Charlotte Smith, and Amelia Opie were not content with stick-figure heroes and villains. Their richly drawn male characters are deeply embedded in late-Georgian controversies over men's status, responsibilities, and behavior, reflecting what I term the "crisis of masculinity" in the Romantic period. I argue that before Jane Austen and Lord Byron – dominant Romantic writers of the 1810s – Burney, Smith, and Opie's novels illustrated the ongoing debates over Georgian masculinity among both men and women. Combining feminist and masculinity studies, my dissertation reveals how women writers understood and created male characters, providing key insight into issues of male identity largely given short shrift in Romantic period criticism.

Each of my four chapters illustrates the perceived changes in male behavior in late-Georgian Britain transformed masculinity and the predicament of fictional heroines confronted with predatory or otherwise threatening male suitors. I contribute to the work of cultural historians and literary scholars who have addressed the public controversies over masculine conduct throughout this period, making the male characters in novels integral to my analysis. My cultural and historical archive, a collection of eighteenth-century pamphlets, poems, plays and guidebooks, situates the crisis in masculinity within a larger social debate. Thus contributing to the field of masculinity studies – the work of Michele Cohen, Tim Hitchcock and G.J. Barker-

Benfield, in particular – by questioning male behavioral codes, and how male characters in Burney, Smith, and Opie perpetuated or challenged destructive models of masculine behavior. My discussion of how women are negatively affected, physically, mentally and financially, by men’s inability to adjust to these changing norms builds on the work of feminist scholars such as Claudia Johnson and Eleanor Ty. We can better comprehend the changing expectations for masculine behavior in Romantic-era society and its fiction by considering male characters as part of a burgeoning social dilemma in debates on masculinity.

My first chapter argues that Burney’s *Cecilia* (1782) investigates the crisis of masculinity through a conflict that emerges in period notions of politeness and the refinement of manners, and the harmful effect this has on women and men in the novel. Focusing on the struggle of the novel’s suitors, Mortimer Delvile and Mr. Monckton, to avoid looking too violent or too effeminate, I show how their conflict endangers Cecilia. I argue that Burney presents these characters as both too aggressive *and* too weak, too manly *and* too polite. Through this conflict between politeness and manliness, I explore Burney’s portrayal of a dubious hero and rival as embryonic components of the male characters that emerge in Austen’s and Byron’s work.

In chapter two, I discuss Burney’s second novel, *Camilla* (1796), contending that the male characters and their desires – for wealth, status and companionship – endanger the heroines’ lives by exposing them to familial and social predation. These masculine desires reflect changing social expectations toward courtship practices and a battle between often irreconcilable male behaviors. I use eighteenth-century pamphlets and poems that warn men and women of public predators, and use works like *The Spectator* (1711-12), to contextualize the novel’s critique of masculine desire as a conflict originating from refashioned attitudes toward gallantry and courtship practices. Burney’s departure from the effeminate sentimentality of Mortimer in

Cecilia, and her move toward the silent, restrained Edgar Mandlebert, suggests a desire, for, I argue, the kind of reticent male character that we later see in Austen.

Turning to the contested and evolving divide between the professional classes and gentlemen, chapter three examines the link between aspiring gentlemen lawyers and ruined male heirs in the politically repressive period of 1790s England. A political Gothic novel akin to William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1793), Smith's *Marchmont* (1796) addresses the social threat that upwardly mobile lawyers posed to country gentlemen. I provide a brief history of "legal representations" in era satires, poems and plays to contextualize the corruption in Smith's depiction of lawyers. With the poor and exiled Marchmont, I contend that Smith suggests a new model for gentlemanly behavior not dependent on property and fortune, but deeply invested in a cosmopolitan identity exemplifying masculine virtues such as generosity, sincerity, and honor. A new class of professional gentlemen, like the monstrous lawyers in the novel, represent a distorted inverse of these manly characteristics. Smith's concerns about predatory men depart from Burney's in her emphasis on the marginal zone between the professions and the gentry, and the damage this masculine gray area does to women, who cannot find personal or legal protection from either model of gentlemen.

Continuing the discussion of the pernicious practices of the professional classes, chapter four centers on the friction between theory and practice in Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (1805). I argue that Opie's novel is a junction text, treating the concerns of earlier Romantic writers while also anticipating those of the second generation, as various masculine types converge. Opie's use of four different male characters – the libertine, fortune hunter, lawyer, and effeminate male – paints a picture of dangerous men encircling the heroine. Yet, the intellectual lover, Glenmurray, is most harmful in his ambiguous, misleading self-representation and his

inability to protect the heroine. I situate Opie's novel as part of a larger conversation in the Romantic period, as older models of masculine aggression still dominate in the Byronic hero, but are also being replaced by a new model of masculine rectitude and responsibility that looks forward to such Austen heroes as Edmund Bertram and Captain Wentworth.

Women writers from the first generation of Romantic fiction engaged in challenging masculinity, and their critiques provoked the development of new expectations for male behavior. Their representations of heroic and even villainous men considered how the struggle to adhere to competing models of masculinity meant different negotiations for women and English society. The hero of the Romantic period, and his attractive but dangerous rival, become critical aspects of emergent characterizations of men in the novels of the nineteenth-century, from Austen to the Brontës.

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May I not sound too presumptuous when I quote Mary Shelley, and say that this “hideous progeny” would not be possible without the support of many people. This project benefited from the advice and encouragement of my advisor, Gillen D’Arcy Wood, and my committee members Bob Markley, Hina Nazar and Ted Underwood. Thanks are not enough for your generosity as teachers and scholars in your critique, praise, and time.

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Most importantly, I dedicate these pages to my mother, who unknowingly nurtured my Romantic sensibility, and taught me that patience, fortitude and strength are invaluable virtues to have in life. I am beyond grateful to my sister, whose fire and belief in rising above one's circumstances always pushed me to shoot for the moon, an admirable, and lofty Romantic goal. Finally, to Carla, without whom I do not know how I, or this project, could have made it this far. I was, during this process, sometimes a hero and too many times a villain. For bearing with me, thank you from the depths of my heart. 'Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear.'

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Introduction

After famously calling Byron “mad, bad, and dangerous to know,” Lady Caroline Lamb shared how dangerous and bad he could be in her kiss-and-tell novel, *Glenarvon*, published in 1816, four years after their torrid affair. In the novel, Glenarvon is described as an “idol,” a “god,” and compared to a siren, satyr and satanic tempter.¹ To fully encompass the tumultuous emotions and actions of her “hero,” Lamb fuses several genres in her first novel, combining sentimental fiction, the Gothic and the *roman à clef*. Claiming to be unlike no other, Glenarvon is hero, lover, villain, rebel, and outcast – the epitome of the Byronic hero. Lamb reveals the complex, beguiling energy of a male character who, rather than conceal his crimes, flaunts them in order to entice. While she renders her former lover as a depraved but haunted tragic hero, she also satirizes Regency life’s infatuation with Byron, through the “phrenzy” and “pestilence” spread by the fictional Glenarvon (109).

Associated from birth with a traitorous grandfather, raised in Italy by a money-hungry Italian count, and returning to Ireland under suspicious circumstances, Glenarvon enhances his allure by being beautiful, charming and a rebel leader. Glenarvon harks back to the eighteenth-century libertine – though he claims to be “no Lovelace” – while also looking forward to the tortured, animalistic sensibility and violence of Emily Brontë’s Heathcliff (163). He inspires a rebellion in Ireland that results in a Bacchic orgy of contrary moral and religious principles, where men are a “lawless gang” and women are “struck mad [...], their hair dishevelled, their heads ornamented with green cockades” of Irish freedom (109). Among the elite, he has a reputation as a licentious but mysterious stranger, living among social outcasts in his ruined ancestral home. A mixture of “haughtiness and bitter contempt” and “melancholy and dejection,”

¹ Lady Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon* ed. Deborah Lutz (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2007), 183.

Glenarvon is a “fallen angel” upon whose soul is “stamped the heavenly image of sensibility and genius” (118).

A primary aim in my dissertation is to establish a pre-history of the Byronic and Austenian hero and in doing so contribute to larger discussions of masculinity, women’s writing and feminist literary studies in the Romantic period. Feminist scholarship has established some of the groundwork regarding the harm – physical, mental and financial – that patriarchy has inflicted on women during the long eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. Building on the work of scholars such as Claudia Johnson, Margaret Doody, Eleanor Ty, and Katharine Rogers, I extend their contributions to the field by focusing specifically on the male characters in the novels of Romantic-era women writers. In doing so, I argue that patriarchal institutions negatively affect both men and women through social constructs and modes of behavior exacted upon men. Patriarchy cuts both ways. By interrogating the detrimental effects of patriarchy, masculine codes of conduct and how men upheld or challenged shifting modes of masculinity, I also engage scholars in eighteenth-century masculinity studies, such as Philip Carter, Michele Cohen, Tim Hitchcock and G.J. Barker-Benfield. I aim to better understand the larger ideological and cultural history behind representations of male characters in Romantic-era women’s writing. Adding to the work of cultural historians and literary scholars who have addressed shifting notions of masculinity in this period, I illustrate the problematic relationship these shifts had on literary representations of masculinity and their impact on the female characters in these fictional men’s lives. Combining feminist studies with masculinity studies allows my dissertation to consider how women writers understood and created contemporary masculinity, which provides clarity into key novelistic characters largely given short shrift in Romantic period criticism.

Women writers such as Burney and Smith were keen observers of their social environment and were not content with stick-figure heroes and villains. Their male characters are richly drawn and deeply embedded in late Georgian controversies over men's status, responsibilities and behavior: what I am calling the "crisis of masculinity" in the Romantic period. In examining literary representations of men, I am taking part in a larger conversation that emerged out of feminist studies in the 1980s. Janet Todd's volume of essays, *Men by Women* (1981) centers on women writers' creation of male characters. In her essay from that volume, "Jane Austen's Men: Inside/Outside "the Mystery"" Judith Wilt focuses on the "handsome stranger," the rival to the hero, who represents "a touch of anarchy in an organized world, a direct challenge to a future-oriented society."² Margaret Madrigal Wilson's 1996 essay on Austen's "other man" – the romantic figure who attracts but does not win the heroine – continues this argument, demonstrating the viability of the relationship between the hero and his rival.³ These essays situate my investigations into representations of men in Romantic women's fiction in a post 1980s tradition. as a central focus of analysis. Alongside these studies, Claudia Johnson's *Equivocal Beings* (1995) examined the effects of sensibility on Romantic-era depictions of masculinity. More recently, Megan Woodworth's *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement* (2011) demonstrates an ongoing discussion of masculinity in women's writing, especially, as she claims, a need to pay attention to "male characters [who] have been dismissed as fantasy figures."⁴ While my dissertation is indebted to these prior studies, I am interested in arguing that before Austen and Byron, writers like Burney, Smith and Opie were invested in creating not only fantasy lovers or tormentors, but also involved

² Judith Wilt, "Jane Austen's Men: Inside/Outside "the Mystery,"" in *Men by Women* ed. Janet Todd (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), 66.

³ Margaret Madrigal Wilson, "The Hero and the Other Man in Jane Austen's Novels," *Persuasions* 18, (1996): 182.

⁴ Megan Woodworth, *Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement*, (England: Ashgate, 2011), 2.

in ongoing debates on masculinity and the effect these crises had on both men and women. By considering male characters as more than conventional types, existing either to reward the heroine or persecute her, and recognizing them as part of what historians identify as a burgeoning dilemma in masculinity, we can better comprehend the influence of shifting masculine identities in Romantic-era society.

The marriage plot novel takes two to tango and by analyzing male characters, I also offer an investigation into the reasons why the hero is chosen by the heroine. In interrogating the construction of male characters, heroes and the “other man” alike, I seek to establish a precedent in literary history for current much-debated questions on the similarities of the Austenian and Byronic hero.⁵ For instance: What makes the hero different from his rivals? Are there moments when the hero behaves like the impertinent rival? What effects does social expectations have on men? What does women’s fiction tell readers about men, their conduct and their social expectations? What do these representations tell readers about women’s needs, fears and desires? Is there a shift throughout the Romantic period toward realism in these depictions, or are there fluctuations between fantasy and reality?

Upon closer investigation, the Romantic male hero is usually found lacking, because while he is the better alternative to his rival, he has his moments of doubt, ineffectualness, and destructive behavior. Unsure how to act, what to say, or sometimes too emotional and troubled to act, despite his crisis, he is nonetheless good enough and attractive enough to warrant the heroine’s love. More than meets the eye, the hero is an amalgam of good and bad traits, and when the heroine’s story is summed up, it often ends on a note of ambivalent happiness. Whether she has given up her fortune or compromised part of her happiness, she is united to a hero who

⁵ For more on this topic, see Sarah Wootton, “The Byronic in Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice*,” *Modern Language Review*, 102 (2007), 26-39.

troubled her enough to make her pause, but who promised to be better in the long run. It is not the hero who is the fantasy of these novels, but the promise that he is secure in his identity to ensure her happiness.

Glenarvon is the exception who proves the rule. Lamb illustrates why a man like Glenarvon is harmful to everyone by demonstrating that his criminal folly is enhanced by his “sensibility and genius,” “virtue, charm, and fascination” (141). Calantha, the heroine, is attracted and initially also repulsed by Glenarvon’s “spirit of evil”: “her soul trembled within her, and felt its danger” (145). Like his other female victims, Calantha does not heed the signs, but rejects her husband, a devoted but neglectful lover, for the deceitful Glenarvon. He is an adept manipulator of social codes and behavior, because he can transform himself into whatever a woman may desire. The narrator, observing Glenarvon’s manipulation of an innocent Miss Monmouth (supposedly modeled on Byron’s wife Annabella Milbanke), notes that “He had a mask for every distinct character he wished to play; and in each character he acted to the very life” (262). Even more telling, one character claims that Glenarvon unites “the malice and petty vices of a woman, to the perfidy and villainy of a man” (236). Because he chooses not to embody masculine ideals and fulfill either a political or emotional role, he also chooses to flout normative masculine identities. A smooth talker and dissembler, Glenarvon is revealed to be unworthy as a Romantic ideal. Like his literary predecessors Monckton in *Cecilia* and Bellamy in *Camilla* — subjects of two of my chapters — Glenarvon is a duplicitous charmer. A composite of gender characteristics, Glenarvon combines the worst stereotypes of each gender into a potent, attractive and dangerous hero-villain.

Glenarvon’s beautiful countenance aids his depravity, helping him blur the lines between manliness and femininity, monstrosity and fearsome godliness. His physical attractiveness is

seemingly incompatible with his diabolical behavior. After being abandoned by Glenarvon, Calantha asks him in a letter: “Oh you who are so young, so beautiful, can you be inhuman? [...] why have you not the looks, as well as the heart of a villain? Why take such pains, such care to lull me into security [...] to destroy me with more refined and barbarous cruelty?” (274) Calantha’s query expresses the vexed nature of the Byronic hero: how can the external features not align with the inner corruption? It is not solely Glenarvon’s beauty that disguises his cruel heart, but his words and actions, which “lull” his victim. Susceptible to his charms, women excuse his errors because “his mind is superior, and his heart is full of sensibility and feeling” (265). Glenarvon is a passionate and intelligent man, but those feelings are fleeting, and are aimed at whoever needs to be seduced, convinced, and conquered. Describing his alter ego, Count Viviani, as an “idol of women,” Glenarvon argues that women do not prize virtue, “honour and renown,” but that they, instead, respond favorably to the addition of “the dazzling light of genius upon baseness and corruption, and every crime will be to them but an additional charm” (328). Glenarvon uses his refined sensibility to convert his villainy into powerful tools of sensible seduction.

Lamb’s goals in the novel are twofold: to reveal the machinations of the Byronic hero, (and how difficult it is to not fall under his spell) and also to excoriate him. Glenarvon is exposed as an inhuman lover and a fickle rebel, who repeatedly disdains all conventional masculine virtues. Speaking of Calantha’s husband, Lord Avondale, Glenarvon says he “has nobleness, generosity, sincerity. I only assume the appearance of those virtues” (308). Aware of his failings, Glenarvon behaves according to his own rules, and because they are unlike those established by society, he is “mad” and “bad.” All men, as Lamb suggests, possess the ability to harm women, to entangle them in webs of emotional doubt, distrust and fear, whether it is a fear for their lives

or for their hearts. Yet, Glenarvon is coveted, desired, pursued, despite the threat he poses to women's virtue, sanity and reputation. *Glenarvon* reproduces the frightening and irresistible appeal of the Byronic hero – he is melancholic, impassioned, but also poisonous and detrimental. Lamb succeeds in tracing how and why the Byronic hero is dangerous to know.

The same year 1816, that Lamb published *Glenarvon*, Jane Austen was writing her final novel, *Persuasion*, notable for arguably her most modern masculine heroic creation, Captain Wentworth. A reticent, manly hero, without ties to the aristocracy, Wentworth personifies the new gentleman of the Romantic period. The creation of a new Post-Napoleonic ruling class male, Captain Wentworth is a figure of Reform. While Wentworth figures as an attractive suitor, his rival, Mr. Elliot whose villainy is hidden by his mysterious, but still gentlemanly veneer, is in many ways the Byronic hero of the novel. Austen's *Persuasion* emphasizes a crucial change in representations of masculinity as the differences between the hero and the rival suitor are no longer as clear, as in, for example, *Glenarvon*. Anne *could* choose Mr. Elliot. Despite moments of quasi-Byronic broodiness and the potential for questionable behavior, Wentworth is the epitome of the Austenian hero, as his rational disposition is marked by sincerity and honor. Anne's preference for Wentworth signals a change toward a romantic hero who combines just the right amount of virtue, danger and attractiveness.

While the eighteenth-century rake and libertine may seem to be the model for the outmoded Glenarvon of 1817, I argue that Romantic novelists of the 1780s, 1790s and 1800s influenced the construction of the "second generation" Romantic heroes of Byron and Austen. Lamb may have produced an extended investigation of the Byronic hero, but the larger question I am posing in my dissertation is: Do we really know what "mad, bad and dangerous to know"

means? And more importantly, is the Romantic hero everything he, or the novelist, claims to be? In order to trace the creation of the Byronic and Austenian hero, I look back to the novels of Frances Burney, Charlotte Smith and Amelia Opie to understand how the sentimental hero of the Romantic era was constructed. In these novels, the hero is often a combination of effeminacy, emotional instability, jealousy, possessiveness and aggression. Rather than conflate the Byronic hero with the Austenian hero, I propose that they emerge out of similar investigations into Romantic masculinity, and changing expectations of male behavior in the period.

The larger thrust of this project is both a critique of the Romantic hero as well as a history of the Byronic and Austenian hero. Gentlemen can be attractive, even dangerous figures, but without becoming rakes. It is this malleability that deceives, and which forms a central part of my argument - the transformation, produced in the novel between 1780 and 1820s of the stereotypical rake into a central masculine character who is not initially or obviously villainous. In order to investigate how this new masculine character is inherently problematic, I examine his rivals who often function as darker versions of the same masculine image. Upon closer inspection, the sentimental hero and his rival are often similar in their behavior and the effect they have on the heroine – she may be driven mad, or emotionally distressed as a result of their courtly persecutions. The heroine often has to choose between two male rivals, basing her decision on which male character best enacts her inherited notions of masculinity. As my chapters argue, these markers of masculine identity are interwoven, and male characters struggle to adhere to conventional masculine traits – what Glenarvon outlines as “nobleness, generosity, sincerity” to list a few.

This dissertation interrogates the sentimental hero, noting how men’s predatory and destructive behavior provides a central source of anxiety for heroines in novels written by

women in the tumultuous decades around 1800. I investigate the history of these male characters as part of a larger historic and cultural trend that fed into the creation of a central masculine figure who was attractive, complex and deceptively dangerous. Alongside an analysis of the novels, I use cultural history, engaging cultural discourse histories to chart the ways in which female novelists of the first Romantic generation anatomized specific feminine fears of a subset of men within the gentry and professional classes. The ostensible “gentlemen” of Frances Burney, Charlotte Smith, and Amelia Opie’s novels – published between 1780 and 1805 – are not readily identifiable as seducers or rakes. This deception allows these characters to entrap heroines in their pursuit of fortunes and sexual conquest.

As part of my investigation into Romantic-era masculinity, I use eighteenth-century treatises, guidebooks, poems and plays to situate the discussion of masculinity in these novels within a sociohistorical context that positions predatory male characters as part of a larger societal debate. For example, by understanding the representation of masculinity in first generation Romantic women’s fiction, we can see the heritage of the rake in conflict with the later, progressive Romantic male hero of Austen’s novels from the 1810s. Drawing from pre-existing Georgian stereotypes such as the rake and the fop, Burney, Smith, and Opie created male characters who blurred the lines between libertine and gentleman. In its creative combination of feminist literary history and masculinity studies, my dissertation makes original claims for the centrality of threatening masculine identities in the emplotment, social critique, and ideology of early Romantic women’s fiction.

In my first chapter, I argue that Frances Burney’s *Cecilia* (1782) investigates the crisis of masculinity through a conflict that emerges in period notions of politeness and the refinement of

manners, and the harmful effect this has on women and men in the novel. In the eighteenth-century, conduct books directed at young men modeled proper social behavior, teaching them manners, conversational skills, and self-control, while conspicuously avoiding effeminacy. Focusing on the struggle of the novel's suitors, Mortimer Delvile and Mr. Monckton, to avoid appearing too violent or too effeminate, I show how their conflict endangers Cecilia. I argue that Burney presents these characters as both too aggressive *and* too weak, too manly *and* too polite. Their intemperate and chaotic behavior threatens others and themselves, evidenced in their duels and bouts of madness. Through this conflict between politeness and manliness, I explore Burney's portrayal of a dubious hero and rival as embryonic components of the male characters that emerge in Austen's and Byron's work.

In chapter two, I discuss Burney's second novel, *Camilla* (1796), arguing for the fear generated by the displacement of predatory characters into the countryside and the lack of an effectual hero to protect the three central female heroines. To contextualize the depredations and luxurious vice that existed both in London and in resort towns, I use eighteenth-century tracts, pamphlets and poems that warn men and women of the dangers of sharpers and fortune-hunters. Through this discourse history, I provide a larger framework in which to understand the novel's treatment of masculine desire as a conflict that stems from changing attitudes toward courtship practices and gallantry. While the heroines in *Camilla* are situated within the supposed security of the family property, they are exposed to greater harm as trouble comes home to roost in the form of problematic male relations. The men in the novel, either brothers or potential lovers, expose the women they should be protecting to the vices and depredations of a society rooted in financial gain and illicit desire. With the central male hero, Edgar Mandelbert, Burney moves away from the effeminate, excessive sentimentality of Mortimer in *Cecilia*, and toward a silent,

restrained male hero. In creating this character, I argue that Burney paves the way for the Austenian hero. Once again, we see in Burney's work the pervasive fear of exploitative figures that in turn responds to broader cultural and social changes around the idea of advantageous marriages and women's precarious legal status while on the marriage market.

Turning to the contested and evolving divide between the professional classes and gentlemen, chapter three examines the failure of the law to protect both men and women in the politically repressive period of 1790s England. I argue for a reevaluation of Charlotte Smith's *Marchmont* (1796) as a "political Gothic" novel in the vein of William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1793). In Smith's examination of legal abuses, there is also a larger preoccupation with new definitions of respectability and the diminishing stature of the gentleman embodied in the dispossessed Marchmont. Smith's novel addresses the social threat that the upwardly mobile lawyer posed to the status of the country gentleman. To contextualize the thread of corruption and fear that exists in Smith's depiction of lawyers, I adumbrate a history of legal representations in eighteenth-century satire, poems and plays. *Marchmont* demonstrates the complex link between aspiring gentlemen lawyers and ruined heirs. With the poor and exiled Marchmont, I contend that Smith suggests a new model for gentlemanly behavior that does not rely on estates or money, but instead on a cosmopolitan identity. Marchmont wants to be considered a gentleman because he exemplifies masculine virtues such as generosity, sincerity and honor, while the new class of professional gentlemen, like the "monstrous lawyers" of the novel, represent a corrupt, distorted inverse of these characteristics. However, Marchmont, by emphasizing his innate value over his diminished circumstances through excessive pride, becomes both a Gothic hero *and* villain. Smith's own set of concerns about predatory men departs from Burney's in her emphasis on the marginal zone between the professions and the

gentry, and the damaging effect this masculine gray area has on women, who are unable to seek personal or legal protection from either model of gentleman.

Continuing the discussion of the pernicious practices of the male professional classes, chapter four centers on the friction between theory and practice in Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* (1805). A *roman à clef* of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin's relationship, Opie also criticizes Godwinian philosophy, especially his philosophy of sincerity, as a subversive influence on society. Using the discourse histories from the previous chapters as a contextual basis, I argue that Opie's novel is a junction text, which factors in the concerns of the earlier Romantic writers while anticipating the work of the forthcoming "second generation" of women writers, as various masculine types converge. Opie employs the fortune hunter, lawyer, and effeminate male to paint a picture of dangerous men encircling the heroine. In the formulation of the philosopher as lover in the character of Glenmurray, the novel also exposes the harmful effects of believing in the seemingly innocuous promises of the intellectual male. Although the stereotypical model of the libertine is still a threat in the character of Sir Patrick, the intellectual lover is harmful in his inability to protect, morally and legally, the heroine. I situate Opie's novel as part of a larger conversation in the Romantic period, in which older models of masculine aggression are still dominant, but are incrementally being replaced by a new model of masculine rectitude and responsibility, one that looks forward to the Austenian hero. This modification and modernization in Romantic-era masculine behavior signals the advent of two complicated, but also compelling heroic types.

Chapter I: Dominos and Devils: Heroic Failures in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*

It is a sad day for romance when the hero repeatedly lives up to the epithets “baby” and “puppet.”⁶ Mortimer Delvile, the hero in Frances Burney's second novel *Cecilia*, demonstrates that the possibility of an ideal gentleman is a fantasy. Unlike the polite gentility of Lord Orville in *Evelina*, Burney's decision to create a weak hero in *Cecilia* suggests a conscious strategy to work against generic assumptions in refusing to present a man worthy of marrying the young heiress. Cecilia meets gamblers, men of the world, fops, madmen, and mamas' boys. All of her possible suitors must contend with the name clause in her uncle's will: to marry the beautiful and rich heiress, her future husband must also be willing to take her surname. As a result, Mortimer Delvile, the most suitable of men, is also the least eligible because the problematic nature of the name clause forces Mortimer to choose between his family – his position as the only son and heir to the Delvile title – and Cecilia. It thrusts him into a conflict with his mother, who is psychologically stronger, and a more attractive character, than her son. More importantly, the name clause launches Mortimer into a crisis of masculine identity that frequently threatens to undermine his status as the hero of the novel.

Feminist scholars have tended to concentrate on Cecilia's difficulties navigating the patriarchal socioeconomic world of fashionable London life and have analyzed Burney's sociocultural commentary on late eighteenth-century England.⁷ However, part of Cecilia's

⁶ Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress*, ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Doody (1782; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 515.

⁷ See Margaret Doody, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney And The Politics Of Women's Writing* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Act of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); Joanne Cutting-Gray, *Woman as "Nobody" and the Novels of Frances Burney* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992); Susan C. Greenfield, "Money or Mind? *Cecilia*, the Novel, and the Real Madness of Selfhood," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 33 (2004): 49-70; Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, And Sentimentality in The 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Catherine Keohane, "'Too Neat for a Beggar': Charity and Debt in Burney's *Cecilia*," *Studies in the Novel*, 33, no. 4 (2001):379-401; Cynthia Klekar, "Her Gift Was Compelled": Gender and the Failure of the "Gift" in *Cecilia*," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 18, no.1

difficulties stem from her relationship with Mortimer and her friend Mr. Monckton, two characters who offer contrasting representations of “effeminate” men in the novel. By shifting the critical focus to representations of masculinity in the novel, I investigate why these two men emerge as the principle suitors for Cecilia, the insecure, and even effeminate hero in Mortimer and the genteel but corrupt Monckton. These two characters embody the conflict between refinement and manliness in men’s failures to live up to impossible masculine ideals. Mortimer is a weak, blank canvas of masculine identity, symbolized by both his domino costume in the masquerade scene and evident in his inability to choose between family and love.⁸ Monckton in his devil costume is a duplicitous combination of refinement and insincerity. In this chapter, I argue that Burney presents the problematic nature of the refined male as both too aggressive *and* too weak, too manly *and* too polite. I begin by discussing the relationship between effeminacy and eighteenth-century notions of masculinity, as well as the refinement of male manners. This crisis of masculinity is a determining factor in the eligibility of Cecilia’s suitors because politeness and facility in conversation are integral components of her reception of particular men; this crisis also proves crucial in understanding the multiple models for the behavior of male characters in the novel. I then analyze the novel’s masquerade scene, before turning to Lady Honoria’s scathing satirical dissection of Mortimer, and conclude with a discussion of Burney’s conflation of Mortimer and Monckton, the domino and devil figures. By examining the conflict

(2005):107-126; Katharine M. Rogers, *Frances Burney: The World of ‘Female Difficulties’* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); Kristina Straub, *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987); Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Barbara Zonitch, *Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in The Novels of Frances Burney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997).

⁸ For discussions of sensibility, see for example, Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986); John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

between politeness and manliness, manifest in the conduct of Mortimer and Monckton, I explore the complex reasons why there is no real hero worth marrying in Burney's novel.

I

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, effeminacy was linked to weakness, affectation and making oneself a slave to love, and embodiments of effeminacy ranged from the “dominated milquetoast to the elegant ‘ladies man.’”⁹ Given its multiple implications, to associate the term “effeminate” with “fop” is to limit its associations for masculinity. For Philip Carter, the foppish man was overtly heterosexual, and in his attention to dress and women, was seeking female attention.¹⁰ Fops, it was believed, helped promote artificial and affected behavior in their attempts to seem superior, both in elegance and refinement, to their peers. Effeminacy, therefore involved behaviors that undermined the classical male virtues of sense, hardiness, heroism, assertiveness, firmness and self-control.¹¹ An effeminate man was seen as a “male falling away from the purposeful reasonableness that is supposed to constitute manliness, into the laxity and weakness conventionally attributed to women.”¹² This confusion led to a certain difficulty in distinguishing politeness from effeminacy, which shared the same codes of speech and behavior.

Politeness was problematic for masculinity in the eighteenth century, “because it blur[red] gender boundaries with its emphasis on softening, pleasing and polite (that is

⁹ Susan Shapiro, “Yon Plumed Dandebrot: Male ‘Effeminacy’ in English Satire and Criticism,” *The Review of English Studies*, 39, no. 155 (1988), 402. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, effeminacy was associated with “weakness, softness, delicacy, enervation, cowardice,” but less commonly associated with a deviant form of heterosexuality, marked by “subservience to a wife or mistress, lecherousness, or the compulsive pursuit of sexual experience to the neglect of more ‘manly’ activities” (401-402).

¹⁰ Philip Carter, “Men About Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society” in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (Longman: New York, 1997), 34.

¹¹ Carter, “Men About Town” 53.

¹² Alan Sinfield, quoted in Philip Carter’s “An ‘Effeminate’ or ‘Efficient’ Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary,” *Textual Practice* 11, no. 3, (1997): 431.

fashionable) conversation.” English gentlemen thus questioned whether they could be manly and polite.¹³ However, advice literature from the eighteenth century stressed that men should converse with women to soften the rough edges of masculine conversational skills, eschewing taciturnity and impolite topics. A man who could not converse with ease lacked the air of a refined gentleman. On the other hand, the ability to hold a conversation was the sign of a gentleman, but to lose control of his emotions or become too verbose was to risk a charge of effeminacy.

