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VISUALITY, GENDER, AND CONSUMERISM IN
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ENVISIONING FEMALE SPECTATORSHIP: VISUALITY, GENDER, AND CONSUMERISM IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

By

Kyung Eun Lo

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ABSTRACT

ENVISIONING FEMALE SPECTATORSHIP:
VISUALITY, GENDER, AND CONSUMERISM IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN

By

Kyung Eun Lo

This dissertation investigates the complex relations among visuality, gender, and consumerism in a diverse group of texts from eighteenth-century Britain: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's The Turkish Embassy Letters (1716-1718), Daniel Defoe's Roxana (1724), Eliza Haywood's The Female Spectator (1744-46), and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751). This dissertation seeks to engage the ongoing debates about female spectatorship and political agency by focusing on each writer's engagement with questions of seeing in relation to the radical changes brought about by an emergent consumer revolution in the eighteenth century. Rather than offering an overarching, essentialized reading of female spectatorship, my goal is to recover a rich and varied discursive history of female vision in English culture that engages with contemporaneous discourses of consumerism, domesticity, orientalism, and nation etc. I contend that what is often characterized rather monolithically as the rational, impartial, disinterested scopic regime of the Enlightenment is in fact heavily shaped by anxieties and ambivalences within consumer culture. The contradictory roles women assumed as both subjects and objects of consumerism enabled them to gain and claim authority as both spectators and spectacles. Challenging the simple opposition between the female object and a monolithic, universalized 'male gaze' that is so often provided by psychoanalytic film

theorists, I argue that women's uses of consumption became the basis for their formation as active and desiring visual agents.

My claim for the importance of the female consumerist gaze is concerned with greater understanding of active female agency and potential for resistance. By focusing on complex ways women's experiences of gender, class, race, and nation in the eighteenth century are mediated by their consumer subjectivity, I am preoccupied with exploring how female consumers manipulate their specular roles to challenge and subvert dominant gender, social, political, and economic structures. My two chapters on Montagu and Defoe focus on British women's consumption of foreign luxuries and their scopic desires in relation to their sexual, domestic, national, and imperial identities. My chapter on Haywood examines how The Female Spectator and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless critique and revise the visual authority of Addison and Steele's Spectator papers through women's fashionable consumption and strategic self-display both in private and public spheres. My chapter on Camilla interrogates the various ways in which women's increasing visibility and public mobility played an increasing role in shaping feminine subjectivity and spectatorial agency. By concluding with the example of the female consumer's boycott of sugar in the 1790s, my study insists that female consumerism in the eighteenth century opens up space for cultural and political agency. An understanding of eighteenth-century consumerism in relation to visuality is crucial because it helps to challenge the workings of male visual dominance. It also underlines how the eighteenth-century female consumers had the capacity to disrupt stable notions of gender, class, nation and subjectivity through the production of new and more mobile forms of identity and pleasure.

To my parents, Heung Sik Lo and Ai Ja Han

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> "I consider Woman as a beautiful Romantick Animal, that may be adorned with Furs and Feathers, Pearls and Diamonds, Ores and Silks."
>
> Joseph Addison, The Tatler [1]

> "Every sign or shop was a gazing-trap."
>
> John Cleland, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure [2]

Joseph Addison's observation about a fashionable woman in The Tatler (No. 116) and Fanny Hill's remark on her first stroll through the streets of London provide us with meaningful points of departure for my study of gender identity, spectatorship, and consumption. In both passages the female body is linked closely with consumerism through the workings of the gaze. Joseph Addison depicts the woman as a consumer with undisciplined desire for exotic, luxury products. The female figure disappears behind her conspicuous consumption to the extent she becomes identified with the commodities themselves. Under male scrutiny, the adorned female body becomes a "beautiful" item of display. In contrast to being an objectified spectacle, Fanny, however, is portrayed as the paradigmatic female consumer who indulges in visual pleasure as she looks around London. Fascinated by the display of merchandise, the female shopper becomes a powerful spectator who examines the spectacle of goods around her.

Both passages indicate how the figure of the female consumer occupies dual positions: she is addressed as both an agent and an object of commercial exchange, both

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[1] Joseph Addison, The Tatler, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), No. 116.

