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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

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About This Volume

This volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* includes an editor's introduction by Richard C. Sha, essays by Richard C. Sha, Jonathan Loesberg, Elizabeth Fay, Jillian Heydt-Stevenson, Susan S. Lanser, Bradford K. Mudge, Daniel O'Quinn, David M. Halperin, and Andrew Elfenbein.

In *How To Do the History of Sexuality*, David M. Halperin puts to rest the idea that Michel Foucault meant in the *History of Sexuality* to separate sexual acts from identity. According to Halperin, Foucault never intended to encourage historians of sexuality to neglect the connections between sexual subjectivities and sexual acts. From this came the idea of creating a volume of essays that would take on the history of sexuality in the Romantic period, and in so doing use Halperin to rethink what we now know to be a pseudo-Foucaultian divorce between acts and identities, a divorce that has made sexual subjectivities before sexology an historical black hole. This volume is presented here.

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About the Romantic Circles Praxis Series

The **Romantic Circles Praxis Series** is devoted to using computer technologies for the contemporary critical investigation of the languages, cultures, histories, and theories of Romanticism. Tracking the circulation of Romanticism within these interrelated domains of knowledge, **RCPS** recognizes as its conceptual terrain a world where Romanticism has, on the one hand, dissolved as a period and an idea into a plurality of discourses and, on the other, retained a vigorous, recognizable hold on the intellectual and theoretical discussions of today. **RCPS** is committed to mapping out this terrain with the best and mo st exciting critical writing of contemporary Romanticist scholarship.

About the Contributors

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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

Introduction

Richard C. Sha, American University

Without arguing for direct influence, this essay reads a group of English poems as an implicit Romantic conversation that advances different models of sapphic sublimity in a troplogical contest about the nature and place of female affinities. I begin by revisiting the exclusion of 'Christabel' from the *Lyrical Ballads*; I discuss the implicit dialogue enacted through William Wordsworth's sonnet to the 'Ladies of Llangollen' and Dorothy Wordsworth's poem 'Irregular Verses'; and I conclude with a look at the metrical practices of these poems and of Shelley's 'Rosalind and Helen' as a way to explore the ambivalences and ambiguities in Romantic configurations of female same-sex desire. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. In *How to Do the History of Sexuality*, David M. Halperin puts to rest the idea that Michel Foucault meant in the *History of Sexuality* to separate sexual acts from identity. According to Halperin, Foucault never intended to encourage historians of sexuality to neglect the connections between sexual subjectivities and sexual acts. I found this corrective especially fruitful for Romanticists who have long known that Byron's sexuality had something to do with his identity. Coleridge also insisted that it was "wise to think of [sodomitical] disposition[s], as a Vice, not of the absurd and despicable Act as a crime" (*Marginalia* 1:43). Although this statement can be pressed in service of the binary opposition between sexual acts and sexual identities, Coleridge's statement that it is wise to think about sodomy as a vice refers to dispositions, a term that bespeaks identity. The reflexiveness of his remark implies that it is possible to think of non-normative forms of sexuality outside of vice and outside of crime. Thus I envisioned a volume of essays that would take on the history of sexuality in the Romantic period, and in so doing use Halperin to rethink what we now know to be a pseudo-Foucaultian divorce between acts and identities, a divorce that has made sexual subjectivities before sexology an historical black hole.

2. The contributers and commentators have accomplished more than I could have hoped for. As I wrote in my introduction to *Romanticism and Sexuality*, which appeared on *Romanticism on the Net* in 2002, the history of sexuality in the Romantic period has been regarded if at all as little more than a speedbump on the way to Victorian sexuality. The essays herein give us many reasons to slow down and enjoy the ride. With the exception of Jonathan Loesberg's essay on Foucault, each essay shows a powerful form of sexual subjectivity, and together the essays imply that the history of sexuality in the Romantic period must remain a deeply collaborative enterprise since no one scholar can master the discourses that are subsumed under sexuality. Loesberg, by contrast, hopes to encourage others to think outside of subject positions altogether.

3. In my own essay on David Halperin's and Percy Shelley's interpretations of Ancient Greek Sexuality, I look at the ways in which alterity has become a post-modern form of objectivity: one that masks the controlling of traffic between identity and difference under the guise of an historical otherness. Jonathan Loesberg's powerful essay on Foucault reminds us of the philosopher's investment in an aesthetic inauthenticity, an inauthenticity that mandates a kind of aesthetic apprehension of history whereby arguments do not take their value from subject positions but rather from indifference. When Halperin acknowledges that Loesberg has left him no subject position from which to respond, he misses the fact that it is precisely Loesberg's Foucauldian point to get historians of sexuality to think

outside of subject positions altogether. And while Halperin's work is admirably self-conscious in its use of alterity, my point is that Halperin still needs the alterity of the Greeks to prevent his history from being reduced to mere autobiography. Halperin's calculated alterity does not explain why he misreads the Pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* or overstates his case. It is because he needs the Greeks to undermine our notions of sexuality that he engages in what I call "surplus alterity": the use of more alterity than is necessary to change our concepts of sexuality. When alterity becomes about our needs rather than the needs of the Greeks, distortion is inevitable. Rather than arguing for objectivity, I want us to consider the extent to which alterity has become a post-modern form of objectivity in hopes that we can start to value concepts like proximity instead.

4. For Elizabeth Fay, even costume provides Mary Robinson and Princess Caroline with sexual subjectivities, while Jill Heydt-Stevenson finds a brocade of sexual innuendos in Jane Austen's Juvenilia: innuendos that suggest the proper lady has no clothes. For Fay, costume provides an important if precarious form of agency, in that it can set into motion sexual narratives that have unintended consequences. For Heydt-Stevenson, by contrast, Austen is able to revolt successfully against official sexual identities. Susan Lanser's delicious essay argues that metrical irregularity could be a code for Sapphic irregularity, a maneuver that might encourage historians of sexuality and literary critics to dust off their prosody manuals. Bradford Mudge's essay asks what it means that the history of pornography begins at the moment when the word threatens to evaporate, and reminds us once again that far from being separate discourses, the novel and pornography coexist. His essay amply shows the benefits of seeing pornography as an imaginative construct rather than in terms of semantic absolutes. By situating Equiano's narrative within a masochistic discourse of sodomitical desire, Daniel O'Quinn reminds us that the discourses of abolition and the slave trade had much to say about alternative forms of sexuality.

5. I am deeply grateful to the hard work of the authors herein, to Orrin Wang, the editor of Romantic Circles Praxis Series, and to George Haggerty, reader of the volume, whose tough but sobering criticisms kept us rewriting even after we thought we were done. I must also thank Andrew Elfenbein and David Halperin, for graciously responding to the essays in the volume. David Halperin productively takes on the essays that most engage his own work, while Andrew Elfenbein provides thoughtful commentary to all the essays. One could hardly wish for a fitter initial audience. While Joseph Byrne did a magnificent job digitizing this volume, the essays are stronger for the copy-editing of Melissa Sites.

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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

The Uses and Abuses of Historicism: Halperin and Shelley on the Otherness of Ancient Greek Sexuality

Richard C. Sha, American University*

Without arguing for direct influence, this essay reads a group of English poems as an implicit Romantic conversation that advances different models of sapphic sublimity in a troplogical contest about the nature and place of female affinities. I begin by revisiting the exclusion of 'Christabel' from the *Lyrical Ballads*; I discuss the implicit dialogue enacted through William Wordsworth's sonnet to the 'Ladies of Llangollen' and Dorothy Wordsworth's poem 'Irregular Verses'; and I conclude with a look at the metrical practices of these poems and of Shelley's 'Rosalind and Helen' as a way to explore the ambivalences and ambiguities in Romantic configurations of female same-sex desire. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

"What function of the imagination can erect absolute difference at the point of deepest resemblance?"

—Stephen Greenblatt (134-35)

1. Many historians of sexuality have come to accept alterity as the gold standard of history. It is easy to see why. Insofar as the historian of sexuality finds alterity in his or her version of past sexuality, that historian has seen sexuality as a historical category rather than a timeless and universal category. Instead of projecting his or her own values onto past forms of sexuality, acting like a tourist in the archive, the historian who embraces the alterity of past sexualities is offered the chance of enlightened awareness, of being simultaneously capable of history and metahistory. This awareness is all the more critical when sexuality is the historical object of scrutiny: human sexuality is so riven with such elusive concepts as desire and fantasy that it is crucial to refuse anachronism, and to separate one's own fantasies from those of the past.

2. Although I think it is crucial to consider how past cultures did not necessarily understand sexuality in the ways that we now do, and although I see how alterity has made the history of sexuality sexier insofar as it now delivers encounters with other brave new sexual worlds that have the capacity to undermine the ontological solidity of ours, I worry that historicism's dependence upon alterity as a metaphysical principle has as much tendency to read a past position according to current ahistorical, philosophical belief as does the principle of identity it tries to overcome.[1] For this reason, I want here to use David M. Halperin and Percy Shelley to think about how alterity has become a post-modern version of objectivity. By that I mean that whereas under objectivity, historians could rely upon an historical object independent of the subject who wants it to become an historical object—a position that can now seem naive—our recent historicist self-consciousness that there are no innocent objects of historical inquiry has meant that alterity now takes on the possibility of distance between subject and historical object without bringing with it objectivity's naive baggage. Our alterities are calculated. Yet the admission of calculation is supposed to attenuate the shaping force of that calculation. Our thinking about the history of sexuality can only be strengthened by trying to come to terms with why we need past forms of sexuality to be other, and trying to distinguish between an otherness that speaks to our needs and an otherness that accounts for the needs of the past.

3. Halperin's version of alterity ultimately leads to misreadings of Romanticism because it insists on seeing its construction of sexuality in terms of a periodization in which Romanticism exists before the construction of not only homosexuality but of sexuality itself. "Sexuality" occurs when "sexual object-choice became in the course of the twentieth-century, at least in some social worlds, an overriding marker of sexual difference" (*How To* 17). In other words, for there to be sexuality, sex and sexuality must have constitutive and totalizing hold over identity. Halperin crystallizes Foucault's definition of sexuality as "an apparatus for constituting human subjects" (*How To* 88). Hence, if we read Percy Shelley on Greece (his "Discourse on the Manners of the Antient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love") through the lense of David Halperin on Greece, we can't understand the particular form Shelley's history takes. Insofar as Shelley understands the "sexual impulse . . . as common basis, an acknowledged and visible link of humanity" (220), he infers that "existence is becoming sexistence" (A. Davidson xiii) in the Romantic period, that sex is acquiring its constitutive hold over identity. I am suggesting that something approaching sexuality occurs before 1869. Moreover, I will show how in Shelley's essay, alterity is a strategy for controlling the traffic between identity and alterity, rather than a quasi-objective form of otherness.

Halperin on Greek Alterity

4. Perhaps no other historian of sexuality has done more to refine the differences between Ancient Greek concepts of sexuality and modern concepts than David M. Halperin. Building upon the work of K. J. Dover and Michel Foucault, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* claimed that it was wrong to apply the concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality to ancient Greek sexual practices because those terms blinded historians to the "indigenous terms in which the experiences of past historical cultures had been articulated" (*How To Do* 14). Halperin argued that the concept of homosexuality could not account for how sexual desire was construed in Ancient Greece. Sexuality was then "construed as normal or deviant according to whether it impelled social actors to conform to or to violate their conventionally defined gender roles" (*One Hundred* 25); certain homosexual acts could be celebrated only in certain specific hierarchical contexts (*One Hundred* 47). Halperin further maintained that what we now call "sexuality" then was more of a "dietary preference": sexual object choice did not then count as a "constitutive feature of . . . personality" (*One Hundred* 27). In short, Halperin showed how our current notions of sexuality made Ancient Greek sexuality incoherent: homosexuality and heterosexuality are too totalizing, encompassing, and just plain wrong. Moreover, they allow certain specific homoerotic behaviours to stand in for all homosexuality.

5. More recently, Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* opens with an eloquent defense of historicist practices, one that "foregrounds historical differences" and explicitly "attempts to acknowledge the alterity of the past" (17). Halperin buttresses his defense with a call for historians to engage in a valiant struggle: "to work against his or her intuitions, to counter them with hard-won apprehension of irreducible historical difference" (15). Halperin continues, "the ultimate purpose [of an enlightened historicism] was to accede, through a calculated encounter with the otherness of the past, to an altered understanding of the present—a sense of our own non-identity to ourselves—and thus to a new experience of ourselves as sites of potential transformation" (15). Whereas Halperin had in *One Hundred Years* wanted to "interrupt" the identifications of contemporary gay men with the Ancient Greeks, the Halperin of *How to Do* acknowledges the "hermeneutic advantages in foregrounding historical correspondences and identities" (15). He has thus refined his notion of alterity from a "priggish" one that would not acknowledge any resemblance (14) between ancient paederasty and modern homosexuality, to an alterity that now "acknowledge[s], promote[s], and support[s] a heterogeneity of queer identities, past and present" (16).

6. Halperin's more refined concept of alterity enables him to reexamine the alleged gap between sexual acts and sexual identities, a gap falsely attributed to Foucault. Halperin is right that this conceptual

maneuver has done much disservice to the history of sexuality, leading historians to ignore traces of identity in pre-modern forms of sexuality. Specifically, Halperin's claim that the *kinaidos* represented a "deviant sexual morphology without a deviant sexual subjectivity" (38) helps us to reconceptualize the relation between sexuality and identity, enabling us to consider the possibility of an "existence without sexistence," to put it in Arnold Davidson's terms (xiii). Indeed one of Halperin's most valuable suggestions for historians of sexuality is for us to "indicate the multiplicity of possible historical connections between sex and identity, a multiplicity whose existence has been obscured by the necessary but narrowly focused, totalizing critique of sexual identity as a unitary concept" (43).

7. Nonetheless I want to ask how one knows when one is being "priggish" about one's alterity? This epistemological question acquires greater urgency in a climate in which identity and identification are such suspect terms, a climate in which alterity is always already a defensive posture. Moreover, to the extent that the Greeks understood what seems to us a mere morphology analogously to the way we understand identity/subjectivity—sexuality did not then have the totalizing constitutive hold over identity that it does now—just how significant is the distinction between morphology and subjectivity? Only from our post-sexological vantage point does identity without sexuality look like a morphology. Halperin's stress on alterity, his emphasis on Greek morphology, runs the danger of underestimating how the Greeks understood the relationship between sex and identity.

8. Far from an "earned badge of struggle," alterity has too often become a marker of historical validity insofar as the historicist can turn to alterity to rescue him or herself from charges of bad history, projection, or anachronism. Halperin concedes that "a historicist approach to sexuality needs to be argued for as a preference, not insisted on as a truth" (23) and that "identification is a form of cognition" (15). Yet insofar as insistence upon alterity has become a symptom of our self-consciousness, declarations of alterity can dispense with the need for further self-consciousness. I am reminded here of Nietzsche's warning that "forgetting is essential to action of any kind" (62). Historicism fosters such amnesia by demanding consciousness about one's historiographical impulses, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by confessing an inability to stand fully outside one's own culture. Hence Halperin admits that histories of the present are "necessarily and inevitably framed by contemporary preoccupations and investments" (23). But doesn't inevitability make self-consciousness beside the point since consciousness is now powerless to stop the influence of those contemporary investments? That the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality did not exist in Ancient Greece does not, of course, mean that something like homosexuality and heterosexuality did not exist, although the absence of the categories is a kind of evidence. The fact that the Greeks categorized differently does not in itself mean the concepts are absent. Despite Halperin's recognition that identification is a form of cognition, it is for Halperin always already a suspect form of cognition. That he consistently takes other historians to task for their identifications (Brooten, Richlin, Williams) underscores that for Halperin identification is still an inferior form of cognition than alterity.

9. It is Halperin's decision to collapse alterity with historical accuracy that most highlights the possibility that alterity has become a post-modern form of objectivity. Halperin begins his defense of historicism by admitting "my major preoccupation is with the accurate decipherment of historical documents" (2). He wants to "resituate [Greek erotic practices] in their original social context and (by refusing to conflate them with modern notions) to bring into clearer focus their indigenous meanings" (4). Here, it is the parenthetical substitution that I want to draw attention to; "refusing to conflate" and "resituat[ing] . . . in social context" are virtually equivalent terms. Yet contextualization is more than a refusal to conflate. This problem is further compounded by the fact that those "indigenous meanings" circulate within systems of thought that may be more ours than theirs. One thing is for sure: the Greeks did not define their sexual differences to enable the "disintegration of our own concepts" (107). To what extent is our version of their sexuality about our disintegration rather than about their own agenda? Perhaps alterity has become such a blind spot in historicism generally because it simultaneously serves as a

proxy for "accuracy" and self-consciousness. If this is the case, are we asking alterity to perform too much work?

10. One important way in which we screen the work of alterity from ourselves is through the way we think about language.Halperin sometimes suggests the possibility that language is transparent and at other times celebrates its opacity. When he invokes the "accurate decipherment of historical documents" (2), or "taking Greeks at their word" (3), or reading them "literally" (3), or "restor[ing] to Greek erotic practices their alterity" (4), Halperin seems almost positivistic. When Halperin criticizes the work of others, however, he lambasts them for "treat[ing] the texts they study as transparent windows onto Roman social reality and sexual practice" (144). Halperin further praises the work of one scholar for being "alive to the opacity of Roman sexual discourse" (144). I account for this seemingly contradictory relationship to language by noting that Halperin allows language to be transparent when it reveals the weirdness or alterity of Greek sexuality. To be fair to Halperin, his opening gestures of literalism are then immediately complicated by a post-structuralist self-reflectiveness. Nonetheless this oscillation from thinking about language as transparent to insisting upon its opacity recalls Brook Thomas's critique of the New Historicism. Thomas argues that the very post-structuralist theories that are invoked to attack past histories and to justify the new one, are often forgotten in the making of those histories (30). Even the most cursory examination of the *Greek Lexicon*, which highlights the mobility of Ancient Greek, or of Dover who teases out the ambiguities of *kalos* (111-21), should make us wary of gesturing towards transparency.

11. I also wonder about the extent to which alterity is a blunt instrument, failing to acknowledge the possibility, a peculiarly Romantic possibility, that there are differences of kind and differences of degree. Differences of kind insist upon the alterity of alterity whereas differences of degree highlight a continuum between differences. In a larger view, I want to ask if the kind of world-mapping of sexuality that Eve Sedgwick argues took place in the late nineteenth century with the advent of sexology represents a difference of degree and not kind from the past. Our understanding of sexuality in the Romantic period would benefit considerably from genealogies of orientation, studies that show how orientation came to be.[2] Halperin's distinction between orientation and taste is perhaps a good place to consider how even his now less priggish alterity can still be a blunt instrument. Halperin argues that "the anonymous author of the pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* approaches the question of male sexual object choice not as a matter of sexual orientation but rather as a matter of taste" (98). I want to deconstruct Halperin's binary opposition between taste and orientation because such a deconstruction potentially reveals the will to truth that can stand behind alterity.

12. Halperin ends his discussion of the pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* with a list of considerations that make the text "look very queer indeed, especially if we view it as a debate about the relative merits of homosexuality and heterosexuality" (99). Halperin has effectively demonstrated how "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" fail to describe how at least Lycinus and Theomnestus in the *Erotes* do not seem immune from the attractiveness of either sex. What is undeniably different is that object choices were associated with a much wider range of gender and status inferences: much more seems to be in play then. For example, as Halperin points out, we no longer equate a sexual preference for women with effeminacy (95). Nor is it easy for us to see how a culture could imagine heterosexual acts to be more awkward to defend than homosexual acts. But many of Halperin's considerations can look a lot less queer once we consider the possibility that he actively distances "taste" from orientation. Halperin later captures this difference as being between "belief and value," on the one hand, and "what or who they are," on the other (100). But is it not the object of the Platonic dialogues to close this very gap?

13. The interlocuters of the *Erotes* attempt to persuade others of the superiority of either the love of boys or the love of women by attaching meanings to one's sexual object choice or even to the part of the anatomy that one uses to gratify one's sexual urges. Since the dialogue is a debate about the superiority

of one version of love over another, both Charicles and Callicraditas associate object choices with gender, status, aesthetics, and morality. The partisan of boys, Callicraditas, hence, contrasts the "evils associated with women [and] the manly life of a boy" (217). Charicles, partisan of women, argues that only the love between man and woman is reciprocal, whereas only the active lover gains pleasure in the relations between man and boy (193). And whereas Charicles trumpets the higher purpose of sex between men and women, Callicratidas takes the Platonic view that it is more honorable to do things for aesthetic reasons than out of brute necessity. The fact that object choices connect to status, gender, and aesthetic implications brings taste closer to orientation: Charicles implies that male love of women is "an ordinance prescribed for us by providence" (185). That the Greek describes object choices in terms of *diathesis*, meaning leanings/inclinations or bodily state or condition, and *gnome*, translated as will, inclination, and dispositions (164-65), further suggests that, at least in these instances, we may have more in common with the Greeks than Halperin wants to allow for. While certainly not anchored securely in identity as "orientation" would have it, object choices are at least proximate to essence. To the extent that taste then could function as a marker of essence—justifying the citizen as citizen—orientation may have had an asymptotic rather than an differential relation to taste. If in Greek thought, societal happiness (*eudaimonia*) is "an objective condition, not a subjective feeling" (Gill 77), and if taste too names an objective condition thus giving it the residue of ontology, then how different is taste from orientation? In the *Symposium*, Diotima brings taste and orientation closer when she claims that he who wants to reach beauty, "like someone using a staircase, . . . should go from one to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, and from beautiful bodies to beautiful practices, and from practices to beautiful forms of learning" (49).

14. Although Halperin claims that Charicles's and Callicratidas's agreement about the sexual attractiveness of the famous statue of Aphrodite speaks not to a "preferred sex or gender but merely certain favorite parts of the human anatomy" (97), Halperin quotes yet ignores the fact that Callicratidas immediately changes the sex of the statue from Aphrodite to Ganymede (171): gazing longingly at the statue's proportional buttocks, thighs, and shins, Callicratidas utters: "So that's what Ganymede looks like as he pours out nectar in heaven for Zeus and makes it taste sweeter. For I'd never have taken the cup from Hebe if she served me" (171-73). While it is true that the passage anatomizes body parts, and true that when the two interlocuters hear the story of the youth who gluts his passion on the marble statue, the narrator exclaims that "he made love to the statue as though to a boy" (177), this missed detail of Callicratidas's projection of maleness onto the statue suggests that Halperin's statement that the text is about "differential liking for particular human body parts, independent of the person who possesses them" (98) needs qualification if not modification. Halperin might respond that since boys and women were somewhat interchangeable sexual objects in Greek culture, the shift from Aphrodite to Ganymede really doesn't substantially refute his argument. On the one hand, the fact that Ganymede is a boy, so beautiful that Zeus decides to abduct and rape him, highlights this interchangeability. On the other hand, Ancient Greek depictions of Ganymede sometimes depict him as a boy (small in stature with little or no musculature as in Ganymede 41 in *Lexicon Iconographicum*) and othertimes show him to be quite manly, though beardless (as in Ganymede 44).[3] Ganymede, then, partly undermines Halperin's claims of alterity, and Halperin's insistence upon the alterity of Greek sex explains his inattention to Ganymede. Moreover, that Callicratidas declares that he would have refused the cup from Hebe—who fell down in an indecent posture as she was pouring nectar to the Gods and thus lost her job to Ganymede—and that Ganymede makes the nectar sweeter, implies that the sex of the body does matter. Or would Halperin suggest that Ganymede has better thighs than Hebe, or that he isn't so clumsy?

15. That Ganymede makes the nectar sweeter implies that there is something more than an absolute gap between body parts and personhood. This something more hints that Halperin's alterity—the notion that the Greeks could completely separate body parts from gender—is a form of what I am calling surplus alterity, more alterity than is necessary to make us question our own concepts of sexuality. Just as imposing our notions of sexuality onto the Greeks leads to blindnesses, so too does insisting that the

Greeks were absolutely other. Insofar as it is our need to show the otherness of Greek sex that potentially overshadows the actual otherness of it, surplus alterity can be as much a form of blindness as a too ready identity. Alterity thus can disfigure otherness even as it renders it.[4]

16. One further quarrel with Halperin's reading of the pseudo-Lucianic text may help underscore the fact that alterity can be a form of disfigurement. Halperin argues that Callicratidas's sexual desire for boys "makes him more of a man; it does not weaken or subvert his male gender identity but rather consolidates it" (94). Mindful of Eve Sedgwick's emphasis on contradiction (subsequent notions of sexuality betray the contradictions of the previous), and mindful of the insistent rhetoricity of the *Erotes*, I wonder if both weakening and consolidation are possible. Might Callicratidas's excess masculinity—his political life, oratory, physical training, and philosophy—license his general sexual desire for boys and the forms that desire might take even as it consolidates or defends his masculinity? I suggest that the insistence of multiple masculine traits bespeaks an anxious masculinity that must be cloaked under masculine bravado. Does Lycinus, the teller of the tale, protest too much, since he will not only side with Callicratidas, the lover of boys, but also reap the benefit of a "magnificent feast" by doing so (231)? Lycinus pronounces that "all men should marry, but let only the wise be permitted to love boys" (229). Certainly Lycinus loads the deck in favor of Callicratidas by initially calling attention to Charicles's deceptive and feminizing uses of make-up while contrasting those with Callicratidas's "straightforward ways" (163). Lycinus's early observation that Callicraditas takes "excessive delight in boys" (159) further indicates that his masculinity and his excessive indulgence in his object choices may be at odds. Halperin rejects the notion that a taste for boys weakened masculinity in part because he wants to insist upon Callicratidas's "well-established erotic 'identity'" (94) of the macho paederast.

17. Halperin continues, "far from being effeminized by his sexual predilection for boys, as the modern 'inversion model' of homosexual desire would have it . . . Callicratidas's inclination renders him hypervirile: he excels, we are told, at those activities traditionally marked in Greek culture as exclusively and characteristically masculine" (94). Against Halperin's claim that paederasty renders masculinity, Eva Stehle suggests that masculinity was more performative than Halperin allows; she argues that complex gender codes were used to position speakers within the *Symposia*, and that men often disconnected from women in order to show their masculinity (227-28). And whereas Halperin claims that the Athenian's "inclination renders him hypervirile," Lycinus makes it clear that Callicratidas's fondness of wrestling schools stems from his inclination: Lycinus states that "he was only fond of the wrestling schools on account of his love for boys (the Greek insists that love of boys is the cause of his love for wrestling)" (163).

18. How might one account for the discrepancy between Pseudo Lucian and Halperin? I suggest that to preserve if not foreground the alterity of the Greeks, Halperin performs an inversion of inversion; that is, unlike modern accounts of homosexuality that explain it as a form of effeminizing, the Greeks understood a taste for boys as masculinizing. Hence Halperin takes paederasty as a cause or symptom of a sign of Greek masculinity—fondness for physical training and wrestling. The problem is that the Greek text does not support Halperin's claim that inclination "renders" Callicratidas more masculine; rather, it suggests a far more boring possibility: that a taste for boys accounts for the Athenian's desire to be around boys. Again: "he is only fond of wrestling schools on account of his love for boys" (163). The *Erotes* juxtaposes signs of masculinity with paederasty, which alone points to the otherness of the Greeks, but it does not make the causal connection between inclination and virility that Halperin argues for. If love for boys accounts for love of physical training, it does not mean that love of wrestling equals hypermasculinity. Dover suggests the more boring alternative when he argues that "the gymnasium as a whole or the wrestling-school in particular provided opportunities for looking at naked boys, bringing oneself discreetly to a boy's notice in the hope of eventually speaking to him . . . and even touching a boy in a suggestive way, as if by accident. . ." (54-55). Dover's alternative implies that the very symmetry and neatness of Halperin's version of Greek alterity—they invert our models of

inversion—indicates that alterity can disfigure the messiness of sexuality even when it aestheticizes it, makes it symmetrical.

19. The classical scholar James Davidson puts more pressure not only on Halperin's claim that paederasty renders hypermasculinity, but also on Halperin's insistence upon the absence of reciprocal *eros* in Greek paederasty (Halperin 150-3). Halperin concedes that there is reciprocal emotion between the *erastes* and *eromenos*, but he draws the line at sexual desire. "The Greeks distinguished carefully between *eros* and *philia*—passionate sexual desire and love, or romantic and non-romantic love" (147). When Davidson argues that Greek penetration was not always honorable and that the active role was not "always assigned positive manly values" (29), he introduces a significant gap between a sexual act and its gender implications. Such a gap begins to undermine Halperin's claim that the Greeks understood sexual deviance more in terms of gender than in terms of desire (37) because it questions whether the Greeks saw the passive role in sodomy as deviance, and whether the *erastes* and *eromenos* have gender implications at all. Davidson puts it this way: "the *erastes* is simply 'a male who loves,' the *eromenos*, 'a male who is 'loved.' (Discussions of penetration often seem to confuse grammatical and sexual activity/passivity)" (41). Davidson concludes that "the terminology of *erastes* and *eromenos* says nothing in itself about penetration" (41). The classicist Claude Calame also undermines the notion that Greek penetration was noble when he claims that passivity only became a target when it was coupled with sodomy (137). By contrast, here's Halperin: "the unmentionable deed of the cinaedi . . . is passive bodily penetration" (125); and "to be sexually penetrated was always therefore potentially shaming for a free male of citizen status" (147).

20. The difference between Halperin and Davidson amounts to this. Halperin wants the Greeks to be more precise in their categories than us—hence, they distinguish between sexual love and romantic love in ways we don't. They also link active love and passive love with gender hierarchies to degrees that we do not. Halperin also wants the Greeks to define deviance more in terms of gender than in terms of sex. Together, these two kinds of alterity are designed to make us now question our insistence upon sexuality as an explanatory tool, and to think about how the current muddying of categories extends the reach of sexuality. Davidson argues that the notion of the alterity of Greek sex has in fact enabled a current phallocentrism to smuggle itself backwards into history. Tellingly, Davidson substitutes difference for otherness when he states, "if Greek sexuality is not other, it certainly appears rather different" (47). Difference tempers the absolutism of alterity. In the end, he hopes that he will have encouraged a renewed questioning about the role of the homoerotic in Greek culture.

21. Halperin's claim that Callicratidas's virile gender identity is stable, despite his taste for boys, is further potentially undercut by the Pseudo-Lucianic text itself. While Callicratidas does not on the face of it appear inverted, the Greeks were perfectly capable of using supposedly "modern" models of inversion to describe same sex acts. Charicles argues that homophilia is caused by luxury: "luxury, daring all, transgressed the laws of nature herself. And who was the first to look at male as though female. . . . One nature/sex came together in one marriage bed. Though they saw themselves embracing each other, they were ashamed neither at what they did nor at what they had done to them, and, sowing their seed, to quote the proverb, on barren rocks they bought a little pleasure at the cost of great disgrace" (183). Unspecified sexual acts between men are referred to in terms of a kind of inversion, looking at a man as if he were female. Much in the same way as inversion now works, Charicles uses inversion to normalize homoerotic desire by making it the desire of a feminized male for another male: the defender of love between the sexes enables desire to remain essentially heterosexual. Here I also want to highlight that the text allows for slippage between active and passive sexual roles: "they were neither ashamed at what they did or what they had done to them." The insistent plurals undermine the notion of exclusive sexual roles. Nor does this passage distinguish between boys and men. In point of fact, the Greek *agonos speiro*, meaning they are sowing seed on a barren field, indicates that what is being described is a sexual relationship between men or at least between a man and adolescent—not children

—inasmuch as both are depicted as ejaculating. The proximity of Callicratidas to this description of inversion, coupled with the reference to his "excessive," and thus effeminizing, desire for boys (159), makes it possible that Callicratidas may be protesting too much in trying to become the poster boy for masculinity.

22. In fairness to Halperin, I do want to point out that this example of Greek inversion is more complicated than I have thus far indicated. The difference between this inversion and ours is that as the feminized male, Charicles, is credited with the ability to be persuasive about the love of a man for a woman. As Halperin acknowledges, "according to the terms of Greek misogynistic discourse, there would appear to be no distinction between being the champion of women and being their slave" (95). Charicles, the one "most feminine of all," is asked "to plead the cause of womankind" (181). We, of course, expect the feminized male to plead the cause of homosexuality. That Greek inversion has this interesting wrinkle to it does suggest that Halperin is right in warning us that orientation is not accurate for the Greeks. Fair disclosure also prompts me to acknowledge that the inverted male is either inverted because he was "cunningly persuaded" or "tyrannically constrained" (183). Nonetheless, the fact that the Greeks could interpret sex acts between ejaculating males in terms of the desire of a man seeing another man as a member of the female sex means that they were not as other as Halperin maintains. I also wish that Halperin's version of Greek otherness would do more to acknowledge a possible gap between Greek prescription and Greek practice. That Callicratidas's love of boys is coupled with "hatred for women" (163), furthermore, indicates that more than an inessential "taste" is at issue, and that sexual desire could spill into gender.

23. My sense that alterity has as much tendency to distort history as does the principle of identity that alterity tries to overcome is even further strengthened by James Davidson, who argues that Kenneth Dover's and Michel Foucault's "picture of ancient sex and sexual morality as a plus-minus 'zero sum game,' where one party can only win at the expense of the other, is not only unsubstantiated, but contradicts what evidence there is" (7). For Davidson, there is simply no evidence that the Greeks understood penetration as a form of power; moreover, "much of the abuse directed at pathics, . . . is clearly attacking excess or readiness, rather than a man's 'loss of virginity' or submission" (21-22). Davidson continues, "it [penetration as power] is a fantasy—a fantasy based on modern preoccupations of sex as power; a fantasy driven by the desire to prove that (Greek) homosexuality was (is) not 'real'; a fantasy based, paradoxically, on a twentieth-century impulse to fight against Victorian inhibition and hypocrisy and to expose 'the truth of sex'" (7). The failure to find evidence that sexual verbs indicated aggression leads Davidson to conclude that "it is illegitimate to interpret Greek scenes of penetration in terms of domination" (25). The end result of Davidson's work is that all the usual suspects—the *kinaidos*, the *katapugon*, the *eromenos*—trotted out to show Greek contempt of sexual passivity—don't look like usual suspects anymore. Davidson suggests that rather than being the poster boys of effeminizing receptive intercourse, these need to be seen as poster boys of excess and commerce. While Davidson is especially good at historicizing Dover's and Foucault's motivations for recent histories of Greek sex, his debunking of those histories does not yet do enough to explain the logic behind Greek sex.

24. I juxtapose Halperin's version of Greek alterity with Davidson's precisely because both versions together allow us to consider how alterity is necessarily selective. Is the appropriate context gender and penetration, or is it sexual excess or commerce? Selection intervenes at two stages: once at the choice of the details that will persuade us of alterity, and once again when those details are interpreted in larger contexts. Which explanatory framework will be chosen? These two moments of selection suggest that alterity is—like a self-conscious objectivity—a composite of the historian's desire and the object of that desire. Although I think that Halperin would admit that his own will to truth potentially disfigures alterity, I think he underestimates that disfigurement. Halperin wants the alterity of Greek sex to show the constructedness of our notion of sexuality. But exactly how much alterity is necessary to do

this? And must this alterity necessarily be one of kind versus degree? Davidson critiques what has become a standard view of the inherent nobility of Greek penetration, a view that Halperin shares, to show how that model of ancient macho culture enabled Dover to rescue Greek culture from homophobia, and to suggest that what began as a search for the contingency of Greek sexuality actually reinforced a transhistorical notion of sexual act as domination (37). For Halperin, "the Greeks understood sex itself to be defined entirely in terms of phallic penetration" (147). He continues, the Greeks had a "social/conceptual/erotic grid that aligned masculinity, activity, penetration, and dominance, along one axis and femininity, passivity, being penetrated, and submission along another. The two axes corresponded to, but could function independently of, gender differences" (56). For Davidson, buggery only became a problem under certain contexts like commerce, and the roles of *erastes* and *eromenos* do not have any necessary gender implications.

25. I want here to attend to another important repressed form of identity within Halperin's version of Greek alterity. Whereas under orientation, we turn to sexuality as a totalizing explanation, Halperin would have us consider that the Greeks thought that gender was their encompassing explanation. Sexual acts correlated then with gender whereas they now correlate with sexuality. Despite their differences, both models seek a totalizing explanation, a kind of world mapping that may pertain more to modernity than to Ancient Greece. Davidson's skepticism concerning what he calls a fantasy of macho Ancient Greek culture should make us question how we are using gender to explain Greek sex. If we are not using gender as a totalizing explanation, we are potentially distorting how gender gets mapped onto sex. The complex use of inversion in the *Erotes* also enables us to question how gender has been used to describe the sex lives of the Ancient Greeks: we need in any case a concept of gender that enables us to account for the effeminate Charicles's authority to speak on love between the sexes, and, also to account for how Charicles sees homosexual acts in terms of a feminized male looking at another male.

26. James Davidson further allows us to consider the extent to which alterity can facilitate denial. If the notion that the Greeks only valued penetration is a fantasy, then is it true that reciprocal sexual relations between men did not exist or that something like homosexuality was not even recognized (Halperin 99)? Halperin baldly states that "the Greeks understood sex itself to be defined entirely in terms of phallic penetration, regardless of whether the sexual partners were both males, both females, or male and female" (147). The addendum to *One Hundred Years* acknowledges the existence of Attic pottery that depicts reciprocal erotic contacts between adult males (225). Yet in *How to do the History of Homosexuality*, Halperin claims that there are "rare" instances of reciprocal male eros, only to discount those presences as absences or "omissions" (150). Here is Halperin: "Allusions to reciprocal male *eros* or *anteros* are almost entirely missing from DeVries's archive, and when on rare occasions they do occur, the occurences tend to be quite late historically" (150). What interests me here is Halperin's rhetoric: allusions to reciprocal male love do occur, but rarely, and these allusions "tend" to be quite late. Halperin deftly transforms the presence of allusions into something missing—they "are *almost* entirely missing"—even as he finesses the chronology by claiming that these allusions tend to be late. They may tend to lateness, but his choice of "tend" implies that some of the rare allusions aren't late. In the same vein, I take issue with Halperin's claim that there is a "virtual exclusion of any mention of female or adult male homosexuality" in the *Erotes*. Certainly there seems to be no positive mention of homosexual acts between adults. Yet recall the passage cited above about luxury and looking at a male as though a female; this passage links this inversion with male sex acts. Both sow seeds in a barren field; both need to be able to ejaculate. A negative treatment of adult homosexual acts is far from a "virtual exclusion" of any mention. When is an absence an absence? Moreover, Callicraditas does imagine a life with his male lover in old age: "I shall ail with him when he is weak, and, when he puts out to sea through stormy waves, I shall sail with him" ([Pseudo-]Lucian 221).

27. My skepticism about Halperin's use of alterity has been leading up to this: despite Halperin's recognition that there are relations between sexual acts and identities in Ancient Greece, he subscribes

to the notion that sexual identity as we now know it took place post 1860. Halperin writes, "I continue to believe that something very significant happened when sexual object-choice became in the course of the twentieth century, at least in some social worlds, an overriding maker of sexual difference" (17). On the one hand, Halperin wants to think outside of our present concept of orientation. On the other hand, he makes orientation his vantage point for establishing the alterity of Ancient Greek sexuality. His choice of orientation as the vantage point for gauging the alterity of the Greeks has the unintended effect of anchoring modern sexual categories in the ontology of history. One could easily imagine other ways of thinking about alterity: for example, by examining how different cultures cope with the elasticity and excessiveness of desire, orientation thus becomes a strategy for dealing with—for tempering—the mobility of desire just as gender is one means of discouraging excess desire in Ancient Greece. Such a re-imagining demands that we truly think outside of orientation by insisting upon its ideological work without running the danger of reifying orientation as a vantage point from which to gauge alterity.

28. Recently, Jonathan Dollimore has explained what queer theorists might have to gain from the notion of orientation. He calls attention to the fact that, on the one hand, queer theorists embrace a notion of deviant desire as inherently "dangerous and disruptive" (18). On the other hand, he asks why the queer theorist is himself or herself never undone by desire, why desire is only disruptive for everyone else. Dollimore thus argues that "identity politics might in part be a defence against the instabilities and difficulties of desire itself" (32). Dollimore potentially explains Halperin's resistance to orientation, a resistance that simultaneously tries to step outside of it and to enshrine it as a vantage point. Before one can show the otherness of orientation, one has to be absolutely sure one is not in some way beholden to it.

29. Like Halperin, Percy Shelley is committed to the otherness of Greek sex. Unlike Halperin, the poet labels the sexuality of the Greeks as other so that he can deny the contemporary existence of male-male love in Britain. Halperin wants the Greeks to be other because such a claim will show us the limitations of our modern concepts of sexuality. I have suggested, however, that Halperin uses alterity as a more palatable (because postmodern) form of objectivity. Halperin's desire to have the alterity of the Greeks undermine the ontological solidity of our concepts of sexuality disfigures that alterity because it sharpens differences to facilitate current disequilibrium. Alterity thus becomes a means of controlling the traffic between identity and difference, rather than a simple declaration of difference. Shelley wants the passion of the Greeks to be "'inconceivable' to the imagination of a modern European" (222). And the poet not only explains the alterity of Greek sexuality in terms of gender inequality, but he also denies the existence of gender inequality in Britain to make love between men and paederasty now impossible.

Percy Shelley and the Alterity of the Greeks[5]

30. If James Davidson is right that contemporary accounts of Ancient Greek sexuality invoke the alterity of the Greeks only to smuggle in a modern notion of sexual penetration as power, then, his work is also helpful for understanding how alterity can be shaped by identity even as it denies or suppresses it. Although it is now common to think of essence as a form of identity and identification, and construction as a form of alterity, both Shelley and Halperin remind us that essences can be constructed and that alterities can be about forms of identification. Viewing alterity and identity together helps us to understand Shelley's othering of Greek sexuality in as much as it explains Halperin's complex use of a less priggish alterity to control the traffic between identity and alterity. More to the point, without some sense of a homosexual identity, we cannot account for Shelley's complex traverses from alterity to identity. Why doesn't Shelley find the alterity of Greek sex sufficiently explanatory? And if he can identify with the Greeks even by way of denial, might not alterity work actively to suppress identity even as it denies it?

31. In his "Discourse of the Manners of the Antient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love" (1818), one of two prefaces he wrote to his translation of Plato's *Symposium*, Shelley highlights the imperfections of the Greeks to inspire contemporary society to a higher standard of perfection. "When we discover how far the most admirable community ever formed was removed from . . . perfection . . . how great ought to be our hopes, how resolute our struggles," the poet exclaims (219). The clearest sign of their imperfection—their alterity—is their homoeroticism. Shelley's argument is simply that the Ancient Greeks made males erotic objects for other males because they understood women to be inferior; the idea of intellectual beauty as the highest form of beauty precluded women from being thought of as truly beautiful. Men thus turned to "illegitimate" objects for their sexual instincts. Rest assured, Shelley seems to say, because there was no such thing as real homosexual desire in Ancient Greece; there were only illegitimate objects of desire. The poet begins by insisting that "the regulations and sentiments respecting sexual intercourse" form "one of the chief distinctions between the manners of ancient Greece and modern Europe" (219). The stakes of this alterity are that so long as homosexual acts can be explained by gender attitudes of the past, and as long as modern Europe has improved relations between men and women, neither paederastic acts nor homosexual beings can now exist. Shelley argues that "the practices and customs of modern Europe are essentially different from and comparably less pernicious than either [the Greeks and Romans]" (221). He continues, "in modern Europe the sexual and intellectual claims of love, by the more equal cultivation of the two sexes, so far converge towards one point so as to produce, in attempt to unite them, no gross violation in the established nature of man" (221). Without gender inequality, there is no "violation in the established nature of man."

32. Part of the reason why Shelley thought of sex acts between men in terms of natural violation, is that he cannot imagine paederasty to have been consensual. The poet was by no means isolated in his inability to then imagine consensual paederasty or sodomy; medical books of jurisprudence of the time read the male anus for signs of forced sodomy, listing "inflamation, excoriation, heat and contusion, dialation of the sphincters, ulceration, a livid appearance, and thickening" as signs of "unnatural rape" (Beck 1:102-03).[6] Somewhat surprising, however, is this medical author's insistence that "no man should be condemned on medical proofs only" (Beck 1:103). The body can offer an unambiguous sign of rape only when it is accompanied by an accusation. Even in medical jurisprudence, language supplements the body. Shelley writes, "It is impossible that a lover could usually have subjected the object of his attachment to so detestable a violation or have consented to associate his own remembrance in the beloved mind with images of pain and horror" (222). Shelley cannot conceptualize paederasty as a form of homosexual sex that is pleasurable sex, and without pleasure there can be no consent. By contrast, Friedrich Karl Forberg's 1842 *Manual of Classical Erotology* argues that the passive party to "pedication" could and did feel pleasure.[7] Forberg writes, "we must come to the conclusion that the patient experiences in the anus the same kind of irritation which the other party feels in his genital parts; that, therefore the patient feels in that place a real pleasure unknown to those who have not tried it" (91). Instead of pleasure, Shelley can only express disgust: "the action by which this passion was expressed, taken in its grossest sense, is indeed sufficiently detestable" (223). I read this expression of disgust as Shelley's declaration that he is helping to secure the boundaries of the culture, rather than threatening it (see Dollimore, 47-51). Francis Bacon had argued that "our taste is never pleased better than with those things which at first created some disgust" (cited in Thornton [1:460]), and Bacon's point was reiterated in Robert Thornton's *Medical Extracts*, which Shelley ordered from Thomas Hookham in July 1812. That disgust could mask pleasure underscores the complex and surprising work of alterity.

33. But as soon as Shelley insists on the essential difference of the Greeks, he acknowledges kinds of identity. Neither disgust nor alterity preclude identity. Although Shelley argues that gender attitudes are now more equal—modern Europeans are capable of recognizing female intellectual beauty and thus do not turn to males as the objects of desire—the current equality of gender that he insists upon begins to

seem mere insistence. I'll note that Shelley's above rhetoric moves from absolute difference (his phrase is "essential difference") to comparative difference, ("more equal"). Once Shelley has opened the door to differences of degree rather than kind between the Greeks and modern Europeans, he argues that "this invidious distinction of humankind as a class of beings [of] intellectual nature into two sexes is a remnant of savage barbarism which we have less excuse than they for not having totally abolished" (222). By admitting that gender inequality has not been abolished—we have less excuse than they—Shelley is also admitting the possibility that a love between men now exists. While the poet's denial can easily be understood by recalling the fact that sodomy at the time in Britain was a crime punishable by death, and that 1805-1815 was the height of British cultural homophobia (Gilbert), these facts do not explain why Shelley dismantles the very explanation that insulates him from charges of homoeroticism. He can't be one of them so long as it doesn't exist.

34. What interests me here is how the otherness of the Greeks masks Shelley's double denial. Inequality between the sexes no longer exists; ergo, homoeroticism no longer exists. Given that his mother-in-law was Mary Wollstonecraft, and given that she had railed against separate education of the sexes and feminine sensibility as stunting women's rational capacities, Shelley's momentary blindness to female inequality is breathtaking. Compounding this denial is Shelley's claim in a letter of 1818 that he wrote this essay "to give Mary some idea of the manners & feelings of the Athenians" (Jones 2:470). Shelley's access to the truth of Greek manners and Mary's exclusion from it provides further evidence of the poet's denial. Shelley's second denial— that of the contemporary existence of homoeroticism—is also astounding in light of the homosociality of public school culture that he was part of, not to mention the fact that two boys generally slept together, naked in one featherbed (Crompton, *Byron* 79). When coupled with the fact that Shelley is writing his translation in Italy, a country known for its sodomical tendencies, and that Shelley remarks in an April 1818 letter that Italian women seem "a very inferior race of beings" (cited in Brown, 16; Reiman 6:583), Shelley's sense of the otherness of the Greeks may well have deflected attention away from his own homosocial desires. At very least, Shelley inadvertently explains why paederasty and/or love between men exists in Italy: like Ancient Greek women, modern Italian women are too ugly to be legitimate objects of sexual desire. Nathaniel Brown notes that in Shelley's remarks about Greek sculpture, Shelley was most enamored of Ganymede's beauty. The poet rhapsodized that it was "difficult to conceive anything more delicately beautiful than the Ganymede" (cited in Brown, 21, and in Crompton *Byron*, 292-3).

35. Shelley will soon have to deal with Byron's homosexuality. In a letter of December 1818, Shelley complains about the fact that Byron is associating "with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and phisiognomy of man [sic], & who scruple to avow practices which are not only not named but I believe seldom even conceived of in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures" (cited in Cameron, 179; Jones 2:58). Shelley's skepticism about Byron's declared disapproval leads him to deny not only the very name of these practices, but also the very idea of them; as we might expect, this denial is confined only to England. Although Shelley does refer to "sodomitical" practices and not to identities, he does crucially make Byron guilty by association (identification leads to identity). Moreover, those "practices" have the power to write themselves onto the body through physiognomy and sex, thus becoming identity. Despite Shelley's use of "practices," which seems to support arguments that sexuality has not yet occurred, sex has constitutive hold over identity. That Shelley's understanding of the constitutive relation between sex and identity is not our understanding of that constitutive relation does not mean that no constitutive relation exists.

36. Despite Shelley's constructionist explanation of the alterity of Greek paedophila in the "Discourse"—the Greeks could not love women because women were considered physically and intellectually inferior—Shelley often returns to essentialist explanations that further undermine modern European (not to mention his own) immunity to homoeroticism. Chief among these is that Shelley suggests that the cause might be in "the original constitution of the peculiar race of the Greeks" (221). If the cause is

constitutional, then Greek attitudes towards gender cannot explain them away. Shelley also admits that "beautiful persons of the male sex became the object of that sort of feelings, which are only *cultivated* at present as towards females" (221, emphasis mine). The poet's specification of "cultivated" pointedly does not exclude the possibility of perverted sexual beings. That the Penal Code of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Code had recently decriminalized sodomy (Crompton *Byron* 37), meant that some parts of Modern Europe were cultivating homosexual desire.

37. Whereas Shelley initially implies that homoeroticism cannot now exist, he concludes the essay by admitting that "in the golden age of our own literature a certain sentimental attachment towards persons of the same sex was not uncommon" and that Shakespeare was among those who turned to poetry to "commemorate an attachment of this kind" (223). Moreover, "towards the age of Charles II it is said that this romantic friendship degenerated into licentiousness" (223). Despite the poet's distancing of his own voice from this comment—"it" speaks—Shelley acknowledges that romantic friendship was then only steps away from licentious acts. By contrast, in his own later prose fragment on friendship, Shelley insists that friendship must be "wholly divested of the smallest alloy of sensuality" (Clark 338). His choice of "divest" leaves open the possibility that male-male friendships are inherently sensual; after all, one cannot divest what one does not already have. By acknowledging the connections between Renaissance literature in Britain and homoeroticism, Shelley brings both homoeroticism and gender inequality dangerously close to nineteenth-century Britain. And by refusing to separate both sexual intercourse between men from love, and paederasty from same-sex love, Shelley posits something like homosexuality.

38. But Shelley's most intriguing turn to concepts of identity to explain Greek homoeroticism is his connection of paedophilia with puberty: "If we consider the facility with which certain phenomena connected with sleep, at the age of puberty, associate themselves with those images which are the objects of our waking desires; and even that in some persons of an exalted state of sensibility that a similar process may take place in reverie, it will not be difficult to conceive the almost involuntary consequence of a state of abandonment in the society of a person of surpassing attractions" (222).

39. This connection of puberty to homoeroticism makes that homoeroticism quasi-sexual: it is as the lesbian sexuality of *Fanny Hill*, a warm-up exercise to the real thing. Shelley also thereby welds homoeroticism to an ambiguous state between dreaming and waking, a welding that fudges the relationship of this desire to will. The associations are "almost involuntary." At the same time, however, by linking puberty to homoeroticism, Shelley potentially normalizes homoeroticism insofar as it is now part and parcel of a normal biological process of sexual maturation, a rite of passage. This incipient normalization of an almost unconscious homoeroticism, however, is blocked by the poet's insistence that the sexual act "ought to be indulged according to nature" (222).

40. But there is much more to this blockage. In the above passage, Shelley brings homoeroticism dangerously close to Romanticism itself. Visionary Romanticism is obsessed with the boundary line between sleep and waking. Think here of Keats's "Do I wake or sleep?" Moreover, Shelley connects homoeroticism with "a state of exalted sensibility" (222), recalling Wordsworth's definition of the poet as the man of a high degree of feeling. This proximity of homoeroticism to the narcissism of Romanticism is made even more threatening by Shelley's confusing invocations of nature. Greek paederasty is explained by gender inferiority but then accounted for by the "peculiar nature" of the Greeks. And when Shelley turns to puberty to explain Greek sexuality, he threatens to overturn the category of nature itself.

41. Puberty was a particularly volatile moment of natural transition in the Romantic period; hence, puberty was the subject of enormous medical speculation.[8] Unlike us, Romantic medical writers tended to think of puberty as the moment in which two essentially feminine sexes became fully differentiated

into male and female. The surgeon William Lawrence and friend of the Shelleys referred to pre-pubescent children as "equivocal beings." Unlike us, who tend to see the primacy of genital difference, the Romantics saw puberty as the moment in which secondary differentiation made feminized males become real men. (See, for example, *Don Juan*, Canto 9:45-49). Secondary differentiation then had the weight of sexual differentiation. I raise this historical sense of how the Romantics understood puberty because it helps us to see how complicated Shelley's connection of homoeroticism with puberty was. Since puberty was the moment when the one feminized sex became two, nature was in a state of radical transformation, a transformation that puts even further pressure upon ideas of the natural. To the extent that males before puberty were considered as feminized, what is the appropriate object of love for pre-pubescent boys? This shifting nature and Romantic culture's awareness of sex as a dynamic transformation, not only offered precarious ground for legitimacy and normality, but also hinted at the possibility that all boys had the potential to choose other males as objects for their love.

42. Even more vexing is the fact that much of Shelley's thinking about sexuality derives from the Greeks (see White 2:22-24). Shelley concedes that the sexual act itself is nothing (221). He then argues that there are two sorts of condemnation against it: one, societal and therefore arbitrary; and two, natural, "in regards to the indestructible laws of human nature" (221). The poet's distinction between arbitrary and natural condemnation is indeed courageous, given that sodomy is in England a capital crime. He elaborates three propositions that establish the applications of the natural law. First, the person selected for this gratification should be "as perfect and beautiful as possible, both in body and mind" (222). This proposition paradoxically derives from the Greeks, as it hearkens back to Diotima's instructions for Socrates in *The Symposium*. Second, Shelley insists upon temperance. This is also part of the Greek understanding of sex. Third, Shelley insists again that "this act ought to be indulged according to nature" (222). Propositions one and two clearly are indebted to the Greeks. Proposition three, however, goes against the Greek elevation of homoerotic relationships; moreover, it contradicts Shelley's own admission that the sexual manners of the Greeks might in fact stem from their very "nature." Even more to the point, Rudi Bleys has shown how Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, among others, argued that sodomy was in fact natural because it was so widespread (65-68).[9] Shelley may well have known that French philosophers thought that sodomy was natural. When Shelley left France and entered Savoy, customs officers confiscated the poet's copies of Voltaire and Rousseau (White 2:5).

43. What began as clear difference—what was "inconceivable"—ended up close to identity. One way to explain this is that alterity enables denial of proximity. Otherness can be a distorted form of self-recognition. Shelley in fact admits that otherness can rescue the self when he notes that "nothing is at the same time more melancholy and ludicrous than to observe that the inhabitants of one epoch or of one nation harden themselves to all amelioration of their own practices and institutions and soothe their consciences by heaping violent invectives upon those of others while in the eye of sane philosophy their own are no less deserving of censure" (223). Here, Shelley shrewdly recognizes that invectives levelled against the past can not only ease present consciences, but also make it unnecessary to change the self.

44. Because invectives against the past can stunt the present's need to amelioriate itself, Shelley equates homoeroticism with prostitution, making them equally morally reprehensible. Look at yourselves, Shelley warns the English. After condemning the Greeks for glutting their passions "detestabl[y]," the poet adds, "but a person must be blinded by superstition to conceive of it as more horrible than the usual intercourse endured by almost every youth of England with a diseased and insensible prostitute. It cannot be more unnatural, for nothing defeats and violates nature, or the purposes for which the sexual instincts are supposed to have existed, than prostitution" (223). In light of Randolph Trumbach's argument that middle-class men in the eighteenth century had to see prostitutes to defend their sexuality from charges of sodomy (61-65), Shelley's lumping together of prostitution and homoeroticism may be an even more powerful form of denial/recognition than I have thus far

suggested. One must, of course, recognize what one denies. Ivan Crozier has recently suggested that "sources for nineteenth- century medical history of same-sex behaviour are hidden in books on venereology, forensic medicine, criminology and hypnotism, when it was written about at all" (63). Perhaps our sense of the otherness of orientation has prevented us from looking at its genealogy or at incipient forms of it. Even as we now look for more nuanced connections between sex and identity as David Halperin has urged us to do, we might also begin to rethink the different historical forms for how sex begins to constitute identity in the past. And although both the Greeks and the Romantics would seem to have a more elastic concept of desire than we now do—orientation has made desire seem welded to identity through object choice in ways the past seems to be oblivious to—I suggest that orientation has just been another historical form for controlling the mobility of desire, one that has acquired the solidity of fact.

45. I have tried to show how Shelley's concept of the alterity of Greek sex cannot be understood without some sense of the poet's complex identifications with the Greeks. Shelley's turn to concepts of identity furthermore undermines Halperin's sense that before sexology, one did not have concepts of sexuality, of sexuality having enormous conceptual hold over identity. We can trace the emergence of sexuality in the fact that associating with men who practiced sodomy had the potential to impugn sexual practices of the associate. Shelley's imagining that the practice of sodomy writes itself on the body in terms of sex and physiognomy further indicates the growing constitutive hold that sex has over identity. What makes the Greeks different—what gives them their identity—is their "regulations and sentiments concerning sexual intercourse" (219). That we can only gauge Shelley's identifications through denial (alterity) should perhaps alert us to how alterity functions in the history of sexuality as a form of objectivity and to how alterity controls the traffic between identity and difference.

46. Before closing, I want to identify important similarities between Halperin's and Shelley's versions of Greek alterity because those similarities put pressure on alterity's ability to generate new accounts of past sexualities. Both at least initially make gender central to accounts of Greek sexuality. Both connect Greek sex to important shifts in patterns of erotic organization: homoeroticism becomes a crucial site for the reimagining of basic social relationships. Halperin wants to make Greek paederasty an inverted form of our inversion: paederasty makes Greek men more manly. Shelley wants to claim that without gender inequality, homosexual acts are not possible. Halperin's sense of how Greek paederasty renders masculinity is complicated by his view that modern homosexuality is about the absence of gender difference. Whereas the Greeks used sex to consolidate gender, modern homosexuality has the potential to eradicate the negative implications of gender difference, a conclusion that just so happens to intensify and demonstrate the otherness of Greek sex. Halperin elaborates, "One effect of the concept of homosexuality is to detach sexual object choice from any necessary connection with gender identity" (132). Moreover, writes Halperin, "homosexual relations are not necessarily lopsided in their distribution of erotic pleasure or desire" (133). What does Halperin mean by insisting upon "not necessarily"? Are heterosexual relations thus necessarily lopsided? "Homosexual relations no longer necessarily imply an asymmetry of social identities of sexual positions, nor are they inevitably articulated in terms of hierarchies of power, age, gender, or sexual role" (133). But does getting rid of gender get rid of hierarchy? And if the notion of the macho penetrating paederast is a fantasy, as James Davidson has argued, does gender have the explanatory power over Greek sex that Halperin suggests it does? For Shelley, eradicating gender inequality will result in the end of homoeroticism. That both Halperin and Shelley turn to gender to explain Greek sex suggests that we need more historically-refined accounts of the relationship between gender and sexuality, accounts that are more careful not to smuggle contemporary ways of seeing gender back into the past. Both together also imply that it might be useful to consider convergences—how gender and sexuality are interwoven—before one fully assents to the otherness of Greek sex, that sex was then about gender deviance whereas it is now about sexuality. That Shelley could associate what we now call "homophobia" with gender equality, a position that seems inexplicable to us because it is the opposite of what we expect, further argues for

such refining.

47. I conclude by making it clear that despite my skepticism about alterity, I am not advocating throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Alterity, especially Halperin's reflexive brand of it, has enabled important correctives to universalizing histories of sexuality. Alterity also has done much to explain elements of Greek sex that were previously incomprehensible. No one reading Halperin can afford "unproblematically" to map heterosexuality and homosexuality onto the past. Halperin's insistence upon alterity has led me to consider if proximity might be a useful historical concept because it, unlike alterity, suggests differences of degree not kind. I have argued that alterity is a post-modern form of objectivity in that it claims to deliver difference even as it controls the traffic between identity and difference. Considering how alterity functions as a blind spot of historicism will enable us to think about how the othering of the past, so it can fully serve the needs of a present, potentially disfigures that alterity even as it renders it. Moreover, this blind spot can be intensified by the validating function of alterity. To what extent are our historicizing key terms post-modern versions of objectivity? Because historicist identifications can get deflected into language, examining when we turn to post-structuralist theories of language and when we are more willing to claim linguistic transparency may further help us to reexamine the work of alterity. I have, moreover, urged that we think more about how the choice of one's vantage point for alterity may have unintended consequences in the shaping of that alterity. In as much as Halperin wants to think outside of orientation, his use of orientation as his vantage point for alterity has perhaps had the unintended effect of reifying this ideological concept.

48. Histories of sexuality will be further strengthened once we recognize that inevitable blindness does not excuse selective blindness. Although Halperin's insistence that historicism must be defended is helpful, a fully-defended historicism can never be accomplished. We are always selecting what we defend, and we can only defend what we can imagine skeptically. Finally, thinking about how alterity can facilitate the projection of current sexual attitudes onto the past without looking like it is doing so, may help us to distinguish between what we want alterity to do for us and what alterity meant then. If Halperin has successfully warned us of the dangers of "unproblematically" mapping the concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality onto Greek sex, I hope that this essay has shown the possible dangers of mapping the concept of alterity onto the past even when one is partly aware of the dangers.

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Notes

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[1] Important critiques of historicism include works by Liu, Mailloux, Thomas, and Hacking. Hacking asks why critics assume that words refer to static entities.
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[2] Andrew Elfenbein's *Romantic Genius: Towards a History of a Homosexual Role* is an important contribution to a genealogy of orientation. In "Romanticism and the Sciences of Perversion," I consider how the increasing importance of function in the biological sciences of the Romantic period makes it difficult to imagine a perverted identity.
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[3] In Volume 4 of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, the standard reference for Classical iconography, the depictions of Ganymede range widely from those which show him as a boy (Ganymede entries 56, 79, 119, 122, and 125) to those which illustrate him as more manly (i.e., entries 28, 44, 250). I would point out that the more muscular ones are not at all interchangeable with women. No depictions of

Ganymede show him with a beard, although in some of them he may have sideburns (see, for example, #44). A number of entries depict Ganymede with a rooster (see Ganymedes 12, 22, 28, 44, 48, 56 and 73). Might not the rooster be an unambiguous sign of Ganymede's maleness?