Moreover, a central element of refined masculinity, a man’s ability to converse, remained problematic because of its gendered associations. Politeness is based on conversation, and while conversation was essential to men’s “self-fashioning as gentlemen,” facility in conversation was considered “effeminating not just because they could be achieved only in the company of women, but because they were modelled on the French.”¹⁴ Cohen links the creation of the fop to an adoption of French manners, arguing that the fop becomes Frenchified through his aping of both conduct and language. Addison once used the terms “levity” and “vivacity” to describe France, and also “to differentiate English women from English men, counterposing female vivacity and airiness to male gravity and severity.”¹⁵ Men who displayed these attributes in their conversation were thought foppish. English gentlemen had to contend with avoiding being thought both too French and too effeminate. More pertinent to the larger aims of this chapter is Cohen’s discussion of English taciturnity and the fear of effeminizing loquacity. It was feared that men who emulated female conversation would descend into unrestrained, uncontrollable babble; in other words, become effeminate.

¹³ Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (Routledge: London, 1996), 53.

¹⁴ Michèle Cohen, “Manliness, Effeminacy, and the French.” In *English Masculinities 1660-1800*. ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen. (Longman: New York, 1999), 46, 47.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

Despite the polite education men could receive from women's conversation, women were thought to produce sprightly chatter, an ongoing babble that clearly was a gendered practice. While politeness demanded that gentlemen hold conversations in mixed company, demonstrating ease and goodwill, it also encouraged them to avoid "French smatterings [...] and talk[ing] too much."¹⁶ The rattling discussion of the fop separates him from other men, and, in his identity, we see the "dilemma and danger of politeness: in becoming polite, one risked forfeiting one's identity as *English* and as a *man*."¹⁷ Polite men were able to distinguish themselves from boorish men and from women primarily through conversation. Part of refining the manners of men and converting them into polite individuals capable of being at ease in mixed gender groups was the ability to converse, maintaining what Richard Steele recommended, "'good Judgement' and to avoid 'giving Offence'."¹⁸ Jonathan Swift in "Hints Toward an Essay on Conversation," recommended that conversation with women would "lay a Restraint upon those odious Topicks of Immodesty and Indecencies, into which the Rudeness of our Northern Genius, is so apt to fall."¹⁹ Self-control was a key component of refinement, and it began to give way to "more expressive forms of social interaction, embodying sensibility," leading to the mid-century man of feeling.²⁰

The dividing line between manliness and effeminacy was a tricky one, prompting men to directly tackle the question of what constituted masculine identity. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, worried about what it meant to be a man, as memorably articulated in his personal notes:

¹⁶ Cohen "Manliness, Effeminacy, and the French," 51.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Qtd. in Carter, "Men about town", 50.

¹⁹ Qtd in Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*, 29.

²⁰ Carter, "An 'effeminate' or 'efficient' nation?", 439.

But how then not a child? How least like woman? How far from beast? [...] How properly a *man*? [...] A man, and not a woman; effeminate, soft, delicate, supine; impotent in pleasure, in anger, talk; pusillanimous, light, changeable, etc; but the contrary to this in each particular. — A man, and not a beast: [...] but sociable as the creatures that live in society and have a public. — A *man*, and not a child: [...] The contraries: Manhood, manliness, humanity – manly, humane, masculine.²¹

This anxiety, manifested in the question, “How properly a *man*?,” demonstrates the limitations of using such binary and gendered oppositions; a man is either defined by feminine qualities, “soft, delicate,” cowardly, and unsteady, or must be the “contrary” in each instance. If we follow Shaftesbury’s logic, man must negotiate a spectrum of behavior, avoiding being beastly, childlike, or womanly. Even the succession of terms, “Manhood, manliness, humanity,” is followed by what can be read only as more acceptable and polite terms and ways of being, “manly, humane, masculine.” Shaftesbury’s concern indicates a fear of being “effeminate” and also being considered too undisciplined, or even beastly. The question, “How properly a man?” could be answered by modifying one’s behavior through social interactions with the opposite sex. James Boswell also pondered these questions in his journals, since manliness covered a “range of attributes — sense, self-control, moderation, independence, refinement and sentiment,” but was also contingent and molded by other aspects of a man’s identity, such as his social status.²² Manliness could encompass these classical virtues, but also drift toward what Shaftesbury feared as being too feminine, overly soft, elegant and refined.

The debate over effeminacy raged throughout the eighteenth century, as a “subject for intellectual debate; emerging as a cornerstone of civic ideology and rhetoric.”²³ John Brown’s influential *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757) helped spur the debate

²¹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen* ed. Benjamin Rand (London: Macmillan, 1900), 216-217.

²² Philip Carter, “James Boswell’s Manliness,” in *English Masculinities*, 126. Boswell is an interesting study in manliness, since he struggled with the conflicting allure of playing the blackguard, and emulating what he saw in Samuel Johnson’s politeness and social ease.

²³ Carter, “An ‘effeminate’ or ‘efficient’ nation?,” 431.

through his argument that effeminacy was linked to wealth and luxury, associating effeminate behavior with a decline in conduct and the corruption of the nation. He feared that excessive wealth and luxury contributed to “vain, luxurious and selfish effeminacy,” which would undermine the British moral constitution.²⁴ John “Estimate” Brown’s definition of effeminacy was grounded in the “vain and Empty Mind,” a result of “the pursuit of fashionable ‘Parties of Pleasures’” in a society that sought entertainment in gambling, Italian opera, and the very feminine activity of tea-drinking.²⁵ One of Cecilia’s guardians, the dissipated and spendthrift Mr. Harrel, perpetrates the kind of selfish and self-destructive effeminacy that Brown inveighs against.

James Fordyce, in his *Addresses to Young Men* (1777), also addressed the association of effeminacy with decadence and loss of control in his advice to young men. Echoing Brown, he decried the exchange of manly virtues like “strictness, hardiness, and noble spirit” for “selfish and vicious effeminacy.”²⁶ Fordyce suggests that effeminacy begins because young men are pampered in the nursery, “by a cruel indulgence of those desires, passions, fancies, and humours, which should be early checked and regulated.” Because they are coddled and flattered, they become “debilitated, and their minds debased: they are rendered children for life, disqualified to endure fatigue, [...] apt to be deranged by the slightest accident, and discomposed by the least contradiction.” Rather than exercise manly strength and fortitude, these young men are “violent, vain, capricious, headstrong.”²⁷ They thus become, Fordyce argues, “those distorted beings called fops, fribbles and coxcombs,” outfitted not with amiable manners or stoic resolve, but

²⁴ John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, 1757), 2:29.

²⁵ Carter, “An ‘effeminate’ or ‘efficient’ nation?”, 433.

²⁶ James Fordyce, *Addresses to Young Men* (Dublin, 1777), 2:115.

²⁷ Fordyce, 2:130.

with “lax nerves, the ludicrous decorations, the affected jargon, [...] the courtly simper, the soft insipidity” of the macaroni.

In his *Addresses*, Fordyce criticizes Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, and his *Letters to His Son* (1774), which suggest a measure of politeness and refinement that borders on effeminacy. Chesterfield’s letters recommend that his son “master [...] the art of pleasing,” since “politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life.”²⁸ Disagreeing with Chesterfield’s advice “to shine, to flatter, to be flattered, and to rise, at whatever expense of truth, of rectitude [...] are held up as the highest ends of existence,” Fordyce believes it contemptible for a man to fashion himself into “a merely courtly artificial being.”²⁹ To avoid being a “piece of polished machinery,” men had to learn to be polite, while avoiding any charges of effeminacy or foppery. Fordyce’s language reflects his disdain for refined men like Chesterfield, who are “courtly, artificial,” and “shine, flatter.” Stanhope and Fordyce represent different solutions to the intractable problem that Shaftesbury voices in his question “How properly a man?” Effeminacy and manliness diverged and converged, tenuously and intricately, in the new model of refined masculinity. Novels, like Burney’s *Cecilia*, and her portrait of Mortimer reflect the same kind of insistent, open-ended questioning as Shaftesbury of “ideal” and “normative” masculinity.

II

In *Cecilia*, Burney introduces a variety of eighteenth century masculinities in her social groupings, demonstrating an intervention in the eighteenth-century debate concerning fops and effeminacy. John “Estimate” Brown’s indictment of an effeminate and luxurious nation is reflected in the self-destructive extravagant expenditures of the Harrels and the greed of Sir

²⁸ Lord Chesterfield, quoted in Patricia L. Hamilton, “Monkey Business: Lord Orville and the Limits of Politeness in Frances Burney’s *Evelina*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 424.

²⁹ Fordyce, 2:145-46.

Robert Floyer, who seek pleasure and entertainment in the vapid pursuits of gambling, parties and debauchery. Meadows, Morrice, and Captain Aresby exhibit varying degrees of foppish airs and affectation. Equally undesirable is the excessive refinement of the man of feeling, who loses his identity in trying to conform to dueling social injunctions. Until the death of her uncle and the beginning of her entrance into the world, Cecilia's social life has been limited to the country. Burney introduces Monckton as Cecilia's neighbor, friend, and a Chesterfieldian example of a pleasing, socially acceptable gentleman, who uses politeness to mask his predatory self-interest. From the start, Monckton is depicted as a mercenary fashionable man, who married a rich dowager to supplement his limited income as a younger son. In what reads like a narrative precursor to Jane Austen's *Emma*, we learn that Cecilia has known Monckton "half her life," and as an adult, she considers him "an amiable acquaintance" (8). Yet the narrator informs us that Monckton is the novel's scheming villain, who looks upon Cecilia "as his future property" (9). His only redeeming quality is his ability to carry a conversation and serve as a source of information and entertainment. His manners and conduct disguise his desires, and his ability to mimic the rhetoric of polite conversation conceal his dishonesty and self-interest. Monckton reveals the flaws in a logic of masculinity predicated on the appearance and the assumption that with gentlemen, what you see is what you get.

Monckton also portrays how politeness and conversation become tools for predatory behavior. Seeing every man in Cecilia's social circle as a rival, he is aware of how the performance of good breeding can affect Cecilia's judgment of these men. He is one of the few male characters in the novel who engages in pleasing and polite conversation with Cecilia. But Monckton's conversation and behavior are performative, tailored to his particular audience. Under the guise of a friend, he advises Cecilia to "judge nobody from appearances; form no

friendship rashly,” yet this concern is prompted solely by his desire for her fortune (18). While he hides his insincerity with the politeness of his manners, other male characters are careless and coarse in their discourse with women. Sir Robert Floyer prefers the rakish model, choosing not to modify his behavior and topics of conversation in the company of women.³⁰ Instead, he talks about “horse-racing, losses at play, and disputes at gaming-tables, [...] comparative strictures upon celebrated beauties, hints of impending bankruptcies, and witticisms upon recent divorces.” These topics become, for his intended target Cecilia, either unintelligible, or regarding the salacious nature of divorce cases, “disagreeable to her” (34). Unlike Monckton, Sir Robert takes “little pains [...] to converse with her,” and “the invariable assurance and negligence of his manners” confirms his indifference to Cecilia’s feelings (59). Upon being questioned by Mr. Gosport in the theatre, “Have you talked to [Cecilia]?” Sir Robert responds “one never thinks of talking to the women by way of trying them.” He prefers to let “women take all that trouble upon themselves now,” arguing that “laziness” governs the level of attention paid to women, because “Who the d —— I will fatigue himself with dancing attendance upon the women, when keeping them at a distance makes them dance attendance upon us?” (39-40). Sir Robert’s “laziness” is in direct contrast to Monckton’s studied efforts to “dance attendance” upon Cecilia. Both men, in different ways, problematize the performative nature of masculinity.

In this novel, conversational skills as a measure of identity always seems to be untrustworthy. In the case of Mr. Arnott, a childhood friend of Cecilia and the milquetoast brother of Mrs. Harrel, polite conversation becomes repetitive and boring. Emphasizing his unsuitability by making his name a play on the words *Are-not*, Burney makes him an awkward gentleman, ill-suited for conversation: “he talked, indeed, upon no new subject; and upon the old

³⁰ For a discussion of the role of conversation in Burney’s novels, see Christina Davidson, “Conversations as Signifiers: Characters on the Margins of Morality in the First Three Novels of Frances Burney,” *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 8, no. 2 (2010): 277-304.

one, of their former sports and amusements, he had already exhausted all that was worth being mentioned; [...] it employed his thoughts, regaled his imagination, and enlivened his discourse” (30). His love for Cecilia impedes his ability to engage her attention. Mr. Arnott is this novel’s Lord Orville; his conversation reveals the limits of such a model of gentlemanly conduct. In volume one, before she meets Mortimer, Cecilia believes at that point in time that Mr. Arnott is the only man who would be a suitable match, but in a novel supporting companionship, sympathy and mutual love, Arnott inspires little of these. In turn, Monckton sees and fears every eligible bachelor as a threat and rival, excepting Mr. Arnott. Little does he realize that these possible suitors are not the most agreeable or polite of men, as Cecilia finds most of them too foppish or boring. Cecilia’s judgment of men is that conversation and moral value are independent qualities.

III

The masquerade chapter reveals the power of conversation as an identifying marker of masculinity and refinement, and signals the beginning of the novel’s defining rivalry between Mortimer and Monckton. In this chapter, the masquerade is the place where Shaftesbury’s relational terms, “A man, and not a beast,” and “A man, and not a child” become germane to these two flawed and unsuitable characters. For Terry Castle, the masquerade “provides the perfect stage for the acting out of powerful illicit desire,” a place where “Everyone is determined to be bad.”³¹ It is a devil, who manages to clear “a semi-circular space before [Cecilia’s] chair, [...] and then fiercely plant[s] himself at her side.” Revealing his desire to secure Cecilia all to himself, Monckton unveils his inner self through his symbolic link to his disguise. Dressed all in black with cloven feet and horns, he embodies his devilish intentions and, without knowing who

³¹ Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1986), 262.

is detaining her, Cecilia “felt no great delight in his guardianship” (107). Monckton’s behavior during the masquerade converts him from a man to a beast.

The two male rivals are distinguished by their costumes and competing roles. Monckton’s disguise signals the artifice of politeness through the limits of sincerity, as his usually pleasing manner is undercut by his true colors. Through intimidation and physical agility, the devil maintains “all authority in his own hands, and [...] no one again venturing to invade the domain he thought fit to appropriate for his own,” until the emergence of his new rival, Mortimer (108). Paired against the morally tarnished and growling devil, Mortimer Delvile appears as the white domino: talkative, flirty and doubly disguised. Mortimer uses his costume to disguise his identity and to permit him to address Cecilia on familiar terms. Both men distort the larger game that is played at the masquerade of “Do you know me?,” since Monckton’s voice would immediately reveal him, and Mortimer’s voice, unknown to Cecilia, makes the game moot. While Monckton cannot risk losing Cecilia’s attention and favor by openly demonstrating his inappropriate attentions, Mortimer can safely reveal his curiosity and attraction in his conversation.

Like the devil costume, Mortimer’s disguise as the domino reveals his character and position on the spectrum of masculinity. Venetian in origin, the domino costume was ideal for “intrigue, love, adventures, conspiracy,” aiding the illicit allure of masks because it was unisex. The domino costume was a staple of masquerades, and was often an all black gown with a “bahoo, a kind of hood [...] [that goes] forward over the mask.” To come dressed as a domino, however, meant that the individual “did not want the bother of acting the part necessitated by the wearing of character dress,” and, as the fad for masquerades diminished by the end of the

eighteenth-century, the domino became a more popular choice.³² Mortimer's decision to dress as the domino suggests both his lax attitude toward playing a part, and more importantly, his chief goal: to foster intrigue, courtly love and adventure, as he conspires to become better acquainted with Cecilia.

Accoutered as the white domino, and signaling his commonplace, but singular nature, Mortimer situates himself as the anti-Monckton. He announces his position to Cecilia with the declaration, "you will find me as inoffensive as the hue of the domino I wear" (116). His behavior emerges as the opposite of Monckton's aggression and violence, enabling him to stand out from the crowd of suitors as a non-threatening young man. He offers an alternative, a "Grandisonian ideal of heroism and masculinity," the blankness of his costume suggesting "the ways in which identity must be constructed through self-fashioning."³³ Yet, over the course of the novel, Mortimer confuses and vexes Cecilia. In this respect, Doody reads the costume as an indicator of Mortimer's inability to don the role of a suitor and romantic hero: the costume

reveals [...] his desire to remain innocent, uncommitted, uncontaminated. [...] his blank appearance is a good indicator of the young man's dependence on others to supply an identity for him, and of his inability to give himself away. [...] at a deeper level of the novel he is pleading to her to help him find an identity. In some ways, he badly needs rescuing.³⁴

While I agree that the costume demonstrates Mortimer's inability to be his own man, its unisex nature seems to symbolize his compromised masculine identity. If his costume allows Mortimer to remain "innocent, uncommitted, uncontaminated," then it also renders him culturally effeminate because those words suggest a feminine quality to his indecisive attitude. Even as he protects Cecilia from the possessiveness and sexual advances of Monckton, Mortimer distances

³² Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730-1790, and its relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (Garland: New York, 1984), 29-30.

³³ Megan Woodworth, "If a man dared act for himself": Family Romance and Independence in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 22, no. 2 (2009): 366.

³⁴ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 134.

himself from the aggressive masculinity exhibited by other men. Danger lies in his desire to be nothing at all, and his undetermined nature forces Cecilia to deduce who he is, both for him and for her. The domino costume is a blank canvas on which Cecilia can project – or create – the idealized version of a charming, witty hero. But she can do so only if we apply Shaftesbury’s spectrum of masculinities, because Mortimer’s conduct situates him as a child and not a man.

The masquerade reveals the extent to which any male character can become a devil or a domino. Monckton’s ineffectual attempt to secure Cecilia’s company and keep other men at bay adumbrates his narrative arc. Later in the novel, he subtly reveals his disguise by acknowledging that preventing Cecilia’s marriage can be accomplished only through a “design black, horrible, and diabolical! a design which must be formed by a Daemon” (765). Intentionally becoming a “tormentor,” Monckton overplays his hand, and the “violence” of his role-play instead generates Cecilia’s “disgust and indignation” (123- 4). Although Monckton has to guard his identity through physical disguise and silence, his displays of violence, and possessiveness allow him to deflect those negative characteristics onto other men whose behavior in fact fits his disguise. Cecilia believes the devil is Sir Robert Floyer, whose predatory behavior in her mind best matches the costume. The same confusion is evident when she cannot identify the domino, believing him to be Belfield, the only other suitor who might protect her from Floyer. By associating one type of behavior with one man, Cecilia incorrectly presumes that men are typecast in terms of their masculinity. The devil is linked to rapacious, lusty intent, a dark desire for power, money, privilege and sex, while the domino is associated with blankness, ambiguity, and a reining in of desire.

Whereas Monckton’s presence elicits frustration and fear, Mortimer’s disguise generates interest through its very ambiguity. His costume allows him to court Cecilia, provoking her

curiosity, while also demonstrating his precarious position as a suitor. Aware of the name clause and the near impossibility of a union with Cecilia, Mortimer still pursues her. Garbed as a domino, Mortimer is a blank slate, seeking definition outside of himself, and his speech patterns reveal the instability of his masculine identity. Rather than effectually taking leave, his parting speech merely signals his more general emotional indecisiveness and dependence:

You think, perhaps, I shall never be gone? And indeed I am almost of the same opinion; but what can I do? Instead of growing weary by the length of my stay, my reluctance to shorten it increases with its duration; and all the methods I take, whether by speaking to you or looking at you, with a view to be satiated, only double my eagerness for looking and listening again! I must go, however; and if I am happy, I may perhaps meet with you again — though, if I am wise, I shall never seek you more! (127)

Instead of assertive statements, he poses questions he cannot answer: “I shall never be gone? ...but what can I do?” His speech is dictated by an inability to be clear and decisive. Mortimer’s reluctance is fueled by an inability to act, and it is manifest in a conflict between staying and going, between a hunger that is not fed, but renewed. Much as Monckton’s acknowledgement that his devilish disguise prevents his intended goal, yet reveals his nefarious designs and desires, Mortimer’s disguise reveals the kind of wavering and indecision that we see in Shaftesbury’s questions to himself.

IV

Mortimer’s costume at the masquerade reveals his dilemma, one that posits not only what it means to be a man, but also what is acceptable behavior for a man. Although his overall demeanor and speech may seem flirtatious and charming, his gallantry reveals a conflicted young man. The talkative domino emerges as a clear favorite, who “leav[es] Cecilia greatly pleased with his conversation and his manners” (238). Over the course of their acquaintance, Cecilia’s attraction is based upon his polite gentlemanliness, and she is “pleased with his deportment and

elegance.” After getting to know him, “she [is] charmed with his disposition and his behaviour; [he is] manly, generous, open-hearted and amiable, [...] kind in his temper, and spirited in his actions” (252). Mortimer’s “mingled sweetness and vivacity” makes his “society attractive and conversation spirited” (171-72). Although these traits are attractive to Cecilia, in the context of masculine identity in the eighteenth century, terms like “sweetness and vivacity” have feminine connotations.³⁵ Margaret Doody describes him as a “very surprising hero in a love-story – so likeable, so nervous, so weak. Never was lover-hero more ruthlessly treated in his own novel.”³⁶ For Ann Campbell, he is “more milksop than rogue.”³⁷ Burney’s descriptions are inconsistent, because he is both “manly” and “generous.” While his initial behavior is appealing, the combination of vivacity and softness results in a hero who is too emotional, too conflicted and too unmanageable in comparison to Monckton.

Mortimer can thus be defined as an effeminate man, an embodiment of a conflicted and struggling masculinity. Part of his conflict is his recognition that he must obey his parents and not pursue Cecilia because of the name clause. His dilemma again recalls Shaftesbury’s question: “How properly a man?” It is this undefined fluctuating identity that afflicts Mortimer. Doody claims that Mortimer’s “virility is ironically threatened by the very institutions which honors only males” and Megan Woodworth argues that Mortimer’s inability to act for himself is a result of his parent’s coddling, and his “connection to land, to name, and to honour make him dependent on the whims of his father and perpetuate a cycle of tyranny.”³⁸ Both readings suggest an even larger, but subtler influence, underscoring the motivations and conflicts of Mortimer and the other male characters in the novel. His conduct, combined with his oscillations between

³⁵ Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinities*, 37.

³⁶ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 135.

³⁷ Ann Campbell, “Clandestine Marriage and Frances Burney’s Critique of Matrimony in *Cecilia*,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 37, no. 2 (2013): 93.

³⁸ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 136; Woodworth, 368-369.

weakness and obstinate anger, suggest that his conflict is not solely political or familial, but rooted in his identity and gender construction.

The best critique of Mortimer's behavior, though, comes from the novel's satirical commentator, Lady Honoria. Unaware that Mortimer's behavior is a consequence of his love for Cecilia and the problematic name clause, Lady Honoria acutely assesses his disposition in her reaction to his pouting. Her analysis is shrewd and cutting because she repeatedly calls him a "baby" and a "puppet" (515). He is a mama's boy. The narrator promotes this reading, rendering Mortimer a veritable man of feeling, but also emotionally manipulative, inconsistent and petulant. Lady Honoria's judgment serves as a warning to the reader to interpret Mortimer as far more dangerous to Cecilia's well-being than any other character in the novel. Paradoxically, he is the best, if not the only suitable candidate for Cecilia's affections. Because of this, the novel is "not essentially a love story," and Mortimer's faults serve to emphasize that one of its major preoccupations is the pressure placed on the individual, including men, by social constraints.³⁹ Cecilia's response to Mortimer is complex, in that she is attracted to his sensibility and quick sympathy, while his unpredictable emotions upset her.

Lady Honoria's comic dissection of Mortimer reveals his parents' problematic treatment of him as the source of his deficiencies. She accurately foresees that anyone who loves Mortimer will be doomed to continual mortification. Her laughter and derision mark the problem with Mortimer as a love interest. He is the weak and indecisive pampered son. Trying to protect Cecilia from a thunderstorm, he exposes himself both emotionally and physically when he claims that her life is "more precious [...] than the air I breathe" (473). As a result, he gets a cold that also symbolizes the conflict between his heart and his family. Cecilia inherently understands this conflict, being in a similar position herself, but Lady Honoria nonetheless offers a valid point

³⁹ Doody, Introduction to *Cecilia*, xxx.

when she says that it is all “the fault of his father and mother,” barely able to stop herself from laughing at the Delviles’ behavior. When she calls Mortimer a “tender chicken” who was not put to “bed by its mama, and nursed,” she highlights the very problem that oppresses Mortimer, who as the only son, must bear the burden of his family line. Arguing for his son as a potential suitor for Cecilia, Lord Ernolf defends the Delviles’ coddling of “the last of so ancient a family,” whereas Lady Honoria perfectly summarizes the predicament: “That is his great misfortune [...] because it is the very reason they make such a puppet of him. If there were but a few more little masters to dandle and fondle, I’ll answer for it this precious Mortimer would soon be left to himself: and then, really, I believe he would be a good tolerable sort of young man” (484). Mortimer’s worst flaw is being a mama’s boy, the sole heir who has been thoroughly effeminized by parental coddling.

In conjunction with his misfortune as the only son, his emotional gloominess and inconsistency render him unattractive and a target worthy of teasing. Desirous of livening up her boring country life, Lady Honoria attempts to recreate the narrative destiny of Burney’s hero and heroine. Drawn to the conventions of romance and novelistic plots mirrored in her daily life, she tries to entertain herself by provoking the boring suitor, Lord Derford, into a duel with Mortimer over Cecilia. Even more so, she attempts to start a scandal by fabricating a story that Mortimer has a mistress, but instead only reveals his deviation from the standard male characters in the novel. She conjures up rumor and half-truth in a feeble attempt to make Mortimer interesting, or at least to supplant what she sees as a non-conventional romance plot. Yet Burney’s intention in this plot device suggests a need to create a devoted, loyal and sympathetic hero. The mistress is revealed to be a gypsy he takes care of, making Mortimer not into a traditional rake with a poor ruined girl and a bastard in the countryside, but into a generous charitable man. However,

because of Lady Honoria's critique, Mortimer emerges as a complex amalgam of hero, lover, and coddled eldest son. The narrative suggests that Cecilia and the reader should be chary of desiring such a union.

Under the oppressive weight of familial duty that compels Mortimer to preserve his family name, we can sympathize with him despite his petulance, impatience and neediness. However, this sympathy has its limit. His seeming inoffensiveness, first noted during the masquerade, veils his inability to be assertive. Desiring to marry Cecilia, he is bound to honor his parents' wishes to forego her. Mortimer is torn between displaying the proper signs of good breeding and controlling his emotions. After the storm, Mortimer falls ill because he cannot decide whether to be the hero or to be rescued, to be a man or a child. In the chapter "An Attack," Mortimer's speeches reveal his inability to be steadfast. Despite trying to hide his emotions, Mortimer acknowledges that "prudence and forbearance have suddenly yielded to surprise and to passion", and his indecision takes the form of his lament to Cecilia, "O were I to paint to you the bitter struggles of a mind all at war with itself — Duty, spirit, and fortitude, combating love, happiness and inclination [...] I could endure it no longer, I resolved by one effort to finish the strife, and to undergo an instant of even exquisite torture, in preference to a continuance of such lingering misery!" (513). Mortimer's language reveals an existential conflict between manliness and effeminacy, as he contends between the manly prerogatives of "duty, spirit and fortitude" and "love, happiness, and inclination." No doubt his struggle is difficult, but his lack of fortitude further emasculates him, especially when his emotional conflict takes the form of his "lingering misery." His attempts at defiance, and exerting those masculine traits of fortitude and strength only make him *seem* heroic.

Mortimer's rattling talk, once part of his charm and attraction, soon becomes a source of frustration for Cecilia because it demonstrates his debilitating effeminacy. After confessing his love and his conflict, Mortimer's speeches reflect his unstable identity. Following Cecilia's emotional confession of her love for him, Mortimer still acts like the domino, unable to stay or go, and his language underscores his lack of resolution: "the longer I stay, the more I am fascinated, and the weaker are those reasoning powers of which I now want the strongest exertion." Rather than leave, he continues to "[repeat] his professions of eternal regard," and worse disregards her "injunctions of going till she was seriously displeased, he only stayed to obtain her pardon, [...] and then, though still slowly and reluctantly, he left her" (550). The same pattern of behavior established at the beginning of their love story remains in place throughout their torturous courtship and even after they are married. He is unmanned by his love and unable to gain mastery over his emotions or his tongue.

More dangerous for Cecilia is Mortimer's need for direction, expressed in his improper language and impertinent behavior. Unable to decide for himself and oppose his parents, Mortimer demands that Cecilia become his "counselor and guide" when he first proposes marriage. Again, his greatest weapon and liability is his discourse. He coerces Cecilia into eloping through two methods: by "almost forcibly preventing her" from leaving, and then through a characteristically dysfunctional exchange: "a short conversation, on his side the most impassioned, and on hers the most confused." He does not allow her to leave until she listens to his proposal. The narrative omits Mortimer's precise language, but informs the reader that Cecilia is overcome because of his "impetuous urgency," through which Mortimer "had long been accustomed to overpower all opposition" (555). In other words, he throws a tantrum until Cecilia is too tired to resist. He insists that he has been consistent and steady, two masculine

traits conspicuously absent from his behavior throughout the novel. Paradoxically, his seeming passivity and good manners become a mode of emotional browbeating. Despite Cecilia's questioning his belief in his own constancy, he repeatedly ignores her injunctions to leave. Incapable of controlling himself and his volubility, Mortimer's speech begins with "I am gone," and ends with the highly improper "Cecilia," an impassioned disregard for decorum. Already cajoled into a secret arrangement, Cecilia cannot bear his impolite behavior, asking him "what language is this! how improper for you to use, or me to hear!" It is his improper language and accompanying behavior that vex Cecilia; he refuses to leave, and like Monckton's turn as the devil, he traps her within the confines of his monologue. Launching into "a thousand times taking leave and returning, promising obedience, yet pursuing his own way," Mortimer stays until he finally "conquered, and at length he departed" (559). Throughout this scene, his effeminate volubility, emphasized by Mortimer's "impetuous" and "impassioned" speech is at odds with the masculine aggression that overpowers her. Through his excessive emotions, Burney is demonstrating a paradoxical conflict: that feeling itself can be a form of masculinist power.

The scene for which Burney claims she wrote the novel – the confrontation between Mrs. Delvile and her son – emphasizes Mortimer's transformation from the civil, charming young man of the early volumes into a petulant, uncontrollable man of feeling.⁴⁰ Further cementing his inability to decide, he believes that only Cecilia's acquiescence to a secret marriage can "save me from the resistless entreaties of a mother, [...] Oh generously save me" (572-73). Mortimer is like a heroine desiring to be freed from the clutches of a tyrannical parent. Rather than exercise manly self-restraint, Mortimer's language and behavior continue to be excessive. He shocks his mother with his behavior, when in a spasm of passion he questions

⁴⁰ Doody, Introduction to *Cecilia*, xxxii.

Cecilia's affections: "tell me without disguise, do you hate, do you abhor me?" Mortimer's emotions erupt and like a child, his rhetoric demands all or nothing from Cecilia. Mrs. Delvile calls him a "hot-headed young man," and condemning his loquaciousness, she commands him, "if you cannot be rational, be silent." Recognizing his intemperate passions, Mrs. Delvile infantilizes Mortimer by scolding him. More importantly, she questions her son's self-fashioning as a noble lover: "What madness and absurdity! I scarce know you under the influence of such irrational violence. Why will you interrupt Miss Beverley in the only speech you ought to hear from her? Why, at once, oppress her, and irritate me, by words of more passion than reason?" (672). She does not recognize her son, whom she once described as "amiable, accomplished, well educated," under the sway of "irrational violence" (673,679). Rather than keep calm, Mortimer is led astray by "more passion than reason," converting him into an emblem of effeminacy.