[2] John Cleland, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure, ed. Peter Sabor. (1749; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 6.

invited to be a spectator and a spectacle within the visual field. The female consumer is figured as a powerfully paradoxical presence: she is depicted as unruly and threatening to male power, yet manageable and controllable thorough the male gaze. This dissertation argues that the contradictory roles women assumed as both subjects and objects of consumerism enabled them to gain and claim authority as both spectators and spectacles. I examine the complex relations among visuality, gender, and consumerism in a diverse group of texts from eighteenth-century Britain: the epistolary travelogue of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, novels by Daniel Defoe and Eliza Haywood, and the periodical writings of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, and Eliza Haywood. Over the course of the long eighteenth century, the consumer experience was fundamentally altered in scale and scope through the availability of greater variety of consumer goods, revolution in retail practices and spaces, and related socioeconomic developments such as the opening of new global trade routes and the rise of new credit arrangements. My dissertation seeks to situate female spectatorship within this complex and fraught cultural and material context, since discourses of seeing cannot be understood separate from other political, social, economic and ideological practices at any time. By focusing on each writer's engagement with questions of seeing or looking in relation to the radical changes brought about by an emergent consumer revolution in the eighteenth century, I argue that women's uses of consumption became the basis for their formation as active and desiring visual agents in the eighteenth century.

My attempt to conceptualize female spectatorship in relation to the emerging consumer culture of eighteenth-century Britain seeks to challenge fundamental assumptions about vision, gender, and political agency. First, I contend that what is

often characterized rather monolithically as the rational, impartial, disinterested scopic regime of the Enlightenment is in fact heavily shaped by anxieties and ambivalences within consumer culture. By linking women with the corrupting influences of consumerism, eighteenth-century culture sought to repress and contain uneasiness about female consumption through a reifying gaze that reduced women to commodified spectacles. These tensions over female consuming appetites in turn had a powerful impact on the construction of female subjectivity. By tracing how these concerns over female consumerism became increasingly mapped onto other discourses of gender, domesticity, nation, and empire, this dissertation argues that women took advantage of the contradictions within competing ideologies to explore radical female desires and negotiate women's assigned place within a visual order. Using their paradoxical status as both agents and objects of market exchange, women manipulated and reconfigured the inherent instability of subject/object relations to challenge patriarchal visual authority and to redefine themselves as active, even transgressive agents.

Second, my dissertation also underscores the degree to which consumerism becomes central to the ideological construction of the female subject in eighteenth-century Britain. [3] Rather than dismissing female consumerism as trivial or valorizing it as simply emancipatory, my study takes the often overlooked and underestimated activity of consumption as a potentially transformative form of cultural production. By focusing on complex ways women's experiences of gender, class, race, and nation in the eighteenth century are mediated by their consumer subjectivity, this dissertation

[3] While the definitions of consumption, consumerism, and commodity culture are varied and often overlap with each other, I use the notion of consumer culture to refer to a range of human investments in, attitudes toward, and behaviors around consumer goods in contrast to commodity culture, a term derived from a Marxian theory of commodities.

illustrates that women's pleasure and desires are formed within the marketplace rather than outside of it, thus challenging the notion that subjects are situated prior to or outside of consumerism. While literary critics have often seen only limited forms of agency and subjecthood in the act of consumption, I am preoccupied with exploring how female consumerism opens up a space for alternative models of female identities beyond the prescribed norms of femininity.

Lastly, my claim for the importance of the female consumerist gaze is concerned with greater understanding of active female agency and potential for resistance. Rather than seeing the female consumer as complicit with capitalist economy, my readings explore the extent to which female consumers manipulate their specular roles to challenge and subvert dominant gender, social, political, and economic structures. I will demonstrate that while both Montagu and Roxana take advantage of their consumerism to fashion mobile identities for their own pleasure, they also participate actively in commodifying and domesticating the foreign 'other' for the consolidation of British identity and domestic economy. Haywood also challenges the disciplinary patriarchal gaze in Addison and Steele's periodical through strategic manipulation of female visibility, thus making a radical intervention into empowering women in both private and public life.

Politicizing Visuality

My dissertation is primarily concerned with issues of seeing, spectatorship, and visuality in eighteenth-century Britain. This study partly draws from the recent growth of theoretical interest in visuality in a wide range of disciplines, including art history, film,

media, philosophy, cultural studies, and critical theory. With its unprecedented wealth of new imaging technologies and complex visual information in many different aspects of our daily lives today, human experience is increasingly more visual and visualized than ever before. Such heightened fascination with various modes of seeing and visuality in everyday life may well be indicative of the paradigm shift that W. J. T. Mitchell has referred to as the "pictorial turn" from the earlier "linguistic turn." [4]

Historically, images have always played an important role in western culture, often accompanied by general anxiety about their power. The visual, because it was so tangibly, sensually direct, had been consigned ever since Plato's cave to the lowest rung in the traditional intellectual hierarchies of Western philosophers. Plato also denounced the visual arts as mere copies of the original ideal of perfection and banished them from his Republic, perceiving pictures and images as suspect and treacherous. [5] In fact, Western culture and its philosophies have consistently devalued visual representations as inferior, secondary illustrations of ideas while privileging the spoken and written word.