In *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Louis Crompton reads the *Erotes* as "more an assault on male love than a defense of heterosexuality" (125). Crompton's admirably comprehensive study would have been further strengthened had he addressed arguments like Halperin's that are wary of using the concepts of "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" to describe sex in Ancient Greece.
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[4] Paul Hamilton puts the problem this way: "historicism is the name given to this apparent relativing of the past by getting to know the different interpretations to which it is open and deciding between them on grounds expressing our own contemporary preoccupations. Fears then grow that this amounts to uncontrolled relativism on the part of the historian or critic" (19). He "mitigates" the problem by arguing, "the changeability in our view of the past is a condition of getting our present into proper perspective. A fixed view of one would entail a contradictory curtailing of our alertness to the formative historical process still at work in the other" (19).
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[5] Considering how fascinating Shelley's essay on the Ancient Greeks is, there has been little sustained commentary on it. Shelley wrote this essay as one of two prefaces to his translation of "The Banquet of Plato" (the other is "On Love"); this was the first translation in English to render the pronouns exactly. With the exception of Crompton's *Byron* (288-300), much of that commentary is misleading. Christopher Hobson's claim that Shelley "stress[es] the normality of male-male attraction in Greek society" only makes sense if he means "normal" as common. As I have argued here, Shelley insists that homoeroticism is unnatural and "illegitimate." Graham Robb distorts Shelley's essay by describing him as having "hinted that sodomy could be an expression of love and that it was hardly 'more horrible than the usual intercourse endured by almost every youth of England with a diseased and insensible prostitute'" (177). Eric Clarke largely passes over Shelley's essay; he notes that Shelley could not get over an incongruity between Greek paederasty and Greek philosophy as thus he "postulated wet daydreams as the true source" behind homoeroticism (127). The fullest study of Shelley's essay to date is Nathaniel Brown's. Brown argues that Wincklemann informs Shelley's understanding of Greek beauty (19-23), and he extolls Shelley's feminist principles. Brown also discusses the importance of Shelley's distancing of the Greeks from Roman "obscene" versions of the Greeks (120-22). See also Notopolous.

For a deconstructive approach to Shelley's translation of Plato, see David Towsey's essay. Towsey's valuable attention to synechdochal patterns within Plato that make it "difficult to distinguish the rational and good, the generality of the whole, from the carnal and base" (515) suggest clear dangers to any historian of sexuality who does not take into account how aesthetic features complicate the text's function as window to sexuality. Whereas Halperin insists upon clear divisions between *eros* and *philia*, Towsey argues that Plato conflates "love, sexual intercourse, procreation, artistic creation and divinity" (521). That Towsey does not mention homosexuality supports Sedgwick's view that "deconstruction...has both fetishized the idea of difference and so vaporized its possible embodiments that its practitioners are the last people to whom one would now look for help in thinking about particular differences" (23). On the one hand, if I have in this essay sacrificed historicist particularity for a metaphysics of alterity, I have done so to try to reinvigorate our uses of alterity. On the other hand, I want to emphasize what can be learned from thinking beyond or vaporizing embodiment.

For more on Shelley's taste in statuary, see Stephen Larrabee, *English Bards and Grecian Marbles*, 175-203.
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[6] The medical work on same-sex behavior that Crozier cites in the 1842 edition, T.R. and J. B. Beck's *Elements of Medical Jurisprudence*, has an earlier American 1823 edition, available at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland.
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[7] Forberg's *Manual of Classical Erotology* comes 24 years after Shelley's essay. Forberg's attention to Greek passages of depiliation, moreover, allows for the possibility of adult male homosexuality in Ancient Greece, so long as adult males plucked out their beards and other hairs to look younger (118-19).
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[8] Puberty and Romantic science is one of the foci of my forthcoming essay, "Romantic Science and Romantic Sexuality," and book project, *Perverse Romanticism*.
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[9] Louis Crompton in *Homosexuality and Civilization* notes that although Voltaire and Diderot did argue that sodomy was natural, this did not prevent them from using "anti-homosexual rhetoric" (see pages 518 and 521-22). Voltaire discusses sodomy in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. Jones lists Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique* as among the books that Shelley read in 1811 (2:487); he does not specify which books were later confiscated. When Shelley refers to this work in his letters, however, he points to Eliza Westbrooke's reading of it, not his.

That natural sodomy could then be aligned with "anti-homosexual" rhetoric means that we also are in need of more nuanced histories of "heteronormativity."
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

Foucault and the Hedgerow History of Sexuality

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This article argues that what it calls hedgerow envy, a generalized sense of having a non-historical stake in the meaning of a historical narrative, which is part of its inauthenticity and its theory, is also a central part of how Foucault's history works and of the light it casts on some of the debates his history has incited and played a part in over the historical meaning of sexuality and homosexuality. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. I lift the term "hedgerow" from *Doonesbury*, as much to characterize my own ambiguous position as the author of a piece on what Foucault's influence on the writing of the history of sexuality has been and ought to be, as to characterize what I will argue that influence should be. In a series that ran sometime after *Saving Private Ryan* had opened, Mark Slackmeyer, one of the original baby-boomer cast of characters of that strip, is visiting his dying father. Slackmeyer was, of course, an opponent of the Vietnam War and had famously judged all the Watergate conspirators to be "Guilty, guilty, guilty." He and his father, a conservative, a veteran of World War II and of the Normandy invasion (although, as it turns out, really a veteran of the typing pool) have, unsurprisingly, never gotten along. But now Slackmeyer suddenly feels sympathetic interest in his father's wartime experiences. In one of those ripostes Trudeau frequently gives to his conservative characters when they capture the hypocrisies of his contemporaries, Slackmeyer's father refers to the baby-boomer, post-*Ryan* elegiac attitude to World War II veterans and the Normandy invasion as "hedgerow envy." The term not only captures the inauthenticity of the sudden nostalgia for a life-threatening challenge in support of an unmistakably good cause of all of us who had never and would never want to go anywhere near a battlefield. Because it is a nostalgia for danger held from a safe, theoretical distance, the term also captures the uncomfortable position of claiming to have a position on a matter of critical dispute that is also a matter of political dispute, without any expertise in that field, based on the tenuous applicability of a larger theoretical position and a comfortably unthreatening fellow-feeling with those political ends. Such political sympathy from afar based on safe theories certainly have all the inauthentic possibilities of Trudeau's hedgerow envy. And the term all too closely describes my own entry into debates over the history of homosexuality, with no Greek, no Latin, no expertise in any of the requisite fields and only an interest in Foucault's philosophical and aesthetic positions and an intellectual envy of the work of that history to justify me. My only further justification will be my claim that hedgerow envy, in a more generalized sense of having a non-historical stake in the meaning of a historical narrative—which is part of its inauthenticity and its theory—is also a central part of how Foucault's history works and of the light I think it casts on some of the debates his history has incited and played a part in over the historical meaning of sexuality and homosexuality. If, by attaching that term to a particular, influential part of Foucault's project, I can recuperate the value of hedgerow envy in all of its inauthenticity, I am perfectly, if inauthentically happy, to hope that that recuperation attaches to my argument as well.

2. Before discussing what I am calling Foucault's hedgerow history, though, I want to start with some closer connections drawn between his history and the history of sexuality. There are three levels of this connection, which occur at greater and greater levels of generality and thus in closer and closer approximations of the inauthentic distance of hedgerow envy. The first level is a recurrent interest, both among allies and critics, in connecting his work, especially the three volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, to his biography—in particular not only to his own homosexuality, but to his taking, in late

interviews, gay S/M practices as exemplary of the shaping of one's own practices, self and life, that he came to see as a positive response to the discipline of sexuality. The second level has been the very real importance of some of his claims about homosexuality (that concept's history and its lack of applicability to sexual practices prior to the nineteenth-century) to debates through the 1980s and 1990s over the history of homosexuality and the implications of that history for an antihomophobic politics. Finally, at a more general level, although obviously connected to the prior one, Foucault's description of the disciplinary power of sexuality as a field of knowledge, while it has seemed to so many of his liberal critics and even sometime allies, as taking away all ability to engage in any political action at all, has played a strangely productive—strange, evidently only to straight notions of production, though—role in gay political action.

3. The attachment critics make between Foucault's life and his thought is in all ways the worst. This has nothing to do with his own ostensible antagonism to the concept of an author.[1] If explaining a text with regard to the biography of its author has a value despite Foucault's beliefs, then it will have the same value for his case.[2] And although biographers frequently refer apologetically to Foucault's often quoted appeal in *Archaeology of Knowledge* not to ask who he is or to demand that he remain the same (17; see for instance, Macey, xiii), one only need respect this request to the extent that one agrees with Foucault in the first place that such questions and demands are irrelevant to understanding a work. Of course, if one does think that, then one will hardly look to his biography in order to understand them. But if one does not, Foucault presents no special case, his appeals to the contrary notwithstanding. The problem has been that connecting Foucault's life with his work has too frequently been homophobic and, even when not, has been reductive at best. Given the fact that he died from AIDS early enough in the life of that plague so that melodramatic emplotments of such deaths did not seem as excessive as they do now, it was inevitable that anti-postmodern critics would connect his death with his thought. Of these formulations, George Steiner's is relatively restrained: "This obsessed inquirer into diseases and sexuality—into the mind's constructs of Eros and the effects of such constructs on the body politic and on the individual flesh—was done to death by the most hideous and symbolically charged of current diseases" (105). Steiner in all probability meant "hideous" as a judgment about how horrific it was that people died of AIDS. Still, in what sense does Foucault's death from AIDS tell us anything about "obsessions" that pre-date the existence of the disease by twenty years. And, although the disease has certainly been symbolically charged for some, not all symbols are even remotely useful ones for evaluating someone's thought, even for those who think that authorial lives are in principle pertinent, least of all those symbols that arise from fear and ignorance. A more fully worked out and notorious example of connecting Foucault's life to his works, James Miller's *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, at least means to be an admiring book which connects what Miller takes to be a life-long obsession with limit-experiences to his work in ways that are at least narratively satisfying, at any rate for those who enjoy Victorian melodrama. Regardless of whether one agrees with Halperin's evaluation of Miller's book as homophobic, however, one can only think it elucidates Foucault's thinking for those who have no interest in the details of that thought since it regularly quotes out of context and really deals with no book before *Discipline and Punish* on its own terms.[3]

4. Perhaps the best place for arguing why one should not connect even what might seem the most personal of Foucault's meditations with his life would be in his defenses of S/M, the practice of which he separates from sadomasochism, understood as a feature of consciousness:

> I do not think that this movement of sexual practices has anything at all to do with the bringing to daylight or the discovering of sadomasochist tendencies deeply buried in our unconscious. I think that S/M is much more than that; it's the actual creation of new possibilities of pleasure that one might never have imagined before. . . . I think that we have here a sort of creation, of a creative enterprise, of which one of the principle characteristics is what I would call the de-genitalization of pleasure. The idea that physical

> pleasure is always a matter of sexual pleasure and the idea that sexual pleasure is the base of all possible pleasures is something that I think is truly something false. What S/M practices show us is that we can produce pleasure beginning with very strange objects and using certain bizarre parts of our bodies in very unusual situations, etc. (*Dits*, II, 1556-57).

Because of the gossip surrounding both Foucault's activity in the bathhouses of San Francisco and his death from AIDS (were there really no such similar places in Paris, or is the location of Foucault's activity part of a mythmaking element to the story we now tell of his death?), his espousal of S/M as an example of cultivating "bodies and pleasures" as a counterattack against the power-knowledge of sexuality (*History of Sexuality*, 157) can seem to link his theories to his life. This may take the homophobic tone of Steiner's suggestion of the darkness and obsession of Foucault's thought, or that of Miller's melodramatic narrative of someone interested in limit-experiences in both life and work. It may take the openly hagiographic form of Halperin's analysis of the queer politics entailed in Foucault's espousal of S/M (*Saint Foucault*, 85-91), coupled with the evaluation that he led an "intellectually and politically exemplary life" (*Saint Foucault*, 7). The problem with all these connections is that they reduce the challenge of Foucault's thought to a reaction to a specific practice rather than using a reaction to a practice to test our ability to accommodate a way of thinking.

5. There is after all a clear line of connection going from Foucault's interest in S/M to his more general statement that the value of doing history is to get free of oneself. One starts the connection with his espousal of askesis as a response to explain his statement that rather than "bemoaning dulled pleasures, I am interested in what we can do by ourselves":

> Asceticism as the renunciation of pleasure has a bad reputation. But askesis is something different: it is the work that you do on yourself to transform yourself or to allow a self to appear that, fortunately, you never quite reach. Is this not our problem today? We have dismissed asceticism. It's now up to us to advance into a homosexual askesis that will enable us to work on ourselves, and invent—I do not say discover—a manner of being that is as yet improbable (*Dits*, II, 984).

The common ground between the practice of S/M as the invention of new pleasures that would allow us to see bodily pleasures as de-genitalized in an unfamiliar way, and an askesis construed, in accordance with its original meaning, as an exercise on oneself rather than simply a self-denial, an exercise that will allow us to create new forms of self and being, is fairly clear. And yet, if this response did not appear in an interview for the gay journal *Gai Pied*[4] and if the word homosexual were left out, the text would perfectly accord perfectly with Foucault's description in his introduction to *The Use of Pleasure* of his motive for writing history:

> As for what motivated me, it is quite simple; I would hope that in the eyes of some people it might be sufficient in itself. It was curiosity—the only kind of curiosity, in any case, that is worth acting upon with a degree of obstinacy: not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself. After all, what would be the value of the passion for knowledge, if it resulted only in a certain amount of knowledgeableness and not, in one way or another and to the extent possible, in the knower's straying afield of himself? (8)[5]

From the askesis that allows us to invent new modes of being to a history that enables the knower to stray afield of himself, there is only the distance between a rule and an instance. If this is the only kind of curiosity worth acting upon with any obstinacy, though, one must assume that it should motivate more than gays (or straights) practicing S/M. My point here is not to enfeeble the espousal of S/M by turning it into a more easily digestible general principle of self-detachment. Rather the reverse, I think

the force of the example of S/M for the audience that does not practice it is to stress that self-detachment, not to say the more difficult losing one's fondness for oneself, may involve harder acts of empathy than we usually imagine. If many of Foucault's liberal critics seem to shy before the hedgerow they are being asked to leap, that is no reason to let them off the hook by creating the authentic connection of a hagiography that excludes them from the possibility of comprehending.[6] If hedgerow envy is inauthentic, it still seems preferable to its absence.

6. Ultimately the problem is that Foucault proposes an extreme form of self-detachment as an end. For allies of that position, proposing to attach Foucault back to his life, even merely as exemplary, does not really refuse him the detachment he seeks. It refuses to grant the value of detachment he espouses. His critics, of course, may mean to deny that he achieves that end, or to deny the value of the end, but to do so by attaching his thought to his life via that which they find in it that is most sensational and melodramatic has, to be understated, an air of insufficient detachment to evaluate the thought. But the second form of attaching Foucault to the writing of the history of sexuality suffers none of these problems. Instead it takes two significant ideas from the three volumes of the *History of Sexuality* and uses them as guiding ideas for further work in that history. I put these ideas simplistically, with the promise to refine them more satisfactorily further down: 1) in the first volume of the history, Foucault famously states that while "as defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts," "[t]he nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage," and 2) in *The Use of Pleasure*, in contrast to either of these definitions, the Greeks of the classical period, rather than categorizing sexual activity in terms of the sex of the desired object, thus dividing among homosexual and heterosexual, categorized in terms of the dominance or passivity of the desired role, thus classing boys and women—as passive—together as objects of desire for men. These ideas taken together imply, at least for some critics, the historical constructedness of first homosexuality, and as a consequence of heterosexuality as well since heterosexuality was created as a concept only in tandem with the creation of homosexuality as a concept in the nineteenth century, and thus finally of sexuality as a whole.[7] This connection, of course, does not in any sense run afoul of Foucault's idea of detachment. Indeed, it derives quite pointedly from his desire, as we will see, to use history to estrange us from our own ways of thinking, to make them look historical rather than necessary givens, either natural or logical. And there is no question that these claims, if in more historically careful and refined terms, do play important roles in Foucault's history of sexuality. If I question the closeness of their connection to Foucault, it will not be to question the validity of the histories of sexuality that follow upon him but rather to question whether, finally, taken in the largest sense, he is making historical claims at all. And my point will be that one can get the values of the histories of sexuality written in his wake only by accepting his recognition that the value of his work is not in its historical validity (which will not be the same as saying that his claims are invalid).

7. Before looking at these specific arguments, however, we should note that the historical constructedness of sexuality is in one sense not a conclusion from the historical evidence but a necessary presupposition to doing the history of sexuality. Foucault recognizes this explicitly in his introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, in which he claims that he needed to begin by presuming the historically changing nature of sexuality:

> To speak of sexuality in this way, I had to break with a conception that was rather common. Sexuality was conceived of as a constant. The hypothesis was that where it was manifested in historically singular forms, this was through various mechanisms of repression to which it was bound to be subjected in every society. What this amounted to, in effect, was that desire and the subject of desire were withdrawn from the historical field, and interdiction as a general form was made to account for anything historical in sexuality. (4)

The logic is quite clear. Only if we treat sexuality as historically changing, treat its elements—desire and the subject of desire—as parts of the historical field, can we do a history of sexuality. Otherwise, we write a history of external variations that befall a natural constant. We will write how different historical periods allow or repress sexuality but not how sexuality itself changes through history. Halperin follows this logic and clarifies it: "Sex has no history. It is a natural fact, grounded in the functioning of the body, and, as such, it lies outside history and culture. Sexuality, by contrast, does not properly refer to some aspect or attribute of bodies. Unlike sex, sexuality is a cultural production" ("Is There a History of Sexuality," 416). Like Foucault, Halperin does not offer historical evidence for this claim at the outset (though he does go on to say that the history that follows will function as support for the claimed historicity of sexuality). He proposes a logical definition that allows the history to move forward. And, therefore, as with Foucault, the history that follows can only buttress the claim to the extent that we are willing at least to entertain the possibility of the subject having a history at all.[8]

8. Although, as we will see, there is strong evidence for the historical accuracy of all of these claims, they have all been contested, and the reasons those arguments cannot be resolved satisfactorily will show us why the claims are really not ultimately historical. Let us start with the final most general one, since from it will follow the contestation of the more specific claims about the historicity of homosexuality. John Boswell, who opposed quite pointedly the notion that the category of homosexuality was an historical construct, also argued that if it were, "if the categories 'homosexual/heterosexual' and 'gay/straight' are the inventions of particular societies rather than aspects of the human psyche, there is no gay history" (93).[9] And the logic here is as unexceptionable as that of Foucault's and Halperin's. In order to write an historical account of a single people whose common trait is that they are gay, gayness or homosexuality must actually be common to all of those people. If, therefore, gay history is to be the history of gay people, then obviously there must be such people. At issue in each of these statements is whether one wants to write the history of sexuality, thus the history of homosexuality, or the history of gay people. One's position on the constructedness of homosexuality or of its natural reality will derive at least in part from which history one wants to write. And of course the history one wants to write will have a connection with one's view of the present situation of gay people.

9. Although in principle, at this point, one might foresee this argument being over the status of the historical evidence for whether traits amounting to homosexuality exist in cultures regardless of how they categorize sexual acts, one needs to see that the debate begins in different evaluations of what kind of history will best forward differing positions about the best political position regarding either the origin or the essence of homosexuality. For those identified as Foucauldians, showing the historical constructedness of our understanding of homosexuality will show the emptiness of those categories as a basis for claiming knowledge about people one classifies in that category. Hence the case that other societies, in particular Classical Greece, did not have such categories implies the historical limitedness of our own categories. David Halperin makes this aim clear in both *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* and *How to do the History of Homosexuality*. In the first book, he opens with the statement that ". . . if we are ever to discover who 'we' really are, it will be necessary to examine more closely the many respects in which Greek sexual practices *differ* from 'our own'—and do not merely confirm current cherished assumptions about 'us' or legitimate some of 'our' favorite practices" (1-2). Although this sentence is posed as an epistemological demand, the quotation marks around the first-person plural pronouns indicate clearly enough the ethical force behind the epistemology. And although Halperin develops a more nuanced constructivism in his second book, his statement of it only makes his ethical claims clearer: "If we cannot simply escape from the tyranny of homosexuality by some feat of scholarly rigor (as I once thought we could) . . . we can at least insist on taking our categories so seriously as to magnify their inner contradictions to the point where those contradictions turn out to be analytically informative" (107). The point of what is an openly artificial analytical act is to escape a tyranny, to show the contradictions in current categories.[10] Nor should one think that only Foucauldian constructivism begins by assuming the historical case supposedly at issue. Leo Bersani,

for instance, has argued powerfully for the idea that, contra Foucault, a gay identity serves a vital ethical and political role in a society that seems most to want homosexuality to disappear (*Homos*, particularly 31-76). And giving that identity historical duration often seems to motivate an animus with which essential gay historians attack constructivist ones.

10. It would be hard to imagine a history immune from a principle that motivates its composition, and there is no necessary contradiction between having such a principle and producing a history that adequately performs the role of evidence for it, so the above argument should pointedly not be taken as, by itself, any very strong reason for skepticism about either side in this argument, or a reason for faulting attaching one of the positions to a Foucauldian influence. But as one looks at the debate in further detail, one can see how impossible it would be to resolve in terms of an appeal to historical evidence. I will address two approaches to the debate, one a specific argument for a category of homosexuality held at least by the early Roman empire and the second a more general claim that regardless of what a specific society thought, the reality of homosexuality existed and one can see recognitions of that reality. Oddly, though those who make these arguments oppose themselves to Foucauldians, neither side contests entirely Foucault's central claim about the Greeks, one Dover made in a less pointed way before him and Halperin has argued vigorously after him. Whether or not pederasty was the only form of same-sex relationship the Greeks recognized, that relationship nevertheless followed a categorizing of sexual relationships that did not attend primarily to the sexes of the participants: ". . . sexual relations—always conceived in terms of the model act of penetration, assuming a polarity that opposed activity and passivity—were seen as being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate, and individual who dominates and one who is dominated. . . ." (Use of Pleasure, 215). From this perspective, a dominant male desiring sex in the active role with either a woman or a boy would be experiencing the same kind of desire. Moreover, the taboo attached to the image of the effeminate gay man, in Greek society attaches to a man who, by an excess of desire, shows a lack of virile self-control. And this would be true regardless of whether that excess manifests itself in the unmanly willingness to allow oneself to be penetrated or in the unmanly excessive participation in sexual relationships with women (84-85). From this perspective, at least, it would seem that the Greeks did not think of sexual relationships as divided up along the line of the sexes of the participants as we do, and by implication at least, that they experienced desire differently in consequent ways.

11. One way to attack this picture as denying a natural reality to homosexuality would be to pick out one part of it and align it with current attitudes toward homosexuality to show the persistence of those attitudes, thus a persistent version of homophobia and as a consequence, a persistent sexual identity beneath the shifting conventions. An example of this approach is Amy Richlin's pointedly titled "Not Before Homosexuality: the Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law Against Love Between Men." Richlin at least intends to argue against Foucault and Halperin in contending that

    > [it] is true that "homosexuality" corresponds to no Latin word and is not a wholly adequate term to use of ancient Roman males, since adult males normally penetrated both women and boys. But it is partly adequate to describe the adult male who preferred to be penetrated. An accurate analysis is that here was a concept of sexual deviance in Roman culture, which was not homologous with the modern concept of "homosexuality" but partook of some of the same homophobic overtones our nineteenth-century coinage owns. (529-30)

    The figure Richlin identifies here is the *cinaedus*, and she argues that there were people who corresponded to this term, and that they were treated with what amounts to homophobia. Both Foucault and Halperin do deal with this figure, as we shall see, so the question will not be over Richlin's having found a bit of evidence that they ignored—the existence of the *cinaedus* and a taboo against him—but over the significance of that figure and what kind of category he corresponds to. The first problem is

simply whether it is sufficient to pick out one figure in a series of relationships categorized in entirely different ways and claim that this is the evidence of homosexuality in society. After all, if the deviance of the *cinaedus* is still being identified in terms of his anti-male desire to be penetrated, then while there is something like what we would describe as a gender aspect to his deviance, it is not quite a sexual aspect. To this Richlin essentially argues that if this figure corresponds to a male who enjoys sexual relations, even if only of a certain kind, only with other males, if he is depicted according to the stereotypes applied in the nineteenth-century to homosexuality construed as inversion and in the twentieth-century to homosexuals depicted in terms of their effeminacy, then regardless of the Greek and Roman values surrounding pederasty, we have a genuine trans-historical category that allows us to do a meaningful history of homosexuality and homophobia.

12. If Foucault and Halperin, among others, had somehow missed the figure of the *cinaedus*, Richlin's case, though still limited, would have been stronger, but in fact, her articulation of a commonality between negative stereotypes about inversion in the nineteenth century and negative stereotypes applied to the *cinaedus* might have been taken word for word from Foucault, who in the section in *The Use of Pleasure* labeled "an image," makes the connection explicitly. Beginning with a nineteenth-century "stereotypical portrait of a homosexual or invert" (18), Foucault then asserts that one can find exactly the same image going back through Greco-Roman to pre-Socratic Greek texts. He then asserts, however, that it "would be completely incorrect to interpret this as a condemnation of love of boys, or of what we generally refer to as homosexual relations; but at the same time, one cannot fail to see in it the effect of strongly negative judgments concerning some possible aspects of relations between men, as well as a definite aversion to anything that might denote a deliberate renunciation of the signs and privileges of the masculine role" (19). He justifies this claim in a passage that I referred to above explaining the difference between the Greek categorization in terms of active and passive sex and the modern one between hetero- and homosexuality:

> In the experience of sexuality such as ours, where a basic scansion maintains an opposition between masculine and feminine, the femininity of men is perceived in the actual or virtual transgression of his sexual role. No one would be tempted to label as effeminate a man whose love for women leads to immoderation on his part…In contrast, for the Greeks it was the opposition between activity and passivity that was essential, pervading the domain of sexual behaviors and that of moral attitudes as well; thus it was not hard to see how a man might prefer males without anyone suspecting him of effeminacy, provided he was active in the sexual relation and active in the moral mastering of himself. On the other hand, a man who was not sufficiently in control of his pleasures—whatever his choice of object—was regarded as "feminine." The dividing line between a virile man and an effeminate man did not coincide with our opposition between hetero- and homosexuality; nor was it confined to the opposition between active and passive homosexuality. It marked the difference in people's attitudes toward the pleasures. . . .(85)[11]

Foucault not only recognizes the existence of the commonality of stereotype on which Richlin bases her argument, he means by pointing to that commonality to stress precisely the difference in acts of categorization by which it is applied. Nor can we adjudicate the dispute in terms of some empirical element in the two ways of construing the *cinaedus*. Both Foucault and Halperin note that the term is not applied to all participants of same-sex relations and is applied to men who have sexual relations with women if their desire for sex is immoderate. And both of them, despite the fact that the term can be used of men who have sex with women, do recognize the special role that desiring to be penetrated plays in the definition of the term. Richlin, for her part, begins by recognizing that the common taboo she outlines does not refer to all participants in same-sex practices and does also allow that some men who were called *cinaedi* were so labeled as a result of having sex with women: "authors sometimes claim that a man's wife is involved with a *cinaedus* and that *cinaedi* seem to be faulted for excessive

sexiness in general" (549). But because the stereotype is importantly tied to an enjoyment of being penetrated, she insists that "overwhelmingly and explicitly, *cinaedi* are said, with disgust, to be passive homosexuals" (549). In other words, there is a broad agreement on the empirical features of the category but a disagreement on whether those features comprise a depiction of a kind of homosexuality or of a kind of generalized, immoderate sexual desire.

13. To understand the unyielding quality of the debate, we need to recognize that what is at issue in how to read the evidence is precisely the issue the evidence is supposed to solve. Boswell puts the essentialist argument in its most general terms when he compares our recognition of homosexuality in the Greek period to our recognition of Newton's laws of gravity (96). The Greeks clearly had no concept of a law of gravity but, because that law describes features of the world in which we live, regardless of human categories of knowledge, the Greeks clearly did describe the forces those laws explain. In like manner, even though the Greeks might not have had concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality, if those concepts capture real elements of the human psyche, then the activities they do describe will correspond to those concepts and exhibit their real existence. Of course the analogy pre-supposes precisely the issue: whether the concepts of hetero- and homosexuality do correspond to elements of the psyche in the same way that the laws of gravity describe certain forces in the universe. Halperin, thus, proposes, as an alternative analogy, asking whether it makes sense to describe those who work with their hands prior to capitalism as a "proletariat." (*How to do the History of Homosexuality*, 59-60). In a vague way, it makes sense to see a commonality among people in history who work with their hands and whose labor produces surplus value for those who more or less dominate them. But a proletariat exists precisely as a function of being alienated, physically unattached labor in relation to a capital-owning class and thus the term only become meaningful in a capitalist society when there is other than agrarian labor. In the same way, one can find a recognition in certain contexts of a distinction between same-sex objects of desire and alternate-sex objects of desire. But it will not get you very far in understanding how the society construes sexual relations and how people in it experience their desires and come by them to think of that distinction as indicating the real existence of a category of people that we could call homosexuals, if in fact the entire conceptual apparatus for making that distinction is absent from the society. In effect, Boswell, Richlin and critics like them, adduce the reality of the categories by pointing to elements in Roman and Greek society that could be described as showing the existence of homosexuality. Foucault, Halperin and others, similarly point to the same features as showing that the Greeks categorize sexual practices in an entirely different way. Since the only way to choose between one interpretation and another will entail presuming whether the concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality actually do operate trans-historically, it follows that pointing to those features will not resolve the question.

14. I do not mean this account of the debate to suggest a throwing up of the hands, in the manner of Stanley Fish, with the clichéd conclusion that all historical debates are ultimately matters of interpretation with no interpretation-free facts that can decide matters. My problem with such a conclusion is, in the first instance, not that it might not be the case but that, even if it is, it does not have much to say about the specific issue of writing the history of sexuality, which project would be left in the same fix that all history is in. But, second and more pertinently here, despite the above presentation of the dispute, my neophyte's reading of this historical debate leaves me entirely persuaded by the argument made by the critics who follow Dover and Foucault and more particularly by Halperin's account of it in his two books. Or, rather more specifically, I am persuaded by the accounts of the sexual categories of the Greeks and Romans to see our own as at least historically local, as hardly necessary conditions of human thought even if I am agnostic about whether or not those categories can be meaningfully superimposed on past descriptions of practices and events—whether or not such a superimposition would look like reading the physics of the past through Newtonian categories or like reading pre-industrial, feudal agrarian economies through the categories of capitalist class structure. I want to argue further that this estrangement from the categories of the present remains the real aim of

Foucault's writing (whether one calls it history or philosophy) and the more important element in them for telling us how to do the history of sexuality. This will lead finally to what I take to be the most important connection between Foucault's work and the history of sexuality aimed at supporting an antihomophobic politics, which is not the details of the history he writes but the rightness his picture of discipline has for many gay critics (in contrast to the wrongness it has had for so many liberal critics), how recognizing this rightness necessitates what I have been calling hedgerow envy on the part of many of those of us who as theorists, treat Foucault as a theorist, and why hedgerow envy may not, in this case, be a bad thing.[12]

15. To get at what I all too grandly call "the real aim of Foucault's writing," I will, in my capacity of general theorist, treat one of his more philosophical and theoretical moments, his articulation of his theory of genealogy in his reading of "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." "Genealogy," as the term that succeeded "archaeology" in Foucault's thinking, is all too frequently construed as a specific way of doing history, a new method, as archaeology arguably was. In this perspective, genealogy undoes our delusions about the meanings of institutions by pointing to their actual past affiliations, and thus exhibiting their actual discontinuities.[13] And certainly the essay starts by posing genealogy as "gray, meticulous and patiently documentary" as "demanding a precision of knowledge, a large amount of materials, and patience" (*Dits*, I, 1004). But Nietzsche would be an odd avatar to choose to embody such documentary patience and meticulousness. His *Genealogy of Morals* proposes only the sketchiest of histories and bases them on virtually no documentary evidence. What Foucault does find in Nietzsche to share is a genealogy that stands in opposition to a history that bases itself on "the metahistoric unfolding of ideal significations and vague teleologies" (1004-5). In other words, genealogy is characterized by its skepticism of teleology and origin more than by any specific documentary method or itinerary that would arrive at that end.

16. In the course of the essay that follows, Foucault continues to talk about how genealogy "will attend to the details and accidents of beginnings," how its intention will always be to see "the face of the other emerge, all masks finally fallen" (1008). In other words, genealogy, despite the essay's attack on philosophy (by which it means any belief in meaning or teleology), has a Nietzschean, philosophical expectation about what it will find through its historical researches and that expectation, as much as the researches, and determining their courses, defines it. The final pages of the essay confirm the role of this expectation in a startling claim that genealogy has three uses each of which corresponds to and recuperates by parodying or reversing one of the forms of history outlined in Nietzsche's "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (*Untimely Meditations*, 57-123). There Nietzsche describes three modes of history, each one of which can forward the needs of the present or, if engaged in without perspective or limit, obstruct those needs: monumental history, antiquarian history and critical history. To oppose monumental history, Foucault proposes instead a history that parodies beliefs, thus "de-realizing us" (1021). As against antiquarian history, which seeks to discover continuities in the past, Foucault offers a history that "systematically dissociates our identity" (1022). The final use of history sacrifices the knowing subject—"le sujet de connaissance" (1023) and this use recuperates the critical history that in Nietzsche serves the will to truth. Nietzsche's essay is itself an attack on the historicism that he sees the Germans as priding themselves on. His point with each of these forms of history is that they have value only insofar as they aid the present. Foucault's genealogy goes one step further in this attack on history as a field of knowledge. It does not present a new kind of history but undoes the knowledge claims of the old ones. Far from being a more vigorous historicism that would discover the real truth the past has to tell us, behind the illusions of an overly philosophical history, it is rather an attack on the philosophy of history that uses its researches to parody and invert the forms of history. Genealogy has the project of detaching us from ourselves; historical research is its instrument, not its end.

17. If one reads the first two volumes of *The History of Sexuality* for the genealogical theme that undoes

identity, one will find that the two positions that have influenced the subsequent debate over the history of homosexuality—that the nineteenth-century invented homosexuality as a personality, while prior to that there were merely acts of sodomy and that Greek categorizations of sexual acts cannot be understood through the categories of hetero- and homosexuality, which categories thus appear as historically local rather than universal—are actually secondary to his more central claims and so consequently is the empirical truth of them. Let us start with the first volume of the series, whose French title is *The Will to Knowledge*. Foucault makes all too clear in his introduction that will—erased from the title of the English translation—is indeed his theme:

> And finally, the essential aim will not be to determine whether these discursive productions and those effects of power lead one to formulate the truth about sex, or on the contrary falsehoods designed to conceal that truth, but rather to bring out the "will to knowledge" that serves as both their support and their instrument. (11-12)

Foucault's objection to the will to knowledge follows from his objection to the concept of man in *Order of Things* and of the discipline that enforces self-regulation through knowledge in *Discipline and Punish*. In all cases, the claim to know human essence ties individuals to the limits of the identities imposed upon them. Sexuality, constructed as a science, as it has been in the West, imposes identities on individuals. Freedom from those identities does not depend on proving that the knowledge claims of nineteenth-century scientific sexuality are false, only that they are not intellectually necessary, that lives can be conducted in their absence. Thus Foucault claims indifference to whether discursive productions and power lead to truth or falsehoods. He aims only to disengage from the productions and the power a will to knowledge that may be identified as a constraining will, regardless of the status of the knowledge it discovers.

18. This aim shapes Foucault's later influential claim, quoted above, with regard to the homosexual becoming a personage in the nineteenth century. If one attends to the modifications with which Foucault surrounds that claim, it will be clear that he does not claim that there were no such things as personality types tied to sexual desires prior to the nineteenth century but merely that it was possible under different contexts to think about sexual practices in the absence of identity concepts. One should note to start that the claim comes in a list that purports to show that what happened in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not the interdiction of sexual acts but the definition of sexual identities. The first item in the list contrasts the attempt to regulate childhood masturbation with the attempt to forbid incest. In the second instance, the aim was to eliminate all instances of the act. In the first, masturbation supported an apparatus for overseeing and regulating childhood more closely. Foucault then moves to the second example:

> This new pursuit of marginal sexualities entails an incorporation of perversities and a new specification of individuals. Sodomy—that of the old civil or canonic laws—was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was only their juridical subject. The homosexual of the nineteenth century has become a personage: a past, a history, a childhood, a character, a form of life; a morphology as well, with an indiscrete anatomy and perhaps a mysterious physiology. (42-3)[14]

Even taken in isolation, the passage does not claim that the concept of sexual identities did not exist prior to the nineteenth century, or even that prior periods did not have identity concepts that they linked to those who showed a preference for genital activity with members of their own sex. It specifies that sodomy in canonic and civil laws referred to a set of acts not to an individual; the laws did not define a subject except in the juridical sense.[15] Foucault's remark a few pages earlier makes the specification about those codes even clearer: "Up to the end of the eighteenth century, three major explicit codes—apart from customary regularities and constraints of opinion—governed sexual practices: canonical

law, the Christian pastoral, and civil law" (37). Foucault begins with the recognition that the laws defining sodomy were not the only ways European culture defined sexual practices prior to the nineteenth century. Indeed, since the heightened attention to childhood masturbation he describes in the preceding point, which participates in the same process as the nineteenth century definition of the homosexual, begins in the eighteenth century—although in other discourses than the old codes—he could hardly have thought that those codes comprehended all the cultural definitions of sexuality.[16]

19. But with these qualifications, what purpose can this statement any longer serve? Granted, homosexuality, with the precise psychological etiologies and even biological specifications with which the nineteenth century first endowed it, may be a recent construction. But if past cultures did have categories through which they classified those whose tastes ran toward one sexual practice as opposed to another, and if one of those categories contained those who preferred same-sex practices, then effectively one cannot claim that homosexuality—except as specifically defined by nineteenth century discursive practices—is a cultural construction. First one should note that, when posed the question of whether homosexuality was innate, or socially conditioned, Foucault refused to answer because "I think it's simply not useful to speak of things that are outside of my field of expertise. The question you ask does not come under my area of competence, and I don't like to speak about that which is not actually an object of my work" (*Dits*, II, 1140). In other words, Foucault does not think that his work has as a consequence the claim that homosexuality is culturally constructed. This might seem surprising if one does not consider what the passage does claim and how far that claim goes. First, Foucault wants to show that the activity of giving sexual preferences characterological ties of a kind that made them a proper object of knowledge was a nineteenth-century innovation. Since *The History of Sexuality* argues that we still live with discourses that define sexual preference as a matter of psychological identity, seeing that form of categorization as historically local is all that matters to his claim here. As long as, first, one can instance a form of categorization that does not see sex acts in terms of sexual identity—for instance sodomy as defined by the old civil and canonic laws—and second one can see the definition of homosexuality in terms of etiology, mode of living, biology, etc. as a nineteenth-century innovation (does anyone argue that these definitions of homosexuality existed prior to the nineteenth century?), then his claim holds up. And second, if that claim holds up, and we see the modern practices of sexual definition not as knowledge—or at least as merely knowledge—but as a practice of constraint, his genealogy will have achieved its end. He does not need a theory of what homosexuality is to assert that any claim as to what it is amounts to a form of constraint.[17] Nor does he need an historically accurate account of what was prior to it for the genealogically ironic Nietzschean critical history to have called into question the domain of knowledge that produced the concept of homosexuality.

20. If, when he wrote this passage, Foucault did believe that prior to the nineteenth century, culture did not construct identities out of sexual practices, he would have to have given up this position by time he wrote *The Use of Pleasure* since the very theme of that book is how the Greeks constructed their understanding of the subject, and of how they judged the choices subjects made according to their different sexual morés. He did, as we have seen, think that the Greeks thought about both sexual relations and about the basis on which ethical decisions should be made with regard to sexual relations through very different categorizations both of sexual practices and of what counts as an ethical choice or problem. But he also did argue that they thought one's sexual partners, one's ability to restrain one's sexual impulse, one's preference for activity or passivity all did derive from and thus indicate something like a character. If the *cinaedus* discussed above was not really a homosexual, he nevertheless was a personage and his quality as personage was manifest in his sexual comportment. What was manifest and how it was manifested was entirely different, but Foucault's point in contrasting how the Greeks thought about their sexual comportment was hardly that they didn't think about it at all as significant. In contrasting how they made their judgments, he makes clear that they did make judgments. Their moral reflection on sexual conduct (and, of course, not entirely sexual, since they way

they thought about it also pertained to other domains in which restraint or excess were relevant), he says "did not speak to men concerning behaviors presumably owing to a few interdictions that were universally recognized and solemnly recalled in codes, customs, and religious prescriptions. It spoke to them concerning precisely those conducts in which they were called upon to exercise their rights, their power, their authority and their liberty. . ." (23). The reflection spoke to the Greeks on a different basis and about different qualities of their personality, but it did speak to them about the significance their acts had as more than merely acts.

21. This distinction conditions Foucault's discussion of how the Greeks categorized the significance of one's sexual preferences. His contention that they did not attend to the sex of one's object choice but rather to who was active and who passive, who dominant and who submissive, as is well known, comes almost entirely from Dover's *Greek Homosexuality*.[18] But he is not particularly concerned to argue that the pederasty Dover analyzes represents all or the main forms of Greek same-sex practices. And, while he does insist that homosexuality does not accommodate how the Greeks thought about sex, that is neither the central point of his book nor even of the chapter in it on pederasty. He more or less assumes Dover's definition of pederasty but argues that what matters is not the particular shapes that set of practices took but the fact that the Greeks both problematized it and theorized it: what is historically singular is not that the Greeks found pleasure in boys, nor even that they accepted this pleasure as legitimate; it is that this acceptance of pleasure was not simple, and that it gave rise to a whole cultural elaboration. In broad terms, what is important to grasp here is not why the Greeks had a fondness for boys but why they had a "pederasty"; that is, why they elaborated a courtship practice, a moral reflection, and—as we shall see—a philosophical asceticism around that fondness. (214)[19]

22. Foucault means to show the different ways the Greeks constructed the subject, what kinds of choices made one one kind of subject rather than another, and accordingly what kind of choices manifested who one was. Thus the significance of Greek pederasty was not that it does not correspond to our cultural division of homosexual from heterosexual (though it does not) but that the various problems it caused the culture and the forms of self-control those problems led to created an alternative way of constructing one's identity.

23. If there is a shift in Foucault's thinking between the first and second volume of the history of sexuality in that the first volume—in this sense still following upon *Discipline and Punish* and even *Order of Things*—tries to depict forms of thought without the concept of subjectivity or identity while the second and third volumes try instead to depict alternative means of constructing subjectivity, alternative materials out of which it might be built, there is no shift in the motive behind the depictions. *The Use of Pleasure* is not, as some of its first critics oddly seemed to think, a paean to the Greek form of subjectivity as a positive alternative to our own.[20] Foucault's description of the shift that took place between *The Will to Knowledge* and *The Use of Pleasure* makes clear that his goal was to depict the modern concept of subjectivity as historically local by showing alternative constructions of the concept:

> . . . it seemed to me that one could not very well analyze the formation and development of the experience of sexuality from the eighteenth century onward, without doing a historical and critical study dealing with desire and the desiring subject. In other words, without undertaking a "genealogy." This does not mean that I proposed to write a history of the successive conceptions of desire, of concupiscence, or of libido, but rather to analyze the practices by which individuals were led to focus their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize, and acknowledge themselves as subjects of desire, bringing into play between themselves and themselves a certain relationship that allows them to discover, in desire, the truth of their being, be it natural or fallen. In short, with this genealogy the idea was to investigate how individuals were led to practice, on themselves, and on others, a

> hermeneutics of desire, hermeneutics of which their sexual behavior was doubtless the occasion, but certainly not the exclusive domain. Thus, in order to understand how the modern individual could experienced himself as a subject of a "sexuality," it was essential first to determine how, for centuries, Western man had been brought to recognize himself as a subject of desire. (5-6)

In the first volume of the history of sexuality, Foucault meant to give a limit to sexuality as a domain of knowledge by showing its inauguration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite what he says here, for that purpose, beginning with that field of knowledge's pre-history in Christian confession would have been sufficient. The goal of the genealogy, which was still, as we shall see, just to think differently, led him to decide that historicizing the subject meant not a pre-history in which we were blessedly free of thinking of ourselves as subjects but a history of different kinds of subjectivities. This would not be a history of successive conceptions of desire. Such a history, delineating a line of development would not be a genealogy, which, as we have seen, must undo notions of essence and end by undoing notions of development. Instead, it analyzes different practices that different periods thought led to a knowledge of the truth of being since, if the practices are sufficiently disparate, the connection between our own practices and their goal in that knowledge will seem equally tenuous.

24. I have silently assumed Foucault's earlier definition of "genealogy" in construing the term in this passage, firstly because nothing in the passage otherwise explicates the term. It cannot be true that, if one's subject-matter is desire and the desiring subject, the only kind of history one could write would be a genealogy. Foucault might not approve of other ways of writing such a history, but one could write one nevertheless. Nor does telling us that by genealogy he means analyzing practices rather than successive conceptions by itself tell us why he calls that alternative a genealogy. But second, his description of the genre of the work he is now engaged in makes clear its connection to the Nietzschean discussion of that term in the earlier essay:

> The studies that follow, like the others I have done previously, are studies of "history" by reason of the domain they deal with and the references they appeal to; but they are not the work of a "historian."…Considered from the standpoint of their "pragmatics," they are the record of a long and tentative exercise that needed to be revised and corrected again and again. It was a philosophical exercise. The object was to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently. (9)

The exercise is philosophical because the object is not the history it depicts but the effort to think outside the limits of one's own presumptions. This is of course the classic effort of philosophy since at least the Enlightenment. The goal of thinking differently as its own end, though, makes the exercise genealogical inasmuch as genealogy, as Foucault sees its version of critical history, destroys the subject of knowledge—the subject that knowledge produces (*Dits*, I, 1024). From this perspective, Foucault's historical depictions in and of themselves cannot tell us much about how to do the history of sexuality since neither his aim nor his method are historical. Even the claims he makes in referring to history must be carefully qualified and placed within context to be maintained as historical. In particular, it is hard to imagine him getting very exercised by questions of how to refer to same-sex practices prior to the nineteenth-century definition of homosexuality. But this hardly means that the uses historians of sexuality and homosexuality make of his work and of the most frequently cited claims are somehow actually improper or unFoucauldian. Rather it means that Foucault tells us of the propriety of having a philosophical object in one's historical perspective. And this brings us back to hedgerow history.

25. Hedgerow envy, that wonderfully inauthentic desire to have had a valuable experience without the trouble of actually having experienced it, has the feature, in addition to its inauthenticity, of the

distance of safeness. But from distance and inauthenticity we can, I think, reconstruct a connection between Foucault's aims and the features of his works that have led to so much discussion. To do so, I will now turn to what I described at the outset as the third level of Foucault's influence at least on gay historians of homosexuality: while Foucault's analysis of power and particular its skepticism about liberation has seemed either quietist or irrationally anarchist to many straight liberal critics (though not all of them), it has seemed strangely right (strangely, of course only to those who don't share the sense of the rightness) to many gay critics and activists (though not all of them). Halperin offers numbers of reasons for this sense that Foucault's position on power just does describe the way things work and how one can work with that situation. Two seem to me particularly pertinent. One, he says, is the experience of the closet, whereby being in it, while that is hardly freedom, still allows a latitude of action that being out does not and coming out hardly amounts to emerging "from a state of servitude into a state of untrammeled liberty" (*Saint Foucault*, 29-30).[21] Second, he notes, that Foucault's sense of the workings of power and resistance seem particularly pertinent to the experience of confronting homophobia, with all of its contradictory resources (31). Although he does not discuss it here, claiming liberation on the basis of an identity can hardly seem promising to gays since the first homosexual liberation movement in the nineteenth century in fact provided the material for homophobic stereotypes that are still with us (Halperin, *One Hundred Years*, 52). On the other hand, to the extent that a constructivist position can be transformed into a position that gayness is a "free" choice, it can be the grounds for arguing that the choice ought not to be made (Sedgwick, 41). Such double-binds make very attractive the idea that one should act precisely without theories of origin or of pure states outside of power.

26. Now this connection between the politics of *The History of Sexuality* and at least gay politics may seem in both good and bad ways the very opposite of both the distance and the inauthenticity of hedgerow envy. Imagine, for instance, how a straight critic who finds Foucault quietist or anarchist might criticize the position (it is, alas, only too easy if you try). First, granting the appropriateness of Foucault's analysis to the position within which gays who assent to his argument see themselves, one ought not to generalize too quickly from the contingencies of one's own position to a theory of power and resistance in general. If Foucault's critics are correct in arguing that he does not offer a position from which to resist power coherently and effectively, if power is inherently negative and the only ethical choice is to step outside it, then, even given all the ways those from outside the gay perspective will tend to distort it and not see its particularities, it will remain theoretically true that gays' sense of their own politics will still contain within it some version of a position of freedom and their politics could be recuperated on that basis to look like a liberal theory of individual liberty.[22] Second, to the extent that the kind of history of homosexuality Halperin, for instance, writes shares this politics as its motivating force—and Foucault's histories, after all, certainly did have as their motivating force a philosophy of questioning value-free original positions and saw as a particular instance of this position gay politics, as we have seen in some of his statements in interviews—then that suggests that those histories will be distorted by their political presumptions. And finally, to the extent that the histories following upon Foucault imagine working out those politics within the very limited position of arguing a couple of specific Foucauldian claims as the basis for a history of homosexuality when his aims and his themes were much larger, then even despite their sympathy with Foucault's basic apprehension of power, these historians will even be improperly limiting their own source.

27. Controversies of this sort, between the testimonies of those in a certain subject position and those who, from outside that position, appeal to values of objectivity, which values are then contested on the basis that objectivity is its own kind of subject position, never have satisfactory outcomes, never go anywhere new. I do not want to play ventriloquist, to offer a justification for the application of Foucault to doing the history of sexuality based on Halperin's perception of the rightness of his description of power. Not sharing the subject-position being attacked, pretending to defend it from within would amount to the kind of critical cross-dressing Elaine Showalter criticized some years back.[23] Instead, I

want to suggest that the problem with the straight objectivist position articulated above is not that it sacrifices the values of authenticity for those of a false distance, but that it is insufficiently distanced and insufficiently inauthentic. The insufficiency in the distance of the positions outlined in the prior paragraph is easy enough to articulate. Since all of three of those arguments fault Halperin's description of gay experience for being insufficiently objective, they amount to an attack on the place from which that description comes rather than an analysis of either Foucault's theory of power and knowledge or of what it means to the claim that ethical positions must be based on at least the concept of a power-free state, a state moreover that one group within our society finds literally meaningless for their experience of how they must operate politically. Given that the aim of Foucault's project is to get us outside of ourselves, the refusal to engage in the project because of our sense—even if accurate—that the arguments of some of those who have been influenced by him are insufficiently distanced amounts to a refusal to engage in that project of distancing for merely formal reasons. Foucault's aim of getting us to lose our fondness for ourselves, to free thought from what it silently thinks, is so completely in line with Enlightenment ideals that to the extent that his "histories" do effect that end, one would think that their philosophical value would far exceed any details of historical inaccuracy or accidents of political implication. With regard to his theory of power and his theory of resistance, if the ideal of liberation cannot work for even one group, then its value for other groups can only be local, not a universal ideal. So again, one would think that liberal universalism would compel an attempt to make sense of its own provinciality rather than worry the source of the information that indicates that provinciality.

28. But does such a defense really do Foucault justice? Doesn't it make him "philosophical" at the cost of robbing him of his political force? After all, these most general theoretical statements of Foucault on which I am fixing could be so readily detachable from one history and affixed to another that making a case for his writing at that level may take from it the vital sting of its more specific political claims. Once again, an effete Arnoldian holds up the pouncet box of theory while serious forms of oppression surround us. At the very least, one might accuse my argument of wanting the kick of political arguments while preserving itself from the dangers they incur by remaining safely within the walls of indifferent theory and so of enacting the inauthenticity of hedgerow envy.

29. But inauthenticity is not really such a bad state for a Foucauldian. It allows that self-crafting that was the ethical aim of his history of the Greek *Use of Pleasure*. Here, for instance, Foucault discusses Sartre, authenticity and the art of self-creation:

> From a theoretical point of view, I think that Sartre set aside the idea of the self as something that is given to us, but, thanks to the moral concept of authenticity, he fell back on the idea that one must be oneself and truly oneself. In my view, the only practical and acceptable consequence of what Sartre has said entails linking his theoretical discovery to creative practice and not to the idea of authenticity. I think there is only one possible way to go from the idea that the self is not given in advance: we must make works of art of ourselves. (*Dits*, II, 1211)

Certainly Foucault had a deep skepticism for the universal intellectual. But he was equally skeptical of claims of authenticity and propriety, of arguments that take their value from subject positions. His attack on the concept of sexuality as a form of power that took part of its force from the claim to be a universal knowledge was in the service of freeing individuals from being objects of knowledge. Since a concept of universal freedom or a concept of authentic identity simply re-introduces the constraints he meant to avoid, the inauthenticity of an artificial theoretical self-distancing can claim a tie—a tenuous and inauthentic one to be sure—to the history of sexuality and the historical provinciality Foucault outlined. This inauthenticity cannot interdict the deployment of identity as a political tool or the statements by a group of Foucault's specific pertinence to their situation, nor should it want to. It

certainly cannot fault subsequent histories of sexuality for fixing on details of Foucault's theories because of their political effectiveness. But it can demand of critics who defend objective distance that they carry that criterion to its logical if artificial and self-undercutting end.

30. Inauthenticity has one trait in common with Nietzschean genealogy: they are both motivated by the will to knowledge and they each wind up, precisely because of that motivation, worrying the will rather than extending the knowledge. Foucault's liberal critics frequently complain that his theories paralyze political resistance. His answer is relevant here:

> Who is paralyzed? Do you believe that what I've written on the history of psychiatry has paralyzed those who for some time experienced unease with regard to the institution? And to see what has happened in and around prisons, I don't think that the effect of paralysis is very obvious. . . . On the other hand, it is true that a certain number of people—for instance those who work within the institution of prison, which is not quite being in prison —must not be able to find in my books advice or prescriptions that allow them to know "what to do." (*Dits*, II, 850-1)

I think this statement can be applied to the supposed problem of what kinds of consequences his history of sexuality has. His work does not seem to block the activities of those it would support. It may block the discourse of those on the outside looking in from thinking they can act from an outside free of power, but it also tells us what the value of that position "outside" really is.

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Notes

[1] The essay usually cited is "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" ("What is an Author?"). It really argues less against considerations of authorship than it posits an historicist explanation of a contemporary critical antagonism to that concept that predates the essay: "In this indifference [to who speaks], I think one must recognize one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing. I say 'ethical' because this indifference is not so much an aspect of the manner in which one speaks or writes; it is rather a sort of immanent rule, constantly repeated, never completely applied. . . ." (*Dits*, I, 820). I will cite Foucault's books from their English translations, emending where I think necessary. I translate his essays and interviews from the collection *Dits et Ecrits* since some remain untranslated and the translations are widely scattered.
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[2] Roger Chartier opens an essay that really is not at all biographical criticism by questioning the validity of the concepts "Foucault" and "Foucault's work" in the light of "What is an Author?" (167-68). But, although Foucault certainly did not want only to explain texts by reference to the intentions of their authors, or to privilege the works of an author as their only explanatory context, even the most summary reading of his works, from first to last, will show that they are hardly barren of references to authors and to their works. While it is surely true that to do a Foucauldian history in which his texts function as evidence or document, one would have to do more than consider them as "works" of a specific author, that hardly entails that one can never consider them in this way. Until we can look at "What is an Author?" as about the problem of how the categories through which we see texts determine their histories and not as about whether to use the word "author," it bids fair to become a shibboleth.
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[3] Halperin offers a long evaluation of Miller's work in *Saint Foucault* (162-82). Alexander Nehamas's admiring evaluation of the late works of Foucault as exemplifying what he takes to be an *Art of Living* has a more admiring take on Miller, but it is hard to see how we need Miller's book to get Nehamas's reading, or indeed that we need any knowledge of Foucault's life. Nehamas subjects Socrates to a far more telling reading of the same kind with no evidence beyond Plato and Xenophon, which is to say, as he recognizes, no evidence at all of any Socrates behind those texts. Halperin's book is perhaps the best evidence of my claim that Foucault's life doesn't get you anywhere in reading his work. Halperin is a sympathetic and acute reader of Foucault. His critiques of other biographers are telling and informative. His chapter on Foucault's politics has influenced my argument here. But despite the book's subtitle, "Toward a Gay Hagiography," any such hagiography is simply invisible in the book. After having taken apart the three current biographies of Foucault, he offers no alternative of his own. Even a fairly unexceptionable claim of the kind that Robert A. Nye makes that one can best understand Foucault's theories of sexuality and homosexuality by looking at the context of his experience of specifically French attitudes toward homosexuality in the mid-twentieth century during which he formulated his thought, may be instructive only if one does not take its limits too far. Nye suggests that we can only understand Foucault's thinking if we do not "collapse together national, cultural, and temporal boundaries" (237). But if this is to suggest that his theories are only significant for France in the middle of the twentieth century, we would have come to understand Foucault only at the cost of making him an historical curiosity.
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[4] Since gai pied (gay foot) is a homonym in French for guêpier, which is either a wasp-nest or a trap, the journal's title may be taken, in the manner of the double-entendre of the term "queer studies," as announcing political aims that have effects beyond a gay audience.
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[5] "Se déprendre de soi-même" means not just to get free of oneself but to lose one's fondness for oneself, a

more telling figure of speech for the grip Foucault wants to loosen here.
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[6] Richard Rorty is a particular case in point. His essays on Foucault have always seemed more dismissive than is usual of his treatment of Continental critics, even those with whom he is not in much agreement. His review article of Miller's *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, in which he characterizes the American reaction (by which he means his own liberal reaction) to S/M as "as long as nobody gets damaged, why not" and the reaction to the transformation of consciousness achieved by S/M as wondering if it could be achieved comfortably, perhaps by a pill, thus detaching it from Foucault's larger political program, is a case in point (63). While I think his ethical position is, if uninteresting, unexceptionable enough, his refusal to confront the political connection Foucault makes except with such bland dismissiveness is insufficient precisely because uninteresting. Rorty is at fault here, though, not because he can't comprehend Foucault's position but because he refuses to do the intellectual work that would enable him to.
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[7] Judith Butler, in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," explicitly uses the Derridean model of "The Double-Session" to argue that heterosexual identity, rather than being the norm parodies homosexual roles that themselves are criticized for imitating heterosexual roles (313-314). Eve Sedgwick's work, most importantly *Between Men* and *Epistemology of the Closet* has had the project of articulating the centrality of the definition of homosexuality, and consequently of heterosexuality in the formation of modern culture. One may take as a sample statement, her argument that "The special centrality of homophobic oppression in the twentieth century, I will be arguing, has resulted from its inextricability from the question of knowledge and the processes of knowing in modern Western culture at large" (*Epistemology*, 34-5). And Michael Warner maps out the role of this argument in the way Queer Studies means, by its construction of the concept of heteronormativity precisely to terminate that states existence as a norm in his "Introduction" to *Fear of a Queer Planet* (vii-xxxi). It should be evident that this footnote amounts to a neophyte's overview of a field. If one couples this naiveté with what I hope will be an evident admiration for the way these critics and others like them have given Foucauldian and Derridean analysis telling political edge, it will be clearer why I have described at least my position with regard to it as hedgerow envy.
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[8] Foucault, it should be pointed out, did not grant that sex was any more a natural given than sexuality (*History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (156-7). Whether he would grant a natural givenness to sex as a mode of reproduction common to most forms of life or whether he would see such categorization as one of the features that separate organicist biology from classical natural science (following the argument of *The Order of Things*), however, does not have material effect on the history Halperin wants to write. I bring it up, though, as a reminder of what will become more important to my argument, that Foucault's arguments about sexuality always take place in a much larger philosophico-historical context.
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[9] Interestingly, Foucault, in two interviews (one of which was also printed in the same number of *Salmagundi* from which I have drawn Boswell's claim that homosexuality must be an aspect of the human psyche for a gay history to exist), claims that Boswell does not believe that homosexuality is a historical constant (*Dits*, II, 1111 and II, 1139-40). Foucault's ability to interpret Boswell into agreement with him indicates how porous this debate may become.
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[10] Halperin, of course, means his history to serve a political end, so there is neither surprise nor problem with these statements of those ends. But even K.J. Dover's groundbreaking *Greek Homosexuality* begins with a statement about an attitude necessary for such an historian to have to see evidence accurately that also

amounts to an ethical claim: "No argument which purports to show that homosexuality in general is natural or unnatural, healthy or morbid, legal or illegal, in conformity with God's will or contrary to it, tells me whether any particular homosexual act is morally right or morally wrong. I am fortunate in not experiencing moral shock or disgust at any genital act whatsoever, provided that it is welcome and agreeable to all the participants…" (viii). No one reading Dover's book, I think, would doubt the complete seriousness with which it deals with a vast array of historical evidence. But even one who reads it in agreement with an ethical view that seems to me as unexceptionable as it is unexciting cannot fail to see how much that view needed to be in place for him to analyze his evidence in the way he did.
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[11] Halperin argues out Foucault's remarks here in considerably more detail (*How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 32-38.
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[12] Halperin criticizes the writing of theorists on Foucault for requiring him to have a theory (*How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 44), and, while I do not require him to have a theory of sexuality, I certainly do write about him as if he has theories of various kinds. Halperin here has a little of the tone of Frederic Harrison criticizing Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* for being an irresponsible literary type, holding up the pouncet box of culture while there was serious political work to be done (233). And I am enough of a Victorian aesthete in my theorizing to bear the accusation all too comfortably.
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[13] See for instance H.D. Harootunian, "Foucault, Genealogy, History," p. 122. Han also argues that genealogy "is the only approach that can make this will to truth apear, complete with all its history and ramifications" (7).
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[14] I have modified the translation here to stress that Foucault limits his statement about sodomy to the juridical codes he lists. I also think that "only their juridical subject" means "only their subject juridically." The distinction comes out more in the French, which names the person who commits the crime as their author (not really idiomatic in English) rather than their perpetrator.
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[15] This qualification hardly makes Foucault's claim a tautology. As Janet E. Halley argues, contemporary attempts to regulate homosexuality legally are often rendered incoherent by the current incoherence of sodomy as a legal concept. Thus the fact that same sex genital activity was forbidden under the different concept of sodomy does tell us something about how those codes considered the acts they were forbidding.
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[16] Halperin anticipates much of my argument here (*How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 27-32) though with importantly different emphases since he does want to preserve a distinction between noticing sexual preferences and defining sexual orientations as fixed and a matter of identity. I do not want to dispute that distinction as much as I want to suggest that one doesn't need such refinements in historical specification to deal with Foucault's claim.
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[17] Sedgwick's gesture of refusing to take a part in the debate between constructivists and essentialists but rather to analyze the debate itself skeptically in such a way as to free gays from the consequences of either position is I think homologous to the logic of Foucault's aim here (*Epistemology*, 91).
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[18] Halperin, though, in recognizing Dover's founding importance, also notes the ways in which the book does not always state clearly its thesis, but teases it out of empirical comment (*One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 5) so the clearer and more polemically directed statements of that thesis by Foucault and others who followed upon Dover must also be taken as a refinement of his position. Dover also accepted that homosexuality, defined as "the genus definable by the sex of the person participating (in reality or in fantasy) in action leading towards genital orgasm" does comprehend Greek pederasty (quoted in *One Hundred Years*, 164). Although Halperin says he can assent to this stripped-down formal definition of homosexuality as capable of being used to refer to sexual practices prior to the nineteenth century, he may be giving away more than he means to. While one can use the term in that way, it would be unclear what value it would have to categorize sexual practices in a culture contrary to the way that they do unless one presumes that that categorization is not merely a formal one but one that actually does capture the relevant events in a superior way.
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[19] Cohen and Saller also note that Foucault's innovation upon Dover was in his discussion of how the Greeks problematized pederasty (39).
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[20] For an example of this kind of response, see Wolin.
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[21] Although he generously cites Sedgwick elsewhere, Halperin oddly does not cite her here, although *Epistemology of the Closet* (particularly 67-90) seems the inescapable reference here in the way it works out all the ambiguities of being in and out of the closet in such a way as to make coming out seem hardly an unproblematic stepping out into freedom.
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[22] Thus Habermas famously accuses Foucault of cryptonormativism (382-386), and the accusation would be transferable to gays, with little change in argument, who assent to his position. Nor should the animus of the term "cryptonormativism" hide the seriousness of Habermas's claim for the necessity of conceptualizing a power-free position.
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[23] To the extent that cross-dressing is both an openly recognized masquerade and—at least in Showalter's metaphor—an attempt to appropriate an external subject-position, it may be that it is not a bad liberal goal since it at least recognizes the carnivalesque side of the belief that one can understand all positions as if from the inside.
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

Framing Romantic Dress: Mary Robinson, Princess Caroline and the Sex/Text

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Costuming the female body creates a permeable space for identity play. During the Romantic Period women who were accustomed to public appearances used the semiotic play provided by deliberate dress choices to create public interpretions of their legible bodies. Mary Robinson and Princess Caroline provide two models for how productive such performative practices might be. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. This essay examines the ways in which two women whose social careers frame the Romantic period used dress in the assumption that costuming the sexual body could purposefully define social and political identity.[1] Neither Mary Robinson nor Princess Caroline aimed for sexual liberation so much as for less restraint on their gendered social destiny and participation in the public sphere. In an age not yet regulated by the fashion industry, but characterized by a rapidity in shifting trends and fashion experimentation, it was possible for women to costume as a means of continually renewed attempts at self-definition. I argue that the extent to which these two particular women succeeded or failed in achieving the identities they toyed with was, if undermined by the predetermined gendering of media interpretation and presentation of both women for visual consumption, nevertheless productive for both women of unusual freedom from self-regulating social checks for brief periods—Mary Robinson during her heyday as the Prince's mistress, and Princess Caroline while living in "exile" both at Blackheath and in Europe. Granted, both women's attempt to use femininity rather than subvert it—to manipulate flirtatious play to attract the male gaze—backfired dramatically when they tried to control the gaze's interpretive direction. Unlike male contemporaries such as Beau Brummell and Lord Byron, who more successfully played dress off a defined sexual identity by staging views that guided the interpretive process—so successfully that each man found their fashioned role inescapable—Robinson and Princess Caroline were unable to completely manage or confine their media image. Rather than redefine identity as style as Brummell and Byron did, Robinson and Caroline employed gendered expectations of indecorous feminine behavior to straddle the divide between woman as décor and woman as actant by toying with the doubling nature of revealing fabrics, suggestive accoutrements, or outlandish getups. Although these women's attempt to use materiality to translate visual expression into a more powerful discourse was more innovative in its ends than the dandy's, the means was too aligned with femininity and consumption to be truly freeing. Rather than establishing a new behavioral style identified with dress as did Brummell, or a poetic style equally identified with dress as did Byron, Robinson and Caroline played into rather than off of interpretive norms that associated loose dress with loose politics, and both with lax morals that had no place in the public eye. Yet their exploits periodically provided Robinson and Caroline with freedom from the unrelenting self-constraints endured by other women playing queenly roles, such as Queen Charlotte and Sarah Siddons, who submitted to such rigor in order not to be negatively stereotyped as ambitious or unlicensed women. Although Tory cartoonists used these same stereotypes to indict Robinson and Caroline, and even liberal Whigs perceived both women through such models, each woman was also able to influence public perception of herself so as to destabilize such constraints.