Following such demonstrations of Mortimer's emotional instability, contrasted by the poise of Mrs. Delvile and Cecilia, Mrs. Delvile attacks his masculine identity in order to bring him back to reason. Not content with offending Cecilia's preference and depicting her son as a man without honor, principle or resolve, Mrs. Delvile triumphs with this *coup de grace*: "How will the blood of your wronged ancestors rise into your guilty cheeks, and how will your heart throb with secret shame and reproach, when wished joy upon your marriage by the name of *Mr Beverley!*" (677). Mortimer already has become effeminate through his uncontrollable emotions, but his mother delivers the final blow to his identity. She also renders his body feminine with a guilty blush and a heart stung with "secret shame." The combination of his mother's stroke and the scare this occasions in him momentarily restore Mortimer to his senses and he admits to Cecilia that he has been "impetuous, violent, unreasonable" (683-4). Aware of his "impatience,

this violence, this inconsistency,” he begs for her forgiveness. Yet, his behavior does not change throughout the rest of the novel, as he oscillates from childishness and effeminacy to beastliness.

V

Cecilia’s rival suitors, while opposites at the start – domino and devil – are very much two sides of the same coin. In the final volume, Mortimer and Monckton’s rivalry comes to a dangerous conclusion. After marrying Cecilia, Mortimer continues to display ungentlemanly traits, because his inability to control his emotions drives him into a duel with Monckton. The same young man who in volume one attempted to prevent a duel now engages in one, despite his claim to “hold duels in abhorrence, as unjustifiable acts of violence, and savage devices of revenge.” Doody argues that this is an “overflourish of virility after long passivity.”⁴¹ This “overflourish” is characteristic of his inconsistent and tempestuous behavior, as demonstrated by Mortimer’s being “transported with passion” and “not master of [his] reason” (845). Until this contest, Monckton remains suave, prepossessed, polite and as pleasing as possible, even when confronted with the frustration of his desires and the news of Cecilia’s engagement. Monckton uses all of his resources in “checking [...] the violence of those emotions to which his sudden and desperate disappointment gave rise, and which betrayed him into reproaches so unskilful, he endeavoured to recover his accustomed equanimity, and assuming an air of friendly openness” (580). Always master of his emotions, Monckton is unlike Mortimer because he purposely uses emotional “self-denial” in the pursuit of his self-interests; his manipulation of the “refinements of hypocrisy, and the arts of insinuation” ensure that no one suspects his behavior (578-79). Nonetheless, the duel pits these two characters against each other through their irrational anger and dangerous masculinity. Driven to defend Cecilia’s honor, Mortimer initiates the duel because he feels Monckton’s “insolence joined with guilt had robbed me of all forbearance.” Monckton

⁴¹ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 142.

and Mortimer's mutual dissatisfaction and anger, "the frenzies of rage," result in this ironic display of courage and male aggression (845). For Mortimer, this unexpected eruption of aggression is merely the converse of his inability to control his emotions.

Immediately afterward, Mortimer returns to his usual indecisive, effeminate self, further proof that his masculine identity remains unstable. He turns to Cecilia to help him determine a course of action, or rather, to instill in him with the masculine traits of fortitude and assertiveness. Asking her "aid me now with your counsel, or rather with your instructions; I am scarce able to think for myself, and to be thought for by you, would yet be a consolation that would give me spirit for any thing," Mortimer places Cecilia in the seat of his reason. Again, he is the domino, back to the blankness of indecision. He pesters his wife with questions, signaling his inability to decide and to act independently in this scenario: "I please nothing but by your direction, to follow that is my only chance of pleasure. Which, then, shall I do? — you will not, now, refuse to direct me?" (846-47). Struck with the news of Monckton's potential demise, Cecilia is unable to think for herself, let alone for Mortimer. But the importunate husband questions her reason and emotions, accelerating the eventual decline of her faculties, "tell me I have not tortured you quite to madness!" Unfortunately, yet not surprisingly, he has. The inoffensive domino becomes a real devil and also a baby, unable to cope with what he has done to his wife: "rescue me from this agony! it is more than I can support!" Rather than compose his nerves and save his wife from mental agony, Mortimer needs saving yet again. We learn that even with such a shock to her system, Cecilia manages to be in a better "condition for reasoning and deliberation" than Mortimer (848). This moment is an obvious reversal of traditional power and intellectual relations within a marriage.

Each man is both domino and devil by turns. They are refined gentlemen, but their displays of aggressive masculinity prove damaging to their wives. Monckton's civility to his wife is lost in the delirious rage with which he abuses her, culminating in her death. The polite and hypocritical Monckton is exposed as a hurtful, resentful beast. Calling Lady Monckton "the cause of all his sufferings, and accus[ing] her as the immediate agent of Lucifer in his present wound and danger," his abusive language is enough to kill her (852). Here, the veneer of polite masculinity is not enough to prevent Monckton from revealing his true feelings. Similarly, Mortimer's politeness is not enough to prevent him from mistreating Cecilia. His inability to control his emotions prove as harmful as Monckton's duplicitous scheming. Mortimer's behavior throughout their courtship and marriage has deviated from the playful, flirty, charming domino into that of a devil, a possessive, jealous guardian, prone to groveling and violence. Both men endanger their wives through their violence, particularly verbal abuse. Cecilia is brought to the brink of death through Mortimer's volatility and volubility. The sweet, vivacious yet completely ineffective Mortimer is exposed as an impetuous and verbally violent man.

During her madness, Cecilia confuses Mortimer for Monckton, a conflation I read as Burney's suggestion that the men are similar, even bordering on interchangeable. In the chapter "An Encounter," Cecilia madly rants about both men. In her wandering mind, both Monckton and Mortimer are her husbands.⁴² She associates Monckton's injury with the imagined death of Mortimer; both incidents follow duels or the threat of a duel. She fears that she will not outlive Monckton and her desire for her remains "to moulder in his hearse" cements this fundamental confusion, namely the underlying semblance between these two men. When Mortimer

⁴² For other readings of Cecilia's madness, see for example Epstein, *The Iron Pen*; Straub, *Divided Fictions*; Greenfield, "Money or Mind? Cecilia, the Novel, and the Real Madness of Selfhood," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 33, (2004): 49-70; Meghan Jordan, "Madness and Matrimony in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 55, no. 3 (2015): 559-578; Jane Kromm, "Olivia Furiosa: Maniacal Women from Richardson to Wollstonecraft," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 16, no.3 (2004): 343-372.

encounters a raving Cecilia, his indeterminate identity is reinforced with her question, “Who are you?” which sends him once again into uncertainty and doubt. This question mirrors the inquiry of the masquerade in volume one, “Do you know me?,” and in this situation, Mortimer is confronted with his own blankness. Cecilia’s declaration, “I thought you had been Mr. Monckton yourself,” suggests that these men are dangerous threats because they cannot embody a fixed masculine identity (906). Mortimer and Monckton resemble one another in their inability to become or properly disguise themselves as friend or foe, threat or lover.

The Burneyan crisis of masculinity comes to full flower in this exchange, and suggests the violence inherent in the inability to live up to an idealized masculine identity. Mortimer’s inability to carry Cecilia, combined with his frail emotional state – the “sight [is] too much for his fortitude, and almost for his understanding” – demonstrate that he cannot settle his abiding inner conflict: to be a physically and emotionally strong, resolute man, or to be overcome by his emotions to the point of collapse (907). Unable and unwilling to be either, he runs out of the pawn shop to find Dr. Lyster, and even when he is comforted by this professional’s advice, he cannot remain in the same room with an increasingly sick Cecilia. While Mortimer feels remorse and sorrow because he sees himself as the cause of Cecilia’s mental state, he does not have enough resolve and strength to bear the consequences. Even with his “manly cheeks [...] burnt with tears of joy,” the sentimental Mortimer is accused, by Cecilia and Dr. Lyster, of being too emotional for anyone’s benefit (921).

Polite masculinity has its limitations, because the “too feeling” hero and the duplicitous and insincere gentleman prove equally dangerous to women and the social order. Mortimer is so overcome by emotions that he is “no longer [...] master of himself or his passions” and needs the assertive, rational hand of Dr. Lyster to help him recover (926). While aware that the

“impetuosity of [his] temper” has resulted in Cecilia’s suffering, Mortimer merely promises to “try to curb it in future by the remembrance of [her] injuries” (930). In contrast, in his letter to Cecilia, Monckton continues to believe he behaved appropriately in intervening between Cecilia and the Delvilles. His behavior is also in keeping with his role as a mentor and friend who is trying to prevent injury at the hands of the Delvilles, a statement that is ironically too true. His villainy remains occluded by his belief in himself as the best possible suitor for Cecilia. Both characters, in trying to live up to the ideal of a refined, polite gentleman, demonstrate that this model is unstable and easily discomposed by external threats to a man’s position in society. Whether these characters embody extremely emotional, effeminate or hypermasculine traits, the novel’s treatment of Mortimer and Monckton, along with those of Harrel, Sir Robert Floyer, and Belfield, suggests that these models of masculine behavior are not socially acceptable. Not only are these manly types dangerous to others, but they trigger intemperate behavior and chaos among themselves.

Lady Honoria, who returns to witness the spectacle of the newly married couple, offers the novel’s final indictment on Mortimer’s unmanly behavior. Her role at the end of the novel can be interpreted as a strategic emphasis on Burney’s part to both criticize and expose truths about Mortimer’s character and Cecilia’s situation. Her presence at the Delvile home is marked by her subtle “curiosity,” in contrast to the pompous “parade” of Mr. Delvile in honoring the new couple (931). Lady Honoria’s earlier fabrication of Mortimer’s having a mistress suggest she is interested in fashioning a narrative, and here, she is invested in a comedic version of tragic circumstances. She is given a critical voice, one that competes with but also reinforces the narrator’s version of events. Lady Honoria already has attempted to write Cecilia’s story, and by imagining Cecilia’s future as Mortimer’s wife, she is completing the dangerous cycle we have

already witnessed. Lady Honoria pities Cecilia, and while her humor can be read as derisive, it is honest, particularly when she states, “as to Mortimer, you will not be able to govern him as long as you live; for the moment you have put him upon the fret, you’ll fall into the dumps yourself” (934). This recipe has already been followed, for Cecilia’s emotional collapse has been a result of Mortimer’s fretting.⁴³ Like Fordyce’s critique of the effeminate man, Lady Honoria knows that the emotionally volatile Mortimer can be “easily deranged and discomposed.”⁴⁴ Mortimer has been and will be unmanageable, and his irrational, inconsistent behavior throughout the novel promises a tedious, exhausting future for Cecilia.

Lady Honoria contends that with such a man of excessive feeling, the idea of a “happily ever after” is an illusion. Rather than congratulate Cecilia, she states, “Though, really, upon second thoughts, I don’t know whether I should not rather condole with her” (936). Mindful of Mortimer’s shortcomings, Lady Honoria perceptively foresees Cecilia’s bleak married life, a reality that almost all Georgian sentimental novels gloss over. Importantly, Lady Honoria is acutely aware of Cecilia’s past, present and future situation and expresses her sympathy in an acknowledgment of the disappointing state of Georgian matrimony. To marry a man who will be easily discomfited and difficult to appease is at best a questionable fate. Mortimer, who promises to curb his unmanly emotions, is emasculated by Lady Honoria’s brutal putdown. The man who cannot govern himself is perpetually fretful and will always be a burden to his wife. Though Mortimer keeps his name, his lack of self-control and his perpetual reliance on Cecilia bring Mrs. Delvile’s worst fear to life – he is *Mr. Beverley*.

⁴³ The origins of *fret* mean to devour; destroy; torment, or of slow and gradual destructive action. The word and its origins are appropriate synonymous companions to Mortimer’s deathly influences. The OED glosses the phrase “*on or upon the fret*” as in a state of agitation, irritation, ill-humour, or impatience and cites *Cecilia* as an example. Samuel Johnson has five definitions of fret, with the fifth meaning “agitation of the mind; commotion of the temper; passion.” *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic by Samuel Johnson*. Edited by Brandi Besalke. http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/?page_id=7070&i=860.

⁴⁴ Fordyce, 2:130.

Chapter II: Players and Posers: The Risky Business of Masculine Desire in Frances Burney's *Camilla*

When gentlemen resemble con artists and when the lover is indistinguishable from the villain, the romantic landscape for women is fraught with danger and violence. Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796) draws on the anxieties produced by inadequate male characters found at home and abroad. In her third novel, Burney brings transgressive behavior home to roost. Brothers and lovers, are modeled on the unfavorable behavior of fortune hunters, fashionable rakes and sharpers. Burney's opening prologue to the novel sets the stage for her characters, who must contend with "the wilder wonders of the Heart of man; that amazing assemblage of all possible contrarieties, in which one thing alone is steady – the perverseness of spirit which grafts desire on what is denied."⁴⁵ The subtitle "picture of youth" captures the complexities of navigating youthful errors, and while feminine errors of propriety are central to the novel, errors committed by male characters are pivotal in Burney's representation of late eighteenth-century life. In *Camilla*, Burney suggests that the adult world of romance is a cruel distortion of the pretend play and seesaw of youth.

Feminist scholars have focused on the tribulations of Camilla and her female relatives in a patriarchal society.⁴⁶ Margaret Doody's reading of the novel as an "anti-love story" and an "enormous spy story" that centers on observation and counterobservation is an astute and

⁴⁵ Frances Burney, *Camilla, or A Picture of Youth* ed. Edward and Lillian Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 7.

⁴⁶ See Margaret Doody, *Frances Burney: A Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Kristina Straub *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987); Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Sara K. Austin, "'All Wove into One': *Camilla*, the Prose Epic, and Family Values", *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, Vol. 29, (2000): 273-298; Katherine Binhammer, "The Economics of Plot in Burney's *Camilla*," *Studies in the Novel*, 43, no.1 (2011):1-20; Barbara Zonitch, *Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in the novels of Frances Burney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997); Jennifer Locke, "Dangerous Fortune-Telling in Frances Burney's *Camilla*," *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 25, no.4 (2013):701-720.

summary interpretation of Burney's third novel.⁴⁷ Both Claudia Johnson and Kristina Straub note the lack of male authority in *Camilla* and its failure to protect the heroines from harm. For Johnson, excessive sentimentality, which has been usurped from the feminine, leads to the problematic function of male characters in the novel. Male authority, as Straub points out, is revealed in the novel to be "a cultural construct of power that masks an essential impotence."⁴⁸ In my reading of masculine desire in the novel, I argue that competing strands of masculinity, demonstrated in the dueling desires of predation and gallantry, are remnants of the children's games that begin the novel. Burney's episodic storytelling lends itself to the seesaw nature of romance. Courtship practices, like the other games of chance in the novel, fosters an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety. It is possible to read this anxiety and the insecurity it engenders as central to the novel.⁴⁹ In its depictions of violence, danger and threats lurking both in public places and on the borders of the family estate, *Camilla* is also an examination of the social upheaval of the 1790s. In her representation of masculine desire, very much like in *Cecilia*, where the hero is arguably a questionable suitor, Burney continues to prod and poke the suitability of male characters in the marriage market.

The failure of the patriarch extends to male characters misled by social and cultural modes of behavior. In many ways, *Camilla* is an example of what happens when young single men with a fortune seek a wife. The novel anticipates historical shifts in masculine behavior and women's preference for reticence and self-restraint over excessive gallantry. This preference displays an often contradictory response to demonstrations of male desire and female responsiveness to them. An example of the changing romantic landscape during the 1790s occurs

⁴⁷ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 221, 227.

⁴⁸ Straub, *Divided Fictions*, 209.

⁴⁹ Andrea Henderson, "Commerce and Masochistic Desire in the 1790s: Frances Burney's *Camilla*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no.1 (1997): 69-86.

in the central love story in the novel, that of Edgar and Camilla. She rejects the often idealized, but inherently problematic, passionate lover for the cold, respectful regard of a boy next door. A pivotal figure in the insular world of the Tyrold sisters is the ‘boy next door’ Edgar Mandlebert, the ward of Mr. Tyrold. Edgar’s adherence to his tutor’s advice, which reveal a misogynistic bitterness toward women and marriage, robs him of his youthful inclination toward Camilla. He becomes a watchful, suspicious suitor, and his behavior brands him as “the greatest prig in English literature.”⁵⁰ Compared to other characters in Burney’s novels, Edgar may seem too exacting and cold. I suggest that Edgar stands out as a wet blanket because he prefigures the reticent, manly Austenian hero but without that hero’s redeeming qualities.

We can better understand *Camilla* and its depiction of dangerous men by analyzing its emergence out of a nearly century-long discussion in Georgian society concerning vice, crime, gambling, and fortune hunting. Before my analysis of the novel, I outline the discourse history of the eighteenth-century’s fascination with vice and crime, notably in the presence of predatory fortune-hunters and sharpers. Burney’s novel depicts a variety of social types and behavior. The discourse history for this chapter encompasses the long eighteenth century, beginning with *Spectator* articles, then midcentury texts focusing on dangerous social types, and concluding with a ballad published a year after *Camilla*. The novel does not solely depict an “ideal family,” but its secrets: “fraud and blackmail, adultery, elopement, forced marriage, physical and emotional violence, crushing debts and dealings with moneylenders.”⁵¹ Some of these instances play out in the background, while others – violence, debts, moneylenders – and other socially predatory behaviors form a central component of Burney’s “picture of youth.”

⁵⁰ Qtd in Elisabeth Rose Gruner, “The Bullfinch and the Brother: Marriage and Family in Frances Burney’s *Camilla*,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93.1 (Jan. 1994).

⁵¹ Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters’ Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 132.

I

My aim in examining disparate texts from the period is to contextualize Burney's preoccupation with illicit, but also customary, desires found in male characters like Lionel Tyrold, Camilla's brother, and Alphonso Bellamy, to gamble and engage in predatory behavior. These various works take into account the development of polite society in England, centered on contemporary debates about gambling, fortune hunting and generalized vice among the classes. Simultaneously establishing good virtues and ethical norms for behavior, *Spectator* essays outline the inappropriate forms of foolish and profligate social types. The *Spectator's* satiric approach to social behavior illustrates a manly inducement to live up to certain social standards. Some men may have felt compelled to affect particular aspects of gentlemanly, or ungentlemanly, behavior. In an August 27, 1711 letter, Simon Honeycomb explains his need to pose as a rake because it is the only way to attract ladies. He states "the Reasons why I was forced to wench, drink, play, and do everything which are necessary to the Character of a Man of Wit and Pleasure, to be well with the Ladies." His chief inducement came from being thought a virgin and having his identity and masculinity come under scrutiny; he applies himself to becoming an impudent rake by traveling every season to each resort town. Simon claims that a sober man is "looked upon by both Sexes as a precise unfashioned Fellow of no Life or Spirit." The main appeal in becoming a "Man of Spirit" is that loose principles and immoral behavior "carried all before them in Pretensions to Women of Fortune," yet he acknowledges that, "In due Process of Time I was a pretty Rake among the Men, and a very pretty Fellow among the Women."⁵² In courting the approbation of women, but also of men in the social circles he

⁵² Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 154, August 27, 1711.

frequents, Honeycomb feels compelled to perform a role determined by excess: promiscuity, drinking, gambling, spending and boasting.

While the rake is a fashionable creature who disrupts social codes for the sake of maintaining appearances, the fortune hunter is a morally questionable character. Another *Spectator* essay by Steele from 1712, under the byline “Tom Watchwell” focuses on two satiric figures: the concerned father and the fortune-hunter. This concerned father fears that his daughter, heiress to his estate, could be tempted to run away with “those audacious young Fellows among us, who commonly go by the Name of Fortune-Stealers,” yet are simply “Kidnappers within the Law.” Watchwell describes living in “continual Apprehension of this sort of People that lye in wait, Day and Night, for our Children.” Claiming to keep his daughter a virtual prisoner, he still finds himself alarmed by hearing fiddles in the street, or finding a “tall Irish-Man, that has been seen walking before my House more than once this Winter.” A man without an estate, the modern fortune hunter seizes any opportunity to improve himself, through courting heiresses. The fortune hunter receives further elaboration in a letter dated March 14, 1712 from another watchful father, who calls the current situation a “state of war.” For this father, it is his “Misfortune to have a very fine Park and an only Daughter; upon which account I have been so plagu’d with Deer-Stealers and Fops.” He treats unwanted suitors like poachers by placing fox-gins, or traps, in the garden, but despite his attempts, “every now and then have a saucy Rascal ride by reconnoitring [...] under my Windows, as sprucely drest as if he were going to a Ball.” Frustrated with his inability to prevent the pursuit of his daughter, he tries to enlist Mr. Spectator to promote “a Project I have set on foot; [...] to secure our Daughters by Law, as well as our Deer, [...] to bring in a Bill For the better preserving of the Female Game.”⁵³ In

⁵³ Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 326, Volume IV, Friday, March 14, 1712.

Camilla, Sir Hugh Tyrold worries about the protection of his niece and heiress, Eugenia, who is preyed upon and stalked by a young fortune-hunter, who waits outside “sprucely drest.”

These worries were not merely the fare for middle-class readers of lighthearted magazine articles, but preoccupied the larger public. Published in 1740, the anonymous *Proposals for Redressing Some Grievances Which Greatly Affect the Whole Nation*, recommends the punishment of “vermin Fortune-hunters.” The author provides a supplementary proposal for managing Irish fortune hunters, because it is a matter “of very great Importance to every Family in the Nation.”⁵⁴ His larger fear are the men poaching the wealth attached to great families. The author claims that young women, like England’s wealthy properties, are “a City besieged,” and urges them to “have great occasion to apply your innate virtue and good sense to avoid the flattery, and other snares that are laid for you.”⁵⁵ The best advice offered to these young ladies is to “make a strict Inquiry after all the men who pretend to make their Addresses to you; learn who they are, what is their Temper, what their Birth and Education, what their Fortune and Character in the World.”⁵⁶ Treating fortune hunting as a crime, he recommends these predators should be jailed for their attempts and that marriages with such men should be considered void, thus ensuring that these men retain their low social position.

In 1797, a year after *Camilla*’s publication, a ballad titled “The Irish Fortune Hunters” gathers all of the period’s preoccupations with fortune hunters, crime and punishment. It relates the story of two young Irishmen, Patrick and Ted, who, to avoid starvation, and by implication labor, come to London to “try if their persons and talents / Would not gain the affection of some

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Proposals for Redressing Some Grievances Which Greatly Affect the Whole Nation. With a Seasonable Warning to Our Beautiful Young Ladies against Fortune-Hunters; and a Remedy Proposed in Favour of the Ladies*. (London: 1740), 3, 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 46, 47.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 53-54.

British fair.”⁵⁷ Despite Patrick’s handsome features, he has to dress the part in order to obtain the hand of a rich Dowager. Patrick and Ted, in their pursuit of an heiress, become highway robbers so they can acquire the funds to play the part of a young man of fortune and his servant. Patrick “sporting so gay” and seizes a young widow as his prey. While Patrick and his widow are on a countryside excursion, Patrick and Teddy are accosted by lawmen. In their attempt to climb the social ladder, they pay the price for their transgressions, through Patrick’s death and Teddy’s deportation.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the preoccupation with sharpers, gamblers, fortune-hunters and overall dissipated, criminal lifestyles highlight the fears of inheritances and women, or property being stolen, while also emphasizing the lack of safety and security that should be found within the domestic sphere. In the eighteenth century, guidebooks warn the unsuspecting country person about the criminals to be found in city life, simultaneously providing a voyeuristic glimpse into the seedy underside. Satiric guidebooks like Ned Ward’s *London Spy* (1709) were meant to help unprepared visitors seem like experienced Londoners, fully aware of the cheats and tricks employed by sharpers to ensnare prey. An updated version of the *London Spy*, Richard King’s *New Cheats* (1790), advises readers to “shun these reptiles of creation, fraught with guile, and artful as the serpent to delude,” and to be aware that “many a Sharper lurks under the disguise of our modern fine gentlemen, as daily experience fatally shews.”⁵⁸ These works center on the multiple threats to be found in society, and the need for fathers, daughters and larger governmental institutions to be aware of the men who form the threat. They also convey the problematic nature of a society that creates men who feel compelled

⁵⁷ Anonymous, “The Irish Fortune Hunters” (London: Printed for J. Lee, engraver in brass and wood, No. 68, Hatton-Garden, 1797), l. 5.

⁵⁸ Richard King, *The New Cheats of London Exposed; or the Frauds and Tricks of the town laid open to both sexes. Being a Warning-Piece against the Iniquitous Practices of that Metropolis. Containing a new and clear discovery of all the various frauds and villains that are daily practiced in that great city.* (London, 1790?), 73.

to cheat, steal, deceive women and extort family members in order to maintain or acquire a particular social position or appearance.

These texts also provide insight into an ongoing issue in eighteenth century society – the creation of a masculine identity forged and motivated by ambition into crime, fashioning men who make it their career to dissemble and cheat. In a society governed by dress, fashion, commerce and status, there are many ways to play the part until the desired rank is achieved. Steele and Addison’s impetus to reform an extravagant flamboyant culture through an idealized alternative of refined and sensible tastes and manners was thwarted frequently by a sense of pride in being an unreformed rake, gambler or fortune hunter. Part of establishing a gentlemanly status was a need to gamble, an often “crucial, though to some controversial, component of gentlemanly identity.”⁵⁹ The world of the novel is one of predation, as adventurers of all sorts lurk everywhere, and even the most cautious characters cannot keep these threats at bay. Burney’s novel is “willing to express the disintegration and incoherence that exist not only without, in the social structure [...] but also within the psyche, which is bound to respond to the contradictory messages issuing from society, and to respond in a variety of ways.”⁶⁰ This is made explicit by the conflicted behavior of male characters, who struggle to conform their desires to a governing social or familial impulse.

II

Games and domestic upheaval begin with the arrival of Camilla’s uncle, Sir Hugh, to the neighborhood of the Tyrold family. With his return, the novel’s troubles commence. A wound in Sir Hugh’s side, “occasioned by a fall from his horse,” means he can no longer hunt, which he substitutes with playtime with his nieces and nephews. This change in diversion represents a

⁵⁹ Jessica Richard, *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth Century British Novel*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.

⁶⁰ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 263.

reversal from hunting to the childish antics of dress up and the seesaw. Sir Hugh is “the man of feeling writ large,” and his equivocal nature results from the “affective drag in which sentimentality has invested him.”⁶¹ While Sir Hugh suffers from excessive sentimentality throughout the novel, his ineptitude as an authority figure can be traced back to Camilla’s birthday, when he dresses up like a woman, complete with a cap, apron and baby doll, which he has to “nurse and amuse.” However, he drops the doll, a precursor to a later scene when he loses his grip on Eugenia on a makeshift seesaw. These games are just as dangerous and involve exposing a helpless creature, Camilla’s younger sister Eugenia, to a world of threats. It is through the benevolent guises of family members that these characters facilitate the destruction of the peaceful lives of Camilla and Eugenia.

No longer able to enjoy the vigorous pursuit of a young man, because his body is both injured and riddled with gout, Sir Hugh desires to be a family man. It is this longing to be a loving patriarch that disrupts both gender roles – he transforms himself, through his actions into a child and a woman – and the lives of his kinfolk. By playing with dolls and arranging the future marriages of his nieces and nephews, he no longer embodies manliness. A country gentleman, Sir Hugh lacks the educational aptitude to manage the affairs of his family. Lionel will eventually occupy this role, when he later supplants both his uncle and his father, and attempts to arrange Camilla’s marriage for his personal benefit.⁶² But, due to his inability to care properly for his family members, Sir Hugh unknowingly opens the doors for further instances of speculation, violence and the hunt. With his action, there is an increased risk for “danger and even violence in the family system” and for the possibility that “domestic life is fraught with

⁶¹ Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, 150.

⁶² Gruner, “Bullfinch and the Brother,” 4.

danger.”⁶³ While Sara Austin argues that “*Camilla* is the only Burney novel which provides its heroine with a complete, stable and indeed ideal family,” I argue that this family is far from ideal and stable, because it breeds its own danger and instability.⁶⁴ For Camilla and Eugenia, the men who pose the biggest threats are not only beyond the familial estate, but within it.

A brother and a surrogate brother are two of the internal threats that continually disrupt the stability of the Tyrold family. Camilla’s brother, Lionel is idle and sportive, described as “the zealot for every species of sport, the candidate for every order of whim,” and to satisfy these whims, he entertains himself with his sisters and cousin (79). The only son of Mr. Tyrold, a country parson, Lionel expects to be a gentleman once he inherits the estate of his maternal uncle. Until then, he is a dissipated, entitled man of the world, seeking pleasure and vice wherever he can. On the other hand, Edgar Mandlebert is the ward of Mr. Tyrold, which makes him into a surrogate member of the family. During the childhood years of the Tyrold siblings, Edgar is a serious and mature boy. But as a young man, about to take over his deceased father’s estate, he cuts a gallant figure, until he is faced with a choice of romantic prospects – Indiana or Camilla – when he becomes insecure and doubtful. Against Lionel’s levity and recklessness, Edgar is a model young man.

Children’s games are converted into the adult games of courtship once the Tyrold youths are of age. Early childhood games persist through the tricks and deceptions exercised by other male characters, and exist in Sir Hugh’s fear of his female relatives becoming “prey to some sharper, many such being to be found; especially at horse races and so forth” (372). Camilla and Eugenia, while warned about the dangers in public places and polite society, are ill prepared for their encounters with these social predators. In her chapter, “New Characters” Burney introduces

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Austin, “All Wove into One”, 292.

the Tyrold family to a new set of predators at a public ball, a place where these women confront a new reality in the unfolding of masculine desire. It all begins with Lionel's game, when he incites the curiosity of the officers waiting for the Cleves party to guess which one is the heiress: "I will only tell you she is one of our set, and leave it to your own ingenuity to find her out" (60). Lionel is not only satisfied by setting the officers upon his family, but stimulates their interest by "enumerating the present possessions of Sir Hugh, and her future expectations" (61). Pleased with himself, he tells Camilla, "I have made a fine confusion among the red-coats about the heiress of Cleves! I have put them all upon different scents" (69). Lionel's thoughtlessness sets upon the women various fortune hunters disguised as suitors - Dubster, Major Cerwood, Macdersey and Alphonso Bellamy.

This public event is a microcosm of the rest of society, where heiresses are open to the speculation of potential fortune hunters. Like his uncle, who fails to protect the family, Lionel also does not protect his familial relationships, exploiting and "wantonly sport[ing] with his family's honor" (736). The novel's motifs of hunting, gaming and fortune hunting also lend themselves to the eighteenth century's preoccupation with vice and crime, when the characters' transition to the adult playgrounds of deceptive genteel sport found in balls and resort towns. The public world proves dangerous for those ignorant of the larger game-hunt which dominates social rules and life. Everyone is out for something. The inexperience of the Tyrold women, due to their seclusion and lack of parental advice, exposes them to the violence, humiliation and threats of men on the prowl. Camilla and Eugenia naively and repeatedly stumble into the traps set up by fashionable life. Despite the admonitions to beware of deceitful characters, they are incapable of registering the threat because of the protean nature of these gamesters.⁶⁵ In the

⁶⁵ I am indebted to Jessica Richard for this idea. On page 4 of *The Romance of Gambling*, she quotes Dror Wahrman on identity during this period as "protean and performative, characterized by malleability: the sense that one's

larger scheme, deception and malleability, in seeming like a friend, a suitor, or a brother, is a necessary component of the agenda of individuals willing to take a risk.

In the lives of the Tyrold women, masculine desire is the driving force behind the often complicated and dangerous actions of men. It is in the vein of hunting that Dubster, following the scent of money, sees Camilla as a potential third wife. He ignores “that ugly little body” Eugenia who, according to his standards of beauty, cannot possibly possess “a great fortune” (77). Miss Margland immediately discounts Sir Sedley as an “Irish fortune hunter” because of his foppish dress and airs, but he is only seeking amusement by conversing with Camilla (67). He is described as “dressed so completely in the extreme of fashion, as more than to border upon foppery. [...] there was an archness in the glance of his eye, that promised, under a deep and wilful veil of conceit and affectation, a secret disposition to deride the very follies he was practising” (64). Because of his posturing, Miss Margland interprets his behavior as that of an overly fashionable and incongruously disguised pretender. His appearance, moreover, further obscures that of Bellamy, the novel’s villain and dangerous fortune-hunter. Bellamy is described as a “gentleman now, eminently distinguished by personal beauty, approached the ladies that remained, and, in the most respectful manner, began conversing with Miss Margland” who is impressed with his civility (67). Appearances are deceiving, but more so when good manners and good looks, which Bellamy employs, provide another level of disguise.