Nevertheless, with the proliferation of visual experience over the course of recent years, it is no longer possible to understand and define culture in purely linguistic terms, and thus scholars have demanded more focus on visuality as an object of study. Rather than supplanting a textual with a pictorial view of the world altogether, this rediscovery of the visual foregrounds the complex interplay between visuality and textuality, images

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[4] Although "linguistics, semiotics, rhetoric, and various models of 'textuality' have become the lingua franca for critical reflections on the arts, the media, and cultural form," W. J. T. Mitchell argues that there is a shift to the visual and the increasing recognition that language is no longer paradigmatic for meaning. Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11.

[5] According to Plato, "Painting and imitation are far from the truth when they produce their works;...moreover, imitation keeps company with the worst part in us that is far from prudence and is not comrade or friend for any healthy or true purpose." Plato's Republic. trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 286.

and words, and viewing and reading. W. J. T. Mitchell points out that "spectatorship (the look, the gaze, the glance, the practices of observation, surveillance, and visual pleasure) may be as deep a problem as various forms of reading (decipherment, decoding, interpretation, etc) and that visual experience or visual literacy might not be fully explicable on the model of textuality." [6]

One of the principal tasks of the study of visual culture is to highlight the importance of the visual as a place where meanings are created and contested. If the 'linguistic turn' has shown that what appears 'natural' is highly contingent upon textuality and discourses, visual culture attempts to understand and interpret not only how images operate as 'sign systems' but also the constituted nature of seeing itself. Instead of presupposing a pure, unmediated vision that is 'natural' or 'universal,' theories of visual culture propose that what we see is ideologically and historically constructed.

In this regard, much of the discussion of visual culture has often taken the form of a critique of representation itself, emphasizing the role of sight as a powerful organizing principle in Western epistemology. In particular, scholars have been strongly suspicious and critical of hegemonic visual paradigms underlying what appears to be 'true' or 'natural' vision and perception. Visual culture scholars like Martin Jay and Norman Bryson have shown how the Cartesian perspectivalist tradition, especially its "ahistorical, disinterested, disembodied" subject's monocular gaze, becomes closely associated with the 'natural' experience of sight, which in turn is complicit with scientific discourses and the bourgeois ethic of the modern scopic regime.[7] Similarly,

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[6] W. J. T. Mitchell, Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation , 16.

[7] Martin Jay, "Modern Scopic Regimes of Modernity." Vision and Visuality. ed. Hal Foster. (New York: The New Press, 1988), 9-10.

Guy Debord's "society of the spectacle" denounced the dominance of a visual regime in which individuals are reduced to a passive existence by postmodern life that presents itself as "an immense accumulation of spectacles." [8]

Indeed many critics have insisted that Western philosophy and culture can be considered broadly 'ocularcentric' in its privileging of "a vision-generated, vision-centered interpretation of knowledge, truth, and reality." [9] Perhaps it can be argued that the eighteenth century, more than other eras, is resolutely ocularcentric in the preeminence that Enlightenment thought gives to sight. More than other senses, the faculty of seeing reigns supreme in the eighteenth century, as sight becomes crucial in the philosophical project of the Enlightenment towards human understanding and rationality. Just as John Locke celebrates vision as that which can distinguish "the Bounds between the enlightened and dark Part of Things" in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, the trope of sight comes to stand for enlightenment itself. [10] If to enlighten is to define, uncover, and clarify the unknown and the unfamiliar by means of penetrating sight, the visual organization of knowledge can be seen simultaneously as control and hegemony. The rational vision of the Enlightenment conceptualizes, classifies, and systemizes its knowledge of the world through processes of standardization and normalization.

This emphasis on the problematics of vision has profound implications for our understanding of how vision can be an ideological means of control and power, and much

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[8] Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle. trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 12.

[9] David Michael Levin, ed. Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 2.

[10] John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Alexander Campbell Fraser (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 32.

scholarship on eighteenth-century literature, particularly the novel, has been heavily informed by Foucaldian notions of visuality as a key instrument of social control and self-regulation of the subject. In The Order of Things (1970), Foucault insists that looking and being looked at are deeply implicated in relations of power and knowledge and identifies the eighteenth century as a period when "a new field of visibility was being constituted in all its density." [11] For example, in The History of Sexuality (1990), Foucault describes how confession and later the medical and psychiatric professions increasingly governed sexuality through the pressure on the subject to tell all under an enlightenment scopic regime. He claims that examination—medical, psychiatric, or religious—is "at the center of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object" of both power and knowledge. [12] In Discipline and Punish (1979), he offers another compelling example of the effect of surveillance in his discussion of Bentham's Panopticon, where prisoners never know when they are being watched, yet know that they can be watched at any time. The result, according to Foucault, is that they internalize the sense of being watched and willingly subject themselves to the norm:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he

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[11] Michel Foucault, The Order of Things. (New York: Pantheon, 1970), 132.