2. A flirtatious relation to the dress code, aided by the availability of the newer, body-revealing imported fabrics such as thin silks, lawns and muslins[2] , and of rapidly shifting trends that made immediate use of imported materials and motifs for decorative touches and accessories, was as I see it a redressing of

ancien régime fashion play, considered by this time a corrupt use of costume, and associated with masquerade and disguise.[3] Yet by flirting with sentimental conceptions of female character, both Robinson and Caroline found themselves falling out of romance fantasy (Prince's mistress, Prince's bride) into the "realism" of the sentimental domestic novel (tightly drawn sexual identity). This was a bourgeois realism, but also a social one, and if George could practice aristocratic privilege and escape intact through fashionable dalliance and excess, the women related to him could not. His sisters were kept under tight rein by their royal parents, his mother practiced strict surveillance of social codes, and his mistresses from Maria Fitzherbert on heeded the proprieties as appropriate. If Robinson and Caroline gained periods of fantasy-fueled freedom from class and gender constraints, their more frequent falls into the penalizing realities of sentimentalism, realities determined increasingly by bourgeois conceptions of female sexual obedience, were necessitated by their refusal to stop playing the coquette in public.

3. Furthermore, these two women's potential to be undone was strengthened by their understanding of themselves, and their self-expressions in their autobiographical writings, as textual bodies as well as linguistic agents.[4] They both used self-expression to create more flexibility in the tension between the roles they were expected to inhabit and their practice of identity, yet their reliance on genre markers created sexual pitfalls as much as their flirtation with social codes provided liberation. Both Robinson and Caroline interpreted themselves as sentimental heroines whose romances were deliberately unraveled, like the threads of one's dress, by the animosity that inhabits the corridors of sentimental realist fiction, thus exposing the female personage as a vulnerable body. Such fantasies at once exploited feelings of victimization, and liberated both women from reality checks, as they interpolated textual selves into public space. This self-narrativizing—staging the self through dress as much as through public or highly publicized bodily acts—captured the popular imagination in ways that extended both women's public presence beyond expectation. Both women materially armored themselves by costuming for public consumption, while defending their honor to the public and in their memoirs through various textual strategies that revised their self-liberating social transgressions. The various scandals each woman experienced through her association with the Prince of Wales had lasting social ramifications, causing emotional distress exacerbated by associated financial insecurity, an increasingly oppositional politics, and debilitating bodily symptoms. Indeed, both Robinson's paralysis and Caroline's intestinal disorders are readable as excessive responses to gender codes that could not be refashioned.

I. The Sentimental Heroine

4. Mary Robinson begins her *Memoirs* as a gothic novel: "At the period when the ancient city of Bristol was besieged by Fairfax's army . . . a great part of the venerable minster was destroyed by the cannonading before Prince Rupert surrendered to the enemy; and the beautiful Gothic structure, which at this moment fills the contemplative mind with melancholy awe, was reduced to . . . [half ruin;] a monastery . . . which fell before the attacks of the enemy, and became a part of the ruin, which never was repaired or re-raised to its former Gothic splendours." It was here that the house, "partly of simple, and partly of modern architecture" was built:

> A spot more calculated to inspire the soul with mournful meditation can scarcely be found amidst the monuments of antiquity. In this venerable mansion there was one chamber whose dismal and singular construction left no doubt of its having been a part of the original monastery. It was supported by the mouldering arches of the cloisters, dark, Gothic, and opening on the minster sanctuary, not only by casement windows that shed a dim mid-day gloom, but by a narrow winding staircase, at the foot of which an iron-spiked door led to the long gloomy path of cloistered solitude. . . .In this awe-inspiring habitation, which I shall henceforth denominate the Minster House, during a tempestuous night, on

> the 27th of November, 1758, I first opened my eyes to this world of duplicity and sorrow. (1-2)

It is perhaps no accident Robinson sees herself destined to be a gothic heroine. Gothic heroines wear demur dress stuffs with well-wrapped bosoms and necks, but as every reader knows the villain or ghost prefers bedchambers at midnight when the nightgown and other forms of undress are the rule, and when a heroine fleeing barefoot through crypts will be most titillating for the sense-heightened voyeur. As Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* revealed, the underside of the sentimental realist novel was its gothic attributes. Indeed, Clarissa Harlowe is imprisoned for her desirability as a possessible body (she uses a vigilant full dress for her only real defense), and as such she represents the over-determined value of things in a bourgeois materialism that counts unmarried bodies for their exchange value. Women's mastery of fashion and the material intertext of dress and body signaled the extent and extension of that value. Plumage could stand in for coinage, a social fact Robinson would exploit to the hilt. Female bodies in particular are metonymically read through their accessories as a full package that can be "taken." Walpole's prince, Manfred, will take Isabella, his son's betrothed, in order to reproduce his line and thus keep his estate. Isabella will be imprisoned, raped, married, and otherwise bodily trapped to ensure the generation of a body-estate thing—an heir. The story of this possessibility provides fodder for both domestic novels and the sentimental underpinnings of gothic narratives; it is also the stuff of real life. Mary Robinson was married for reasons similar to Manfred's incestuous logic—safeguarding property or getting it into the family line. Thomas Robinson, a non-heir because illegitimate and thus outside the body-estate reproductive scheme, married Mary Darby in the hopes that her beauty, middle-class status, and the respectability that marriage represents, would persuade his disowning father to reposition him in the family heritage. Mary and her mother agreed to the marriage because Mary had learned, through shifting cultural expectations as well as her boarding school education, to view marriage sentimentally as a companionate arrangement between two affectionate partners rather than a business arrangement (as the Darbys' marriage perhaps was, her father deserting the family to conduct business and love elsewhere).[5] In Mary's most formative school experience with the extraordinary but disappointed and alcoholic Mrs. Lorrington, Mary read studiously, and "it was my lot to be her particular favourite. She always, out of school, called me her little friend, and made no scruple of conversing with me (sometimes half the night, for I slept in her chamber), on domestic and confidential affairs." The somewhat lesbian [6] overtones of this situation are associated with strong female role-modeling, reaching beyond educative norms, and composing verses: Mrs. Lorrington "frequently read to me after school hours, and I to her; I sometimes indulged my fancy in writing verses. . .love was the theme of my poetical phantasies" (*Memoirs* 22-24). It is an associative complex that returns in Robinson's late autobiographical sonnet-cycle, *Sappho and Phaon* (1796), in which the expression of female sentiment fuels the fantasy of desiring textual bodies beyond the margins of propriety. Sappho, of course, wears the body-draping Grecian shifts and tunics self-consciously present in the poem's sonnets as markers of her sexuality, availability, and desire. The scene of women writing poetry was associated with nighttime journal confessions and night dress/undress; Sappho's robes correspond to the young Mary's fanciful verses and female companionship "after school hours," as a kind of imaginative dishabille, a relaxing of proper norms. And the contemporary reader would have recalled Robinson's public appearances in muslins and silks as a sex goddess, a woman of infinite desire and desirability, in the staging of Sappho's love. Yet, as much as Robinson's preface to *Sappho and Phaon* attempts to redefine Grecian female sexuality to overwrite "lesbian" into acceptable female friendship, the scandalous punning on "finger twirlers" associated with Marie Antionette and ancien régime decadence could not be forestalled, nor might Robinson entirely want to lose that titillating aspect of her textual marketability.[7]

5. When Thomas Robinson's familial scheme failed, he readjusted the male audience for what was publicly thought of as pimping Mary, or at least a lucrative idea of her as his wife, from his father to another kind of potential "purchaser," his rakish London friends. (While attempting to "sell" Mary first

to Lord Lyttelton, and then the more interesting George "Fighting" Fitzgerald, he simultaneously entertained his own paramour.) Mary is thus available when George, Prince of Wales, falls in love with her in an act of imaginative seeing, while watching her perform the demur ingénue role of Perdita in a 1779 command performance of *The Winter's Tale*. He "becomes" Florizel and takes the slightly older Robinson as his mistress for a single year, a year that would determine her career for the rest of her life. Robinson is in a single vision cast as both a scripted body, whose fancy dress and role become her persona for the prince, and a textualist who learns to write her own life and public character, and reproduce this body-text enactment on various public stages whether social or textual. Through the prince's desirous sighting, Mary's body-estate value has been transformed into a body-text one, and she will ever after have a slippery relation to financial security, for his desire has taken her out of the circulatory schema of female propriety and property transferal. She will also have a slippery relation to self-constructing identities that attempt to redirect desire.

6. Caroline of Brunswick can likewise be seen to fall victim to sentimental realism while fantasizing her heroine identity. Unlike Mary Robinson, she did not marry young and resisted parental pressure to wed a number of eligible European candidates, giving so little reason for her refusals that her parents put them down to a waywardness of character and stubbornness of mind.[8] Both qualities are ones Mary Robinson either veiled (at least early on) or used to particular effect, as when she heroically (by her account) resisted her husband's friends' propositions and stubbornly clung to her wifely chastity. Caroline finally agreed, enthusiastically, to wed her cousin George, the right man, the man destined for her through lineage and property: her prince had come. Her expectations, expressively revealed in her lack of preparations for her move to England, show a young woman who had already fallen in love through her fiancé's portrait and who expected to be loved by this ideal man for the ideal heroine she was. George, hoping to re-install himself in his father's and Parliament's favor, both of which were to lead to a substantially increased annual allowance that he desperately needed to pay his increasing debts for purchased goods, agreed to the marriage in the self-blinding belief that the Caroline portrayed in her miniature would be beautiful enough to make him forget his beloved, Maria Fitzherbert, or his current mistress, Lady Jersey. Caroline should have been forewarned, however; her own sister Augusta was victim to a gothically brutal marriage, from which she gained sanctuary with Catherine of Russia but lost her children in doing so. The gothic shoe (or in Walpole's version, the giant helmet which becomes a useful prison) descends on Caroline at her first meeting with George, who on embracing her said, "Harris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy," and drowned his disgust so well he was drunk throughout their wedding ceremony. According to Caroline, he"passed the greatest part of his bridal night under the grate, where he fell" (qtd. in Fraser 54, 62). He cohabited with Caroline long enough to get her pregnant while insisting that his mistress, the ambitious Lady Frances Jersey, be Caroline's head lady in waiting, which allowed her to participate in the "Carlton House system" (along with, as Caroline later told Lord Minto, George's "blackguard companions. . . [who] were constantly drunk and filthy, sleeping and snoring in boots on the sofa" [qtd. in Fraser 166]). Then in true gothic style he essentially kicked Caroline of his house. Like Mary Robinson, George's desirous sighting—this time, however, based on her property-estate value as an heir-producer—also creates for Caroline, like Robinson, a financially insecure future that rescripts her from sentimental beloved to gothically disowned wife. She acquires the need to revalue her body in public for the enlargement of her social bonds. This is nevertheless textually valuable, a role to flirt with. Like Hippolita, the wife Manfred hopes to divorce in order to ensure that Otranto remains his, Caroline is in George's eye expensive and expendable. Pursued by his agents for the rest of her life to determine her as unfit mother and wife, he wished to establish her as an unnecessary expense on the privy purse (in her last years her annual allowance was to have been £50,000, raised from £35,000), to be cloistered outside the royal habitus and rendered invisible (the destiny of Hippolita and all unwanted women). She used his manipulations to gain her own residence, determine her own ladies in waiting, and compose her own social circles. Playing on her victimhood, she believed that the nightly dinners and parties she hosted created the liberating space in which to shift from the naïve to the sexual and back to the chaste wife, and despite

disgusting her guests and cycling through acquaintances as a result, she successfully conducted numerous affairs without being caught. When George and Maria Fitzherbert sought custody of a young ward, Caroline pretended to be pregnant in order to gain her own "child," in fact the legally adopted Willy Austin (it was his legitimacy that was at stake in George's "Delicate Investigation" into Caroline's misdemeanors). And when Caroline insisted on being seen both at her own residence and in public independent of him, George was outraged. His undesiring sighting of her body achieved the same effect for her as his desirous vision of Robinson: Caroline is disarticulated from the body/property scheme so necessary to the realism of sentimental narratives (to which the prince was himself addicted, believing Maria Fitzherbert to be his soulmate from whose bosom he had been torn by parental pressure to marry against his nature). Thenceforth, Caroline is free, like Robinson, to rescript herself, and so she does through a constant redressing of her public body. When she wanted to be freed from George's vision entirely, she decamped to the Continent, where she lived out various fantasies from holy pilgrim and liberal chatelaine to marital bliss with her Italian lover Bartolomeo Pergami, dressing accordingly. Although her wily political supporters like Henry Brougham and Spencer Perceval attempted to use her for their purposes, writing letters for her and publishing her documents, she continually frustrated them by her unruliness—if she was not to rule by her husband's side, neither would she be ruled by these men. Rather, she toyed with them, letting their schemes play into her fleeting, only half-serious scripts. Less politically informed than the young liberal, then radical Robinson, Caroline's politics were self-serving and related to her fantasy identity as a sentimental heroine. She wanted the money and the freedom to play at royalty, especially when this allowed her to show her largesse to the poor in another bit part (she supported poor children at Blackheath and whole villages in Italy). Politicians and pressmen were like lovers, to be wooed and used to portray temporary identities of chastity, liberality, and maternalism to gain particular ends: Whig loyalty, the king's support, the mob's love.

II. Mary Robinson's Self-performance

7. Robinson played her brief tenure as the Prince of Wales's mistress to the hilt by riding in a carriage with a faked version of George's coronet. If she did this earlier, when as London's foremost actress she rode in a carriage with a coronet-like emblem, while she was George's mistress she rode in as many different carriages as she could; it was a fashion begun by Marie Antoinette that, through the fantasy associations of movement with identity, swept the imagination. And it persisted as a fashion statement: Caroline later also used carriages while traveling the continent to role play, indulging in fantasy and masquerade, and finally also riding in a carriage with a faked royal coronet in a semiotic attempt to claim her crown after George III's death. For Robinson, riding in carriages, dressing in the most recent fashions or costuming à la Marie Antoinette's playful milkmaid[9] , allowed her to use various vehicles for self-portrayal, especially the semiotic code of fabrics, to portray herself as a variety of sexual characters that all had queenly associations. Her society portraits and her own descriptions of dresses used for stage performances and significant events evince a careful attendance to bodily messages: from sheer lawns to heavy silks and velvets, she played the role of fashion leader while using the purity of white cottons and the pinks of luxury fabrics to enhance her own coloring, all the time playing the edges of a chaste vulnerability.[10] These semiotic messages were not always under her full control, however, and her attempts to queen it over the fashionable set, if not to pretend to herself and George that she was a version of the fashionable French queen, was to prove her downfall. The press, in particular, disliked such audacious pretensions from the middling ranks and contemptuously read her playful dressing as indelicate availability, whereas all of Caroline's attempts to act the queen-to-be and finally to claim her right to be recognized as the queen she was at George's succession received widespread support from the press.

8. Marie Antoinette was for Robinson, if not for the German Caroline (who would identify with the deposed Napoleon instead), the performative model par excellence. In "Embodying Marie Antoinette:

The Theatricalized Female Subject," Judith Pascoe dwells on Sarah Siddons's loss of a four-yard length of Marie Antoinette's lace in the 1809 Covent Garden fire, an article of dress that "covered me all over from head to foot," which she reserved for Hermione's trial in *The Winter's Tale* (95). Pascoe traces the connections between maternity, treason, and trial through this shared female article: "In invoking Marie Antoinette through the use of her veil as a prop, Siddons appropriated the performative power of an actual queen to play a fictitious one" (96). Making much of the cultural power of the mis-tried French Queen's story to update that of the equally unjustly tried Hermione, both accused on the basis of improper maternal behavior, Pascoe plays with the edge between factual and fictional heroines and the actress's exploitation of this edge in order to dis-play and displace queenship onto herself as an embodying agent. While this appropriative act corresponds in fascinating ways with Mary Robinson's blurring of the fictional/factual interplay in her various stage and "real life" roles and the blurring, semi-transparent quality of lace, Marie Antoinette's theatricality is crucial for connecting her sartorial reign to the "sexualized body" of the pamphleteers' "paper queen" that Pascoe unveils. Yet the anecdotal material signifies: Siddons's lost lace was important to her not only because it brought Marie Antoinette to life, at least on stage, but also because it was lace—a textile that veils in the same way as the fictional/factual binary. Lace, especially of such enormous quantity ("more than a yard wide" Siddons remembers [qtd in Pascoe 95]) that it functions as a dress, has a quality that hovers between opacity and the translucence of a fine lawn. It teases with its openings and closures, its peepholes and distracting surface figurings: it both reveals and hides what may or may not be there. In period plays such as Hannah Cowley's 1783 *A Bold Stroke for a Husband*, female characters wear veils in order to assume false identities to confuse and manipulate their suitors and stage-manage the plots of their own stories; Siddons's Hermione, however, is veiled in order to produce identity: "By wrapping herself in the vestige of one persecuted queen in order to play another," the actress could better "project that imagined self for an audience" (Pascoe 97).

9. Robinson describes herself in her *Memoirs* in the third person as appearing before Marie Antoinette in 1783 dressed in "A pale green lustring train and body, with a tiffany petticoat, festooned with bunches of the most delicate lilac. . .while a plume of white feathers adorned her head; the native roses of her cheeks, glowing with health and youth, were stained, in conformity to the fashion of the French Court, with the deepest rouge" (*Memoirs* 2:93, qtd. in Pascoe 120). This attention to dress—the fine glossy silk of lustring fabric creating a delicate verdure that, in combination with dainty lilacs and a petticoat of lustrous tiffany all creating a "natural" lady, herself a pink bloom heightened through coloring—is signal because the ability of women's costuming to similarly aid in projecting identity and manage their own social plots was one Robinson, like Siddons and other public women, was intimately familiar with, and one that such women ignored to their cost. Princess Caroline of Brunswick alternately ignored and exploited the potential of female dress to manipulate perception, usually to her disadvantage. Yet once she became Queen of England, estranged from her husband but bent on sharing his throne, Caroline quickly refashioned herself for the occasion, appearing in appropriate costumes for public appearances. Like Marie Antoinette, Caroline was the subject of malicious judgments by her public and private detractors on her dress and her sexual activity, the two combining to project an unruly and thus unqueenly stature for both women. Mary Robinson, too, was the subject of public attacks on her choice of costume and her adulterous relationships, most particularly because of what gossips and caricaturists considered a misappropriation of power for public display. As Adriana Craciun notes, Charlotte Corday and Marie Antoinette were interpreted in contradictory fashions in the 1790s, representing female empowerment for radicals or fatal sexual excess for conservatives. Women daring the public sphere should instead exhibit a "masculine command of their passions," according to *The Anti-Jacobin* (qtd. in Craciun, 79); Robinson placed Marie Antoinette even higher, as an exemplar of "transcendent genius," a natural gift that enabled transport across strictly gendered boundaries so that women could enter the public sphere "on distinctly feminine (and fleshly) terms" (Craciun 17). But Siddons represented herself as non-ambitious, as not-quite publicly available, through a properly maternal versioning of Marie Antoinette. The actress evoked maternity not just in roles like Hermione

that reflected the French Queen's maternal defense at her trial, but in defensively "trotting her three children out on stage to explain her professional decision to move to London" (Pascoe 97). If Robinson trots out her daughter in her *Memoirs* as both a prop for her maternal role and veil for her adulterous ones, it is as much an apologia for her radical past as it is a restitution of Marie Antoinette's fleshly motherhood, her right to be publicly productive, and her representation as the cosmopolitan woman.

10. However, both professional portraitists and print cartoonists delved beneath Robinson's careful costuming. When word first leaked out that she was the Prince of Wales's paramour, the press was scandalized. *The Morning Post* reported "A certain young actress who leads the ton appeared in the side-box at the Haymarket Theatre a few evenings since, with all the grace and splendour of a Duchess, to the no small mortification of the female world, and the astonishment of every spectator!" and George's biographer would later recount that "Mrs. Robinson now appeared in indecent splendour, rendered still more scandalous by the vile participation of her husband" (both quoted in Bass 135). Robinson's self-stagings were interpreted as her audacity, not George's (though it was he who publicly gave her two rosebuds to wear before the secret liaison was outed in the press). Her careful costuming was interpreted as social-climbing statements, a duchess and then a queen want-to-be, but always as politically naive. James Gillray's depiction of her as a tavern whirligig to signal the prince's flipflop politics reads Robinson as a political sex object offering herself to the prevailing winds, even as her signage is meant to indicate the prince's opportunism (his political shifts occurring to win Parliamentary leverage over his father or Parliamentary support of an increased annual allowance, depending on what would provide most gain for his increasing debts). [11] Gillray's depiction of Robinson as a political pawn—a reading later refuted by her strongly Whig and radical publications—translate her costumed self-portrayals as a chaste naïf or fashionable lady into slutty ignorance, a body to be turned to account in a fascinating replay of Thomas Robinson's usage of Mary's marital body. Interestingly, in Thomas and Mary's very first meeting (she was 15) she had worn a dress of pale blue lustring with matching ribbons for her chip hat (*Memoirs* 39), foreshadowing her fabulous appearance later at the French court. But here too she was not the innocent girl that 15 suggests: she was already engaged to debut as Cordelia at Drury Lane, and understood the codes of texture and color, lustring proving to be a favorite dress fabric. Prevented by illness she married instead, and when Thomas insisted on a secretive wedding ceremony at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, she dressed as a Quaker (of dull brown, but of lustring nonetheless). She would pose in this dress, coyly positioned as if self-absorbed and innocently looking out at the viewer to see who he or she is, while discreetly sheathed and bonneted and her hands hidden by a small muff in a 1781 portrait by George Romney.[12]

11. If not so aggressive in his semiotic strategy as Gillray, Thomas Gainsborough also used the opportunity in painting Robinson's portrait *Mrs. Mary Robinson ("Perdita")*, (also1781) to wrest semiotic control from her, depicting her as a demi-rep, sexually available and artfully self-posing.[13] Gainsborough idiosyncratically painted his "sitters" by candlelight standing with six-foot handled brushes. "Sitter" is a misleading term for society portraits, however, and Gainsborough was no different than Romney or Reynolds in posing his clients for full-length portraits standing, or in the case of his double portrait, Mr. and Mrs. William Hallett (*The Morning Walk*, c. 1785), strolling. Mary Robinson's seated position in Gainsborough's 1781 society portrait is not only unusual, but she reclines, her body cutting diagonally across the composition, rather than sits upright (as in Reynolds's 1783-4 half-length, more intimate painting of her, in which in a melancholy but upright seated pose she faces away from the viewer with the sea behind her).[14] Although portrait painters generally had to please their clients while satisfying their own standards for fine detail and expression, and although portraits have "no unproblematic referent," Gainsborough "enjoyed a degree of autonomy unusual for the period, employ[ing] his wit and sharp intelligence in impressive displays of polite but unyielding verbal skirmish," and was quite capable of "convey[ing] a daring degree of disdain for his patrons," but Gainsborough was also capable of persuading his clients to his point of view (Pointon 48-49).[15] Gainsborough's portrait, commissioned by George, Prince of Wales, emphasizes her beauty and sexuality, and gives her the

same odalisque pose that he also does for a society portrait of another woman associated in the popular imagination with the theatre, *Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (c. 1785-87).[16] Certainly Gainsborough's choice for posing Robinson, unlike any other portrait of her of the period, makes a clear opposition to portraits of other women of George's family and circle.[17] In the portrait of Robinson, she sits holding the Prince's miniature, of which she later wrote "I received, through the hands of Lord Malden, the Prince's portrait in miniature, painted by the late Mr. Meyer. This picture is now in my possession. Within the case was a small heart cut in paper, which I also have; on one side was written, Je ne change qu'en mourant. On the other, Unalterable to my Perdita through life," (*Memoirs*, 163).

12. Although an apparently flattering portrait of her, Gainsborough's composition accentuates the miniature of the Prince of Wales in Robinson's hand and her nearly exposed bosom as her two fetishized bodily aspects. The Prince is here seen to be her portable object, a fixed identity whose movement depends on her bodily acts, giving a suggestive nod to the media anxiety concerning her control of the Prince. In addition, her languid posture suggests the odalisque pose used by artists for depicting nudes while, to indicate her moral character, Gainsborough poses her in a chemise gown of sheer, gauzy lawn such as he favored in his *The Mall in St. James's Park* (c. 1783), rather than using the hard lines of a heavy silk dress such as Robinson wears when posed between the Prince as her lover and her husband in Rowlandson's *Vauxhall Gardens* of just a year later. Robinson's visible body beneath the fine layers, and the focus on her bosom, is as unlike as possible his 1785 portrait of the Halletts, in which Mrs. Hallett is similarly dressed in sheer cotton and lace layers, but lace politely sheathes her bosom while her figure appears properly confined and her arms encased in the three-layer "weeping ruffle" of the sleeves.[18] One ruffled hand is linked through her husband's arm, confirming her controlled presentation and a quite different message from Robinson's hand which actively holds/controls the prince's "body." George's lack of control was flamboyant—he had sent the diamond-circled miniature (by the renown miniaturist Jeremiah Meyer), as well as a lock of hair—to Robinson along with innumerable love letters while she resisted his advances, some of which were made in public. His lack of decorum contrasted sharply with the public perception of Robinson's utter control, indeed manipulation, of the prince's mind and emotions.

13. Gainsborough seemed to know he was depicting a woman at the height of her social and political career, for in the fall of that same year she would go as the belle Angloise to visit the new mother, Marie Antoinette, at Versailles, where the queen specifically asked to see and then borrow the prince's miniature, returning it along with a purse she had netted herself. The net purse, like the queen's lace that Siddons's later obtains, provides a visual metaphor for Marie Antoinette's and Robinson's identity play, its metaphoric texture one that Gainsborough exploits as fully as Robinson herself. In contrast to Mrs. Hallet's dress, Gainsborough gives the filmy layers of Robinson's costume the suggestively loose boundaries of netting, implying flexibility rather than constancy, and the demi-rep rather than the artist. And she confirmed his interpretation, in 1782 taking up residence with the dashing war hero, Banastre Tarleton, who would become her long-term lover, and subject of her later *Sappho and Phaon* (1796). In that sonnet sequence, of course, Tarleton's eventual disloyalty in love echoes George's rather than Thomas Robinson's desertion of her. But for Robinson, Sappho's dress—carefully described chitons that can reveal the body through their draping silhouettes and exposed shoulders or bared arms—shows her artistry. Sappho is neither sexually loose, as Gainsborough's chemise suggests, nor sexually innocent. As she reveals a character who knows her own mind, her account of a love relation gone wrong provides a vindication of female sensibility that is radically like Mary Wollstonecraft's declaration of the passions as a female right. Her preface to the poem cites Wollstonecraft, but more importantly, gives her own intentions for using Sappho as her heroine: "because it was impossible for her [Sappho] to love otherwise . . . she expressed her tenderness in all the violence of passion: your surprize at this will cease, when you are acquainted with the extreme sensibility of the Greeks; and discover, that amongst them the most innocent connections often borrow the impassioned language of

love" (154). This is Robinson's vindication for loving as she has done as well, and her reproof to those who portrayed her against her own self-stagings.

III. Caroline's "Character"

14. Princess Caroline's biographer remarks that "all her life, [she] took a childish delight in flouting convention, even if this meant exposing her decidedly lustful nature"; this rebellious streak, accompanied by her "outlandish ways and bizarre dress sense" combined to give Caroline an eccentricity not becoming in a female member of the British court, let alone its royal family (Fraser 28, 227). Refusing to accommodate her self-stagings to others' interpretations of her character, Caroline continually sought borders to cross, refusing to abide by the strict parameters allowed women. She longed for adventure and thirsted to travel, entertaining and lionizing distinguished travelers such as Richard Payne Knight whenever possible. She also would do anything to get a rise out of others, she enjoyed hearing of sexual misadventures as much as engaging in her own real and imagined ones, and loved teasing others about her own real and invented improprieties. Her political allegiances varied according to who befriended her and what would most rankle her husband. Likewise, she formed friendships with both the staid and the scandalous, but was most intrigued by those who transgressed as much as she would have liked to do. For instance, Fraser notes that "Of the females who formed part of the Princess's court [in 1810, once she was committed to the Opposition], Jane Harley, Lady Oxford, whose love of Radical men was as great as her love of radical causes. . . was a regular visitor. Her children were by so many different fathers that they were known as the 'Harleian Miscellany'. . . ." (217). Caroline would emulate the miscellany through her own adoption and fostercare of nurslings when she realized Charlotte was to be her only legitimate child, but she did so in such a way as to raise scandalous gossip as to the children's parentage, and to convince the Prince that he had a right to continue spying on her activities. In the "Delicate Investigation," Caroline's servants were summoned for testimony and, as was later fictionalized for the Book Itself! narrating her story, they denied all charges against her of pregnancy or adultery, charges that if substantiated constituted treason against the crown. Caroline's and George's was the "most undignified royal marriage in English history" (Fraser 167, 320). In general, Caroline kept acquaintances and members of her court who were either level-headed (regardless of class, such as her daughter's sub-governess, Frances Garth) or as disregarding of boundaries as she, like Lady Oxford—later she would combine both improprieties in the love of her life, Pergami. The princess was also so considerate, even affectionate, with her ladies-in-waiting and other female members of her ever-changing circle of intimates that suspicion was sometimes aroused by her indecorous behavior that hinted at a sexual desire not always finding satisfaction in the opposite sex. Here the Sapphic potential was not a literary (as for Robinson) but a libidinous freeing of self-expression. Although there has been no hard evidence to support such gossip, like the gossip-mongering press surrounding Marie Antoinette, the scandal-mongerers surrounding Caroline found any hint of sexual faux-pas to be a threatening expression of self-will and uncontained sexual appetites. If her Brunswick background had ill-prepared Caroline for the proprieties of the British court—at least those expected of its female members, whose sexual dalliance could seriously threaten the monarchy's succession—she was also high spirited and self-dramatizing, liking nothing such much as an audience for trying on different roles for herself. Aggravating this propensity was the fact that she rarely thought anything through for herself, reacting to events and others with an adolescent disregard for how others perceived her, or for the political consequences of her flights of fancy. Similarly, she dressed herself in her own style and taste regardless of expense, propriety, or others' reaction to her appearance. If she was herself easily persuaded, she was also highly enthusiastic, wearing others out with her eagerness for entertainment and conversation, costuming with abandon when it suited her, and attempting (albeit on a necessarily lesser scale) to match the prince in expensive outlays for clothing, house renovations, and redecorating schemes. Like him, she found herself constantly in debt, often due to his laxity in paying even her annual allowance.

15. Once she had removed to her own establishment at Blackheath outside London, she was often seen by neighbors improperly walking alone or unescorted except by her ladies. She enjoyed teasing visitors when considering adopting Willy Austin that she was indeed pregnant by emphasizing her stomach with pillows at her back to push her midsection forward, just as she gained great pleasure in flirting with and actively pursuing handsome adventurers who attended her dinner parties. Some of these guests were certainly playmates if not actual lovers, although she never again became pregnant after delivering Princess Charlotte. In August of 1811 Caroline vacationed at Tunbridge Wells, keeping company with the Berry family. Mr Berry became her escort and the Berry sisters (Mary Berry was one of Caroline's inner circle) attended balls and entertainments with her, but by then out of political favor with the Whigs who had themselves lost considerable power, the princess was already being ridiculed for her behavior and outlandish dress. On first meeting her in 1808, Mary Berry had described the princess as "Such an over-dressed, bare-bosomed, painted eye-browed figure one never saw" (quoted in Fraser 209-10). Now ridicule was more open, encouraged by the prince.

16. By the time Caroline had reached Italy in her voyage abroad after the opening of Continent, and through the ministry's relief to see her "safely" out of sight, she had put on considerable weight, assumed a black wig she purchased in Geneva, drawn in black eyebrows and coarsened her skin to make it ruddy. Later, in 1819 she would be described by Lord Essex as very dirty and wearing liquid rouge (Fraser 337). Her attempts to look non-British and yet theatrically royal only made her look more eccentric than usual. One former acquaintance on seeing her again wrote that her expression was "alternately of studied dignity and of an insouciant nonchalance," presumably her interpretation of her two main roles: courtly lady and society hostess. He added that "her toilette is rich but bizarre, and recalls the dress of Guercini's sibyls" with their loosely fitting, shoulder-baring costumes, again reminiscent of Sappho and the Grecian-draped Emma Hamilton (qtd. in Fraser, 258). She gave a masquerade ball for the King and Queen of Naples at their own court, dressing as Fame and decorating one room as a Temple of Glory with a bust of the King crowned with laurel. Her political enthusiasms were matched by her sexual ones: during the Neopolitan Carnival she costumed as a devil and as an "immodest Sultana," her dress often improper and extravagant, evidence of her peccadilloes later gathered by George's agents to use against her (268). Meantime she devised beautiful uniforms for Pergami as she promoted him from one position to another. At Genoa, Caroline drove through the streets in a phaeton with a child dressed as a cupid leading two tiny horses who pulled the shell-shaped carriage. Caroline was dressed in a body-revealing pink gauze bodice, short white skirt and pink-feathered headdress, with Willy Austin (whom everyone believed to be her natural son) beside her, and Pergami dressed as the Neopolitan King riding behind. This procession "mark[ed] the high point of her —not unsuccessful—attempt to make England a laughing-stock abroad" (Fraser, 273). And when Caroline attempted to raise money through the Grand Duke of Baden to resolve some of her financial difficulties, he was as astonished by her request as he was by her insistence on wearing half a pumpkin on her head to keep cool. Finally, on leaving Italy for her Parliamentary divorce hearing, Caroline took her clothes, jewelry, plate and china in order to create the appropriately royal appearance in England: "Leaving her more gauzy items at Pesaro, Queen Caroline commissioned several new dresses from Alderman Wood in London on the day she set out, sending him the patterns for some silks. 'Them which are in gold [possibly those she bought in Constantinople] should be made in all sort of collers [colors],' she wrote. She recommended that Mrs. Webbe, her former mantua-maker opposite Pall Mall, send her a white silk gown and hat, 'made exactly of the English fashion. . . as the present franche [French] mode do not please me much'" (Fraser 254). Heavy and stiff materials would replace gauze, body hiding would supplant body teasing as she exchanged the role of the flirt for that of queen.

17. Caroline's real and self-dramatizing character(s) with their coquettish and outlandish behavior were undoubtedly responses to her constant awareness that she was out-landish, that is, not English. Her German court manners were never up to English royal expectations, and the London court was one where mistresses could outclass her at every turn. To rebalance the equation, she emphasized both her

alienation and her feminine dependency, rather than her royalty. According her friend, the courtier Sir William Gell, she was "sincere to nobody. . .mak[ing] false or half confidences" that exposed her "to a thousand misfortunes" (Fraser 258). This behavior continued that of the giddy girl she had early fashioned herself into and never outgrown; as a young woman it had won her supporters but now it had increasingly disastrous results. And in general Caroline was a poor judge of others' character. Herself of a forgiving temperament, she could neither understand George's and the Queen's abiding dislike and distrust of her, nor their inflexible reactions to her behavior and initiatives. Having been raised in the utmost strictness verging on neglect, and having held out against her mother's attempts to arrange a marriage for her until her prince literally came along, she imagined a fairytale princess existence for herself in which she was either victimized by wicked relatives or able to live out any fantasy without paying attention to budgets, annual allowances, or tradesmen's bills. She liked people who exemplified the transgressions or adventures that she herself, kept partially in check by her royal status, longed to accomplish. Once she was permitted to escape to Europe she felt herself uninhibited by the behavioral constrains on British female royalty, and indulged her fantastic imagination as much as possible. When on sea journeys she preferred to sleep on deck under a tent as would an Egyptian princess; she undertook adventures that she thought might get her romantically captured as a harem slave; she made aristocracy out of nobodies (buying Pergami an estate and title) and became the charitable lady of the manor to an Italian region; she visited European courts for their entertainments and left quickly if bored; and she ignored the rumors and gossip surrounding her notably improper intimacy with members of her traveling court. "The Princess's lust for independence was astonishing" (Fraser 269), and she was finally, at least in her own imagination, truly free, but it was an independence for which she would have to pay.

IV. The End of an Era: Caroline's Sex/Text Politics

18. In the Whig-Tory tug of war over the Prince of Wales's party affinity, Princess Caroline's gothic marital experience achieved widespread press. Like the anti-royalist Whigs, radical pressmen such as William Mason, William Hone, and William Benbow used the "Delicate Investigation" (1806-07) and the Queen Caroline Affair in 1820 (George's attempt to divorce Caroline) to rally popular opposition to George through pro-Caroline propaganda that depicted George as "Old Corruption." Iain McCalman claims that "the loyalist-populist mythology of Queen Caroline" did not arise spontaneously, but was the creation of radical pressmen as much as of the opposition (162). Thus when Caroline returned from her Continental travels, she landed as a wronged woman, "already the heroine of a gothic-romantic fantasy" (163) through press coverage of George's sexual peccadilloes. This popular fantasy, fed on the opposition's propaganda and the currency of street mob symbols relating to "petticoat government" and other images of an emasculated and decadent monarchy. The radical press promoted Caroline's cause through both fictional and iconic interpretive codes, producing a barrage of pamphlets and caricatures to counter the viciously anti-Caroline literature and caricatures of the loyalist press concerning her sexual relations with Pergami. But McCalman attributes Caroline's mythic public character to a creation of politicians and pressmen that sentimentalizes her for popular consumption without asking what Caroline's own contribution to that persona might be. He reads the various publications surrounding the "Book" (the report from the "Delicate Investigation" that exonerated Caroline of producing an illegitimate son), including all the scurrilous and fantastic spinoffs of that publication which contributed to the fictionalizing of her life, as solely the product of Grub Street hacks. These sensational pamphlets, many semi-pornographic, stemmed from Thomas Ashe's 1811 confessional "autobiography," *The Spirit of "The Book"*, purported to be the Princess' private version of "The Book." Although its subtitle indicated its literary status ("A Political and Amatory Romance"), *The Spirit* was read by most as deliciously true.[19]

19. It seems to me important that while McCalman discusses *The Spirit*'s portrayal of a Princess who is already in love prior to her marriage while the Prince is not, and of a marriage forced on Caroline

rather than one forced on the Prince, as pertinent to the pro-Caroline mythology, he makes nothing of these factual marital inaccuracies. In considering Caroline's contribution to and influence on her public image, it is worth looking at least at one pro-Caroline pamphlet that does not follow *The Spirit*'s essential plot (as McCalman claims all the spinoffs do), *The Book Itself! Private Memoirs, interspersed with Curious Anecdotes of several Distinguished Characters, being a complete answer to the Spirit of the Book* (n.d.).[20] In this short version, the story turns Ashe's romance into allegory, different names and different minor characters appear (the Prince of Cumeria for Ashe's Prince Albion; no prior lover of the Princess, and so forth), and there are significant plot differences (the King arranges the marriage to reform his son, as in actual fact). It is important not to conflate these publications as all part of the same campaign; in attributing spinoffs of Ashe's *Spirit*—especially *The Book Itself, or Secret Memoirs of an Illustrious Princess*—to radical hacks, McCalman does not examine the differences between texts that represent different ideologies.[21] .

20. In *The Book Itself!*, Caroline's marriage is depicted in the Walpolean terms that Caroline herself viewed her marital relations with George. "One day, sending for the prince into his closet, the venerable monarch opened his design to him": that he should give up his bachelor life and marry to produce heirs. The king adds that, "as you have often represented to me the insufficiency of your income to the liquidation of your numerous debts, I promist you, in case of your compliance with my wishes, that your most sanguine expectations on this head shall be fully satisfied.[22] I will shew you the miniature of one well calculated to give you happiness" (5). After the princess arrives,

    > The nuptial ceremony was performed, and the people were loud in their acclamations of joy, which was universally hailed as the dawn of reformation in the moral character of the prince, who paid every attention to the princess.
    >
    > So great a change alarmed the prince's old companion's, and they soon felt it their interest, by mysterious allusions, to alarm the jealousy of the prince. In this they succeeded but too well, and with the assistance of Doctor Scapegibbet, artfully insinatued [*sic*] that Scarecrow had been seen near the Princess'es [*sic*] chamber. (6-7)

    "Scarecrow" will be scapegoated as the Princess's lover (not a real lover, the Irish lord Algernon of Ashe's story, but a creation of the Prince's friends) and the true father of her baby girl. Trouble begins when the faithful attendant tells the Princess that "I have seen the prince talking very much with the female domestics lately, and as he was never used to do so," and "I could see the prince shake his head in a furious manner, when the servant whom he was questioning answered in a trembling voice —"Indeed, your royal highness, I never saw Mr. Scarecrow in the house, and I do not believe that her royal highness knows any thing at all about him!"(7). Trouble continues until the Princess is avenged, as Caroline herself was in the "Delicate Investigation", and the old king, albeit not the disgraced prince, receives her again. The story reflects Caroline's own penchant for literary fantasy and revisionary self-portrayals.

21. As Caroline's most recent biographer notes, Caroline liked to read with her ladies or be read to for hours, and to surround herself with literati, especially if they revealed an bold, adventurous streak: "A no less colourful element among the Princess's favourites were the writers like Mr Thomas Moore, Mr Matthew 'Monk' Lewis and Mr Samuel Rogers. Caroline read omnivorously, Lewis remarked, and she enjoyed the excitement of publication. When Lady Oxford forsook Lord Archibald for Lord Byron and brought the stormy one to Kensington, the Princess was in ecstasy, though Byron had savaged many of the other writers at her table in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*" (Fraser 217). While *The Book Itself!* seems to reflect more directly Caroline's literary imagination, McCalman's analysis of Grub Street politics and the gutter press's fueling of the opposition is also crucial to understanding how Caroline could feel popularly supported, and necessary to seeing how she could continue to weave

fantasies about her privileges and freedom despite continued constraints laid on her by her husband's family and himself. But it is also important to extend his analysis to the contribution Caroline herself makes to her public persona, such as her self-dramatizations as a gypsy, when she visited Lady Douglas dressed in long red cloak, silk scarf covering her hair, and worn slippers, or when she played gothic victim by parading in front of her house in a lugubrious velvet cloak, Spanish style, and huge muff that made her seem at once emotionally distraught and pregnant (by whom, she left it to the viewer to guess) (Fraser 159, 162). Laura Engel has argued for the symbolic status of the muff in daily promenades and society portraits, its importance as a luxury accessory vying with the sexual innuendos its furry, hand-warming interior invited. The larger the muff, the trendier and dearer, but also the more suggestive of an inelegant double-entendre. This sexual suggestiveness is also present in Mary Robinson's seemingly demure portrait by George Romney (1781, discussed above), where her small muff is centered below her sheathed bosom and her modestly hidden hands suggest another story. Equally important are Caroline's literary self-representations, such as her own fictionalizing and sentimentalizing in her private account of royal affronts, which she proudly crowed about to others as her literary revenge. In asserting that shorter spinoffs of Ashe's book were gutter-press chapbooks targeting working-class families, to which he would presumably say *The Book Itself!* belongs despite its subtitle claim to be a "complete answer to the *Spirit of the Book*," McCalman avoids discussing how such a narrative could so closely mirror Caroline's own self-representations as girlishly innocent and fascinating, and as dramatically misrepresented and maltreated by intriguing others. Furthermore, his focus on the melodramatic emphasis in the chapbooks on Caroline's being estranged from her daughter Charlotte does not account for *The Book Itself!*'s use of allegory rather than fairy tale, or its emphasis on the gothic-style wronged maiden aspect of her story. Instead, this story does not proceed past the child's infancy (ending with Caroline's request for reconciliation to George III), and unlike Ashe's narrative, focuses on the Prince's accusation that the baby is not his (conflating Charlotte and Willy Austin into the same maligned child) through a conspiracy plot rather than, as for Ashe, a chance spotting of Caroline's supposed lover.

22. *The Book Itself!*'s pro-Caroline narrative is eerily like a textual act of self-defense and vindication, enacting a self-pity that determinedly sentimentalizes the story's gothic frame. Echoing the way that Caroline sentimentalized her life in her own imagination creates a circulatory nexus between this publicizing story and how she was able to live out publicly the story/stories she told to herself. It assuages the conflict Robinson experienced between public and published versions of herself, allowing Caroline freer play. If she did not feel constrained by sentimental images of herself—which paradoxically seemed to liberate her from social restrictions—her public persona, so loved by the mob, was already sentimentalized before Whigs like Henry Brougham and radical pressmen published documents purportedly by her, in order to set her popularity against the prince's faction. This conflation works to rob the "memoir" of its factual basis, re-contextualizing it as part of the pamphlet wars concerning her status and possible delinquency, and so emphasizing its fictional nature over its biographical base. Yet it was made believable by Caroline's playful dress and public personae as she acted out her heroine roles.

23. In Robinson's literary re-imaginings of her life story, she similarly depicts herself as the heroine of her own sentimentalized gothic romance not only in her *Memoirs* but also in her other autobiographically influenced works, like the *Letter to the Women of England* (1799), that explore the gothic consequences of a culture predicated on patriarchal right. That her verse narrative *Sappho and Phaon* was autobiographical her readers did not doubt, and they read it and her posthumously published Memoirs for their "tell-all" promise of Robinson's sexual exploits with the young Prince of Wales and then with the famed Colonel Banastre Tartleton. *Sappho and Phaon* evinces a certain self-pity, but it strongly defends the rights of a woman artist to feel and pursue passion, and is more an attempt to flesh out the irrational bases of the sentimental domestic novel wherein heroines are rewarded for waiting until the right man comes along. Here the gothic does not intrude, so much as the negative consequences of a

realistic "sentimental realism" are followed to their logical consequences: stepping out of conventional boundaries of feeling and self-expression spells desertion by the lover and the suicide of the heroine. Nevertheless, the heroine's female strength—reminiscent of Robinson's lessons at Mrs. Lorrington's knees, but publicly enacted à la Marie Antoinette rather than privately absorbed—creates a freeing space for her art and her voice. Similarly, the *Memoirs* were not just a spirited defense, and like Caroline's *The Book Itself!* a fictionalized self-narrative, but also a gothically influenced recounting of sufferings at the hands of husband, lovers, society, and others jealous of her power over the prince and her social prominence. Significantly her story pays exceptional attention to her public costumings, especially when luxury fabrics and accessories were worn. Robinson recalls that under her husband's dealings, his friend "Fighting" Fitzgerald attempted to abduct her at the entrance to Vauxhall: "A servant opened a chaise door, there were four horses harnessed to it," indicating a fast and lengthy trip out of London. She also noticed a pistol in the door pocket just as "Mr. Fitzgerald placed his arm around my waist, and endeavored to lift me up the step of the chaise" (*Memoirs* 85). Mary heroically resisted, but she was notably dressed for a night at Vauxhall. Perhaps her allure overwhelmed Fitzgerald, a man dangerous enough that he was later hanged for having killed a total of 18 men. In any case, the adventure confirmed her as a gothic heroine, a role she would take up when fleeing creditors with her husband, and again when hysterically chasing after Tarleton late at night with borrowed funds as he fled creditors. Later in her *Letter to the Women of England*, she will recount the story of Anne Broderick, who similarly escaped sexual violence but who, in defending herself against her attacker could not defend her act except through a plea of insanity (Cracuin 52). Surely Robinson had her own misadventure in mind when arguing not just for this woman's right to self-defense physically and under the law, but for those of all women threatened by legally empowered men. If *Sappho and Phaon* does not so easily mix the gothic with the sentimental as Caroline does or as Robinson herself will do in her memoirs, it may be because the liberatory space of Sapphic verse functions for Robinson as circulating sentimentality does for Caroline. Both narrative phenomena loosen the contours of sexual identities and possessible bodies.

V. Conclusion: Disciplined Women

24. Mary Robinson and Princess Caroline both considered themselves to be experts at the social games women were expected to play and to be easily trapped by. Both considered themselves alternately trapped and victorious, and both were surprised that their victories never provided social or financial stability. Robinson's hard-headed wrangling over the prince's bond revealed its necessity and economic acuity in her literary career as she assiduously catered to public taste even while exploring her wide-ranging talents and political beliefs through her works. A case in point, *Sappho and Phaon* delivers a radical message about female self-determination in the prefatory materials, but the poem itself tantalizes with a subject promising insights into Robinson's love affairs, possibly through the lens of Sappho's lesbian practice. Princess Caroline, on the other hand, was alternately convinced of her gaming acumen and military strategy, and was always shocked when it went awry, as it inevitably did given her lesser intellect, court intrigue, George's inordinate hostility toward her, and her own implacable belief that in her personal affairs nothing could be held against her. Particularly in her dealings with the royal family, Caroline drew on her own family heritage of military heroism and Caroline herself used military language to her advisors in preparing for various conflicts with George, and particularly for the Parliamentary hearing that was effectively her divorce trial.

25. Yet Robinson's practicality and Caroline's equally impractical approach to her difficulties were both born of a sentimental understanding of playing the heroine. Their revisionary self-histories—Caroline's red-leather bound notebook in which she delightedly noted enemies' misdeeds (admitting outright her accounts were less than truthful) and her letters, Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon* and her *Memoirs*—each perform a sentimental interpretation of events in the same way as the women's real-life enactments did. Robinson's sentimentality (retaining George's miniature and becoming friends with

him later when, paralyzed from the waist down, she entertained him at her house while reclining on her day-sofa) contrasted sharply with her negotiations over his promised love-bond of £20,000, payment for the return of his letters, and her strategic display of his miniature. Her ambivalent feelings were not the desired conduct-book response of good-girl obedience to an arbitrary patriarchy (such as Matilda initially displays in *Castle of Otranto*), but the sentimental heroine's response to gothic events and structures (which Matilda displays when discovering herself to be jealous of Theodore's attentions to Isabella). These feelings were compounded when, in echoes of her father's desertion and husband's rakish interpretation of marital license, George arbitrarily lost interest in Robinson (having spotted the widowed Grace Dalrymple Elliott) and let her know by letter that she was dismissed for a fabricated rudeness (a strategy he would replicate with his wife). Robinson was publicly humiliated after the affair's end was finalized through a compromise payment on her promised bond of a £500 annuity; a financial downgrade foreshadowing those George would repeatedly inflict on Caroline, who often chose to exceed her means in order to live out queenly fantasies, even though she could manage a limited income. And Robinson was publicly shut out of St. James's Palace on the night of the Queen's Birthday Ball just as Caroline would later be shut out of Westminster Hall for George IV's coronation.

26. Sitting in a carriage as guests arrived for Queen Charlotte's party, Robinson watched the society from which she was now excluded, her beautiful dress noticed by no one, her articulate body uninterpreted. Caroline would face years of similar exclusions as first George and then Queen Charlotte took immediate dislike to her; as she dressed to impress and only provoked dismay; as she had to negotiate with the king, her uncle, for admission to the family circle; and as George and Charlotte colluded to deprive her of her daughter. Echoing Marie Antoinette's maternal symbolism, Robinson and Caroline each understood their motherhood as a public role as well as a private consolation; both played this role against roles of sexual availability and queenly status through careful costume choices and bodily displays. Robinson's fashionable dress and Caroline's sloppily eccentric interpretations of haute couture aimed at the same end: to craft a way to get their needs and desires met despite the gothic overtones—half residual aristocratic decadence and half reactionary middlebrow conservativism—of a libidinous radical culture for Robinson, and Regency culture for Caroline. Neither could, in the end, control their destinies which were already determined by each woman's sentimental rather than pragmatic expectations for their careers as wives and mothers of stature, meshed as these were with George's extravagantly sentimental and yet tyrannical behavior.

27. The press, echoing the mob's long-time love of Caroline and dislike of George, generally supported Caroline's attempts to be recognized as queen, but were less receptive to her desire to have her Parliamentary victory blessed at St. Paul's, and were puzzled by her indecorous behavior in trying to gain access to George's coronation in order to be crowned herself. In this they repeated the "fan" response to Robinson when as George's mistress she was followed everywhere, watched from the street as she shopped, and worshipped as a media star. Caroline was adored for different reasons; her public persona had always been carefully presented by herself and her Parliamentary supporters (most especially Henry Brougham) as loving and lovable, a proper princess gothically mistreated by her mob-hated, arrogant husband. By the time George needed a wife, the public was sated with the scandals of royal mistresses and ready for matrimonial scandal instead.[23]

28. Caroline, of course, was determined to prevent any increase of George's prerogatives, since his sexual arrangements had always been flexible, while hers were supposed to be non-existent after he refused to cohabit with her. She pursued or pretended to pursue lovers in retaliation, or for her own desire; and she considered her final lover, Pergami, to be her husband, acting this fantasy out in a number of ways that included using a plate service at their Italian villa with his newly purchased arms. George, whose affairs were legion, had been shockingly cruel to her, letting her hear of her daughter's death by hearsay, setting spies on her and setting up secret commissions to gather testimonials and witnesses to her real or supposed affairs.[24] But when she learned of George III's death and that she was by law

now Queen of England yet George still intended a formal separation and possibly a divorce, she was outraged and determined to fight back, sure she could win the Parliamentary hearing. Nevertheless, being Caroline, she was less in control of her appearance than she thought she was. For the first day of her hearing Caroline appeared in the tall hat plumes that were her trademark; when she removed this inside, she wound white veiling around her head and over the bodice of her "'richly twilled black sarsenet dress,'" giving the intended dignified costume a bizarre effect. Her appearance and demeanor were not regal; indeed, her clumsy deportment and jerky movements made one MP liken her to a "Fanny Royds" (a weighted Dutch doll with red cheeks that jumps up to standing position) (Fraser 417-9). Caroline wanted a thanksgiving service at St. Paul's to celebrate her victory when the exhausting hearing was over, but the Dean, shocked, refused all but an ordinary morning service. She appeared in white to symbolize innocence: "a silk pelisse extravagantly trimmed with white fur and 'a close turban covered with a white veil'" (Fraser 449). Finally, for the Coronation she dressed as befitted a Queen: while George was ordering new jewels and crown and fussing over his Coronation dress, Carolyn had her mantua-maker attend both herself and Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton several times to outfit them for the occasion should she be allowed to participate. But she was resoundingly shut out of this ceremony, just as Robinson had been from Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball. Caroline's exclusion was more humiliating than Robinson's, of course, for so much more was at stake for George. Robinson had been "cut" just as Beau Brummell would be, effaced in public by George not "seeing" her—his visual strategy of erasure now the reverse of his initial desiring and scripting gaze. So too would Caroline be erased from his life (indeed, she would shortly die of a painful intestinal disorder), but more resoundingly.

29. As Caroline exited her carriage at Westminster, she scurried from one entrance to another as each was shut in her face as she attempted to crash George's party and claim her crown at his side. Gothic heroines are dignified in their suffering while sentimental heroines achieve their desires through moral victories. Neither Robinson nor Caroline could countenance the discipline involved in earning such outcomes for they were each passionate women, convinced of their right to emotional well-being; both suffering humiliatingly at men's hands, with one prince's hands strongly influencing how they interpreted their subsequent destinies. But both women also felt empowered by the radicalism or laxity of their times to tease the borders of expected roles and rules engendering sexual expression, cunningly or foolishly dressing these roles up to fabricate lives that might match their dreams.