The ball enables men to display themselves to advantage, and present themselves as players in the courtship game. It sets in motion much of the novel’s action, while also providing a precursor to the enactment of masculine behavior and practices for these male characters. Sir Sedley’s affectation and Dubster’s need to fit in illustrate the need of men to participate and

personal identity...could be imagined as unfixed and potentially changeable- sometimes perceived as double, other times as sheddable, replaceable, or moldable.”

embody particular models of behavior – the conceited fop or the aspiring gentleman. Bellamy’s facility, in assimilating himself into the higher classes, emphasizes the importance of seeming versus being, which confuses Dubster. These male characters are motivated by a desire to fit in, and by a desire for more money, comfort, or prestige.

An example of Burney’s depiction of the conflict to conform to a type is best seen in Lionel. Unsure whether to be more like his father, or like a typical young man of the world, he vacillates between risky behavior and cautious discretion, as he tells his sisters:

I can be merry and harmless here at the same time, – and so I can at Cleves; – but at Oxford–or in London, – your merry blades there – I can’t deny it, my dear sisters–your merry blades there are but sad fellows. Yet there is such fun, such spirit, such sport amongst them, I cannot for my life keep out of their way. Besides, you have no conception, young ladies, what a bye word you become among them if they catch you flinching (227).

In disclosing his excessive debts and subsequent extortions for his uncle’s money, Lionel also reveals his reasons for joining the “merry blades” in London and at Oxford. In addition to being unable to help himself, Lionel also suggests that a failure to act accordingly is seen as a failure of manhood. By not expressing what sort of “bye word” he would become if his fellow friends catch him “flinching,” Lionel suggests that he has to maintain appearances. Lionel feels pressure to behave according to the standards of the age for young men. His sisters, in turn, cannot comprehend the urge to join these “merry blades” in leading lives of dissipation. Yet, Lionel also suggests that to be part of this society is too difficult, both financially and psychologically.

Burney, in her usual method of posing contrasting ideas, uses the chapter “Modern Ideas of Life” to further develop the basis of Lionel’s need to be a “spark.” While his sisters implore him that his first duty is to “resist such dangerous examples and to drop such unworthy friends,” “Modern Ideas of Life” reveals the stakes which determine Lionel’s identity as a man (227). They do not understand that money is required to fit in and behave like a man of the world, and

not like his father, Melmond, or Edgar. For Lionel, to be a man who pours over “a few musty books, sleeping over the fire, under pretence of study, all day long, [...] like young Melmond, who knows no more of the world than one of you” is akin to effeminacy (240). By comparing the scholarly, romantic Melmond to his sisters, Lionel establishes one of the first differences among the men in the novel – Melmond’s romantic notions and study make him effeminate, sensible, and ignorant of life outside of the domestic space. In response to Camilla’s claim that Melmond is “romantic, amiable and modest,” Lionel further illustrates the difference:

He’s just a girl’s man, just the very thing, all sentiment, and poetry and heroics. But we, my little dear, we lads of spirit, hold all that amazing cheap. I assure you, I would as soon be seen trying on a lady’s cap at a glass, as poring over a crazy old author when I could help it. I warrant you think, because one is at the university, one must all be book-worms (240).

Lionel describes two sorts of men, the man of feeling, and the man of the world. He establishes a baseline for the behavior of other young men in the novel. Society presents Lionel with several models of behavior, but each in turn is revealed to be a source of ridicule and contempt, seen as weak, uncultivated, effeminate, and ill-suited for the world. He wants to continue playing adult games – gambling, adultery, general dissipation – without enduring the consequences, or settling down into the tedium that society requires of him. He is also unwilling to put a restraint on his desires, sexual or financial, and other male characters, particularly Bellamy, operate in the same vein. Blinded by familial duty and love, Camilla and Eugenia fail to see the men in their lives for what they truly are – hunter-idler, gamester, blackmailer, and adulterer – and thus fail to recognize similar threats elsewhere.

III

The antithesis of Lionel’s spirit, Edgar Mandlebert, is the novel’s prudent, cautious “starched prig” (524). It is Lionel who calls Edgar a “starched prig” in comparison to Sir Sedley,

a “man of the world.” Edgar models himself after Mr. Tyrold, whose sensibility endears him to his family, but Edgar is prone to a frigid exterior. The hero-lover is a father-figure, an appointed monitor of Camilla’s behavior. However, under Dr. Marchmont’s tutelage, Edgar is cold, insensible, and often impassive to the point of complete inaction. Reading Edgar’s surname Mandlebert as a “portmanteau,” Doody argues that it suggests “man, manliness, manlet, mangled, mishandled,” and given Dr. Marchmont’s education, Edgar is mismanaged and mangled by the scholar.⁶⁶ Edgar has been taught by Dr. Marchmont to be exacting and vigilant. Edgar is already “by nature, penetrating and minute in [his] observations; which, in [the] general commerce with the world, will protect both [his] understanding and [his] affections from the usual snares of youth,” traits which serve well the owner of a big estate, but not a young man seeking a wife (161). Dr. Marchmont aims to make Edgar into a model of philosophic integrity and fortitude, the novel’s representation of manliness and maturity.

All of this stoic reserve makes Edgar relatively unprepared for the ups and downs of love. After relinquishing his intended engagement with Indiana, Edgar, having fallen for Camilla’s ingenuous charms, is unsure of her conduct in public society. He is worried about her reputation, because of her relationship with Mrs. Arlbery, a female wit, who attempts to help Camilla see the world through her experienced eyes. In conjunction with this potentially dangerous friendship, Camilla also seems to flirt with Sir Sedley, which causes Edgar to be uncertain of her feelings and of her suitability as a future wife. For Edgar, the ups and downs of their romantic story boils down to this doubt, which initiates his observant, watchful investigation into her feelings and behavior. Primarily, his tutor is responsible for the surveillance and hesitation that guides Edgar. Unable to trust his feelings and act accordingly, Edgar turns to Dr. Marchmont for help. This “two-time loser in marriage” advises Edgar to be observant of Camilla’s every action,

⁶⁶ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 222.

recommending “you must study her, from this moment, with new eyes, new ears, and new thoughts,” and be completely distrustful (159-60).⁶⁷ Told to suppress his feelings and become a studious observer of the woman he loves, Edgar is shaken to the core, “his confidence was gone; his elevation of sentiment was depressed; a general mist clouded his prospects, and a suspensive discomfort inquieted his mind” (160). Yet, despite his deflated spirits, Edgar is not altered. He is “by nature” observant and cautious, but his desires are in conflict. He wants to be with Camilla, but he also wants to follow the advice of his mentor. Unwilling to play the love game and take a leap of faith, Edgar chooses to be overly cautious and suspicious. This behavior arguably converts him into a different sort of sharper or fortune-hunter, who must wait until the time is right to make his move.

Edgar’s propensity to be exacting and intolerant of any deviation in virtue or duty proves detrimental to himself and Camilla. He is considered too “delicate” and Mrs. Tyrold objects to a man who finds “the smallest deviation [from duty] is offensive, and even the least inaccuracy is painful” (118). He is Camilla’s “chief tormentor” because as Julia Epstein argues, the hero-lover is “so seduced by the world’s outward forms [he] becomes officious, judgmental, authoritarian,” imprisoning himself in “his own punctilio and fussy gallantry.”⁶⁸ Edgar is a finicky young man, whose hypersensitivity to any deviation from a strict way of life is too much to bear. In the character of Mrs. Arlbery, Burney expresses her ideas on romance and marriage prospects in a changing society.⁶⁹ Aware of Edgar’s preference for Camilla and his behavior toward her, Mrs. Arlbery provides the reader with a way to interpret Edgar’s behavior. She tells Camilla:

He is a watcher; and a watcher, restless and perturbed himself, infests all he pursues with uneasiness. He is without trust, and therefore without either courage

⁶⁷ Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, 157.

⁶⁸ Epstein, *The Iron Pen*, 125.

⁶⁹ In some regards, Mrs. Arlbery is like Mrs. Selwyn in Burney’s *Evelina*, and Lady Honoria in *Cecilia*. Critics have suggested that the name Arlbery is a play on Burney’s married name, d’Arblay.

or consistency. To-day he may be persuaded you will make all his happiness; to-morrow, he may fear you will give him nothing but misery. Yet it is not that he is jealous of any other; 'tis of the object of his choice he is jealous, lest she should not prove good enough to merit it (482).

Mrs. Arlbery underscores the fussy and complex nature of Edgar by arguing that his too discerning nature, if Camilla marries him, may result in domestic unhappiness. She understands that Edgar's persona is motivated by "all or nothing," because he does not trust what he cannot control. As long as Camilla behaves according to her whims, he cannot trust her. Without that trust, he lacks "courage" and "consistency." Perhaps more alarming is Mrs. Arlbery's contention that Edgar is "a creature whose whole composition is a pile of accumulated punctilios. He will spend his life in refining away his own happiness: but do not let him refine away yours" (484). Her word choice "accumulated punctilios" and "refining away" signal the nature of Edgar. He bases his behavior on conforming to strict manners, and will require the same of Camilla. By "refining away" his life and happiness according to a strict adherence to conformity, it is only natural he will do the same to Camilla. Marriage to Edgar will be a process of "refinement," a slow stripping away of Camilla's character.

Edgar is a mature, responsible man, a departure from the animated sparks, like Lionel and Sir Sedley, who dominate the novel. Under the guidance of Dr. Marchmont, Edgar "suffers from repressed feelings."⁷⁰ Mrs. Arlbery dislikes his lack of animation and wants to "see that frozen youth worked up into a little sensibility" (483). She makes it her goal to rescue Camilla from the "antediluvian courtship of a man, who, if he marries at all, is so deliberate in his progress, that he must reach his grand climacteric before he can reach the altar" (491). Mrs. Arlbery's critique of Edgar allows readers to situate his positive, gentlemanly character traits as flaws – cold, frozen, and dull. His deliberate courtship process is not only outdated, but marriage is also bound to

⁷⁰ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 223.

happen *after* he has hit physical and sexual maturity. The “grand climacteric” is a period of great bodily change, often occurring around middle-age and implying the start of senescence.⁷¹ Mrs. Arlbery cheekily suggests that Edgar will not be ready for marriage until he is too old to be of any use.

Edgar’s calculating attitude is in direct contrast to the reckless, youthful behavior of men like Lionel, Macdersey and Sir Sedley, who are willing to risk their affections. Jessica Richard argues that the novel “represents a world governed by mere luck,” as it celebrates “the gambler’s wager and critiques paralyzing calculation.”⁷² Fortune hunters are always willing to take a risk. Believing Camilla to be the heiress of Cleves, both Major Cerwood and Dubster propose. Major Cerwood, upon realizing she is not the heiress, cannot “connect himself without fortune,” and he is revealed to be a habitual fortune hunter, “who, in various country towns, had sought to retrieve his affairs by some prudent connection.” Used to rejection, he “quit the field” and resolved to “gather his next documents concerning the portion of a fair damsel, from authority better to be relied upon than that of a brother” (534-35). Dubster, seeking a third wife, also exits, happy to have escaped “being tricked into unprofitable wedlock” (602). In this world, the gambler’s willingness to risk is better than the calculating man who hedges his bets.

IV

Regardless of where they appear, whether it is in church, Tunbridge or the salon of Mrs. Arlbery, the men who pursue the Tyrold women are persistent players. They circle Camilla, Eugenia and Indiana, courting their favor, eliciting their confidence and jockeying for attention.

⁷¹ “climacteric, adj. and n.”. OED Online. September 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/view/Entry/34310?redirectedFrom=climacteric> (accessed September 07, 2016). Samuel Johnson’s dictionary also corresponds to the OED’s definition. “Page View, Page 389.” *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic by Samuel Johnson*. Edited by Brandi Besalke. Last modified: December 6, 2012. http://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/?page_id=7070&i=389.

⁷² Richard, *Romance of Gambling*, 123.

More importantly, these men manipulate sentiment to their advantage, whereby they “gain sway by a passive-aggressive display of susceptibility.”⁷³ Through these characters’ conduct, Burney suggests a change in courtship rituals, and in the ability of young men to woo women through excessive romantic addresses. Bellamy and Sir Sedley represent similar approaches to winning over a young woman, while Edgar resists falling into the expected behavior of a young paramour.

Bellamy operates as the tempter and seducer in a snake-like incursion in the supposed idyll of Etherington.⁷⁴ His ability to be near the Tyrold party at key times, lurking outside of Etherington, horse races and the theatre, suggests the ease with which fortune-hunters and sharpers can access their prey. He reflects the ease with which vice, corruption and greed infects all layers of society. Bellamy initially poses as a protector, claiming that since a “mad bull was running wild about the country; [he] thought it, therefore, advisable to send for a chaise from the nearest inn, that [he] might return [Eugenia] to her friends” (137). Following this chaotic scene incited by Lionel’s prodding of the mad bull, Edgar raises his concerns to Sir Hugh about this mysterious stranger, whom he finds kneeling before Eugenia. Like Lionel, Bellamy serves to bridge the idealized world of Etherington and the dangerous public life of London and resort towns. Bellamy continues to pursue Eugenia, who is flattered but also alarmed by the attention.

Disguising his middling-class background with the accoutrements of a gentleman – a coach, a servant, and good manners – Bellamy also masks his intentions with the trite language of a typical lover. In the chapter appropriately titled “The Pleadings of Pity”, Bellamy sends Eugenia a letter calculated to appeal to her youthful, ignorant heart:

⁷³ Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, 149.

⁷⁴ Even the name of this idyllic countryside estate suggests its heavenly, delicate and Romantic connotations, as a place located in the ‘Ether.’

I do not dare, cruellest of your sex, to write you another letter; but if you would save me from the abyss of destruction, you will let me hear my final doom from your own mouth. I ask nothing more! Ah! walk but one moment in the park, near the pales; deny not your miserable adorer this last single request, and he will fly this fatal climate which has swallowed up his repose for ever! (316-17)

His appeal reads more like Mortimer's speeches in Burney's *Cecilia*. But here, these romantic flourishes, despite Eugenia's response of "horror and compassion," are treated with suspicion and doubt. Bellamy's use of hyperbole, "the abyss of destruction," and "final doom," are merely symptomatic of the exaggerated claims of a lover. His flowery language and melodramatic tone, epitomized by labeling Eugenia "cruellest of your sex," calling himself her "miserable adorer" and stating that Etherington is "fatal climate," only speak to the deceitful nature of the fortune-hunting lover. It also attests to the expected behavior and language of a young man playing the role of distressed lover. While Sir Hugh had argued for Eugenia's education, believing it would "hinder [her] from being a prey" (48), but instead, that education exposes her to Bellamy's false sentimentality. Although she has been educated like a young boy, complete with a classical education, Eugenia possesses the "elevated sentiments, formed by animated credulity playing upon youthful inexperience." She is not, we are told, educated by the "common adoption of a circulating library," but by the heroics of poetry and history into seeing love bear "the character of heroism, and the lover that of an hero" (315). Despite being told by Camilla that Bellamy, who has been seen by Edgar lurking around Etherington with a waiting chaise, means some "dreadful violence," Eugenia claims, "From whom should I dread violence? from a man who – but too fatally for his peace – values me more than his life?" (337). Misguided into seeing heroic acts where only self-interest exists, Eugenia fails to see beyond the veneer of Bellamy's suave professions of love. His letters and addresses, however forced and overwrought, employ the discourse of fictional romantic love.

The novel suggests that these passionate appeals should be treated with a healthy amount of hesitation. Melmond, Sir Sedley and Major Cerwood make impassioned speeches, but they are dismissed, or treated lightly. Sir Hugh offers one reasonable piece of advice when he instructs the young women to “Never trust a flatterer” (330). Sir Sedley’s flirtation with Camilla is attended to, merely in the aims of making Edgar jealous, and are not treated seriously. However, following his heroic rescue, when he prevents a horse carriage from plummeting down the hill with Camilla in tow, he begins to resemble a potential suitor. Unlike the cold and repressed Edgar, Sir Sedley is restored to a more natural sensibility:

His natural courage, which he had nearly annihilated, as well as forgotten, by the effeminate part he was systematically playing, seemed to rejoice in being again exercised; his good nature was delighted by the essential service he had performed; his vanity was gratified by the publicity of the praise it brought forth; and his heart itself experienced something like an original feeling, unspoilt by the apathy of satiety, from the sensibility he had awakened in the young and lovely Camilla. (404)

Sir Sedley feels the need to perform a “part” that becomes “systematic” and thus exposed, he is revived. Underneath the fop is a man of sentiment, even if he is *so* vain. However, the next day, in the company of his friends, he resumes his “easy and affected manner”, an action that confuses Camilla. But this heroic moment, in resuscitating Sir Sedley’s manliness, also serves to defrost Edgar. The spying lover overhears the celebratory party in Sir Sedley’s room following this harrowing event and becomes a sighing ghost. Overcome with feeling, Edgar’s “sigh, so deep that it might rather be called a groan,” indicate his frozen despair (407). A groaning ghost in the other room, Edgar can barely utter a word when confronted with the gay party.

With these two examples of masculine desire, Burney illustrates the difference between assumed feelings and controlled desires. Edgar’s restraint is in contrast to Sir Sedley’s “systematic” role playing. Pretending to be someone else does not benefit any party. Guises are

revealed to be only protective layers. Sir Sedley, despite his aloof, devil-may-care attitude to Camilla, begins to feel something. His relationship with Camilla is further complicated by Lionel's need for money. By implicating Camilla in asking Sir Sedley for money, Lionel essentially prostitutes his sister's virtue for the sake of his vices. Sir Sedley uses pretty speeches, but they are too flattering and seemingly feigned. In a letter to Camilla, for instance, there are echoes of the same language used by Bellamy, which cause Camilla consternation, and Eugenia to think him worthy. Sir Sedley writes, "Have you taken a captive only to see him in fetters? Allured a victim merely to behold him bleed? Ah! tomorrow, at least, permit the audience that to-day is denied, and at your feet, let your slave receive his doom" (529). This language inspires multiple responses from the Tyrold sisters. Lavinia is affected by the "words *victim* and *bleeding*," and "those of *fetters*, *captive*, and *insensible*" have an impact on Eugenia (530). Camilla, meanwhile, is cold and insensible to these declarations (529). Both her regard for Edgar and her fear of misleading Sir Sedley prompts Camilla's response. After he proposes, she rejects him. Although Camilla prefers Edgar above all others, her rejection of Sir Sedley and of his ardor reflects a change in attitudes toward impertinent and impassioned men. While Lavinia and Eugenia are affected by his words, Camilla interprets them for what they are: empty words and the practiced rote speeches of a man of the world. Sir Sedley's reaction to Camilla's rejection attests to his hurt feelings. He was "Piqued completely, and mortified to the quick, by the conviction which now broke in upon him of the superior ascendance of Mandlebert, he could not brook to have been thought in earnest when he saw he should not have been accepted, nor pardon his own vanity the affront it had brought upon his pride" (560). Proud and resentful, Sir Sedley's immediate departure from the country speaks to a measure of honest feeling underneath the foppish exterior.

Burney opposes the unrelenting fervor of lovers to the stoic, fraught regard of Edgar. Other suitors use florid, overwrought romantic phrases and gestures, but these do not appeal to Camilla. Much of the novel's actions concern the seesawing ups and downs of their romance. In the midst of the confusion regarding Sir Sedley and his proposal, Edgar and Camilla are engaged for twenty-four hours. This tumultuous romance is a "picture of youth" and also an examination into a (wo)man's heart and denied desires, which is also a mystery of "man's ways with woman, man's meaning in relation to woman."⁷⁵ Both characters are unable to decipher the mystery before them. Frustrated with Edgar's cold disposition, Camilla tells Lavinia, "if you would avoid deceit and treachery, look at a man as at a picture, which tells you only the present moment! Rely upon nothing of time to come! They are not like us, Lavinia. They think themselves free, if they have made no verbal profession" (538). Camilla's interpretation relies on reading only the superficial actions of men's behavior, because that is all women can see. The "present moment" means that she can judge Edgar only by his immediate actions. Her words are an echo of Mrs. Arlbery's claim that: "Every damsel, as she enters the world, has some picture ready painted upon her imagination, of an object worthy to enslave her: and before any experience forms her judgment, or any comparison her taste, she is the dupe of the first youth who presents himself to her, in the firm persuasion of her ductile fancy, that he is just the model it had previously created" (366). Camilla has seen that the picture she painted no longer matches the reality in front of her. Mrs. Arlbery also cuts to the core of romance, that is, the creation of the ideal male hero, who does not exist.⁷⁶ As demonstrated by Sir Sedley and Bellamy, the overzealous, exuberant romantic and heroic male is a dangerous fantasy.

⁷⁵ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 251.

⁷⁶ Bloom, Introduction to *Camilla*, xiv. This moment is also a critique of the sentimental novel. In her notes on the draft of *Camilla*, as well as in her dedication and introduction to the text, Burney does not call it a novel, but stresses the "little work" is a "sketch of characters and morals," not a romance.

To look at Edgar as if he were a picture, unfortunately, does not help solve the mystery of his heart or reveal his long term plans. Like Mrs. Arlbery notes, Edgar is too “deliberate in his process.” Edgar’s reluctance to partake in the lottery of romance, which he renounces, “how despicable a lottery have I risked the peace of my life!” paints him as a cold, unfeeling suitor (571). But it also emphasizes how unwilling he is to bend to the vicissitudes of love – the most challenging game of all. Confounded by Camilla’s behavior, following the entanglement with Sir Sedley, Edgar asks Dr. Marchmont to “explain, expound to me this work of darkness and amazement” without trying to analyze his own emotional response (571). Frenzied by the mystery that is woman and unable to get his adviser to help quell his turmoil, Edgar loses his composure, as he rides off toward his estate. No longer “that frozen composition of premature wisdom” (375), he is “almost maddened” and unable to “reflect; retrospection was torture, anticipation was horror” (572). Love and its ups and downs are too much for the exacting Edgar, who cannot manage the loss of control over his situation and his emotions. Fleeing his own heartbreak, Edgar is finally *too* animated as he thoughtlessly rides on, reckless because he thinks he gambled everything and lost.

Comparing himself to other romantic rivals, Edgar notes the facility with which they act and respond to Camilla. They immediately spring forward to help Camilla and court her, while he remains, mute and frozen. Despite the dissolution of their temporary engagement, Edgar follows Camilla to Southampton. The adult game of courtship, and the faro table of Camilla’s new friend, Mrs. Berlington, contributes to complicate the opposing desires of Edgar. Witnessing the actions of Camilla and her new group of friends, particularly Mrs. Berlington, Edgar is an anxious yet passive observer.⁷⁷ His concerns “speak to the gentry’s growing cultural anxieties

⁷⁷See Jessica Richard’s chapter “The Lady’s Last Stake: *Camilla* and the Female Gambler,” in *The Romance of Gambling* and the dangers of the female gamester.

about their loss of power and control in the public sphere,” as public places are associated with vice and crime.⁷⁸ Edgar considers the attractions of Hal Westwyn, who in being nearly engaged in a duel to protect Camilla’s honor, exhibits traits that are alluring, because they are passionate. Although Edgar intervened to prevent the duel, he notices how quickly Hal responds with his sword and his “gallantry” which Edgar attributes “to a vehement, however, sudden passion” (650). Edgar feels jealousy and envy because he “imagine[s] an amiable rival [...] suddenly springing up in young Westwyn, at the very moment of his own dismissal, which he now even thought possible this incipient conquest had urged” (650). Insecure and doubtful, Edgar fashions a new rival out of Hal Westwyn solely on the basis of his heroism. He assumes that Camilla is seeking a new suitor shortly after his “dismissal” from her heart. Confronted with the risky behavior of Hal, Edgar also sees the glaring difference in his own conduct, especially the lack of “gallantry” and “sudden passion” that incites action, rather than statuesque observation. Edgar and Eugenia believe in the same romantic notions, that these marks bear “the character of heroism, and the lover that of an hero.”

Aware of his failings, Edgar remains unwilling to alter his behavior. Fearful of the powerful allure of a man he deems more attractive because he is more passionate, Edgar cannot help but compare himself. Bemoaning his imagined loss to Dr. Marchmont, Edgar says “I have lost Camilla! I see it plainly. This young man steps forward so gallantly, so ingenuously, nay so amiably, that the contrast ... chill, severe, and repulsive ... must render me ... in this detestable state ... insupportable to all her feelings” (653). Outlining exactly why Camilla must reject him, Edgar does not see that she is relatively immune to these characteristics. Although Hal is gallant and amiable, while Edgar is admittedly “chill, severe, and repulsive,” these distinctions are of his

⁷⁸ Zonitch, *Familiar Violence*, 100.

own creation. His restraint, although it renders him cold and severe, are attractive to Camilla. But by imagining rivals everywhere, Edgar becomes his own worst enemy.

Capable of action, but still guided by Dr. Marchmont's advice, Edgar is forced into becoming a silent observer. Torn between leaving Camilla and staying near her, Edgar struggles to reconcile his desires and his ability to articulate them. In one attempt to "take his eternal farewell," he is irresolute, unable to bring himself to say goodbye. Instead, he becomes a statue, "his feet refused to move, his tongue became parched, and his pleading heart seemed exclaiming: O, not to-night! yet, yet, another day, ere Camilla is parted with for ever!" (685). Edgar is emotionally and orally constipated. When he finally does manage to bid Camilla adieu, this inability becomes apparent in a physical battle as he struggles to command his body. Taking Camilla's hand, she finds "his whole frame was shaking, and saw his complexion every moment varying" (707). His speech is marked by cut off sentences, as his repressed emotions rise to the surface, only to be quelled. Upon leaving Southampton for his continental tour, an action that removes him from the narrative until the last book of the novel, Edgar's sensibility nearly overcomes him. He "changed colour, his heart beat quick, and he sighed rather than breathed. He held his hand upon his eyes and forehead for a few minutes, in agony inexpressible" (726). The sighing Edgar returns as "A deeply assenting sigh broke from [his] bosom" and the priggish hero possesses emotions, but they seem to be awakened only by excessive actions (726). While Burney displays the errors of youth, she also suggests the extremes of emotional play: one can be the fussy, cold Edgar, or the reckless Lionel. The heart is full of contrarities, which Edgar does not know how to reconcile.

V

With Edgar's departure, the novel returns to the issue of the Gothic suitor, the encroaching predator playing the long game.⁷⁹ As one watcher quits the scene, another lays his trap, as the novel's action builds toward the disastrous climax of courtship. The action of the final two volumes revolves around more gambling, vice and observation. The novel makes its strongest case for the dangerous intrusion of the protean hero-lover in the figure of Bellamy. Bellamy, like the fortune-hunters satirized in *The Spectator*, is Burney's Gothic villain – a precursor to the Byronic hero: charming, good-looking, gallant, but also manipulative, oppressive. His dubious origins and questionable behavior situate him in the very heart of fashionable life, and because of his protean nature, he becomes a catchall for various metaphors and tropes of vice in the novel.⁸⁰ Bellamy's former social position places him as an outsider on the fringes of society and respectability.

The chain of events through which Bellamy enters the world of the Tyrold clan link Lionel and Bellamy and suggests that danger can enter through family ties. The connection between Bellamy and Lionel is evident in their similar dispositions: both received a good education, yet lacked application, and both are devoted to gambling, which leads them to gather debts of honor they cannot repay. Beneath Bellamy's good looks and appeal is a fortune-hunting gambler, who charms his way into Eugenia's life. His alias is an ironic reversal – the suave moniker – a pretty friend is really a false friend and an elaborate disguise. Alphonso Bellamy is really Nicholas Gwigg.⁸¹ Misinterpreted as a gentleman, he is a reminder that appearances are deceiving, and fraudulent characters attempt their best to manipulate and dupe. It is only when he

⁷⁹ Bloom, Introduction to *Camilla*, xvi. Burney called *Camilla* her “Udolphish volumes,” seeking to capitalize on moments of Radcliffian terror, an obvious appeal to reading audiences of the 1790s.

⁸⁰ Arguably, Bellamy becomes the easy scapegoat for criminal behavior, while Lionel, with the exception of his father, is not always treated as one both by the narrative and his family.

⁸¹ Bloom, Explanatory notes to *Camilla*, 935.

dies that the Tyrold's learn of his dubious origins and his sinister plans. He is described as "Inheriting a passion for the means by which the parental fortune had been raised" and disposed to gambling, "he devoted himself next to its pursuit, and won very largely" (892). His inclination to try his good luck and ply his skills in deception stem from a desire to maintain his extravagant lifestyle. Bellamy represents the dangers of the middling-class upstart, as the "youngest son of the master of a great gaming house" (814). In Bellamy's history and villainous behavior, all of the tropes regarding sharpers, fortune hunters and gamblers merge. He is what every heiress and father most fears, the dangerous outsider, who could also very easily be a familial relation.

Reading Bellamy's declarations at face value and fooled by his appearance, Eugenia fails to see the double meaning of her own "little figure" as the valuable property Bellamy desires. Camilla's belief, that women should "avoid deceit and treachery, look at a man as at a picture, which tells you only the present moment! Rely upon nothing of the time to come!" is not a safeguard against the disguises men use to beguile women (538). Bellamy becomes what women like Miss Margland have been taught to expect – the well-mannered, well-dressed hero, with the words to match his undying love and despair. Behind the mask of civility and storybook romance, there is a dissolute tyrant. He dons the mask so well that he is a picture, a dark rendering of the greed, vice, cruelty and gameplay that exists in the novel. In the world of the novel, there is "game-play-cruelty", and Bellamy brings all of these to the fore with his final actions.⁸² His manipulation of Eugenia and her fortune are all for the sake of his vice. Bellamy embraces the role of the lover until he absconds with Eugenia and then he can "cast off the mask of pretended passion" (814). His demands for money and reproaches reveal his rapacity and rage. Bellamy's demise is precipitated by a murder-suicide threat, which he announces to Eugenia by saying "This is no child's play" (887). Children's games may not always end in death, but for

⁸² Doody, *Frances Burney*, 237.

adults, the games they play can and do. His sport is worlds away from the child's play that opens the novel. However, his frantic threat underlines the reality, and Eugenia, despite being fifteen, has entered an adult world where games bring about dangerous consequences. Bellamy shoots himself while trying to hide the gun he has used to threaten Eugenia, after a coachman startles him upon seeing their violent exchange. Bellamy's reckless gaming, both at the tables and with his wife, leads to his death.

With Bellamy's accidental death, all games end, and order seems restored. His death signals the end of the wicked seesaw game that dominates the novel. Margaret Doody reads Bellamy's death as the end of the "woman-hater, woman-destroyer," and "the death of the father," law and authority.⁸³ Barbara Zonitch argues that his death is "representative of an older, aristocratic, primogenital system. Bellamy had spent his life gaming, dueling, and manipulating heiresses like Eugenia. Through his bloody death, we are invited to consider how the vices bred from this system – dueling and gambling – lead to sure destruction."⁸⁴ Bellamy's death may also represent the death knell of excessive eighteenth-century melodramatics, and the start of a new standard in reticent, self-controlled manliness. Burney suggests that other models of male behavior, represented by Edgar and Melmond, are better alternatives to the dissipation and risk of men like Lionel and Bellamy. His dead body becomes a reminder of the cruelty and pain generated by a world governed by gambling, dueling and predation. It is even possible to read his death and the spectacle it offers as the heroine's final passage into adulthood. Through this destruction, both Camilla and Eugenia are released.

Following Camilla's near death and her terrifying vision of doom, namelessness and abject fear, she is reunited with Edgar. Shaken by her weakened state, Edgar cries and finally,

⁸³ Doody, *Frances Burney*, 271.

⁸⁴ Zonitch, *Familiar Violence*, 109.

Camilla has her desire, to see “him penetrated to anguish by her situation, awakened to the tenderest recollections, and upon her hand had dropt a testimony of his sensibility” (878). In a letter, Edgar announces his heart’s desires, “The sorrow, the tumult of my soul, I attempt not to paint. [...] Deign to bury in kind oblivion all remembrance but of our early friendship — our intuitive attachment, our confidence, esteem, and happy juvenile intercourse” (879). No longer cold and severe, Edgar longs to return to the youthful exchange they once had, without doubt or suspicions.