[12] Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. Volume 1. (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 192.

simultaneously plays both roles; be becomes the principle of his own subjection. [13]

For Foucault, this ambiguous position of man as both a subject and an object of knowledge under the Panopticon's diffused modes of visual surveillance marks a shift toward the order of modernity. Yet, for all his attempts to problematize the place of the visual in knowledge and power, he ends up presenting a rather totalizing account of sight solely as control and discipline. As Martin Jay points out, Foucault's model ultimately offers "one hegemonic ocular apparatus" which fails to account for any genuine means of resistance or positive alternative." [14]

Following Foucault, other important studies of visuality in the eighteenth century have focused mainly on how Western culture deployed 'sight' as a primary mechanism of control and power. Using Foucault's panoptical conception of authority, in her Desire and Domestic Fiction, Nancy Armstrong demonstrates how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic fiction and conduct books paved the way for the rise of domestic woman as a modern bourgeois subject. In her reading of Richardson's Pamela, Armstrong explains that Pamela's rise to middle-class power involves a "shift in the direction and dynamics of gazing," a transformation from an earlier form of aristocratic power based on scandalous display to a middle-class moral authority based on domestic surveillance and self-monitoring. [15] Armstrong explains that "[s]elf-regulation alone

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[13] Michael Foucault, Discipline and Punish. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 202-203.

[14] Jay, "Modern Scopic Regimes of Modernity," 415.

[15] Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 123.

gave a woman authority over the field of domestic objects and personnel where her supervision constituted a form of value in its own right and was therefore capable of enhancing the value of other people and things" (81). Thus, Armstrong insists, the power of domestic surveillance is instrumental in constructing female power; instead of being objects of knowledge, women become subjects of the gaze. For Armstrong, visuality remains an apparatus of self-regulation and control within a middle-class, bourgeois imperative.

Also using Foucault's model of the disciplinary gaze in the construction of human subjectivity, John Bender examines the convergence of the eighteenth-century penitentiary and the novel. In Imagining the Penitentiary, which explores the link between the role of literature and visual culture of eighteenth century, Bender contends that novelistic discourse about prisons enabled the conception and construction of actual penitentiaries. He finds a parallel between the workings of the inspecting gaze of the modern penitentiary, which he describes as a form of "impersonal, yet god-like supervision," and the transparent omniscient view of the narrator found in the free indirect discourse of early realist novels. [16]

While these studies demonstrate the importance of the visual in the eighteenth century, they tend to focus predominantly on how seeing was complicit with middle-class bourgeois hegemony. Such widespread distrust of the visual poses the danger of reducing the question of vision and spectatorship into a monolithic and totalizing narrative. As Alison Conway puts it, "[i]n embracing Foucault's compelling analysis of the Panopticon, we have imposed our own disciplinary gaze on the eighteenth-century

[16] John Bender, Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 203.

novel;" for Conway, this practice "empties out the eighteenth century of both in its counter-discourses and moments of resistance." [17]

Important recent works in visual culture that have explored visuality in connection with other scientific, medical and physiological discourses also end up providing rather broad schematizations about eighteenth-century scopic regimes. In Techniques of the Observer, for instance, Jonathan Crary traces a radical reconfiguration of vision from a classical 'camera obscura' model of seeing and its stable space of representation to a modern corporeal seeing that took place in the nineteenth century. Crary's preoccupation with a "hegemonic set of discourses and practices in which vision took shape" and with a "dominant model of what an observer was" tends to relentlessly reduce "marginal and local forms by which dominant practices of vision were resisted, deflected, or imperfectly constituted" to a single rigid model. [18] Ultimately, his neatly oppositional models of camera obscura and stereoscope, which are "paradigmatic of the dominant status of the observer" (8), are unable to account for other heterogeneous visual experiences which fall outside the binary. Despite his attempts to theorize the "corporeal subjectivity of the observer" (69), the observer remains a singular, undifferentiated subject, unmarked by gender, class, or ethnicity.

Some of the more recent work being done on eighteenth-century visuality, like Alison Conway's Private Interests, attempts to challenge and correct Foucauldian accounts of the rise of the novel. Rejecting the totalizing tendencies of Foucault's

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[17] Alison Conway, Private interests : Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709-1791. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 5.