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Notes

[1] I am building here on the arguments of Christopher Breward in *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of*

Fashionable Dress.
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[2] Muslin is a medium-weight balanced plainweave (no design is woven into the cloth), as is calico, gingham and chambray; lawn is a lightweight loosely woven plainweave; voile, organza and organdy are sheer or transparent plainweave fabrics. These textiles, most fashionably of cotton and silk, as well as lace and netting, could be fashioned to the wearer's body more easily than patterned fabrics that leant more easily to fashion statements and fancy dress. The new fabrics were startlingly different from 18th-century brocades, damasks, and other stiff and figured materials. By 1801 the Jacquard attachment was invented, increasing the range and affordability of figured weaves, and fashions began moving back to the body-hiding dress styles of earlier and later periods. The Romantic period is an age in which new imports and manufactures made possible for a brief time the body-revealing costuming exploited by women attempting to carve out larger public roles for themselves.
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[3] Terry Castle analyzes this reaction to eighteenth-century elite fashion practice in *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth Century English Culture and Fiction*.
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[4] Although I am using "actant" in the sense postulated by Greimas, it would be interesting to perform a semiotic analysis of these women's performances in terms of Barthes's narrative theory, in which a "function" only gains meaning through narrative and only when within an actant's field of action, so that meaning-making is guided by the staged or framed experience. Both Brummell and Byron excelled at framing themselves and framing off their private lives, while Robinson and Caroline were unable to control the boundaries of their stagings.
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[5] Robert D. Bass notes of Mr. Darby's desertion that it was born of a restlessness and "a love for the sea in his blood," but that after he mortgaged all his property to start a whaling factory in Labrador, Mrs. Darby discovered that a young woman named Elenor sailed with him (24). Darby later returned to formally separate from his wife in a scenario eerily like George's attempts to legally separate from, and then divorce Caroline.
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[6] By "lesbian" I am not asserting a relation defined by female-to-female sexual activity, but rather (following precepts of early feminist theory) implying that the authoritative and affective relations between partners are defined by the women involved for their own empowerment rather than by patriarchal terms. It is in this sense of affective and intellectual empowerment and self-authorizing that Mary Robinson will align herself with Sappho in her prefatory essay for *Sappho and Phaon*. This sense of "lesbian" certainly defined Princess Caroline's relation with her ladies-in-waiting, particularly if they were chosen by her rather than George, and with her female servants and attendants. However, Caroline was more prone to cross the line of allowable sexual behavior than Robinson, and was capable of acts easily misconstrued by others. Marie Antoinette either behaved in similarly loose fashion with the ladies of her court, or did indeed, as the radical French press asserted in a massive campaign against her, engage in open lesbian practice with her favorites. However, it is not in the sense of actual sexual practice that I use the term "lesbian," but rather its empowerment—like flirtation and dress fashions—for Robinson and Caroline, and its accompanying detrimental social effects.
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[7] Sapphism's association with Marie Antoinette's supposedly lascivious inner circle of court women provided a strong marketing ploy, while shoring up Robinson's own queenly associations through her affair with

George. See Joan DeJean's thorough study of this aspect of the French press attacks on the Queen's sexuality and its supposed effect on Louis XVI's ability to rule, and Craciun, p. 84.
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[8] By her own account Caroline turned down proposals from the Dutch heir apparent and Queen Charlotte's brother Prince Charles of Mecklenburg-Strelitz; she refused the matches her mother attempted with the margrave of Baden's son (with 60,000 florins a year), the future Prince of Prussia, the future Duke of York (Prince Frederick), Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, and others. See Fraser, *The Unruly Queen: The Life of Queen Caroline*, 19-28.
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[9] Marie Antoinette's peasant gaming with her court ladies, part of the late eighteenth-century interest in the picturesque and rural life as a recuperation of "natural" sentiment is well-known. Robinson enjoyed riding about or parading in London parks and pleasure gardens dressed in peasant costumes that enhanced her beauty and figure. Judith Pascoe finds that "Robinson's stylistic identification with Marie Antoinette extended beyond clothing fashions to her vehicle of conveyance. Her propensity for riding about in extravagant carriages . . . followed a standard set by the French queen" (121).
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[10] For a thorough history of the importation and importance of luxury and fashionable fabrics and textiles, see Ginsburg, esp. ch. 2, "The Dawn of the Modern Era 1550-1780," by Andreas Petzold, (pp. 35-53), and ch. 3, "The Industrial Revolution 1780-1880" by Rhiannon Williams (pp. 55-71); the short chapter on lace by Patricia Frost is also very helpful (161-71). Jane C. Nylander's *Fabrics for Historic Buildings* is also helpful for period-specific information, while Nora Waugh's *The Cut of Women's Clothes, 1600-1930* provides an overview of fashion shifts and their influences. Anne Hollander's *Fabric of Vision* offers a fascinating if controversial textual reading of the dressed body in paintings, fashion plates, and photographs over a range of centuries.
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[11] See Anne K. Mellor's discussion of portraits and print representations of Robinson in "Making an Exhibition of Her Self: Mary 'Perdita' Robinson and Nineteenth-Century Scripts of Female Sexuality," 271-304.
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[12] To view this portrait in the Wallace Collection, see:
<http://www.wallacecollection.org/
c/w_a/p_w_d/b/p/p037.htm>
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[13] To view this portrait in the Wallace Collection, see:
<http://www.wallacecollection.org/
c/w_a/p_w_d/b/p/p042.htm>
Back

[14] To view this portrait in the Wallace Collection, see:
<http://www.wallacecollection.org/
c/w_a/p_w_d/b/p/p045.htm>
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[15] As Pointon notes, artists' studios were often "public performance" sites in which the artist would display his genius while friends of the sitter watched him paint (41). In such a socialized space, prominent artists such as Gainsborough and Reynolds would have had ample opportunity to work on their clients' taste as much as their preferences.
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[16] <http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/
pinfo?Object=102+0+none>
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[17] Even Cosway's portrait of Maria Fitzherbert, in which she is also seated, portrays her in upright position, a book in her hand, and the Prince's miniature over her heart and her hands positioned quite far from it, rather than actively holding it as Robinson does.
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[18] <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/cgibin/WebObjects.dll/CollectionPublisher.woa/
wa/work?workNumber=ng6209>
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[19] McCalman characterizes *The Spirit* not as a confessional autobiography, as does Flora Fraser (234) but as an epistolary gothic romance (McCalman 163-64). This difference may result from the anonymity and frequent lack of publication dates for many of these texts. However, McCalman ignores the negative portrayal of Caroline in *The Spirit* as well as Ashe's later claim that he was paid to write *The Spirit* by Carlton House (Fraser 234). While Ashe hardly seems a reliable witness (he both wrote attacks on Spencer Perceval and for the opposition), McCalman puts Ashe in the same camp as Perceval (who secretly arranged for *The Book* to be published) despite the negativity of *The Spirit*, and its targeting by subsequent pamphlets that countered its ideology. Notably, McCalman bases his discussion of their working relation on inconclusive evidence for payment by Perceval to Ashe.
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[20] Caroline's interest for European and American readers was indicated by the avidity with which European court circles had already read Ashe's *Spirit of the Book*, and by its being reprinted in the U.S. just one year later by Moses Thomas in Philadelphia.
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[21] This influential version was brought out by the radical printer E. Thomas.
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[22] Under Fox's advocacy, George was to receive an increased allowance at age 25 of £100,000 to allow him to establish his own residence, but Parliament could not match his debts; a marital allowance was to significantly increase his income although this never matched his spending binges.
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[23] Anna Clark, in *Scandal*, argues that the Regency's royal mistresses and their publicized scandals had discernible effects on the constitution. Clark pays particular attention to Caroline's role in constitutional revision through her divorce scandal, which re-energized the reform activism; see Ch. 8, 177-207. However, George's uncles had already had such an effect when his father reacted to his brothers' outrageous affairs by creating the Royal Marriage Act of 1772, the very bill that had forced George to propose marriage to Caroline of Brunswick by denying any royal child the right to marry without the monarch's consent. While Clark does

not investigate Robinson's brief tenure, certainly the worry over both Robinson and Caroline's influence on the prince dramatically heated Parliamentary wrangles. Robinson's Whig leanings were insubstantial compared to Fox's influence, but Caroline's strong Whiggism as determined counter to Queen Charlotte's fanatical Toryism may have moved him further to the right, and certainly her person had constitutional impact in moving George to instigate the "Delicate Investigation" which would lead to the Parliamentary hearing for the Bill of Pains and Penalties that he hoped would provide the grounds for more constitutional flexibility of marital arrangements.
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[24] Caroline was careless of who saw her when she sought her own pleasure. Her first biographer, Robert Huish attempted through his two volume account to recast her character as spotless if spirited. For instance, for one of the most damning pieces of testimony for the divorce hearing he gives this interpretation: At Escala Nuova, from where she wanted to visit the ruins of Ephesus, "she had her traveling bed set up in a vestibule which fronted a church shaded by tress. It was here that another circumstance took place respecting her royal highness and Pergami, on which a charge of an adulterous intercourse was founded; but it was so similar to all the rest in its deficiency of the most important ingredient in the fabrication of every story, namely truth, that it would be perfectly ridiculous in this place to enlarge upon it," (632-33).
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

"Pleasure is now, and ought to be, your business": Stealing Sexuality in Jane Austen's Juvenilia[1]

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*

Austen's Juvenilia, seen as a whole, represents a world in which young women consistently display excessive appetites--for food, drink, erotic pleasures, and material objects. While comic, such narrative excess also constitutes a pointed critique of the constraints Austen's society placed on women, constraints she not only exposes but also subverts by her young heroines' exuberant, even criminal refusal to deny their appetites and their demand for gratifications of all kinds. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. She laughs at all of it: the advice from conduct books, philosophical tracts, sermons, and medical manuals; at the idea that women's sexuality should be closely guarded; that private pleasures should be controlled; that gender should dictate behavior; and that any conceivable appetite—sexual, criminal, alimentary, and liquid—should be governed. Austen's published novels laugh at all that too, but not with quite the same abandon as her Juvenilia, which, I argue, investigates excessive repressive constraints on women and, in turn, the heroines' excessive responses to those regulations.[2] This essay addresses two major points: first, Austen's style reinforces the emphasis on excess in this culture; even at the level of narratology, the Juvenilia focuses on the superabundant. Virtually every story in the Juvenilia incorporates bizarre, if not absurd details: at the Masquerade in "Jack and Alice," for example, Charles stands in a room "3 quarters of a mile in length & half a one in breadth" (13). These laughable, preposterous features operate in conjunction with sophisticated mimesis, seemingly causing a contradiction between the realistic and the fantastic. This phenomenon has led some to see the texts as lacking unity—that is, as lacking purpose and or authorial control.[3] While playfully keeping the reader off balance, the generic disparity nevertheless is often forcefully reconciled when we acknowledge that Austen is overlapping representational modes—realism and fantasy, the literal and the figurative—in order to highlight the absurdity of women's condition in this culture. I do not want to turn these stories into moral lessons—so often, the fragments captivate us through their joyful lawlessness—yet I do want to chart how these improbable adventures offer a perceptive and fearless analysis of her culture as they illuminate the liberation of the adolescent girl's sexual body.[4]

2. Second, I explore the ways—all excessive—that the heroines react to the loss of many kinds of freedom. I focus primarily on theft, organizing the essay into sections on what and how culture steals from women and the ways they try to cope with or steal back their vitality: Cassandra purloins a bonnet, pastries, and a coach ride, and Eliza steals a bank note and another woman's fiancé. Characters defraud other young women's reputations and filch money from their parents; cousins steal from cousins and houseguests from their hosts. Drawing on eighteenth-century attitudes toward women and crime, as well as more current psychoanalytic theories, I examine how these young women tend either to internalize cultural violence by expressing their frustrations and needs in intoxication and food, a process that in itself devours their willpower; or they externalize that violence in sexual escapades and adventures in thievery. In this latter case, they express a desire for abundance that becomes a manic and triumphant celebration.[5] As Avital Ronnell describes in *Crack Wars: Literature, Addition, Mania*, these pleasures cut addicts "off from the world . . . far from objective reality and the real life of the city

and the community" while simultaneously offering "the supreme lucidity of intoxication, which arises when you have something in you that must be encrypted" (5). Austen's representations of her heroines' fighting and drinking and lovemaking and thieving—which meld together and function as substitutes for each other—offer a language for deciphering the robust, lusty female energy that social rules encrypt or entomb. In other words, these addictions and bacchanalian outpourings both hide and reveal larger social crimes against women themselves.

I: Women who Steal Pleasure

"She flew to her bottle & it was soon forgot"

3. In "Jack and Alice," Austen draws attention to the virtual inevitability of women's need to steal male attention and to "steal"—through some kind of psychotropic delight—moments of freedom from entrapping eighteenth-century codes. Inebriation, if not the wisest way to console and repress, is at least an opportune way to live with the knowledge that it is impossible to win affection. Alice Johnson, the heroine, commonly finds herself "in liquor" and, at one point in the story, "drunk" and so "heated with wine and raised by passion, she could have little command of her temper," which results in a "Dispute [that] at length grew so hot on the part of Alice that, 'From Words she almost came to Blows'" (18). Besides a family tendency toward "addict[ion] to the Bottle & the Dice," (13) the cause of Alice's suffering is her longing for the one available man—apparently there is only one—in the community of Pammydiddle, Charles Adams. When Lucy says of Charles that she could "not resist his attractions," Alice laments with a "deep sigh," longingly exclaiming, "Ah! Who can" (21).

4. These attractions are, of course, sexual.[6] Austen unabashedly normalizes her female characters' panting longings and shows how those cravings to satiate unfulfilled love (and sheer erotic desires) through inebriation coincide with the extreme deprivation to which the characters are subjected. The story illustrates this deprivation when it describes how, at the masquerade birthday party, Charles dresses in a costume that perfectly exemplifies his extraordinary status, gained simply by the fact of being the only prospective husband around:

> Of the Males a Mask representing the Sun, was the most universally admired. The Beams that darted from his Eyes were like those of that glorious Luminary tho' infinitely superior. So strong were they that no one dared venture within half a mile of them; he had therefore the best part of the Room to himself, its size not amounting to more than 3 quarters of a mile in length & half a one in breadth. The Gentleman at last finding the feirceness [sic] of his beams to be very inconvenient to the concourse by obliging them to croud together in one corner of the room, half shut his eyes by which means, the Company discovered him to be Charles Adams in his plain green Coat, without any mask at all. (13)

   Here in this miniature portrait of the way patriarchy relies upon illusion, Charles parodically plays the role of "oriental" eminence: he is static, sensuous, and passive, yet nevertheless despotically controls the female world around him. In this harem, Lady Williams and Alice, subjugated to his power, fight each other to gain the privilege of his attention. Austen exposes how Charles's supremacy is only a chimera maintained by the tiny community he rules. Stripped of his illusory status as "the Sun"—the beneficiary of primogeniture and, in nature and culture, the star around which everything revolves—he is merely "Charles . . . in his plain green Coat." But the "fierce" competition between women for this one source of light and heat leads Lady Williams to keep Alice drunk on her claret and to betray her friendship with Lucy, by urging her to leave Pammydiddle for Bath and advising her to marry "an unprincipaled [*sic*], illiterate man" (27).

5. Austen offers a dazzling metaphor that illustrates the mechanism of how women, so desperate for

sexual and marital fulfillment that they try to steal it, must "poach" on their prey. In contrast to Alice, who internalizes her pain through drunkenness, Lucy will not succumb to melancholy, but instead manically pursues Charles, an absentee landlord she meets when he visits her village in Wales to collect his rents. This economic detail shows Austen linking exploitation of women to that of the poor and also aligning herself with the critique of "rackrents," such as we later see in Maria Edgeworth and Sidney Owenson. Lucy runs away from her family to pursue Charles, and enters his grounds in Pammydiddle, only to be caught in a poacher's steel trap. The game law of 1671 (not changed until 1831) designated hunting the "privilege of all gentlemen whose freehold property was valued at £100 or more a year (or whose leasehold totaled £150)" (Stevenson 79). On the one hand, women, like hungry villagers, must steal the "meats" available for upper class hunting and dining. On the other hand, however, they also resemble the more symbolically ambiguous status of the landowner who, not meeting these property qualifications, was barred from hunting game on his own land. Though of the gentry and though assured an inheritance, these women are considered criminals if they pursue either the felicity of the sport and/or marital sustenance. That Lucy feels the right to hunt Charles suggests Austen's radical assertion of rights for women, a parallel affirmation many men defended in their outrage against game laws, their anger stemming from a belief that English liberty was bound up in the ancient expectation that hunting was an unalienable right (Stevenson 79). Austen takes this revolutionary fight for rights to the death when Sukey Simpson murders Lucy because she has received a marriage proposal from the only apparently desirable husband in Bath, an elderly man of "princely fortune" (27). Although Sukey goes to the gallows for this criminal act (a rare example in the Juvenilia of a woman actually punished for wrongdoing), Austen makes the point that the marriage market itself is criminal, and though Sukey's actions are no doubt perverse, they appear normalized in a patriarchal system so corrupt.

6. Austen depicts such patriarchal corruption and sexual excess as permeating not only gentry culture but also the nobility. Making ribald asides about British royalty, specifically Prince George and Frederick, the Duke of York, she reveals how in a capitalist-driven system of marriage, high-class prostitution becomes an alternative to spinsterhood: Cecilia comments that if her sister "Caroline could engage a Duke, she might without censure aspire to the affections of some Prince—& knowing that those of her native Country were cheifly [sic] engaged, she left England & I have since heard is at present the favourite Sultana of the great Mogul" (29).[7] The joke here is that the Prince's affections are not engaged in marriage, but in a series of erotomaniacal affairs. The contest between sisters is obvious, a hallmark of a society of deprivation, but in choosing to be a Sultana, Cecilia seeks pleasure for its own sake in a system that nevertheless buttresses patriarchal power—a reason why she can aspire to the Mogul's affections "*without censure*" (29, emphasis added). Ironically, however, as we have already seen with the power Charles wields in Pammydiddle, she need not have left England to find a harem that places women in competition with each other and which worships male gods. Austen undercuts the absurd humor of Cecilia's ambitions by linking them to English country life, but also by emphasizing how time curtails a woman's reign since she is only "*at present*" the Mogul's "favourite."

7. The allusions to royal passions in "Jack and Alice" form part of a pattern in the text of pointing out that sexual excess—from royalty down to gentry—accompanies the inability to gratify it; apparently for Cecilia, it is easier and more fulfilling to leave England, travel to the "East," and become an autocrat's mistress than it is to find a proper husband in Bath. While the nonsensical notion of an ordinary gentry coquette joining a harem seems to defy realism, Austen's link between the average girl and the mistresses (or prostitutes) to English royalty grounds that possibility firmly in actuality. In neither Alice's drinking, Lucy's man chasing, nor Cecilia's concupiscent fulfillment with the Mogul, does Austen judge these appetites as a moral failing. Instead, she frankly addresses female desires.

8. In these stories, women try to satisfy those desires by taking the male initiative and proposing to men. Although they generally turn to crime and addiction only after their assertion of "male" power fails,

one can argue that in their society their initiative alone is at least as illegitimate as theft and drunkenness. When Alice inherits a fortune and proposes to Charles, that "glorious Luminary" (13) maliciously rejects the idea, suggesting that she is not "full" enough for him, that she cannot satisfy his appetites: "Your daughter, sir, is neither sufficiently beautiful, sufficiently amiable, sufficiently witty, nor sufficiently rich for me" (26). Though she has already shown a proclivity for anesthetizing her frustration, when Alice hears this news, she tries to "fill" herself up by displacing the affective onto the material: Alice "could scarcely support the disappointment—She flew to her bottle & it was soon forgot" (26). Here, Austen provides enough cause for Alice's requiring what Ronell calls the "partial separation from an invading presence" that alcohol or drugs provide (9). Placing less blame on Alice than she does on the social circumstances inspiring her heroine's turn to the bottle, Austen here looks at excessive appetites less as the result of an intractable will, than as the introjection of external pressures and repressive social codes.

9. Though drawing the story in bold strokes and relying on stock characters, Austen's treatment of drunkenness nevertheless remains subtle insofar as she, like medical writers, refuses the interpretation that drunkenness is merely a mark of license. Roy Porter explains how during the Romantic period, medical writers switched their focus from interpreting drunkenness as a sign of immoderation to, in Thomas Trotter's words, seeing it as a "disease of the mind"; like diagnoses of sexual perversions, medical discourse came to recognize "the intractability of the habit, and its unresponsiveness to medication"; this in turned "helped direct the medical gaze within, into the inner space of the delinquent recalcitrant will" ("Barely" 76). The Juvenilia certainly directs our gaze toward an examination of characters' motivations, but Austen clearly is not interpreting alcoholic (or, in other stories, gluttonous) excess as merely a phenomenon of the "delinquent recalcitrant will," for Alice's inebriation arises in large part from a cultural conditioning that simultaneously stimulates desire and enforces codes that inhibit fulfillment. "Jack and Alice" suggests to the reader that in Pammydiddle and Bath (that is, all of English society), alcohol first of all encloses the female energy that lacks any other outlet since women have so little control over their access to that secure future for which there is no substitute—marriage. Second, and simultaneously, the story reveals how drunken excess functions as a code that exposes cultural flaws. And Austen makes it explicit that there can be no outlet when women are, by custom's force, always the losers in a market that male buyers control.

10. A reading of the Juvenilia, however, might well lead a reader to feel that conservative moralists and repressive systems are fighting a fruitless battle. Most of the marriages Austen depicts are illegitimate; a few select characters are "natural"; appetites of all kinds (as we have seen) are voracious, and usually laws and legal procedures move too slowly for characters who want immediate sexual gratification.[8] In *Lesley Castle,* the worlds of country and city alike superabound with sexual excess, whether adultery, sexual dissipation, or plain erotic longing. Eloisa Lutterell and her fiancé cause a scandal by meeting "both more frequent[ly] & longer" (129); Matilda's admirer, Fitzgerald, offers to escort her and Margaret to Italy, and their Step-Mother encourages this no doubt improper, though "agreeable," scheme (138). Louisa Lesley "wantonly disgrace[s] the Maternal character and . . . openly violat[es] the conjugal Duties" by eloping with "Danvers & dishonour" (110). Her husband recovers immediately, and in fact "even feels himself obliged to her for her Elopement, as he thinks it very good fun to be single again" (116). Their father's sensuality embarrasses his daughters, as he remains "a flighty stripling . . . fluttering about the streets of London, gay, dissipated, and Thoughtless at the age of 57" (111).

11. *Lesley Castle's* exploration of sexual excess relies on a protective shell of comical phantasm, which both masks and enhances the feminist and political critique that the work suggests. For example, Eloisa's fiancé has been killed in a tragic accident, causing her to endure convulsions, then insensibility, and finally delirium; her sister Charlotte, however, suffers from a "vexation" such as she has never "experienced": "what in the name of Heaven will become of all the Victuals" prepared for the wedding

feast? (113). Oblivious to Eloisa's grief (though it is, no doubt, rather hyperbolic), Charlotte preposterously "join[s] in heartfelt lamentations on the dreadful Waste in our provisions . . . and concert[s] some plan for getting rid of them" (113). They enter into their "Devouring Plan . . . with great Alacrity" (114). Austen unites the two sisters' reactions at the level of a deliciously wrought metaphor: Charlotte's "devouring plan" suggests a post-wedding riot of consumption wherein feeding displaces sexual consummation, an association strengthened by the fact that the "Beef, Broiled Mutton, and Stewed Soup" were prepared "to last the new-married Couple through the Honey-moon" (113). Fifteen days later, she writes that

> I have the satisfaction of informing you that we have every reason to imagine our pantry is by this time nearly cleared, as we left particular orders with the Servants to eat as hard as they possibly could, and to call in a couple of Chairwomen to assist them. We brought a cold Pigeon pye, a cold turkey, a cold tongue, and half a dozen Jellies with us, which we were lucky enough with the help of our Landlady, her husband, and their three children, to get rid of in less than two days after our arrival. (119)

The anticipation of erotic frenzy promised by new marital bliss is displaced onto the cold meats, tongue, and jellies, which seem to require a lower-class army to dispense with them in less than two days. The metaphor also enables Austen to make sound social commentary, though not necessarily in a realistic mode, in that the two story lines together amplify the ever-present sense that like the victuals, which will go bad if not eaten before they decay, a marriageable girl is stamped with an expiration date.

12. The sisters' varying systems of deriving satisfaction (one through marriage, the other through cookery) provide other ways for Austen to manipulate the narratological instability in the story while focusing on sensual superabundance. On the one hand, Charlotte's initial rage that she had "been Roasting, Broiling and Stewing both the Meat and Myself to no purpose" (113) exposes the hot anger boiling underneath supposedly willing martyrdom or perhaps, more likely, unfulfilled desire. If Eloisa's "expiration date" foreshadows Marianne Dashwood's—her half brother exclaims that her "bloom . . . has been a very short one!" (*S&S* 227)—Charlotte's predilection for cooking over marrying foretells Emma Woodhouse's displacement of her sexual desires onto superintending the courtship rituals of others—"*She* would notice [Harriet]; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society . . ." (*E*. 23). Specifically, Charlotte relocates her fleshly pleasures onto food, first the creaminess of desserts—her favorite figurative phrase is a "Whipt-syllabub" (sweetened milk or cream mixed with wine or cider and beaten to a froth) and second, the flesh that is eaten: "I shall be able to manage the Sir-loin myself; my Mother will eat the Soup, and You and the Doctor must finish the rest" (113). Further, her preference for catering over marrying—she "never wish[es] to act a more principal part at a Wedding than . . . superintending and directing the Dinner" (121); her belief that "few people understand the art of cutting a slice of cold Beef as well as I do" (128); her evaluation of the food she is served ("the Veal was terribly underdone, and the Curry had no seasoning" [121]) and her wish to have "been at the dressing of it" all imply that she is one of the few women in Austen to have a career objective outside of marriage. Finally, her artistry in the kitchen provides more long-term satisfaction than the hope of marriage when it becomes apparent that although Eloisa will not be enjoying the sexual pleasures of the honeymoon, Charlotte still gets the satisfaction of watching others devour her food. The Reverend John Trusler's *The Honours of the Table for the Use of Young People* (1787) warned that excessive eating "is now deemed indelicate in a lady, for her character should be rather divine than sensual" (qtd. in Lane, 77). While it is unknown whether Austen read this book, she appears to be rethinking the standard confirmation of the necessity for physical repression insofar as her characters' prodigal consumption of food and erotic pleasures compensates for other losses.

13. Austen also describes an economy of consumption in which sexuality and victuals are interchangeable.

Though this is a common idea, her treatment of it in the Juvenilia takes on strong feminist tones. In Charlotte's devotion to food, her tragic response to the potential decay of wedding provisions, and her statement that she can "manage the Sir-loin myself," Austen may have had in mind a passage from *Tom Jones*: Fielding describes how, in the indiscriminate use of the word love for "the desirable Objects of all our Passions, Appetites, and Senses," one could be said to "be in Love with an excellent Surloin of Beef"—however, he continues, much as we may love a "Surloin," yet "we never smile, nor ogle, nor dress, nor flatter, nor endeavour by any other Arts or Tricks to gain the Affection of the said Beef, &c." (510-511). In a twist on Fielding's point, Austen shows us how Charlotte, the unattractive spinster sister, admires edible viands precisely because she does not require them to love her back. Charlotte, however, does long to be cherished for her cooking, and the loss of her sister's affection, when she becomes engaged to be married, upsets the emotional economy of the household, wherein "No one could sing a better Song than She, and no one make a better Pye than I . . . till Henry Hervey made his appearance in Sussex" (129). His entrance upsets the symbiotic relation between sisters as it introduces a direct sexual component that takes the place of displaced forms of pleasure such as cooking and music: and "tho' I constantly applauded even every Country-dance [Eloisa] play'd, yet not even a pidgeon-pye of my making could obtain from her a single word of approbation." Austen implies that Eloisa now has no need for the emotional synergy she enjoyed with her sister wherein they both, through acts of transference onto food and music, satisfied their sexual longings, since Eloisa has found a new, more libidinal release:

> Before the arrival of [Henry's] Aunt in our neighbourhood . . . his visits to [Eloisa] had been at stated times, and of equal & settled Duration; but on her removal to the Hall which is within a walk from our House, they became both more frequent & longer. This as you may suppose could not be pleasing to [our Aunt] who is a professed Enemy to everything which is not directed by Decorum and Formality, or which bears the least resemblance to Ease and Good-breeding . . . . (129)

Though Charlotte calls those "more frequent & longer" meetings as evidence of "Ease and Good-breeding," the line also hints toward a sexual excess that parallels that of the sensual gourmand or glutton.

14. Whether sought out for the sheer bliss of it or as compensation for other losses, the heroines' dependency on food or drink provides outlets for their stifled sexual and intellectual energy. In the next section, I will explore how, in making hedonism and rapture these young women's business, Austen exposes the interlacing ways in which the system that steers women toward internalizing violence through intoxication both equates the sexual and economic exchange of women and manipulates their desires for erotic fulfillment.

II. Men who Steal Women's Sexuality

"Do, do, do what you will, do what you will with Chloe"[9]

15. Men, several of these stories suggest, are often thieves who "steal" women's physicality in order to pleasure themselves. Women's sexuality is rendered in terms of excess in this culture insofar as it is abundantly available to men. In only three pages, Austen's "First Act of a Comedy" sets up the framework for a spectacular collision of desires when Strephon, Chloe, Pistoletta, and her father all accidentally converge at a Hounslow Inn on their way to London. Intertwining the discourses of sexual love and alliance, the play's antihero, Strephon, exploits the surfeit of available female sexuality by inflaming the desires of two women, Chloe and Pistoletta, both of whom he has promised to wed. And not only is there a surplus of brides for one man, but a surfeit of exuberant energy in general. For example, Popgun, disproportionately enthusiastic about his daughter, his future son-in-law, and her

marriage, delivers "*My* Girl, *my* Darling, *my* favourite of all *my* Children" to London to marry Strephon, to whom he will "bequeath *my* whole Estate" (173, emphasis added). And Chloe's own erotic exhilaration knows no bounds: glowing with anticipation, she breaks into song to celebrate her future marriage, which she sings "will be fun," a sentiment her chorus of ploughboys echoes with the refrain, "be fun, be fun, be fun, / And that to me will be fun" (173). She is even excited when she orders her dinner. After choosing the leg of beef and the "stinking partridge," she sings: "I wish I had here Strephon / For he would carve the partridge if it should be a tough one," another sentiment her chorus reiterates: "Tough one, tough one, tough one, / For he would carve the partridge if it should be a tough one" (174). Though one cannot determine whether or not Austen knew that "partridge," according to Eric Partridge, was slang for "a harlot" (late-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth-century), here the bawdy meaning would reinforce Chloe's enthusiasm for physical pleasures and spotlight what we learn later, that she seems to be supporting Strephon financially.

16. Even Austen's choice of names, Chloe and Strephon, which are famous in literature both singularly and when paired, have a rich history of sexual allusion that emphasizes this hypertrophic pursuit of physical pleasure. Both names stem from classical literature, and Chloe is one of the lovers in Longus's Greek pastoral novel, *Daphnis and Chloe,* in which two orphans from Lesbos, brought up by goatkeepers and shepherds, gradually fall in love and receive a sexual education from various mortal and mythological characters. The character of Strephon is always associated with eroticism and usually with erotic deception in popular music of the day[10] and in works by authors as diverse as Ephelia's *Love's First Approach* (1679), John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester's "A Dialogue between Strephon and Daphne" (1691), Anne Finch's "The Wit and the Beau" (1713), Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "Town Eclogues: Wednesday; Tête-à-Tête" (1716) Swift's infamous "Strephon and Chloe" (1731), and Janet Little's "Almeda and Flavia" (1792). After 1793, the tenable date for Austen's short play, we see the tradition continuing in Sarah Cassan's "On Mrs. Sandiford, ---- of Barbadoes" (1806) and in Lord Byron's "To the Sighing Strephon" (1807).

17. The play, however, splices this sensuous liveliness with acts of theft and forgery, here committed by the male character. Not only is Strephon engaged to two women, and not only does he plan to support himself in town with a "bad guinea," but he pawns Chloe's "undirected Letter" to pay the Postilion (174). The "bad guinea" may either be counterfeit or a coin that someone shaved small bits from and melted down to sell as pure bullion. In either of those senses, or in the fact that it might just be worn down and thus less valuable, no longer weighing what it is supposed to, it doubles as a sign of Strephon, who is a phony bridegroom, one who has diminished his value by splitting his worth between two women.[11] The larger forgery taking place, however, is that in the very act of pawning her letter, Strephon puts a woman whom he plans to marry into "circulation." At the simplest level, he pawns the letter to the Postilion, planning on returning later to buy it with the remains of the counterfeit guinea he has cashed. This interpretation suggests he has put his fiancée in the "hands" of another man.

18. A wider-ranging analysis of the play's sexual politics emerges when we tease out the implications of the fact that this "undirected" or unaddressed letter can, it seems, be turned into cash. One hypothesis, noted above, is that Chloe has given Strephon a promissory note that she received from someone else. In the eighteenth-century, such notes could be bought and sold "promiscuously," transferred from one hand to another as credit for goods or services. Moreover, anyone in need of "ready money" could endorse the note and pass it on to another individual in exchange for cash. Promissory notes could and did circulate throughout the country much like banknotes—or young women. This would highlight the fact that not only Chloe, but Popgun is willing to hand his money over to Strephon since the father will "bequeath [his] whole Estate" to his future son-in-law. Further, if Chloe is supporting Strephon, the very idea of such an exchange before marriage breaches codes of modesty. If we return to the allusion to the stinking partridge, a potential code for harlot, we see that this bawdy detail reinforces what the text does offer us on the surface: the liquid nature of exchange in the play—money going to and fro, a

woman's body standing in for the money for a bill, and two different brides affianced to the same man.

19. Because sexual and economic exchanges are virtually synonymous in this comedy, a further possible meaning is possible. Chloe's letter might be sold precisely as a text, as a woman's love letter, and it might be sold in that way for a couple of different reasons. First, since it is "undirected," then it might be possible to sell it to some other young woman, perhaps a less skillful or illiterate compositor, looking to send such a letter on her own behalf (Thomas DeQuincey, for one, admits in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* that to stave off starvation, he ghost-wrote "love-letters to their sweethearts for young women who had lived as servants in Shrewsbury, or other towns on the English border" [43]). Secondly, Strephon could also sell it to a book dealer or printer as an authentic piece of sentimental correspondence. Such possible connotations, in a sense, also mark the letter as "promissory" even if it did not literally contain such a note: its value may lie in its status as a bearer of secrets and promises—the secret of Chloe's love, or the secret of her skill as an amatory writer.[12] As Mary Favret argues, "the fictionalized letter traveled in a promiscuous no man's land; one could never determine to whom a circulating letter belonged. In the epistolary novel, expressive license and the heroine's vulnerability were intimately linked: the woman in these letters was up for grabs" (138). Polyvalent with emotional and financial possibility, Chloe's letter amplifies the criminal nature of the marriage market.

20. Austen represents the theft of women's sexuality in another way in these texts. When she critiques how female erotic desire is described in conduct books and the like, she shows how their sexuality is stolen and then returned to women in an altered form, as an excessive force that must be controlled. Moral tomes and lessons may superficially forbid female sexual expression, but they do so in a salacious way, one which encourages the reader to picture temptation, violation, or voluptuous surrender. Earlier in the eighteenth century, Daniel Defoe had nervously commented on this possibility in the introduction to his own conduct book, *Conjugal Lewdness: Or, Matrimonial Whoredom*:

> The Difficulty before me is, to know how to reprove with Decency offences against Decency; how to expose Modestly Things which 'tis hardly Modest so much as to mention, and which must require abundance of clean Linnen to wrap them up in; . . . [critics] tell me it is an immodest Subject; that as it cannot be handled decently, and cannot be discours'd of modestly, so it is not intended to be so, but that 'tis a meer Bait to the Curiosity of that Part of the reading World, whose Vices are prompted as much by a pretended reproving them as by the plainest Expressions: That it forms the same Ideas in their Minds, and they receive the Notions of Vice in as lively a form by the very Methods taken to expose and condemn the Facts, as if those Facts were represented to the Opticks in all their shameless Nudities. (7-8)

Like Defoe, Vivien Jones acknowledges the salacious content of conduct books, but argues a very different point of view. Most conduct books, she points out, were "instruments of repression and confinement" which tended to disallow "female pleasure," emphasize "asexual 'modesty,'" and "inculcat[e] feminine propriety . . . and confinement"; however "their moral discourse of chaste conduct evokes precisely the desires and fantasies it claims to police" ("Seductions" 108). Because of this, "far from repressing sexual pleasure," such works could "open up spaces of fantasy and female desire which are potentially transgressive" (112, 116). Austen, aware of the stimulating content of these texts, addresses the possibilities for both prurient and liberating responses to immodest subjects.

21. In the stories I have discussed so far, the heroines' bodies are transgressively, even exhilaratingly, out of control. In *Catharine, or The Bower*, Austen moves inward, to the imagination, to argue that even in environments where the body is constrained, the imagination is free. And this is a subject that becomes complicated when we are discussing the imagination's sexual content. In "Scientific Forms of Sexual Knowledge in Romanticism," Richard Sha asks

> what happens to visibility as a criterion of sexual knowledge when sexuality turns inward —when the imagination, mind, and the brain become understood as sexual organs? It is precisely this inward turn that makes sexuality a possible site of liberation for Romantic artists: sexual liberation at once becomes potentially reflective and strategic and difficult to survey. As the poet/physician Thomas Beddoes put it, "no one certainly, can regulate the imagination of another." Not surprisingly, the sexualized imagination and brain are insistently demonized because of their resistance to visibility . . . . The imagination engenders a profound epistemological panic because it confuses its own virtual sensations for actual foundational empirical experiences. (10)

Both Catharine (also called Kitty) and Mrs. Percival present fascinating, though opposing, cases for arguing that the sexual imagination resists whatever repressions may be foisted onto the body. The Juvenilia (and I would argue that this holds true for the later novels as well) suggests that Austen believes that sexuality—like creativity—is an arena that censorship often cannot reach or that censorship may stimulate but not tarnish. *Catharine* presents Kitty's imaginative function as a richly sensuous, liberating process insofar as it allows her to evade her aunt's authority in a way that leads to great pleasure and satisfaction. The bower becomes significant, then, as the externalization of this internal, unreachable environment where any kind of reverie is possible; for Kitty, under constant surveillance, the bower represents a winsome retreat that "possessed such a charm over her senses, as constantly to tranquillize her mind and quiet her spirits," a place which she believed "alone could restore her to herself" (193).

22. Austen's *Catharine* also makes transparent the misogynistic logic associating the bower with seduction that so much conduct literature depended upon. As a symbol of rampant female sexuality, the bower is a ubiquitous image throughout the eighteenth-century, appearing in texts ranging from Thompson's *The Seasons* to moral miscellanies such as Mrs. Bonhote's *The Parental Monitor* (1796). In another such moralizing text, the *Lady's Miscellany*, we find "On True Happiness, an Epistle Written to a Young Lady in the Country," a poem which prompts a heroine to avoid the "earth":

> True happiness is not the growth of earth,
> The toil is fruitless if you seek it there;
> 'Tis an exotic of celestial birth,
> And never blooms but in celestial air

Earthly flowers trick women, "charm[ing] your fancy, gaily drest / In shining dyes—a native of the ground" (189). More of the same sort of attacks on bowers and their association with sexuality, though in this case nearly pornographic, appear in Richard Polwhele's "Unsexed Females," where he asks us to picture an "unsex'd" woman's body: "Scarce by a gossamery film carest, / Sport[s], in full view, the meretricious breast;" he then guides us to undress the woman farther, to "Loose the chaste cincture, where the graces shone, / And languish'd all the Loves, the ambrosial zone." In his almost masturbatory fantasy, he enjoins readers to watch how women's "bosoms heave" as they read Darwin's *Botanic Garden*, how they "pluck forbidden fruit, with mother Eve, / For puberty in sighing florets pant, / Or point the prostitution of a plant" (7-8). Polwhele's bower refers specifically to the "loose" desires of the recently-deceased Mary Wollstonecraft, who is the poem's primary target: there, "Bath'd in new bliss, the Fair-one greets the bower, / And ravishes a flame from every flower" (26).

23. Conduct books, advice manuals and polemics such as the ones I have cited here by Wright, Bonhote, and Polwhele steal women's sexuality, only to thrust it back at them in a contorted form. That is, they do not eradicate it, but return it in a way that incites the imagination to interpret sexuality as stimulating but negative, all the while rendering it a pleasure prohibited to the body. In *Catharine*, the extent to which Mrs. Pervical tries to regulate her niece's access to and feelings for this "bower"

suggests the force of its threat, and the extent to which she fails to control what she cannot reach implies the power of its capacity for liberation.

24. In an environment of such repression and stimulation, advice literature functions like a stimulating drug in itself, one that urges young—and even elderly—women to distrust their sexuality and internalize it as a parasitical danger to their bodies. Through Aunt Percival, Austen concentrates not on the ways conduct literature can function positively to liberate female pleasure, but instead on the way mildly pornographic conduct book materials encourage the imagination to retain a hyper-attenuated focus on the perverse qualities of women's sexuality. Aunt Percival has internalized the ideology that women are both sexually voracious and in need of constant surveillance in order to control their erotic gluttony. Though the aunt's body remains chaste, her imagination is sexually active, a process that makes her miserable, and though I would not call this "liberation," it can be understood as a process that evades cultural constraints while simultaneously embodying them. *Catharine* suggests that the "sexualized imagination" is vicious only when repression perversely stimulates it. Because she has no empirical proof that Kitty "cannot withstand temptation," Mrs. Percival uses an object, the bower, to materialize and thereby control her niece's sexuality. And because her idea of this lovely grove is, like Polwhele's, a place of "loose desires" (Polwhele 25), she first simply tries to keep Kitty out of this refuge and in her own parlor (197), but later, once Stanley arrives, she decides she must destroy the bower. Mrs. Percival's reaction becomes excessive as she bloats this lovely, sensuous place of contemplation and reverie into a damp, vicious disease-ridden environment. Standing in the bower with Kitty to chastise her for allowing Stanley to kiss her hand, her aunt begins to feel a chill and exclaims that she "must and will have that arbour pulled down—it will be the death of me; who knows *now*, but what I may never recover—Such things *have* happened" (233-34).[13] While conduct books equally concern themselves with female imagination and female sexuality, in *Catharine* Austen undermines the seducer's (that is, Stanley's) lascivious nature—paring debauchery down to a process of pure power-mongering—and rather shockingly transfers that lasciviousness to Mrs. Percival.

25. Thus, in laboring to control Kitty, Mrs. Pervical must necessarily attempt to imagine what her niece imagines, and this process, indeed, causes precisely the "profound epistemological panic" Sha describes when she cannot differentiate between her own "virtual sensations" and Kitty's "empirical experiences." The young girl's interest in sex is obvious through her flirtations and joyful interactions, but her Aunt's graphic imaginings manifest as perverse and brackish what she fantasizes that Catharine is literally doing, leading her to imagine her niece playing the willing companion—and even the temptress—to Stanley's flirtations. The vicious accusations she levels against her niece to Stanley's father clearly reflect the aunt's inabilities to differentiate between empirical facts and her own "virtual sensations." Kitty, she says, is

> one of the most impudent girls that ever existed. Her intimacies with Young Men are abominable, and it is all the same to her who it is, no one comes amiss to her. I assure you Sir, that I have seen her sit and laugh and whisper with a young man whom she has not seen above half a dozen times. Her behavior indeed is scandalous, and therefore I beg you will send your son away immediately, or everything will be at sixes and sevens. (228)

To sit and laugh and whisper is to act in an "impudent," "scandalous," and "abominable way." Mrs. Percival's attitudes about London repeat her own wild imaginings: she could never let her niece visit the metropolis, "the hothouse of Vice," since Kitty was "inclined to give way to, and indulge in, vicious inclinations, & therefore was the last girl in the world to be trusted in London, as she would be totally unable to withstand temptation" (239). Her use of the word "vicious" suggests Kitty indulges in all manner of vices. Despite the elder lady's imaginative sexual surplus, no romance in fact materializes, though Stanley kisses Kitty's hand while the aunt watches—expressly to torment Mrs. Percival. Austen's unfinished novel simply stops with Stanley having left for France, leaving Catharine as chaste

as he found her.

26. Finally, because those fantasies function at odds with the Catharine we meet, the aunt's imaginings also call the niece's supposed perversity into question and set into motion another set of visualizations about Catharine's sexuality, these more playful and appealing, the kind of normative expectations of much Romantic-era medical advice: "that love enhances bodily pleasure" (qtd in Sha, 11). Significantly, in the story Catharine *can* physically control manifesting her erotic desires, but her Aunt *cannot* control her own sexual fantasies. Austen thereby achieves the effect of normalizing heterosexual desire and pathologizing sexual repression while also expressing what must have been her poor opinion of the success such moral stories had in repressing women's sexuality or their desires.

III. Women Steal it back again

"But I kept my eye on it; and, as soon as I dared, caught it up, and never parted with it again from that moment."

27. The Juvenila's heroines try to emancipate themselves by stealing "back" what their culture denies them. Whether they succeed or not, Austen herself succeeds in using their criminality to explore the violence of normative social relations during her era. Because these stories link theft and sexuality, they suggest that these women are indeed stealing in order to retain, express, or regain their libidinal powers, and this is a point Austen continues to pursue in later novels, especially in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*. Lucy Steele's last name blatantly calls attention to her identity as a thief (of husbands, tithes, and fortunes), and Austen casts her as a shrewd little vixen, who steals by seducing the entire Ferrars family, from younger son to haughty mother. In *Emma*, Harriet Smith confesses that during the height of their illusory courtship, she had purloined "the end of an old pencil,—the part without any lead" from Elton.

> "This was really his," said Harriet.—"Do not you remember one morning?—no, I dare say you do not. But one morning—I forget exactly the day—but perhaps it was the Tuesday or Wednesday before *that evening*, he wanted to make a memorandum in his pocket-book; it was about spruce beer. Mr. Knightley had been telling him something about brewing spruce beer, and he wanted to put it down; but when he took out his pencil, there was so little lead that he soon cut it all away, and it would not do, so you lent him another, and this was left upon the table as good for nothing. But I kept my eye on it; and, as soon as I dared, caught it up, and never parted with it again from that moment." (339)

Here the normally passive Harriet slyly pounces at her first opportunity to secure some*thing* of the man she loves, a foreshadowing that renders less surprising her later assertive pursuit of Knightley, of whom she too has experienced a *part*—a dance. The drama of this event, her nervous anticipation, the risky, breathtaking moment when she "caught it up," the sexual implication of the *pen*cil, the association between actual seduction and stealing the bodily metonymy—and then the blank emptiness, literally and figuratively, of the object, all underscore the fetishistic nature of her act. Taught to love a man with no "lead"—that is, no substance either of character or sexual potency—she steals an appropriate metonym, one that speaks for its inability to record a receipt for spruce beer, let alone produce a courtship narrative.[14]

28. Standing out vividly in *Love and Friendship,* "Henry and Eliza," and "The Beautifull (sic) Cassandra," and suggesting that nebulous cross-over between sexuality and theft, is Austen's ability to use crime to enact a festive sort of emancipation, though it may be in some cases a "mad" "frenzy fit" (*L&F* 102) and to allow her criminal heroines glory in their success. As I have been arguing throughout this essay, the characters in these early works divide (quite loosely) into two categories, those who internalize

cultural violence (Ronell 93) and those who eject this constructed rage against women: Alice (from "Jack and Alice") and Eloisa and Charlotte (from *Lesley Castle*) fall into this first category. Aunt Percival also internalizes cultural rage but then projects outward onto her niece. In this section, I will be discussing the heroines who externalize their rage. Sophia, for example, from *Love and Friendship* warns Laura not to absorb social hostility or self-recrimination by fainting, but instead to disgorge the shame or pain and "Run mad as often as you chuse" (102). In *Aberrations of Mourning*, Laurence A. Rickels explains Karl Abraham's idea that mania "revers[es]" the "retentive tendency of melancholia":

> mania celebrates the ego's sudden triumph over both ego ideal and the once-loved, lost, and subsequently introjected object. Whereas in melancholia the ego is vampirized by the introjected object, in mania the libido turns with ravenous hunger to the external world of objects; whatever appears before the manic's rapidly advancing probe is swallowed. But this pleasurable swallowing during the manic phase, which succeeds the melancholic's sense that he is excluded from the world of objects as though disinherited, corresponds to an equally rapid, equally pleasurable expulsion of the briefly retained objects and impressions. (6, qtd. in Ronnell 124)

In "The Beautifull Cassandra" (1787-1790), we observe the heroine "turning with ravenous hunger to the external world of objects." This, a "novel" of three pages, charts the adventures of the heroine, who having "attained her 16th year, was lovely & amiable & chancing to fall in love with an elegant Bonnet, her mother had just compleated bespoke by the Countess of _____ she placed it on her gentle Head & walked from Mother's shop to make her Fortune" (45). She next "devoured six ices, refused to pay for them, knocked down the Pastry Cook & walked away" (45). She does not just eat her ices, she "devours" them, and, in this sense, Austen's misspelling of "Beautifull" in the title of this short piece is apt insofar as it emphasizes the heroine's desire, here as throughout the Juvenilia, to "fill" herself, as she acts from a sense of deprivation or a sense of vibrant yearnings. When expected to pay after devouring her ices, Cassandra does not cower in the face of her crime, but aggressively spurns any responsibility for acknowledging or agreeing with the contract between selling and purchasing. Her physical strength seems prodigious here, as she "knock[s] down the cook" and then nonchalantly "walk[s] away," rather than running in fear. While she does later flee from a coachman whom she cannot pay, she asserts herself with equal fearlessness when she "placed her bonnet on his head & ran away" (46). Though offering some sort of reparation, this act of placing a female hat upon a man's head also blatantly disgenders him, as when Lydia Bennet, a later instantiation of these same energies, dresses up Chamberlayn as a woman in *Pride and Prejudice*. Cassandra is also "paying" the coachman with stolen goods—turning a purloined commodity into a kind of counterfeit currency, and thereby doubling her crime.

29. The need to consume and the simultaneous inability to buy lead her to steal, a variant form of consumption. Elaine S. Abelson points out that for female thieves, "shoplifting was a form of consumer behavior" (167).[15] Leslie Camhi similarly observes that "[i]t is an entire social order that the female kleptomaniac calls into question by her actions. It is, perhaps, this very gamble with an entire social identity that compels her, the unconscious need to establish the fraudulence of inherited wealth and social position . . . . Thus the difference between buying and stealing . . . becomes increasingly attenuated . . ." (123 qtd. in Pinch). Cassandra's need for the sensory stimulation of theft/consumption seems almost a birthright to her as she walks "Thro' many a street . . . and met in none the least Adventure till on turning a Corner of Bloomsbury Square, she met Maria. Cassandra started & Maria seemed surprised; they trembled, blushed, turned pale & passed each other in a mutual silence" (46). This last sentence, a parody of sensibility, no doubt, suggests less the presence of guilt at being on the *street* and enjoying private pleasures that have suddenly become public, but instead the need to imagine and even make an adventure where there is none, to live an adventurous—and in this example, erotic fiction. When she returns from home after seven hours of theft and assault and battery, she is "pressed

to her Mother's bosom" and "smile[s] & whisper[s] to herself 'This is a day well spent'" (47). The word spent, here, intimates how her adventures and crimes connote a physical excess that has consumed, yet satisfied her.

30. Though according to eighteenth-century law, Austen's heroines, Cassandra in particular, generate enough "excitement" to be arrested for several capital crimes, their escape from any sanction for their malefactions is consistent with the historical record of how women were punished, despite the fact that they violate customary gender roles. Cassandra, Eliza, Laura and Sophia and so many more of the heroines of Austen's Juvenilia transgress, in the active sense of that word: they "walk" outside of the boundaries prescribed to them according to their gender, class, and age. In doing so, they enter into what Bryan Reynolds, in *Becoming Criminal*, calls "transversal territory" insofar as they strive to "transcen[d], fractur[e], or displac[e] the constantly affirmed world of subjective territory" (19).[16] All of the women of the Juvenilia, with the exception of Charlotte, who commits suicide, feel guiltless. When Sophia, from *Love and Friendship* is caught stealing a banknote, she cries "Wretch . . . how darest thou to accuse me of an Act, of which the bare idea makes me blush?" (96).[17] Her language perhaps deliberately sexualizes the crime. Because Cassandra's actions in part seem unintelligible, her own and the other heroines' sense of self-righteousness sounds sociopathic, if not anarchical; however, insofar as they escape punishment, Austen is presenting a historically accurate view of the criminal justice system, since, according to Frank McLynn, women

    > were . . . usually treated more leniently by juries and judges, who were more inclined to reprieve and pardon them when found guilty. On capital charges, they were more likely than men to be acquitted, more likely to be found guilty on a reduced charge, and if convicted more likely to be reprieved. Only 12 per cent of the accused in the home countries in 1782-7 were female. Yet female acquittal and partial verdict rates were nearly 40 percent higher than average and their sentences relatively light, even when allowance is made for the fact that women tended to be accused of less violent crimes and less serious property offences. . . . . [W]omen charged with homicide were likely to be accused of murder. But apart from murder, women convicted of capital crimes had a better chance than men did of escaping the gallows. Out of 467 offenders executed in London and Middlesex in 1771-83 only seventeen were women. In the years 1660-1800, 80 percent of female offenders in property crimes in Surrey were reprieved. (128)

    In *Love and Friendship*, Sophia, for example, though caught in the act of stealing a banknote from her cousin, is simply kicked out of the house, though he knows this is the fifth time she has stolen from him; in contrast, her husband, Augustus, is imprisoned at Newgate for having purloined money from his father. McLynn goes on to explain, however, that women were treated leniently only if they followed the "unspoken rules of gender and sex roles"; if they instead acted "'mannishly,' aggressively, or without due deference" (129), they tended to be convicted and treated more harshly.

31. From the point of view of eighteenth-century criminal history, both "Cassandra" and one of Austen's most notorious and thrilling fragments, about the serial killer Anna Parker, who finds love and wealth by the end of her one-epistle story, appear to manipulate those gender conventions in radical ways by being both "mannish" and yielding. In "A Letter from a Young Lady, whose feelings being too Strong for her Judgement led her into the commission of Errors which her Heart disapproved," Miss Parker occupies two subject positions simultaneously: in one, she follows the rules of gender by expressing guilt and, in the other, she transgresses those by planning further crimes:

    > Many have been the cares & vicissitudes of my past life, my beloved Ellinor [*sic*], & the only consolation I feel for their bitterness is that on a close examination of my conduct, I am convinced that I have strictly deserved them. I murdered my father at a very early

> period of my Life, I have since murdered my Mother, and I am . . . going to murder my Sister . . . . But now I am going to reform. (175)

It is unclear why she has murdered her family, but by helping "Colonel Martin of the Horse guards" swindle his elder brother out of his fortune with her false testimony, she wins a marriage proposal (175). Given the delicious anarchy of this story, it may seem as if Anna emerges triumphant from her crimes because she acquiesces to gender conventions: she scrutinizes her "conduct" (a conspicuous word here since it implies demeanor and not character), accepts her guilt, and now promises to change. More likely, however, is the probability that she is juggling those conventions by pretending to feel remorse only now that she is fully successful. Further, whether she complies with or finesses the system, her letter also reveals the inefficacy of the kind of verbal whippings the conduct books and moral miscellanies mete out, since her awareness of her felonies does not guarantee her reform and her crimes do not lead to punishment.[18] In the story about Cassandra, however, Austen's social history is unequivocally radical, for when this heroine steals a bonnet, she transgresses gender expectations in multiple ways, charting her own course through London, and blissfully exerting her power without a moment's remorse. To steal a bonnet is both to embrace a gender role (taking the metonymic sign of femininity) and transcend it, since it is acquired by anti-social means. Because she vanquishes such devitalizing influences single-handedly, however, this heroine's "day well spent" exposes how cultural rules—which strive to contract women's freedom and blunt their expressive capacity—fail.

32. Shoplifting and sexual expression function in "Cassandra" and *Love and Friendship* as substitutes for each other and as ways to compensate for other losses of liberty and self-expression that the stories hint at. Elaine Abelson records how many women thieves "described the overwhelming temptation, the 'physical inability to resist' the magnetism and lure of the displays [. . .]. Although this routine explanation quickly became a cliché, it fulfilled social expectations. Women were expected to succumb to temptation" (168). What is interesting about the Juvenilia, however, is that although these women fulfill a cliché—they "succumb to temptation," Austen gives their longings a context and naturalizes them as thoroughly as if they were stealing because they were starving.

33. In several cases, however, the heroines are stealing, ironically, that which *does* belong to them, or rather to their family, but which cultural attitudes toward women and property deny them. By normalizing theft, Austen can examine a social organism in which women must "steal" their rightful inheritance. This helps explain why Eliza, in the seven-page "Henry and Eliza: A Novel," "the delight of all who knew her," "educat[ed] . . . with care and cost," taught "a Love of Virtue and a Hatred of Vice," "steal[s] a banknote of £50" from her parents, and why, once caught in the act, this "beloved" and "adored" child would be "turned out of doors" (34).[19] It may seem impossible to attribute rational or at least psychological motivations in a story where a child of three months offers "sprightly answers," hungry children "bit[e] off two of [their mother's] fingers," and a woman raises an army to "entirely demolis[h] the Dutchess's [*sic*] Newgate" (33, 37, 39). Yet we discover later all kinds of reasons and motivations which, while presented in phantasmagoric contexts, are not without significance. Sir George and Lady Harcourt, allegedly the adoptive parents of Eliza, whom they discover as a three-month old in a haycock, are in fact her biological parents, a fact the mother later admits to her husband:

> "dreading your just resentment at her not proving the Boy you wished, I took her to a Haycock & laid her down. A few weeks afterwards, you returned, & fortunately for me, made no enquiries on the subject. Satisfied within myself of the wellfare (sic) of my Child, I soon forgot I had one, insomuch that when, we shortly after found her in the very Haycock, I had placed her, I had no more idea of her being my own, than you had . . . ." (39)

As readers have noted, this passage reveals feminist savvy since the preference for boy babies and a mother's fear of disappointing her husband explains a mother's "forgetting" that she gave birth and abandoned her child, and her later "remembering" enacts the psychic economy of a woman functioning in a patriarchal society.

34. Stealing from her parents, purloining her benefactress's future son-in-law for her own husband, and then raising an army against that woman and demolishing her private prison all speak to Eliza's hunger to secure her rightful inheritance in a world that literally denies women their due under primogeniture. Although Sir George "freely forgive[s] the robbery [Eliza] was guilty of" when he finds she is his "real Child" (39, 38), the laws concerning women's ownership of private property make it seem unlikely that she would inherit whether she were adopted or "real." A woman's triumph in a corrupt society signals the conclusion of this story: selfishness, narcissism, libido, indulgence, and betrayal all enable Eliza to live and to thrive. "Henry and Eliza" suggests these are also positive terms for individualism, self-love, liberty, and social consciousness. Eliza's expression of female power, a power that she will not deny or repress, springs forth vibrantly. Exiled by her parents, she expresses her self-love in a sensuous, voluptuous way by sitting beneath a tree, "happy in the conscious knowledge of her own Excellence." She composes a little song she sings to herself for "some hours": "Though misfortunes my footsteps may ever attend / I hope I shall never have need of a Freind [sic] / as an innocent Heart I will ever preserve / and will never from Virtue's dear boundaries swerve" (34).

35. Her little mantra here, wherein she expresses hope that she can survive without losing her "Virtue" to a "Friend"—a man, we presume—further fuses the nexus between stealing and sexuality, an eighteenth century ideology arising from the premise that there was a link between erotic expression and the acquisition of wealth. And in fact, Eliza does "swerve" from "Virtue's dear boundaries." Her ability to have such "pleasing reflections" about herself as well as her "enchanting" appearance stimulate the Duchess to express her spontaneous love for Eliza: she "no sooner beheld our Heroine than throwing her arms around her neck, she declared herself so much pleased with her, that she was resolved they never more should part"; Lady Harriet, like her mother, is "so pleased with [Eliza's] appearance that she besought her, to consider her as her Sister"; Mr. Cecil, Harriet's fiancé wants immediately to marry the heroine and since the Duchess's chaplain was also "very much in love with Eliza" the private union was "easy to be effected" (35). As Margaret Doody and Douglas Murray point out, however, this is not a legal union, but merely a pro-forma ritual to justify an illegitimate sexuality: "Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act (1753) required either the publication of banns or a special license from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Here the duchess's chaplain is guilty of a felony; he is liable to fourteen years' transportation" (Doody, Murray 298-299). Impoverished in the world after her husband's death and hoping to "receive some Charitable Gratuity," Eliza positions herself such that the Postilion has "an opportunity of admiring the beauty of the prospect"—the beauty, apparently, being Eliza herself standing out in the roadway.

36. Eliza's theft from her parents, the presence of other aristocrats in the novel, and her revolutionary energy suggest Austen is linking the heroine's crimes to seditious activities at home and abroad. Although we cannot know whether this was written after 1789, it is possible that when Eliza "raised an Army, with which she entirely demolished the Dutchess's Newgate," Austen refers to the French peasants who demolish their own "Newgate," better known as the Bastille.[20] Claudia Johnson argues that this text "was written before any actual unrest in England as a result of the events in France"; however, "Henry and Eliza" could certainly be placed in the context of another "delivery," that of London's Newgate during the Gordon Riots of 1780, wherein hundreds of prisoners were set free, most of them committed for crimes against property.[21] Both of these "liberations" did what Eliza does: "gained the Blessings of thousands & the Applause of [their] own heart[s]" ("Henry and Eliza" 69). The pairing of her thievery and her destruction of the Duchess's Newgate resembles those riots, wherein, as Peter Linebaugh explains in *The London Hanged,* the rioters who freed "hundreds of

prisoners on a single night" were not "the misguided actions of an ignorant, drunken mob, . . but on the whole, journeymen or wage earners, [whose] . . . targets were chosen less because of their religious affiliation than because of their wealth" (333-4). Thus, while the Duchess's private Newgate can stand in for the actual Newgate, it could also refer to the other occurrences that week in 1780, to wit, the "liberating" of other private homes owned by aristocrats, as well as other jails, magistrates' houses, and crimping and spunging houses (Linebaugh 336). From this point of view, Eliza's thefts from her parents, who "punis[h] the idleness of [their haymakers] by a cudgel," function as an apt fictional representation of crimes against the aristocracy during the Gordon Riots.

37. In *Love and Friendship,* taking back manifests itself as sheer Dionysian excess. There, the heroines' energy, so refreshing, though irritating, in comparison to the proper characters, as well as that strong undertext of social critique prevalent throughout the Juvenilia, reveal a celebration of liberation and gratification, even though it is satirized and even though it suggests some kind of loss at the core of its anarchy. The characters' complete insensitivity toward others offers an obvious parody on sensibility. There seems to be no room for reading the text in any other way, so tight is the caustic attack on Laura's bizarre inversion of events in order to see them as "reflect[ing] Honour on [her] Feelings and Refinement" (104). Yet, Laura and Sophia are not such monsters that one cannot sympathize with them, and, despite their absurdity, the rules they defy often need to be broken. The novel begins with loss and the story records the need to "fill" up constantly so as to experience instantaneous and sensuous satisfaction. As Laura and Sophia bolt through England and Scotland, marrying lovers they just met, losing them just as fast, as they rush through their money and that which belongs to others, as they steal to meet their needs, as they eschew any reasonable, sensible plans or interpretations for the "high" of instantaneous symbiosis, as they rush to meld with nature's beauties, their libidos turn, as Cassandra's did, "with ravenous hunger to the external world of objects" (Rickels 6). Raving incoherently in the face of her husband's death, Laura cries out, "Look at that Grove of Firs—I see a Leg of Mutton—They told me Edward was not Dead; but they deceived me—they took him for a Cucumber—" (100). Obviously hilarious, and equally obviously a parody of King Lear's speech on the moor, it is important to note that Laura focuses specifically on objects of consumption, an interesting irony, as Susan Fraiman points out, since the women and their husbands "will not admit the need for any currency but love" (76).[22] She sees a literal object—a grove of firs and inside that sees perhaps a sheep—which becomes in her state of fragmentation, a fragment itself—just the leg of the animal and the animal after death and processed for consumption. "They," however, take Edward as a Cucumber—slang for tailor? Or a phallic symbol or pure vegetative life, again, ready to be eaten? In this moment, worthy of a surrealist painting, the object's transformative power takes on a life of its own so excessive that it mystifies and yet remains tangentially referential.

38. Their rhapsodic feats of liberation, which leave their over-wrought brains "tremblingly alive" (78), center mostly on gratifying sexual desire and the heroines' frantic search for consanguinity. In contrast to "Jack and Alice," where Alice's situation preys upon her, Laura and Sophia strive to triumph, albeit manically, over what they lose or fear losing. Laura's ancestry and childhood all set off triggers for sexual excess—"my father was a native of Ireland and an inhabitant of Wales; my mother was the natural daughter of a Scotch peer by an Italian opera-girl—I was born in Spain and received my education at a convent in France" (77). Her family history of illegitimacy and her genealogical associations with Italy, Spain, and France would have been for the British multiple signifiers for erotic hypertrophy and exuberant corruption. And Laura fulfills these stereotypes: when a stranger arrives at her door and almost immediately cries out to her, "Oh! When will you reward me with Yourself?" Laura replies, "[t]his instant," and in a frankly questionable legal arrangement that allows wholly for instant sexual gratification, they "were immediately united by my Father, who tho' he had never taken orders had been bred to the Church" (82). She allies herself with Sophia in a homosocial friendship which is deeply erotically inflected: upon meeting for the first time, the two girls instantly "flew into each others arms & after having exchanged vows of mutual Friendship for the rest of our Lives,

instantly unfolded to each other the most inward Secrets of our Hearts—" (85). Their search for stimulation leads them to fantasize sexually about others and, in one instance, to concoct a passionate love affair between Janetta and Captain M'Kenzie that leads to the couple's doomed marriage. Insatiably longing for physical and emotional arousal, they are wounded if a stranger does not instantly greet them with affection. When Lindsay's father and family respond to them with "Coldness and Forbidding Reserve"; Laura is shocked that his sister does not open "her arms . . . to receive me to her Heart, tho' my own were extended to press her to mine" (82).