The games played by men in the novel may be over, but they receive a final indictment in the aborted memoirs of Eugenia. Already a widow at fifteen, she attempts to use her hard-bought wisdom to warn young men and women of the errors of youth. She addresses future male readers with this injunction, “the value you yourselves set upon external attractions, your own neglect has taught me to know; and the indifferency with which you consider all else, your own duplicity has instructed me to feel” (905). Eugenia addresses an issue that pervades the novel, that of misunderstanding and misreading men’s “duplicity” and failure to see beyond an initial physical attraction. Camilla reproaches her for reflecting on former events, but Eugenia underscores the problem of misreading men and failing to comprehend their subterfuge. One way to interpret Eugenia’s abandoned memoir is to consider it as a guide for naïve young women. In some ways, it prefigures Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1793). Yet, Burney cuts this alternative text short, and rewards Eugenia with a suitable marriage to the bookish Melmond. With this union, Burney suggests that despite their failures, men like Melmond, who favor beauty over inner worth, can redeem themselves. Regretting his youthful error, with “the fervour of sincerity, yet diffidence of shame and regret” Melmond and his “well-earnt esteem,

and grateful affection,” are worthy of Eugenia (912). By demonstrating Edgar and Melmond overcoming their flaws, Burney redefines how love can “bear the character of heroism.”

Chapter III: Monsters and Men: Pettifoggers and a Disenfranchised Gentry in Charlotte Smith's *Marchmont*

I

Edwin Armyn-Marchmont, the eponymous victim of legal chicanery in Charlotte Smith's novel, is a complex character: proud, emotional, impoverished, a criminal, and a wandering exile, incapable of saving himself, let alone his family. *Marchmont* explores not only legal oppression in England, and the real Gothic horrors of the 1790s, but also the potential lack of a sentimental hero in Gothic fiction. By examining the economic dispossession of defrauded heirs and the social climbing of lawyers during this period, Smith exposes the complex underpinnings of the system that supports the creation of a male hero. Read in the context of the repressive 1790s marked by the suspension of *habeas corpus* and treason trials, *Marchmont's* critique of the law and its effect on the innocent is in keeping with other texts from this radical period, namely William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1793) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman* (1794). Yet, *Marchmont* is not included in the same category as these political Gothics, and instead her other radical novels, *Desmond* (1792), *The Old Manor House* (1793) and *The Banished Man* (1794) occupies its place. In its use of Gothic tropes and its depiction of persecution, *Marchmont* exemplifies the real horror of terror and oppression in England. More importantly, Smith suggests how victimization and criminalization negatively affect society, but also the male hero and his inability to protect his loved ones.

Smith's complicated and resentful relationship with the legal system in England forms a central part of any introduction to her work and life. In her work, she often discussed the long-standing battle regarding her father-in-law's inheritance and its effects on her life, which resulted

in Smith's claim to "live only to write and write only to live."⁸⁵ Along with *The Old Manor House*, *The Young Philosopher* (1798) and two other novels, *Marchmont* is catalogued by Lorraine Fletcher as "Condition of England" novels for its focus on England's social ills, particularly the imprecise notion that "the law [...] is the palladium of liberty, and the protector of property" (293).⁸⁶ These novels center on British weakness, abuse and corruption and its eventual "personal and national reform."⁸⁷ Smith's belief in British national reform diminishes by 1796 as a result of her disillusionment with the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror and subsequent British oppression. During the turbulent 1790s, the Gothic genre was often "the vehicle of political debate."⁸⁸ Smith's employment of the Gothic has been read as a way to "expose the evils of autocratic power, especially that exercised by men over women," and her ruined estates as "indicating how she viewed tradition and the possibility of reform or revolution."⁸⁹ Rather than the gothic villain being a despotic duke or member of the landed gentry, in *Marchmont* it is the law and its agents who terrorize and persecute the hero and heroine. In this light, the novel is a "unified indictment of the British legal establishment," serving as an exposé of the abuses perpetrated by lawyers.⁹⁰ In all its configurations, the law, embodied either in lawyers, officers of the law, and clerks, feature "repeatedly in her fiction as

⁸⁵ Smith's legal issues are well-documented, both in her novels and Smith scholarship. For more information, see Lorraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Jacqueline Labbe, "Selling One's Sorrows: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson and the Marketing of Poetry," *Wordsworth Circle* 25:2 (1994), 68.

⁸⁶ Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, 89. For more on Smith's political novels of the 1790s, see Eleanor Ty, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries: Five Women Novelists of the 1790s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

⁸⁷ Leanne Maunu, "Home Is Where The Heart Is: National Identity and Expatriation in Charlotte Smith's *The Young Philosopher*," *European Romantic Review* 15 no. 1 (2004), 56.

⁸⁸ Harriet Guest, "Suspicious Minds: Spies and Surveillance in Charlotte Smith's Novels of the 1790s" in *Land, Nation, and Culture, 1740-1840* ed. Peter de Bolla, Nigel Leask, and David Simpson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 172.

⁸⁹ Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), xiii; Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith*, 92.

⁹⁰ Melissa Sodeman "Charlotte Smith's Literary Exile," *ELH* 76, no. 1 (2009), 136.

evil agents of persecution and oppression that parallel her own.”⁹¹ *Marchmont* engages in two conversations that dominate the eighteenth century: reforming lawyers and the rules governing creditors and debtors. In the terms of this dissertation, *Marchmont* examines the debilitating effect legal corruption and its costs on the national debate over masculine identity in the chaotic 1790s.

Smith’s critique of the English legal system is unflinching, given the repression at the time. Contemporary reviewers were quick to criticize Smith’s obvious personal attack on an English institution. As Carrol Fry notes, “Smith is remarkably explicit about the flaws of the British legal system” and her use of the “Gothic of real life” testifies to Smith’s aim in underscoring the perversion of the law and the perpetration of injustice in daily life.⁹²

Eighteenth-century reviews of *Marchmont* generally focus on Smith’s harsh treatment of the law. The reviewer for *The Critical Review* lambasts Smith’s attack on the law, since she “would have done well to have considered that to draw the character of the enemy by whom we consider ourselves injured, requires a degree of coolness and candour that falls to the lot of the few.”⁹³ However, a favorable review emerges in the *Monthly Review*, which follows, suggestively or not, a review of a newly abridged edition of William Blackstone’s legal commentary. It begins with “The tediousness, chicane, and uncertainty of many of our law-proceedings, and the ease with which they may be perverted, by the rich and unprincipled, till they become engines of the most cruel oppression, form the leading character of this work.” The reviewer even pardons the overwhelming intrusion of the “iniquities of the law” into the novel due to Smith’s “personal circumstances and misfortunes.” Attune to the Gothic tropes of *Marchmont*, the reviewer assesses the effects of these iniquities, “they give rise to scenes and situations much more

⁹¹ Guest, “Suspicious Minds,” 175.

⁹² Carrol L. Fry, *Charlotte Smith* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 102.

⁹³ *The Critical Review, or, Annals of literature*; Mar 1797; 19, British Periodicals pg. 256

interesting than the vaulted galleries and castle dungeons of some modern romances, by chilling the heart with the dreadful conviction that, even in this land of comparative freedom, similar acts of cruelty and injustice not only *may be* but actually *are* perpetrated.”⁹⁴ In her Preface to *Marchmont*, Smith acknowledges the criticism she received from contemporaries who disliked her “egotism” by combining her sorrows with fictitious ones, and especially by making “enemies by personality.”⁹⁵ Not one to make apologies, Smith used her fiction as a vehicle for protest and reform, even if that reform seemed inconceivable.

With this novel, Smith uses Marchmont’s plight to argue for the ways in which the law not only disenfranchised men, but forced them to create new identities and communities. Because of his deceased father’s debts, Marchmont is pursued and persecuted by lawyers and creditors. As a result, he is like a Gothic heroine. He is powerless to avoid imprisonment for debt, and unable to protect his wife and his family members. Smith establishes a spectrum of masculinity in 1790s England by juxtaposing corrupt, monstrous lawyers, who attack England and notions of Englishness, to the cosmopolitan citizen of the world, who believes in charity and compassion. Smith’s distinction suggests a departure from the aristocratic gentleman as a worthy romantic interest and toward the dispossessed man of feeling. This change occurs in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and Smith’s use of this cataclysmic event as a background to the novel’s action further suggests the parallels between England and France. She dismantles the ambitious reputation of the lawyer, because their aspirations to gentility are presented only to be scorned and judged, not praised and admired. Part of the novel’s focus is the effect debt has on a citizen’s reputation and character. With this larger social critique, it is arguable that Smith suggests how the rising power of the legal profession undermined the socioeconomic position of

⁹⁴ “A Ai” *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal*, 1752-1825 (4,1797): 22, British Periodicals 468

⁹⁵ Charlotte Smith, *Marchmont* 1796. ed. Kate Davies and Harriet Guest (London; Pickering and Chatto, 2006), 3-4.

genteel men like Marchmont. By converting middle-class, upstart lawyers into veritable monsters, one whom she names Vampyre, she undermines their power and authority. On the other hand, Smith suggests that in the form of the generous, kind and sentimental wandering hero, a new type of gentleman emerges.

Smith offers a new model of English masculinity, removed from patriarchal and aristocratic ties, and newly situated in a domestic, benevolent idyll. By focusing on Marchmont, rather than an impoverished tradesman, Smith suggests that there is much more at stake for England than its fractured and unequal laws. Unlike Austen's England, a "home land of liberty and plenty," Smith's Britain is "a mirror of *ancien régime* corruption."⁹⁶ This novel asks, if lawyers profit from abusing English laws, while heirs are afflicted by these laws and not respected as gentlemen and seen as criminals, how different is England from France? Through Marchmont's exile and his interactions with foreign men who have estranged ties to their country, Smith develops a response to the corruption and crisis engendered by the French Revolution, but especially by the oppression of English law.

I argue that Marchmont redefines Marchmont's identity to exhibit a cosmopolitan or transnational masculinity.⁹⁷ Dispossessed of his familial estate, poor and hunted down like a criminal, Marchmont redefines his identity through an association with other afflicted men, creating an alternative community with them. Smith's cosmopolitanism, controversial in the

⁹⁶ Adriana Craciun, *British Women Writers and the French Revolution: Citizens of the World* (Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 151.

⁹⁷ Sodeman uses the term 'transnational' to refer to a community of "exiled individuals" (139). Marchmont is exiled, but the men with whom he identifies are not exiles, but either poor farmers, second sons, or browbeaten husbands. I am using what other critics, like Sodeman, Anne Mellor, and Harriet Guest have noted about Smith's use of wandering exiles who create a community outside of governing parameters or definitions. See Ann Mellor, "Embodied Cosmopolitanism and the British Romantic Woman Writer," *European Romantic Review*, 17.3, (2006): 289-300; Guest, "Spies and Surveillance"; Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s: Romantic Belongings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Heather Ann Ladd, "Invaded Spaces in Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* (1794)," in *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1660-1820* ed. Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

1790s, consists of four components: a rejection of national character, rejection of “British or even English distinctness,” a refusal to “be bound by the conventions or prejudices specific to a place,” and a fervor for the transnational.⁹⁸ Rejected by his country and in turn rejecting the limited definition of masculinity and gentility associated with status and wealth, Marchmont finds, in other men’s transnational examples of virtue and honor, a cosmopolitan alternative to English notions of masculinity. He becomes, like other characters in Smith’s novels, a “citizen of the world.” In *Marchmont*, the hero and heroine are drawn together by their mutual rejection of particular English conventions, and in their fostering of an ideal community. With her exiled hero, Smith suggests that English notions of masculinity and gentility can be separated from the bastions of landed estates and inherited fortunes. Instead, she links English manliness to sensibility, familial ties and benevolent charity. However, despite his desire and several attempts to rescue his family from oppression and poverty, Marchmont is ultimately too Romantic and sentimental, resulting in an ineffectual, effeminate and dependent hero who jeopardizes those he most wants to protect. Yet, Smith’s larger argument may be that an England resembling despotic, gothic France will yield weak, ineffectual men, who must depend on the gracious bounty of an heiress to reclaim their status.

Marchmont’s complex relationship with his nation, its laws and in turn his masculine identity, are reflected by his familial ties, which ultimately define and limit his cosmopolitan ideals. The hero substitute of the novel, Marchmont’s uncle Desborough, is an eccentric, upwardly mobile character, whose social rise is removed from the greed and corruption of lawyers like Mohun and Vampyre. Desborough’s helping hand is facilitated by money he received after selling his West Indian slaves and plantation – a reminder that the new community fostered by a rejection of English politics or virtues is not entirely free from blemishes. However,

⁹⁸ Craciun, *British Women Writers*, 154.

Desborough represents the return of a cosmopolitan masculinity that Marchmont envisioned in France, suggesting a need for the citizen of the world to combat the destructive status quo.

Before my analysis of the novel and its representation of an English masculinity and gentility in flux, I briefly contextualize the contentious relationship England had with lawyers. This discourse history encompasses the mid-eighteenth century call for legal reform, and the concomitant relationship between lawyers and debtors during this period. By providing a cursory account of Smith's "scourges of the earth," I aim to shed light on how and why Marchmont, via his socioeconomic position, and his masculine identity, is affected, and why lawyers present a threat to the English gentry (5).

II

Marchmont draws on a long discourse history related to lawyers and debtors and the need for legal reform. By turning the spotlight onto the lawyer – a “destructive monster, armed with the power of doing mischief, and of robbing legally” – Smith enlarges her personal struggle with the law into a broader critique of “a nuisance widely diffused, and spreading frequent desolation” (5). Smith's satirical perspective is part of a long literary tradition. During the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the lawyer, especially with the increase of pettifoggers, was a figure of satire, contempt and infamy.⁹⁹ Eighteenth-century fiction, in particular, is concerned with the law, and David Punter notes that representations of the law revolve around an “ambivalence in expressed attitudes toward legality,” resulting in a “blurring of the line between lawyer and criminal,” and a continual “discrediting of English legal mechanisms and institutions.”¹⁰⁰ Linked to Satan,

⁹⁹ E.F.J. Tucker, *Intruder into Eden: Representations of the Common Lawyer in English Literature 1350-1750* (South Carolina: Camden House, 1984). Francis Grose's *The 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, defined pettifoggers as “A little dirty attorney, ready to undertake any litigious or bad cause: it is derived from the French words petit vogue, of small credit, or little reputation.” <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5402/pg5402.html>.

¹⁰⁰ David Punter, “Fictional Representation of the Law in the Eighteenth Century”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 16.1 (1982), 47.

attorneys were believed to have sold their souls for money, as “sowers of discord” and cunning liars.¹⁰¹ A Satanic figure who disrupts a prelapsarian world, the lawyer is a creator of strife and discord.¹⁰² These negative representations all influence and can be traced in Smith’s depiction of Vampyre as a monstrous, Satanic entity.

Lawyers were considered monstrous offshoots who were now seeking, as a result of their education and authority, a respectable status. A 1708 publication, *The True Characters of, viz A Deceitful Petty-Fogger, Vulgarly Called an Attorney. A Know-All Astrological Quack, or Feigned Physician* describes the pettifogger as “an animal descended from the plough-tail [...] or Lawyer’s Clerk into Gentleman, to Scandalize the Profession of honest and fair Practising [sic] Attorneys.” Such a description expresses contempt for the elevation of a laborer (the plough-tail) or a clerk to the status of gentleman.¹⁰³ The invective continues with a detailed exposition of pettifoggers through extensive metaphors and insults, such as “Among Knowing Attorneys, he looks like a Tripe-Man’s Ass, loaded with Offal and Excrements; but among the vulgar fry, like a Sage Common-Counsellor.”¹⁰⁴ These critiques make explicit the concern and threat that lawyers pose to the status quo. These “sages” and peddlers of offal are seen as unworthy and unsavory additions to the genteel class.

¹⁰¹ E.F.J. Tucker, *Coram Paribus: Images of the Common Lawyer in Romantic and Victorian Literature* (Charleston: The Citadel Monograph Series, 1986), 9. A pamphlet from 1703 titled *The True Picture of an Ill Practiser of the Law*, features a solicitor named Legion, who claims “We are as numerous as He [Satan], and as closely combined in the same design of Tormenting Man. He is the father of lies, a Calumniator, One who delights in bringing Afflictions and Ruine on Mankind.”

¹⁰² Sir Morris Finer, quoted in Tucker, *Intruder into Eden*, 2 describes lawyers as “an intruder into Eden; [their] presence an affront to the vision which men carry within them of a paradise lost, and hopefully to be regained, in which lambs and lions will congregate without specialist assistance.” Coleridge would employ this Satanic association in the poem, “The Devil’s Thoughts,” where the devil sees “A lawyer killing a viper / On the dunghill beside his stable; / And the Devil smiled, for it put him to mind / Of Cain and his brother, Abel.” Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, “The Devil’s Thoughts,” *Romantic Circles*, online. (<http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/shelley/devil/dev29vs35.html>) 1997, accessed 3, April, 2015.

¹⁰³ Anonymous, *The True characters of, Viz. A deceitful petty fogger, vulgarly call'd attorney. A know-all astrological quack, or, Feigned physician. A female hypocrite, or, Devil in disguise. A low-churchman, or, Ecclesiastical bisarius. A trimmer, or, Jack of all sides, &c.* (London, 1708), 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 3-4.

These early depictions of corrupt lawyers demonstrate the divide that emerges in the legal profession in the eighteenth century. It was not just the public who took offense but established, honest lawyers also saw them as a scourge of the legal class. Pettifoggers were known for their “lack of education, [...] self-enrichment to the ruin of the client, and deliberate contentiousness in stirring up civil disputes.”¹⁰⁵ They acquired a bad reputation because of their tricks and quibbling, which situated them in the same satirical class as quack doctors and other knaves.¹⁰⁶ As a result of his crimes, the pettifogger is depicted as a subhuman figure, capable of all evils. Ned Ward’s *The London Spy* (1709) describes the pettifogger as a “caterpillar upon Earth, who grows fat upon the fruits of others labour. A meer horse-leach in the law, that when once he is well fasten’d, will suck a poor Client into a deep Consumption.”¹⁰⁷ Ward’s characterization continues the depiction of pettifoggers as a monstrous creature, maintained by embroiling their clients in protracted suits. In an England rife with predatory lawyers, the poem *Pettifoggers, a Satire* (1723) encapsulates the motivation of all legal agents, “Of Cunning Knavery they boast, / And He’s the Greatest, who Tricks most; / For this is Understood of late, / *Be once a Knave and You’ll be Great.*” These lines articulate the chief credo of pettifoggers: to be unscrupulous is the best path to professional success.¹⁰⁸

Smith’s depiction of lawyers in the novel as “destructive monster[s], armed with the power of doing mischief, and of robbing legally”, and as a “specimen of a genus extremely

¹⁰⁵ Tucker, *Intruder into Eden*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ On negative representations of lawyers throughout this period, see Tucker, *Intruder into Eden* and *Coram Paribus*; David Lemming, *Professors of the Law: Barristers and English Legal Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert Robson, *The Attorney in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1959).

¹⁰⁷ Edward (Ned) Ward, *The London-Spy* Volume 1. 4th ed. (London, 1709), 194.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, *The Pettifoggers. A satire. In Hudibrastick verse. Displaying the various frauds, deceits, and knavish practices, of the pettifogging counsellors, attornies, solicitors and clerks, in and about London and Westminster, and all market towns in England. With characters of the chief of them* (London, 1723), 30. In this poem, lawyers are also “Rav’nous Beast”, who propagate like animals, ready to spring into action, “Who in their Corners lie perdue, / ‘Till they’ve found out some Game in view;/ And like the Tyger, in the Wood, / They love to Feed on Flesh and Blood” (3-4).

poisonous and noxious he becomes an object to be held up to detestation” is in keeping with the general distaste held by citizens and professionals in the long eighteenth-century (5). Carrol Fry dismisses Vampyre and other lawyers in the novel as “stick figures,” and Lorraine Fletcher states that the “violence of Charlotte’s anger makes [Vampyre] into a mythic figure.”¹⁰⁹ Yet, the villainy of lawyers, especially pettifoggers, was a crisis that many in the profession felt needed redress. Through their iniquitous practices, ordinary lawyers were seen as dangerous social climbers. But barristers, as members of an aspirational middling class, “wanted to be seen as polite gentleman,” and initiated the midcentury push to reform the dubious practices of pettifoggers.¹¹⁰ In 1740, the emergence of the Society of Gentlemen Practisers in the Courts of Law and Equity, which became the Law Society in 1792, sought to “detect and discountenance all male [bad] and unfair practice.”¹¹¹ Various treatises published during this period focused on reforming the “inferior class of these devouring locusts” and these writers appealed to the public, but chiefly to the Lord Justices and Parliament, to help what seemed to be “the very crisis of an Era.”¹¹²

Appearing a year after *Marchmont*, the play *The Pettyfogger Dramatized* (1797), encapsulated the abuse, chicanery, and false imprisonment under the law. Dedicated to Lord Kenyon, chief justice of King’s Bench, who exercised his judiciary powers to regulate “the greatest pests of society,” the play seeks to unmask the villainy of the pettifogger and institute his moral reformation.¹¹³ The play’s pettifogger, Hungary Wolf is reformed because his employees, tired of being cheated out of money and food, turn against him and help restore the

¹⁰⁹ Fry, *Charlotte Smith*, 101; Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith*, 251.

¹¹⁰ Lemming, *Professors of the Law*, 8.

¹¹¹ Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1995), 80-81.

¹¹² Anonymous, *A Free Inquiry*, 5, 38.

¹¹³ A Speech House of Lords (June 17, 1794) by the Earl of Abingdon who called pettifoggers “locusts of the law [...] who, [...] fall like a cloud upon the earth, and eat everything they meet up with”, words which echo invectives used by Smith and other writers. *Gentleman’s Magazine*, LXIII, February 1793, 182. Qtd. in Robson, *The Attorney*, 19.

estate of his sister-in-law Maria Hardcastle. Made to recognize his status as a “public nuisance,” Wolf believes that “the profession of the law is a glorious one,” and “like a Game License, he may put up, hunt down, pursue entrap, ensnare, worry and destroy all mankind at pleasure, under the cover of that special qualification and authority.”¹¹⁴ In his desire to secure wealth and status, Wolf engages an entire network of clerks, sheriffs and bailiffs to entangle tradesmen in debt, falsify oaths, and extort more money by delaying payments to clients. He also takes ruthless advantage of a client’s generosity and moral weakness.

Though poverty is one concern for his victims, Wolf’s employees fear being discredited. One clerk admits that it has “disobliged my friends, wasted my best days, and sullied my good fame for ever.”¹¹⁵ The wife of one of Wolf’s debtors worries that they may be driven to poverty, which when it happens will result in

all his actions [being] misrepresented, and under its [the stigma of being a debtor] influence, every species of guilt is implicated! – Where is the poor man whom the world does not injure and contemn? Every living soul is his foe [...] He must be vicious, base and abandoned; because he is poor!¹¹⁶

The consequence of doing business with a pettifogger like Wolf is a loss of credit and character, a price that exceeds the total sum of exorbitant fees and drawn out suits. While the play occasionally references appeals to Parliamentary bills and reforms, such as Lord Moira’s Debtors/Creditors bill (first put to vote in 1792, and then again in 1796), these efforts are dismissed as futile attempts to impose restrictions.

What we see in *The Pettyfogger* is a general concern about lawyer’s potentially predatory practices in the latter half of the eighteenth century, as lawyers rose to a gentlemanly status at the expense of their clients, especially debtors. While the legal profession benefited from the ease

¹¹⁴ T.B. Junior, *The Pettyfogger Dramatized* (London, 1797), 12.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

with which debtors could be imprisoned, debtors of all classes languished in prisons like King's Bench. Smith spent time there with her husband in the 1780s, where, in an attempt to secure funds, she penned her first edition of the *Elegiac Sonnets*. Imprisoning people for debt was a long-standing issue in the eighteenth century, and the laws permitting this injustice would remain unchanged until the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ The increasing numbers of imprisoned debtors led to the creation of the Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debt in 1772. The right of the creditor to imprison a debtor, "no matter how small the debt, no matter how futile continued incarceration, creditors could leave their debtors in gaol indefinitely," was seen by many as a violation of divine and human rights.¹¹⁸ One anonymous writer in the early eighteenth century echoed a common complaint that this injustice was an act often motivated by revenge impoverishing its victims and the country.¹¹⁹ England resembled a gothic novel, as one reformer, William Smith, made clear in his proposal on how debtors should be punished. Arguing that contemporary criminal law was too severe and "might perhaps be very proper in the days of gothic tyranny and ferocity of manners," he proposed reform, not discipline, in this current "period of civilization and refinement."¹²⁰ *Marchmont* emerges during a moment in English history where writers could proclaim against iniquitous practices, and even if they were

¹¹⁷ For more information, see Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Joanna Innes, "The King's Bench Prison in the Later Eighteenth Century: Law, Authority, and Order in a London Debtor's Prison" in *An Ungovernable People: The English and Their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* ed. John Brewer and John Styles (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Philip Woodfine, "Debtors, Prisons, and Petitions in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth Century Life* 30, no.2 (2006):1-31.

¹¹⁸ Paul Haagen, "Eighteenth-century English Society and the Debt Law," in *Social Control and the State* ed. Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (St. Martin's Press, New York: 1983), 226.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, *The Case of Prisoners for Debt Consider'd (Dublin, 1727)*, 15-16. Another contemporary text outlines this issue: Anonymus, *An Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State, of the Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts throughout England*. (Philanthropic Press, St. George's Fields, 1792).

¹²⁰ William Smith, M.D. *Mild punishments Sound Policy: or Observations on the Laws Relative to Debtors and Felons. With an account of the frauds practised by swindlers, sharpers and others. Also some clauses necessary in any future insolvent act; and a plan for the relief of poor distressed families and others*. (London, 1777), 6.

not successful in bringing about reform, they vocalized their fears and emphasized the potential danger in succumbing to the tyranny of a powerful, emerging new class.¹²¹

While lawyers ascended the social ladder, debtors suffered more than just economic loss. Branded as criminals, debtors lost their reputation, and stained their families' honor. The connection between credit and character was a crucial factor in the impetus to reform debt law and the powers of lawyers. With the system easily contorted to meet the needs of the creditor, especially if he was a lawyer, credit, reputation, and character were all affected, becoming a source of concern in the eighteenth century. Most importantly for my purposes, notions of masculine identity and gentility were implicit in this debate. *Marchmont* reflects this divided world, a society pitting lawyerly ambition against impoverished citizenry, monsters against vulnerable heroes.

III

Smith begins her critique of English society with her heroine, Althea Dacres, and her unsuitable domestic situation. Following the death of her aunt and guardian, Mrs. Trevyllian, Althea relocates to her father's estate, where she is immediately presented with a possible suitor.¹²² Sir Audley, desirous of using his daughter for his own political advancement, urges a union between the lawyer Mohun and Althea. She describes Mohun as "odious," and a "tall, awkward, rawbone figure, with a countenance it is impossible to look at without disgust, for it has the most disagreeable expression I ever saw" (17-18). Along with being physically unattractive, Mohun's profession contributes to his undesirability. To supplement her repulsion,

¹²¹ For more information, see Alexander H. Pitofsky, "'What Do You Think Laws Were Made For?': Prison Reform Discourse and the English Jacobin Novel," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 33, (2004):293-312.

¹²² Althea is the only child of Sir Audley and her late mother. Upon his remarriage to the new Lady Dacres, Althea was placed with her aunt. Upon her aunt's death, Althea is evicted from her aunt's estate, which is handed down to a dissipated cousin and heir, Mr. Trevyllian. By the end of the novel, this estate plays a pivotal role in Althea's restoration to financial independence.

Althea adds that Mohun never ceases to perform his professional persona, because “when he speaks, which is always more than any body in the room, it reminds me of the voice and manner of the man whom I heard plead against those poor creatures who were prisoners at Exeter [...] so that I suppose it is the usual manner of lawyers, and that Mr. Mohun cannot divest himself of it in private company” (18). Rather than plead for the poor, Althea remembers the barrister arguing for the county, an action that converts Mohun into an agent of oppression rather than relief and compassion. His unappealing appearance and overbearing, self-righteous and litigious persona make Mohun into a despicable representation of the law, while also undermining any pretensions he may have to gentility, and subsequently to Althea’s affection.

As the stereotype of the social-climbing lawyer, Mohun aspires to join the gentry through his political influence as a Member of Parliament. His rank is enough to recommend him as a husband for Althea, and Sir Audley reproaches her for dismissing a man “who will undoubtedly be Chancellor,” and who, by preferring her, would culminate in “the most fortunate circumstance of your life” (20). Although he associates and is aligned with the higher classes, Mohun’s personal behavior remains unacceptable to Althea. He drinks excessively, behaves inappropriately, and looks upon Althea solely as a sexual object. Along with sharing the scandalous proceedings of divorce trials with Althea’s stepmother Lady Dacres, Mohun makes a drunken pass at Althea, when he utters “disagreeable speeches,” and “[put] his arm around my waist, he stared at me, and said, I was the most divine little dear he had ever seen” (19). Mohun’s monstrosity is further demonstrated in his impolite behavior. His attitude toward women is to assume that they are “honored in being allowed to become objects of his notice and favour,” while showing aversion to “sensible women” and declaring their understanding futile and inferior to his own (75-76). This behavior is witnessed by Althea, who notes his “cold and

careless manner” in talking to her, and Mohun’s “surveying [her] with that sort of look that a sagacious jockey puts on when he is about to purchase a horse” (47).

Mohun’s aspirations to a gentlemanly status actually undermine his ability to behave like one. Equally offensive to Althea is that Mohun “seems thoroughly persuaded that his political consequence, his legal celebrity, and his increasing fortune, give him a right to disregard and insult the feelings of the rest of the world” (68). She suggests that political influence, money, and celebrity do not constitute the proper behavior of a gentleman. Mohun’s aim in desiring “to aggrandize or to gratify himself by every means, and by all means” is seen as a “right.” This “right” is incontrovertible in his eyes because his money, influence, and abilities secure it for him. As Lady Dacres’s lawyer, he employs Vampyre to hound Marchmont’s father, whose death allows Mohun to assume ownership of Eastwoodleigh, the Marchmont family estate. Later in the novel, after Sir Audley death, he uses his power as an executor of Althea’s estate to oppress her further. Smith’s characterization of Mohun suggests that members of the gentry like Sir Audley are being infiltrated by undeserving, overly ambitious men, who seek power without any concern for the refinement befitting a man of his status.

While Mohun is a villainous character of higher rank, who also uses the law to benefit himself, Smith uses Vampyre as an embodiment of the lower order of pettifoggers. He undermines the values that make England a supposed “palladium of liberty” (292). His role as a “disturber of the living,” illustrates the source of the plague, the nuisance at the heart of this defect in the nation’s legal system (293). While Smith’s depiction of Mohun portrays lawyers as lascivious and upwardly mobile, he maintains a gentlemanly attitude, if only for the sake of appearances. Smith suggests that lawyers and pettifoggers are flawed and undesirous examples of gentility and even of masculinity. Their identity is not governed by classical masculine virtues

such as honor, loyalty or sincerity. They are instead ruled by avarice and pride, led solely by a need for power and money with little consideration for polite trappings of gentility.