[18] Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 7.

paradigm, Conway argues that the eighteenth-century novel's use of portraiture and its mode of beholding are "important means of assessing how the eighteenth century understood women's connection to the cultural power."[19] Like Conway's work, this dissertation aims to complicate and add nuance to these monolithic and totalizing conceptions of eighteenth-century visual regimes. Instead of framing eighteenth-century visuality through a single monocular lens that ends up conflating vision with tools of domination, I seek to explore the possibility of alternative ways of viewing within the eighteenth century. How might vision be conceptualized as more than a mode of domination and control? How does gender or sexual difference, race, or class intersect with a subject's viewing practices and assumptions? How might the sites of these differences offer loci for resistance to or challenge dominant eighteenth-century scopic regimes? If the very act of viewing is often seen as a male prerogative, how might women's gaze be theorized? Within the complex power relations of looking, how might women's gaze be related to female subjectivity, agency, and power?

To consider the question of female visual agency seems especially important in light of ongoing scholarly debates within feminist criticism about female spectatorship. Feminist theories have long been suspicious of what seemed to be 'natural' vision and have questioned the operations of a dominant Western ocularcentricism complicit with phallocentricism. Feminists insist that the sight is one of the primary mechanisms by which oppressive patriarchal relations are naturalized and maintained, arguing that the power dynamics of the knowing gaze are gendered in that the bearer of the powerful gaze has been coded as male and the object of the gaze as female.

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[19] Conway, Private Interests, 4.

Psychoanalytic theories, chiefly those of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, have been significant in illustrating the central position of the gaze in the formation of gender identity. Of course, one of the central principles upon which psychoanalysis has been constructed depends upon the explication by Freud of visual phenomena: the recognition by boys and girls that their genitals are fundamentally different from one another leading to penis envy in girls and to the castration complex in boys. While for Freud this traumatic yet crucial recognition determines a child's development into a gendered subject, his phallocentric premises have been heavily critiqued by feminists. Luce Irigaray, for instance, emphasizes the gendered nature of the gaze in the Freudian framework in her essay "Another 'Cause'—Castration": in the Freudian narrative, the men claim the signifying power of the phallus and "the omnipotence of gazing, knowing...the eye-penis...the phallic gaze," whereas women are assigned the place of lack and the object of male desire. [20] Lacan also stresses the importance of the gaze in the formation of the ego at the mirror stage, the moment when the child becomes conscious of its specular image. Here the infant learns to distinguish between itself and the mother's image by becoming aware of sexual difference. The gaze brings into being recognition of self and other in relation to what Lacan calls the Name of the Father or the phallus, the realm of signification and language. Although Lacan's model of gendered subjectivity has been quite influential in theoretical discourses about the gaze, especially in film criticism, his schema has also been criticized for its phallocentric assumptions, especially in regard to how women are defined as lack and as Other. As Laura Mulvey

[20] Luce Irigaray, "Another "Cause" – Castration." Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary and Criticism. eds. Robyn R. Warhol & Diane Price Herndl. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 431.

sharply points out, the "paradox of phallocentricism ... is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world." [21] Working out of and yet to some extent against the psychoanalytic theories of both Lacan and Freud, feminist theorists like Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane, and E. Ann Kaplan, to name a few, have focused on the gender implications of this power imbalance in which the viewer is constructed as the active male gazer, while the object of his gaze is the passive female. Furthermore, they have striven to demonstrate what political consequences ensue from a masculine spectator who occupies a dominant subject position in relation to his objects of vision.

In her groundbreaking 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey draws attention to the cinematic male gaze in classic Hollywood films, where the viewer is constructed as the active male and the object of his gaze as the passive female. Insisting that "Women are simultaneously looked at and displayed...so they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (19), Mulvey reveals how the gaze objectifies women by making them no more than the locus of scopophilic pleasure. Mulvey's essay was an important feminist intervention that illustrated the gender, political and ideological dimensions of visuality. Yet her notion of the objectifying 'male gaze' is a focus of debate. For Mulvey, the gaze is always male, and it is this male gaze with which the spectator, whether female or male, is made to identify. The gaze becomes an instrument of objectification and control by the powerful male subject but fails to account for any visual agency or pleasure on the part of women.

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[21] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Visual and Other Pleasures. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14.

Subsequent feminist critics–such as Mary Ann Doane, E. Ann Kaplan, and Teresa de Lauretis—have attempted to challenge and revise Mulvey's model of masculinized spectatorship, but their own dependence on a psychoanalytic framework has proven problematic and limiting in their efforts to theorize female spectatorship. For instance, Doane argues that women are constructed differently from men in relation to the processes of looking and that women have difficulties achieving the distance needed for cinematic pleasure, since "[f]or the female spectator, there is a certain overpresence of the image—she is the image."[22] Doane proposes that the concept of masquerade can allow the female spectator to create a distance between herself and the image on the screen through a certain excess or self-conscious use of femininity. She is able "to manufacture a distance from the image, to generate a problematic within which the image is manipulable, producible and readable by the woman" (143). On the one hand, Doane extends and challenges Mulvey's model of masculinized spectatorship by framing binary oppositions of masculine/subject and feminine/object into a question of proximity and distance. Yet her theorization of female spectatorship, which she describes in terms of deficiency, "absence" or "lack," reinstates a subject/object dichotomy into sexual difference and does not go beyond Mulvey's dyad to offer an alternative theory of spectatorship. That is to say, psychoanalytic feminist film theories working within the binary framework of a masculine/active/sadistic gaze and a feminine/passive/masochistic object ultimately do not allow a woman a subject position except as an object of the masculine gaze.