39. The main characters' longings exceed the heteronormative trajectory, so common to this period, that begins with romance and ends in marriage. In a scene that intimates same sex love, Edward and Augustus "fl[y] into each other's arms" and exchange deep avowals of love: "My Life! My Soul!" (exclaimed the former) "My Adorable Angel!" (replied the latter) (86). These passionate embraces cause the women to faint, perhaps suggesting that evidence of love between their husbands arouses them or perhaps because it is easier dealt with by repressing it in a swoon; the men's homosocial (and perhaps homoerotic) preference for each other over their wives is certainly fulfilled when Edward chooses to abandon Laura to accompany Augustus to jail and the two are not found until they die together after a carriage accident. Discussing this novel, Susan Fraiman argues that Austen, "particularly defiant of heterosexual last rites," has the inseparable "male cousins Philander and Gustavus crown their theatrical collaboration by removing 'to Covent Garden, where they still Exhibit under the assumed names of *Lewis and Quick*'" (78; Austen, 109).[23] Thus, despite the emphasis in medical manuals of the Romantic period on subsuming sexuality under the call for reproduction, even if that call did justify sexual pleasure, *Love and Friendship* offers multiple instances of emotional and physical fulfillment outside those confines.[24] Roy Porter explains that "as part of the movement toward heightened sensibility, sex itself was being elevated, sublimated into the ideal realm of the mental pleasures" ("Barely Touching" 75). However, for Laura and Sophia the somatic and the mental pleasures merge, whether they are *imagining* M'Kenzie panting for Janetta or *experiencing* the sensation and pleasure they receive from "press[ing]" their hearts against each other. In "Medicalizing the Romantic Libido," Richard Sha argues that

> The general shift from a seventeenth-century vascular understanding of the body to an eighteenth-century sense of the body as a complex network of the organs of sensation, the nerves, solidifies the links between individuality and sensations—sexual and aesthetic. It is this solidifying connection between sexual desire and identity fostered by the medical literature of the period that concerns me here: as Habermas helps us to see, having an appropriate relation to pleasure and sexual pleasure makes humanity—one's right to participate in the public sphere—intelligible. (2)

Significantly, Laura and Sophie (as well as Cassandra and Anna Parker) function outside this "appropriate relation to pleasure," but also appear to act as if their longings, generated by their "organs of sensation," do solidify their sense of identity.

40. Against the girls' manic desire to fill up, to intoxicate themselves with love and with symbiotic attachments, the story posits a series of losses. The epigraph reads "deceived in Friendship & Betrayed in Love"; the first two letters from Laura to her old friend, Isabel, and Isabel's daughter, Marianne, tell of Laura's loss of her youth, beauty, charms, and accomplishments. Also "altered now!" is her former sensibility which was "too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Freinds [sic] "—but one she doubts was a fault (78). Whatever resists their attempts to fill up, whatever threatens to reject them and turn them inward toward contemplation, they themselves triumph over by ignoring or punishing. For example, when she is reproached by Isabel, Laura "paid little attention to what she said, & desired her to satisfy my Curiosity by informing me how she came there, instead of wounding my spotless reputation with unjustifiable Reproaches" (104). Although Sophia and Laura "faint alternately on a

sofa," readers familiar with this text know that the exhortation that persists after reading "Love and Friendship" is not so much a solemn homily—that is, sensibility can be used to justify selfish behavior (which it does in fact prove)—but the radiant moral that one should "beware of swoons. . . . A frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious; it is an exercise to the Body & if not too violent, is I dare say conducive to Health in its consequences—Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint—" (102).

Conclusion

41. There are several ways to understand what all the indirect sex in the Juvenilia signifies. Austen clearly is not Aphra Behn or Delarivier Manley, who "wrote popular novels that combined political scandal with graphic sexuality," as Bradford Mudge points out in *The Whore's Story* (136). However, such material as Austen includes has significance for those studying Austen and the history of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sexuality. First of all, most readers agree that the Juvenilia's raw erotic energy punctures the mythic representation that Austen's writings sprung from the head of late eighteenth-century culture in a form that was utterly refined, the very template of decorous propriety and deportment. What connection we should draw between these earlier works and her mature novels has been a debated topic. In my opinion, the stories are not anomalies of her youth and expressions of a vernal freedom later wholly censored. Instead what we find in the Juvenilia points toward what we should also pay attention to later: the critical and historical significance of the erotic content in her polished and urbane works. Thus, when Austen begins writing for publication, the joyful abandon we find in the Juvenilia does not "die," nor is it entirely repressed, and neither is the critical acumen she demonstrates in these early stories, where she satirizes the hypocritical rules some conduct books disseminate about sexuality. In other words, these "wild" characters are not so wild that they cannot be stand-ins for "normal" women who read advice manuals that pathologize desires or feelings these female readers know to be legitimate.

42. Second, historians of sexuality might find instructive the authority Austen gives to the power of the sexual imagination in these stories and to her fictional characters' implementation of that imaginative energy: on the one hand, her heroines demonstrate how young women can and did revolt against an "official line" that sent out contradictory expectations for female identity. While censorship did intensify during Austen's lifetime—in 1787, William Wilberforce founded the "Proclamation for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the preventing and punishing of Vice, Profaness, and Immorality" (Peakman 41)—readers today do not have to assume that cultural restraints exerted a completely successful hegemonic control over female desire. As Leslie A. Adelson argues, "History without bodies is unimaginable. How odd then that the grand abstraction of history would seem to obliterate the very concrete stuff of which it is made" (1). Austen takes a different direction from most conduct literature as she protests against the demonizing of women's erotic desires. And though she acknowledges that social rules can control women physically, and they can of course be internalized as self-imposed rebukes in acts of self-censorship, ultimately she clears a space for at least the imagination to spring forth in protest. Vivien Jones points out that the aim of conduct books was to teach women "how [they] might create themselves as objects of male desire, but in terms which . . . contain[ed] that desire within the publicly sanctioned form of marriage" (qtd. in Ellis 28). The problem Austen isolates is what happens when women transform themselves into "objects of male desire" but lack the opportunity to marry: where does the energy go? Or, alternatively, what happens when women vigorously pursue their pleasures—an activity conventionally thought of as "male"?

43. But the historian of sexuality could also note that Austen is not just reacting against certain theories, but also endorsing other discourses, at least as mainstream as the repressive hypotheses. The Juvenilia includes, for example, a variation on "Enlightenment attitudes toward sexuality": as Roy Porter puts it, that "nature had made men to follow pleasure, that sex was pleasurable, and that it was natural to follow one's amorous urges" *(Facts of Life* 19).[25] The notion that sex kept (married) women healthy,

the sexual lexicon in botany and science (including theories of electricity), the erotica of picturesque description—all of these gesture toward a sexual climate that women could enjoy and that in part encouraged erotic fantasy. Is it surprising then that indirect sex would show up in writings by women about women? Finally, Austen dramatizes for us that these heroines' manic acts arise from loss: that transgression in these stories is not just anarchy, but a reaction to culture's attempts to entomb their potential for physical delight. As Carole Pateman argues, "the social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract is a story of subjection" (2). The heroines in Austen's Juvenilia could be said to be trying to live according to a social rather than a sexual contract.

44. Physical intoxication both reveals and befuddles. So does a generic style that is hilariously silly and blatantly serious. Austen offers various ways of critiquing, mourning, and triumphing over cultural rituals and rules that inter women. She allows us to revel with her characters as they satisfy their Bacchanalian desires with food and drink and erotic delights. The undercurrent of these saturnalias is a melancholy deprivation of freedom and possibilities in tiny worlds such as "Pammydiddle" that cheat women out of their potential. To fend off such larceny, these heroines choose to stimulate and or to stupefy themselves—with food, with drink, with sex—to express a joy and frustration they cannot suppress. Austen uses Dionysian indulgences to provide an outlet for their energies, as a way to avoid internalizing violence, and also as a way to suggest that these manic revelries speak to an inner loss that, in turn, arises from social pressures and constraints. A short novel, like *Catharine,* is typical, as it embodies those codes in gruesome form, yet also reveals how obviously women's sexuality is both "up for sale" and firmly taboo—stolen from them and replayed back in perverse form: it is their worst power and their only power, so much so that one wonders how an unmarried or unattractive woman in her culture is ever fed. Though their intoxication reveals the wounds culture inflicts, and their inebriation and eroticism illuminates a manic and ravenous turn away from those fractures, still, in drinking, eating, sensualizing, and stealing, these young women achieve a brief and exhilarating victory as they steal their bodies back.

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Notes

* I want to offer many thanks to Richard Sha, Anna Brickhouse, Alex Dick, and Mary Favret for their inspiring suggestions as I was writing this essay.
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[1]The quotation in the title is from *The Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to his Son* (Vol. 2, 133, qtd. in Porter and Hall's *The Facts of Life* 19).
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[2] Approaches to the literary significance of the Juvenilia and of the relationship between Austen's Juvenilia and her later works vary. My argument contrasts to those below insofar as I see a closer link between the published and the unpublished writings than most critics and I interpret them as more politically charged—indeed, as significantly so—than most other readers. For example, Lord David Cecil called them "squibs and skits of the light literature of the day" (qtd. in Doody xxiii); Doody argues that Austen had to control her exuberance in her later texts: "She could not laugh so loudly in the later works. She could not be wild as she had been in the notebook Volumes. She had to become genteel, and act like a lady" (xxxviii). Sometimes they are read as insights into Austen's life: biographer Jon Spence argues that the Juvenilia provide a rich source of knowledge about Austen's young life, especially because "there is no conventional source of personal information about her [. . .] between the ages of eleven and twenty" (ix-x). Often critics read them as a precursor, a key, to the published works: "The juvenilia are precocious and sometimes amusing but they are by no means brilliant. . . . They are chiefly interesting in illuminating . . . Austen's first struggles to find a literary voice of her own" (Halperin 30). The Juvenilia Press focuses on the "concept of 'play,'" which "allows one both to avoid the implied teleology of apprenticeship and to approach juvenilia on their own terms" (Robertson 293). My own point of view is closest to that of Claudia Johnson's, especially insofar as she argues that "Austen treats conventions not as sterile devices, but as structures of human possibilities which evolve from specific social and political situations [. . .]" (52). Johnson does not discuss the role of crime in the Juvenilia in the same detail as I do.
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[3]Brian Southam argues that in "Lesley Castle," "singly the letters are quite successful, but as a whole the work lacks unity" (32).
Back

[4]Margaret A. Doody has written persuasively on the importance of the Juvenilia as texts in themselves and not as the works of an apprentice: "Jane Austen was not a child as a writer when she wrote these early pieces. She possessed a sophistication rarely matched in viewing and using her own medium [. . .]" (xxxv). Juliet McMaster explores how in juvenilia in general the presence of "sexual knowingness in a child, especially a girl" is usually met with "resistance": "[w]riting and doing it are seen as perilously close, although the same assumption would not apply in the case of subjects less loaded" ("Virginal Representations" 304-5, 302).
Back

[5]Margaret Drabble finds in them "another Jane Austen, a fiercer, wilder, more outspoken, more ruthless writer, with a dark vision of human motivation [. . .] and a breathless, almost manic energy" (xiv).
Back

[6]Juliet McMaster sums it up: "[t]hese females are frankly in pursuit of good male bodies and, by implication, good sex. The long tendency of sentimental fiction to etherealize the heroine can hardly survive against this gust of earthy comedy" ("Energy"178).
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[7]As Doody and Douglas Murray point out in their edition of the Juvenilia, the Prince Regent's affairs were well known, including his liaison with Mary Robinson and, in 1785, his well-known, though invalidated marriage to Maria Fitzherbert (295-6).
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[8]For illegal marriages, see "Henry and Eliza," "Love and Friendship," "Sir William Mountague," and "Letter the second From a Young lady crossed in Love to her friend" from "A Collection of Letters." For "natural" children, see "Love and Friendship" as well as the children conceived by characters in "Henry and Eliza," and "Letter the second From a Young lady crossed in Love to her friend."
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[9]*Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (six volumes) identifies this as '"*A* Song' in the Comedy call'd the *Biter,* Set by Mr. John Eccles, and Sung by Mr. Cook" (345).
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[10]In *Wit and Mirth*, at least sixteen songs alone have either Chloe or Strephon in their title, and these songs are, on the whole, erotic in nature. Here are two examples: in "*A* Song," Chloe "Kiss'd him up before his Dying, / Kiss'd him up, and eas'd his pain" (I, 329); in "*Young* Strephon *and* Phillis," Strephon "clasp'd her so fast: / 'Till playing and jumbling, / At last they fell tumbling; / [. . . .]'Till furious Love sallying, / At last he fell dallying, / And down, down he got him, But oh! oh how sweet, and how soft at the Bottom" (VI, 221). *Wit and Mirth,* a facsimile reproduction of the 1876 reprint of the original edition of 1719-1720, clearly remained popular for over 150 years. It would be impossible to determine exactly what songs Austen knew, though she had to have been familiar with a lot of popular music. In *The Innocent Diversion: A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen*, Patrick Piggot admits as much: "it would be idle to pretend that many of the songs and piano pieces which Jane Austen copied with such care and labour into her books are of a good musical standard. [. . .] 'Taste' is not very evident in her choice of music, too many of the items in her collection being no more than superficially pretty and sometimes worse than that [. . .]" (153).
Back

[11]Whether or not people took coins from each other often depended on how worn the coin appeared. I am very grateful to Alex Dick for his expertise in this point and in the analysis of pawning an undirected letter that follows.
Back

[12]Many thanks to Mary Favret for her valuable insights into this passage.
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[13]For further discussion of the associations between this arbor (bower) and disease, see my book, *Unbecoming Conjunctions*.
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[14]It is funny, then, in a sly, joking sort of way, that Mr. Elton is described as "spruce, black, and smiling" the night Emma finds him "actually making violent love to her" (129). The repetition is significant. According to the *OED*, when applied to costume, it suggests "a lively air, fashionable dress;" (Chesterfield, 1792), but it also carried connotations of an artificer, as in "Your spruce appearance is a perfect forgery" (Young 1755 *Centaur* ii. Wks. 1757 IV. 148) The OED cites a chronological range of sources using the word in this way: Ben Jonson refers to " A Neat, spruce, affecting Courtier (1599); Burney to "He'll make himself so spruce, he says, we sha'n't know him (1796 *Camilla* IV. 163).
Back

[15]Though Abelson is writing about thefts occurring around 100 years later than Austen, the women she describes sound in many cases like those in the Juvenilia. See *When ladies go a-thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store*.
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[16]Reynolds does not discuss the Juvenilia.
Back

[17]This was a commonplace reaction, Bleson argues, among later nineteenth-century offenders: once apprehended, "contrary to all logic and to the evidence, more than one woman rejected any conscious motive and adamantly defended herself with the assertion, ‘I am an honest and respectable woman.' This level of denial was pervasive. [. . .] Aware of the normative distinctions between stealing and not stealing, these women were seemingly incapable of sensing emotionally that their shoplifting was wrong. They told themselves they were innocent, and, however fragile their defenses, they did not think of themselves as thieves" (167-8).
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[18]They are in another way, of course, punished for their selfishness (Sophia, Augustus, and Edward all die and Laura ends up alone). As Patricia Meyer Spacks argues, "[t]he most frequently recurrent plot-generating characteristic of persons in the juvenile fiction is relentless self-interest: what we might call *narcissism*" (127).
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[19]The story's plot alludes to that of *Tom Jones*, another orphan who is abandoned by his mother, and who is then "found" and "adopted" into her family only to be later thrown out of the house because of supposed criminal activity. Tom, like Eliza, is of course recognized and rejoins his proper family in the end.
Back

[20]Dating certain pieces from the Juvenilia can only be approximate. "Henry and Eliza" is found in Volume I, which Chapman and Southam date from 1787-1790, though as Southam points out, this text was dedicated to Miss Cooper, who married on December 11, 1792 (15). Since Austen most likely wouldn't denominate her childhood friend by her maiden name after her marriage, "Henry and Eliza" could have been written up until the wedding date, though it is not clear whether it was written before or after the fall of the Bastille.
Back

[21]Linebaugh explains that trial records show that 80 of the 117 prisoners freed from Newgate had committed crimes "against property" (336).
Back

[22]Ellen E. Martin, though arguing that the Juvenilia both "cr[ies] out for interpretation, and resist[s] it

thoroughly," nevertheless offers the interesting reading that in Laura's reference to the "indigestible leg of mutton, [she] obtrusively substitut[es] it for the leg of the wrecked hero"; this is "interpretable only by a desperate appeal to the heroine's conflation of culinary and sexual appetites" (84). I do not agree that such an interpretation is a desperate move or that the texts are resistant to interpretation.
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[23]Lewis and Quick were noted actors: William Thomas Lewis—who was in such plays as Inchbald's *Everyone Has His Fault* and Cowley's *Bold Stroke for a Husband*—was at Covent Garden for 35 seasons and was the acting manager of Covent Garden between 1782-1893. He was known for parts in comedy of manners and farce. John Quick—who was in the same two plays listed above, started at the Haymarket and moved to Covent Garden; one of the best loved and highest paid actors in the CG Company, he was known for his comedy acting, creating more than 70 original roles. As far as I know there is no evidence that either Lewis or Quick were homosexual; of course, no actor could be labeled a sodomite in a visible way since it was a capital offense—thus, the playwright, Bickerstaffe, fled the country when he was accused of this "crime." I gather from Fraiman's essay that she is capitalizing on the men's close relationship (they live, travel, and work together) and the fact that even if they are not lovers, they have formed a relationship that is nontraditional by eighteenth-century standards, insofar as it is not defined by marriage. Thanks to Jeffrey N. Cox for his expertise in this matter.
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[24]Though the point of coition in *Aristotle's Masterpiece* is reproduction, this popular medical manual ignored eighteenth-century gender prejudices, and in it "women enjoy parity in sexual desire, and female desire is not viewed as grotesque or psychopathological [. . .]" (Porter, "Secrets" 14-15).
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[25]Roy Porter goes on to state that the Romantics rejected "Enlightenment sensuality as gross and materialistic" for the "idealization of love, and particularly of woman" (*Facts of Life* 32). Although sensibilities do shift throughout the nineteenth century, I believe that Porter's statements here are too sweeping and inclusive.
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

"Put to the Blush": Romantic Irregularities and Sapphic Tropes

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Without arguing for direct influence, this essay reads a group of English poems as an implicit Romantic conversation that advances different models of sapphic sublimity in a troplogical contest about the nature and place of female affinities. I begin by revisiting the exclusion of 'Christabel' from the _Lyrical Ballads_; I discuss the implicit dialogue enacted through William Wordsworth's sonnet to the 'Ladies of Llangollen' and Dorothy Wordsworth's poem 'Irregular Verses'; and I conclude with a look at the metrical practices of these poems and of Shelley's 'Rosalind and Helen' as a way to explore the ambivalences and ambiguities in Romantic configurations of female same-sex desire. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality,* a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. "Edleston and I have separated for the present," Byron laments from Cambridge in a letter of 1806, "and my mind is a chaos of hope and sorrow. . . . I certainly love him more than any human being, and neither time nor distance have had the least effect on my (in general) changeable disposition. In short, we shall put *Lady E. Butler* and *Miss Ponsonby* to the blush, *Pylades* and *Orestes* out of countenance, and want nothing but a catastrophe like *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, to give *Jonathan* and *David* the 'go by'" (30).

2. When Byron includes a pair of women in his mythography of friendship, he marks a new moment in the long history of same-sex bonds. By 1806 the public image of friendship had undergone something of a sex change, and Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, the so-called "Ladies of Llangollen" who eloped to Wales in 1778 and lived together until Butler's death in 1829, became the first female emblem for the kind of classical friendship that early modernists such as Michel de Montaigne and Jeremy Taylor had resurrected as an affair between men. As I have written elsewhere, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries private intimacies between women became public relations: European gentlewomen appropriated the cultural capital already attached to friendship between elite men as a resource in their struggle for autonomy, authority, and class privilege (Lanser 179-98). [1]

3. Yet notice the asymmetry of Byron's tropes. He doesn't speak of putting any of the male couples "to the blush," but imagines irritating and besting them as he flaunts his love for Edleston. Does the blush merely echo the cultural commonplace that renders men combative but women merely delicate? Do Butler and Ponsonby blush only because Byron's love would best theirs, or does the blush hint at something more than friendship between Butler and Ponsonby, as was possibly the case between Byron and Edleston? Whatever Byron's logic, his gendered tropes underscore the limits of imagining female-female relations within a male-male lineage. For when two men choose one another, patriarchy may be altered but is not overturned, but when two women do so, structures of male dominance are potentially compromised. As David Halperin reminds us, in patriarchal systems "women must submit to a system of compulsory heterosociality" in which "the dominating feature" is "the inescapability of sexual relations with men." Thus "sexual relations among women represent a perennial threat to male dominance, especially whenever such relations become exclusive and thereby take women out of circulation among men" (Halperin 78).

4. This threat is recognized in contemporary defenses of Butler and Ponsonby. Mary Pilkington's *Memoirs of Celebrated Female Characters* (1804), for example, comments that "so completely gratified" were

Butler and Ponsonby "in the society of each other, that they entertained the determination of never becoming wives." But she acknowledges that their families thought this decision "very unnatural" and that the two women had to "def[y] the opinion of the world" in order to "reside in the harmony of true friendship." Pilkington then uses Butler and Ponsonby to refute the assertion "that females are incapable of a permanent attachment" and to argue that women cannot to be "disqualified from feeling a passion which is calculated to dignify the human mind" (Pilkington 64-5). Anna Seward's heroic poem *Llangollen Vale* (1796) likewise recognizes Butler and Ponsonby's "sacred Friendship" as having been "assail[ed]" alike by "stern authorities" and "silken" efforts at "persuasion" (5).

5. These tributes to Butler and Ponsonby suggest that Byron's blush might stand in for both delicacy *and* defiance, characterizing exclusive female coupling at once, and paradoxically, as an epitome of virtue and a transgression of social and sexual norms. This paradox may explain why, especially during the last quarter of the century, an eruption of bawdy and satiric texts coexisted uneasily with, and could potentially undermine, idyllic representations of female friendship that seemed to be their opposite. Where friendship was a substitute rather than a supplement for marriage, and thus a transgression of the heterosexual order whether or not the relationship was itself "sexual"—and who could know?—the lines separating virtuous from transgressive alliances were often literally paper thin: a public word could make or break a reputation, especially after what Katharine Binhammer has called the 'sex panic' of the 1790s when Marie Antoinette's putative sapphism helped to pave her journey to the guillotine (409-35).

6. It is this light that I want to explore the place of women's erotic affiliations in the Romantic imagination and the tensions around which they get configured in Romantic verse. In the larger project from which I draw this discussion, I argue that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries female intimacies become a charged site for working out the epistemic changes of modernity. By the late eighteenth century, when Butler and Ponsonby had themselves become a charged site, the fragile lines separating chaste friendship from suspect sapphism were heavily class-inflected, favoring gentlewomen who did not transgress external codes of propriety and femininity. In the end, though, the fine lines of distinction depended on the words and images that surrounded a particular relationship and on the interpretive conventions through which these could be read.[2] As with Gestalt psychology's famous figure of the vase that is also two faces in profile, or the "ingenue" who can turn into a "hag," the alternative reading lurks—and becomes startlingly obvious once the figure-ground system is reversed though a perceptual shift. On paper, Butler and Ponsonby were thus variously celebrated (for the most part) and denigrated (privately and sometimes publicly) for a way of life that itself did not change: in 1790, for example, fully twelve years after their elopement, a newspaper story suddenly appeared mocking Butler as "masculine" and the couple as odd and implying that they had something to blush about. Not surprisingly, women like Butler and Ponsonby and defenders like Pilkington and Seward also took part in manipulating representations, in what sometimes amounted to an elaborate public relations scheme (Lanser 179-98).

7. I want to suggest that the transgressive potential of female friendship, with its tenuous distinction between virtuous friendship and sexual sin, urged the inscription of female intimacies into the ambiguities of figuration and hence into poetic forms. One can argue, of course, that in Romantic poetry *all* sexuality is so figured, that—to cite Stuart Curran—in Britain "there is little sex, seldom an actual body, and virtually no romance in Romanticism" ("Of Genes"). But for two somewhat contrary reasons Romantic writings may be especially important to the history of female homoeroticism. First, it is arguably the Romantic moment that spawned the modern constructions of sexual subjectivity and the attendant values of individual difference, self-fulfillment, the fatedness of attraction and the primacy of desire that have legitimated modern same-sex bonds. It is no accident that Anne Lister (1791-1840), the first Englishwoman known to have left explicit records of a self-conscious, actively sexual, and firmly homoerotic orientation, looked to Rousseau's *Confessions* and Byron's poems for the self-

authorization that enabled her to see the love of women as her proper state, the "straight" path that "nature seemed to have set out" for her (qtd. in Liddington 182).

8. Secondly and somewhat contrarily, however, female intimacies may offer a limit case for Romantic sexual ideology. It is a commonplace that many Romantic writers were accused of libertine sexual beliefs and practices, yet (or perhaps for that reason) as Richard Sha has observed, a notion of Romantic transcendence, along with Foucauldian sexual chronologies, have also tended to erase sexuality from Romanticist scholarship (Sha). Now that scholars have begun to restore sexuality to Romanticism in the process of historicizing "Romantic ideology," it becomes important to investigate the specific contours of Romantic values about sexual forms and alliances. Andrew Elfenbein's *Romantic Genius: The Prehistory of a Homosexual Role* gives the most fully articulated expression of this new project when he suggests that "sexual transgression" underwrites the genius of Romantic art and that homoeroticism in particular became a way for writers to mark their superiority.[3] Elfenbein's study explores the association of sapphism with genius in Anne Damer's life, in Anne Bannerman's poetry, and in Coleridge's self-fashioning through "Christabel." Here I want to ask what we can learn about the place of sapphism in the Romantic imagination by looking at poetic tropes—that is, at the uses of language and form in "a sense other than that which is proper" to them.[4] If, as I implied above, poetic discourse is a fertile site for transmuting suppressed content into symbolic form and for inscribing the ambiguous, the contradictory, the unspeakable, then it may hold a significant place in the history of sexuality. Parsing out the poetic contours of sapphism in Romantic poetry could thus help us accomplish one piece of the history of female homosexuality that, as David Halperin recognizes in his "History of Male Homosexuality," must be pursued separately in recognition of the enormous difference patriarchy makes in the social construction of same-sex bonds.

9. As one contribution to such a project, I will focus here on a loosely interconnected set of poems about the nature and implications of female coupling. I'll begin by revisiting "Christabel" (1816) and its exclusion from the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), where it was hastily supplanted by William Wordsworth's "Michael." I'll then explore an implicit contest about female intimacies carried out in poems by two Wordsworths: an occasional sonnet published in 1827 that William composed while visiting Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby during an 1824 tour of Wales with his wife and daughter, and a longer work titled "Irregular Verses" that Dorothy began in 1826 or 1827 for the daughter of her beloved friend Jane Pollard but which was not published until 1987. Finally, I will take up a metrical figure present in "Christabel," "Irregular Verses" and Percy Shelley's "Rosalind and Helen" (1818), with a bow as well to Anne Lister's diaries. Without arguing for direct influence, I want to read these poems as an implicit Romantic conversation that advances different models of sapphic sublimity in a tropological contest about the nature and place of female affinities.

10. "Christabel" is, of course, the best known of these poems and also the most openly sexual. Although the encounter between Geraldine and Christabel is shrouded in mystery, the poem makes clear as much through its silences as through its images that something sapphic happens in Christabel's bed that fateful night. Both Geraldine and the scene of seduction are represented primarily through metonymy and synechdoche: we know Geraldine as a "faint and sweet" voice, as white garments and a whiter neck, bright eyes, a "bosom" and "half [a] side"; we know that both women undress and become the objects of one another's gaze; that Geraldine "had" her "will" with Christabel after a psychic struggle with Christabel's "wandering mother"; that Geraldine's "spell" becomes "lord" of Christabel's "utterance"; and that the "touch" of a "bosom" reveals a "mark" of "shame" that creates a tightness "beneath [Christabel's] heaving breasts." We know that Christabel recognizes that she has "sinn'd," but experiences only "perplexity of mind" about its occasion. Of what passes in the bed we know only that Geraldine held "the maiden in her arms" and "worked" her "harms." The scene carries images of both pleasure and danger: that it is "a sight to dream of not to tell" suggests that sapphism, though unspeakable, may also be desired.[5] Herein lies the transformation into "forbidden mystery" of which

Elfenbein writes: in contrast to a text like Henry Fielding's *Female Husband* (1746), which makes sex between women only a matter "not fit to be mentioned," "Christabel" transmutes sapphic silence into the stuff of fantasy.

11. Elfenbein has argued persuasively that "Christabel" marks at once the culmination of eighteenth-century anti-sapphic satiric discourse and a transmutation of that discourse into a "lesbian sublime" (Elfenbein 177). But the fullness of this transmutation depends on a reader's ability to suppress the satire, and thus the referentiality, that underwrites the poem. Arguing that "the poem is virtually immune to historical allegory of the kind that has traditionally been associated with lesbianism," Elfenbein dismisses Hazlitt's and Wordsworth's readings of "Christabel" as obscene—and indeed one anonymous reviewer called the poem "the most obscene poem in the English Language"—as lapses of judgment to which "more discriminating readers" with a "finer aesthetic taste" would not succumb (Elfenbein 188,177). I would suggest, however, that literalized readings of "Christabel" point to an inability less aesthetic than social, and one encouraged by the poem's own recourse to the very tropes it seeks also to transcend. What I find transgressive about "Christabel" is the way in which it treads upon the fine line of external appearance that separates the gender-bending sapphist from the virtuous friend. By figuring both Christabel and Geraldine as beautifully feminine on the surface, the poem suggests that "surpassingly fair" women of high birth—and not only the potentially demonic Geraldine but the innocent Christabel—might be harboring homoerotic desires. When Coleridge makes Geraldine's body only half visible, he exploits and arguably plays with old fears that women who desired women were hermaphrodites, and some of Coleridge's reviewers did imagine Geraldine's hidden side as "terrible and disgusting" and "all deformity."[6] Moreover, in a perverse doubling, Geraldine seems to be exploiting lesbianism in the service of a marriage plot just as eighteenth-century "female husbands" were accused of doing when they seduced innocent young women with an aim toward marrying for wealth or rank. And at least one reviewer did fret that Geraldine's seduction of Christabel resembled "the spells of vicious example in real life" (Condor 210).

12. We may never know whether this anxiety about "real life" figured in the oddly belated distress "Christabel" created for one or both Wordsworths. Coleridge had written the poem's first section in 1797 and completed Part II for the second (1800) edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, for which it was to serve as the concluding poem. As biographers have reported, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote in her journal on October 4, 1800, after a visit in which Coleridge apparently read the poem aloud, the subjectless sentence, "Exceedingly delighted with the 2nd part of "Christabel." Coleridge apparently read out the poem once more on October 5 and, says Dorothy, "we had increasing pleasure." Yet on the third day, the journal states without elaboration: "Determined not to print 'Christabel' with the LB" (Wordsworth, *Journals* 24-5).

13. Scholars have of course wondered why "Christabel" was so "suddenly and inexplicably dropped," and John Worthen has claimed that there is "very little evidence and very few facts" to justify contentiously partisan readings of this development (Eilenberg 4; Worthen 10). Richard Matlak speculates that Wordsworth had begun to recognize the need "to battle for his creative life against the remarkable gifts of originality and imitative prowess Coleridge possessed" (Matlak 82). It's most probable that in the end "Christabel" seemed too great a departure from the poetics of *Lyrical Ballads* as a whole; William did write to his publisher that the style of "Christabel" "was so discordant from my own that it could not be printed along with my poems with any propriety," though as Susan Eilenberg points out, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is surely discordant as well (qtd. in Eilenberg 10). Taking "propriety" to signify both decorum and property, Eilenberg argues that Wordsworth rejected "Christabel" in a struggle against Coleridge for literary ownership. Others have suggested that Wordsworth may simply have chosen the path of prudence: the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* had already faced troubles, and when "Christabel" finally was published, it did meet with several mocking and scathing reviews. It's possible that the Wordsworths were concerned too about Coleridge's failure to complete the poem

and did not think it could be printed in its unfinished form.

14. None of these plausible answers explains why William's and/or Dorothy's negative reaction to the poem was so sudden and belated, nor do we know whether William or Dorothy led the charge. In any event, it is tempting to see in this decision a re-enactment of "Christabel" itself, with the Wordsworths belatedly resisting a seduction that would have turned into a malediction. If so, then belated concern about the sexual tenor of the poem cannot be ruled out. Alaric Alfred Watts reports his mother's description of a visit with Wordsworth in 1824 or 1825 in which the subject of "Christabel" came up; as she reports, Wordsworth "'did not dissent from my expressions of admiration of this poem, but rather discomposed me by observing that it was an indelicate poem, a defect which it had never suggested itself to me to associate with it."[7] Like the Janus-faced Gestalt portraits, "Christabel" lends itself to partial screens.

15. Whatever the Wordsworths' motives, the decision to exclude "Christabel" certainly posed immediate problems: the new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was already in press and Wordsworth had to order the proofs destroyed. It was in this pressure for composition that Wordsworth's "Michael" had its genesis. I am not the first to suggest that "Michael" carries on an internal dialogue with "Christabel." Eilenberg has argued that "Michael" is "a work of [conscious or unconscious] usurpation" that re-enacts Wordsworth's anxiety about the "foreign" within his own literary property but that, in reworking "Christabel," leaves in its "self-thwarting narrative structure" the traces of Wordsworth's transgression against his friend (Eilenberg 97). Building on Eilenberg's recognition that "Michael" appropriates many concrete details of "Christabel" ("oak tree, faithful dog, troubling dream, and morally emblematic lamp," the alienation of children from parents, an old friend's evil to which a child is sacrificed), I want to suggest that "Michael" also revises "Christabel's" constructions of gender and sexuality to reinstate a socially safer emotional economy (Eilenberg 98-9).

16. I read "Michael" as at once a heterosexual pastoral and a paean to male bonding, twin projects that, as Eve Sedgwick famously demonstrated in *Between Men*, are often mutually constitutive. If "Christabel" offers us an unholy aristocratic alliance, "Michael" recreates the poor but honest Holy Family of loving father, loving mother, and beloved son. The poem makes a point that Michael "had not passed his days in singleness. / He had a Wife" (80-81), but she is not named until the time of Luke's departure in line 254. Twenty years Michael's junior (as Geraldine is presumably junior by a generation to Sir Leoline), Isabel is without question the least important family member, the one who makes the homosocial bond of father and son materially possible, the one who knows and keeps her place. Michael is as much mother as father, doing "female service" to the child and rocking his cradle "with a woman's gentle hand," further subordinating the need for the mother just as the pre-eminence of the father-son bond subordinates the marital to the filial relationship: Michael and Luke even become "playmates."

17. In substituting "Michael" for "Christabel," then, Wordsworth restores the dignity of the paterfamilias and privileges filial alliances between men over erotic relations with women. If Geraldine is a dangerous shape-shifter wreaking domestic havoc, Michael is a safe one who reaps domestic bliss: he is at once father, brother, and mother to his only son, yet he is as upright as Geraldine is queer. When trouble enters, it remains afar, and while the mountaintop cottage will ultimately be destroyed, while Michael and Isabel live it is incorruptible. Insofar as we can read "Michael" as an instance of the sublime, its sublimity seems to me to lie in the tragic demise of the humble trinitarian family that had been elevated wholly by virtue and industry to its high place.

18. The project of substitution that erases "Christabel" for "Michael" is also enacted in the sonnet to Butler and Ponsonby that Wordsworth wrote in 1824. If "Christabel" uncovers the possibility that sapphic desire can overtake the daughters of noblemen, "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P.," seems bent on re-covery. Titled to convey nothing so much as title itself, the poem mutes sapphic desire through re-

naming and metaphor. Like "Michael," "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P." instantiates pastoral over gothic sublimity, repeating what became a longstanding difference of more than poetics between Coleridge and Wordsworth. Where "Christabel" feigns silence yet tells all in a poem left deliberately unfinished due to its "subtle and difficult" idea, William's sonnet gives a sense of fullness and closure, of an absence of mystery, a translation of anything foreign into ordinary Englishness (Coleridge, *Specimins* 114).[8] At the same time, however, Wordsworth inscribes this project of substitution into the sonnet itself, so that the cover-up can be dis-covered quite readily.

> To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P.
> Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824.
>
> A Stream, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
> Along the Vale of Meditation flows;
> So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
> In Nature's face the expression of repose;
> Or haply there some pious hermit chose
> To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim;
> To whom the wild sequestered region owes,
> At this late day, its sanctifying name.
> Glyn Cafaillgaroch, in the Cambrian tongue,
> In ours, the Vale of Friendship, let this spot
> Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
> On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long;
> Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
> Even on this earth, above the reach of Time![9]

19. "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P." is sparing in references to its addressees, who appear only twice, and only as pronouns, before the thirteenth line. The poem subordinates them to the landscape of Llangollen Vale in which legend and literature had inscribed them, yet the sonnet never names Llangollen itself. Instead, an elaborate set of synechdoches ends up carrying so attenuated a relationship to the women as to substitute the place for the persons rather than evoking the persons by the place. Instead of the "mingling" of Butler and Ponsonby, we get the "mingling" of stream and river; the women "favour" the river rather than one another; they "have abode so long" not with each other but "on Deva's banks"; and when their love is finally proclaimed—twice over—in the closing couplet —it arrives in the trope of sisterhood, a trope arguably not devoid of erotic potential for a Wordsworth, but hardly the marital partnership that Butler and Ponsonby lived out. And they have been faithful not to one another but to "a low-roofed Cot," an image that rather flattens the imposing enough two-story home of whose improvements they were so proud. (Arguably the "Cot" could also stand for their shared bed, a place, like the vale itself, not of excitement but of "repose," its low roof a signifier of the phallic lack.) Eventually—in the sonnet's last couplet—the love does rise—or rather, more laboriously, climb—but only, it seems, because it is "allowed" to do so, as if against someone's will. Transcending "the reach of Time," it receives immortality—and perhaps sublimity—at the body's expense.

20. The sonnet's central project is one of renaming, of purifying the "new place" (Plas Newydd, as Butler and Ponsonby had named their home) that had become a cultural metonym for women in love. Although "fierce Britons" have already supplied a sanctifying place-name, Wordsworth must rename the vale yet again, displacing the "Cambrian tongue" to cover or supplement the sanctifying name with one that reinforces the Anglicization of Celtic space. In naming the Glyn the Vale of Friendship, whatever is fierce or wild is yet a second time covered by English gentility. One must smile, however, when one learns that in the Welsh, Wordsworth in his misspelling has actually named this the Vale of Horse Haunches or Horse Shanks—"Glyn Cafaillgaroch"—close to, but not the same as, the correct

word for friendship, "Cyfeillgarwch"—an unintended signifier of the physicality that the poem shows itself in the act of covering.

21. That the sonnet *is* a cover story is suggested by Wordsworth's private account of meeting Butler and Ponsonby, which was published with the poem in 1881. The women appear to him a bizarre and rather gothic pair: "so curious was the appearance of these ladies, so elaborately sentimental about themselves and their 'Caro Albergo', as they named it in an inscription on a tree that stood opposite," and "so oddly was one of these ladies attired that we took her, at a little distance, for a roman Catholic priest. . . . They were without caps, their hair bushy and white as snow, which contributed to the mistake" (Wordsworth, *Complete*). Such a passage makes clear the selectivity of the images in the sonnet and the project of substitution that erases Butler and Ponsonby's strange, curious, odd, old, and foreign—Catholic, Italian—style.

22. "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P.," then, reaffirms the difference between "Michael" and "Christabel" in the *Lyrical Ballads*, instantiating English domesticity where alien wildness and transgressive gender might have reigned. Against Coleridge's gothic horror we have Wordsworth's cleansing rite. Where Coleridge points to the sexual through metonym, Wordsworth erases it through metaphor. These two poems, aesthetically and formally incommensurate to be sure, seem to me nonetheless to embody the oppositions that sapphic subjectivity is negotiating in the Romantic age: on the one hand, the secret realm of the sexualized and dangerous, on the other the public and sisterly space of the pastoral.

23. Mediating these poetic postures, whether in explicit response or only implicit dialogue, is Dorothy Wordsworth's "Irregular Verses," which laments the loss of just the kind of female affinity that Butler and Ponsonby lived out. Wordsworth lost her mother at six and her father at twelve and lived most of her childhood apart from her family. She loved two people with particular passion and in different ways lost both of them. Much has rightly been written about Dorothy's devotion to William, and without question William provided the most lasting connection of her life. But Dorothy also loved Jane Pollard, her closest friend in Halifax, and the biographical record has played down the intensity of that love. Dorothy had hoped to make a life with Jane, assuring her in one early letter that "no man I have seen has appeared to regard me with any degree of partiality; nor has anyone gained my affections, of this you need not doubt" (Dorothy Wordsworth, *Letters* 26). As her own doubts assail her, she tells Jane that "no words can paint my affection and friendship for you my dear Girl. When shall we meet! sometimes I am in despair and think that happy time will never arrive, at others I am all hope, but despair, alas! frequently gets the better of me" (*Letters* 14). Another letter imagines their reunion:

> I entreat you my love to think . . . of what will be our felicity when we are again united . . . think of our moonlight walks attended by my own dear William, think of our morning rambles when we shall--after having passed the night together and talked over the pleasures of the preceding evening, steal from our lodging-room, perhaps before William rises, and walk alone enjoying all the sweets of female friendship. I have nothing to recommend me to your regard but a warm honest and affectionate heart, a heart that will be for ever united to yours by the tenderest friendship, that will sympathize in all your feelings and palpitate with rapture when [I] once more throw myself into your arms (*Letters* 100).

It is interesting that the triadic family Dorothy imagines here bears the shape not of "Michael" or of the biographical threesome that forged the *Lyrical Ballads*—two Wordsworths and Coleridge—but that of the Leolines: two women and a man. Here Dorothy is the hinge uniting William and Jane.

24. But William, of course, married, and so did Jane, and in her later years an ill and emotionally isolated

Dorothy lamented happier times when longing was still tempered by hope. Most of Dorothy Wordsworth's poetry dates from these years; she seems to have used the poems as a means of measuring early fantasies against her later life. Among the several interesting features of this poetry are lush images that one can read as sexual: "foaming streamlets," "secret nooks," and rocks "with velvet moss o'ergrown" and "hips of glossy red" to which the poet is "tempted" and "seduced." But Wordsworth's most pervasive image is the woodland cottage that she chooses explicitly against the sublimity of a "Kubla Khan" in a passage that also opposes womblike shelter to phallic heights: "the shelter of our rustic Cot / Receives us, & we envy not / The palace or the stately dome" (Dorothy Wordsworth, *Romanticism* 175-237).[10]

25. Asked by Jane Pollard's daughter Julia to write a Christmas verse, Dorothy began her extended work on the poem she would call "Irregular Verses." While the poem is clearly not a direct response to William's sonnet, it imagines a romantic pastoral much like the one associated with Butler and Ponsonby: a life "exquisite and pure" in "a cottage in a verdant dell" enveloped by plenitude. The Llangollen couple were famous for their gardens, and Dorothy creates here likewise a "garden stored with fruits and flowers / And sunny seats and shady bowers," supporting a life whose completeness is emphasized through the repetition of "all" and "every" in lines 7-8. But Dorothy infuses sexuality back into the scene, as if revising her brother's imagery and suggesting the compatibility of pleasure and virtue in female same-sex bonds. Where Butler and Ponsonby were described as faithful to a "low-roofed Cot," Dorothy and Jane "raised a tower/Of bliss" (13-14). Their stream does not merely "mingle" but "foams"; their wanderings "to the topmost height" are invited rather than simply allowed; and there is no "lack." This project of "hope untamed" is not "vexed" by "maxims of caution" or "prudent fears." Moreover and defiantly, this is a state that has no need of poetry or of the now-reverenced "Poet" (evoked in line 60) who might as likely be William as a generic type.

26. Surely this scene figures a sapphic sublimity implicitly as sexual as that of "Christabel" but without any of Coleridge's predatory and foreboding images. The difference makes it worth speculating that Dorothy may have influenced the rejection of "Christabel" for the *Lyrical Ballads* once she came to terms with its partially demonic rendering of sapphic desires. But "Irregular Verses" turns away from its own "sight to dream of" to the barren reality that befalls not those who transgress but those who are afraid to transgress, as we suddenly learn that "the cottage fled in air" and the "streamlet never flowed." These images—a cottage that flees, a stream that never flowed—suggest an *un*natural turn, "by *duty* led," from what would have been a natural happiness with Jane, who has traded the "brighter gem" of their youth together for a "prince's diadem." (Jane Pollard married a linen manufacturer from Leeds and bore eleven children.) Jane's daughter, the "natural" fruit of this marriage, is figured as "placid" and "staid," a poor copy of the mother with whose heart the writer's own still beats in unison. And even poetry—William's child, one could argue—is superfluous where there is love, Dorothy suggests in a passage that surely raises questions about a woman who centered her life on her brother and his work.

27. Wordsworth apparently worked intensely on this poem over a period of several years; that she made at least three fair copies suggests that she wanted the poem to circulate. But key lines and sections of the poem are absent from the two variant copies: the entire last section (84-107); the mention in line 16 of a "bliss that (so deemed we) should endure" and, most dramatically, the section that begins with the fleeing cottage and extends to the prince's diadem (39-55). In other words, the variant versions skirt the drama of homoerotic desire and its concession to heterosexual convention that is at the heart of the poem: the rupture itself and the constancy of the longing after so many years: the love that is also, if differently, "beyond the reach of Time." If this kind of self-silencing testifies to the difficulty of articulating sapphic desires and losses, it also leaves an idyllic residue in which the scene of parting is erased.

28. The representation of female intimacy in "Irregular Verses," as the poem's own title suggests, extends

beyond content and image to poetic form. Dorothy used the word "irregular" in the titles of three of her poems, but "Irregular Verses" bears the most glaring metrical aberrance of the three: the moment in line 43, the only line of heptameter in the poem: "Though in our riper years we each pursued a different way." Visually as well as aurally distinct, this line breaks the poem in two just at the moment of breach in the relationship. This "irregularity" seems to me to be a powerful poetic statement in itself, a truth the speaker "ne'er strove to decorate" and thus refuses to reduce to the tetrameter that is the poem's basic metric form. The few lines of hexameter also stand out for their common theme: the brightness of youth, the joys one remembers, the beloved's "rising sigh" for what could not be. In this uses of irregular metrics, prosody itself turns into trope: it stands in for, or figures, something that cannot be said straightforwardly.

29. But as readers of Virgil well know, the pastoral is already charged with homoerotic possibilities. It is a female inscription of these possibilities for bliss in a "humble cottage"—a gender swerve that parallels the one Byron makes in his list of loving couples—that Dorothy Wordsworth's "Irregular Verses" takes up as it mediates the poetic poles here represented by Coleridge and William Wordsworth. Whether in explicit response to her brother or only in implicit dialogue, "Irregular Verses" mourns for just the kind of female affinity that Butler and Ponsonby lived out. Wordsworth loved two people with particular passion and in different ways lost both of them. Much has been written about the metrics of "Christabel," and it is not my intention to argue that Coleridge's meter (which, as several critics have noted, he himself does not accurately describe)[11] is simply a function of the "irregular" sexuality of the text. But the preface does suggest some connection between the text's "imagery or passion" and its prosody and Coleridge's choice of the term "wantonly" underscores the possibility that the "passion" in question is sexual. Ann Batten Cristall's use of "irregular" in the subtitle for both her 1795 volume *Poetical Sketches in Irregular Verse* and for a very specific (male-female) love poem, "Thelmon and Carmel: An Irregular Poem," also links sexuality to irregular prosody.

30. My suggestion that sexual content in particular may be connected to professions of irregular poetic form finds a further source in yet another poem about two women, Percy Shelley's "Rosalind and Helen" (1818). Shelley's "modern eclogue" is prefaced by a disclaimer similar to that of "Christabel" and possibly influenced by it: "the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story," says Shelley, "determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it" (Shelley 186). As Shelley scholar Neil Fraistat assures me, this claim of "irregularity" is rare if not unique in Shelley's work. A poem that is probably biographical in source, evoking what John Donovan describes as a rupture of "the long intimacy between Mary and her girlhood companion Isabel Baxter," "Rosalind and Helen" projects a fantasy of reunion that "transforms into a critical and revisionary feminism that is plotted so as to close on an image that marries the domestic and the sublime" (Donovan 245, 269). It's important to point out, however, that this sublimity, like that in Wordsworth's sonnet, is also structured to transcend time; the poem devotes much less attention to Rosalind and Helen's union than to their deaths, and the final, conditional message is that "*if* love die not in the dead / As in the living, none of mortal kind / Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind" (ll. 1316-1318).

31. Moreover, while this sublime and domestic union of two women is never articulated as sexual—though the use of the Shakespearean names is certainly suggestive—the early tension between the two women is marked as a bodily phenomenon, as if subliminity has to overcome a certain physical repulsion that subtly evokes "Christabel." When the two first re-encounter one another, although Helen asks her "sweet Rosalind" to "come sit by me" and recalls the "cherished token" of Rosalind's "woven hair" (36-37) that she still keeps, Rosalind speaks of Helen's "tainting touch" (42) and Henry describes Rosalind as "strange" (91). When Helen finally takes Rosalind's hand as they meet again at evening, the text makes a point to say that Helen is now "*un*repelled" (my emphasis), implying an earlier repulsion. While this "taint" and "repulsion" can be explained on one level by the friends' painful history, it sits

upon the text as a physical obstacle to be overcome before the pair can settle with their children in what Dorothy Wordsworth might have called a "cottage of bliss." But the metrical scene of this domestic union is a scene of irregularity; it's worth noting that one of the least euphonious if not technically irregular pairs of lines in the poem is the one that tells us: "So Rosalind and Helen lived together / Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again" (1275-76).

32. Without reducing metrics to sexuality, I would note that even William Wordsworth's sonnet to Butler and Ponsonby is irregular within the context of his *oeuvre*: while the *overwhelming* majority of his sonnets are Petrarchan, "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P." is mainly Spenserian, with an oddly Petrarchan third quatrain, and its final rhymed couplet is an exceeding rarity among Wordsworth's 500-odd sonnets. (I've found it only in "Scorn Not the Sonnet," where Wordsworth purposes are manifestly metatextual.) Whether to heroize Butler and Ponsonby or to foreclose all openness, that couplet puts the poem, like the "sisters in love," beyond the reach of earthly scrutiny.[12]

33. Dorothy Wordsworth's poems, however, show a fascination with an irregularity that is aberrant in the works of William Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. There are images of being "tempted" to a road with a "serpent line" or "lured by a little winding path" for which the speaker quits "the public road." But irregularity is even more prominent in Wordsworth's prosody. Several poems have stanzas of differing lengths, and many feature irregular lines. A sudden hexameter will burst forth from a poem written in tetrameter, for instance, or a line will turn up that is difficult to scan at all. I am struck by the fact that many of the irregular lines express loss and longing: for example "Thither your eyes may turn —the Isle is passed away" in "Floating Island," or the more hopeful "And I can look upon the past without a pang, without a fear" in "To Rotha Quillinan." Three of her twenty-five or so poems use "irregular" in their titles or subtitles: "A Holiday at Gwerndovennant: Irregular Stanzas," "Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses Addressed to a Child," and "Irregular Verses."

34. These multiple instances suggest that for Dorothy Wordsworth, "irregularity" was a declaration of poetic style and arguably of identity. Since Dorothy reworked most of her poems on several occasions, she certainly could have purged them of metrical anomalies. (And surely William could legitimately have labeled his "Ode: Intimates of Immortality" as "Irregular Stanzas" too.) It is also clear that Dorothy Wordsworth knew how to write in common scansion, yet her niece Dora Wordsworth claimed that "*Aunt cannot write regular metre*," and Dorothy herself wrote in 1806, "I have no command of language, no power of expressing my ideas, and no one was ever more inapt at molding words into regular metre. I have often tried when I have been walking alone (muttering to myself as is my Brother's custom) to express my feelings in verse; feelings, and *ideas* such as they were, I have never wanted at those times; but prose and rhyme and blank verse were jumbled together and nothing every came of it" (Dora Wordsworth [needspg#]; Dorothy Wordsworth 66). Given her rejection of more regular verse as "jingling rhyme," however, might this apparent self-criticism not function as a backhanded claim to originality? In the Preface to her *Poetical Sketches* Ann Batten Cristall apologizes in what may be a similarly disingenuous way for her irregularities of prosody by saying that they are the "wild" practices of one "without the knowledge of any rules" and that her poetic subjects are likewise perhaps ill-advised; but she also uses that irregularity as the grounds for a claim that her work is original: "I can only say that what I have written is genuine, and that I am but little indebted either to ancient or modern poets" (Cristall 11).

35. I want to speculate that Dorothy Wordsworth's insistence on "irregularity," repeated in the tropes of so many poems, constitutes something of what Foucault would call a "reverse discourse" or "reverse practice" that was also produced by women of more obvious sapphic propensity such as Anne Lister, and that serves to tie sexuality to genius in yet another way. If, as I have written elsewhere,[13] gentrywomen could create cover stories for sapphic affinities by asserting both their class status and their femininity—hence their *regularity*—it is all the more interesting that some of them nonetheless

present themselves as *ir*regular. Even as Butler and Ponsonby nurtured a surface—and a surfeit—of pastoral and domestic tropes that helped to screen out sexual suspicion, they also named one of their dogs Sapho, made no pretense of separate rooms or separate beds, called one another "my Beloved," wore mannish riding coats long after these were in fashion, and allowed themselves numerous eccentricities that set them apart from the norms of women imagined by Rousseau. Anne Lister, indeed, as much as *becomes* Rousseau: in her journal Lister quotes from the *Confessions* that "I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world" and fashions herself as a "soft, gentleman like" and quite self-consciously irregular figure.

36. In this light, Anne Lister and Dorothy Wordsworth bear some striking sympathies. Like Wordsworth, Lister longed for a primary affiliation with a woman (Mariana Lawton) who grieved her by marrying. Wordsworth created irregular verse forms for sexual images; Lister wrote sexual acts into her journals in secret code. When Lister finally visited the home of Butler and Ponsonby, her longing evokes the mood of "Irregular Verses": Llangollen, she says, "excited in me . . . a sort of peculiar interest tinged with melancholy. I could have mused for hours, dreampt dreams of happiness, conjured up many a vision of . . . hope" (44). Lister's diaries evoke the plot of "Irregular Verses," a plot of love, loss and longing for a woman who has chosen marriage to a man, and Lister shares Dorothy's disdain for those who marry from "caution" and "prudence": Mariana, like Jane Pollard, is "too tamely worldly." Lister reports that she "felt low" after leaving Llangollen, wistful to see Butler and Ponsonby together, with Mariana at her side.

37. In Anne Lister's diaries and Dorothy Wordsworth's poems, sapphic scenarios get written into what their contemporary Felicia Hemans might have called "the stately Homes of England"—or in Wordsworth's case, the "cottage Homes." For Lister, as for Wordsworth, writing was the primary way to make sense of oneself in a world where "elective affinities" were still rarely—and not even in Goethe's novel of that name—to be lived out. As she recasts her desires *as* language, Lister, like Wordsworth, holds on to irregularity as a kind of master trope for inscribing herself as a subject, and like so many men and women both during the Romantic moment and since, she invokes an image of Butler and Ponsonby, more or less put to the blush, as the Personification of same-sex desire. "Throwing my mind on paper always does me good," Lister writes after her melancholy visit to Llangollen. One can see Byron making a similar use of writing when he soothes the "chaos of hope and sorrow" of parting from Edlestone by vowing to put Butler and Ponsonby "to the blush." Indeed, the "Ladies of Llangollen" can also be understood as a Romantic trope figuring the sublimity and the sorrows of same-sex desire at a time of intense cultural ambivalence and ambiguity.

38. The poems I have examined here inscribe that ambivalence and ambiguity both in their configurations of desire and in their visions of its fulfillment. If "Christabel" makes sapphism a mysterious compulsion with devastating effects, William Wordsworth tames it into chaste sisterhood while Dorothy Wordsworth restores its erotic sublimity through metaphor. But Dorothy also inscribes the *materiality* of desire: the pastoral spaces where it might dwell, the social and economic barriers to its fulfillment, and the emotional consequences of abandoning desire for safety. It's also worth nothing that of all the poems, it is only Wordsworth's sexless sonnet that sustains a union of two women against some form of loss.

39. The political philosopher Jacques Rancière has suggested that it is metaphors and stories, not rational argument as Habermas would have it, that most effectively shepherd previously unrecognized groups into a position where their rights can be recognized. This is indeed the value (and also the limitation) of the trope: it can figure without even confronting its own implicit ideology. In this light, the figurations of sapphism in Romantic poetry may have helped to make possible the social changes that the poets themselves might neither have imagined nor approved. It is worth remembering, therefore, that the very meaning of "trope" lies in irregularity. Drawn from the Greek *tropein*, to turn, the trope *is* a

perversion, a breaking of rules, a seduction of language from its proper course. It is also perversely true, of course, that without tropes there is not much that we can say. Rather like same-sex union itself, then, the trope is a kind of 'elective affinity,' and one without which there would surely be no representation, no poetry, and perhaps nothing to blush about.

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Notes

[1] See, "Befriending the Body: Female Intimacies as Class Acts," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32 (Winter 1998-99), 179-98, and "The Political Economy of Same-Sex Desire," in *Attending to Early Modern Women V*.
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[2] In the later eighteenth century, public opinion seems to have been especially susceptible to three particular axes of perception: the "femininity" or "masculinity" of the women in question; the extent to which they adhered to proprieties of class and gender; and their social rank. Long-term, female attachments that

conformed externally to social codes, and were lived out by women of what I call the gentle classes, had the greatest chance of passing for pure.
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[3] See Andrew Elfenbein, *Romantic Genius: The Prehistory of a Homosexual Role*, 203, 14, and *passim*.
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[4] I take this definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
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[5] At another level of figuration, one could argue that Geraldine and Christabel are themselves metonyms of their fathers: just as the spell upon Christabel becomes "Lord of [her] utterance," so Geraldine's seduction of daughter and father alike can be read as the revenge of her own father, Lord Roland de Vaux. But Geraldine is also arguably taking her revenge against patriarchy itself; seized forcibly at the outset by "five warriors," left "scarce alive" beneath the maternal "broad-breasted" oak, Geraldine wreaks vengeance on the Father by violating first the daughter and then perhaps the family line.
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[6] Had Coleridge not excised the description of Geraldine as "old and lean and foul of hue," or "Hideous, deformed, and pale of hue," it might have been more difficult to read sublimity into the poem. Susan Eilenberg reports the former deleted line in *Strange Power of Speech: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Literary Possession*, 104; Arthur Nethercot reports the latter in *The Road to Tryermaine: A Study of the History, Background, and Purposes of Coleridge's "Christabel"*, 32.
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[7] Alaric Alfred Watts, *Alaric Watts: A Narrative of His Life*, I, 239. I owe my knowledge of this reference to Elfenbein's *Romantic Genius*, but Elfenbein does not explain that Wordsworth's comment postdates by half a century his decision about the *Lyrical Ballads*.
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[8] I thank Neil Fraistat for suggesting this contrast between "Christabel" and the sonnet.
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[9] "To the Lady E. B. and the Hon. Miss P." was first published in *Miscellaneous Sonnets* (1827) as part of the five-volume edition of Wordsworth's Poems. I have taken this version from *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, 216.
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[10] Dorothy Wordsworth's extant poems have been gathered and edited by Susan M. Levin, *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*, 175-237.
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[11] See, for example, Brennan O'Donnell, "The 'Invention' of a Meter: 'Christabel' Meter as Fact and Fiction," *JEGP* 100, 4 (October 2001): 511-36; and Margaret Russett, "Meter, Identity, Voice: Untranslating *Christabel*," *SEL* 43, 4 (Autumn 2003): 773-97.
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[12] It's also worth noting that each of these poems also yokes female affiliations to charged family ties, supporting Foucault's hypothesis that at the turn of the nineteenth century kinship and sexuality have

converged in ways that give domestic relations a new burden of affectivity. Sapphism and incest both stand at the crossroads between kinship demands and elective desires: if incest undoes kinship by overloading it from within, sapphism undoes it by displacing it from without.
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[13] See Lanser, "Befriending the Body."
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

How to Do the History of Pornography: Romantic Sexuality and its Field of Vision*

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Romantic fiction inherited the eighteenth century's conflicted attitudes about novelistic pleasure but was itself produced in a cultural marketplace that had not yet fixed and formulated the discursive opposition between 'literature' and 'pornography.' Overshadowed by Michel Foucault's discussion of the medical-moral discourse and its role in the transformation of sex into sexuality in the late eighteenth century, the emergence of 'literature' and 'pornography' as diametrically opposed but mutually dependent discursive categories occurred at precisely the same time. This essay considers these issues and suggests that the emergence of 'literature' and 'pornography' can best be understood by rethinking how sexual bodies are represented in romantic fiction, specifically how the sexual bodies of Gothic melodrama contrast to their counterparts in realist novels of manners. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body.

—Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971)

Is not the erotic portion of the body *where the garment gapes*? In perversion (which is the realm of textual pleasure) there are no "erogenous zones" (a foolish expression, besides); it is intermittence, as psychoanalysis has so rightly stated, which is erotic: the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing (trousers and sweater), between two edges (the open-necked shirt, the glove and the sleeve); it is this flash itself which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance.

—Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973)

The problem with the body as a positive slogan [of the irreducible, material real] is that the body itself, as a unified entity, is an Imaginary concept (in Lacan's sense); it is what Deleuze calls a "body without organs," an empty totality that organizes the world without participating in it. We experience the body through our experience of the world and of other people, so that it is perhaps a misnomer to speak of the body at all as a substantive with a definite article, unless we have in mind the bodies of others, rather than our own phenomenological referent.

—Fredric Jameson, "The End of Temporality" (2003)

1. This essay takes as its subject both the sexual body as represented in British romantic fiction and the imagination (is it "literary" or "pornographic"?) that was required to envision that body as a narrative event. Situated after the high watermark of "libertine literature" in the 1740s and 50s but before the emergence of "pornography" proper in the 1830s and 40s, romantic fiction inherited the eighteenth century's conflicted attitudes about novelistic pleasure but was itself produced in a cultural marketplace that had not yet fixed and formulated the discursive opposition between "literature" and "pornography." Overshadowed by Foucault's discussion of the medical-moral discourse and its role in

the transformation of sex into sexuality—of sexual acts as isolated performances of a subject into sexual identity as a totalizing subjectivity derived from those acts—the emergence of "literature" and "pornography" as diametrically opposed but mutually dependent discursive categories occurred at precisely the same time that sexology began the work that would provide Foucault with his most compelling example: the creation of "homosexuality" (*The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, 42-45, 85-91).[1] With all due haste, in other words, historians of sexuality have considered the mid-nineteenth-century transformation of the sodomite into the homosexual but have neglected to connect the evolution of pornography to that same seismic, discursive shift. Relegated to the periphery, perhaps because of its own unseemly nature or perhaps because its fantasies appear less ideologically forceful than those of medicine or public policy, pornography remains an undervalued but crucially important feature of the modern state, a discourse whose status as worthless, forgettable, and disposable belies both its ubiquity and its undisputed economic power. Writing with confidence in the influential collection, *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, for example, Julia Leslie notes, "There were two main discourses about sexuality in early modern England, one religious, one medical" (83). Historians of literature would disagree, of course, insisting that various kinds of literature, say restoration drama or the eighteenth-century novel, were similarly influential and similarly important as antecedents to the "modern" sexuality of the nineteenth century. Those with knowledge of libertine literature might even suggest that all of its various forms—bawdy poetry, whore dialogues, criminal biographies, divorce proceedings, salacious medical treatises, scandal fiction, etc—together constituted a "proto-pornography" also worthy of consideration.[2] But neither historians of sexuality, nor historians of literature have been eager to include the emergence of pornography as one of the premier events of modern culture. Even Terry Eagleton makes a compelling case for the invention of modern "literature" and "criticism" without mention of pornography and its sudden appearance in the early nineteenth century.[3] What if, however, modern "literature" had an evil twin, a shady and disreputable other whose pleasures mocked the refined taste of the public sphere even as they embodied the quintessence of its new consumer capitalism? What if, in other words, literature and pornography were complementary constructions whose Manichean drama (as artificial and self-serving a contest as those staged by professional wrestling) obscures the power with which they together construct and deploy sexual norms and deviancies? Then, presumably, the sexual bodies imagined by romantic fiction would become valuable prehistory to our modern paradigms; no longer either legitimate or illegitimate aesthetic representations, they would instead become both imaginative prefigurements of our lived realities and historical records of the evolving conflicts between private acts and the public domain that sought at once to express and control those acts.