Demonizing Vampyre allows Smith to attack the legal profession by making him both inhuman and thus not a proper gentleman. Althea's encounter with Vampyre in Eastwoodleigh focuses on his physical repulsiveness, a symptom of his corruption. He is a "short mean figure between fifty and sixty, [...] he wore a carroty scratch wig pulled forward over a face which could not, without an affront to the species, be called human," and his voice, "loud and slow" is enough to "have conveyed a perfect idea of the hideous monster that uttered it" (127-128). His attitude toward Althea further illustrates the abhorrence he incites, as he notes Althea's trembling voice as a sign of fear, and "striking therefore his cane against the ground; he said in a still louder voice – 'Understand, Madam, that I am *authorized* in what I demand.'" In her identification of Vampyre as "the Satanic agent of abused law (202)," Smith resorts to familiar stereotypes of the lawyer as an infernal creator of discord, while elevating the "melodramatic stick figure" to the same despotic status as *Caleb Williams*'s Falkland.¹²³ The metaphoric characterization of Vampyre's "happy talons of this venomous reptile" and other inhuman traits further separate him from the species, a key distinction for Smith in distinguishing lawyers from the common man (148). His physical monstrosity in conjunction with his lack of courtesy to a woman of the upper-classes testify to his assumption of a social status that is beyond his ability to perform.

Depicted as neither human, nor a gentleman, Vampyre is an abnormal Englishman, who cannibalizes his own kind through perfidy. The finances and estates of gentleman and the average man are consumed alike. Like contemporary depictions of the pettifogger, Vampyre is responsible for destroying the credit of his reputation and of his victims. He spreads ruin

¹²³ Fry, *Charlotte Smith*, 101.

“wherever this disgrace to his profession and to human nature once infix’d his empoisoned fangs; and that his insidious friendship was not less fatal to his employers, who were always his dupes, than was his enmity to those against whom they engaged him” (138). Vampyre illegally held the body of Marchmont’s father in lieu of payment, an action that prompts Marchmont to consider Vampyre as “that fiend, who, in the shape of an attorney, embittered the last sad days of my father,” and it is this “*miscreant* (for it debases the species to call him man)” (148). With such actions, Smith suggests that lawyers are vampiric, feasting on English money and by extension, Englishmen. Through extortion and illegal practices, Vampyre and Mohun aggrandize themselves, mimicking, in their behavior and use of authority, the very gentility they are diminishing. In another scene, Vampyre, disguised as a beggar, forces his way into Eastwoodleigh. He places a stick between the door and the post, and upon taking off his hat, Vampyre reveals “the diabolical countenance and distorted eyes of the villainous attorney” (198). Vampyre’s description is terrifying, distancing him from any pretension to gentlemanly status, converting the British pettifogger into something unmanly and decidedly un-English. His invasion of a private space, signified by Althea’s presence as a feminine and interior refuge, demonstrates his oppression and disregard for the law and social customs. Althea laments her inability to “chasti[se], as he deserved, a monster, who, disgracing the name of man, seem’d to be some subaltern agent of Mammon and Moloch let loose to blast all on whom *his evil eyes* were turned” (200). By connecting Vampyre to the established trope of lawyers as demons, Smith reinforces her association with literary history, but also with the pressing need in England to hold these men in contempt.

Smith’s rancor is most felt in Marchmont’s description of “the dark caverns of iniquity, called lawyers’ chambers, where the very air seem’d to be infected by the poison of the reptiles

who inhabited them, and where the registers of the victims they had devoured, or were devouring, were the only furniture of the walls” (302). Again, lawyers are seen as inhuman, incapable of possessing the social markers of gentility – paintings and a presentable home – instead they have “caverns” and “registers”. Rather than instilling or projecting politeness or improvement, they “poison” the air, a contagion that causes not only physical, but social disease. The inhumane treatment of clients is converted into financial and physical food for lawyers. Lawyers may feed on their clients’ money, but do not, as Smith suggests, imbibe their ideals or virtues. They cannot attain the same status and refinement, no matter how much money they have or who they marry. Lawyers are devourers of men, an action which convert them into anti-Englishmen, who destroy honor, civility and sincerity — those palladiums of English pride.

IV

If lawyers represent an England that is corrupt and monstrous, driven by the “money-getting and money-saving,” then Marchmont is presented as an antithetical figure. However, this is complicated by this status as an heir, a position that is figuratively and literally in ruin. Introduced as the impoverished only son, at twenty-three Marchmont’s “generous manly spirit” rose up to assume his father’s debts, a decision that leaves him “without a profession, stripped of his paternal property, and not only liable to be pursued for debts he had no means of satisfying, but charged with the support of a mother [...] and three sisters” (58-59). Althea meets the melancholy and insolvent Marchmont shortly after she is nearly sold off to Mohun, favoring the tragic figure to the boorish barrister. Unlike the impudent Mohun, whose political axioms “offend [Althea’s] feelings of common honesty and plain sense – nor his moral decisions set decency and humanity at defiance,” Marchmont offers fortitude and tenderness (68). His self-sacrifice in assuming his father’s debts, a “noble resolution,” and his feelings “acute as they

were” make Marchmont the most attractive and “most deserving” of all the men she has known (71). Marchmont’s “animated countenance and handsome figure,” combined with his emotional tenderness, elicit sympathy and the beginnings of affection in Althea (71). He is unafraid to cry as he discusses his concern for his mother and sisters. Yet, this sentimental hero is also a ghost in his own familial estate.

Smith invests her own feelings of exile and exclusion to her male hero.¹²⁴ Similar to Smith’s novels during this period, *Marchmont* can be read as “early versions of an inverted English national tale” which questions “the dominance and unity of Englishness not from its colonial or postcolonial margins but from within.”¹²⁵ Marchmont’s sensitivity and economic dispossession label him as an alternative version of Smith’s own wandering and social exclusion.¹²⁶ Although Smith may have, as Katharine Rogers argued, created “admirable characters [who] are mindful of the claims of reason and family responsibilities,” Marchmont reflects Smith’s ambivalence toward a particular moral ideal.¹²⁷ Because of his patriarchal need to protect his family, an admirable fault by all accounts, he becomes “a wretched wanderer, concealed like a culprit,” residing in the home of his once affluent and honorable ancestors (145). He is a “fugitive, and an exile,” but Althea wonders, “was he therefore less estimable? — The causes of his poverty and distress rendered him infinitely more respectable” (173). The victim of greedy, overreaching lawyers, Marchmont is not immediately discernible as a dashing suitor or hero, but a noble gentleman. The Marchmont familial estate is mortgaged to Sir Audley, through Lady Dacres, thus linking the hero and heroine in their own stories of dispossession.

¹²⁴ Sodeman, “Literary Exile,” 136. Smith also uses Marchmont to vocalize her frustrations with authorship and respectability. Marchmont turns to writing as a means for financial support, and similar to Smith’s relatives, his mother’s relatives refuse to address him once he is known to be an author.

¹²⁵ Guest, “Suspicious Minds,” 177.

¹²⁶ Rogers, “Romantic Aspirations,” 75; Sodeman, “Literary Exile,” 136.

¹²⁷ Rogers, “Romantic Aspirations,” 87.

Althea still considers him a “genteel” man, even though he is a debtor. Smith positions Marchmont as a male counterpart to Althea’s own exile and dispossession, as both struggle to survive against scheming, opportunistic relatives and agents of the law. What renders Marchmont an interesting marriage prospect for Althea is their shared distress and obvious sympathy. Marchmont’s financial and legal situation somehow convert him into a respectable man. His diminished financial status elevates his worth as a suitor because his impoverishment is a direct result of his noble sentiments for his family. Debtors are only technically criminals, viewed rather as unfortunate victims without resources to secure them from imprisonment. Marchmont’s friend, Eversley, objects to his inability to escape “the torrent of ill fortune which seems rapidly to pursue him,” thus converting him into an object of compassion (37). To others he is a nuisance, worthy of contempt because he is poor. The sentimental hero is a zero.

Because of his diminished status, other characters expect Marchmont to behave like a member of the lower classes. Throughout the novel, Marchmont is refused assistance because of his inability to change his attitude to reflect his socioeconomic status. Sir Audley refuses to hire Marchmont as a tutor for his son based on his impoverishment, but also because “he seemed to consider himself still in his former rank, and even when asking a favour [...] it was less like a dependant than an equal.” Enjoying the vicarious “fruit of iniquity” constructed by Lady Dacres’ father in illegally securing the Marchmont estate, Sir Audley adds his dislike for Marchmont’s “manly bearing” (111). Refusing to act like a man below his rank, Marchmont’s proud behavior is suggestive of his desire to separate character from economic credit. Despite his diminished financial status, Marchmont continues to regard himself a gentleman. He learns that “there is no crime so unpardonable as poverty,” and that the luxury afforded by public credit permits those who are corrupt, whether gentry or lawyers, to be free from ruin and rumor (112).

Regardless of any claims he can make about his innate worth, Marchmont must act like a criminal. Like Godwin's Caleb Williams, Marchmont is persecuted by the law, and forced into hiding, becoming imprisoned in his "paternal prison," the ruined Eastwoodleigh (156). It is there that he builds his friendship with and eventual courtship of Althea. Within these Gothic confines, both Althea and Marchmont are haunted by Vampyre, who becomes the typical villain when he frightens Althea and her temporary guardians/servants as he searches for Marchmont. The cat and mouse game between them permits Smith to use conventional Gothic tropes, such as mysterious footprints in the snow, sighs and knockings heard in the middle of the night, as the familiar is rendered new in her depiction of the outrageous pursuit of the debtor by the creditor. It also allows Smith to turn current English fears of spies and surveillance into an examination of how personal lives are persecuted by "public corruption."¹²⁸ As in other novels by Smith, the hero faces the horrors usually reserved for a Gothic heroine, and within the prison of his family home, he is subject to the same surveillance, lack of freedom and fears as a heroine.¹²⁹ These horrors are fully realized when he is in an actual prison in volume four. Unfortunately, Marchmont's position as a debtor and criminal negates his familial ancestry, his status as a gentleman, and any attempt to restore his reputation.

Faced with two options – imprisonment for debt, or exile – Marchmont chooses exile in France. He submits to the terrors of France and in his letters to his sister, Lucy, expresses his preference for exile over "the pains and penalties which wait on poverty in my native land, [where] I am a coward" (248). Suffering under the oppressive "laws of my country, that from even an unoffending debtor as I am, nothing will satisfy those laws but that I should terminate my life in prison," Marchmont's consideration is mainly aimed at protecting his mother's

¹²⁸ Guest, "Suspicious Minds," 135.

¹²⁹ Ladd, "Invaded Spaces," 183-182.

feelings. Marchmont's fortitude, evident in his seeming to "suffer, though he did not complain," is undone by his feelings of being a "burden to the few who have humanity to be interested for me – a burden to myself" (156). He acknowledges his powerlessness as the family patriarch, because he is "not allowed even to afford them the protection they want" (147). He blames this on the failure of the English government, believing the government "faultless, incapable of losing its spirit of justice, and impossible to be amended" (248). Marchmont feels ineffectual when he compares himself to his mother, whose example only serves to illustrate his lack of fortitude. It is his mother who exhibits "mild submission to evils, heavy because inflicted by men, her patient descent from the place she had been accustomed to, [...] her quiet acquiescence under every oppression" (310). Her example of feminine power, "the mild submission" and "quiet acquiescence" to submit to whatever befalls her at the hands of men in authority, fills him with self-reproach because he cannot mirror it.

Marchmont's letters from France reflect the disastrous conditions present both in England and France. To draw similarities, Smith presents Marchmont with two invidious options each as dangerous as the next: he can spend his life "in the Fleet, or the Abbaye — whether I am to exist under the tyranny of Robespierre, or a victim to the chicanery of Vampyre" (159). The Fleet and the Abbaye are, respectively, prisons in London and in Paris. The Reign of Terror is akin to the prosecution of an English lawyer. By equating Robespierre with a pettifogger, Smith argues that England is all too similar to France, a dangerous critique to make in the politically repressive atmosphere of the 1790s. This connection is further illustrated as part of a long letter where he criticizes England. For Marchmont, the legal handling of his father's estate is "more destructive and more cruel" than the Reign of Terror (302). These letters also allow Smith to illustrate her criticism of "the British legal system in a time of political repression [which] makes the novel

unique to fiction of the mid 1790s.”¹³⁰ Smith claims a material association between corrupt England and despotic France by claiming that lawyers are partly to blame for the French Revolution. In the same letter, Marchmont writes that lawyers are “the cause of, and chief gainers in, the revolution; which in truth I believe, as I think no other set of people could have done so much mischief, brought down such miseries on a great nation.” It is because of these “reptiles” – like an Egyptian plague, but far worse since they are “authorized scalpers –that families like Marchmont’s are destroyed (293).

One letter deserves attention for its extended critique of British law and the country that permits such injustice to continue unabated. Marchmont deplores that these very laws shield this professional class. His letter goes on to question if there is a Briton:

who can venture to make the proud boast that the law in his country is the palladium of liberty, and the protector of property? War, earthquake, pestilence, famine, tempest, all the calamities of this best of all possible worlds, which we pray against the liturgy, do not, I am convinced, occasion more anguish to ‘*the poor creature of the earth*’ than these locusts, which we ourselves arm with stings and claws – because it is the custom (291-92).

Echoing the language and fervor of eighteenth century texts against lawyers discussed earlier, Marchmont’s letter returns to the demonization of the lawyer as a scourge sanctioned by the public. He suffers, but it is a result of losing his freedom, and reputation, but primarily the diminution of his family’s circumstances, which signify the multiple effects that an economic system based on the abuse of debtors can have on individuals and families. The subhuman lawyers, “locusts” who wreak havoc, are given authority and power, while the “poor creatures” of the Earth are converted into cowards and criminals hiding from the “stings and claws” of the law. Even more so, Marchmont’s criticism blames England for effectively unmanning him.

¹³⁰ Fry, *Charlotte Smith*, 101.

Compounded with these cowardly feelings, exile allows Marchmont to reconsider his status in England, especially his commitment to English values. Unlike Englishmen from the “middling or lower ranks of life” who early on in life learn to “indulge that national arrogance, and national prejudice,” Marchmont does not possess this predisposition to see England with such nationalist views. This inclination toward nationalism, which can be defined as a “sense of active participation or citizenship in the individual as he relates himself to a group,” does not reflect Marchmont’s experience.¹³¹ By refusing to feel like a part of a group that exhibits “arrogance” and “prejudice” in a country that abuses and disenfranchises its citizens, Marchmont separates himself from the Englishmen, who have in turn cast him out. Because of his early misfortunes, he claims to instead have “learned to be a Citizen of the World” (311). Through this new identity, Marchmont seeks a different group, a new way of connecting with others, that is not predicated on nationalism, or participation in the flawed ideals that constitute England in the 1790s. By claiming to be a “Citizen of the World,” Marchmont can redefine himself, without relying on the characteristics of being an English citizen, or more precisely, an Englishman.

Marchmont is confronted by the full extent of the limits of national pride and bias on his return journey to England. Seeking a safe passage back to England through Hanover, Marchmont experiences additional consequences of his criminal status. In Hanover during a time of war, Marchmont is an object of suspicion and insolence from the English soldiers stationed there. He encounters more instances of abuse and reproach at the hands of the officers, who refuse to consider him a gentleman. Marchmont is treated as a spy or adventurer, because he has “no recommendation, acquaintance, means of ascertaining what I was, or to whom I belonged. [...] as I called myself a gentleman, yet none of my connections seemed to *countenance* me.” His language, “what I was, or to whom I belonged,” and “no one seemed to *countenance* me”

¹³¹ Gerald Newman, qtd in Maunu, “Home Is Where The Heart Is,” 52.

demonstrate his lack of identity, of belonging, and of being tolerated, all which reinforce his effacement. Without money, or a title, he is no one, and a citizen of a larger world. His presence in France is read as “a crime, and laid me open to suspicions either felt or *feigned*” (311). By claiming to be an Englishman, Marchmont assumes that *merely being* one is enough to provide him with employment, in some capacity, at an English army camp. Part of this suspicion can be traced to his “alienated, cosmopolitan vision of England,” because he bases his status and identity on ideals that are foreign and xenophobic to his fellow Englishman during a time of war.¹³² Marchmont’s attempts to recover his status as an English gentleman are futile because his lack of money and occupation mark him instead as a criminal.

Instead, Marchmont resorts to establishing a cosmopolitan identity, one that is partly based on a humane gentility, removed from petty and corrupt associations with England and its preference for money and titles. Eversley, Marchmont’s friend, joins this group. In Hanover, Captain Forrester correctly interprets Marchmont’s manners as that of an Englishman, and helps establish his status among the English officers. Captain Melincourt, an effeminate coxcomb, is Marchmont’s chief antagonist at Hanover. He is also a distant relative of Marchmont. Compared to the generous Forrester, Melincourt represents part of the larger issue in England, the corrupt “money-getting” branch, who are motivated by their “insipid, selfish” need of a “vacant mind” and live l a life of “perpetual solicitude” (317). For Marchmont, and indeed for Smith, a key distinction lies in behaving graciously and humanely, regardless of rank and status. As a younger son, Forrester has to make his fortune and status independently, unlike Melincourt, and he is revered by Marchmont for having “elegant manners [...] goodness of his heart and sweetness of his temper,” also being “brave [...] yet full of tenderness and humanity” (315). Marchmont places Forrester among a cosmopolitan, motley crew composed of a French surgeon and a Swiss

¹³² Guest, “Suspicious Minds,” 179.

peasant, who regardless of education and profession, are “liberal-minded, generous, and humane, considering nothing but how he might do good to his fellow-men, whatever might be their country, their religion, or their politics” (316). He sees beyond national identity in order to create an identity and a community outside of these parameters.¹³³ By valuing particular characteristics, found in men who uphold virtues above other ties, Marchmont distances himself from a specific national identity. As Heather Ann Ladd notes about *The Banished Man*, “national identities retreat into the background without dissolving entirely, while gender demarcations are likewise softened in the transnational spaces carved out by Smith’s characters.”¹³⁴ These traits, which Marchmont declares, “Nature has scattered here and there such hearts in *all* climates and countries,” contribute to the creation of a citizen of the world and cosmopolitan masculinity that he embraces during his exile (317). The novel presents two types of gentility: the upwardly socially mobile lawyer, and a new community of displaced, cosmopolitan men. There are those men who engorge themselves on the financial ruin of others, and those who make it their life’s work to help others.

V

Despite establishing a new identity for himself in exile, Marchmont remains a creditor and criminal in England, and these two labels problematize his rediscovered sense of self. Labeled an imposter and a spy by the English army, Marchmont returns to England, feeling inadequate and weak. Lamenting the loss of his prospects, Marchmont, forcibly struck with his financial ruin, considers “what I might have been, and what I am” (324). Aware of his absolute worthlessness, he cannot fathom a union with Althea. Still likely to be imprisoned for debt, Marchmont is unwilling to disguise himself. He fears that being an imposter will make him seem

¹³³ Heather Ann Ladd makes a similar argument about Smith’s 1794 *The Banished Man*.

¹³⁴ Ladd, “Invaded Spaces,” 193.

suspicious and to disguise himself would further injure his reputation and make him seem cowardly. Marchmont's sense of pride and identity are not worth losing. He fears that posing in a "fictitious character," could lead Althea to potentially despise him, or worse, he might feel humiliated, and despise himself, feeling like "a man who stoops to act like an impostor, unworthy of her good opinion" (339). Althea, in turn, weighs fortune versus companionable happiness with Marchmont, if various suitors were to propose: "Were such men as Mohun, as Wardour, as the elegant Captain Melincourt [...] and fifty other that she had seen – were *these* persons with whom the most splendid pecuniary possessions would induce her to live? — Certainly not." She realizes with Marchmont "in despite of any pecuniary inconveniences, and in any rank of life, that she must be happy" (331). In valuing his courage and commitment to his mother and sisters, which speak to his selflessness, generosity and an inherent notion of gentility, Althea chooses the dispossessed heir, rather than the external, empty signs of respectability.

Marriage, unfortunately, does little to restore Marchmont to a position of authority or security. He is still a creditor, fleeing the law, and without the means to financially provide for his new wife and family. As Althea's husband, Marchmont is technically able to act on her behalf and help her claim the inheritance money owed her by Mohun and Lady Dacres. But before the law, Marchmont is as ineffectual and powerless as a woman. Meeting with Mohun to discuss payment, Marchmont is treated with indifference and contempt. Repulsing Marchmont's legal status – the secret wedding occurred before Althea becomes of age, and without the consent of Lady Dacres – Mohun uses the law to his advantage when he challenges Marchmont: "If you think, [...] that you have a *remedy* against me – take it, Sir! take it; I have no manner of objection to meeting you on legal ground" (346-47). During this meeting, Marchmont is accompanied by the ineffectual lawyer Bargrave, who defends Mohun's aggressive impertinence

as “behav[ing] cavalierly,” which “means nothing in the world” (348). Marchmont’s rash remedy is to assume that “if the imprudent braggart will not be compelled to behave like a gentleman in *any* way, I will kick him wherever I meet him” (349). Mohun behaves like a lawyer, and not like a gentleman, especially in his response to Marchmont as Althea’s husband, as a man “not worth a shilling, without a profession, without any means of subsistence” (346). Implying that Marchmont married Althea solely for her money, Mohun despises the “undone wanderer,” feeling “the most diabolical hatred” for Marchmont, the preferred suitor (351). Irritated by Mohun’s insolence, and assuming that gentlemen do not insult each other without expecting a duel, Marchmont sends Mohun a threatening letter. Again, Marchmont’s pride and “manly bearing,” which had already damaged his ability to extricate himself from debt and legal issues, further complicate his predicament. Mohun, abusing his power, reads it as a challenge, an action that coupled with his debts, leads to Marchmont’s incarceration.

Imprisonment undoes Marchmont’s proud and masculine bravado. He is unable to bear his diminished status and the oppressiveness of debtor’s prison, fluctuating between feelings of helplessness and rage. Frustrated by his inability to leave the prison grounds (a right afforded to most inmates) and by his mother’s ill-health, Marchmont cries in front of Althea, incapable at times of controlling his emotions.¹³⁵ Drawing from her experience, Smith presents the reader with King’s Bench, an English version of the Bastille. As another location of persecution, oppression and ruin, it is a testament to the glaring defect in the legal institution, which permits the destruction of innocent lives through incarceration. Faced with the increasing expenses of prison life, and liable to never receive Althea’s inheritance, they are left to the mercy of creditors and Mohun.

¹³⁵ See Innes for more information on life in debtor’s prison. Prisoners could freely leave King’s Bench and go to nearby establishments, as long as they returned – Marchmont is kept within the gates at the malicious behest of Vampyre.

Feeling the pressure of prison life, Marchmont's former lack of resolve and ineffectiveness arise even more strongly under duress. Undermining his position as the sentimental hero, Marchmont cries and nearly loses his mind when he realizes that he cannot leave King's Bench to see his ailing mother. The nearly fatal combination of imprisonment and despair cause him to feel "disposed to dash himself against the wall, to tear his hair, to commit some of those wild and useless acts of desperation which intolerable and sudden anguish excites." From near madness to a "passion of tears," Marchmont rages against the legal parasites (376). Crying, he acquiesces to Althea's endeavor to refrain from yielding to such passions, which will only prevent him from seeing his mother and potentially harm Althea. By flying into violent rage and potentially assaulting jailers, Marchmont not only faces solitary confinement, but also fails to model fortitude and resignation. Althea's admonitions are short-lived, for he relapses, falling into despair and anxiety. Unable to endure prison, Marchmont is a prey to violent emotions, oscillating from "rage and indignation, not the less violent for being impotent," to being soothed by Althea (383). He turns to examples of female fortitude in an attempt to master his emotions. Using the anachronistic example of Madame Roland, Marchmont feels shame when he compares his situation to this "illustrious woman of modern times" (386). Through Marchmont, Smith makes a claim for feminine hardiness and resilience in the face of hardship.

Without her husband's help or fortitude, and without his physical protection, Althea steps in as an example of feminine fortitude. Desperate to restore her inheritance, both as a means to secure financial independence and as a way to obtain money to pay for Marchmont's prison fees, Althea is coerced into meeting Mohun. Her encounter begins with a description of Mohun, "whose eyes eagerly ran over her person, placed himself by her." The uncomfortable scenario

recalls Sir Audley's efforts to prostitute his daughter. Seeing Althea in a position of weakness, Mohun delights in having her in his power, believing it, because of "His presumption, his total want of principle and delicacy," and believing that Marchmont, "weary of poverty and imprisonment, from which he had no other means of escaping, had sent his wife as an advocate by whose eloquent beauty his chains would drop off" (396). Affecting a soft, conciliating air and tone, Mohun tries to deceive Althea, underestimating her capabilities. Reducing her to a weak and vain woman, he proclaims his passion for her and states that "Marchmont's release and future prosperity depended altogether on herself" if they renew their acquaintance (398). Horrified with this declaration and the threat of rape, Althea escapes. His power over her inheritance continues until the final page of the novel, when "after an ineffectual struggle, by which he only shewed the daring injustice he thought himself capable of maintaining, was compelled to pay Althea's fortune" (416). The villainous lawyer continues to manipulate his position of power in all aspects and to embody the dishonorable upwardly mobile professional gentleman.

Because Marchmont is unable to rescue himself or Althea, Smith introduces an agent of justice, and of patient, strong humanity, like Marchmont's earlier community of men, in the figure of Desborough. Finding Marchmont as he contemplates suicide in a moment of unavailing despair and helplessness, Desborough is the *deus ex machina* of the novel.¹³⁶ Marchmont's uncle via marriage, Desborough is another cosmopolitan citizen of the world. He is not a member of the gentry, but the son of a clothier, and sells an inherited plantation in the West Indies because he could not tolerate the practice of owning slaves. As a wander and an "unconnected being, neither rich nor poor," Desborough tries "all I can to do good to individuals" (409). He dislikes

¹³⁶ Judith Davis Miller, "The Politics of Truth and Deception: Charlotte Smith and the French Revolution," in *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writer's and the French Revolution*, ed. Adriana Craciun and Kari E. Lokke (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 355.

being called a “reformer,” because he has “given up any such chimerical idea, as that of being able to make men happier who are wicked and miserable by prescription.” Instead, he chooses to relieve “individual distress, and to lighten the chains that villainy often imposes on simplicity under the name of law” (414). The humane Desborough takes it upon himself like a “religion” to help others in distress, actions which convert him into an eccentric character.

With Desborough, Smith seems to be arguing for a personal belief system to counterbalance the corrupt legal system. Moreover, he represents a different version of the exiled citizen of the world, a transnational upwardly mobile member without political, legal or even social ties. In the final pages of the novel, he unveils the iniquity of Vampyre and investigates the long chain of corruption keeping Marchmont in prison and Althea dispossessed. With the help of Eversley and Captain Forrester, part of the cosmopolitan virtuous liberal-minded masculinity he idealizes, Marchmont is bailed out of jail. Marchmont and Althea are reestablished in society, residing in Althea’s former home, that of her aunt Mrs. Trevyllian. Like a typical gothic novel, they turn “away from the political struggles and violence of history toward the exclusive contentment of provincial family life.”¹³⁷ To a certain extent, their new home is another exclusionary bubble, where they can continue to be outcasts. This is all possible because of Desborough, whose claim that “chivalry exists no longer,” an echo of Edmund Burke, believes that English chivalry can exist, albeit in a modified configuration (405). By operating outside of morally and socially destructive networks, Desborough remains free from the implications of monstrosity and dissolute, ungentlemanly traits.

Smith’s waning belief in the possibility of a reformed England is made apparent in the fortunate escape of the two lawyers. In this gothic tale, the villains’ walk away unscathed: Mohun shrugs off “what was said of him,” and Vampyre, true to his obscure and nefarious

¹³⁷ Davies and Guest, Introduction to *Marchmont*, xxv.

origins, flees, after being “disappointed in his infernal malice” (416,414). They are not, like Wolf in *The Pettyfogger Dramatized*, reformed or compelled to release their debtors. Instead, the novel suggests that they can continue their crimes. Despite the appeal to curb the abuses of lawyers, for Smith, the true horror of the Gothic is its continuation. Terror, oppression and persecution live on, much as they do in her contemporary world where reform is barely attainable, where money and tyranny are the rule of the day. In their continuation, it is suggested that a different England is a mirror of the *ancien régime*, and men’s fortunes and reputations are altered as a result of this new oppression. With the rise of a new professional class, there is a shift in socioeconomic status and in a new genteel masculinity.

Marchmont ends with the couple restored to security and domestic felicity. Their new domestic idyll signals a retreat from “money-getting” communities. To an extent, dispossession is a boon, since it enables them to create a new space, free of the past, the historical loyalist ties that brought the ruin of the Marchmont family, and of the present, the suspicious, watchful tenor of an England surveilling for treason and sedition. Moreover, Smith presents Marchmont in his new role, as the husband who “sometimes trembled as he considered his felicity; and, believing it too great to fall to the share of any human being, he, with awe and gratitude, endeavoured to deserve its continuance” (416). His emotional displays are not limited only to sorrow or fear, but trembling joy and gratitude. Smith produces a sensible man appreciative of a new start to his life, signaling a new type of Romantic hero.

Chapter IV: Lovers and Libertines: The Philosophy of Seduction and ‘Things as They Are’ in Amelia Opie’s *Adeline Mowbray*

I

In a postscript to a July 15, 1811 letter from Percy Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Shelley mentions that Harriet Westbrook “has advised me to read Mrs. Opie’s Mother & Daughter [*Adeline Mowbray*] [...] and she has desired my opinion with earnestness.”¹³⁸ This comes after a May 1811 letter describing his feelings toward marriage as “hateful detestable – a kind of ineffable sickening disgust seizes my mind when I think of this most despotic most unrequired fetter which prejudice has forged to confine its energies.”¹³⁹ The novel’s views on the hazards of a union without marriage may have been behind Westbrook’s recommendation. It is impossible to ascertain whether Shelley ever read it.¹⁴⁰ In November of 1814, Westbrook’s letter to her friend Catherine Nugent details her response to Shelley’s elopement with Mary Godwin and suggests that the novel could not have contended against William Godwin and his philosophy. Shelley’s “profligate and sensual” behavior, Westbrook argues, is “owing entirely to Godwin’s *Political Justice*. The very great evil that book has done is not to be told. The false doctrines there contained has poisoned many a young and virtuous mind.”¹⁴¹ Harriet Westbrook’s vitriolic response cites the great radical philosophical work of the 1790s as an evil book that has poisoned Shelley, whom she refers to as “a vampire,” whose “character is blasted for ever. Nothing can save him now.”

¹³⁸ *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Volume 1, Shelley in England. Ed. by Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) No. 96, page 122.

¹³⁹ Letters of Percy Shelley, No. 67, page 80.

¹⁴⁰ In a letter dated July 25, 1811, (number 98) to Hogg, Shelley states that he has not read the novel, but promises to as soon as it arrives. However, the editor of the letters, Frederick Jones, cites Shelley biographer Newman Ivey White’s belief that “Shelley’s marriage to Harriet Westbrook was hastened by the reading of this book.” The Introduction of the Oxford edition of *Adeline Mowbray* by Shelley King also follows this opinion.

¹⁴¹ Cited in a footnote in *Letters of Percy Shelley*, No. 281, page 421.

Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*, Harriet Westbrook's recommended reading for Shelley, was published in 1805, and focuses on the dangers of radical philosophy and the strictures of social custom on the lives of men and women in the late eighteenth century. The action of the novel occurs in the years 1775 -1783, during the American Revolution, distancing the novel's central discussion of men and women's social rights from the more recent events of the French Revolution and the anti-Jacobin backlash in Britain. *Adeline Mowbray* is preoccupied with a drama its readers would have known: the relationship between Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Widely acknowledged as a *roman à clef*, the novel draws inspiration from the life and works of these two radical thinkers. Wollstonecraft began her relationship with Godwin, famous for his treatise *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), after she bore a child out of wedlock with her lover, American Gilbert Imlay. In keeping with their philosophical principles, Wollstonecraft and Godwin refused to follow social convention and marry. It was the birth of Mary Godwin that necessitated the sacrifice to philosophy. Following Wollstonecraft's death weeks after the birth of Mary, Godwin began the controversial *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. When published in 1798, it resulted in Wollstonecraft's vilification. In the *Memoir*, readers learn of Wollstonecraft's torturous affair with Imlay, her suicide attempts, and of her loving and happy union with Godwin.