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[22] Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator." Feminist Film Theory. ed. Sue Thornham. (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 128.

Although psychoanalytic theory's formulation of the gaze has substantially aided in our understanding of the formation of gender, I believe that it is crucial to surpass the simple opposition between the female object and a monolithic, universalized 'male gaze' that is so often provided by psychoanalytic film theorists. This dissertation seeks to engage the ongoing debates about female spectatorship and female agency by historicizing female spectatorship in an eighteenth-century context. In doing so, it reflects recent shifts within feminist scholarship on female spectatorship, moving from a focus on the psyche to an examination of how gender intersects with other cultural and historical specificities such as class, race, nation etc. The work of Jackie Stacey and Miriam Hansen represents recent efforts to integrate psychoanalytically grounded textual analysis with more contextual approaches, such as ethnographic and cultural media studies based upon reception and audience methodology. Not only do they dismantle the totalizing notion of Mulvey's gaze by accounting for a variety of complex viewing practices, but they are able to reconceptualize female spectatorship in a way that accommodates diverse forms of female desire, power, and agency. In Star-Gazing, Stacey examines the relationship between female spectators and Hollywood stars in relation to "general shifts in gender, glamour and commodification which accompanied the expansion of consumer markets and impacted upon spectators and star relations" [23] expanding the concept of female spectatorship to include "an analysis of historical discourses, institutional changes and the social relations of spectatorship" (13). Similarly, Miriam Hansen's Babel and Babylon investigates Hollywood's film-viewer relations during the silent era to demonstrate that the very notion of the classic spectator

[23] Jackie Stacey, Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship. (London: Routledge, 1994), 62.

is a historical construct that emerged around 1909. Hansen radically alters the concept of female spectatorship by tracing cinema's pivotal role in transforming women's access to the public sphere to allow "redemptive possibilities as an inclusive, heterogeneous, and at times unpredictable horizon of experience." [24] Furthermore, she suggests that cinema functioned as counter public sphere, which was "not overtly oppositional, [but] still presented an alternative to dominant social norms," including a potential site for female 'heterotopia.' [25] Recent cultural critics like Hansen and Stacey move away from the notion of a textually constructed female spectator to one who is actively engaged within complex networks of cultural discourses and social relations. In doing so, they have successfully shown how women's viewing may be historicized by placing viewing practices in specific contexts. They are thus able to account for a more active female viewer whose agency is related to her activities as an active participant in consumer culture.

Using the redefined notions of female spectatorship offered by Hansen and Stacey, I will attempt to theorize and conceptualize female spectatorship in accordance with female power and agency by situating it specifically in the historical and cultural context of eighteenth-century Britain. While the dissertation relies on important psychoanalytic concepts of subjectivity and identification, I wish to consider spectatorship in a broader context by positioning it within complexly constituted and historically specific networks of discourses and experiences. As much as the experiences of women were often distinct from those of their male counterparts and their relation to

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[24] Miriam Hansen, Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film. (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 1991), 19.

[25] Ibid, 105.

visuality constituted profoundly differently, it is important not to take gender as a sole category of analysis at the risk of essentializing a singular, feminine experience that speaks for all women. I seek to explore female spectatorship without privileging gender as its only social determinant but rather attempt to account for those multiple, interlocking categories of difference, like class, race, nation, and empire that complicate and inflect the mode of seeing itself. Indeed, spectatorship is not independent, but part of a complex web of political, social, economic and discursive practices and their accompanying ideological values at any given time.

Consumer Culture and Gender

In order to offer a critical reevaluation of the various ways female spectatorship is implicated in historically changing forms of social power, I will be centrally concerned with how female spectatorship is inextricably tied to the growing emergence of consumer culture in eighteenth-century Britain. Although its precise definition varies, the term 'consumer culture' is often used to refer to a range of human investments in, attitudes toward, and behaviors around consumer goods. [26] As the thriving body of scholarship on consumerism in eighteenth-century Britain has clearly shown, once neglected economic changes that stress commercialization during the eighteenth century have emerged as an important historical phenomenon that deserves greater recognition. [27] Of course, the

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[26] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), 5.