2. When Foucault writes that "The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in disintegration," he challenges the corporeal "real" as always already inscribed with the discursive strictures within which that real appears. Such inscription—the body-as-text—tropes the imprisonment of nature by culture and exposes the power that discourse wields to know its object according to its own designs. Foucault's bodies—the docile or normalized, the criminal or perverse, the homogeneous or sanitized—must be "read," the invisible language written on their surfaces revealed and decoded by an act of the historical revision: the historian sees the body inscribed over time by knowledge and power. The sexual bodies of romantic fiction are also seen by acts of imagination, envisioned both as narrative and human possibility by authors testing the abilities of language to represent and recreate somatic pleasure. Envisioned again by a nuanced historicism, these bodies speak volumes. No less ideologically freighted than the bodies of history, the bodies of fiction can be seen as complex sites where the ideals and reals of human sexuality are tested against the cultural moment. Although made of words, these bodies can also live in the world: they emerge from living hands and go forth from the page to quicken the pulse, excite the desires, and stir the flesh. Like their historical counterparts, the sexual bodies of romantic fiction are both desirable and desiring. They too can choose to reveal or conceal, to expose or tantalize; they too can watch as other bodies dance

provocatively in and out of view. Presorted by the categorical imperatives of the nineteenth century, however, these bodies have stories unfairly thrust upon them. "Literature" inscribes a legitimacy that pushes sexuality under the protective arm of humanism; "pornography" erases subtle satire and innovative technique and philosophical nuance and bestows a juvenile, masculinist fantasy uniform in intent and unwaveringly simplistic in effect. The former reminds us of what we are to remember; the latter of what we are permitted to forget.

3. But is it the case that these discursive categories have always been so radically different? So dramatically opposed in intention and effect? What indeed of the imagination that brings them forth in the world? A difference of degree or of kind? What of the middle ground? That which is traditionally figured as "erotic"? Roland Barthes insists that, whether in language or in life, eroticism can be found "*where the garment gapes,*" where the space between the exposed and the revealed provokes wonder and imagination (9-10). Not to be confused with the schoolboy's desire to have the body fully exposed, eroticism is thus transformed from a problem of knowledge and possession—of knowing/seeing/having the body of the beloved—into a problem of imagination and relinquishment—of seeing what is to be seen and imagining what is not and letting go of the illusion of mastery. Barthes's formulation prohibits the body's status as ultimate referent: it is not body's exposure or possession that excites; it is the gap itself, the flash, the space between the concealed and the concealing. Desire, he insists, adheres to intermittence. It is more time than space, more narrative than character. This explains at least in part why fiction and film are so far superior to painting and sculpture as vehicles for the erotic.

4. If Foucault insists that the sexual body is discursively contingent, then Barthes insists that some discursive bodies are sexually contingent, that they defer and displace meanings with playful teasings that excite and arouse the attentive reader

> Apparently Arab scholars, when speaking of the text, use this admirable expression: *the certain body*. What body? We have several of them; the body of anatomists and physiologists, the one science sees or discusses: this is the text of grammarians, critics, commentators, philologists (the pheno-text). But we also have a body of bliss consisting solely of erotic relations, utterly distinct from the first body: it is another contour, another nomination; thus with the text: it is more than the open list of the fires of language (those living fires, intermittent lights, wandering features strewn in the text like seeds . . .). Does the text have human form, is it a figure, an anagram of the body? Yes, but of our erotic body. The pleasure of the text is irreducible to physiological need. (16-17)

   The opening distinction between the body of science and the body of bliss in no way mandates that the former prohibits the discussion of pleasure and that the latter indulges it; to the contrary, it is not the subject matter of the discourse that determines the distinction but instead the text's own awareness of the meaning it delivers: the "pheno-text," certain of its ability to transmit truth, is cold and haughty; the text of bliss is alternately provocative, flirtatious, and coy. That closing insistence—"The pleasure of the text is irreducible to physiological need"—pushes the eroticism of discursive body squarely into the realm of the imagination, into the gap between the certainties of the text (what it "means") and the musings of the reader (what is envisioned). "The pleasure of the text is not certain," Barthes contends, "nothing says that this same text will please us a second time; it is a friable pleasure, split by mood, habit circumstance, a precarious pleasure . . ." (52).

5. Taken together, the two bodies—the sexual body of Foucault's history and the erotic body of Barthes's language—emphasize both the obvious—an ongoing romance between lived sexuality and its modes of representation—and the not-so-obvious—that sexuality and its representations share a choice both of discursive locations and temporal modes. Foucault's "sexuality" and Barthes's "certain body" move out of historical flux into the atemporal space of knowable essence. Whether in life or in language, the

body can be hypostatized as an eternal object or situated as an imagined event, a process unfolding in time. Not surprisingly, the different temporal modes occasion very different kinds of "authorial" and "readerly" satisfaction (terms that I am asking to signify both lived and representational acts). In other words, when bodies are produced and consumed as objects, both in life and in language, the satisfaction is akin to that of mastery, of knowing the other, of celebrating spatial dominance over temporal exchange. So conceived, sexuality deploys desire as a means to possession and ownership, a kind of somatic consumerism. Conversely, however, bodies can also be experienced as events, less objects than opportunity, moments in the history of subject and culture alike where pleasure can be shared, prolonged, and indulged. Pleasure in time—as opposed to desire over space—correlates to Foucault's sexual acts (as opposed identity) and Barthes's eroticism (as opposed to certainty). Crucial to the staging of sexual bodies in romantic fiction, temporality is not, however, an unchanging heuristic. On the contrary, its evolution is tied directly the shifting socioeconomic order out of which it emerges.

6. The historicity of the idea of the temporal stands tall amid contemporary musings about our changing cultural sphere. Arguing, for example, that many recent treatments have incorrectly "valoriz[d] . . . the body and its experience as the only authentic form of materialism," Fredric Jameson contends that a defining tendency of late capitalism is the "reduction to the present," which, he insists, occurs in concert with a "reduction to the body": "it seems clear enough that when you have nothing left but your temporal present, it follows that you also have nothing left but your own body. The reduction to the present can thus also be formulated in terms of a reduction to the body as a present of time" (712). [4] Commensurate with instantaneous communication, global markets, and colonized subjectivities, this reduction signals a larger loss, the loss of history from cultural consciousness: consuming, entertaining, desiring everything and wanting nothing in the moment erodes past and future and limits engagement with the complexities of culture over time. Symptomatic of this reduction, and the larger loss in which it participates, is the "violence pornography" of American action films, which, according to Jameson, proffers a "succession of explosive and self-sufficient present moments of violence" that in turn "gradually crowds out the development of narrative time and reduces plot to the merest pretext or thread" (714). As Jameson notes in passing, the generic predecessor here is sexual pornography, whose "absolutely episodic nature" is composed of "intermittent closures [that] are allowed to be a good deal more final." It is this casual nod to an ill-bred generic relative—a relative stupidly self-evident, obstinately *just there* on the cultural landscape, and seemingly both important and not to the larger scheme of things—that I take as a point of departure for my own musings on the rise and fall of the pornographic imagination. Jameson is entirely correct, in other words, to suggest that sexual pornography is the purest form of reduction-to-the-present available today and that its gross panderings to the desires of its audience provide a model for other kinds of popular entertainment, but he misses an opportunity to think about how and why this may be important to our cultural moment. Is it the case, for example, that contemporary pornography is actually about sexuality and its pleasures, any more than action films, say, are really about crime and punishment? If pornography is about sexuality, what kind of sexuality is it and how does that sexuality serve larger cultural interests? Does the pornography of the nineteenth century participate in the normalizing project of medical-moral discourse or is it a form of resistance to that project? If pornography is not about sexuality, if it is only the simulated surface of a "real" vanquished long ago by forces currently invisible to the historian, how do we understand that process and render the invisible visible? How, in other words, can we trace the evolution of pornography and come to appreciate both the imagination that was required to bring it forth and the peculiar confluence of factors that have made it a defining presence in contemporary society?

7. This essay considers these questions and suggests that the emergence of "literature" and "pornography" can best be understood by rethinking how sexual bodies are represented in romantic fiction, specifically how the sexual bodies of Gothic melodrama contrast to their counterparts in realist novels of manners.

To this end, I situate the discussion of romantic fiction between a reading of voyeurism in John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) and an argument about the pornographic spectacle in contemporary culture. Cleland's novel uses voyeurism—thematically and structurally—as a way of highlighting the transgressed boundaries of private pleasure. Like the book in which it appears, Fanny's spying looks into private spaces in search of a human experience she needs to understand, an experience as true and as desirable as it is forbidden. That experience, together with the imagination that makes it visible on the page and in the mind of the reader, challenges the hypocrisy of public morals and proffers a pleasure sadly absent in legitimate culture. Stephen Sayadian's 1982 film *Café Flesh* and recent controversies about NFL halftime entertainment dramatize an entirely different phenomena: more than a century and a half after the creation of pornography proper, our contemporary culture has witnessed the movement of the pornographic imagination outward from discursive quarantine and into every conceivable cultural nook and cranny. Popular film, television, music, advertising, and internet routinely display sexual bodies for our consuming pleasure, and yet, as I shall argue, the saturation of our contemporary marketplace with this material hardly signifies the culmination of Cleland's satiric, oppositional project. Gone is the material real of the sexual body and the threat posed by its dangerous passions. Gone too is both the adversarial posture assumed by genre or discourse and the erotic imagination which figures forth the sexual body. Instead, we have ubiquitous scopophilia, a new phase of disembodied desire in which pleasure is suspended well above corporeal referent. If Cleland's use of voyeurism insists on the possibility that private pleasures can and should correct public values, then current scopophilia frees the pleasure of watching from any subsequent action, public or private: current spectacles are saturated with simulated sexualities, sexualities that—appearances to the contrary—no longer reference sex at all, only its transformation into a hyper-real glamor, a state of being envied for youth and beauty and the indeterminate "wealth" they signify.[5] The sexual bodies of romantic fiction, on the other hand, positioned as they are after Cleland and before post-pornographic super-saturation, document a crucial transition prior to the normalizing projects of the mid-nineteenth century. Specifically, they illustrate two choices available to the novelistic imagination. Lewis's gothic melodrama creates an entirely new trajectory for narrative pleasure, pushing desire well beyond the bodies of individual characters and into the structure of narrative itself, while the realist novel of manners, exemplified by Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), predicates the reproductive power of romantic love upon the banishment of a certain kind of sexual body from the novel's field of vision. The former destabilizes sexual normalcy by figuring desire as protean possibility, a consistently recalibrated "want" forever subject to temporal change; the latter marries desire to character and fixes passion as an unproblematic means to a cultural end. Taken together, the two demonstrate the dramatic difference in the ways that romantic literature could envision sexuality and its pleasures before more rigid discursive categories held sway.

I.

8. Mulling over the significance of the anonymous, eleven-volume autobiography, *My Secret Life* (c.1890), Stephen Marcus famously described how the pornography of the mid to late nineteenth century created a "pornotopia," an imaginary place where sexual desire reigned supreme and where other wants and needs—food, clothing, shelter, intellectual stimulation, emotional intimacy—all receded before the irresistible power of the genitalia.[6] Pornotopian novels, he explained, make use of "that vision which regards all of human experience as a series of exclusively sexual events or conveniences" (216). Contemptuous of the "vision" he describes—the narratives of which, according to him, are perforce "transformed into unconscious comedy"—Marcus wanted very much to identify the "other" side of Victorian culture but had little interest in thinking further about the inextricable relationship between pornography and literature or its ongoing importance to the modern state. Nor was he interested in the historical emergence of pornography, in the process by which pornography evolved as a word, as a set of generically similar artifacts, as a way of envisioning sexual bodies and their pleasures, as a modern, commercial discourse with its own distinct epistemology. It was enough,

perhaps, for Marcus to identify pornography as cultural "wish fulfillment," to establish its connections to the development of the novel, and to mine certain of its texts, chiefly *My Secret Life*, for social history. It was Marcus, after all, who had the temerity to drag obscene materials into the pages of respectable scholarship and, in so doing, bestow a certain kind historical value upon them. No matter that the "pornography" he identified was historically ahistorical, specific to the mid to late nineteenth century but timeless in purpose, method, and effect.[7]

9. Although Marcus broke important ground, scholars had to wait until the late 1980s for a more comprehensive picture of pornography and modern culture. That book was Walter Kendrick's splendid history, *The Secret Museum*, a study that significantly expanded and refined Marcus's pioneering account (1-32).[8] Kendrick's key premise is that "pornography," like "homosexuality," is a word of recent coinage whose facile deployment in the present wreaks havoc upon the subtlety with which we understand the past. He documents the early eighteenth-century fascination with Pompeii and the confusion generated by the obscene artifacts unearthed there. The compulsion to organize and classify and preserve the past chaffed against the moral responsibility to keep such artifacts away from the public eye. The result was the "secret museum," originally a basement archive open to gentlemen of means but a soon an apt metaphor for an entire discourse pushed to the edge of cultural self-consciousness.

10. It has been more than fifteen years since *The Secret Museum* challenged the status quo, but scholars have not entirely accepted Kendrick's argument that "pornography" is a distinctly modern phenomenon, one that dates only from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The cause is less incompetence and more an unlikely conspiracy between past and present. In the present, the word "pornography" tempts us with categorical certainty, naming a collection of artifacts whose status as deviant, while notoriously problematic when considered case by case, is nevertheless ironclad when viewed from across the cultural spectrum. As Kendrick explains,

> "[P]ornography" has named so many things during the century and a half of its existence that any statement of what it means now must degenerate into nonsense within a very short time. In the mid-nineteenth century, Pompeiian frescoes were deemed "pornographic" and locked away in secret chambers safe from virginal minds; not long thereafter, *Madame Bovary* was put on trial for harboring the same danger. A century-long parade of court cases ensued, deliberating the perniciousness of *Ulysses*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and scores of other fictions, many of which now appear routinely on the syllabi of college literature courses. All these *things* were "pornography" once and have ceased to be so; now the stigma goes to sexually explicit pictures, films, and videotapes. It would be laughably egotistical to suppose that our parents and grandparents called the wrong things "pornographic" out of blindness or stupidity. It would be equally stupid to think that we, at long last, have found in our X-rated images the *real* pornography. (xii)

It may be "laughably egotistical," but contemporary usage wants its own thought categories to rise above historical flux and order the confusions of the past according to the dictums of the present. As his quotation marks suggest, however, Kendrick's "pornography" will do no such thing. It will insist on naming an argument, a controversy, a debate, rather than a collection of generically similar, generically stable objects about which there is near universal agreement.[9] In her influential edition *Inventing Pornography* (1993), Lynn Hunt carefully expands Kendrick's argument:

> Pornography came into existence, both as a literary and visual practice and as a category of understanding, at the same time as—and concomitantly with—the long-term emergence of Western modernity. . . . For this reason, a historical perspective is crucial to understanding the place and function of pornography in modern culture. Pornography was not a given; it

> was defined over time by the conflicts between writers, artists, and engravers on the one side and spies, policemen, clergymen, and state officials on the other. Its political and cultural meanings cannot be separated from its emergence as a category of thinking, representation, and regulation. (10-11)

The history of pornography begins at the moment that the word itself is dislodged as a "given," as an absolute that imposes itself anachronistically upon contested terrain. Hunt insists that before the early nineteenth century, before the invention of modern "pornography," sexually explicit materials almost always served a larger social, political, philosophical, or aesthetic purpose.[10] Thus, a properly historical account of the evolution of "pornography" must resist the knee-jerk moralism that the word itself encourages; it must avoid falling into "category," specifically the "category of thinking, representation, and regulation" bequeathed to us by the Victorians.

11. Kendrick and Hunt are perhaps overly optimistic in thinking that contemporary commentators will compare and contrast different "pornographies" before revising the historical record. Presentism is more likely to content itself with similarities, and long dead authors are all too willing to accommodate. It is difficult, for example, even with Kendrick's admonitions fresh in mind, not to think of John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) as self-evidently "pornographic."[11] Its narrative, after all, appears formulaic: an orphaned Fanny Hill arrives in London and follows a predictable path from "Lesbian" seduction and voyeurism, through defloration and cautious experiments, to group sex and flagellation, before being reunited with her lover and enjoying a happier-ever-after ending worthy of Jane Austen. Regardless of arcane diction and an amusing penchant for metaphor—"his weapon," "that fierce erect machine," "his red headed champion" (68-70)—Cleland's novel stages its sexual scenes with scripted precision, as if rewriting a plot hoary with age. Yet, as both Kendrick and Hunt would insist, "pornography" is precisely the wrong word to describe the most famous dirty book in English literature. The *Memoirs* may well mirror our idea of "pornographic novel," but in 1749, "pornography" was no more a recognizable discursive category than air planes were a viable mode of travel. Although every society since the beginning of time has policed "obscenity"—those materials or behaviors that for whatever reason offend the powers that be—"pornography"—the graphic depiction of sexual acts intended to arouse an audience—is exclusively the product of the modern state, which makes *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* decidedly . . . "*proto*-pornographic." Regardless of the obvious, two-pronged counter argument—the *Memoirs* does graphically depict sexual acts with the intent to arouse, and the object may well predate its naming—Cleland's novel appeared in a world in which libertine literature certainly existed in a variety of forms—bawdy poetry, whore dialogues, medical manuals, criminal biography, and trial proceedings, to name a few—but where "pornography" as word, discursive category, and—most importantly perhaps—commercial practice was more than a half century away.[12] Lisa Sigel argues, for example, that commercial viability becomes centrally important to the Victorian understanding of the evils of "pornography." Certain artifacts became objectionable only when they were disseminated into the larger market, when they left the libraries of educated gentlemen and were offered for sale to the young, the impressionable, and the ignorant. The Victorians created a "pornography," Sigel claims, in which "Objects became indecent through the act of viewing or reading" (4). Textual obscenity thus became commensurate with and contingent upon the commercial expansion of the industry.

12. This semantic shell game, as unpleasant as it is, performs a necessary service, opening up "pornography" as an imaginative construct whose history as the potential to complicate our ideas about human sexuality and its representations. Imaginative constructs differ from categorical absolutes in that they perform actions, ways of seeing, untrammeled by a oppressive discursive identity. Like "homosexuality," in other words, "pornography" can uncritically erase the very historical process that brought it into being—regardless of critical intentions. Traditional commentators, for example—and Marcus comes immediately to mind—have often preferred to do a legal or social history that assumes

the deviant otherness of their subject even as they catalogue forgotten texts or document changing obscenity laws.[13] Feminist commentators, on the other hand, read "pornography" as the quintessence of patriarchal oppression, objecting to sexualized violence and demeaning stereotypes.[14] Both groups treat "pornography" as a monolithic discourse, generally unspecified as to text or image and uniformly self-evident both in purpose and affect. Both assume that the word will remain a pejorative and that the category it names is transhistorical in nature. Thinking of "pornography" first and foremost as an act of the imagination, however, allows for a better understanding of pornography's satiric entanglements within the larger cultural field, for a more nuanced reading of its textual or visual strategies, and for a greater appreciation of its historical development. My consideration of the sexual bodies of romantic fiction focuses on the visual fields within which those bodies appear and on the very different techniques used to construct sexual possibility.

13. Consider, once again, Cleland's novel. Numerous commentators have emphasized the role of voyeurism in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, in part because such episodes appear from beginning to end and in part perhaps because we are particularly sensitive to voyeurism as a staple of our own predominantly visual culture.[15] Very early in her story, after having lain with Phoebe and having been nearly raped by one of Mrs. Brown's supposed "cousins," Fanny recovers from the trauma and chooses to begin her sexual education in earnest. She accidently comes upon Mrs. Brown and her sturdy "horse-grenadier" and decides to watch. Although the sight is anything but pleasing—Mrs. Brown is old and fat and fully exposed to Fanny's view—the "sighs and murmurs," the "heaves and pantings" are enough to arouse Fanny's "nature," and she masturbates (61-63).[16] When Phoebe hears the story, the episode is quickly duplicated, but this time with young and beautiful lovers. As in the first episode, masturbation confirms Fanny's "nature," her sympathetic corporeal response to the passion she witnesses. Thus voyeurism sets up a kind of epistemological challenge for character and reader alike. At the level of the narrative, voyeurism proves first to Fanny and then to Phoebe that the former is sexually mature and physically ready for intercourse. This challenge is also aesthetic, as well as physiological, for both couples are carefully described in terms specific to the visual arts: Mrs. Brown presents her "greasy landscape" to the hidden Fanny; Polly is a worthy "subject for . . . painters . . . [needing] a pattern of female beauty" (62, 67). Like a connoisseur in a gallery, Fanny appreciates the beauty of sexual congress. That Fanny is aroused by both, in the first case against her will, proves 1) an aesthetic predisposition that allows the sight of erotic engagement to be transferred corporeally to the viewer; and 2) the existence of a underlying sexual "truth," a powerful, erotic "pleasure" untrammeled by love or marriage, a human "real" capable of asserting itself against the dictates of society. When the language of painting recasts voyeurism as an aesthetic experience, it satirically challenges traditional ideas of ideal beauty by asserting the material reality of the body. At the same time, it pokes fun at the aesthetic pretensions of high art by suggesting an unacknowledged sexual subtext. The strategy is common to the mock heroic, and this episode can be usefully compared to Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" or Ovid's *The Art of Love*. Of course, Cleland's use of voyeurism implicates his readers as well. The *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* uses Fanny's secret spying to play an elaborate game with the usually sacrosanct boundaries between public and private. Fanny watches a private act from an even more private position, where bedroom stands to closet as intercourse stands to masturbation. The narrative neatly duplicates the pattern: Fanny's private experience is written as an epistle to a friend, a shared pleasure between consenting adults, which is then overheard—"envisioned" to be more precise—by a closeted, presumably masturbating, reader. Like *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) or *Moll Flanders* (1722) or *Pamela* (1740-41), the narrative is delighted with its ability to render the private public. Unlike its more respectable predecessors, however, the *Memoirs* ups the ante as it proffers an even more private reality for public consumption.

14. The voyeuristic episodes that open Volume I are succeeded by Fanny's spying on her maid Hannah with Mr. H., and then Mr. H. catching Fanny with his footman Will. If the earlier episodes prove to Fanny the existence of her irrepressible sexual body, the later scenes insist that monogamy and sexual

knowledge are mutually exclusive: the former provide knowledge she needs and wants, the latter knowledge she needs but doesn't want. While satisfying the reader's desire for fast-paced variety, these latter scenes also highlight a narrative intolerance for privacy. Interruptions abound because the forbidden always occurs behind closed doors, and it is the forbidden that the novel must put on display. In Volume II, voyeurism has to evolve in order to keep step with Fanny's increasing experience. Specifically, Volume II marks Fanny's emergence as a professional prostitute working out of Mrs. Cole's, and the narrative field of vision expands to accommodate group activity. No longer are we alone with Fanny in closet or bedroom; sex is now communal, creative, and openly commercial. The first event is storytelling, in which the prostitutes each in succession tell the story of their defloration; the second is group sex, in which pairs take turns having sex before the group. Although an objection may be raised that neither makes use of voyeurism proper, both signal a new stage in Cleland's sophisticated appropriation of the visual. As each prostitute tells her story, for example, the larger plot temporarily recedes, the storyteller assumes center stage, and the auditors and readers become one audience.[17] It is not simply that listeners and readers together use their imaginations to bring the stories visually to life. It is also that the larger group of auditors marks the increasing legitimacy of the sexually explicit story while claiming an increasingly more public venue for its telling. That both auditors and readers have paid for the privilege unites them as customers expecting their money's worth, and so novel and brothel become reciprocal spaces, staging analogous events for analogous reasons. Cleland's novel, in other words, is self-conscious about its effect and, as I shall argue, deviously satiric as well. Thus, we should not be surprised when the storytelling is followed immediately by the group scene in which pairs take turns as the others watch. This "open public enjoyment" is intended to remove "any taint of reserve or modesty," and Fanny details the activities with a eye attentive to the subtle signs of female pleasure (150).[18] The abrupt juxtaposition of storytelling and group sex, and the choice to have pairs perform in turn before the entire group, demand that each scene be considered in light of the other: verbal performance versus physical performance, listening versus watching, inexperienced virgins versus experienced women of pleasure. Cleland goes to some effort in the latter scene to make two points: first, the absence of modesty does not result in the absence of manners; and second, performers appear in "all the truth of nature" (159).[19] His purpose is to connect the two scenes with the larger narrative and to validate all three as performances, as acts of a new kind of literary imagination, one truer to the sexual realities of human experience. Predictably, Fanny's own "imagination" is "heated" to excess, providing the standard by which the scene is to be measured:

> Now all the impressions of burning desire, from the lively scenes I had been spectatress of, ripened by the heat of this exercise, and, collecting to a head, throbbed and agitated me with insupportable irritations: I was perfectly fevered and maddened with their excess. I did not now enjoy a calm of reason enough to perceive, but ecstatically indeed! *felt* the policy and power of such rare and exquisite provocatives as the examples of the night had proved. . . . Lifted then to the utmost pitch of joy that human life can bear, undestroyed by excess, I touched that sweetly critical point. . . . (161)

It is precisely the interplay between the seen and the felt, between the pleasure of beauty perceived by the eye and that expressed by touch, that brings Fanny to this "utmost pitch of joy." Her orgasm, once again calibrated to her aesthetic sensitivity, subsumes the reader, transferring pleasure from body to sight to word and back again with seamless ease.

15. Fanny does not attribute arousal to physiology only, to the corporeal "machine" whose material "real" is used elsewhere in the novel to challenge aesthetic idealism.[20] Instead, she insists on imagination as an mediating agency between mind and body. Such mediation qualifies Fanny's espousal of the "Truth! stark, naked truth" which she purports to depict. Specifically, it challenges both the stable opposition between body and mind and the categories of "normal" and "perverse" that follow from it. When

sexual pleasure is contingent on imagination as well as physiology, then normalcy becomes a matter of "taste" rather than "nature."[21] Mrs. Cole, a paragon of maternal wisdom, is credited with the theory of pleasure that informs Volume II:

> she considered pleasure of one sort or other as the universal port of destination, and every wind that blew thither a good one, provided it blew nobody any harm: that she rather compassionated than blamed those unhappy persons who are under a subjection they cannot shake off. . . . (181)

Tastes are here "arbitrary" rather than absolute, pleasures "unaccountable," not divinely ordained or physiologically predetermined. Only the unimaginable is unnatural.

16. For Fanny, however, sodomy proves unimaginable. She literally can not envision male-to-male intercourse, and Mrs. Cole does nothing to enlighten her:

> I could not conceive how it was possible for mankind to run into a taste, not only universally odious but absurd, and impossible to gratify, since, according to the notions and experience I had of things, it was not in nature to force such immense disproportions. Mrs. Cole only smiled. . . . (193)

A chance opportunity at a public house gives her voyeuristic access to the forbidden and sparks her outrage and moral indignation. Interestingly, however, Fanny's outrage in no way compromises her ability to watch the scene from beginning to end and to describe it with the same loving attention to detail that she evidences elsewhere. Her objections to "so criminal a scene," in other words, appear ridiculous within a narrative that has just accomplished what its main character could not, a compelling and attractive visualization of male love. Put another way, Cleland sets Fanny up. She's the perfect straight girl, a brilliant foil for novel's overarching vision. The so-called perversions—more accurately, perhaps, "imaginative eccentricities"—are carefully orchestrated and lovingly defended. They have to end with sodomy, and Fanny's naivete is Cleland's insurance policy: against her better wishes, the novel will look at male-to-male intercourse and, in so doing, insist that it appear officially as a human sexual practice. After all, the *Memoirs* is committed to representing sexual pleasure, and Fanny's attempts at exclusion serve only to reinforce the narrative's catholic tastes.

17. Cleland's careful staging of sexual possibility confirms Sigel's contention that graphic materials often reveal a culture's "social imaginary": those hopes and fears, those desires and anxieties, that together constitute the condition of possibility for emergent sexualities. Cleland's insistence that aesthetics generally and literary aesthetics in particular are inextricable from the pleasures of the body, his ongoing interrogation of the boundary between public and private sexual experience, his sympathy for and his depictions of alternative sexual practices, and finally his linking of the erotic and literary imaginations all speak to the imaginary possibilities of mid-century. Marcus's "pornotopia" would preclude such considerations. Presupposing as it does a rigid and absolute division between the "literary" and the "pornographic," the idea of "pornotopia" reduces the complexity of graphic material to a single, non-literary intention: that of facilitating the orgasm of its user.

II.

18. What was for Marcus an accurate depiction of a discursive opposition specific to the cultural life of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries becomes an historiographical blunder if uncritically carted back to the Romantic period. The sexual bodies of romantic fiction, however anticipatory of generic conventions still years away, appeared in a world not yet anchored by the absolutism of "pornography." As a result, Michael Gamer, in *Romanticism and the Gothic*, is quite right to consider

the contemporary uproar that followed Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) as an important chapter in the pre-history of pornography.[22] I would add that the novel itself must also be considered a crucial experiment in the history of the "pornographic" imagination and that Matilda, one of the most unusual characters in British fiction, is a brilliant emblem for the possibilities of a "pornographic" fiction as yet unrealized. Lewis, building deliberately upon Cleland and intimately familiar with French libertine literature, frees desire from the constraints of realism and the burden of character, builds eroticism squarely into the temporality of narrative, and anticipates the power of the image in modern culture. When contrasted to the sexual bodies of realistic fiction, specifically those of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Lewis's experiment highlights both the attractions of and the fears about a narrative pleasure untrammeled by either literary propriety or civic responsibility.

19. Ambrosio, the main character in *The Monk*, is an abbot who, encouraged by Matilda, will fall, not once like Adam and Eve, but over and over again, each time deeper into sin and depravity.[23] Bewitched at each juncture by seductive power of fiction, Ambrosio has no defense against the magic embodied in paintings, stories, and music. Time and time again he will respond authentically to the beauty of an image or the emotions of a story only be tricked by a reality that he is unable to grasp. Matilda appears first, for example, disguised as Rosario, minutes after Ambrosio, alone in his cell, contemplates a small portrait of the Virgin, which had for the last several years "been the object of his increasing wonder and adoration":

> "What beauty in that countenance!" he continued after a silence of some minutes; "how graceful is the turn of that head! what sweetness, yet what majesty in her divine eyes! how softly her cheek reclines upon her hand! Can the rose vie with the blush of that cheek? can the lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a creature existed, and existed but for me! . . . gracious God, should I then resist the temptation?" (65-66)

Soon after this scene Rosario tells Ambrosio a story of his sister Matilda who died heartbroken of her love for the noble Julian:

> "Father, she loved unfortunately. A passion for one endowed with every virtue, for a man —oh! rather let me say for a divinity—proved the bane of her existence. His noble form, his spotless character, his various talents, his wisdom solid, wonderful, and glorious, might have warmed the bosom of the most insensible. My sister saw him, and dared to love, though she never dared to hope."
>
> "If her loved was so well bestowed, what forbad her to hope the obtaining of its object?"
>
> "Father, before he knew her, Julian had already plighted his vows to a bride most fair, most heavenly! Yet still my sister loved, and for the husband's sake she doted upon the wife. One morning she found means to escape from our father's house: arrayed in humble weeds she offered herself as a domestic to the consort of her beloved, and was accepted. She was now continually in his presence: she strove to ingratiate herself into his favour: she succeeded. . . . and he distinguished Matilda above the rest of her companions." (77-78)

Although very different, the two scenes perform analogous functions. In the first, a painting represents a bewitching image of real and ideal female beauty. Ambrosio is intrigued and confused. He desires the "real" that the painting represents even as he acknowledges that the representation is a "fiction," an unreality most likely superior to flesh and blood. The painting, in other words, like the Virgin herself, may be an "idea," a "perfect[ion]" unattainable by mortal man. And yet, Ambrosio wonders, what if that woman actually appeared? Could he resist her? In the second scene, Rosario tells a story of unrequited love. The purpose is twofold. First, Ambrosio must sympathize with the plight of the

heroine. Which he does. Then, he must maintain that sympathy when the narrative shifts its ground, when Rosario springs the trap and declares, "I am Matilda; you are her beloved" (80). If the painting sparks desire, the story evokes compassion, both authentic responses to their respective representations. Then the ground shifts and Ambrosio has no choice but to follow.

20. It is this strategy of representational recalibration that is at the heart of *The Monk*'s Gothic nightmare. Time and again Ambrosio will respond authentically to what he sees only to have the field of vision violently redefine his actions by shifting the boundaries of knowledge. The painting of the Virgin will also change, for example. Ambrosio—to his credit—initially resists Matilda and the temptations she proffers. In torment, he falls asleep and dreams:

> During his sleep, his inflamed imagination had presented him with none but the most voluptuous objects. Matilda stood before him in his dreams, and his eyes again dwelt upon her naked breast. . . . Sometimes his dreams presented the image of his favourite Madonna, and he fancied that . . . he pressed his lips to hers, and found them warm: the animated form started from the canvas, embraced him affectionately, and his senses were unable to support delight so exquisite. (86)

As we will learn, it is not Ambrosio's "inflamed imagination" that is to blame, at least not entirely. In *The Monk*, fictions are real, which means that stories can change men into women, paintings can become animated, and nothing is entirely what it seems. The novel, in other words, like the fictions that it mobilizes against Ambrosio, allows desire to be made visible; it dreams the wants and fears of the unconscious and projects them into possibility. Reality is dynamic, not static, and transformations are the rule not the exception.

21. Like Rosario before her, the Matilda of this section had kept her face carefully hidden from the monk, a sign that reassures Ambrosio of her sexual uninterest. When Matilda sings to the ailing monk, however, "such heavenly sounds . . . produced [as if] by . . . angels" (94), he glimpses lips and an arm that fuel his imagination:

> . . . how dangerous was the presence of this seducing object. He closed his eyes, but strove in vain to banish her from his thoughts. There she still moved before him, adorned with all those charms which his heated imagination could supply. Every beauty which he seen appeared embellished; and those still concealed fancy represented to him in glowing colours. Still, however, his vows, and the necessity of keeping to them, were present to his memory. (95)

Then, while Ambrosio feigns sleep, Matilda addresses the Madonna:

> "Happy, happy image! . . .'tis to you that he offers his prayers; 'tis on you that he gazes with admiration. I thought you would have lightened my sorrows; you have only served to increase their weight; you have made me feel, that, had I known him ere his vows were pronounced, Ambrosio and happiness might have been mine. With what pleasure he views this picture! With what fervour he addresses his prayers to the insensible image! Ah! may not his sentiments be inspired by some kind and secret genius, friend to my affection? May it not be man's natural instinct which informs him—? Be silent! idle hopes! . . .
>
> Of this discourse the abbot lost not a syllable; and the tone in which she pronounced these last words pierced to his heart. Involuntarily he raised himself from his pillow.
>
> "Matilda!" he said in a troubled voice; "Oh! my Matilda!"

> She started at the sound, and turned towards him hastily. The suddenness of her movement made her cowl fall back from her head; her features became visible to the monk's enquiring eye. What was his amazement at beholding the exact resemblance of his admired Madona! . . . Uttering an exclamation of surprise, Ambrosio sank back upon his pillow, and doubted whether the object before him was mortal or divine. (96-97)

Beauty is Matilda's weapon, beauty and the versatility of fiction. Her song, her portrait, her body, her face, even the beauty of her words and the selfless devotion to which they testify, all conspire to drive religious abstraction from Ambrosio's mind. The senses are assaulted one at a time; he will hear, see, touch, and taste beauty so exquisite as to be divine. When the cowl falls away, the monk experiences again the surprise of Rosario's denouement, a sudden recalibration that sends him reeling. The narrative strategy is now clear: it enacts a kind of striptease in which fiction succeeds fiction, revelation following revelation, each promising a greater pleasure to follow. Like a face first coming suddenly into sight, we see an old thing with new eyes, a revision that fundamentally changes the identity of the original. First Rosario, then Matilda, now the Virgin. The dream was of course prophetic; the figure in the painting has stepped off the canvas and sits before the monk in all her glory. At each juncture, Ambrosio sees more, literally and figuratively. As in *Genesis*, sex is here all about knowledge, about the desire to know more of woman and the pleasure she seems to portend. But the brilliance of *The Monk* results from how carefully Lewis orchestrates the dance of the imagination. At each juncture, Ambrosio discovers that his imagination has in fact been realized, that no matter how ambitious or unlikely his desires, no matter how perfect his ideals, they can be made real. If he can but dare to dream, then the fiction will deliver, the event will occur, and he will see and know with as little trouble as clothing falls away from skin.[24]

22. Matilda begins as Ambrosio's platonic friend, and she will be by turns his lover, his whore, his procuress, his sorceress, his savior, and finally his ruin. At each juncture, there is a disclosure, a revelation, a truth that is presented to the monk as final, complete, and unchanging, and then, like clockwork, there is a new pleasure to be satisfied and yet another price to pay. What begins as pride will end with rape, incest, and murder. All the way along Matilda facilitates desire, at first its articulation and then its satisfaction. After the monk has been satiated by her charms, for example, his attention is captured by the young, innocent Antonia. Matilda is accommodating:

> . . . she drew from beneath her habit a mirror of polished steel, the borders of which were marked with various strange and unknown characters.
>
> "Amidst all my sorrows, amidst all my regrets for your coldness, I was sustained from despair by the virtues of this talisman. On pronouncing certain words, the person appears in it on whom the observer's thoughts are bent: thus, though I was exiled from *your* sight, you Ambrosio, were ever present to mine."
>
> The friar's curiosity was strongly excited.
>
> "What you relate is incredible! Matilda, you are not amusing yourself with my credulity?"
>
> "Be your own eyes the judge."
>
> She put the mirror into his hand. Curiosity induced him to take it, and love, to wish that Antonia might appear. Matilda produced the magic words. Immediately a thick smoke rose from the characters traced upon the borders, and spread itself over the surface. It dispersed again gradually [and] . . . he beheld in miniature Antonia's lovely form.

> The scene was a small closet belonging to her apartment. She was undressing to bathe herself. . . . The amorous monk had full opportunity to observe the voluptuous contours and admirable symmetry of her person. She threw off her last garment. . . . Though unconscious of being observed, an inbred sense of modesty induced her to veil her charms. . . . At this moment a tame linnet flew toward her, nestled its head between her breasts, and nibbled them in wanton play. The smiling Antonia strove in vain to shake off the bird, and at length raised her hands to drive it from its delightful harbour. Ambrosio could bear no more. His desires were worked up to phrensy.
>
> "I yield!" he cried, dashing the mirror upon the ground: "Matilda, I follow you! Do with me what you will!" (240-241)

There is no more potent image in the novel. Matilda gives the monk an object, a magical "thing" that provides the opportunity to see his beloved at her most private. Matilda's "magic words" change reflection to projection, exposing the hidden to sight. Like an adolescent schoolboy, Ambrosio is delighted to see what is denied him, to see what is revealed when the smiling Antonia at last lifts her hands. But the magic mirror provides more. Accessed by the right words, it transforms the countenance that it reflects into the thing that that reflected most desires. The mirror must plumb the psychic depths of its user before generating the proper view. Moving in two directions at once, the mirror thus harmonizes internal and external, aligning carefully the longing for pleasure with the hope of its satisfaction. Of course, it is not the sight of Antonia that Ambrosio desires: he wants the pleasure that the sight portends. His "phrensy" of desire highlights not what the mirror has accomplished, but what it hasn't. The mirror can see, but not touch. It can in fact perform the most sophisticated seeing imaginable—becoming in the process an emblem for the "pornographic" imagination itself—but it fails to close geographic distance, it fails to bring two bodies together in an act of love. It remains, in other words, a representation, a fiction, a dangerous make-believe that no matter how magical still falls short of the desire it serves.

23. Matilda's magic mirror distills Lewis's own narrative strategy to its essence, providing a brilliant illustration of exactly the new kind of voyeurism that *The Monk* both provides and eventually condemns. With her magic words, Matilda creates a vision for Ambrosio that tempts him yet again with a beauty seemingly beyond his grasp, as it reassures him that the power she commands is on his side. Matilda is the fiction of desire personified, and the magic mirror is the means to her end. She is less a character than the condition of possibility for the narrative itself. She exists only to say to Ambrosio, "What is it that you really want?" or "What would you want if you could get away with it?" At each stage of the game, the monk thinks he knows what is going on, thinks that what he sees in his field of vision is actually "real," thinks he can satiate his desires and get away with it, thinks that Matilda loves him and will continue to protect him. The final disclosure, the final revelation, however, is not Matilda's to give, nor is she able to save him. When the monk learns with horror that he murdered his mother and then raped and murdered his sister, he also realizes that the Devil orchestrated each and every event and that Matilda herself was no woman, no sorceress, but a devilish spirit enacting a masquerade for the sole purpose of leading the monk to ruin. With this epiphany, Ambrosio's desires finally appear chimerical. When the Devil laughs, in other words, it is to say that the monk's most private fantasies—those innermost desires considered no necessary, so real, and so compelling—were on the contrary imposed from without, artificial constructs created by the manipulative fictions of pure evil. Rosario's story, the portrait of the Madonna, the magic mirror, the sorceress's spells, and last and most shockingly, Matilda herself were all tricks, imaginative feints, seductive fictions intended to fan the flames of Ambrosio's desire. If Cleland challenged literary pieties with the material real of Fanny's body, Matilda, by contrast, is supracorporeal: first male, then female, then blushing virgin, then the wanton whore, then the dangerous sorceress, and finally the devil in

disguise. We learn nothing of her body—of the color of her hair, the shape of her face, the quality of her eyes—because she is the facilitator of pleasure, not its substantiation. She is a figure of possibility, a narrative device, whose function is to extend desire and to push past the boundaries of the normal. "What," she says to us, "do you really want?"

24. In its own way, the realistic novel is as much obsessed with the sexual body and its desires as is the gothic novel. Indeed, one might argue that the appropriation of that body is the condition of possibility for the romance fiction of Jane Austen, and that Foucault's entire argument about the construction of sexuality is neatly foreshadowed by and encapsulated within the normalizing strategies of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).[25] Foucault insists that all of the "garrulous attention" to sexuality coheres in one central purpose: "to ensure population, to reproduce labor capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations; in short, to constitute a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative" (36-37). *Pride and Prejudice* takes for its subject the construction of the perfect love/marriage/family, a fantasy that will eventually be made real by the union of the finest offspring of the aspiring middle class (Elizabeth) with the noblest scion of the landed gentry (Darcy). The problem, of course, is Elizabeth's dysfunctional family: her out-of-control sisters and imbecilic mother conspire in volume one to embarrass the heroine and convince Darcy of "the inferiority of her connections" (35). When Mrs. Bennet visits the ailing Jane at the Bingleys, for example, the following conversation ensues:

> "I did not know before," continued Bingley immediately [to Elizabeth], "that you were a studier of character. It must be an amusing study."
>
> "Yes; but intricate characters are the *most* amusing. They have at least that advantage."
>
> "The country," said Darcy, "can in general supply but few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society."
>
> "But people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever."
>
> "Yes, indeed," cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by his manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood. "I assure you there is quite as much of *that* going on in the country as in town."
>
> Every body was surprised; and Darcy, after looking at her for a moment, turned silently away. (29)

25. So much depends upon the demonstrative pronoun. At once vulgar and shrill, Mrs. Bennet's "*that*" hangs heavily in the air, technically without referent but unambiguous. The sexual innuendo chaffs against the previous conversation, and the novel itself turns away with Mr. Darcy, silent with horror and embarrassment. It is this turn, the turn away from that which cannot be represented, the turn that is the silent act of the well mannered body—the carefully averted eyes and the refusal to see what it already knows can no longer be tolerated—it is this turn that the novel will reproduce linguistically, thematically, and narratively. The realist novel of manners must turn away from the very thing on which its existence depends: the possibility of sexual pleasure untrammeled by love and marriage.

26. Darcy's superiority finds its instantiation in his manners, a code of behavior that, unlike etiquette, embodies both the entirety of Darcy's character and the character of the socioeconomic order to which Elizabeth aspires. It is this code of behavior that negotiates the body's appearance in the social space. Manners structure the interface between public and private; they govern human interaction to the degree that even the most trivial of events can assume theological import. Most importantly, they

strike a balance between the needs of nature and the prohibitions of culture. Darcy's mannered body, for example, represents not the absence of sexuality and its passions but their domestication, their subservience to love, marriage, and family. Like Pemberley, in other words, his family estate, Darcy's manners are intended to signify less the triumph of culture over nature and more the tasteful assimilation of latter by the former. When, for example, Elizabeth first approaches Pemberley, the description is unequivocal:

> They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House. . . . It was a large, handsome house . . . and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something. (166-67)

Pemberley House is not a house: it is an hereditary estate, an architectural manifestation of a family whose wealth—financial, intellectual, and cultural—extends back from generation to generation into the murky prehistory of civilization itself. Numerous references to Pemberley earlier in the novel mark its achievement against and its distance from the middle-class confusion which is the Bennet family. Mr. Bennet's entailed estate, Mrs. Bennet's frantic attempts to marry off her daughters, and her daughters' unsupervised behavior are all of a piece; taken together they represent a social class whose financial, marital, and social value is endangered by ignorance, poor taste, and bad manners. Darcy's manners, however, once corrected by Elizabeth, are emblematic of the most noble virtues of the landed gentry. They are here made manifest by Pemberley's unpretentious superiority, its subtle appropriation of the surrounding beauty, and its refusal to employ artifice or accouterment. Elizabeth gazes upon Pemberley and sees Darcy for the first time. The recognition is aesthetic, not economic or political. Elizabeth does not feel "that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something" because she is desirous of money, power, or prestige; she feels that it "might be something" because she is impressed by the "taste" that is there embodied, a "taste" that speaks directly to the character of Darcy and his family and the values they represent. To be "mistress" of such an estate would be to assume responsibility for the reproduction—both physically and ideologically—of those values.

27. Elizabeth will later admit to her sister Jane that she dated her love for Darcy "from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley" (258). That the novel should emphasize the birth of love from the view of an ancestral estate is commensurate with its overdetermination of Darcy himself and with its containment of sexual pleasure within the normative confines of marriage-for-love. No more an average man than Pemberley is simply a house, Darcy is exposed to Elizabeth's critical gaze in a scene that directly reverses the more traditional disrobing of the lover's body. Paradoxically, Darcy's sexual body assumes significance only as it becomes clothed by cultural value: as it disappears behind his "beautiful grounds," as it is subsumed by his handsome, stone features, as it sinks beneath the weight of love's real purpose: the transmission of his cultural legacy to future generations. The logic of the realistic romance novel has it that the cloaking of the sexual body is more than adequately compensated for by the lover's insight into the psychological interior of the beloved's "self." When, in other words, Elizabeth sees the delicate balance between natural and cultural beauty, she sees into Darcy's true self—his impeccable taste, his mannered control of human passion, his pride—and for the first time she knows him intimately. Because Pemberley is the vehicle for her insight, however, because interior spaces have been externalized for her gaze, the novel is not simply substituting the events of inner life for those of history. It is not just following the dictates of the romance novel and representing the boy-meets-girl formula as the master plot for bourgeois subjectivity. Instead, Pemberley signifies Darcy's historical selfhood, his ability to represent value over time, his potential as patriarch. It is precisely this

potential that requires Elizabeth for its fulfilment. Thus when she muses that "To be mistress of Pemberley might be something," Elizabeth evokes a kind of proprietorship at once economic and sexual, a proprietorship contingent upon her own reproductive faculties.

28. It falls upon Lydia, Elizabeth's promiscuous younger sister, to provide the transgressions against which Elizabeth, Darcy, and their fairy-tale marriage must be measured. Lydia appears in three incarnations: the officer-obsessed maid; the unrepentant mistress; and the shameless, haughty wife. Her elopement with Wickham at the beginning of Volume III provides both the crisis to which the novel has been building and the opportunity for understated heroism that Darcy needs to prove himself to Elizabeth. [26] More importantly, however, Lydia embodies a passion unmediated either by common sense or by respect for her family and the larger social sphere that they represent:

> "[N]ow for my news: it is about dear Wickham [exclaims Lydia] . . . . There is no danger of Wickham's marrying Mary King. . . . She is gone down to her uncle at Liverpool; gone to stay. Wickham is safe."
>
> "And Mary King is safe!" added Elizabeth; "safe from a connection imprudent as to fortune."
>
> "She is a great fool for going away, if she liked him."
>
> "But I hope there is no strong attachment on either side," said Jane.
>
> "I am sure there is not on *his*. I will answer for it he never cared three straws about her. Who *could* about such a nasty little freckled thing?"
>
> Elizabeth was shocked to think that, however incapable of such coarseness of *expression* herself, the coarseness of the *sentiment* was little other than her own breast had formerly harboured and fancied liberal! (151)

Her younger sister's "coarseness of *expression*" marks a difference seemingly trivial when compared to the significance of the shared "*sentiment*." The former, after all, is only a linguistic variant of the same emotional deep structure, a different appearance of the same inner reality. Elizabeth, just like Lydia, fancied herself certain of the nature of Wickham's affections; she too could have dismissed the possibility of Mary King with equal certainty. Significantly, Lydia's contempt focuses on the sexual body of her rival: reduced to and marked by the imperfections of her appearance, Mary King is rendered insignificant—she is simply banished from the realm of the sexually desirable and the matrimonially worthy. Thus Elizabeth's "shock" derives in part from the "coarseness" of expression, Lydia's abrupt referencing of the sexual body, but more from the startling realization that she herself is also participating—emotionally, socially, and sexually—in the same marriage market. She sees all too clearly that it is a difference of degree, not of kind.

29. The "coarseness of *expression*," however, is anything but trivial. Although Elizabeth can not quite see it at the moment, the "expression" will drive the action that follows: it is commensurate with a way of seeing and acting in the world to which the novel is diametrically opposed. It is an unmannered acknowledgment of a one-to-one relationship between sexual passion and emotional compatibility, in which the body reigns supreme as the master signifier, a corporeal trump card with which there can be no arguing. Because Mary King is a "nasty little freckled thing," in other words, Wickham is constitutionally incapable of "care." Reduced to its capacity for sparking desire, the body loses its ability to purvey culture and tradition (Darcy) at the same time that it is prohibited from signifying depth of character and authentic, individual subjectivity (Elizabeth). It is a "thing" capable only of

being used or not. The "coarseness of *expression*" matches blunt language to what the novel puts forth as simplistic and dangerously reductive thinking. Like Mrs. Bennet's demonstrative pronoun, it requires main character and reader alike to turn away in "shock" and displeasure. If at first, however, we turn from the expression, from Mary King's blemished body and the crude language in which it appears, then in short order we will also turn away from Lydia herself and all that she will come to represent.

30. Lydia's tragic flaw is not only that she enacts a selfish sexual passion oblivious of decorum, bad manners of an extreme kind, but also that she fails to appreciate the "real" value of sex. When she elopes, she puts the cart before the horse and provides Wickham sex without considering the possibility that "love"—and the marriage that institutionally enshrines it—may not necessarily follow. The cost of the elopement will be defrayed by the novel's hero, who, in a move that brilliantly exposes the means by which cultural power works its magic, buys Wickham's place at the altar and in so doing saves Lydia and her entire family from social disgrace. More importantly, Darcy proves himself to Elizabeth, who then accepts his offer of marriage and sets about the hard work of being "mistress of Pemberley." By the novel's close, the finest of the landed gentry has wed the finest of the aspiring middle class, the Bennet family has happily started down the road to rehabilitation, and matrimony—of the proper sort—has become the obvious solution to a host of cultural woes. This happily-ever-after ending is made possible by a single important event: Lydia and Wickham's banishment from the immediate environment. Their banishment removes the novel's premiere examples of bad taste and worse manners, it permits Mr. Bennet to assert himself as an effective patriarch, and it paves the way for Pemberley to become site of moral reformation. Their banishment also enacts the displacement of a certain kind of sexual body, that which actively pursues pleasure regardless of propriety and decorum, oblivious of the larger reproductive purpose that proper marriage is intended to serve.

31. Pushed outside the novel's field of vision, the ill-mannered sexual body does not require graphic description to become the *sine qua non* of the romance plot. It does not have to be literally "envisioned" by the narrative because it is not physical exposure or indecency that makes it such a powerful threat to all that is sacred in love and marriage. Nor is it a matter simply of an unbridled appetite, a libertine passion that could escalate out of control into dissipation, depravity, and disease. It is instead a peculiar obliviousness about the cultural weight that sex is meant to shoulder, a foolishly lighthearted disregard for the gravity of mating. In other words, the bad sexual body of *Pride and Prejudice* is a body without a brain, a body that lives in the moment and fails to take itself seriously as a purveyor of culture and tradition. As clothed in its ignorance as Darcy's is in history, Lydia's body reduces desire to the now; it is the site of immediate need and immediate gratification, and it cannot be permitted to coexist within the environs claimed by the novel's ideal romance. That romance coopts sexual pleasure as part of its master plan for middle-class normalcy, and Lydia's body represents both its condition of possibility and its greatest nightmare. If the sexual body in Cleland asserts an autonomous "real" materially grounded and inescapably human, a vital "truth" privately experienced but publically useful as satiric corrective to dominant hypocrisies, if the sexual body in Lewis lives in the shadows, polymorphous, protean, more imaginative possibility than corporeal given, more projection than substance, then the sexual body in Austen works for the greater good, barely visible under its cultural clothing but economically, socially, and psychologically indispensable.

32. Jane Austen exemplifies precisely that kind of "literature" that Steven Marcus used to counterbalance the "unconscious comedy" of pornography. "Literature," he wrote,

> is largely concerned with the relations of human beings among themselves; it represents how persons live with each other, and imagines their feelings and emotions as they change; it investigates their motives and demonstrates that these are often complex, obscure, and ambiguous. . . . All of these interests are antagonistic to pornography. Pornography is not

interested in persons but in organs. (281)

Austen's novels certainly fit the bill, prime examples of the literary humanism Marcus describes. Yet, as we have seen, the dichotomy is reductive. At what cost, we might ask, comes Lydia's banishment? At what cost does "literature" relegate certain sexual/textual pleasures to the dark side? Freud, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, offers one perspective:

> As regards the sexually mature individual, the choice of an object is restricted to the opposite sex, and most extra-genital satisfactions are forbidden as perversions. The requirement, demonstrated in these prohibitions, is that there shall be a single kind of sexual life for everyone. . . . Present-day civilization makes it plain that it will permit sexual relationships on the basis of a solitary, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman, and that it does not like sexuality as a source of pleasure in its own right and is only prepared to tolerate it because there is so far no substitute for it as a means of propagating the human race. (51-52)

Marcus's "literature," like Freud's "civilization," has trouble with "sexuality as a source of pleasure in its own right." The normalizing program of the latter, at least according to Freud, creates illness; that of the former, according to Marcus, saves us from puerile self-absorption. If the pleasures of literature celebrate a cultural "real" more commensurate with responsibility, duty, and the common good, the pleasures of pornography indulge a sexual pleasure unfettered by civic responsibility. My suggestion is that both Freud and Marcus describe a discursive opposition specific to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—one that no longer obtains (Baudrillard 42-43). It is no longer the case, I would argue, that the pleasure principle (read pornography) is locked in tragic conflict with the reality principle (literature). In the current socioeconomic order, an order marked by the supersaturation of sexual images throughout cultural marketplace, only desire itself is real.

33. Consider Stephen Sayadian's 1982 underground classic, *Café Flesh*. The film depicts a post-nuclear world in which the precipitating disaster—the "Nuclear Kiss"—has rendered 99% of the population unable to have sex. The "Sex Negatives," as they are called, become violently ill if they attempt any kind of amorous contact. The remaining 1% of the population, the "Sex Positives," are unaffected and are required by law to perform at clubs like the one that gives the film its title. The plot focuses on Lana and Nick (Michelle Bauer and Paul McGibboney), a sex-negative couple who frequent the shows at Café Flesh. Nick makes himself sick trying to love Lana, and Lana, who is actually a closeted sex-positive, feigns illness and stays with Nick for love. Their refuge is the Café, where the live sex acts and strange avant-garde theater torture the audience with unattainable pleasures and soon have Lana questioning her self-imposed celibacy. At the center of the film's consciousness is the club's MC, Max Melodramatic (Andrew Nicholas), who taunts and teases and insults both his immediate audience and his invisible viewers. His opening monologue—half Ed Sullivan, half Lenny Bruce—is delivered in a quick, smart, sing-song cadence dripping with sarcasm and hostility:

> "Good evening, mutants and mutetes, and welcome to Café Flesh, the club where post-nuke cuties do it nightly for guys and gals who want to go all the way, but just don't have the equipment. You don't have to be ashamed. There is nothing wrong with just watching. . . . And me I am your humble guy for the night, Max Melodramatic, the man who likes to smile, the man who makes the masses happy. I just love sex negatives, I love those little tears of hunger in your eyes! That's my nectar. Could anything be sweeter than desire in chains? Oh, trust me folks, I know what you want, and I know what it feels like when you don't get it. Need is my fix, ladies and gentlemen. Max knows. So go ahead and remember what it was like to lust. Recapture the smack of flesh on flesh, that private ooze and lucky spasm, that panic in the loins that tells you . . . . Yes, yes, yes, yes. And tonight

folks we are going to take it all back before your very eyes. Café Flesh is going to take you back to the old days. . . . So watch, remember, concentrate. Who can say, our humble spectacle might just be able to make you almost feel."

If satire is the mode, then nostalgia is the theme. The survivors are "erotic casualties" who can only watch and remember "the old days" when orgasms were an underappreciated fact of daily life. The "entertainments" of Café Flesh, however, are anything but comforting, and Max relishes torturing his audience with unattainable pleasure. "Need is my fix," Max sneers, "What can be sweeter than desire in chains?" "Need" is of course what it is all about, but unlike pornography proper, whose job it is to create a world in which all desires can be satisfied, *Café Flesh* does the opposite: in its strange post-apocalyptic, self-consciously theatrical world, desire is an addiction, an illness, a disease, a painful, insatiable but unsatisfiable need without corporeal manifestation or release. In the world of *Café Flesh*, individuals are stranded in a solipsistic hell that reduces sexual pleasure to voyeurism. For 99% of the population, there is only watching and remembering; there can be nothing more. All libidinal energies, all corporeal desires, all human needs are trapped within the field of vision demarcated by audience and stage. The pornographic imagination, untethered from the body and without hope of rest or resolution, suspends itself in sight, alert but alone, desiring only that which it cannot make real.

34. The satire of *Café Flesh* is vicious and clever, at once subtle and not. Shakespeare's play-within-a-play has been transformed into pornography-within-pornography, and the film, like the sex club it depicts, delivers an entertainment that confirms the deviancy of all involved. With Max's voice ringing in our ears, we—like the gloomy, doomed, perpetually irritable members of the audience—have to ask, "What have we become?" Options have been reduced to two: in this dystopia there are only exhibitionists and voyeurs, those who perform once private acts as public spectacles and those who watch. The sex itself, predictably perhaps, is at once strange and estranging. Actors perform by rote and ritual. Theatrical excess and stylized convention render the couplings distant, mechanical, and cold. The first show, for example, recalls domestic life before the disaster and features Mr. and Mrs. Sane, a housewife, supposedly at home with children, and her husband, a milkman dressed as a giant rat. He stays in costume—in mask and body suit and long tail—as dance-like ritual transitions to actual sex. At the back of the stage three grown men dressed as infants and seated in highchairs writhe in unison to the pulsating music. At no time can the sex emerge from the highly theatrical spectacle in which it is embedded; at no time, in other words, does the sex appear as anything else but a staged event. Although the sexual bodies of traditional pornography are visibly rendered—we see fellatio, cunnilingus, and intercourse—that "reality" can no longer maintain epistemological supremacy: its conventions are exposed by the spectacle in which it appears. In the second show, for instance, the stage becomes an office where the big boss, dressed from the shoulders up as a large pencil, has his way with a lingerie-clad secretary while another secretary, naked and typing, chants throughout, "Do you want me to take a memo?" Introduced again by Max, now dressed as Little Bo Peep and swinging in a swing, this performance repeats the pattern of the first: it begins as stylized dance with surreal costumes and dramatic music only to transition suddenly into actual sex. The fact that the real penis receiving real oral sex actually belongs to a giant pencil and that penis and pencil both keep time to the typist's arms and the music's beat and the clanging oil wells in the background is no less strange than the fact that the MC imitates Elvis while dressed as Bo Peep and that he harangues his audience in the "carnal charnel house" with bad puns about their "peepers" and their "need." The result is an estranging of both viewer and viewed: we are meant to realize that the film's satire does not reside exclusively with the sex negatives and that in its own way exhibitionism compromises common ideas of "authentic" subjectivity, and of "real" intimacy, as effectively as does voyeurism. Wanting to be seen subordinates one performance to another, displacing individual pleasure outward to the distant audience who in turn reflect it back for narcissistic approval. In other words, the film insists that something is missing on stage just as clearly and profoundly as there is something missing from the audience. Each loss, however, is predicated upon the other, both subordinate to the larger political and

social economy in which they appear, for whatever else they are, the activities of the café are also commercial transactions. Precipitated by the "Nuclear Kiss" (disaster figured as foreplay) and mandated by governmental law, Café Flesh is a cultural microcosm, a futuristic distillation of our entire entertainment industry, not just the pornographic. It is entertainment generally—all advertisement, radio, television, film, and music—that appears metonymically on Max's stage, for there pornography has been transformed from a debased and marginalized other into the quintessence of modern, popular culture. Like the Marlboro Man selling a rugged, nostalgic individualism to millions of urban wannabes, or the cosmetics girl whose airbrushed features taunt consumers with the high cheekbones of transcendent female beauty, Max's stage purveys only that which we can never have, a pleasure that will remain perpetually out of reach, a desire that can be satisfied only by an inferior substitution.