A good friend of Godwin and Wollstonecraft, Opie was displeased by Godwin's revelatory memoir.¹⁴² She loosely bases her heroine and hero, Adeline and Frederic Glenmurray, on Wollstonecraft and Godwin, while reversing the order of Wollstonecraft's life with Adeline's unhappy marriage to Charles Berrendale in the last half of the novel.¹⁴³ Adeline is a young

¹⁴² Amelia Opie (née Alderson) was a friend of Godwin, and it is also believed that Godwin courted Alderson prior to beginning his relationship with Wollstonecraft. She was among the first of their friends to hear of their marriage. See Roxane Eberle, "Diverting the Libertine Gaze" and William St. Clair's *The Godwin-Shelley Circle*.

¹⁴³ Eleanor Ty, *Empowering the Feminine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 155.

woman swayed by radical philosophy, to denounce marriage, and as a result, she is exposed to shame, ridicule, ostracism, and harassment. While she ultimately marries and repents her former errors, her guilt over believing herself the cause of someone else's undoing kills her. In an ironic twist of fate, Opie's novel functions as a script for Shelley and Harriet's narrative, with Shelley behaving like Glenmurray and Harriet as Adeline, seduced by a philosopher-lover. In the novel, Opie takes into account her intimate knowledge of Wollstonecraft and Godwin, her critique of Godwin's *Memoirs*, and her own views on the limits of Godwinian theory in a world that expects a completely different form of practice.

Central to the novel's argument is Opie's reading of Godwin's *Political Justice* and Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, which demonstrates her involvement with their radical reformist ideals. Published in 1793, Godwin's treatise centered on a radical anarchist belief in the euthanasia of government, to be replaced by positive sincerity and a "system of disinterested benevolence" that would allow individuals to govern themselves first and then others with the larger goals of liberty, equality, knowledge and justice. For Godwin, there were two stages to the dissolution of political government: first, destroy the "Lockean natural rights tradition," second, abolish law and political authority. This was to be followed by a period of reconstruction based on "private judgement and individuality," best summed up by his belief in the principle of sincerity.¹⁴⁴ But after the Reign of Terror, Godwin became "synonymous with license, atheism and sin," chiefly as a result of his views on marriage.¹⁴⁵ Despite the public lampooning of his work, after Shelley's rediscovery of Godwin in 1812, his influence proved crucial in the lives and work of the second generation Romanticists.

¹⁴⁴ Isaac Kramnick, Introduction to William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (Suffolk: Penguin, 1976), 17. This edition uses Godwin's third revision of *Political Justice*, published in 1798.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

Fundamental to a reading of *Adeline Mowbray* are Godwin's thoughts on marriage, general sincerity and good. In Book VIII on Property, Godwin attacks marriage as a "system of fraud," and "the worst of all monopolies," due to the "despotic and artificial means, to maintain possession of a woman, [man is] guilty of the most odious selfishness."¹⁴⁶ Central to his critique of the institution of marriage is Godwin's belief that men and women should be free to choose their partner, and free to "[quit] the attachment, whenever their judgement directs them to quit it."¹⁴⁷ Godwin's belief in sincerity is linked to a larger duty to benevolence as a "goal of man's social existence."¹⁴⁸ With someone in the role of an "ingenious censor" who would ideally identify another's "virtues, good deeds, meanness and follies," Godwin argues for absolute sincerity as the "most powerful engine of human improvement."¹⁴⁹ As I will discuss later, Opie's commentary on Godwinian philosophy, through the character of Glenmurray, incorporates his adherence to sincerity and social improvement, while emphasizing the integral flaws in these ideals. An adept reader and critic of Godwin, Opie anticipates Godwin's refutation of his former ideas on marriage in the Preface to his novel *Fleetwood*, published only a month after *Adeline Mowbray* in 1805.¹⁵⁰

Contemporary critics of Opie's novel were quick to find the connections between its main characters and the Godwin-Wollstonecraft union. *The Monthly Review* in 1805 is often cited, since the writer expresses the general sentiment of most reviewers: "It is the intention of this work to portray the lamentable consequences, which would result from an adoption of some

¹⁴⁶ Godwin, *Political Justice*, Book VIII, appendix, 762.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 764.

¹⁴⁸ Kramnick, Introduction to *Political Justice*, 27.

¹⁴⁹ Godwin, *Political Justice*, Book IV, chapter VI, 313, 320.

¹⁵⁰ Glenmurray attempts to convince Adeline that defying convention by not marrying, although one way to change the status quo, it may not ultimately be a very effective method. Godwin would argue in his Preface to *Fleetwood* that his theories might be found "salutary, if brought into general practice," and in other cases, "be attended with tragical consequences, if prematurely acted upon by a solitary individual" (Explanatory Notes to *Adeline Mowbray*, 285).

lax principles relative to a rejection of matrimonial forms, which have been inculcated by certain modern writers.”¹⁵¹ *The Critical Review* took issue with the novel’s portrayal of contentment outside of marriage: “what we have to object to are the fascinating colours thrown over the erroneous virtues of Adeline and Glenmurray, ‘making’ [...] vice more dangerous by giving it an air of respectability.”¹⁵² The reviewer for *The Literary Magazine* likewise identifies the source material – “the heroine having imbibed the principles of the Wollstonecraft philosophy” – and criticizes its “contempt of marriage.” The writer focuses especially on the trials of a Wollstonecraft-like heroine who “unites herself to a man, by whose writings she had been convinced, and subjects herself to the imputation of vice and profligacy,” thus implicitly promoting the justice of the novel’s tragedy through a succinct condemnation: “the story concludes abruptly with her becoming a victim to her foolish and imprudent mode of thinking, and ending a miserable life, by an untimely and unhappy death.”¹⁵³ All the reviewers focus on the heroine’s errors, rather than on the problematic behavior of the novel’s male characters, utilizing recent collective memory of Wollstonecraft and Godwin’s *Memoirs* as the basis of their moralizing.

Modern critics have shifted from reading Opie’s novel as anti-Jacobin to a more complex interpretation centered around Opie’s former radical allegiances, her contradictory views on the radical philosophy of the late 1790s and the oppression of women in Georgian society. Similar to Opie’s reviewers, recent critics begin with the historical context of the novel’s inception in the Godwin-Wollstonecraft romance, but also take into account Opie’s own radical tendencies. Critical readings of the novel revolve around Opie’s complex repudiation of her association with

¹⁵¹ “Monthly Catalogue” *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* (10, 1805): 320-321.

¹⁵² “Book Review” *The Critical Review, or Annals of Literature* (Feb 1805), 4:2: 219.

¹⁵³ “Monthly Retrospect of English Literature” *The Literary Magazine; or Monthly Epitome of British Literature* (July 1805): 358.

the radical philosophical circles of the 1790s. Opie's radical bent, followed by what has been interpreted as her desire to maintain her status as a "proper lady," has resulted in an analysis of the novel as "positively dizzying in the degree to which it invalidates all answers, conservative and radical."¹⁵⁴ Roxanne Eberle has produced one of the more substantial readings of the text, which considers Opie's satire and critique as part of a "deliberate consideration of the consequences of Godwinian philosophy for a female proponent."¹⁵⁵ Meghan Burke Hattaway explores the sites of physical contagion and infection in the novel, and situates illness in the ideologies "rooted in society's constrained and often hypocritical definitions of virtue." She alludes to the ailing bodies of Glenmurray and Berrendale, which "signify moral as well as physical disease," a key element in my discussion below on the importance of male bodies and the tension between theory and practice.¹⁵⁶

Very little criticism has focused on male behavior in the novel. Most readings of the novel focus on the loss of female virtue and the consequences of Adeline's faulty education in Godwinian theory.¹⁵⁷ Opie presents a spectrum of the social prejudices and hypocrisy in her examination of the contemporary world through specific instances of rejection and harassment. For instance, Adeline's rejection by a female community for being a kept woman, and the impertinence of a servant questioning Adeline's virtue. Shelley King has written on "marriage and dueling as social institutions governing feminine and masculine honor, respectively," and the

¹⁵⁴ Claudia Johnson, qtd in Lisa Robson, "so alluring in theory, so pernicious in practice": Amelia Opie's Feminist Materialist Critique of Radical Philosophy," *Topia*, 13, 104.

¹⁵⁵ Roxanne Eberle, "Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*: Diverting the Libertine Gaze; or, The Vindication of a Fallen Woman," *Studies in The Novel* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1994), 127.

¹⁵⁶ Meghan Burke Hattaway, "Amelia Opie's Fiction: Contagious and Recuperative Texts," *European Romantic Review*, 24.5, (2013); 555, 561.

¹⁵⁷ See for instance, Carol Howard, "The Story of the Pineapple": Sentimental Abolitionism and Moral Motherhood in Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*," *Studies in the Novel* 30 (1998): 355-76; Gary Kelly "Discharging Debts: The Moral Economy of Amelia Opie's Fiction," *The Wordsworth Circle* 11 (1980): 198-203.

novel's investigation of gendered social codes.¹⁵⁸ Roxanne Eberle's essay provides the most sustained critique of the novel's male characters, and the danger for women in "being seduced by male language," and "the conflict between destructive masculine desire and ideal philosophy."¹⁵⁹ Given Opie's indebtedness to Wollstonecraft's life story, it is important to consider Wollstonecraft's critique of male behavior as an influence on women's virtue and society's view on gender relations. Opie's characterization of men's attitudes to women is a crucial component of her critique of current social ills. Through the use of established conventional figures, such as the fortune-hunting Irishman, lascivious lawyers, and the rake, Opie reproduces a world where women are subjected to harassment regardless of their marital status. Recurring moments in the novel, such as when Adeline is harassed by men on the street, demonstrate how her reputation has suffered as a result of her ideals, but also validate an essential point in Wollstonecraft's *Vindication on the Rights of Woman*: that men need to exercise restraint. In Opie's inclusion of instances where men are unable to exercise restraint and embody polite ideals in society, whether on public streets or in private homes, she emphasizes the ongoing critique of a dominant and aggressively masculine sexual-social culture and argues for both an examination and a redress of masculine codes of behavior.

In its critique of a society caught between convention and revolution, *Adeline Mowbray* functions as a junction text, as it links the radical fervor of the first generation of Romantic writers to the resuscitated interests in revolutionary ideals of the second generation. The novel captures the flawed practices of early enthusiasts for social progress and reform, and demonstrates the ongoing need to continue such progress in the first decade of the 1800s.

¹⁵⁸ Shelley King, "The "Double Sense" of Honor: Revising Gendered Social Codes in Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*" in *Enlightening Romanticism, Romancing the Enlightenment: British Novels from 1750 to 1832*. ed. Miriam L. Wallace (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 111.

¹⁵⁹ Eberle, "Libertine Gaze," 127,130.

Anticipating the ardor for hope and change evidenced in Shelley and later Romantics, Opie's novel establishes a connection between the main currents of Romanticist ideology. Central to Opie's analysis of the "world as it is" is the representation of Godwinian theory as a seductive program that creates a fantasy world in which a theory of freedom for the sexes aligns with its practice. This fantasy is ultimately in conflict with a reality where prejudices police the conduct of men and women; it is also in conflict with a reality where the male body and sexual desire between the sexes disrupt the promises of progressive philosophy. Part of this fantasy involves the notion that men will behave according to the contemporary rules of polite society and conform to a standard of virtue applicable to both sexes. Unfortunately, reality provides men with an exculpating double standard, leaving fallen women to suffer public opprobrium. This divide between theory and practice, fantasy and reality, proves costly to Adeline, whose adherence to philosophy leads her to be misguided by Glenmurray's Godwinian-like theory, into a downward spiral of irreconcilable conflict with society, especially with the men who read her misfortune as an advantageous opportunity for their sexual benefit. Male characters in the novel operate in a reality where they have the freedom to treat women as objects, thus giving them the right to engage in predatory behavior and exploit social customs to their benefit. Employing models of gallantry and politeness established throughout the long eighteenth-century, these men are able to mask their intentions, whether financial or sexual gratification. However, the novel, through the redemptive powers of remorse, also provides the possibility for a reformation of such social behavior.

II

The seclusion of the Mowbray women at the family estate, Rosevalley, contributes to the creation of a divide between an idealized, exclusive world managed by women and the harsh

realities of a public world dominated by men and social convention.¹⁶⁰ Due to their isolation and preoccupation with abstract theories, Adeline and her mother lack an awareness regarding masculine behavior that is necessary to negotiate male and female relationships outside of their home. They lack interaction with men and society in general – Mrs. Mowbray is a widow and, like a Gothic heroine, Adeline lives in an idyllic retreat. They are little prepared for the varied modes of duplicity offered by a world where men produce normative standards of behavior. It is not until their trip to Bath that they interact with a male-dominated public sphere.

Despite their love of abstract philosophy, Mrs. Mowbray and Adeline are not properly equipped to interpret the motivations and innuendos of the men they encounter at Bath. The friction between theory and practice emerges in the difficulties they encounter when confronted with male attention. Adeline is briefly courted by the fashionable libertine, Colonel Mordaunt, who flees Bath the moment he realizes his growing attachment. Mrs. Mowbray is flattered by the attention she receives from Sir Patrick O'Carroll. She is free to select a companion and in this freedom does not accurately read Sir Patrick's rakish behavior. Entranced by his attention and his good looks, Mrs. Mowbray fails to identify Sir Patrick as an Irish fortune hunter motivated by her money and his sexual desire for Adeline. Discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, resort towns like Bath were the primary locations where predators could be found. Sir Patrick operates in the same manner as Frances Burney's Bellamy and Dubster in *Camilla* (1796), because he comes to Bath with the "wish to set his estate free by marrying a rich wife."¹⁶¹ Mrs. Mowbray's attitude toward him is best described by Mary Wollstonecraft who states, "when a woman is admired for her beauty, and suffers herself to be so far intoxicated by the admiration she

¹⁶⁰ The name suggests the eventual thorns in the relationship between mother and daughter. It also symbolizes a retreat, at the novel's conclusion, for female characters, namely Mrs. Mowbray, her granddaughter, Editha, and Adeline's faithful servant, Savanna.

¹⁶¹ Amelia Opie, *Adeline Mowbray, or Mother and Daughter*, ed. Shelley King and John Pierce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26. All references are to this edition of the novel.

receives, as to neglect to discharge the indispensable duty of a mother, she sins against herself by neglecting to cultivate an affection that would equally tend to make her useful and happy.”¹⁶² Mrs. Mowbray resolves to see only Sir Patrick’s attention to her, while remaining blind to his obvious lust for Adeline. This dangerous attitude, which emphasizes the failure of theory alone to prepare for an encounter with social reality, enables Sir Patrick to pursue both daughter and mother, and plan a sinister scheme.

Although the Mowbrays remain unaware of Sir Patrick’s intentions, the narrative provides the reader with his motivations and calculations. In a theme the novel takes up throughout its examination of relationships as areas of exchange, Sir Patrick laments that he goes too “far in his addresses to Mrs Mowbray” making “it impossible she should willingly transfer him to Adeline.” As a result, he consoles himself with the prospect of the mother’s fortune and the hope of possessing Adeline at a future date. This is also the beginning of his plan to sexually assault Adeline. Sir Patrick purposefully flirts with Mrs. Mowbray, while “his ardent looks and passionate sighs were all directed” at Adeline (26). Further stressing Sir Patrick’s duplicity is his divergent attitudes toward men and women: in his “dealings with men, sir Patrick was a man of honour,” but women he views as “a race of subordinate beings, formed for the service and amusement of men; and that if, like horses, they were well lodged, fed, and kept clean, they had no right to complain” (27). With his “very libertine gaze,” Sir Patrick becomes for Adeline a model of rakish behavior, affording her with a new phrase for whenever men objectify and insult her, “looking like Sir Patrick” (27, 113).

While Sir Patrick fascinates Mrs. Mowbray, Glenmurray and his philosophy bewitch Adeline. The first appearance of Glenmurray is not the man, but his philosophy, and the effect it has on Adeline. Set on impersonating her mother, the enthusiastic Adeline turns to “new

¹⁶² Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Miriam Brody (London: Penguin, 2004), 177.

theories, and these romantic reveries” which she “resolved to make conscientiously the rules of her practice” (14). The reader is offered the narrator’s perspective on Adeline’s first seduction by Glenmurray’s theory: “by a train of reasoning captivating though sophistical, and plausible though absurd, [he] made her a delightful convert to his opinions, and prepared her young and impassioned heart for the practice of vice” (14). Glenmurray’s work is treacherous because of its “captivating” rhetoric. The astute reader recognizes its “sophistical” markers as specious reasoning, veiled by its charm. The young and “impassioned” Adeline, however, is made into a “convert,” a term used by Glenmurray and others to describe her. Adeline’s faulty education and belief in the easy conversion of theory into practice make her susceptible to Glenmurray’s ideas. Under his deluded notion, Adeline and Glenmurray attempt to live in a world of their own fashioning.

Neither Adeline’s lack of experience in the “world” or her mirroring of her mother’s behavior are fully to blame for her enthusiasm, since Glenmurray’s seductive style produces the enchantment. Although Glenmurray’s philosophical discourses are omitted from the text, we are invited to create a paratext out of the similarities between Glenmurray and Godwin, and imagine their purport based on their effect on Adeline. The description of Adeline’s transformation into a “convert” supports a reading of Glenmurray and his theory as an ideological spell: “she had experienced the fatal fascination of his style, and been conveyed by his bewitching pen from the world as it is, into a world as it *ought* to be” (14). It is Glenmurray’s “bewitching” writing that transports Adeline from “the world” of reality and social custom into “a world” of implausible possibilities. Opie’s use of the definite article to support a real world governed by set practices suggests that this is the world all must live in, while the indefinite article, “a world” suggests the probable, but improved, world of Glenmurray’s philosophical creation. She leaves the real world

behind for a utopia Glenmurray proposes, a choice with fatal consequences. Glenmurray's representation of marriage with "its folly and its wickedness," and his creation of "so delightful a picture of the superior purity, as well as happiness, of an union cemented by no ties but those of love and honour," transport Adeline into "the highest pitch of enthusiasm for a new order of things," and spurs her determination to act according to "the rules" of Glenmurray's work (15).

The narrator's critique of Glenmurray resembles what other scholars have noted in Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*.¹⁶³ The power of the philosopher-seducer is as pernicious as the gallantry employed by men like Sir Patrick, though perhaps even more effective as a form of sexual, emotional and mental seduction. In many ways, Glenmurray's theory is as dangerous as the smooth-talking licentious manners of an eighteenth century rake. This is not to claim that this is Glenmurray's goal, or Godwin's for that matter, but the connection suggests that for a system of philosophy to be adopted, it must be enthralling.¹⁶⁴ Gary Kelly notes that for women in Godwin's circle, the philosopher was "more than a Mentor or a father figure, more than one might say, than a mere man."¹⁶⁵ For a young, independent and intelligent woman like Adeline, love begins through a sharing of ideas – a rhetorical seduction that begins through the page and continues in person. Glenmurray's seduction of Adeline is very similar to the sensual seduction offered by men like Sir Patrick.

But the reputation of Glenmurray's philosophy poison any association with him. The narrator's analysis of the flaws in Glenmurray's position is worth detailed examination:

A man whose speculations had delighted the inquiring but ignorant lover of novelty, terrified the timid idolater of antient usages, and excited the regret of the cool and rational observer: - regret, that eloquence so overwhelming, powers of

¹⁶³ Radicals were accused of seducing the nation in the 1790s. For more see Katherine Binhammer, *The Seduction Narrative in Britain 1747-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁴ See William St.Clair's biography *The Godwin-Shelley Circle* for instances of Godwin receiving fan mail from admiring female readers.

¹⁶⁵ Gary Kelly, qtd. in Eberle's "Libertine Gaze," 125.

reasoning so acute, activity of research so praise-worthy, and a love of investigation so ardent, should be thrown away on the discussion of moral and political subjects, incapable of teaching the world to build up again with more beauty and propriety, a fabric which they were, perhaps, calculated to pull down (20).

Glenmurray's "speculations" are converted into a semblance of the sublime, in their ability to "delight," "terrify" and "excite." Opie's adjectives concisely summarize the opposing feelings experienced by readers of Glenmurray's work – delight for the ignorant, terror for the timid, excitement for the coolheaded. Like his readers, Glenmurray's work is in opposition to his imagined aims, as his "eloquence" and "reasoning" are wasted on "moral and political subjects." By associating with Glenmurray, Adeline and her mother become the "inquiring but ignorant lovers of novelty," and fall for the "overwhelming" eloquence of his work: he "completely led their imagination captive, before the fascination of his countenance and manners had come in aid of his eloquence" (20). In short, they are half won over before he physically steps foot into their lives.

Based on Glenmurray's belief that marriage is an absurd institution, one is left to associate vice and disreputable behavior with the awareness that "it was supposed impossible that his life could be blameless and his seeming virtues insincere" (21). Shunned from most of society, Glenmurray is surrounded instead by those who are "bold in theory, and the almost impossible to practice." Similar to Adeline's description as a convert to his ideas, Glenmurray's followers see him as an "oracle – the head of a sect." Glenmurray embraces those "tenets," which he had "put forth more for amusement, than from conviction," and like the head of a sect, he "began to suffer on their account, [those tenets] became as dear to him as the cross to a christian martyr." Convinced that persecution is a "test of truth," Glenmurray reads any opposition to his ideas "not as the result of a dispassionate reason striving to correct absurdity,

but as selfishness and fear endeavouring to put out the light which showed the weakness of the foundation on which were built their claims to exclusive respect” (21). It is hard to distinguish if Opie is critiquing the fervor of new philosophies, or satirizing the inability of society to embrace new ideas. There is something decidedly cultish and deadly in those who worship philosophers, but a deliberate shunning of a potentially enlightening member of society is equally dangerous to cultural health. Yet, the analysis above reveals the danger of Adeline’s seduction, because she is swayed by a doctrine that affects Glenmurray only minimally, which places her in a dire social position.

Initially conceiving marriage as “absurd, unjust, and immoral,” Glenmurray is willing to marry Adeline, because he weighs the social advantages of the union for women. Glenmurray proves flexible in his own philosophy, yet the narrator seeks to dismantle his lofty idealizations. According to the narrator, Glenmurray’s conflict between “selfishness” and “heroic disinterestedness” stems from his belief that he:

thought he was willing to marry Adeline merely for *her* sake; but I suspect it was chiefly for *his*. The true and delicate lover is always a monopolizer, always delirious of calling the woman of his affections his own: it is not only because he considers marriage as a holy institution that the lover leads his mistress to the altar; but because it gives him a right to appropriate the fair treasure to himself, — because it sanctions and perpetuates the dearest of all monopolies, and erects a sacred barrier to guard the rights, — around which, all that is respectable in society, all that most powerful and effectual in its organization, is proud and eager to rally. (38)

Opie echoes Godwin’s critique of marriage as the “worst of monopolies” in order to emphasize the mistaken rationale for Glenmurray’s objections.¹⁶⁶ She also rewrites Godwin’s language on marriage and cohabitation turning his, “Over this imaginary prize, men watch with perpetual

¹⁶⁶ Godwin, *Political Justice*, Book VIII, 762. In the first edition, Godwin writes that marriage is “the most odious of all monopolies.”

jealousy” into “fair treasure” to further her argument and establish a precedent for her critique.¹⁶⁷ Marriage contorts a “sacred” vow into a “sacred barrier” that safeguards women like a property from other men. Opie criticizes marriage because it converts a holy right and institution into a legal contract, one that is sanctioned only to ensure that men exert their sovereignty over women. Unlike other men who see Adeline as prey, Glenmurray allows her to follow her principles to their conclusion. Despite his beliefs, Glenmurray is a man prey to the ways of the world. While he disagrees with Sir Patrick’s ideas that women are like animals, meant to cater to men’s needs, Glenmurray does conform to the standards of masculine honor and behavior that govern Sir Patrick.

Two moments best exemplify Glenmurray’s adherence to masculine codes in polite society, and the failure of the Mowbray women to understand how society governs models of behavior. After avowing her belief in marriage as an absurd practice in mixed company, Adeline fails to understand Sir Patrick’s reference to living a “life of honor” as an arch euphemism for illicit sexual relationships. Glenmurray confronts Sir Patrick over his licentious double talk to Adeline and is subsequently challenged to a duel. Like a gentleman of his age, Glenmurray opposes dueling, having written a volume against it.¹⁶⁸ However, as he is bound by a masculine code of honor, Glenmurray contradicts his principle and argues that he has to set an example and deny any charges of cowardice: “How can I expect to have any thing I say attended to, when, by refusing to fight, I put it in the power of my enemies to assert that I am a poltroon, and worthy of neglect and contempt?” (33). Losing the duel, an injured Glenmurray argues with Adeline that he did not want to be called a “coward” and could not bear the “world’s contempt: — I could not

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 762.

¹⁶⁸ On dueling and reforming masculine codes of honor in the eighteenth-century, see Donna Andrews, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery, and Gambling in Eighteenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Robert B. Shoemaker “Taming the Duel: Masculinity, Honor and Ritual Violence in London, 1660-1800,” *The Historical Journal* 45, no 3 (2002): 525-545.

endure the loss of what the world calls honour.” A surprised Adeline cannot believe she is hearing “the silly jargon of a man of the world,” to which Glenmurray responds, “I am a man, not a philosopher” (36). To remind him of his identity and its associated behavioral standards, she begins to read from his book against dueling. Rather than argue for the need to adopt one model over the other, Glenmurray submits to her reasoning. Adeline believes in a life modeled after theory, meaning Glenmurray’s previous opposition to dueling dictates that he cannot duel for any reason. Her strict adherence to theory – irrespective of possible exceptions - means that she fails to recognize that Glenmurray’s motives are twofold, for both protecting his reputation and protecting her from Sir Patrick’s insinuations. In practice, Glenmurray has to break with theory in order to strike a balance between the man and the philosopher. As I will discuss, Glenmurray’s refusal to explain the differences between theory and practice, his tacit upholding of the conflict between them, perpetuates the fantasy world where Adeline is most at risk from predatory men.

Glenmurray continues to follow social customs even when he and Adeline are living together. He refuses to argue for the propriety of their relationship. Failing to defend their relationship and argue its ideological sanction, Glenmurray chooses silence and the status quo. A dissatisfied Adeline struggles to come to terms with his conduct:

true, he had earnestly and sincerely wished to refuse to see his unexpected and unwelcome guests; but he had never once expressed a desire of combating their prejudices for Adeline’s sake, [...] but as any common man would have done under similar circumstances, he was consented to do homage to ‘things as they are’, without an effort to resist the prejudice to which he was superior. ‘Alas!’ cried Adeline, ‘when can we hope to see society enlightened and improved, when even those who see and strive to amend its faults in theory, in practice tamely submit to the trammels which it imposes?’ (126)

The philosopher becomes the “common man,” unwilling to resist the pull of society, content to respect “things as they are,” rather than change them. Glenmurray’s inability to follow his beliefs

in sincerity and acting in the best interest of all, two foremost Godwinian tenets, suggests that Opie acknowledges the limitations of such principles in daily life. It also evokes Mary Wollstonecraft's claim that "Men, in general, seem to employ their reason to justify prejudices, which they have imbibed, they can scarcely trace how, rather than root them out."¹⁶⁹ Opie's phrasing, "consented to do homage," further stresses Glenmurray's susceptibility to allow and follow the current ways of the world, showing his reverence for an order that permits him to keep a mistress and hide her from prying eyes. Adeline's reasoning is evident in her use of the construction "true...but", which in conjunction with her recognition of Glenmurray "tamely submit[ting]" to the restrictions of society, suggests a shift in her attitude toward him. She is critical of his specious reasoning, but does not fully condemn his behavior. It is left for the reader to conclude that Glenmurray struggles with effecting change because he alone benefits from the double standards of society.

III

The friction between theory and practice emerges in the dueling desires of Adeline and Glenmurray, as they struggle to reconcile the identities of the philosopher and man. She abides by his ideals in every possible manner, whereas he understands that it is necessary to bend the rules in order to be part of society. The idealized fantasy of the philosopher cannot exist alongside the realistic body of the man. It is within this conflict that the novel makes its fascinating argument: the highly educated, cerebral Mowbray women do not understand the disruptive forces of the male body. In many ways, this is the rub. Outside of their idyllic secluded home, they are confronted with the male form, a text with which they are unfamiliar, leading them to bewitchment or delusion. Rather than primarily focusing on the sexual objectification of Adeline and her mother, the novel dedicates a considerable amount of attention

¹⁶⁹ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 20.

to the male bodies of its characters. Displacing the traditional perspective of desire and the gaze, Opie presents Adeline and her mother as the desiring subjects, who are so enchanted by the men they see, that they are unable to practice their philosophic beliefs.

Bodies in the novel operate as twofold entities, sometimes hiding and other times displaying their duplicity. Mother and daughter, however, are not the focus of Opie's attention. Instead, the male body, diseased or beautiful, illustrates the double standard that benefits men, because it is nearly impossible to tell a man's character from his appearance. Adeline, influenced by Glenmurray's book, assumes what a philosopher should look like, and expects an older unattractive man, not the dark, handsome Glenmurray. Sent to Bath for his health, Glenmurray first appeals to Adeline as the "young and interesting invalid." Frail but "tall, pale, dark interesting-looking," Glenmurray only renders his "absurd" philosophy even more attractive, demonstrating a sensibility that overcomes his body, while also imbuing it with an ephemeral power (22). Adeline is completely unprepared to find a tempting man responsible for such thought. Unlike the good-looking yet corpulent Charles Berrendale, Glenmurray's ill health and consumptive frame connote a deceiving weakness that hides the dangers of his philosophy. Glenmurray's diseased body also acquires a delicate sensibility, made weak by the slightest agitation of emotion, as his "feelings operated so powerfully on his weak frame, that a sudden faintness seized him" (78). His disease, like his philosophy, delude Adeline into thinking he is healthy and potentially recovering. While his decline is the talk of the town, and despite Adeline's wondering if "only her eyes [were] blind" to his condition, her delusion is perpetuated. She sees "the brilliant deceitful appearance that attends his complaint – a bloom resembling health on his cheek, and a brightness in his eye rivaling that of the undimmed lustre of youth" (125). In her description, his illness becomes attractive, as the consumptive fever imitates health,

vigor, and beauty. Yet his sensibility, here heightened by his illness and his awareness of Adeline's precarious social position, makes him doubly attractive and dangerous. His body and deteriorating condition mirrors the flaws of his theory, and the more the couple tries to live according to his philosophy, the weaker he becomes.

To complicate further the difference between a healthy and a diseased male body, Opie introduces Glenmurray's cousin, Berrendale. The narrator states that they could have been mistaken for brothers. Glenmurray is "remarkable for the character and expression of his countenance," and Berrendale for his beauty. The narrator further declares that a physiognomist would find that while these men are exactly the same, excepting a different eye color, Berrendale is void of character, whereas Glenmurray's expression demonstrates his elevated mind. Physically the men are opposites, as Glenmurray is "thin and muscular; Berrendale, round and corpulent" (142). Berrendale is thus the healthy equivalent of his cousin, a statement that does not connect health with virtue. They are also similar in how their bodies are consumed by disease: Glenmurray's body is consumptive, battling the effects of sensibility, philosophy and competing desires, while Berrendale's body is plagued with gout and rapacious, selfish appetites. Both their bodies demonstrate a shared susceptibility to dangerous desires and ideals.

Berrendale's physical beauty is dangerously attractive, for it hides the conventional prejudices of a worldly gentleman. Like Sir Patrick, Berrendale is gallant and attractive, but morally and ideologically a man of his age. The narrator makes allowances for Berrendale's "extreme beauty of features and countenance", because he is "so truly what is called handsome [...] any woman would have been excused for falling in love with him" (142). Glenmurray calls upon this similarity as a reason for presenting Berrendale as Adeline's future husband following his imminent death, arguing "Perhaps self-love makes me recommend him, [...] as he is

reckoned like me, and I thought that likeness might make him more agreeable to you.” Adeline notes that this makes it “only the more odious [...] To look like you, and not *be* you,” a rational assessment of the seemingly obliging Berrendale (152). It is another instance of bodily exchange in the novel, which we witnessed earlier with Sir Patrick, and see again later with Colonel Mordaunt. Yet, Berrendale is like his cousin in deceiving Adeline with his appearance, as his behavior matches Adeline’s prediction that he may *look like* Glenmurray but is not *like* him.