[27] see Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, eds., The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commericalization of Eighteenth-Century England. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985); John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., Consumption and the World of Goods. (New York: Routledge, 1993); Ann Bermingham and John Brewer. The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text. (London, Routledge, 1995).

desire to consume was not new to the eighteenth century, but historians like Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb argue that there was a dramatic turning point as early as 1711 with the introduction of marked changes such as unparalleled spending available for a wider range of people, different attitudes to goods, luxury, and fashion, and increased tendency toward 'conspicuous consumption.' [28] Indeed, the consumer boom of eighteenth-century Britain ushered in a new economy and a new demand structure, along with unprecedented intellectual, social, political, and cultural shifts for eighteenth-century Britain and its people. [29] Whereas before spending was limited to the very few, in the wake of British commercial expansion and growing prosperity, rapidly expanding consumer practices enabled a wider range of people to pursue a newer and wider array of consumer goods. These socioeconomic changes raised key issues in eighteenth-century British culture, including the place of commerce and commodities in culture; the standards of power and status; the formulation of taste and aesthetics; ethical debates about fashion and luxury; and revised models of subjectivity and gender.

Feminist scholars have often remarked on the paradoxical way women were seen in relation to the world of goods. Women have long been perceived as mere objects, with their bodies and sexuality seen to exist in relation to male needs and desires. While women were conventionally viewed as circulating goods within economic systems, feminist historians like Rachel Bowlby and Anne Friedberg also point out that the spectacularized urban culture of arcades, boulevards, and department stores in the late

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[28] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, eds. The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commericalization of Eighteenth-century England, 10.

[29] John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds Consumption and the World of Goods. (London: Routledge, 1993).

nineteenth century enabled women shoppers to emerge as a powerful figures complicit with bourgeois capitalism. [30] This dissertation argues that long before the rise of modern retail and marketing in the nineteenth century, the emerging consumer culture of the eighteenth century illustrated the paradoxical and complex ways in which visual experiences play an ever-increasing role in shaping female subjectivity.

Often marked culturally both as commodities and consumers, women, of course, have been perceived as having a special relation to consumerism. Depictions of the female subject in eighteenth-century literature reveals the extent to which women were aligned with the commodities as well as acts of consumption. While spending was seen as necessary for economic expansion and global trade, luxury items often associated with female consumption were generally seen as both a moral and economic threat. Eighteenth-century British society often deployed the female body in debates about the benefits of consumption. For instance, Bernard Mandeville's 1714 "The Fable of the Bees" registers the complexities of a world in which the new values of the marketplace associated social good with traits long deemed world vices: [31]

> ... Luxury
> Employ'd a Million more.
> Envy it self, and Vanity
> Were Ministers of Industry;
> Their darling Folly, Fickleness

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[30] Rachel Bowlby, Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola. (New York: Methuen, 1985).

[31] Bernard Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees. ed. Phillip Harth. (New York: Penguin, 1970).

In Diet, Furniture, and Dress,

That strange ridic'lous Vice, was made

The very Wheel, that turn'd the Trade. (180-88)

Mandeville proposes that "personal vices" such as luxury, fickleness, vanity, acquisitiveness, and the pursuit of pleasure were necessary for a thriving national economy and the generation of "publick benefits." Although he deplored women's undisciplined desire for luxuries and the means they employed to consume, he nonetheless sanctioned women's spending as a necessary evil in consumer society. He insists that "a considerable Portion of what the Prosperity of London and Trade in general, and consequently the Honour, Strength, Safety, and all the Worldly Interest of the Nation, consist in, depends entirely on the necessary and vile Stratagems of Women" (238). Mandeville's critique of female consumerism reveals the extent to which the female body becomes a key site for theorizing the very nature of consumerism and the questions raised by commercial society. In fact, women's increasingly active participation in processes of production and consumption within the economic, financial and literary marketplace in the eighteenth century was manifested in a national debate where women's spending was seen with ambivalence and contradiction. Women's acquisitiveness was seen as necessary to the strong growth of the domestic British economy and its imperial mercantile expansion at the same time that the licentiousness of female appetite was perceived to be threatening to male control.