35. Like all great satire, *Café Flesh* stands in parodic opposition to the very generic forms out of which it evolved. Its brilliance results from a bifurcated vision: it dramatizes at once the death of pornography and its disturbing resurrection as culture itself. In so doing, the film marks a juncture—historically arbitrary to be sure—when "pornography" is finally capable of critical self-reflection, capable of seeing its own "imagination" as distinct from but integral to both its aesthetic predecessors and its larger cultural environment. When *Café Flesh* rejects the fantasies of sexual wish fulfillment so typical of "pornography" proper, it demands critical engagement with its own history at the same time that it questions the simulated realities of contemporary culture. It thus signals the awareness of a new phase, a new era in the mass production of desire. The material "real" that deployed Cleland's sexual bodies as a philosophic challenge to middle-class pieties, the corporeal pleasures that he so carefully documents and catalogues, the various privacies that his novel envisions for public consumption, these are all obsolete as satiric devices by the time *Café Flesh* imagines our future and reconfigures our past. Obscenity of the sexual sort now no longer means anything at all, much less some variation of an anti-ecclesiastical rationalism self-consciously skeptical of social mores. During the romantic period, however, after libertinism but well before pornography and literature assumed their discursive antagonism, choices about how sexual bodies were represented in prose fiction were less constrained by genre and convention. The daring experiments of Lewis's gothic fiction were not yet in danger of being supplanted by the formula narratives of the nineteenth century; nor were Austen's strategic displacements the commonplace method by which romantic love normalized passion for middle-class consumers. On the contrary, romantic fiction could adapt the sexual body for diverse purposes: Lewis could push male fantasy against limits of the novelistic imagination; Austen could stabilize volatile tensions between classes with a master narrative of cultural reproduction.

36. After mid-century, however, the Manichaean drama became second nature for a nascent industrial state eager to police the increasingly diverse offerings of the marketplace, and soon it became almost impossible to remember a time when the word "pornography" had not been there to collect all the flotsam and jetsam despised by the purveyors of culture proper. Cleland's subtle satire and philosophic purpose lost out to cruder versions of Lewis's magic mirror. While Austen's descendants remained preoccupied with exactly that which their narratives were not allowed to envision, pornographers looked squarely at the forbidden and reproduced it over and over again for the sexual satisfaction of their readers. Like the sexual body itself, these formulaic fictions reproduced sameness with difference, offered an intimate view of the infinitely variable human body assuming a finite number of positions. Pornography soon became big business, with books and drawings and prints making way for photographs and motion pictures and VHS tapes and computer sites. As my reading of *Café Flesh* suggests, however, I believe that pornography has undergone yet another seismic shift, another profound change in the way that it works in the world. The pornographic imagination is no longer quarantined in underground book shops, art film houses, or strip clubs; it no longer envisions the sexual body in ways dramatically different from those employed by mainstream representations. Indeed, the pornographic imagination can be said to have leached itself throughout contemporary culture generally, saturating radio, television, advertising, and journalistic media with its own way of seeing.

37. This is not to suggest only that our cultural sphere is now awash in a seemingly unstoppable number of graphic images—which, of course, it is. It is also to claim, speculatively, that desire itself has been reconfigured to accommodate a new socioeconomic order and its overwhelming number of products and choices. In the late nineteenth century, "pornography" named a category of representations whose graphic depictions satisfied forbidden desires, where the very essence of the "pornographic" depended upon the certainty with which the "forbidden" was measured against the "acceptable." The triumph of late capitalism is precisely that nothing is forbidden and everything is available: moral boundaries are vestigial constraints honored more in the breach than the observance. When FCC chairman Michael Powell bellows his outrage at the recent NFL halftime show, he evidences a Comstockian prudery jarringly anachronistic and violently at odds with the made-for-TV spectacle. Furious because the unscripted revelation has, in his opinion, the power to corrupt our nation's youth, Powell bestows upon a single enlarged sweat gland a significance so bizarrely out of proportion to the split second exposure that we can only wonder if at that moment he had suddenly surfaced from a long, deep sleep. That the entertainment was grossly, overtly sexual from beginning to end highlights the disconnect between Powell's moral outrage and the exposed breast, a disconnect that also highlights the violent disparity between the old "pornography" and the new. Powell must declaim against the "forbidden" in order to legitimate the "acceptable" from which it deviated; he must read the brief flash of the sexual body as a profound threat to all that is sacred in order to mask the even more disturbing possibility that the sexual body no longer claims any real referential significance, that the spectacle has coopted that body and pushed its dangerous desires into dance and costume and lyric so as to hold out the promise of greater needs to be satisfied. Like a provocatively dressed adolescent tugging nervously on one item then other, the NFL display simulates sexuality with painful self-consciousness but at the same time is clearly not about sex at all. Lewis's magic mirror made desire visible; it plumbed the depths of Ambrosio's soul and, like the novel in which it appeared, brought the forbidden to light. Contemporary spectacle, no matter how loud and garish, no matter how crude and provocative, does the opposite: it displays everything but illuminates nothing. In so doing, it finds an analogue in the dark interiors of Café Flesh, where there is no satisfaction to be had, on stage or off.

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Notes

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[1] Foucault writes of this mid-century transformation: "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy into a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (43). This argument occasioned a firestorm of criticism. One of the more nuanced responses is David Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*.

My point is that "pornography" made its first official appearance during the same period and must be considered an important and related event. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, for example, the word "pornography," a neologism from the Greek, entered the language in 1857. That same year, Lord Campbell's Obscene Publications Act became the first English legislation to target specifically "obscene" materials. In the same way, in other words, that discussions of homosexuality served to normalize middle-class, heterosexual relations, discussions of pornography served to reinforce the legitimacy of "literature" proper. The boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate literature began to be patrolled with unprecedented enthusiasm. While Lord Campbell was railing against obscenity in London, for example, over in France Flaubert was in court defending *Madame Bovary* against charges of immorality. Such public scrutiny would have been unthinkable a hundred years earlier. This essay is an attempt to tease the prehistory of these mid-century transformations more fully into view.
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[2] Sexually explicit materials from before 1900 have been until recently very difficult to access. There are

now two modern sources. The first is Alexander Pettit and Patrick Spedding's *Eighteenth-Century British Erotica*; and the second is my own *Sex and Sexuality, Parts 3 and 4, Erotica 1650-1900 from the Private Case*.
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[3] See, in particular, Terry Eagleton's *The Function of Criticism* and *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Eagleton's explanation of the "rise of literature" was as influential as it was convincing.
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[4] Jameson's article finds an important predecessor in Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." There, Benjamin expresses concern that the "aura" of the original–which encourages engagement with history and tradition–is eroded by reproductions that serve only to confirm the status of art as commodity.
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[5] The reference is to Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations*. I explain my debt to his work more fully in the last section of this essay.
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[6] *My Secret Life* can with assurance, although not with certainty, be attributed to Henry Spencer Ashbee, the Victorian bibliographer whose collection of pornography now forms the core of the famous Private Case Collection at the British Library. See Ian Gibson, *The Erotomanic: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee*. For an extended discussion of "pornotopia," see Marcus, pp. 265-86.

The central issue for Marcus, and the one that I challenge, is pornography's fundamental difference from literature. His conclusion argues at length that pornography is literature's irreconcilable nemesis: if literature is the complex exploration of human existence, then pornography is the simpleminded reduction of humanity to a single function. Locked into the very categories he inherits from the Victorians, Marcus insists that pornography's "governing tendency in fact is toward the elimination of external or social reality" (44). Historical insignificance follows as a matter of course.
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[7] "[W]e know," Marcus concludes, "that pornography is not literature":

Like the main character of *My Secret Life*, Marcus's "pornography" embodies a deviance whose power is in direct proportion to the legitimacy of that against which it is measured.
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[8] Kendrick has a lengthy discussion of "pornography" as a nineteenth-century neologism from the Greek: "writing by or about whores." Although his argument is particularly well formulated, he is not the only scholar to make the claim. See also Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*; Lynn Hunt, *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*; and my own *The Whore's Story: Women, Pornography, and the British Novel, 1684-1830*.
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[9] Kendrick's contention that "pornography" names an argument not a thing rewrites Eagleton's well-known introduction to *Literary Theory* in which he maintains that "literature" does not name an stable category of uniformly consistent aesthetic objects. That introduction, entitled "What is Literature?", concludes:

The same, Kendrick argues, is true of "pornography": it is, like "literature," an infinitively variable construct

over which social forces vie for control of the cultural space.
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[10] Important to Hunt's chronology is Ian McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840*, pp. 204-321. McCalman dates modern pornography quite specifically: after the Queen Caroline trial in 1820, pornographers broke away from their radical politics and began marketing obscene materials whose exclusive purpose was sexual pleasure.

More recently, Lisa Zigel's *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914* confirms both McCalmon's chronology and Kendrick's definition. She goes on to provide an extremely valuable analysis of Victorian pornography and its entanglements with what she calls the "social imaginary," that mental construct which is a society's understanding of its own possibilities.
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[11] For example, in a recent and generally very helpful collection, *Launching Fanny Hill: Essays on the Novel and Its Influences*, numerous authors use the word "pornography" without qualification to describe Cleland's novel. In fact, Patsy Fowler, one of the editors, admits that she "read[s] it as a traditional pornographic text objectifying women and focusing only on male power and gratification" (49-50). Deployed anachronistically, "pornography" creates the text it describes and renders invisible Cleland's subtle satire.
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[12] For an introduction to the diverse offerings of the period, see *When Flesh Becomes Word: An Anthology of Early Eighteenth-Century Libertine Literature*; Julie Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England*; and Peter Wagner, *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America*.
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[13] Examples abound. Consider David Loth, *The Erotic in Literature*; and Charles Rembar, *The End of Obscenity: The Trials of Lady Chatterly, Tropic of Cancer, and Fanny Hill By the Lawyer Who Defended Them*. More recently, Julie Peakman and Peter Wagner have catalogued the offerings of the eighteenth century, and Walter Kendrick has rethought the legal history.
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[14] See, for example, Susan Cole, *Pornography and the Sex Crisis*; Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* and *Intercourse*; Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, *Pornography and Civil Rights*; Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation*; and Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*.

For a different and more recent perspective, see Jane Juffer, *At Home With Pornography: Women, Sex, and Everyday Life*; and Laura Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America*.
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[15] One of the best is Marvin Lanserk's "'Delightful Vistas': Genital Landscapes in Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*" in *Launching* Fanny Hill, pp. 103-123.

All discussions of voyeurism in book or film have to mention Laura Mulvey's pioneering work on the gaze in cinema. She is well known for identifying a "male gaze" in contemporary film that rigorously assigns sight (and narrative) to male subjectivity, the object of which is then most often female. See Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*.
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[16] Masturbation here confirms an irrepressible sexual nature that must find release. In the logic of the narrative, the act is neither dangerous or deviant; instead, like her Lesbian experiences, it is preliminary to the most satisfying interaction of all: intercourse between heterosexual lovers. Cleland rewards Fanny with marriage, but this fairytale ending works to serve satiric ends and is not meant to suggest that the finest of physical pleasures are reserved for the marital bed. For a splendid history of masturbation, see Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation*.
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[17] For an account of Cleland's revision of this scene in his subsequent novel, *Memoirs of a Coxcomb* (1751), see *The Whore's Story*, pp. 223-226.
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[18] What Linda Williams pointed out in her study *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'*—that contemporary pornographic cinema is obsessed with the visual representation of female pleasure—is also true of Cleland's novel. In fact, a sound argument could be made that the entire novel coheres in its pursuit of and tribute to the female orgasm. In this episode, Fanny describes Louisa:

Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the emphasis is placed on the "truth" of her "joy."
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[19] The text is unequivocal:

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[20] The centrality of French materialist philosophy to Cleland's project is outlined in Leo Braudy's well-known essay, "*Fanny Hill* and Materialism."
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[21] For an account of Cleland's tasteful pleasures, see Jody Greene, "Arbitrary Tastes and Commonsense Pleasures: Accounting for Taste in Cleland, Hume, and Burke," in *Launching Fanny Hill*, pp. 221-65. Back

[22] I would like to think that Gamer's argument is related to my own treatment of gothic pleasure, "The Man With Two Brains: Gothic Novels, Popular Culture, Literary History," *PMLA* 107 (1992): 92-104.

Also relevant here are four recent essays on sexuality and *The Monk*. See Steven Blakemore, "Matthew Lewis's Black Mass: Sexual, Religious Inversion in *The Monk*"; Wendy Jones, "Stories of Desire in *The Monk*"; Clara McLean, "Lewis's *The Monk* and the Matter of Reading, in *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*; and Clara Tuite, "Cloistered Closets: Enlightenment Pornography, the Confessional State, Homosexual Persecution, and *The Monk*."

See also D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography*. Macdonald's work is a welcome revision of Lewis Peck's *Life of Matthew G. Lewis*. Of particular interest is the treatment of Lewis's alleged homosexuality and his parents' disastrous marriage.
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[23] Ambrosio is modeled on the character of Montoni in Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* and anticipates Schedoni in *The Italian* (1797). Ambrosio differs in that his crimes all originate in lust; he is a character who is motivated, from beginning to end, by sexual passion. For a classic treatment of Gothic excess, see Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, pp. 53-94. Praz situates Ambrosio within romanticism's larger fascination with Satan and his rebellious energies.

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[24] Compare with Peter Brooks, "Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*," *ELH* 40:2 (1973): 249-263.
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[25] Two standard works on Austen have influenced my reading. See Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, pp. 197-218; and Lillian Robinson, *Sex, Class, and Culture*, pp. 178-193. See also, Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen, A Life*; and Clare Tuite, *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon*.

No discussion of sexuality in Austen can avoid Jill Hedyt-Stevenson's work. Best known for her essay, "'Slipping into the Ha-Ha': Bawdy Humor and Body Politic in Jane Austen's Novels", Hedyt-Stevenson argues convincingly for a sexual innuendo crucial to Austen's fiction but largely ignored by commentators. For a reading of sexuality in *Pride and Prejudice*, see her forthcoming book *Jane Austen, Comedies of the Flesh*, Chapter 2.
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[26] For an insightful treatment of Lydia and Wickham, see Tim Fulford, "Sighing for a Soldier: Jane Austen and Military Pride and Prejudice," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 57:2 (2002): 153-178.
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

The State of Things: Olaudah Equiano and the Volatile Politics of Heterocosmic Desire

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The essay explores the notion of masochist nationalism through a reading of a brief passage in Equiano's Interesting Narrative in which Equiano engages with a young Musquito man named George. The argument pays particular attention to how Equiano figures George in a complex economy of humiliation and revenge. Ultimately, the essay suggests that Equiano's most radical gesture in this scene is to stage politics from the ground of the object. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

Women to govern men . . . slaves freemen . . . being total violations and perversions of the laws of nature and nations. . . .

—Francis Bacon

1. As a strategic intervention in the debate on the abolition of slavery *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* made its author famous, but the full import of the text is only now beginning to re-emerge.[1] The text is a complex political performance because, as Sonia Hofkosh emphasizes, "Equiano enters the political debate [on slavery] through personal experience. . . . *The Interesting Narrative* seeks to influence ('excite') the collective, political body of Parliament . . . through the vocabulary of sentiment and feeling, appealing directly to the very hearts of its individual members" (334). The preface to the 1814 edition of *The Interesting Narrative* explicitly states that the representation of his sufferings is designed to elicit sympathetic affect in his readers: "Being a true relation of occurrences which had taken place, and of sufferings which he had endured, it produced a degree of humane feelings in men's minds, to excite which the most animated addresses and the most convincing reasoning would have laboured in vain" (Qtd. in Hofkosh 334). By suggesting that reason may not provide a viable political tool in the abolition of slavery, these prefatory remarks focus the reader's attention on the body itself—on precisely that which is commodified in the trade of African slaves. Hofkosh's appraisal of these remarks draws attention to the shared bodily existence of slaves and readers:

   > The book is directed not to the reason, an abstract quantity, but seeks rather to register its effect in the very bodies of its readers—at their feet, in their hearts, and in their minds. It represents individual experience to them—both the author's and their own—creating for them an isolate, intimate space through which they can respond sympathetically to its argument. It operates from the inside out, self-referentially, narrowing its focus in order to universalize its appeal. . . . The political dimension of the text is thus articulated in libidinal language; in Equiano's abolitionist intervention, his life story, the political is personal. (334-5)

   The affect generated by reading about private bodily suffering is therefore crucial to Equiano's political mission.

2. However, if this generation of affect is to have political effects, a series of complex substitutions needs

to unfold.[2] On the one hand, Equiano's suffering needs to be hollowed out such that it can exemplify the pain of commodification as such. His pain needs to synechdocally stand as part of the whole of slavery's anguish. This implies a certain cancellation of his private experience in the service of a generalizable exemplarity. On the other hand, the reader's pain, that which allows him or her to be "put into the place of another," must undergo a similar set of modulations.[3] Before this libidinal economy can be harnessed in the political project of abolishing slavery, the generated affect has to be simultaneously separated from Equiano and from the reader so that it may be attached to the space of commodification. What this means is that the effectivity of Equiano's text lies in its power to make the reader experience objecthood. Paradoxically, I believe that this is achieved by inculcating affective responses and then extracting that which we associate most directly with emotion—i.e. its specific subjective quality. In other words, libidinal language is deployed to make one understand the horrors that attend the libido's cancellation thereby founding a politics from the ground of the object. One of the aims of this essay is to demonstrate that such a politics is remarkably volatile and while apparently opening onto transgressive possibilities also seems prone to reversion in its specific manifestation in the discourse network of anti-slavery activism. However, to achieve such a demonstration requires that we bring styles of thinking endemic to queer theory to bear on the historical materialism of much recent work on the relationship between colonial and metropolitan society in Romantic studies.[4] Specifically, this essay inhabits the still underappreciated period in Foucault's thinking immediately prior to and following the publication of *La Volonté de savoir* in which he attempted to articulate the relationship between sexuality, biopower, race and the regulation of the middle classes.[5] In accordance with David M. Halperin's recent reminder that Foucault's project needs to be understood as an "inquiry into the modalities of human subjectivation," this essay historicizes Equiano as a subject of desire at a particularly vexed moment in the history not only of British imperialism, but also of circum-Atlantic subjectivity (88).[6] By attempting to historicize specific scenes, desires and sexual acts in Equiano's text, one can discern not only the intersection of sexual and imperial economies, but also the largely forgotten libidinal dynamics of Dissenting religion during the period.[7]

3. This essay examines this problematic by concentrating on a small episode in *The Interesting Narrative* in which Equiano meets a young Musquito man for whom property is a largely foreign notion. The interaction between one who was formerly a commodity and one who does not yet know how commodities circulate occurs late in *The Interesting Narrative*. My contention is that this complex pedagogical scene constitutes the radical core of Equiano's text and as such provides a model for understanding the libidinal exchange between reader and text articulated above. Furthermore, this scene also involves a specific historical intervention aimed at teaching the Musquito prince how to resist the commodification of his people as their region is colonized. In what I see as a symptomatic gap in the existing scholarship on this text, it is never asked who George might be.[8] Since neither Equiano's eighteenth-century readers, nor his twentieth-century exegetes seem willing to enquire after specific Musquito individuals, I want to establish George's identity and suggest that it may provide a key for understanding Equiano's textual and political strategies.

4. Late in 1775, shortly after Equiano undergoes a Methodist conversion, he is invited by Dr. Charles Irving to join "a new adventure, in cultivating a plantation at Jamaica and the Musquito Shore" in present day Nicaragua (202).[9] Aside from making money, Equiano's primary desire during his connection with Dr. Irving is "to be an instrument, under God, of bringing some poor sinner to my well beloved master, Jesus Christ" (202). Equiano concentrates his missionary activities on a young Musquito prince who is returning to Central America from an embassy in London. That embassy constitutes a minor moment in the British attempts to colonize the Musquito coast.

5. After a series of struggles with the Spanish for control of the Musquito Shore, "the British bestowed sovereignty on the Musquito Indians, i.e. on the hereditary 'king' of the Musquitos, and formed an alliance with them" (Naylor 46). As Robert Naylor argues, "the weakness of this particular protectorate

system was that the territory was occupied by scattered clusters of mesolithic Indians with no formal conception of territorial domain in the western sense. . . . Therefore, the British would virtually have had to create the very [sovereign] entity to which they were allegedly allied" (46). In the late 1760s and early 1770s this fictional sovereign body became the object of intense economic speculation. Eight merchants, including William Pitt the elder, formed the Albera Poyer project, which quietly acquired vast tracts of land in the Black River district from the Musquito "king" George I, with the hope that Britain would formally colonize the region in the near future. Britain's superintendent in the region, Robert Hodgson, became convinced that the natives "were being cheated out of their lands and that the Musquito Shore was becoming 'prey to the rapacity of a few individuals'" (59). In the interest of maintaining faux-diplomatic relations with the Musquito and of foiling a land scheme that did not include him, Hodgson unilaterally declared his authority over all lands and possessions of the Musquito Indians and announced that land transactions involving the Musquito would be regulated by his office. The ensuing legal crisis is directly related to Equiano's text, for the members of the Albera Poyer project sent the Musquito king's son to London to demand that Hodgson be recalled.

6. When the prince is introduced into Equiano's narrative, Equiano recognizes but does not elaborate on his connection to the Albera Poyer land-scheme:

> Before I embarked, I found with . . . Doctor [Irving] four Musquito Indians, who were chiefs in their own country, and were brought here by some English traders for some selfish ends. One of them was the Musquito king's son, a youth of almost eighteen years of age; and whilst he was here he was baptized by the name of George. (202-3)

What Equiano does not explain is that George and his companions have come to London to demand that Hodgson be recalled on the grounds that he has failed to prevent the enslavement of natives in the region. Through George, the project is attempting to obviate Hodgson's interference by having him recalled on grounds unrelated to the land scheme.[10] In other words, anti-slavery arguments are being used to further the project's plans for colonization. Robert Naylor is careful to point out the suspicious nature of this visit by emphasizing first, that the other interested party in the land transaction is George's father and second, that the principal agents in the trade of native slaves were the Musquito Indians themselves. Bolstered by their allegiance with the British, the Musquito actively captured and sold their tribal enemies to English planters.

7. Equiano's temporary reticence regarding this corrupt deployment of George's anti-slavery position breaks down when he attempts to give George a double lesson first in protestant election and later in capitalist exchange:

> In our passage I took all pains that I could to instruct the Indian prince in the doctrines of Christianity, of which he was entirely ignorant; and to my great joy he was quite attentive, and received with gladness the truths that the Lord enabled me to set forth to him. I taught him in the compass of eleven days all the letters, and he could put even two or three of them together, and spell them. I had Fox's Martyrology with cuts, and he used to be very fond of looking into it, and would ask many questions about the papal cruelties he saw depicted there, which I explained to him. (203)

In this colonial encounter, the scene of reading is remarkably similar to the one Equiano stages in *The Interesting Narrative* as a whole. In the process of conversion, Equiano has hailed the Musquito prince, who has been baptized and given the name George, into an affective relation with representations of suffering. Once this affect is generated, Equiano then explains the proper interpretation of the represented agony. Equiano subtly intervenes in George's embassy, but the transcultural lesson works by way of a series of perverse narratives. Equiano's interaction with George involves two masochistic

scenes—a broad scenario of Christian masochism with a more specifically sexualized fantasy at its core—which establish a series of interlocking political allegories. These allegories draw parallels between the martyrdom of Protestant Englishmen, the psycho-sexual dynamics of shipboard society, and a specific moment in the history of British colonization. The allegorical dimensions of *The Interesting Narrative* speak directly not only to the construction of racial categories in late eighteenth-century Britain and America, but also to the forms of complex political resistance developed by Anglo-Africans to deal with imperial domination in the Black Atlantic.

Equiano's Invisible Church

8. Linda Colley has recently reminded us of the significant role played by Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. . . in the consolidation of British nationalism in the eighteenth century (25-8). Based on Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* of 1563 the book was revived and circulated in an aggressively patriotic fashion in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Publishers and patriots alike realized that Foxe's representation of the agonies of Protestant martyrs during the reign of Queen Mary had a certain translatability to contemporary British politics. The burning bodies could be retroactively cited as evidence not only of their resolute faith, but also of their future countrymen's Protestant destiny.What emerges from this specific imagination of community could be described as a form of masochistic nationalism—i.e. a nationalism that coheres in the pain of its annihilated members.[11]

9. Masochistic nationalism may seem counter-intuitive to our normative understanding of national character since masochism carries with it the connotation of perversion, a turning aside from truth or right, and specifically a turning from pleasure to pain. As the quote from Bacon in my epigraph indicates the perverse is threatening because it deviates from the principle of hierarchy—for Bacon, women should not govern men and slaves should not rule over masters. Significantly, Colley argues that Foxe's text has nationalist effects precisely because it threatens state hierarchy. To understand this we need to recognize that Equiano and George are poring over a book that represents two kinds of violence. The violence in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* does not "go all one way." Richard Helgerson suggests that "the persecution and martyrdom of those whom Foxe considers members of the true church of Christ are the book's most persistent subject but God's punishment of persecutors makes a strong countertheme" (255). This is important because the second type of violence allows for a type of nationalism predicated on the disjunction of nation and state and hence from the extant governmental strategies of modernity. Foxe's text contains vivid accounts of Queen Mary's persecution of Protestant heretics accompanied by less systematic representations of sudden violence in which the state sanctioned persecutors are killed by animals or natural disasters. In the first instance, "The violence of Antichrist against the true church of Christ and its members is carried out by willing human agents occupying offices of great worldly power," whereas "the violence of God [in the second instance] is either direct or else mediated by unwitting actors" (258). As Richard Helgerson states, "God's violence requires no institutional order. [Beneath these two distinct forms of punishment] lies a double and potentially divided sense of communal identity" (258).

10. The way in which these two communities connect is of crucial historical importance, for "the visible church of which the king is the head should also be the local embodiment of Christ's invisible and universal church" (258). In Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, the period immediately following Wycliffe's vernacular translation of the Bible constitutes a significant rupture between the visible and invisible church, between the state and a less tangible form of religious community. Of this latter group, Helgerson argues that

> Its members are readers who imagine themselves in invisible fellowship with thousands of other readers, particularly those who encounter the word in the same vernacular translation. Like the nation, this imagined community does not necessarily coincide with

> the state. Indeed, the state may frustrate its ambition to achieve a visible institutional embodiment of its own, may hunt down and persecute its members. But where the imagined community does not coincide with the state, it saps the state's legitimacy and the legitimacy of the social hierarchy that constitutes the power structure of the state. (266)

Within the overall narrative, the accounts of the suffering of the invisible church are embodied in the burning Protestant martyrs, but these stories are counter-balanced by a chronicle history of England in which worldly and godly institutions exist in harmony. This balance allows Foxe to figure the period of Queen Mary's reign as an aberration which once corrected will allow a re-harmonization of worldly and divine governance, of state and divinely elect nation. However, the text in Equiano's hands moves in an altogether different direction.

11. Significantly, Equiano's primary teaching tool is not the magisterial 1563 edition of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, but rather a more portable abridged version of 1760 with elaborate copper plate illustrations edited by Martin Madan, a noted and controversial Wesleyan teacher, entitled *The Book of Martyrs: Containing an Account of the Sufferings and Death of the Protestants in the Reign of Mary the First. Illustrated with Copper Plates. Originally Written by Mr John Fox; And now Revised and Corrected with a Recommendary Preface by the Revd: Mr: Madan*.[12] As the title indicates the illustrations are a significant selling point, but they also fill the space left by significant elisions. Commenting on the various editions of Foxe's text, William Haller notes that eighteenth-century abridgements

> are a vulgarization of the original for an increasingly narrow evangelical Protestant piety. Foxe's whole account of ecclesiastical and national history, by which he sought to make his contemporaries understand what happened in Mary's reign and its bearing on the situation in which they found themselves under her successor dropped completely out. (252)

Without its counter-balancing national history, the book in Equiano and George's hands establishes, in Haller's words, "a strongly oppositional identity, an identity founded on suffering and resistance and profoundly antithetical to the hierarchical order of the English state" (268). Standing in place of this historical critique, the illustrations demand closer scrutiny.

12. With only a few exceptions the illustrations in *The Book of Martyrs* repeat the same compositional elements (see fig. 1). Typically, the centre of the engraving is dominated by the martyr himself who is usually surrounded by a frame of fire and uttering his final testimonies of faith. That frame is itself enclosed by a crowd of onlookers who fill the background of the image. In between the crowd and the burning martyr one finds two or more executioners. In light of Kaja Silverman's analysis of masochism, the illustrations which ostensibly fascinate George conform to the structural contours of Christian masochism as described by Theodor Reik in *Masochism in Sex and Society*. Reik argues that the psychic economy of moral masochism has three primary characteristics—"exhibitionism or 'demonstrativeness,' revolutionary fervor, and 'suspense'" (Silverman 197).[13] For Reik,

> an external audience is a structural necessity [in Christian masochism], although it may be either earthly or heavenly. Second, the body is centrally on display, whether it is being consumed by ants or roasting over a fire. Finally, behind all these "scenes" or "exhibits" is the master tableau or group fantasy—Christ nailed to the cross, head wreathed in thorns and blood dripping from his impaled sides. (197)

The illustrations in *The Book of Martyrs* contain all of these elements. In figure 1 (detail), the displayed body dominates the centre of the image, the earthly audience surrounds the martyr, and key elements of

the composition invoke the crucifixion—the attitude of the martyr's body and the lance-bearing officers make the link to Christ all too evident. The body being burned and beaten "is not so much the body as the 'flesh,' and beyond that sin itself, and the whole fallen world" (197). As Silverman argues, this substitution of the flesh for the body "pits the Christian masochist against the society in which he or she lives, makes of that figure a rebel, or even a revolutionary of sorts. In this particular subspecies of moral masochism there would seem to be a strong heterocosmic impulse–the desire to remake the world in another image altogether, to forge a different cultural order" (197-8). When one applies that heterocosmic impulse to the realm of anti-slavery activism, the slave's suffering is retained as the instantiation not only of the eternal punishment of those who participated in and perpetuated the slave trade, but also of a different cultural order beyond the reach of racial derogation and commodification. It is this conjunction of vengeance and radical renewal that characterizes Equiano's largely eschatological approach to the political in this passage.[14]

13. This threat to the principle of hierarchy gains some resonance in light of Paul Gilroy's recent decision in *The Black Atlantic* to consider diasporic African identity not in terms of roots but rather "as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached via the homonym routes" (19). If following Gilroy we recognize "the image of the ship [as] a living, micro-political system in motion," then Equiano's invocation of the invisible church through the act of reading *The Book of Martyrs* with George establishes him as part of an oppositional community that is being persecuted by the ship-board minions of the English state. As the phantasmatic drama unfolds, the white sailors of the Morning Star are initially deployed as the observers in the illustrations, but, borrowing a phrase from Reik's analysis of Christian masochism, "the subject [in this case, Equiano] functions both as the victim and the victimizer, dispensing with the need for an external object. Even when the punishment seems to derive from the external world, it is in fact the result of a skillful unconscious manipulation of 'adverse incidents'" (Silverman 196).[15] If we understand Equiano's invocation of the Marian martyrs in a thoroughly political fashion, then what is emerging is a subtle bid for political autonomy in a limited field of action. As Silverman summarizes, "the sufferings and defeats of the fantasizing subject are dramatized in order to make the final victory appear all the more glorious and triumphant" (196). However, this demonstrative aspect of Equiano's text involves a second masochistic scene that is much more overtly sexualized, yet nonetheless integrally related to the reading of Foxe.

14. As Equiano continues his account of George's conversion, he carefully notes that George's act of praying is not prayer in the proper sense:

> I made such progress with this youth, especially in religion, that when I used to go to bed at different hours of the night, if he was in his bed, he would get up on purpose to go to prayer with me, without any other clothes than his shirt; and before he would eat any of his meals amongst the gentlemen in the cabin, he would first come to me and pray, *as he called it*. I was well pleased at this, and took great delight in him, and used much supplication to God for his conversion.(203)

One could argue that Equiano's perspicuity regarding the status of prayer is nothing more than a sign of doctrinal rigor, but such a reading downplays the extent to which Equiano himself indicates that reading *The Book of Martyrs* with George is traversed by a complex economy of pleasure. This process of conversion is operating by way of perversion because Equiano experiences pleasure in spite of the fact that George's activities deviate from true prayer.[16] The moment when Equiano indirectly represents George's use of the word "pray" should give us pause, for there is a sense of estrangement that enters the text when Equiano attributes this naming to George—when in fact it is Equiano who is introducing George to this ritual. This mis-attribution of Equiano's own actions and desires to George are an instance of what Reik calls the manipulation of "adverse incidents." In the paragraphs below, I argue that Foxe is deployed such that Equiano becomes phantasmatically abased as the object of

George's desire.

15. If we look closely at the scene of reading we see that Equiano emphasizes that George "was very fond of looking into [Fox's Martyrology]" (203). But this "fondness" has another register in which Equiano constructs George's desire to join him at bedtime, scantily clad and ready for "prayer." This double ascription of desire unfolds into two different masochistic trajectories.First, George's desire for the book hails him into an identificatory relation with the Christian martyrs; and second, George's "readiness for prayer" figures Equiano as the object of George's desire. The first textual hailing is aimed at George's conversion, whereas the second contextual ascription of desire is aimed at Equiano's abasement. Through this latter gesture, Equiano has moved beyond political identification with the represented martyrs in Foxe.He is now enacting his sexual degradation.The two masochistic scenarios, the persecution of the invisible church and the abasement of Equiano, are tied together by George's name. Since he has been named after the sovereign, George can figure simultaneously as the Other and as the King. In this light, George plays a perverse yet constitutive role in Equiano's oppositional relation to the ungodly "little world" of shipboard society.[17] The textual and contextual trajectories of masochism are joined by the spectral presence of the sovereign who acts as the apex or pivot in both triangular scenarios.

16. Significantly, these two masochistic trajectories are set in conflict with one another. If George achieves a full identification with the burning bodies represented in *The Book of Martyrs,* he accedes to his conversion and begins to imagine himself as a persecuted member of the invisible church. In other words, conversion will push George towards the same masochistic practice enacted by Equiano, and thereby deprive Equiano of his necessary tormentor.[18] It is not surprising, therefore, when Equiano tells us that the process of George's conversion is not only slow, but ultimately unsuccessful:

    > I was in full hope of seeing daily every appearance of that change which I could wish; not knowing the devices of Satan, who had many of his emissaries to sow his tares as fast as I sowed the good seed, and pull down as fast as I built up. Thus we went on nearly four-fifths of our passage, when Satan at last got the upper hand. (203)

    Despite Equiano's desire for George's conversion, the fact that the whole process unfolds slowly fits a crucial element of masochistic practice. According to Reik, the moral masochist develops a series of strategies to "prolong preparatory detail and ritual at the expense of climax or consummation. . . . this implies the endless postponement of the moment at which suffering yields to reward" (Silverman 199). Silverman specifies the relationship between suspense and reward in Christian masochism by focusing on its temporal aspects:

    > The Christian...lives his or her life in perpetual anticipation of the second coming. The figural meaning which this anticipation implants in present sufferings makes it possible for them to be savored as future pleasures, with time folding over itself in such a way as to permit that retroactivity to be already experienced now, in a moment prior to its effectivity. Such is the fundamentally perverse nature of Christian suspense and the pain it sanctifies and irradiates. . . .(200)

    In other words, Equiano's pleasure in George is actually displaced pleasure that will be experienced in the future when he is rewarded by God. Through George's unachieved "conversion," Equiano is able to savour his future status in a post-revolutionary state, in a post-imperial cultural order.

17. But Equiano's oppositionality at this stage in the narrative is contingent on his continuing relationship with George. That which separates them directly interferes with Equiano's heterocosmic fantasies. As long as Satan "sows his tares as fast as [Equiano] sows the good seed" the engagement with George

seems capable of infinite extension—a kind of interminable conversion (203). In a sense, the steady pace of Satan's obstruction works to Equiano's advantage because it provides the suspense which is so crucial to the maximization of pleasure in the masochistic subject. However, when the white sailors intervene in George's conversion they instantiate a fundamental shift in Equiano's masochistic fantasies, not because they impede George's identification with the invisible church—that only suspends Equiano's reward—but because their actions physically, psychically and politically separate George and Equiano. This separation pushes Equiano's masochistic practice into more extreme manifestations whose specific details allow us to clarify the libidinal economy which undergirds his political resistance to ship-board society.

Rape and Liberation

18. The subtle and seemingly innocent account of George's attempt to pray is linked to a much more violent masochistic scenario when the white crew members of the *Morning Star* are introduced into the scene:

> Some of Satan's messengers, seeing this poor heathen much advanced in piety, began to ask him whether I had converted him to Christianity, laughed and made their jest at him, for which I rebuked them as much as I could; but this treatment caused the prince to halt between two opinions. Some of the true sons of Belial, who did not believe that there was any hereafter, told him never to fear the devil, for there was none existing. . . .(203-4)

This passage introduces a remarkable subtext which re-orients much of the heterocosmic desire we have encountered thus far. The subtext is coded into Equiano's attack on the white sailors as "the true sons of Belial" for the appellation involves the threat of sodomitical rape. Like many of Equiano's presentations of evil, he is alluding to *Paradise Lost*:

> . . .when night
>
> Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
>
> Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
>
> Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
>
> In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
>
> Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.(I. 500-5)

Lurking behind both Equiano's and Milton's invocation of the "sons of Belial" lies the combined story of sexual violence and national election in Judges 19-21, whose implications for not only the represented scene of reading, but also the act of reading Equiano's text are profound. The shift from *The Book of Martyrs* to the book of Judges occasions a reversal in the flow of sexual violence that subtends the emergence of a specifically national fantasy.

19. Adam Potkay's reading of *The Interesting Narrative* persuasively argues that Equiano consistently relates presumably historical events in the Old Testament to occurrences in his own spiritual life (Potkay, "Olaudah," 681). This tropological strategy was far from unusual in Evangelical self-fashionings, but Potkay demonstrates that

> unlike other Puritan spiritual autobiographies, Equiano's "progress" is not *just* the

> tropological freeing of the soul from the symbolic Egypt of carnality; rather, his journey proceeds on a literal as well as an allegorical level. According to Equiano's telling of his life, he *literally* retraces the course of the Bible from patriarchal mores . . . to captivity in a strange land; and from deliverance to repratriation in a Beulah land of the spirit. In short, Equiano literally reenacts the basic narrative pattern of the books of Genesis and Exodus, as well as learning, by his conversion or Christian re-birth, to read Israelite history along with his own experience as an allegory of spiritual deliverance (681).[19]

This narrativization of personal experience in terms of Israelite history blurs the line between spiritual and political deliverance. This blurring was especially evident in the early Methodist teachings of George Whitefield. Equiano attests to having seen Whitefield speak, and as Potkay argues, "Whitefield's message of spiritual liberation from the bondage of 'these depraved natures of ours' sounded to some like a call for liberation, pure and simple" (Potkay and Burr 9).[20] As Whitefield states,

> Let us consider ourselves . . . as persons travelling to a long eternity; as rescued by the free grace of God, in some measure, from our natural Egyptian bondage, and marching under the conduct of our spiritual Joshua, through the wilderness of this world, to the land of our heavenly Canaan. (Quoted in Potkay and Burr, 10)

Potkay's account of the tropological gestures in *The Interesting Narrative* focuses primarily on how Equiano links Igbo society to the pastoral state of the Patriarchs in Genesis, and on how he figures his enslavement, auto-manumission and conversion as an enactment of the Israelites' escape from captivity in Exodus.[21] The Genesis/Exodus allegory animates much anti-slavery discourse, but Equiano strays to other sections of the Old Testament. The "sons of Belial" episode under consideration in this essay rehearses an infamous passage later in the history of the Israelites which is much more difficult to understand in terms of liberation, but which has everything to do with the consolidation of power in what can only be described as a national corpus.

20. The prime factor in the growing national unity was the religion of Yahweh. The various national and tribal lists, and the tribal relationships themselves [that recur throughout Judges], show the Israelites were a heterogeneous group held together only by a more or less common experience and by their devotion to Yahweh." (684-5)

Judges therefore is an account of national consolidation based on shared religious belief. In this context, Equiano understands his struggle with the sailors on board the *Morning Star* as a tropological rehearsal of the war between the tribes of Israel and the renegade Benjaminites that points to an allegorical unification not only of Christian believers, but also of ethnically distinct peoples in the emergent British nation.

21. Equiano integrates the Book of Judges into his narrative first, by declaring the sailors "true Sons of Belial," and second, by staging multiple scenes of hospitality. The sailors taunt George by telling "him never to fear the devil, for there was none existing; and if ever he came to the prince, they desired he may be sent to them" (204). This taunt obliquely rehearses Judges 19 in which the Benjaminites, figured by Milton as the sons of Belial, demand that an old man from Gibeah break the laws of hospitality and give up his Levite guest to the lustful mob. The Benjaminites "beset the house round about, beating on the door, and they said to . . . the master of the house, 'Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him'" (19:22). The threat of sodomitical rape unfolds into a horrifying narrative of sexual violence and national vengeance which ultimately recoils on Equiano's political resistance to the institutions and practices which enslaved him. However, before exploring this problematic I want to establish the strange way in which the sailors' taunt impinges on Equiano's

interpellation of George into his masochistic reading of Foxe.

22. The sailors short circuit Equiano's masochistic practice by simply telling George that if the Devil comes to you, send him to us and we'll take care of him. In other words, the sailors are offering to protect George from precisely the martyrdom which drives identification with the invisible church. However, the sailors' taunt contains a double sign which fully entraps George. The "sons of Belial" stand as a figure for Satan in 2 Corinthians 6:15. The sailors' promise, therefore, forms a loop: if the Devil comes to you, send him to those who stand in for the Devil. In this paradoxical scenario George is shunted from the masochistic scene and hence denied access to the salvation of the invisible church which Equiano has linked to freedom from the bonds of colonial domination. George's acceptance of the sailors places him in a similar position to those who accepted the protection of the state during the reign of Queen Mary, for in Foxe's narrative they too misrecognized the power of the ungodly state. Equiano's response is perfectly apposite, for he argues that "if he and these people went to hell together, their pains would not make his any lighter" (204). By refusing to seek pleasure through pain in his lifetime, George is promised not only political subjugation in this world, but also an eternity of torment in the next.

23. Because Equiano's identification with the martyred figures in Fox is guaranteed by his deployment of George in the position of the King, the sailors' taunt effectively destroys Equiano's masochistic identification by depriving him of his tormentor—of his "sovereign" George. At this point, Equiano's text takes a deeply unsettling turn for the masochistic scene which revolves around the reading of *The Book of Martyrs* shifts textual loci. In an extremely subtle manner, Equiano re-stages his engagement with George using narrative structures derived from Judges 19-21. This means three things. First, that the agent of abasement shifts from George the indigene sovereign to the "Sons of Belial." Second, that Equiano's phantasmatic abasement becomes more explicitly sexualized and more overtly violent. And third, that Equiano's invocation of revenge becomes at once more pointed and more ambivalent. In order to understand this latter point we need to return to the moment of hospitality from the earlier masochistic scene and examine how it is restructured to allow the Judges narrative to become tropologically active.

24. At the core of Equiano's attempt to convert George one finds a moment of hospitality very similar both to that of Judges 19 and to that of the sailors' taunt, for it is George who comes to Equiano's cabin in the middle of the night full of the desire to "pray." I have already suggested that Equiano's self-construction as the object of George's desire constitutes the abasement necessary for Equiano's masochistic identification with the invisible church. But the allusion to Judges allows us to be much more specific about that abasement. In Judges 19 the master of the house offers his daughter and the Levite's wife as a way of saving his guest from sodomitical rape. When the wife is cast out, she is raped to the point of death and dumped on the threshold of the house. In response, the Levite cuts the body of his wife into twelve pieces and sends a piece to each of the tribes of Israel as a call to arms against the Benjaminites. Mieke Bal emphasizes that the text is ambiguous about the raped wife's condition upon her return. As she states, the text "refrains from stating whether the woman is dead or alive" (218). This detail is crucial because it suggests that the Levite may have killed his wife in order to elicit vengeance. As we will see this ambiguity has significant ramifications for Equiano's text.

25. When George comes to Equiano's door, the narrative immediately establishes a visitor-host relation in which the shelter Equiano offers is that of the invisible church posited in *The Book of Martyrs*. Significantly, both *The Book of Martyrs* and the Book of Judges emphasize that loyalty to God is necessary to success as a nation. By referring to the sailors as the "Sons of Belial," Equiano subtly figures the sailor's threat to George's conversion as the threat of sodomitical rape. The resolution of that threat, however, is extremely complex and requires that one recognize some important constitutive elements of shipboard society. First, since the ship is an all male zone, women exist only as "ideas" of

alterity—their bodily difference is nowhere in evidence. What this means is that the primary corporeal encoding of difference on the ship is that of race. In the terms set forth in Judges 19, there is no sexual other to be offered to the rapacious "Sons of Belial." In light of the earlier masochistic scenario, could we not argue that Equiano re-casts himself simultaneously as the Levite and the Levite's wife in this phantasmatic scene? After all, he has already figured himself as the object of George's desire.

26. At this point Equiano's Christian masochism reveals itself to be integrally connected to a certain feminization. As Silverman emphasizes,

> the exemplary Christian masochist also seeks to remake him or herself according to the model of the suffering Christ, the very picture of earthly divestiture and loss. Insofar as such an identification implies the complete and utter negation of all phallic values, Christian masochism has radically emasculating implications, and is in its purest forms intrinsically imcompatible with pretensions of masculinity. And since its primary exemplar is a male rather than a female subject, those implications would seem impossible to ignore. (198)

What I would argue is that the hole left by the collapse of Equiano's Christian masochism is filled by newly active feminine masochism. The shift from the scene derived from Foxe to one defined by Judges 19-21 reveals not only the sexual dynamics which drive Christian martyrdom, but also the close relation between femininity and commodification.

27. Equiano's ability to phantasmatically align himself with both the Levite and his mutilated wife is deeply connected to Equiano's experience of slavery, for the Levite owns his wife as property in much the same way that Equiano owns himself. As Sonia Hofkosh states,

> in the moment that he buys his freedom, Equiano's history might also be seen to literalize the ethos of possessive individualism, exposing as it does so the double edge that defines the paradigm of the entrepeneurial subject: the self as owner depends on the principle that selves can be owned, freedom on the possibility of alienation, identity on difference. (336-7)

What this implies is that auto-manumission is structurally similar to feminine masochism. If we look closely at Equiano's account of his manumission this link between feminization and commodification is already operative. In his attempt to register the extent of his "unutterable" bliss at buying his freedom, Equiano offers a list of comparable moments of joy:

> Heavens, who could do justice to my feelings at this moment? Not conquering heroes themselves in the midst of triumph—Not the tender mother who has just regained her long-lost infant, and presses it to her heart . . . Not the lover, when he once more embraces his beloved mistress after she had been ravished from his arms!—All within my breast was tumult, wildness, and delirium! (136)

The resting place of this sublime cascade offers a sexual allegory for the experience of slavery and self-purchase that resonates with the narrative of Judges 19. The figure compares the relationship between purchasing subject and object purchased to the relationship between male lover and his raped wife. The comparison is grounded on the double meaning of the word "ravish" for it signifies the act of rape as well as the act of violently seizing and carrying away someone or something. If the passivity inscribed in femininity can be understood as parallel to commodification, as Laura Brown suggests, then the act of commodification hollows out the subject in a fashion that makes it susceptible to feminization.[22] The double identification with the Levite and his wife, therefore, is intimately connected to the

experience of double subjectivity instantiated by the commodification of bodies.[23]

28. At one level, this feminization reverses one of the key metaphorics of abolitionist discourse—i.e. that the sexual commodification of women in marriage is akin to the commodification of Africans in the institution of slavery.[24] It reverses it by aligning femininity with what is required to extricate oneself from the institution of slavery.[25] In this particularly condensed form, Equiano's textual gesture critiques the fantasy of docility which underwrites much of the discourse of Christian abolitionism. But in the context of the Judges tropology, it also suggests that this same feminization/commodification will elicit cataclysmic acts of vengeance aimed at those who install relations of hierarchy based on gender and/or commodification. Here Equiano feminizes himself in a fashion that not only re-establishes his masochistic abasement, but also marks a crucial similarity between Foxe's, the Levite's and his own practice of writing. Peggy Kamuf has argued that the Levite's butchering of the raped wife is an act of writing, for the severed fragments of her body are used as letters calling forth vengeance.[26] Similarly, *Acts and Monuments* is a collection of writings, often by the martyrs themselves, that testifies to persecution in such a way as to demand revenge in the after life. Equiano's body of writing, in turn, can be equated with these accounts of butchering and burning, for in rendering his own life he has textualized his pain in a fashion aimed at unleashing a higher vengeance against not only the white sailors who interrupt his relation with George, but also against the state which sanctions the institution of plantation slavery. There is, however, a complex ambivalence embedded in this tropological revenge. As noted earlier, the Levite's call for vengeance via bodily dissection may rely on killing his wife. In terms of our argument thus far, this suggests that in producing *The Interesting Narrative* Equiano's call for vengeance turns on the annihilation of his enslaved self. There is a self-mutilation, a lopping off of historical experience, at the core of Equiano's textualization of bodily suffering. The resolution of this problematic requires that we attend more closely to two distinct moments where revenge enters into the account of the journey to the Musquito shore.

Things as They Are

29. The first and most visible moment of vengeance, like the vengeance of the invisible church in Foxe, suddenly enters Equiano's text as a direct action of God:

> one morning we had a brisk gale of wind, and, carrying too much sail, the main mast went over the side. Many people were then all about the deck, and the yard, masts and rigging, came tumbling about us, yet there was not one of us in the least hurt, although some were within a hair's breadth of being killed. . . .(204)

The fact that this intervention occurs immediately following George's decision to withdraw not only from Equiano's masochistic designs, but also from shipboard society altogether, points to a significant rupture in Equiano's text. Without George, Equiano's abasement is without an agent, and therefore his connection to the invisible church reverts from one of masochistic practice to one of readerly identification. The gap between practice and representation is filled in by God's direct intervention in the social life of the ship in the shape of a "brisk gale of wind." However, in contrast to *Acts and Monuments* the violence of the gale does not kill anyone. Rather, it marks the capacity for destruction almost as if a sign of God's existence was necessary to condemn the sailors' lack of belief. This resolution of a temporary breakdown in Equiano's masochistic practice answers the worldly will to power of the sailors with power of a different order.[27] But behind and following this invocation of Godly vengeance lies a more troubling tropological reading based not on *The Book of Martyrs* but rather on the Book of Judges.

30. The demonstration of the providential hand of God does not negate Equiano's complex negotiation with George or with the vengeance narrative in Judges. Equiano's relation to George from this point on

in *The Interesting Narrative* can only be fully understood by considering the full import of revenge in the Judges narrative. The body of the Levite's dismembered wife calls forth vengeance on the Benjaminites, but it also instantiates a series of repeated sexual crimes. In the war against the Benjaminites, the tribes of Israel almost wipe out one of their constituent members. When the tribes realize that the tribe of Benjamin is on the verge of extinction, they repeat the Benjaminite's rapes on a heightened scale. First they kill the male inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead, ravish four hundred daughters of the town and present them to Benjamin so that the tribe can re-populate itself. And second, the tribes make it possible for the Benjaminites to steal and rape two hundred more women from Shiloh. Peggy Kamuf's analysis of the biblical text focuses directly on the relationship between revenge and repetition:

> From this outline of the legend, it is easy to see the strange turn taken by this vengeance of brother against brother. When Israel stops short of annihilating Benjamin, when the extinction of one of its members by the whole is at last understood as a form of self-mutilation, it achieves resolution by twice *repeating* Benjamin's crime. In the first repetition, the Israelites act as Benjamin's agents, stealing the virgins of Jabesh Gilead;[28] in the second repetition, the Benjaminites are authorized to steal their wives for themselves and promised immunity from retribution. Israel thus averts the threat to its unity and continuity as a whole by prescribing the crime that it had to avenge in the first place, by legislating and enacting in an exceptional manner the contrary of the law *as* the law. (193)

This repetition and reversal is resonant for *The Interesting Narrative* because Equiano performs precisely this identification with his oppressors in his final interaction with George.

31. Following the cessation of George's conversion, Equiano emphasizes that "[George] became ever after, during the passage, fond of being alone" (204). With George living in exile at the edge of shipboard society, no longer involved in a process of perverse conversion, Equiano's primary interest in George becomes inextricably tied to the circulation of commodities. Equiano narrates one more pedagogical scene which concretizes much of our discussion thus far:

> One Sunday . . . I took the Musquito prince George, to church, where he saw the sacrament administered. When we came out we saw all kinds of people, almost from the church door for the space of half a mile down to the water-side, buying and selling all kinds of commodities: and these acts afforded me great matter of exhortation to this youth, who was much astonished. Our vessel being ready to sail for the Musquito Shore, I went with the Doctor on board a Guinea-man, to purchase some slaves . . . and I chose them all of my own countrymen some of whom came from Lybia. (204-5)

Before analyzing Equiano's exhortations on the marketplace, it is important to recognize that Equiano completes the tropological relation to Judges 19-21 by entering into the slave trade. With Equiano's masochistic strategies in abeyance, he shifts from object of abasement to subject of punishment, from bonded chattle to bondsman. His capacity for this kind of transition is as Susan Marren has argued the defining quality of his specific historical situation.On the face of it this shift appears to be a reversal in political strategy for Equiano, but I would like to suggest otherwise. The earlier negotiation with George was aimed at eliciting vengeance for Equiano's commodification. The new strategy is aimed less at compensatory violence than it is at generating a re-constituted social body. The radical gesture embedded in Equiano's Christian masochist deployment of the Judges allegory is his suggestion that these seemingly opposed strategies—the calling forth of God's vengeance on those who enslaved him, and his purchasing of slaves like himself—are in fact politically continuous. What Kamuf says of Judges is equally applicable to this segment of *The Interesting Narrative*:

> The Levite's avengers, after punishing Benjamin, find themselves forced to identify with the criminals they have punished and to refuse any demand for vengeance....The solution requires, in other words, that the victim—or the victim's representatives—exchange places with the victimizer, and that the new 'crimes' be exceptionally exempted from any right to vengeance. (193-4)

This obviation of vengeance in Judges is prompted by a sudden recognition that the entire narrative constitutes a self-mutilation which threatens the unity and continuity of the tribes of Israel. Taking the tropology to its conclusion therefore suggests that Equiano's actions not only bring his self-mutilation to close, but do so in order to effect a corresponding national consolidation based on Christian belief and capitalist expansion that surfaces more explicitly elsewhere in the narrative in his advocacy of the Sierra Leone project.[29]

32. If we return to Equiano's mediation between the church and the marketplace, we find that his temporary reticence at the outset of this episode regarding the corrupt deployment of George's anti-slavery position for ends defined by the Albera Poyer scheme breaks down when he attempts to give George a double lesson in protestant election and capitalist exchange.[30] These two moments of exchange—the sacrifice of Christ's body and the purchasing of slaves— buttressed against one another, are not only the suture point of everything we have seen thus far, but also the textual moment when the historical nature of George's activities for the Albera Poyer project impinge on Equiano's narrative. In making the anti-slavery arguments needed to impeach Hodgson, George furthers the interests of his family as participants in the sale of land, but it is precisely this move that will guarantee his family's disappropriation and potential enslavement at the moment of future colonization. George is caught in a loop, for his arguments against the commodification of natives in the region facilitate the commodification of native land. I would argue that Equiano casts his critique of this complicitous loop within the discussion of the sailors' taunt, for that taunt offers temporary protection in this world that opens onto eternal damnation in the next. The sailors, like the members of the Albera Poyer project, deploy George in a scheme that he does not understand. What is remarkable about this encrypted critique of George's relation to the "selfish English traders" is the degree to which Equiano replicates George's "error." From the site of commodity exchange Equiano turns and specifically purchases Africans like himself. If George and his family have sold out for short term gains in the scene of colonial conflict, then Equiano is attempting to generate a reconstituted social body—a kind of human portfolio, which will accede to its full surplus value in the longest term imaginable—eternity.

33. I would like to close by considering this entry into the slave trade in the terms of the masochistic fantasies which drive this portion of *The Interesting Narrative*. If we read Equiano's representation of ship-board events as an allegory for George's involvement with the project, then George's acceptance of the sailors' deceptive offer registers his status as an unwitting tool of the Albera Poyer scheme. George is deceived by the sailors because, unlike Equiano, he does not yet read like a member of the invisible church. Similarly, he is deceived by the English planters because he has not yet internalized the workings of capital and specifically the logic of the commodity. As Robert Naylor argues, it is the non-comprehension of property in the Western sense that allows George and his family to become tools in a scheme that eventually will disappropriate them. In this light, Equiano's attempts to convert George focus on this double miscomprehension. Just as George does not understand prayer in a conventional sense, neither does he comprehend the theological economy in which he is being manipulated. The sailors, like the Albera Poyer project, manage to disable George's oppositional impulses by concealing the fact that they are his worst enemies. The exchange they are offering will gaurantee his damnation and the servitude of his people. It is not surprising therefore that Equiano's exhortations should pass from the church to the marketplace, for George needs a lesson in commodification no less than in protestant election.

34. But how does Equiano's role in purchasing Africans like himself fit into such a lesson? As mentioned above, the Musquito were directly engaged in the enslavement of their tribal enemies. In contrast, Equiano emphasizes that he explicitly goes about enslaving those most like himself. It is a rare assertion of racial community in Equiano's text, one which he highlights with a footnote that identifies himself with the biblical followers of "Apher...who were called Africans" (293). Could it be that in light of his failure with George he is now building a community of martyrs more like himself than the Marian martyrs? If we are willing to think through this possibility in light of Equiano's religious resistance to the ship-state, then I think what emerges from this encounter with the Musquito prince is a politics based not on freedom, but on slavery—a politics from the ground of the commodity, rather than the subject of capitalist exchange. The apocalyptic politics that Equiano advocates operates through the body of the commodified being. Equiano signals as much when he states at the outset that his purpose is to bring "some poor sinner to my well-beloved master, Jesus Christ" (202). This apparent acceptance of abasement, of commodification, of pain and persecution is predicated on a future act of vengeance which will establish Equiano and those racially like him as the exclusive property of God. What remains is the harsh judgement of unlegitimated and unsublimated complicity, for George is ultimately not granted access to such an imagined community in Equiano's narrative.

35. George is consigned to textual oblivion when the text shifts its attention from the social dynamics of ship-board society to the economic problems associated with plantation management. The transition from sea to land marks a crucial discursive transition in *The Interesting Narrative*. The intense presentation of affective relations between Equiano and George gives way to the conventional Enlightenment description of life among a generalized category of native Indians. This discursive shift enacts a textual repression in which physical and quasi-anthropological observations are used to regulate the power of emotion elicited by rememorative passages that are too volatile to handle. If we understand the elimination of George in this way then it is difficult not to read the ensuing interactions with the Musquito population as revisions of the political entanglements of ship-board life.

36. As Equiano, Dr. Irving and their cohort establish a plantation in the Black River region, the indigenous population become fundamental props in fantasies of community consolidation that eerily continue the Judges allegory. In the realm of plantation society, Equiano constructs himself as the locus of almost omnipotent power. At one level, this consolidation is a fundamental premise of the quasi-ethnographic gaze which now mediates all of Equiano's observations on the Musquito and the Woolwaw. But his descriptive authority is superseded by two remarkable demonstrations of power that we tend to associate with the dominant fantasies of white supremacy, whether exercised in the realm of plantation slavery or the history of European imperial expansion. After describing the Indians' simplicity, Equiano recounts the failure of Dr. Irving to mediate between the "Governor"—again, the descriptor transplants notions of English governance to a context where governance means another thing entirely—and one of the local Chiefs who ensure the economic stability of the Irving plantation. As the conflict deepens, the Doctor literally disappears and Equiano emerges as the representative of colonial power. The conjunction of Equiano's expressed desires at this moment in the text should give any reader pause:

> I was so enraged with the governor, that I could have wished to have seen him tied fast to a tree, and flogged for his behaviour; but I had not people enough to cope with his party. I therefore thought of a strategem to appease the riot. Recollecting a passage I had read in the life of Columbus, when he was amongst the Indians in Jamaica, where, on some occasion he frightened them, by telling them of certain events in the heavens, I had recourse to the same expedient, and it succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. (208)

We have already seen Equiano buying slaves, but here we find him overcome with the master's desire to beat the subaltern not simply for reasons of exemplarity, but for reasons directly related to

maintaining the easy flow of commodities between the settlers and the neighbouring native populations. In light of our earlier discussion, it is far too reductive to suggest that Equiano has simply been seduced by the two-fold power of capital and imperial expansion, or that he is simply identifying with his former oppressors. In terms of the Judges allegory, Equiano exchanges places with the victimizer to enact the contrary of the law as the law. And he is doing so in part because the masochistic nationalism which characterized his ship-board praxis has transformed into a form of national imagination grounded not on heterocosmic fantasies, but rather on fantasies of immanent plenitude. The desire to avenge the horrors of slavery by remaking the world in an altogether different image is replaced by a phantasmatic accession to absolute sovereignty. Like the sudden shift in Judges from assailing the Benjaminites to folding them into a fantasy of national similitude, Equiano's practice shifts from one of self-mutilation to a performance of imperial self-consolidation.

37. Equiano himself emphasizes that his desires and actions in this scene of colonial conflict are strategic, but he is forced to choose between two related strategies. The first is a primary tactic in subordinating fractious slaves in the plantation economy. Equiano certainly witnessed and may have experienced precisely this deployment of bodily pain for the management of slave populations, yet he decides against this method of violent subordination in spite of his desire for its enactment. The second strategy is drawn from the history of imperial expansion and constitutes a form of symbolic or cultural violence that does not, in the first instance, have recourse to bodily pain. It has instead recourse to books.

38. The resonant detail for our discussion is that Equiano ends the dispute by simply using a bible as a visual icon of power:

> When I had formed my determination, I went in the midst of them, and taking hold of the governor, I pointed up to the heavens. I menaced him and the rest: I told them God lived there, and that he was angry with them, and they must not quarrel so; that they were all brothers, and if they did not leave off, and go away quietly, I would take the book (pointing to the bible), read, and *tell* God to make them dead. This was something like magic. The clamour immediately ceased . . . after which they went away peaceably. (208)

The definition of reading has substantially transformed since the exchange with George over Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Instead of teaching letters and words to his indigenous companion, Equiano opts for a kind of theatrical practice learned ostensibly from accounts of Columbus's voyages, but perhaps equally derived from Equiano's own childhood understanding of the talking book.[31] Perhaps this is why Equiano no longer talks about being "an instrument under God, of bringing some poor sinner to my well-beloved master, Jesus Christ," but focuses instead on his apparently magical ability to direct God's actions through successfully talking to the bible. Unlike Equiano's childhood attempts to talk to books, this particular scene is not one of alienation, nor is it one of heterocosmic desire. Instead the bible acts unequivocally as the disciplinary tool of colonial domination. The masochistic praxis attendant upon the earlier engagement with both the text and the illustrations of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* is here occluded by Equiano's phallic deployment of the bible as a prop in colonial performance. The experiment in masochistic nationalism on board the *Morning Star* has transformed into a phantasmatic consolidation whose force is not that of narrative but rather of visual signification. Significantly, Equiano's gesture is not grounded on territorial claims—the English have yet to colonize the region—but rather on a phantasmatic form of Christian territoriality which traverses most late eighteenth-century fantasies of nationhood.