The male body becomes the locus of men’s inability to exercise restraint, where vanity and desire are showcased. Berrendale, for instance, is described as a voracious eater, a selfish habit that emerged in youth. He resembles Wollstonecraft’s description of the voracious tyrant: “Passions are spurs to action, and open the mind; but they sink into mere appetites, become a personal and momentary gratification, when the object is gained, and the satisfied mind rests in enjoyment.”¹⁷⁰ His intemperate appetite resembles Wollstonecraft’s critique of men’s inability to curb their desires:

Men are certainly more under the influence of their appetites than women; and their appetites are more depraved by unbridled indulgence and the fastidious contrivances of satiety. Luxury has introduced a refinement in eating, that destroys the constitution; and a degree of gluttony which is so beastly, that [...] before one being could eat immoderately in the presence of another, and afterwards complain of the oppression that his intemperance naturally produced.¹⁷¹

Berrendale’s attitude toward food is the same that he exercises toward women.

Opie situates the first battle between corporeal reality and intellectual fantasy in the threat occasioned by Sir Patrick’s body, whose fit and handsome appearance masks his unregulated desires. In his scheming and manipulation of the Mowbray women, he displays the danger of a masculine desire without any moral code, one solely in pursuit of pleasure as a right. Sir Patrick

¹⁷⁰ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 41; Roxanne Eberle makes the same connection in her essay “Diverting the Libertine Gaze.”

¹⁷¹ Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 171.

believes that his body is enough to seduce Adeline. He makes his body into an object of desire and irresistibility, believing the “superior beauty of his person” capable of overthrowing Adeline’s preference for Glenmurray (41-42). He converts his height into a sexually charged reference when he tells Adeline that “being bothered by my debts, I made up to the old duchess [Mrs. Mowbray], and she nibbled the bait directly, — deeming my clean inches (six feet one, without shoes) well worthy her dirty acres” (32). Sir Patrick is aware that his attractive body, like that of an attractive woman, can be used to his advantage, as he exchanges his good looks for Mrs. Mowbray’s fortune. Dr. Norberry, a family friend of the Mowbray’s, notes Sir Patrick’s “fine person and a handsome leg” are the cause of Mrs. Mowbray’s blind infatuation (98). He becomes the embodiment of the profligate Irish fortune hunter, and the model for “man of the world.” In one scene, Sir Patrick assumes that Adeline behaves like most young women. Following his attempt to hold her and kiss her, she asks him to leave the room and Sir Patrick laughs off her anger, insisting that “you do not suppose, my dear creature, that you and I do not understand one another! Telling a young fellow to leave the house on such occasions, means, in the pretty no meaning of your sex, “Stay, and offend again,” to be sure” (32). Adeline, still inexperienced with men of the world, thinks he is insane. Choosing to read her behavior through his libertine lens, he sees her “not a deceived enthusiast, but a susceptible and forward girl, endeavouring to hide her frailty under fine sentiments and high-sounding theories. Nor was Sir Patrick’s inference an unnatural one. Every man of the world would have thought the same; and on very plausible grounds” (44). Opie uses the eighteenth-century signature phrase “man of the world” to emphasize Sir Patrick’s attitude. As his behavior illustrates, a man of the world “combined the dangerous and selfish qualities of the unreformed male with the materialism and corruption of the world against which the culture of sensibility defined itself.”¹⁷² As a model of

¹⁷² G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Chicago:

the “unreformed male”, Sir Patrick behaves according to the notions of a society that values masculinity, strength, honor and loyalty.

Sir Patrick’s displays of conventional masculine values are perverted in his performance of unreformed masculinity, particularly in his sexual aggression, dueling and lying. After his duel with Glenmurray, Sir Patrick distorts the truth in order to hide from Mrs. Mowbray his intentions, and presents himself as a proper English gentleman. He spreads the rumor that Glenmurray is a traitor to king and country, thus necessitating his having to protect the nation by dueling. He claims that he has to maintain his distance from Glenmurray because “never shall sir Patrick O’Carrol be father-in-law to the notorious and infamous Glenmurray – that subverter of all religion and order, and that scourge of civilized society!” (45). The irony here is obvious; both men, in their respective ways, upset order and garner their own notoriety and infamy. The difference is that Sir Patrick is nefarious in his intentions. His duplicity is in keeping with his status as an adventurer.

Sir Patrick’s rampant desires are best illustrated when he brings mother and daughter to the Pavilion, a “temple of Pleasure.” The unassuming women do not detect danger. Similar to the fascination with Glenmurray’s theory, but varying in its chief pursuit of material pleasure, the “enchantment” of Aeolian harps and perfumes provided by the Pavilion works its magic. Mrs. Mowbray, now Lady O’Carrol, misreads it as a sign of “her husband’s desire of making her happy,” choosing to interpret it as the sign of a caring husband, rather than an indication of a lecherous one (54). The estate also creates “a world as it is and ought to be,” an area where masculine fantasies become reality. It is here that Sir Patrick plans his assault on Adeline, after she experiences his “noisy mirth, to his odious familiarities, which, though she taught herself to believe they proceeded merely from the customs of his country, and the nearness of their

University of Chicago Press, 1992), 46, 245.

relationship, it was to her most painful to endure” (55). Sir Patrick gratifies his needs by adopting the role of the loving stepfather, thereby masking his lascivious affection. Adeline chooses to ignore her interpretation of Sir Patrick’s “libertine gaze” and affections by excusing it first as the behavior of a step-father, and then a typical Irishman. The location of the assault is his library, a place full of French novels and profligate tales from Rousseau and Voltaire. It is a reflection of Sir Patrick’s education and practices, learning mixed with “downy pillows of the inviting sofas around, calculated to inflame the fancy and corrupt the morals” (55). Before his attempt, Adeline notices books perused by Sir Patrick for the purpose of invigorating both his fancy and morals.

The sensual seductions offered by the Pavilion, and Sir Patrick’s attempts to woo both mother and daughter, are in keeping with his theory and practice. Even his desire to appear as a caring member of the gentry, by relieving the poor, is part of his learned duplicity. After Adeline asks him for money to help the poor in the estate, Sir Patrick disguises himself in order to dole out charity. Yet, the disguise is two-fold. Adeline at first believes it is Glenmurray, whom she imagines as “perhaps unseen hovering round her”, giving her “one of the most exquisite feelings which she had ever known.” Sir Patrick’s disguise as a highwayman, or ruffian with a “horseman’s large coat,” with a handkerchief to his face, associates him with criminality. Adeline’s pleasurable feelings, her “agreeable delusion” in thinking that Glenmurray is the benevolent unknown hero fulfilling his philosophy and doctrines, dissipate when the card that “had dropped from his pocket” reveals the man to be Sir Patrick (59). This is a staged moment, but one she mistakenly regards as evidence “that he loved to do good by stealth, and had withdrawn himself even from her thanks,” leading her to read Sir Patrick in a favorable light, and this moment as “proof of excellence” in him. Sir Patrick’s goal is to secure Adeline’s esteem, allowing him to manipulate the situation for his benefit by inflaming his “hopes of a return to it.”

Knowing that she values charity and selflessness, Sir Patrick assumes the disguise of a caring member of the gentry, of the well-meaning protector. And it works: “daily instances of his benevolence came to her knowledge, and threw such a charm over all he said and did, that even the familiarity in his conduct, look, and manner towards her, appeared to her now nothing more than the result of the free manners of his countrymen; - and she sometimes could not help wishing sir Patrick to be known to, and intimate with, Glenmurray” (58-59). Having worked and preyed upon Adeline’s susceptibilities, Sir Patrick initiates his “villainous design.”

The attempted rape drives the novel’s action, and results in Adeline fleeing to Glenmurray for protection. It also reveals the danger in “gallantry.” Fooled by her husband’s attention, Mrs. Mowbray fails to see the truth before her and even after Sir Patrick admits to desiring Adeline, she refuses to believe that he is the villain.¹⁷³ In a letter written by Dr. Norberry to Adeline, we learn that Sir Patrick is a bigamist, with a wife in Ireland, revealing him as the true “subverter of religion and order, and a scourge to society.” Having declared to Mrs. Mowbray his passion for Adeline, he leaves, determined to separate Adeline from Glenmurray and claim her, but his lack of restraint, both in passion and drink, culminates in the ultimate punishment. Drinking in the hopes of “banishing care,” Sir Patrick falls into the water as he tries to board a ship, thus ending the threat of this man of the world (86).

IV

At first, Sir Patrick’s role in the text suggests he is the sole threat to Adeline, a vestige of the unreformed male in the body of the fortune-hunting Irishman. With Adeline under the protection of Glenmurray, the novel provides the reader with a false sense of security. Adeline is exposed to further harm due to Glenmurray’s capability for silence and duplicity. As noted

¹⁷³ See Mary Wollstonecraft *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Chapter III, when the mother forgets her duty under the actions of a coquette and makes her daughter into a rival.

above, Glenmurray, the philosopher, is also a flawed man. As Roxanne Eberle has discussed, Adeline is “first seduced by male language,” arguing that Glenmurray is “perhaps more dangerous on paper than he is in the flesh,” willing to sacrifice Adeline to his doctrine.¹⁷⁴ I want to emphasize, instead, what Glenmurray omits from his tutelage and protection of Adeline, namely his silent acquiescence to her will.¹⁷⁵

While Opie stresses Adeline’s free will in following her radical philosophy to disastrous limits, the narration also makes clear Glenmurray’s culpability in damaging her reputation. He does not try to convince Adeline of her errors, but lets her exercise her judgment. Protected by his masculine privilege, Glenmurray’s silence, in light of his demonstrable eloquence and reasoning, prove as pernicious as the lascivious behavior of other men in the novel. It is foremost silence, if not the wholesale recantation of his doctrine, which other characters desire of him: Mrs. Mowbray burns his book when Adeline points out a section in defense of her refusal to marry, and Dr. Norberry twice tells Glenmurray to “burn your books before her face, and swear they are d-----d stuff,” so as to convince Adeline that marriage is the proper course (110).¹⁷⁶ His silence and his consequential involvement in Adeline’s continual harassment at the hands of other men, begins prior to his duel with Sir Patrick when he realizes that he should “hint to her, as delicately as he could, that the opinions which she had expressed were better confined, in the present dark state of the public mind, to a select and discriminating circle” (31). Glenmurray’s silence, nonetheless, is often countered by the volubility of other men.

¹⁷⁴ Eberle, “Libertine Gaze,” 127.

¹⁷⁵ It can be argued that Opie does not include examples of Glenmurray’s philosophy because parts of the novel read like references and paraphrases of Godwin’s work, thus negating the need to reproduce what is publicly available.

¹⁷⁶ Dr. Norberry previously tells Glenmurray that he is “weak o’ the head, not bad in the heart: burn your d-----d books, and I am your friend for ever.” Glenmurray, a master of avoidance, replies, “We’ll discuss that point another time” (88).

Confronted with marriage, Adeline repudiates convention, arguing that Glenmurray should act in accordance with Godwinian philosophy's "desire to promote general utility" and not focus on the interest of the individual. In contrast, Glenmurray considers her interest and pushes for marriage, which Adeline refuses, disdainingly the opinion of the world. Glenmurray's weak response is to discontinue talks that "evidently drew a cloud across her brow; and hours, days, week, and months passed rapidly over their heads before he had resolution to renew it" (66). Thus begins a long battle between persuasion and experience, knowledge and propriety, to convince Adeline's that practice need not follow theory. His silence is doubly dangerous, as he refuses to explain fully to Adeline that their relationship exposes her to rumor and harassment, while his reticence is read as jealousy by other men. One moment, which is repeated in various forms throughout the novel, involves a friend, Mr. Maynard in Lisbon. When Glenmurray does not introduce Adeline as his wife, it exposes Adeline to shame. Maynard reads Glenmurray's behavior through a lens of vanity: he "shook his grave and silent friend by the hand [...] his vanity not a little flattered by the supposed jealousy of Glenmurray" (68). Once again Adeline misinterprets the situation, assuming Maynard's acceptance of their relationship and feels proud that not all of society is prejudiced. She rejoices in this social connection, while Glenmurray "remain[s] silent" and provides Adeline with a "burning hand" indicative of his uneasiness. Knowing that Adeline cannot meet Maynard's sisters due to any implications of impropriety, Glenmurray "dread[s] to tell her," and "silent" still, he dissimulates, "complaining of indisposition" (69). Glenmurray tells Adeline that his friend will not understand the reasons for their union, and in a moment of petulance, wishes he had never published. Adeline replies, "If you had not, I probably should never have been yours," prompting Glenmurray to feel "pleasure" "mixed with pain," as he holds her (71). Fleeing Lisbon, Glenmurray continues to exercise

silence and moral errors of omission, particularly when he fails to explain to Adeline why he must protect her from other men. He cannot bear for Maynard to “look on you with an eye of disrespect”, something Adeline does not understand, despite knowing what “looking like Sir Patrick” resembles. Attempting to explain the situation to her, their exchange begins with Glenmurray stating “the name of wife imposes restraints even on a libertine; but that of mistress —” to which she asks, “Is Mr Maynard then a libertine?” Glenmurray “afraid of wounding her feelings by entering into a further explanation, changed the subject” (71). Rather than take the opportunity to explain the ways of the world, he opts for suppression.

Armed with the experience of the world to understand why Adeline will suffer, Glenmurray withholds key arguments from her, while continuing to benefit from their relationship. The conflict between a desire to both uphold his doctrine and protect Adeline’s virtue, and realization that he cannot be both a philosopher and a man, exacerbates his illness. Glenmurray’s mixture of pain and pleasure coincides with an acknowledgement that his theory and practice are irreconcilable. He is aware that marriage would “make my mind easier than it now is,” but Adeline denies this based on the belief that his “regard for my supposed interest merely makes you say so.” Further, she questions her continued regard for him if, by marrying him, she would force him to “forfeit all pretensions to that consistency of character so requisite to the true dignity of a philosopher.” As in other moments, Glenmurray’s response is ambiguous silence: his “deep sigh [...] in answer,” which proves “that he was no philosopher” (91). Adeline chooses to see Glenmurray only as a philosopher, an ideal who is consistent, fulfills his theory, and adheres to his convictions. In some respect, the label of philosopher removes him from the material baseness of other men. She perpetuates this fantasy in her inability to read his silence as a refutation of his doctrine. In turn, the philosopher-lover experiences a fair amount of pleasure

mixed with pain because of the knowledge of the degradation Adeline will face. For example, after the duel with Sir Patrick, Glenmurray receives Adeline's promise of a union and what can be read as a consummation of it. This leads him to feel a "mix of pain and pleasure" when he acknowledges, only to himself, the "degradation" she will face as his mistress. These thoughts "[blight] the triumphs of successful passion" (37). This construction, "successful passion" and the "blighting of triumph," suggest that Glenmurray has managed to seduce Adeline. Yet when he considers the damage her reputation will incur, the rational philosopher dampens the triumph of the lover.

The philosopher succumbs to the customs of the lover when Glenmurray fails to be honest and honor the tenets of his doctrine. For instance, Glenmurray tells Berrendale that Adeline is "an interesting study" and a "book [...] which the more you study the more you will admire; and I wish to give you a clue to understand some passages in it better than you can do now." This declaration is meant to deceive Adeline, who thinks that Glenmurray is really talking about the book Berrendale is pretending to read. Instead, Berrendale realizes that Glenmurray is "speaking metaphorically", and Glenmurray sends Adeline, and the reader, out of the room, in order to convince Berrendale that Adeline is a worthy wife (146). Eberle reads this scene as "selling Adeline as a good nurse and housekeeper," and argues that Glenmurray's adoption of metaphor "turns Adeline into a sexual object; it is his final betrayal of his avowed philosophy of plain speech and sincerity."¹⁷⁷ All along, Glenmurray has betrayed Adeline and his philosophy through omitting the reality of how dangerous the relationship is, and how socially and legally compromised she is as a result of it.

Glenmurray's illness is exacerbated by guilt over his role in Adeline's reputation. Faced with the eventual consequences of Adeline's status as a fallen woman, a near-death Glenmurray

¹⁷⁷ Eberle, "Libertine Gaze", 138.

seems “to shrink from her embrace with horror” crying “alas! alas! how little have I deserved it!” (157). Invested in the radical social discourse of its protagonists (both its real life models and its fictional characters), Opie inserts this moralizing section on Glenmurray’s personal suffering:

If Glenmurray, who had been the means of injuring the woman he loved, merely by following the dictates of his conscience, and a love of what he imagined to be truth, without any view to his own benefit or the gratification of his personal wishes, felt thus acutely the anguish of self-upbraiding, — what ought to be, and what must be, sooner or later, the agony and remorse of that man, who, merely for the gratification of his own illicit desires, has seduced the woman whom he loved from the path of virtue, and ruined for ever her reputation and peace of mind!
(157)

The narrator criticizes Glenmurray’s intentions, as part of his deluded fantasy, “what he imagined to be truth.” In the context of what follows, “without any view to his own benefit or the gratification of his personal wishes,” his intentions do not excuse or condone his ultimate execution of his doctrine. Motivated by a misguided sense of truth, a subjective fabrication, Glenmurray *still* exposes Adeline to his personal wishes and the gratification of his desires. The philosopher comes into conflict with the lover and momentarily the philosopher prevails, as his failure to his moral duty upbraids him. Against the example of the virtuous Glenmurray, the average man “ought” and “must” feel even more “agony and remorse.” However, the narrator is optimistic in these expectations, as indicated by the implied obligation to correctness in the use of “ought” and “must.” The sensible philosopher feels the pangs of guilt, but in the hopes of reforming society, and in making men feel guilty for ruining women, the hope that they *eventually feel* remorse is predicated on feeling the error of their ways. Men ought to feel the same agony, if not more acutely, in their intentional seduction of women and the destruction of their virtue, reputation and future prospects. Yet, as evidenced by Glenmurray’s mixture of pain and pleasure, Glenmurray’s guilty pangs do not lead to his doing right by Adeline. His silence, if read as a negative accessory to his radical words, places him outside of the law for: how can

silence, omission, failure to act, be prosecuted and penalized? Glenmurray's death is a punishment outside of the law, and his illness combined with his self-reproach, enact the fitting end to the philosopher – he is consumed and destroyed by his inability to reconcile differences.

V

Following Glenmurray's death, Adeline trades the danger of a fallen woman for the false security of marriage. Through a reversal of fortune, by uniting Adeline with Berrendale in marriage, Opie "highlights the struggle and the violence, rather than the sense of achievement and the short-lived romantic bliss experienced by Wollstonecraft towards the end of her life."¹⁷⁸ At first, Berendale originally promises to be the equal exchange suggested by Glenmurray and perform the role of the lover. However, by attempting to disguise his desire for Adeline through his many offices and tender care during her period of mourning, Berrendale becomes another performer of destructive masculine behavior. He takes care of Adeline in her madness after Glenmurray's death, but after their marriage, when her attention fails to satisfy him, he reveals his true nature. Happy to seek entertainment elsewhere, Berrendale renews dinners with friends, flirtations with other women, and gladly heeds the call to take care of his former father-in-law's plantation. Refusing the comforts of home and fatherhood, Berrendale seeks heterosocial pursuits elsewhere. At first, he plays the role of the interested husband until this soon gives way to disenchantment with domesticity and childcare. Like Sir Patrick, Berrendale's attitude to Adeline is based on his former associations with women. His affair with a servant and his bigamy in Jamaica stem from what Wollstonecraft would describe as an "adulterous lust [to which] the most sacred duties are sacrificed, because before marriage, men, by a promiscuous intimacy with women, learned to consider love as a selfish gratification—learned to separate it

¹⁷⁸ Ty, *Empowering the Feminine*, 155.

not only from esteem but from the affection merely built on habit, which mixes a little humanity with it.”¹⁷⁹

But, as Berrendale exemplifies, marriage fails as a barrier against the ways of the world. The promise of marriage is destroyed by Berrendale’s behavior. Like the other two men in Adeline’s life, Berrendale’s ungentlemanly behavior is fittingly punished. Haunted by Glenmurray and the weight of responsibility he bequeathed upon him, Berrendale falls ill after learning that Mordaunt will prosecute him for bigamy. His decline is precipitated due to a “frame debilitated by intemperance,” as once again the male body becomes a site of illness. This final blow comes after Berrendale has been seized with remorse occasioned by “the violent temper and overbearing disposition of his second wife,” which often made him regret the gentle and compliant Adeline, [...] still he feared to encounter the disgrace of a prosecution, and still more the anger of his West Indian wife; who, it was not improbable, might even attack his life in the first moment of ungoverned passion” (226). Faced with dual forms of punishment, one through proper legal channels and the other in the form of domestic retribution, he dies in front of the friend who brings the news of the legal suit. His death is similar to Glenmurray’s, who also fell prey to guilt, for having mistreated Adeline. His final act is to sign his will, acknowledging Adeline as his legal spouse, and bequeathing his daughter a considerable fortune.

Dangerous masculine desire in the novel ends in three deaths: Sir Patrick, Glenmurray and Berrendale. All die, but escape social and legal retribution. The last vestige of male desire is Colonel Mordaunt, who upon seeing Adeline again, aspires to finally attain her love. Following a disastrous encounter with a lascivious lawyer and his smallpox-infected mistress, in a scene

¹⁷⁹ Wollstonecraft, *Vindications*, 240; Opie seems to use Godwin’s *Memoirs* and her use of Wollstonecraft’s *Letters from Norway* in her creation of Berrendale, who resembles Imlay with his “commercial face.” The similarities are slight but considerable if we factor in Berrendale’s association with the New World (in the novel the West Indies, and not Imlay’s America), his abandonment of Adeline with their child, and infidelity.

reminiscent of Frances Burney's *Cecilia*, a frenzied Adeline runs around London, afraid to return home and possibly infect her daughter. Two drunk young men accost her on their way to the theatre and misinterpret her cries of "my child! thy mother has destroyed thee" and "death and pollution about with me" as the ranting of a prostitute. The consummate bachelor, Colonel Mordaunt, rescues her, but his gallantry is mitigated by his desire "to renew his addresses, and take advantage of the opportunity now offered him, while she was as it were in his power" (208). On the night time streets of London men have the freedom to treat any woman as a prostitute. Colonel Mordaunt, despite his chivalry, is like these men. His desire to "renew his addresses" while Adeline is in his power, demonstrates that he cannot be trusted, nor be expected to control his impulses. Despite their mutual attraction, Adeline refuses his advances, because of her dedication to her marriage vows and ironically, promoting the sacred ties she once repudiated and that have caused her so much pain. Rejecting a potentially happy but socially ruinous relationship with Mordaunt, she urges him to reconsider his licentious ways.

Unlike Sir Patrick and Berrendale, Mordaunt is depicted as a sensible, emotional man, willing to allow the pangs of remorse and regret to prompt him into change. His name seems to be a play on the word *mordant*, which fittingly describes his bitter realization.¹⁸⁰ Yet, he is governed by a sense of traditional male virtues and his devotion to Adeline spurs his determination to bring Berrendale "to justice, and to secure to the injured Editha her rightful inheritance." He laments that he preferred the life of the libertine and, like Glenmurray, feels a "secret pang" that "instead of being a forlorn, unattached being, [he could] have been a happy

¹⁸⁰ Samuel Johnson's dictionary only has an entry for *mordacity*, meaning biting. The OED includes a listing for *mordant* as "a device which holds something fast," or "an ornamental hooked fastening, usually jeweled, on a girdle or a belt." Opie's spelling is Middle English. It is also associated with dyeing fabrics, or varnishing gold or silver, and as an adjective, can mean corrosive, biting humor; caustic and incisive. Col. Mordaunt is appropriately named; both for his fashionable libertinism and for the stinging remorse he exhibits in Volume III upon realizing he missed his chance with Adeline in Volume I when they met at Bath.

husband and father” (213). Beneath the vestige of a libertine is an honorable man, one that seems worthy of Adeline’s influence. She attempts to reform Mordaunt, who has never been a “marrying-man,” by correcting his womanizing ways. Such men, she says, “who can on system suppress the best feelings of their nature, and prefer a course of libertine indulgence to a virtuous connection [...] deserve, in the decline of life, to feel that regret and that self-condemnation which you this moment anticipate.” Her cure is that he “form a virtuous attachment” before it is too late (218-19). Mordaunt temporarily returns to his libertine ways, but this is only after he is driven to despair and illness by Adeline’s immediate departure from London.

Opie interrupts the narrative flow by concluding Mordaunt’s history, which suggests an investment in creating a redemptive male character. While we can read Mordaunt’s illness as the result of “wandering from place to place with joyless and unceasing restlessness” and lying on cold grass in a fit of self-indulgent love sickness, it is possible to read his behavior as a sign of emotional sensitivity, indicative of his openness to being reformed. Resuming an affair with a former mistress proves unsuccessful in stimulating the erstwhile libertine, because he is “soon disgusted with an intercourse in which his heart had no share [...] and displeased with himself” (227). Mordaunt’s discontent with his previous way of life seems to be related not only to his unremitting love for Adeline, but also to the realization that it is an empty, unfulfilling existence. The novel implies that having seen how different his life could have been, Mordaunt could have become an adequate hero, comparable to Glenmurray.

Despite missing his moment with Adeline, Mordaunt is given an opportunity for happiness. His interest in Emma Douglas, a young lady who once attempted to befriend Adeline and convince her to marry, proves to be part of the cure Adeline recommends. In Emma Douglas, a like-minded defender of Adeline, Mordaunt encounters a version of Adeline: young,

educated and principled, but pure. She becomes an adequate substitute for his affections. Critics have read Mordaunt and Emma's happy resolution in several ways. Emma is "rewarded inevitably by her marriage to the reformed libertine Mordaunt, who sees in her an unfallen Adeline," and with her conventionality and female propriety, she "complements Mordaunt, and perhaps together they represent a potential for social renovation."¹⁸¹ Roxanne Eberle also believes that Opie "rewards the free thinking and generous Emma" with a conventional and companionate marriage. Aida Díaz Bild, however, refutes the notion of a model relationship established by Emma and Mordaunt, arguing that a man who prefers the virtuous Emma to Adeline "is not really an example of a new hero converted to more egalitarian and humane principles, but a staunch defender of the status quo and therefore of patriarchal order." Díaz Bild's critique takes into account Mordaunt's need to have a "submissive and devoted wife", a reading based on Mordaunt's double standard.¹⁸² He "felt that no man of acute sensibility can be happy with a woman whose recollections are not pure; she must necessarily be jealous of the opinion which he entertains of her," preferring to give his affections to a woman "whom he admired than one whom he forgave" (236). In his inability to transcend the reality of a woman having previous affections, Mordaunt fulfills the self-serving masculine code, as his numerous transgressions are merely a matter of course, to be ignored by his future wife. Like Sir Patrick before him, Mordaunt also exchanges one female form for the other, as the resemblance between Emma and Adeline forms part of his esteem and love for Emma.

By securing a happy ending for these two characters before the resolution of Adeline's fate, Opie emphasizes the double standard of the world as it is. It is a world where women carry the burden of their sins, physically, psychically and publicly, while men are socially and legally

¹⁸¹ King and Pierce, Introduction to *Adeline Mowbray*, xxxi.

¹⁸² Aida Díaz Bild, "Adeline Mowbray, or The Bitter Acceptance of Woman's Fate," *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 23 (2010): 187-211, 205.

free from the burden of responsibility for the women they ruin. Mordaunt's preferring a pure Emma, coupled with his belief that a fallen woman would take issue with his opinion of her, highlights the prejudices of society. However, it is Mordaunt's sensibility that drives him to pursue a virtuous attachment with Emma. Even if this union is not predicated on developing an ideal model, it does present a favorable outcome, born out of Adeline's mistakes. While I do not read Mordaunt as a new hero, his "acute sensibility" and remorse at having preferred the life of a libertine, rather than having courted Adeline in Bath years earlier, suggests the possibility of a shift toward a new masculine type. We see this in the role that Dr. Norberry plays throughout the novel, as a sensitive, compassionate man, unafraid to cry and display his emotions. Despite upholding the dominant status quo, these two men are the only ones who survive in a largely female-centric novel. They are outweighed by the numerous dangerous men.

In addition to exhibiting the trials suffered by the fallen woman and examining late eighteenth-century England's deeply imbedded social prejudices, Opie's novel presents a new possibility for male heroes. With Mordaunt's felicitous conclusion and Dr. Norberry's sensible tears, she demonstrates that remorse can be redemptive, but only for those men who can ultimately reject worldly temptations. Mordaunt survives as an example of sensibility overcoming pernicious and illicit desires, and while he may not entirely embody the new progressive hero of an Austen novel, he is a step in that direction.

Coda

As I describe in the conclusion to my final chapter, Amelia Opie's 1805 novel provides a fascinating perspective on Romantic masculinity in the characters of Colonel Mordaunt and Dr. Norberry. Surrounded by women, Dr. Norberry is rational but sensible, a model of masculine sensibility. He is envisioned as a pillar in this female-centric community, who can ostensibly educate little Editha and her new sibling. With Colonel Mordaunt's suggested reform, Opie also indicates a new model of masculinity. Although he is arguably not a new hero, he represents a shift in attitudes toward masculinity. His loyalty and emotional sensibility prefigure Austen's heroes, while his despair and repressed libertinism suggest the Byronic.

Beginning with Frances Burney, Charlotte Smith and Amelia Opie, the trend toward an emotionally reticent hero is underway in Romantic fiction. Austen's novels borrow heavily from these literary precedents. The women writers of the early Romantic era anticipated the shifts in masculinity of the more celebrated second generation, while participating in the evolution of the discourse on masculinity, as they present the antiquated rakishness and libertinism of the eighteenth-century as no longer acceptable in polite society. In this context, canonical Romantic-era novels, such as Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Persuasion* (1816) can be read as part of an ongoing modernization of masculinity in the Romantic period. Male characters in these novels are iterations and combinations of earlier models of masculinity that Burney, Smith and Opie helped fashion. Edward Ferrars, who is conspicuously absent for most of *Sense and Sensibility*, reads like a version of Edgar in Burney's *Camilla*, while Colonel Brandon can be plucked from either *Cecilia* or *Camilla*. In *Mansfield Park*, we also see the troublesome conflict between masculine desire and politeness in Henry Crawford, an attractive charmer with traces of the Byronic hero. The rivals Mr. Elliot and Captain Wentworth in

Persuasion embody the changes in masculine codes of behavior by the end of the Napoleonic period where reticent sincerity and toughness win out over eloquence and elegance. The heroes and rivals of these novels reflect the move away from excessive sensibility or effeminacy found in novels published by the “first generation” of Romantic women writers.

Austen’s timeline is intertwined with Byron’s emergence as a political figure, a poet and man about town. By the time Austen published her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, Byron was a public figure. The Byronic hero is present in Austen’s work in figures such as Willoughby and Wickham and also in the larger contexts through which Romantic masculinity is framed. Byron’s cultivation of his persona, like Austen’s creation of her masculine hero, stems from Gothic literature and sentimental fiction from the eighteenth-century. Whether in Byron’s work or in Austen’s novels, the Byronic hero is predominant in the perpetuation of the complex, duplicitous masculinity in Romantic fiction. Essential to this formulation were women writers from the “first generation” of Romantic fiction — 1780-1805 — who were engaged in articulating and examining changes in masculinity, its effects on men and women, and what these changes meant to English society. Austen’s departure from the one-dimensional Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*, drafted in the 1790s, to the physically attractive and tempting Henry Crawford in her 1810s novel *Mansfield Park* attests the influence of these women writers but also to Byron’s powerful effect over the English public. Before the 1817 *Glenarvon* helped readers fantasize the terrible and appeal of the ambiguously motivated hero, the first generation of Romantic women writers were innovators in crafting men who were “mad, bad and dangerous to know.”

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