39. However, the resilience of Equiano's earlier perverse strategies is evident in his final account of social exchange between the Musquito and the settlers. As Equiano progressively accedes to positions of colonial power, the question of sexual exchange between indigenous and settler peoples, which formerly defined his masochistic nationalism, becomes a site of intense anxiety. The anxiety is

registered in two different ways in the following description of a grand feast or *drykbot*:

> The mirth had begun before we came; and they were dancing with music: and the musical instruments were nearly the same as those of any other sable people; but, as I thought, much less melodious than any other nation I ever knew. They had many curious gestures in dancing, and a variety of motions and postures of their bodies, which to me were in no wise attracting. The males danced by themselves, and the females also by themselves, as with us. The Doctor shewed his people the example, by immediately joining the women's party, though not by their choice. On perceiving the women disgusted, he joined the males. At night there were great illuminations, by setting fire to many pine-trees, while the drykbot went round merrily by calabashes or gourds. . . .(209)

This curious passage is worthy of much discussion in part because it seems to refute point by point the sexual overtones of the ship-board encounter with George. Equiano asserts explicitly, in a remarkably distant voice, that he finds none of the native dancers desirable, and then seems to evaporate at precisely the moment that Dr. Irving, in a gesture of exemplarity, enters the realm of sexual exchange. Equiano carefully marks both his own repulsion from the bodies of the Musquito before him, and indicates that the Musquito women share a similar "disgust" with Dr. Irving's contravention of supposed ethnic and racial barriers. However, through the assertion of his own repulsion, Equiano partakes of the Musquito women's rejection of interracial sexual practices.[32] Equiano's earlier self-feminizations are subtly rehearsed in this identification with the women who reject Dr. Irving's attempt "to shew his people the example." The fact that Irving has to lead his people into relation with the indigenous women can be read as a tacit assertion of the ethnocentric fear of miscegenation among his white crew. But such a reading ignores the fact that interracial sexual relations were fundamental to both colonial encounter and the plantation economy—and it neglects the degree to which Irving's action both asserts and undercuts the naturalness of heterosexual desire, as does Irving's subsequent shift from the women's group to the men's. It is this latter event which prompts a sudden turning away in the discourse from descriptions of relations between native and settler people to less affect-generating descriptions of the physical environment. It would seem that object choice for Equiano—whether considered in terms of gender or ethnicity or both—is by this point a discursively volatile problematic. The sudden jump away from the intersubjective altogether may be necessary for Equiano to contain the earlier heterocosmic desires and to finally assert that "this merry-making at last ended without the least discord in any person in the company, although it was made up of different nations and complexions" (210).

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Notes

[1] All references to Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* will be included in the text. For an account of the success of the book and the fame of its author see Carretta ix-xxviii. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr have provided a bibliography of editions and printings of the text in *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Living the New Exodus in England and the Americas*, 162-4. Sonia Hofkosh provides a summary of Equiano's political career in "Tradition and *The Interesting Narrative*: Capitalism, Abolition, and the Romantic Individual" in *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834*, 333.
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[2] For related discussions of the complex substitutions which mediate between the production of affect and political action see Ann Cvetkovich's compelling readings of the problem of exemplarity in AIDS activism and in Marx's novelistic gestures in *Capital* in *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism*, 1-6 and 165-97 respectively.
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[3] This is from Edmund Burke's famous definition of sympathy in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our idieas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, 41.
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[4] In this regard, this essay obliquely engages with Ann Laura Stoler's *Race and the Education and Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1995) in that it attempts to bring questions of sexuality and coloniality into constant reiteration through the reading of a single passage.
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[5] See Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. In this regard, I concur with David M. Halperin's recent admonition in *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 24-47, that Foucault has been poorly served by many scholars who work in his name. This is especially evident when one recognizes that Foucault's engagement with questions of sexuality are deeply entwined with his attempt to offer a thorough account of the emergence of the middle classes that runs tangentially to Marx's account of cooperation in the first volume of *Capital*. Clearly articulated in *Discipline and Punish*, this project traveled through the analysis of sexuality and eventually culminated in the startling genealogy of biological state racism articulated in *Society Must Be Defended*. This complex historical assemblage of class stylization, sexual regulation and racial specification remains largely unexplored, and its future analysis arguably constitutes Foucault's "forgotten" legacy.
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[6] The term circum-Atlantic is derived from Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, 4-5.
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[7] Equiano's deployment of Christian discourse and his complex relationship to Methodism have been the subject of controversy in recent discussions of *The Interesting Narrative*.Adam Potkay offers an illuminating account of the secularization of Equiano's text while defending his own tropological reading of the narrative in "History, Oratory, and God in Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*." It is my implicit contention that attending

to the erotic substrate of Equiano's Christianity not only allows one to develop a coherent account of the strangeness of his politics, but also allows one to recognize precisely how Equiano's practice diverges from the political desires of recent criticism.
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[8] See for example Helen Thomas, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies*.

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[9] Equiano, like most followers of Whitefield and Wesley, refers to himself as a member of the Church of England.It is important to remember Henry Abelove's persuasive account of the erotic substrate of Methodist practice in *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists*.
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[10] Keeping the scheme out of the public eye was crucial for the success of the land monopoly.
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[11] What I am describing here is not that distant from the notion of "traumatic nationalism" recently articulated by Lauren Berlant in *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, 1-4.
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[12] Martin Madan was also the author of an extremely controversial critique of The Marriage Act—which argued that polygamy was in accordance with Mosaic and Christian law—entitled *Thelyphtora; or, A Treatise on Female Ruin, in its Causes, Effects, preventions, and Remedy; Considered on the Basis of Divine Law: Under the following heads, viz. Marriage, Whoredom and Fornication, Adultery, Polygamy, Divorce*. Madan's close reading of the Bible opened him to charges of blasphemy, but his critical strategy of testing contemporary statutes and practices regarding marriage via typological readings of the Bible is not at all distinct from Equiano's own strategy of configuring his life in terms of the Old Testament. See Adam Potkay's analysis of this rhetorical strategy in "Olaudah Equiano and the Art of Spiritual Autobiography."
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[13] As Silverman argues, Reik's examples suggest that "his attention may be focused upon a different variety of moral masochism than that spotlighted by Freud—that his concern may ultimately be with Christian masochism, even when he is discussing more secular instances" (197).
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[14]In "History. . .", Potkay argues that Equiano's rhetorical strategies are very similar to the oratorical tactics of Whitefield: "Behind all of these [gestures] lies the promise of divine vengeance.In this context, the question "might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God" signals not so much the perspective of a cultural outsider as a confirmation that the Christian universe knows no outside; it is all inclusive, and is itself the surety of eventual justice" (605).For an illuminating account of the oratorical qualities of Equiano's text see William Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865*.
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[15] See Reik, 304.

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[16] What true prayer might mean in this instance may be impossible to define. Equiano may be distinguishing

George's actions from the rules for personal conduct laid out by Wesley, or he may be referring to more traditional Protestant definitions of prayer. Equiano may be referring to specific doctrinal exercises, although the context does not explicitly support this view. I would like to thank Kim Michasiw for suggesting this possiblility.
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[17] Equiano refers to ships as "little worlds."
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[18] For a discussion of the ambiguous role played by the masochist's tormentor see Gilles Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*.
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[19] Starting from Equiano's profession of similarity between the laws of the Pentateuch and the laws of Igbo society, Potkay's essay works through the progression from Genesis through Exodus in *The Interesting Narrative*. Potkay's reading however trails off after Equiano's conversion for reasons that are partially articulated in Srinivas Aravamudan's critique of Potkay's reading in *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1668-1804*, 239-46. Aravamudan suggests that Potkay's decision to focus only on the tropological leaves the question of the anagogical unaddressed, but, as Potkay has recently argued in "History. . .", 608-9, Aravamudan's reading of Equiano's Christianity is neither persuasive in itself, nor sufficient for dealing with the complex relationship between rhetorical performance and political incitement in *The Interesting Narrative*. As I hope my unraveling of the Judges allusion indicates, Equiano's deployment of the Bible cannot be contained in any straightforward fashion, for even at the tropological level the text works against itself.
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[20]Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr, "Introduction" *Black Atlantic Writers of the 18th Century*, ed. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 9. Potkay and Burr also draw attention to an inaccuracy in Equiano's claim to have seen Whitefield, see p.9.
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[21] See Potkay, "Olaudah," 682-685.
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[22] See Laura Brown, *The Ends of Empire*, 85. Brown's link between femininity and commodification is succinctly stated as follows:

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[23] See Hofkosh, 337.
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[24] See Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1838*, Deirdre Coleman, "Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and English Women's Protest Writing in the 1790's," and Ann K. Mellor, "Am I Not A Woman, and a Sister": Slavery, Romanticism, and Gender."
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[25] Felicity Nussbaum broaches the question of Equiano's gender identity in *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century*, 191-206, but like much of the prior

criticism regarding Equiano's unstable masculinity overlooks the possibility of strategic feminization as a figural and textual strategy of violent revenge. Nussbaum, like numerous other critics, assumes a disconnection between feminization and violent revenge that renders Equiano's deployment of Judges all but unreadable. Equiano's "femininity" has been a topic of some concern in Wilfred D. Samuels "Disguised Voice in *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*," and in Catherine Obianuju Acholonu, *The Igbo Roots of Olaudah Equiano*. However, much of this discussion not only diverges from Equiano's text, but also fails to adequately historicize gender and sexuality in both 18th century British and Igbo society. Katalin Orban raises a related question in "Dominant and Submerged Discourses in *The Life of Olaudah Equiano (or Gustavus Vassa)*."Attempts to excavate the roots of Equiano's femininity from his Igbo past may have been rendered moot by Vincent Carretta's recent suggestion that Equiano was a native of South Carolina in "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity." The problems posed by Equiano's gender identity demonstrates the complexity of thinking historically about sexuality in a trans-cultural context.
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[26] See Peggy Kamuf, "Author of a Crime" in *The Feminist Companion to the Bible*, 20.
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[27] The invocation of God's power is simply the corollary declaration of the oppositional relation between the invisible church and the visible state previously exercised through the masochistic scene.
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[28] Mieke Bal, in "A Body of Writing: Judges 19" in *The Feminist Companion to the Bible*, objects to the use of virgin in this instance in a fashion that underlines precarious task of paraphrasing or troping this passage in Judges (217).
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[29] The most important element in Equiano's romance with capital is his advocation for the Sierra Leone company.For an illuminating discussion of his relation to the project see Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804, 234-88*.
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[30] In "Word between Worlds: The Economy of Equiano's Narrative," Joseph Fichtelberg has persuasively argued that Equiano's piety and his economic fantasies are thoroughly intertwined.
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[31] Aravamudan emphasizes the generic quality of this recourse to the bible (271). See Henry Louis Gates, "The Trope of the Talking Book," in *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, for the canonical reading of the talking books episode.
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[32] At one level, this would seem to be at odds with Equiano's advocacy of intermarriage in an article published in *The Public Advertiser* in 1788. However, Equiano's refutation of James Tobin's pro-slavery writings focuses exclusively on ameliorating the exploitation of black women by white men in the plantation economy and thus stabilizes the scene of sexual exchange by eliminating not only other ethnicities, but also non-heterosexual sexual practices and identities. The problem posed by the drykbot is that its intensely hybrid form of sociability does not allow for easy discursive stabilization and thus Equiano's text opts for temporary containment. For a discussion of Equiano's writing on intermarriage see Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, 284-5.
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

"That Obscure Object of Historical Desire"

David M. Halperin, University of Michigan

David Halperin responds to the essays in this collection, many of which respond to his 2002 book, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series,* prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. I was of course pleased but also quite surprised when Richard Sha wrote me to say that he had conceived the idea of a volume for the Romantic Circles Praxis Series that would consist of responses to my 2002 book, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. I know little, and so I said little, about the Romantic period in that book, and I didn't see how my speculations would be especially helpful to Romanticists. So it was with a good deal of interest that I read the stimulating essays collected here, but it was also with a continuing sense of puzzlement—a puzzlement shared, evidently, by some of the contributors themselves, who could identify only extremely tenuous or general connections between their work and my own. The result, which will be reflected in the commentary that follows, has been a pronounced fluctuation in our level of engagement with one another's work.

2. I found myself most in sympathy with the projects of Susan Lanser and Bradford Mudge. Lanser's effort to imagine and to describe a history of female homosexuality separate from that of male homosexuality is very much in line with a couple of hints contained in my book, as she notes, though the credit for conceiving lesbianism as both a perennial potentiality within and a possible menace to the social structures of male dominance belongs to Gayle Rubin and to Valerie Traub, as Lanser also knows.[1] Moreover, Lanser seems to be elaborating the tension that Traub discerns in English Renaissance discourses between the figure of the tribade and the figure of the friend, the former being a monstrous image of sex and gender deviance while the latter embodies the possibility of a female homoeroticism contained within the bounds of virtue and the canons of femininity. When Lanser writes of "the fine line of external appearance that separates the gender-bending sapphist from the virtuous friend," I wonder about two things. First, what sort of historical connections does Lanser see between the phenomena described by Traub in the earlier period and what Lanser calls "the lines separating virtuous from transgressive alliances" in her period—lines which, she says, "were often literally paper thin"? Second, I wonder whether or not it makes sense to attempt to construct, from whatever resemblances there might be between "the tribade" and "the gender-bending sapphist" on the one hand and the virtuous female friends of the early modern and Romantic periods on the other, two enduring types or figures or forms of life that would correspond, within the history of lesbianism, to the sorts of transhistorical categories that compose a genealogy of male homosexuality, at least according to the model I sketched out in the title essay of my book.

3. The source of my greatest sympathy with Lanser springs from her avowed interest in the possible connections between homosexuality and cultural forms, because that interest happens to coincide with my current preoccupations.[2] Lanser seeks to uncover and to clarify the relation between poetic tropes and female homosexuality as well as the relation between poetic discourse and the history of sexuality in general: "I want to ask," she writes, "what we can learn about the place of sapphism in the Romantic imagination by looking at poetic tropes." I would like to encourage her to pursue and even to broaden that project, by analyzing the peculiar relevance of specific cultural forms to homosexuality itself. As she notes, Andrew Elfenbein has already provided a model for such a project in *Romantic Genius: The*

Prehistory of a Homosexual Role, which inquires into what might be called the culture of homosexuality, by which I mean both homosexuality as a cultural practice and culture as a carrier of homosexual meanings. Elfenbein's achievement in that book, at least in the eyes of this non-specialist, consists in describing and assessing the particular sexual value that could be attached, and that came ultimately to be attached, to a cultural form—in this case, the theory and practice of individual genius. It is as if Elfenbein had identified, at a formative stage in the developmental history of European culture, what D. A. Miller identified at a formative stage in the developmental history of the gay male individual: namely, "those early pre-sexual realities of gay experience" that impart a definite, discernible gay orientation, a kind of gay internal logic, to an existence that has yet to crystallize into a homosexual identity—that can be described, therefore, only as proto-gay (26).

4. At least since the success of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" and its spinoffs, it has become commonplace to regard homosexuality as somehow producing a unique perspective on the world as well as a cluster of superior insights into life, love, and matters of taste in general. According to this way of thinking, homosexuality involves not only specific sexual practices but a wide variety of distinctive social and cultural practices, a particular attitude to life, a critical take on straight society, a heightened sense of taste and style, a collectively shared but nonetheless singular outlook on the world. Of course, as any reader of Elfenbein's book knows, such a notion is nothing new—although its entry into the stock of received ideas that constitute the common sense of straight society has been relatively recent. It seems to me that Lanser may be in a good position to contribute an important and revealing chapter to the history of that notion, and to expand its purview within studies of female homoeroticism and homosexuality. "Tropics of discourse," ethical as well as literary genres, structures of feeling, and codes of behavior may offer a lot of useful material with which to think about sexuality as a cultural form no less than as an erotic practice.[3] It would be good to know more about the lesbian specifics of sexuality as culture.

5. Bradford Mudge's proposal "to include the emergence of pornography as one of the premier events of modern culture" in our new histories of both sexuality and literature is also most welcome and long overdue. Others have considered the rise of pornography in the eighteenth century to be formative for the constitution of modern sexual subjects.[4] Mudge extends their work by providing a rigorously historicist approach to the very category of pornography that gives it new substance and greater precision in historical terms. As he writes, "The history of pornography begins at the moment that the word itself is dislodged as a 'given,' as an absolute that imposes itself anachronistically upon contested terrain." Although he apologizes for taking part in a "semantic shell game" that consists in arguing about what exactly the word means and to what phenomena it can be most accurately applied, he rightly insists that this sort of semantic quibbling "performs a necessary service, opening up 'pornography' as an imaginative construct whose history has the potential to complicate our ideas about human sexuality and its representations." The study of the word, its meaning, and the history of its deployment is crucial, because, "like 'homosexuality,' in other words, 'pornography' can uncritically erase the very historical process that brought it into being—regardless of critical intentions." Mudge's analysis dramatizes, and is intended to dramatize, the usefulness of the kind of historicism that I have tried to defend, so it's not surprising that I like his essay. I also agree with Mudge that many feminist critiques of pornography, in the course of their laudable efforts to focus attention on the enduring aspects of gender hierarchies, have despecified and essentialized it.[5]

6. Jill Heydt-Stevenson's study of the sexual exuberance of Jane Austen's early writings clearly fits in well with Mudge's project. Mudge writes:

> What if, however, modern "literature" had an evil twin, a shady and disreputable other whose pleasures mocked the refined taste of the public sphere even as they embodied the quintessence of its new consumer capitalism? What if, in other words, literature and

pornography were complementary constructions whose Manichean drama (as artificial and self-serving a contest as those staged by professional wrestling) obscures the power with which they together construct and deploy sexual norms and deviancies? Then, presumably, the sexual bodies imagined by romantic fiction would become valuable prehistory to our modern paradigms; no longer either legitimate or illegitimate aesthetic representations, they would instead become both imaginative prefigurements of our lived realities and historical records of the evolving conflicts between private acts and the public domain that sought at once to express and control those acts.

7. Daniel O'Quinn's effort to historicize "Equiano as a subject of desire" did not fail to evoke a grateful echo in me.[6] I wonder if Equiano's post-conversion memoir affords material of sufficient quality and quantity to enable the critic to historicize his erotic subjectivity, but I can only applaud O'Quinn's impulse to "bring styles of thinking endemic to queer theory to bear on the historical materialism of much recent work on the relationship between colonial and metropolitan society in Romantic studies."

8. I now come to the essays by Jonathan Loesberg and Richard Sha, both of which contain substantial critiques of my work on Foucault and the history of sexuality, and which call for a more extended response. I shall try nonetheless to be brief.

9. Loesberg is envious of me. That is not a moral judgment: it is what he proudly and unapologetically declares. He endows me (undoubtedly for the first and last time in my life) with a heroic glamor, analogous to that attached to the survivors of the Normandy landings in the eyes of the post-Spielberg generation, and he positions himself as a "hedgerow historian"—that is, a detached, nostalgic spectator longing, at a safe distance, for the danger and glory of The Good Fight. In this case, that fight is over the proper uses of Foucault, of gay history, and of the interpretation of sexual life in ancient Greece. Loesberg's ostensibly frank avowal of the inauthenticity of his stake in these controversies—he has, he confesses, "no Greek, no Latin, no expertise in any of the requisite fields"—is, and is meant to be, disarming. In other words, it doesn't leave me much in the way of a viable subject-position from which to respond. Can the object of voyeuristic fascination speak? Can those who already know their credentials to be inauthentic suffer any further disqualification? As typically happens in public self-abasement, however, Loesberg confesses to the wrong sin: what he excuses himself for merely serves as a cover for a more dubious maneuver that he refuses to cop to.

10. To be perfectly uncharitable about it, Loesberg is unhappy because he feels excluded from the philosophical thrills of the history of homosexuality—and excluded by homosexuals, of all people, who have somehow managed to shoulder him aside in a come-from-behind triumph of radical chic. He wants to stake his claim to this territory, in particular to explore the philosophical issues that emerge from scholarly efforts to link history with politics, truth with power, Foucault's life with Foucault's work, and homosexuality with the history of homosexuality.[7] In the case of Foucault, he objects to readings of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* that invoke Foucault's interest in sadomasochistic practices in order either to defend or to discredit his work, and he criticizes me for letting liberal critics "off the hook by creating the authentic connection of a hagiography that excludes them from the possibility of comprehending." He goes on to say that "the problem with all these connections (between S/M and life) is that they reduce the challenge of Foucault's thought to a reaction to a specific practice rather than using a reaction to a practice to test our ability to accommodate a way of thinking." (Loesberg's own tendency to characterize my approach to Foucault and to gay history as narrowly political rather than as philosophical or scholarly seems to me reductive in just this way.) Loesberg clearly has an investment in this topic: he wants to be right there, in the front lines of the battle, on Omaha Beach, but he thinks he's too late to make it. He comforts himself for not being an authentic warrior by constructing from his very inauthenticity a passport to philosophy, if not to Normandy, one which has (according to him) Foucault's authenticating stamp on it. I do sympathize with him, in fact: working

occasionally as a man in feminism, I too have experienced the masochistic joys and epistemic benefits of inauthenticity, of being necessarily and irredeemably the wrong man in the wrong place.[8]

11. The problem is that Loesberg isn't willing to interrogate the nature of his own investment in The Good Cause beyond simply declaring it. Much less is he willing to claim it and own it. What his handwringing amounts to is a refusal to recognize that in fact he has no "hedgerow envy": there is no detachment here, no belatedness at the scene of battle. Loesberg is passionately engaged, in his fashion. He is already implicated in the history and theory of homosexuality, but he is not willing to explore (indeed, he is almost unwilling to name) his own implication in it as a heterosexual postmodernist, except by entitling his interest, defensively, "philosophy." Thus, his apologetic, self-conscious, abashed, but ultimately triumphal claim to join the party ends up looking too much like what it had sincerely wanted to avoid: namely, an assertion of heterosexual (philosophical) privilege. But, really, as all the world knows, identification is a solvent of identity. There is room in gay history for all sorts of people, and the history of sexuality matters to many of us for many sorts of reasons. Identifying, claiming, and knowingly mobilizing those reasons shouldn't be such a scary business. Nor should it be necessary to make other people pay for one's own lack of the "correct" identitarian or scholarly qualifications, for one's loss of a sense of entitlement. Come on, Loesberg and other victims of hedgerow envy: *encore un effort pour être historiens*!

12. Richard Sha also wants to be me. At least he reworks bits of my prose into his own text, more as a series of in-jokes addressed to me, or so I presume, than as winks at the reader.[9] But he has a larger point to make: "alterity has become a post-modern version of objectivity. By that I mean that whereas under objectivity, historians could rely upon an historical object independent of the subject who wants it to become an historical object—a position that can now seem naive—our recent historicist self-consciousness that there are no innocent objects of historical inquiry has meant that alterity now takes on the possibility of distance between subject and historical object without bringing with it objectivity's naive baggage. Our alterities are calculated." That criticism seems to me to be very astute and far-reaching. It is quite canny of Sha to notice the way that the category of "alterity" can function in the history of sexuality as a badge of honor, a test of rigor, a guarantee of objectivity. So his criticism of the function of alterity seems well-founded. But I'm not sure it represents a valid criticism of me.

13. In fact, I should have thought that Sha, in framing his critique of the place of alterity in current histories of sexuality, would have numbered me among his allies instead of his targets. What I had singled out as "priggish" about "my [earlier] insistence on the alterity of the Greeks, about my [former] effort to get historians of sexuality to adhere unfailingly to neat, categorical, air-tight distinctions between ancient paederasty and modern homosexuality," after all, was precisely the tendency to dictate the proper uses of alterity, to identify a historian's dedication to alterity with objectivity, rigor, resistance to pleasure, and intellectual virtue (*How to do*, 14). When I called my earlier attitude "priggish," what I meant was that there was something excessively strict, doctrinaire, righteous, superior, even schoolmarmish about my desire to prescribe to students of the past what sort of pleasure they were entitled to find in the archive, and how they might connect pleasure with truth. In undertaking a public auto-critique, I intended to acknowledge that the history of sexuality allows for multiple sites of identification with the past, and that it is not the historian's job to decide whether others should get off by seeing themselves reflected in the surviving record of antiquity or by discovering strange and exotic historical creatures beyond the horizons of their own cultural imagination. I clearly stated my own preference for a historicist approach, and I also tried to specify the reasons as well as the personal (erotic, ethical) investments that lay behind that preference. But I also recognized, in the end, that "a historicist approach to sexuality needs to be argued for as a preference, not insisted upon as a truth" (23). So much, I would have thought, for alterity as objectivity. Sha quotes this last remark of mine, rather skeptically, but he discounts it, as if he thought I didn't really mean it.

14. To be sure, I do think there are some cognitive advantages for historical understanding in attending to and even emphasizing alterity. I don't deny that for a moment. But to speak of "cognitive advantages for historical understanding" is to open up the category of "historical understanding" to further negotiation and specification, to allow for an ongoing discussion of what constitutes such an understanding, what kind of understanding we seek when we undertake any particular project of historical analysis, how that work is carried out, within what sort of intellectual and political and institutional horizons it is inscribed, who wants it and for what reasons. My attachment to alterity therefore has little to do with a notion of historical objectivity as a kind of permanent court of last appeal sitting in perpetual session to judge the rightness or wrongness of historical statements. My own belief is that my pragmatist understanding of the value of alterity is consistent with my pragmatist notion of objectivity—with an alternative view of what constitutes objectivity within the realm of historical practice. Such a revisionist notion of objectivity is in any case far removed, I think, from Sha's somewhat punitive, positivistic understanding of "objectivity."

15. Sha writes, "Just as imposing our notions of sexuality onto the Greeks leads to blindnesses, so too does insisting that the Greeks were absolutely other." I agree. Did I not urge, after all, that "a sensitivity to difference should not lead to the ghettoization or exotification of the Other, to an othering of the Other as an embodiment of difference itself"? (17). I rather thought that by making an explicit defense of historicism; by stating my preference for an approach to the past that valued, without fixating singlemindedly on, its alterity; by articulating the reasons for my preference; and by emphasizing that preference *as* a preference—and not as a truth or a law or a method or a virtue or an imperative: I thought that by doing all those things I had opposed the very fetishizing of alterity of which Sha now accuses me. I don't maintain that the Greeks were "absolutely other." Indeed, my hermeneutic principles, which insist that any notion of alterity is inevitably determined by reference to the subject who constructs it and thus by reference to our present, forbid me to imagine, let alone to lobby for, any such transcendental object of historical knowledge and desire. Already in my 1990 book, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality,* I inveighed against what I called "a kind of ethnocentrism in reverse, an insistence on the absolute otherness of the Greeks, . . . an ethnographic narcissism as old as Herodotus—a tendency to dwell only on those features of alien cultures that impress us as diverging in interesting ways from 'our own'" (60). And in *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* I argued that we cannot reconstitute the otherness of the Greeks "by an insistent methodological suspension of modern categories, by an austerely historicist determination to identify and bracket our own ideological presuppositions so as to describe earlier phenomena in all their irreducible cultural specificity and time-bound purity" (107).

16. It is Sha who dreams of an otherness that would be really, truly, objectively Other:

> On the one hand, Halperin wants to think outside of our present concept of orientation. On the other hand, he makes orientation his vantage point for establishing the alterity of Ancient Greek sexuality. His choice of orientation as the vantage point for gauging the alterity of the Greeks has the unintended effect of anchoring modern sexual categories in the ontology of history. One could easily imagine other ways of thinking about alterity: for example, by examining how different cultures cope with the elasticity and excessiveness of desire, orientation thus becomes a strategy for dealing with—for tempering—the mobility of desire just as gender is one means of discouraging excess desire in Ancient Greece. Such a reimagining demands that we truly think outside of orientation by insisting upon its ideological work without running the danger of reifying orientation as a vantage point from which to gauge alterity.

17. And so he is upset with me because he suspects that I may have palmed off on him an alterity that is not the genuine article. As the passage quoted above makes clear, he thinks he has caught my version

of alterity in the act of smuggling in contemporary identities in the guise of otherness, just as he has caught me in the act of "anchoring modern sexual categories in the ontology of history" and "reifying orientation as a vantage point from which to gauge alterity." But I made no secret of it. That is exactly what I set out to do. There is no "unintended effect" here. My insistence on approaching the history of sexuality from within the cultural and sexual horizons of my own location is the very thing that safeguards the version of alterity I desire from ever being or claiming to be "absolutely other." Contrary to what Sha claims, I don't try, as a historian, to step out of my own world, to escape my own culture, and I don't dream of a "view from nowhere."[10] I am happy to inhabit the contradictions of my own existence.

18. In other words, Sha is quite right when he claims that I want both to think outside modern sexual categories and to acknowledge them as framing my historical inquiries—when he speaks of "Halperin's resistance to orientation, a resistance that simultaneously tries to step outside of it and to enshrine it as a vantage point." That is what I think historians of sexuality need to do. After all, to be a historian of sexuality is necessarily to inhabit multiple temporalities: as a sexual subject oneself, one is bound to contemporary sexuality in an instinctive and unarguable way, but as a historian one engages in the thought-experiment of living in a different world. To be a historian of sexuality is therefore to give oneself over to an endlessly stereoscopic sort of vision: it is to see the world simultaneously as it makes sense to oneself, at a very visceral level, and as it makes sense of the documented experiences of others. It is to recognize that modern sexual concepts compel belief with a force unlike that of any other philosophical concepts, while also recognizing that they do not determine the totality of one's cognition or prevent one from entering imaginatively into other people's experiences of desire and pleasure. The elusive but seductive goal of this intellectual *ascesis* is to turn us into anthropologists of our own culture and historians of our own present.

19. Now, no one said that any of this was going to be easy, that it would be free from contradiction and paradox, that it would produce some stable and lasting scholarly dispensation, that it would safeguard us from noxious effects and consequences, that it would place in our hands some surefire disciplinary method or set us on the royal road to historical objectivity. But that's precisely what makes it interesting —and, in my view at least, preferable to the alternatives.

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Notes

[1] See Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," and Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*.
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[2] See, especially, "Homosexuality's Closet."
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[3] For a brilliant attempt to understand lesbianism as a cultural form in just these terms, see Crandall, "Do the Right Thing."
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[4] Mudge might have acknowledged in this connection the work of Tim Hitchcock, particularly Hitchcock's "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England" and the introduction to his edited collection, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*.
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[5] Mudge writes: "Feminist commentators, on the other hand, read 'pornography' as the quintessence of patriarchal oppression, objecting to sexualized violence and demeaning stereotypes. Both groups [i.e., traditional historians and feminist critics] treat 'pornography' as a monolithic discourse, generally unspecified as to text or image and uniformly self-evident both in purpose and affect. Both assume that the word will remain a pejorative and that the category it names is transhistorical in nature. Thinking of 'pornography' first and foremost as an act of the imagination, however, allows for a better understanding of pornography's satiric entanglements within the larger cultural field, for a more nuanced reading of its textual or visual strategies, and for a greater appreciation of its historical development." Mudge might have included Richlin's *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* among his examples of this transhistorical tendency in feminist criticism: for a critique of that collection along precisely these lines, see the review by Jackson.

Gayle Rubin demonstrated long ago, in "The Traffic in Women," that it is possible to treat forms of female oppression as both universal and constructed: the enduring nature of an oppressive structure therefore provides no justification for essentializing it.
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[6] The third chapter of *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* is entitled "Historicizing the Subject of Desire."
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[7] It is curious in this context that Loesberg doesn't refer the reader to some of the most important scholarship on the connections between Foucault's thinking about sexuality and his personal life: see especially Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics," and the third part of Eribon, *Réflexions sur la question gay*.
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[8] See, for example, "Why is Diotima a Woman?" in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 113-151, 190-211.
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[9] For example, Sha's "acting like a tourist in the archive" echoes my "behaves, in effect, like tourists in the archives" (*How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 60); similarly, his "One thing is for sure: the Greeks did not define their sexual differences to enable the 'disintegration of our own concepts'" echoes my "the one thing about the original spectators of the *Oedipus Rex* that we can be sure of is that they did not wonder what it was like to be the original spectators of the *Oedipus Rex*" (ibid., 21).
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[10] Cf. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*.
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Historicizing Romantic Sexuality

Romantic Loves: A Response to *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*

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This essay responds to the essays in _Historicizing Romantic Sexuality_ by considering their usefulness in response to Michel Foucault. The author examines how each essay continues or complicates Foucault's ideas in *The History of Sexuality.* The author concludes by discussing the concept of love in Romanticism. This essay appears in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, a volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, prepared exclusively for Romantic Circles (http://www.rc.umd.edu/), University of Maryland.

1. In Volume I of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that sex should be treated not as a matter of individual choice but as part of "the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure":

   > The central issue . . . is not to determine whether one says yes or no to sex, whether one formulates prohibitions or permissions, whether one asserts its importance or denies its effects, or whether one refines the words one uses to designate it; but to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said. What is at issue, briefly, is the over-all "discursive fact," the way in which sex is "put into discourse." (11)

   The "central issue" here has nothing to do with how anyone had sex. Foucault agrees with the most startling statement in Percy Shelley's "Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love": "The act itself is nothing" (221). This is an odd dismissal. One might counter that the act is rather important, and deserves careful historical attention. Foucault, however, claims that "sex" is merely "an imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality" (155). His larger point is to avoid the perceived trap of elevating sex to "the side of reality," while demoting sexuality merely to "confused ideas and illusions" (15).

2. Since Foucault sees little purpose in writing a history of sex acts, he is more concerned to counter the assumption that he will present a victorious history of sexual repression (bad) and sexual liberation (good). Such a history would beg the question he wishes to ask, which is how sex came to be understood as repressing or liberating at all. The important history of sexuality for Foucault lies not in the discourse itself so much as in the conditions that enabled it. What counts is not approving or disapproving of particular statements, but grasping the larger system that allowed sex to enter language at all: why sex was worth talking about, who talked about it, what institutions undergirded them, and how language about sex was recorded and disseminated. Foucault's position requires understanding language about sexuality only in relational terms, insofar as any given piece of discourse takes its place within a larger web of statements about sexuality.[1]

3. For literary critics, this is hardly news: Foucault's arguments are nothing if not familiar. Yet the familiarity of his arguments at a theoretical level masks the difficulty that literary critics have had in actually carrying forward Foucault's project. For the most part, the essays in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality* manifest a somewhat oblique relation to Foucault, despite the citation of his work. In part, as Jonathan Loesberg argues in his essay, this may have occurred because a rather minor part of *The History of Sexuality*, the supposed "invention" of the homosexual, has bulked so large in the reception of Foucault that it has come to stand for the whole. Engaging Foucault may not seem very interesting

when, too often, it has come down to nothing more than agreeing or disagreeing with his dates.[2] Furthermore, for all of Foucault's supposed omnipresence, much of the historical spadework required to place literary works in relation to a larger discursive network about sexuality remains unfinished. Decades after the publication of Foucault's work, scholars of British studies have nothing like even a fragmentary account of factors that he suggests are central to a history of sexuality. We do have some pieces, such as examinations of developments in science and medicine, political rhetoric, and literature.[3] But other areas of potentially equal interest remain relatively untouched, such as the discourse of religion (sermons, tracts, biblical commentaries) or the codes of military conduct (the role of sexual humiliation in wartime, as at the siege of Badajoz during the Peninsular campaign). Nor has anyone put the pieces together to create even a tentative map of the deployment of sexuality across institutions, knowledges, and practices. The citation of Foucault's text has substituted for the realization of his project.

4. Beyond the daunting range of knowledge that would be required for a full Foucauldian analysis, disciplinary practices within literary criticism preserve many categories that Foucault wished to question. In particular, the genre of literary critical essay still bases itself primarily around the reading of individual texts, typically understood as the product of an intending author who has expressed himself or herself in them. It has proven much easier to criticize the assumptions of this mode than to provide workable alternatives to it. Essays or books that draw on historicist, materialist, or psychoanalytic theories designed to unsettle the sovereignty of the intending author often do less to unsettle it than to find ways of coexisting uneasily and oxymoronically beside it.

5. For literary critics, the individualism of the artistic self privileged by the conventions of disciplinary analysis chimes with the individualism that, according to Foucault, is the triumph of sexuality's regime: "So it is that all the world's enigmas appear frivolous to us compared to this secret, minuscule in each of us, but of a density that makes it more serious than any other" (156). One result is that he cautions against thinking that "we are affirming the rights of our sex against all power" when we actually are only "fastened to the deployment of sexuality that has lifted up from deep within us a sort of mirage in which we think we see ourselves reflected" (157). Although Foucault does not make the connection explicitly, one result of this individualism is that understanding ourselves in terms of a relational web of power becomes extremely difficult: the deployment of sexuality locates our identity entirely "in" us. Literary critics appropriate this individualism when they read texts as expressing, encoding, or repressing a sexualized self that belongs either to the biographical author or to the author as figure for a cultural moment.

6. The result tends to reinstall as givens the categories that Foucault unsettled. Close reading alone, no matter how historically situated, cannot describe just what kind of power literature *qua* literature had within the larger network of discourses that deployed sexuality during the Romantic period.[4] Unfortunately, Foucault's key concept for battling the individualizing power of sexuality, "power," is so all-encompassing that it offers only limited help. Foucauldian power is a site of "multiple and mobile . . . relations" (98) undergoing such constant transformation that they virtually defy analysis. It seems as if Foucault wants the sheer complexity of his image of power to be a guarantee of its truth.[5] Reading Foucault's description, it can feel as if his concept of power is less a blueprint meant to be realized in a concrete analysis than a point-by-point negation of an older, inadequate model.

7. The great value of the essays in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality* is to provide some badly needed specificity about the forms of agency that sexuality might take during the Romantic period, as an alternative to Foucault's all-devouring "power." Even as Foucault insists on the omnipresence of power, he looks to the most obvious sites for its deployment, such as religious confession and the medicalization of sexuality. The essays in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality* provide a much better guide to the multiplication of sexualities by looking at such sites as the preface, the novel, poetic form,

an abolitionist tract, women's clothes, and juvenilia. In what follows, I treat the essays in *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality* with an avowed bias: imagining how they might fit into a larger Foucauldian project by discussing the kinds of agency associated with each of these sites.

8. Bradford Mudge's essay examines "how sexual bodies are represented in romantic fiction" (8). After describing voyeurism in Cleland's *Fanny Hill*, he turns to Lewis's *The Monk*, in which voyeurism reveals not the "real" body as described by Cleland but the unobtainable body of male fantasy, and Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, in which bodily pleasure is made subservient to "love, marriage, and family." In linking his work to Foucault, Mudge notes that *Pride and Prejudice*foreshadows and encapsulates Foucault's "entire argument," because Foucault "insists" that sexuality "coheres in one central purpose"; this purpose, according to Foucault, is that of constituting "a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative." Yet Mudge seems more convinced of this point than Foucault does; immediately after the passage that Mudge quotes, Foucault writes, "I still do not know whether this is the ultimate objective" (37). Indeed, what Mudge claims to be Foucault's basic argument looks more like Foucault's self-parody of his own repressive hypothesis, which is why he quickly backtracks from it. In the larger context of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault's argument is not that sexuality is politically conservative; indeed, he spends considerable time criticizing historiography that imagines power in terms of a one-sided hierarchy of oppression implied by a phrase like "politically conservative." Instead, he explains how modern discourses of sexuality work through "multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implantation of 'perversities'" (37).

9. The relevance of Foucault for Mudge's argument is less that *The History of Sexuality* recapitulates Jane Austen but that Foucault specifies the question of how literature acted as a vehicle of multiplication: how did reading fictional stories about sex come to be as important as doing it? It is tempting for literary critics to conceive the answer chiefly in terms of representation: because novels depicted sexualized behavior, they were obviously an instrument shaping the deployment of sexuality. Yet Foucault suggests that an analysis of fiction's agency needs to do more, by engaging the dynamics of reception in terms of "the institutions which prompt people to speak about [sexuality] and which store and distribute the things that are said."

10. For scholars of the Romantic novel, answering this question might include examining the intersection between the social institution of the family and the economic apparatus of fiction marketing and production. The point is not simply that novels represented sexuality, but that the presence of novels changed in important ways the sexual dynamics of the family: novels invaded the household; defined, consolidated, or challenged relations between family members; marked living spaces as appropriate or inappropriate for reading; were kept, returned, or junked; and became subjects of conversation. The work of William St. Clair in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* might provide a telling starting-place for a more complete investigation of the novel as a particular site for the multiplication of sexualities during this period.

11. The essays of Susan Lanser and Daniel O'Quinn foreground one of the most important forms of agency in the history of sexuality, the code. Foucault describes the code in terms of "the method of interpretation" central to *scientia sexualis*, in which "the revelation of confession had to be coupled with the decipherment of what it said" (66). Sexuality is the hidden truth that can be made visible only with the help of the expert interpreter. With the right tools, even seemingly innocent texts can be made to confess, to yield up their secrets to decipherment.

12. In Lanser's essay, lesbianism is the mystery encoded by poetic form; the skilled interpreter is able to unwrap the mystery by close attention to "sapphic tropes": "The transgressive potential of female friendship . . . urged the inscription of female intimacies into the ambiguities of figuration." This

essay's detailed foregrounding of figuration and metrics demonstrates that poetic language has resources available to it for encoding that are not available anywhere else. Lanser's essay valuably helps to explain some of literature's peculiar place in the deployment of sexuality because of its ability to install sexuality not only in semantic meaning but also in extrasemantic aspects of language.

13. For O'Quinn, decoding involves interpreting the competing pressures of abolitionist discourse between Christian masochism and the history of British imperialism. His essay looks closely at an odd scene of prayer in Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*. The gap between what one might expect of such a scene and what Equiano provides leads O'Quinn to read the episode as a moment of Christianized masochism, in which Equiano "is . . . acting his sexual degradation." This abasement is "necessary for Equiano's masochistic identification with the invisible church," an identification that the essay develops by examining Equiano's reference to the "Sons of Belial" in terms of its Biblical source in Judges 19.

14. The major achievements of O'Quinn's essay lie in foregrounding abolition and the slave trade as critical sites for the deployment of sexuality during the Romantic period, and in emphasizing the role of Christian rhetoric in mediating this deployment. Moreover, O'Quinn importantly underscores the value of masochism in forging a nexus between Christianity, imperialism, and the slave trade. Yet the status of masochism fluctuates in the essay between a rhetoric of eighteenth-century dissent strategically deployed by Equiano and something closer to a psychological neurosis, as described by Reik and Silverman. The more that O'Quinn's essay moves toward decoding, the more masochism becomes the essence of Equiano's being, what Foucault describes as "a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage" (59).

15. For example, Equiano tells us that George "would get up on purpose to go to prayer with [him], without any other clothes than his shirt." O'Quinn's prioritization of masochism leads him to read this scene in terms of Equiano's sexual abasement, in which George serves as Equiano's "necessary tormentor." Yet positing masochism as the truth that must be extracted from this scene leads O'Quinn to sidestep the fact that Equiano's language does not obviously reveal masochistic torment. On the contrary, when Equiano describes George's enthusiasm for prayer, Equiano notes, in the passage quoted by O'Quinn, "I was well pleased at this, and took great delight in him, and used much supplication to God for his conversion." One might argue that such a statement is a reaction formation, a defense against desire, but doing so reinscribes the sexualized essence that Foucault wished to question. (O'Quinn argues for something like such a reaction formation later in his essay when he describes a "textual repression in which physical and quasi-anthropological observations are used to regulate the power of emotion elicited by rememorative passages that are too volatile to handle.") Yet Equiano's language focuses less on his sense of threat and powerlessness than on his somewhat condescending amusement at George's naivete and his pleasure at his own power over George, his ability to "make such progress with this youth." His ultimate failure to convert George may point less to his own need to sustain a masochistic fantasy than to his opportunity to provide a negative example to his audience; they should not be like the "sons of Belial" who ultimately prevent George's conversion, but should be among those who hear the word and bear a good harvest by abolishing the traffic in slaves.

16. Through their investment in decoding, Lanser and O'Quinn both raise questions about the temporality of this mode of agency. Did these figurations have to wait for twenty-first century critics to unlock their ambiguities, or were they available to Georgian readers as well? Both essays seem to assume that they were indeed decipherable to their original readers. If so, they might do more to explain the reading practices whereby readers would have been acclimated to look for sexualized codes, as in the reception of satire. More generally, these essays develop in a way that Foucault does not the effectiveness of the code as a site for the proliferation of sexuality, since codes, like allegories, have a tendency to overwhelm their boundaries. If poetic form is sometimes a code for irregular desires, is it all the time? Does this irregularity apply only to sapphic representations, or to ones between men as well? If

Equiano is sometimes occupying the position of Christian masochist, is he doing so all the time? If not, how does one recognize the presence or absence of coded moments? As D. A. Miller has pondered, answering such questions is particularly difficult. Ignoring coded meanings condemns sexuality to invisibility, but searching for them can at times come close to a hostile interrogation, an outing of the text (17-18).

17. Whereas the essays by Lanser and O'Quinn focus on uncovering what the text encodes, those by Fay and Heydt-Stevenson examine more visible rebellions or challenges to a repressive order. In so doing, they seem to disagree strongly with Foucault, who claims that "sexuality must not be described as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely" (103). Both Fay and Heydt-Stevenson posit female sexuality as just such a stubborn drive, looking for modes of independence and self-expression in the face of restrictive social conditions and hostile censorship. According to Fay, Mary Robinson and Princess Caroline "felt empowered by the radicalism or laxity of their times to tease the borders of expected roles and rules engendering sexual expression"; according to Heydt-Stevenson, "Austen's representations of her heroines' fighting and drinking and lovemaking and thieving . . . offer a language for deciphering the robust, lusty female energy that social rules encrypt or entomb." They both reaffirm the rebellious woman of bourgeois feminist criticism, whose inherent intelligence and dynamism struggle against an oppressive, patriarchal environment.

18. Although these essays eschew Foucauldian positions, they both nevertheless raise important points for a Foucauldian analysis of the Romantic period, especially in relation to women. The association traced by Fay between clothes and female agency offers a telling contrast to what Foucault describes as the interpretive techniques of confession. Whereas some bodies need to be forced to disclose their sexual truths, others, such as those of Robinson and Princess Caroline, become all too easily legible, being reproduced with dizzying rapidity in written descriptions, prints, and satirical drawings. Her essay suggests that the Foucauldian category of *scientia sexualis* could be provocatively juxtaposed with a very different system of clothes and fashion as modes for producing the sexualized body. Whereas Foucault imagines a body of opinion generated by medical specialists, Fay describes a system created not merely by the British fashion industry, but also by pamphleteers, actors, cartoonists, and society painters. As Fay demonstrates, it is not enough to treat clothes simply as another item within a burgeoning consumer society: clothes had a privileged place within print capitalism's techniques of training the eye. Literary historians should have a particular interest in this use of clothes, given the parallels that historians have noted between the struggle to define literary property and the debates over the ownership of dress design.[6]

19. Heydt-Stevenson's essay points to what Foucault calls "the tactical polyvalence of discourses" (100): the condescendingly repressive language of the late eighteenth-century conduct books gives rise to the "joyful lawlessness" of Austen's juvenilia. Moreover, Heydt-Stevenson importantly insists that the "abandon" of the juvenilia is not "entirely repressed" in Austen's more mature work. Her essay points to the need for further analysis of the work that the label "juvenilia" performs simultaneously to sexualize and desexualize the narrative of an authorial career. Since the time of Virgil's *Eclogues*, juvenilia have been associated both with displays of eroticism and with an immature stage of life that the author, thankfully, outgrows in order to engage more "serious" issues. Heydt-Stevenson powerfully demonstrates that the assumptions undergirding this developmental model need serious reconsideration.

20. Richard Sha's essay moves the ground of discussion from particular case studies to the larger theoretical underpinnings of the historiography of sexuality. His essay makes an important intervention not only into scholarship on the Romantic period but also into work on the history of sexuality more generally in its persistent querying of "alterity as the gold standard of history." He pursues this theme

through a potent contrast between two thinkers, both "committed to the otherness of Greek sex," but for different reasons. David Halperin's discussion of the pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* values alterity as a way of making us "think outside of our present concept of orientation"; Shelley's preface to his translation of *The Symposium*, according to Sha, uses alterity more conservatively to consign homoeroticism to the Greek past and thereby clear the way for a universally heterosexual modernity. Sha's criticism of the fetishization of alterity is a familiar theme in the history of hermeneutics; Paul Ricoeur, for example, describes the "illusion . . . that puts an end to our collusion with the past and creates a situation comparable to the objectivity of the natural sciences, on the grounds that a loss of familiarity is a break with the contingent" (74). Sha is particularly compelling in his demonstration of how the privileging of alterity encourages a sort of "lite" objectivity, a humanities-friendly version of the (supposed) factual certainty of science.

21. In the service of this objectivity, according to Sha, Halperin ends up portraying the Greeks as even more "other" than they were, at least on the evidence of the *Erotes*. The differences described by Halperin turn out to be ones of degree rather than kind, though, to be fair to Halperin, the crux of his argument is that difference existed at all. A further question about the *Erotes* might be not so much about difference as about about generalizability. Both Halperin and Sha suggest that the *Erotes* is a highly self-conscious dialogue, with two opposing points of view brought into exaggerated contrast. As Halperin writes, it might be thought of as a "passionate debate . . . between someone who eats nothing but vegetables and someone who eats nothing but meat" (99). Given this obvious rhetoricity, what kinds of conclusions can be made about differences either of degree or of kind in light of its questionable generalizability?

22. When Sha turns to Shelley, he reads the homophobia of the "Discourse" somewhat as O'Quinn reads Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, partly as a deflection of sexual threat: "Shelley's sense of the otherness of the Greeks may well have deflected attention away from his own homosocial desires." According to Sha, Shelley blames the Greeks' homoeroticism on their degradation of women; since Shelley believes that modernity has improved women's condition, homosexuality should no longer exist. Yet, as Sha notes, this othering quickly breaks down, since Shelley both admits that "gender inequality has not been abolished" and employs essentializing rhetoric to suggest that homosexuality cannot be safely confined to the past.

23. Yet the psychologizing of male sexual threat in this essay, as in O'Quinn's essay, may sidestep some of the text's performative work. The *Discourse* introduces Shelley's translation of *The Symposium*, with its gorgeous, rhapsodic account of love between men. Shelley's concern in his preface seems to me to be less to confine homosexuality to the Greeks than to stave off his audience's potential rejection of the whole of *The Symposium* because of their assumed disgust with Greek homosexuality. Rather than confining homosexuality to the Greek past, Shelley makes an even more peculiar argument. He saves *The Symposium* for his audience by arguing that Greek homosexuality was not what his audience (at least some of them) might think it was: "I am persuaded that it was totally different from the ridiculous and disgusting conceptions which the vulgar have formed on the subject, at least except among the debased and abandoned of mankind" (222). Class respectability arrives to rescue the Greeks: nice Greek men really did not have anal sex with boys at all; only vulgar ones did, and only vulgar readers now would be crude enough to think otherwise. According to Shelley, respectable Greeks had such a ripe fantasy lives that they did not need penetration at all:

> If we consider the facility with which certain phenomena connected with sleep, at the age of puberty, associated themselves with those images which are the objects of our waking desires; and even that in some persons of an exalted state of sensibility that a similar process may take place in reverie, it will not be difficult to conceive the almost involuntary consequences of a state of abandonment in the society of a person of surpassing

attractions, when the sexual connection cannot exist, to be such as to preclude the necessity of so operose and diabolical a machination as that usually described. (222)

24. Rather than having full-blown anal sex, which Shelley regards not only as "diabolical" but also as just too much trouble ("operose"), Greek men "of an exalted state of sensibility" would ejaculate as one of the "almost involuntary consequences" of being "in the society of a person of surpassing attractions." One might imagine that the sheer messiness of those involuntary consequences could be just as inconvenient as the "operose and diabolical . . . machination" that Shelley deplores, but he seems to imagine that waking wet dreams are essentially more pure because they are involuntary.

25. The othering in Shelley's preface is not between the Greeks and the moderns but between the exalted and the vulgar in both periods; exalted Greeks had waking wet dreams; debased ones had anal sex; exalted modern readers of the Greeks understand the real purity of the love praised in *The Symposium*; vulgar modern readers insist on a "vulgar imputation" (222) of sodomy. As Sha argues, Shelley's presentation of sexual differences throughout is characterized by a slippage between identity and difference. With regard to Greek love, the slippage centers around the concept of abandonment. On one hand, Shelley claims that if the Greeks had anal sex at all, it was performed only by the "abandoned of mankind." At the same time, he describes the exalted wet dreamers in similar terms: their ejaculations occur when the men are "in a state of abandonment," rather like Heydt-Stevenson's depiction of Austen's juvenilia. What differentiates the abandon of the vulgar from the abandon of the exalted? Shelley's essay reveals "abandon" to be a vexed node in the discourse of sexuality, simultaneously desired and feared.

26. Jonathan Loesberg's essay moves questions of identity and difference to larger issues of gay historiography, without particular reference to the Romantic period. Loesberg spends considerable time in his essay exploring what Ricoeur, after Gadamer, calls the "horizon" of historical understanding (74-75). He names his own variously as "inauthenticity" and "hedgerow envy" and opposes it to those of gay historians, as represented primarily by David Halperin. The concept of the "hedgerow" enables a policing of identity and difference: because Loesberg is not gay, he can claim to have a "non-historical stake in the meaning of a historical narrative." The product of this "non-historical stake" is the conclusion that, even though gay historians are almost guaranteed to get their Foucault wrong, one should not criticize them too much because realizing the "Enlightenment ideals" of Foucault's philosophy "far exceed[s] any details of historical inaccuracy or accidents of political implication." Loesberg uses the aegis of inauthenticity to criticize and not criticize gay historians at the same time. Yet I'm not sure that the concept escapes the condescension that Loesberg wishes to avoid, since the "hedgerow" metaphor still positions gay historians "over there," enmeshed in their naive political biases, while Loesberg is "over here," enjoying the pleasures not of truth but of aestheticized, paradoxical self-consciousness.

27. At the same time, I think that Loesberg is exactly right about oversimplifications of the Foucauldian project, such as the reduction of Foucault either to his biography or to certain quasi-historical positions taken in *The History of Sexuality*. Yet the alternative to seeing Foucault as a historian may not be to treat him as a classic philosopher of the Enlightenment, whose goals are "to think outside the limits of one's own presumptions." We hardly need Foucault to think outside the limits of our own presumptions: Newtonian physics or Christian ethics, among others, would serve equally well. Foucault's interest lies less in neo-Kantian self-distantiation than in a conceptual framework that allowed a particular topic, the discourse of sexuality, to emerge as fundamental for a knowledge of modernity.[7] Given Foucault's own interest in the structures that enable enunciations to gain power, the interest of this framework may reveal less about a philosophical or political project than an academic one: Foucault's work moved sexuality from a minor, virtually unspeakable subject within the humanities to a core concern.

28. By focusing on the aesthetic aspects of Foucault's project, Loesberg avoids the institutional ones. Questions of "hedgerow envy" or "inauthenticity" arise in the realm less of aesthetics and politics than of aesthetics and politics as realized in a particular site: the academy. Although, in *Saint Foucaul*t, Halperin argues for the importance of Foucault to contemporary gay activism, the activist scene may have shifted between the late 1980s AIDS activists mentioned by Halperin and current GLBT activists (15-18). Today, few GLBT books, articles, speeches, or websites designed for a nonacademic audience make substantive use of anything by Foucault. The meaningful site of Foucault's success and influence is an academic one. The relevant subject positions for Loesberg's analysis may be as much English professor versus English professor as gay versus straight. The important questions opened up by Loesberg's essay involve the convergence of Foucault's influence on the academy and the growth of "GLBT Studies," a discipline that takes Foucault's work as a founding text.The (mis)understandings of Foucault traced by Loesberg have less to do with the constraints of gay identity or politics than with the adaptation of Foucault's work by pre-existing disciplinary structures and practices in the service of creating an academic foothold where none had existed.

29. The question haunting me after I read these essays was whether or not the representation of the sexualized human body should be the only or even inevitable starting-point for a discussion of Romanticism and sexuality. As numerous historians and critics have suggested, the eighteenth century witnessed an increasing consolidation of heterosexual norms in literature, politics, social mores, conduct books, medicine, and so forth, all accompanied by increasing impatience with gender transgressions that could be linked to same-sex eroticism. By the Romantic period, those heterosexualizing energies had been successful—indeed, possibly too successful. Frederick Beaty's still valuable *Light from Heaven* details the almost overwhelming heterosexism in Romantic literature. Anna Clark's recent work, in *Scandal*, has demonstrated the saturation of the Georgian public sphere in heterosexuality; endless idealization of heterosexuality went hand in hand with a seemingly endless capacity to be scandalized. What Foucault describes as a proliferation of sexualities may have looked, at least for the Georgian period, more like a monotonous repetition of one sexuality in every nook and cranny of discourse.

30. In the face of the heterosexual onslaught, Romantic writers did not so much develop a counterdiscourse as explore possibilities lurking within an older discourse, one often overlooked by the historians of sexuality, including Foucault. This was the discourse of love.[8] In the Romantic period, sexualities consolidate, but loves proliferate:

    > Eternity is in love with the productions of time. (Blake, plate 7, l. 10)
    >
    > I love to be reminded of the past, Edward—whether it be melancholy or gay, I love to recall it—and you will never offend me by talking of former times. (Austen 118).
    >
    > I love a public road: few sights there are / That please me more. (Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 12.145-46)
    >
    > Here a vain love to passing flowers / Thou gav'st. (Hemans ll. 41-42)
    >
    > I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions. (Lamb 972)

31. The Romantics, like earlier writers, continue to direct love at the usual suspects, like God, man, and nature; in addition, "love" could serve as a convenient euphemism for sex in the period. But I am interested in the other possibilities that love made available, especially the Romantic knack for directing love at more out of the way objects. Diedre Lynch, in "Wedded to Books: Bibliomania and

the Romantic Essayists," has already provided an important discussion of perhaps the most important of these: books. My interest is in just what relations these loves have to the history of sexuality as described by Foucault.

32. When Blake claims that "Eternity is in love with the productions of time," one might, with enough ingenuity, imagine how this could be decoded as a moment in "the will to knowledge regarding sex" (65).Yet Blake's use of "love" here proves more cryptic than a Foucauldian reading suggests it should be. Just what kind of love does Eternity have for these productions, and what is the difference between being in love with "the productions" and being in love with "time" itself? Blake uses the metaphor of "love" more to deflect knowledge than to enhance or proliferate it.Rather than permitting "eternity" and the "productions of time" to enter omnipresent regimes of power and knowledge, the love between them seems to shelter them from those regimes, or at least locate them in a place in which those regimes are not especially relevant. Romantic writers are interested in exploring the possibility that love for the productions of time or for being reminded of the past or for old china may have nothing to do with sexuality because it belongs to an entirely different place within the human psyche. They reveal desires that are not so much asexual as extra-sexual, existing next to but not necessarily in cooperation with the networks of power so vividly described by Foucault.

33. These loves, which may have rebelled against the consolidation of heterosexuality, later became a template for the quirky, "abnormal" loves pathologized by the sexologists, in the activity that Foucault calls "a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure" (105). Designating such loves as "perverse" pulls them away from their own discursive context into the orbit of sexuality. At best, in a psychoanalytic scheme, they could be read as sublimation, which, according to Freud, "consists in the sexual trend abandoning its aim of obtaining a component or a reproductive pleasure and taking on another which is related genetically to the abandoned one but is itself no longer sexual and must be described as social" (345). Yet there is a fine line between sublimation and neurosis for Freud, especially in relation to artists: "It is well known, indeed, how often artists in particular suffer from a partial inhibition of their efficiency owing to neuroses. Their constitutions probably include a strong capacity for sublimation and a certain degree of laxity in the repressions which are decisive for a conflict" (376).

34. In this Freudian light, Wordsworth's praise of "little, nameless, unremembered, acts / Of kindness and of love" appears merely as another episode in the vicissitudes of the libido ("Tintern Abbey" ll. 34-35). Useful as such a decoding might be to later readers, it seems important for Wordsworth in his historical moment to imagine his "acts . . . of love" as something else. At a moment when the public sphere was packed with big, loudly named, embarrassingly trumpeted acts of sexual love on the part of the Prince Regent and others, Wordsworth's poetry seems interested in continuing an entirely different sense of what love might look like. This moment is hardly politically neutral; one might wish to connect it, for example, to the Burkean politics of domesticity as described by Claudia Johnson (198-199). It is, however, a representation of desire that does not mesh obviously with the regimes traced by Foucault, and it is one that Romanticists might want to engage more systematically.

35. Sexuality in Romantic writers can often become formulaic, while love, especially love not directed at people, more fully retains the aura of what Kenneth Burke calls the "concealed offense" (51-60). Foucault's project of tracing the network of knowledge and power around sexuality remains incomplete for the Romantic period. But it may be equally important to acknowledge histories of desire that never quite became part of sexuality during the period. In light of the importance of love, it might be worth asking about the link between bibliomania, as described by Lynch, and the history of pornography, as described by Mudge, so as to examine how the allure of graphic sexual representation interweaves with love for the medium (suspicious books, hidden magazines, exclusive websites). If Sapphic love lurks in eroticized irregularities, as Lanser demonstrates, I am also struck by the association between sapphism during the period and certain marked enthusiasms, as in the gardening of the Ladies of Llangollen and

the sculpture of Anne Damer. The erotics of Equiano's relations with others on his ship meshes with his love for the intricacies of navigation, both the literal navigation of the ship and the figurative navigation of the British commercial system. In the cases described by Fay, a love for clothes may not only heighten the sexual allure of bodies, but compete with it, and Heydt-Stevenson suggests that the appetites indulged in Austen's juvenilia may or may not be pure displacements of erotic energy. The presence of love further complicates the play of identity and difference described by Sha by underscoring the potential inadequacy of a history of sexuality that focuses too exclusively on what Shelley calls "the act." It also adds another facet to Loesberg's analysis by inviting us to consider the relationship between aesthetic self-distantiation and love for a particular thinker like Foucault, of the kind that Halperin champions in *Saint Foucault*. If we imagine love as something other than sexuality by other means, it may offer scholars the chance to return to a seemingly old topic with a new perspective on its agency.

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Notes

[1] Foucault has a complex understanding of exactly what "statement" means; see *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, pp. 106-17.
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[2] See also David M. Halperin's criticism of this misreading of Foucault in *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, pp. 26-32.
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[3] For a partial bibliography, see Roy Porter and Lesley Hall, Anthony Fletcher, Tim Hitchcock, Anna Clark, Richard Sha ("Romanticism and Sexuality" and "Romanticism and the Sciences of Perversion"), and Daniel O'Quinn.
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[4] Compare Ellen Messer-Davidow's discussion of the constraints of literary studies on the development of feminist scholarship, pp.178-82.
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[5] On this phenomenon in cultural criticism more generally, see Alan Liu.
Back

[6] See Greysmith, and Kriegel.
Back

[7] See Amanda Anderson for an argument that Foucault's output is essentially divided between "the critique of bourgeois modernity" and "the shift to aesthetic modernity" (198). In these terms, Loesberg privileges the second at the expense of the first.
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[8] On the importance of considering love in relation to the history of sexuality, see George Haggerty, *Men in Love*, pp. 18-20, and "Male Love and Friendship in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 70-81.
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