Several feminist scholars, including Laura Brown, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Erin Mackie, and Deidre Lynch, offer insights into the ways the figure of the woman was

crucial to how eighteenth-century culture experienced and negotiated the pleasures of and fears about consumerism. Both Erin Mackie's reading of The Tatler and The Spectator periodicals in Market A La Mode and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace's Consuming Subjects, an analysis of eighteenth-century literary texts and consumption in the eighteenth century, examine the definition of gender identity, especially female subjectivity, in a commercial context by focusing on such aspects of consumerism as fashion, shopping, and commodities. [32] They both emphasize that women's close affinity to consumption is not natural or inevitable but produced by specific historical conditions. Kowaleski-Wallace demonstrates how the notion of a gendered consumer appetite first appeared in the eighteenth century, as appetite "was diverted toward goods, ... shopping became gendered as feminine, and ... women's bodies became configured in relation to consumption" (13). Women's paradoxical status as the agent and the object of consumption is a discursive construct that emerged when "British culture projected onto the female subject both its fondest wishes for the transforming power of consumerism and its deepest anxieties about the corrupting influences of goods" (5). In Ends of Empire, a study of eighteenth-century imperialism, Laura Brown argues that "[t]he female figure, through its simultaneous connections with commodification and trade on the one hand, and violence and difference on the other, plays a central role in the constitution of this mercantile capitalist ideology." [33] She reveals how eighteenth-century culture sought to deflect anxieties about imperialism by scapegoating the figure of the

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[32] Erin Mackie, Market a la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in The Tatler and The Spectator. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997); Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Columbia Press, 1997).

[33] Laura Brown, Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature. (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1993), 3.

woman as representative of accumulation and consumption. Similarly Deidre Lynch's study of literary character in relation to Britain's commercial economy in The Economy of Character has convincingly shown that the notion of interiority was shaped by negotiation with the emerging market culture of eighteenth-century Britain. Her sophisticated analysis validly points out how the interiority of modern subjectivity is constituted by the fashionable world of commerce as a "pragmatics of character" for readers to accommodate and renegotiate their relationships to a rapidly changing consumer culture. [34] She does not, however, explicitly mention how these strategies of deciphering characters to cope with the "crisis of legibility" brought about by the new consumer revolution may have affected eighteenth-century visuality, especially its implication for female spectatorship.

What these works share is the recognition that gendered subjectivity is produced in relation to multiple discourses of consumption. While they have successfully shown the various ideological and cultural processes whereby British culture projected its desires and anxieties about commodities and consumption onto a female subject, they tend to overlook the complex yet contradictory nature of the specular economy in which women's subjectivity is defined. Despite the role of gender in the new visual economy of commodity culture, past scholarship does not go far enough to connect the visual aspects of the consumer revolution to wider issues of spectatorship and visuality in eighteenth-century Britain. Accordingly, I am indebted to the insights of critics who have addressed female consumerism in the eighteenth century, I hope to extend them by considering how the new economic, political, cultural and epistemological shifts

[34] Deidre Lynch, The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

precipitated by emergent consumerism in the period affected and shaped methods and practices of seeing. In other words, this project will attempt to show that to understand the experience of seeing is also and necessarily to inquire into some of eighteenth-century Britain's most pivotal economic, cultural and epistemological struggles. How did the radical transformations of the eighteenth-century consumer revolution impact how individuals perceived and conceptualized the experience of seeing? Given women's often paradoxical relationship to commodity culture, how was gender implicated in the experience of seeing? Most of all, how did these radical shifts and transformations brought about by commodity culture define and shape female spectatorship?

Although the eighteenth-century discursive construction of femininity focuses the male gaze on the body of the woman as an as object of display, this dissertation argues that the powerful yet threatening role women had in defining and supporting the economies of consumer culture enabled women to subvert the scopic regime and to claim visual agency. One of my fundamental assumptions is that, just as individuals do not have prediscursive, presocial selves outside the marketplace, visuality is not naturally given and thus cannot be conceived outside the context of the social and economic transformation that provide an arena for the circulation of goods and bodies, exchange, and the exercise of consumption.

Previous scholarship linking visual culture to commodity culture has mainly focused on postmodern, late-capitalist society. Cultural critics like Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard have sharply criticized the pervasiveness of images in today's spectacular consumer society, where all aspects of everyday life, including the process of looking itself, have become commodified to the extent that individuals inevitably become

reduced to passive masses enslaved by hyperreal images or simulacrum. [35] In some respects, the eighteenth century, with its proliferation, exchange, and circulation of images and readily available goods, can be seen as an incipient "society of the spectacle" grounded in and inscribed by the specific contours of the economic and material world. Thus, Barbara Stafford in Body Criticism claims that eighteenth-century culture was deeply dependent on the visual, in that "the problem of imaging what was 'out of sight' became critical in the fine arts and the natural sciences" as part of the Enlightenment's systematic effort to visualize all aspects of the invisible and the unknown. [36] Although Stafford aptly points out that eighteenth-century culture was image-oriented, she overlooks how the Enlightenment's project of visualization is also closely tied to the period's commercialism. I suggest that the very visual strategies for imaging the unseen during the Enlightenment can be crucial in dealing with problems arising from the consumer revolution. As I will demonstrate subsequently, the proximity of the wide array of novel commodities and innovations in retail practices and spaces enabled female consumers to explore fluid, mobile modes of looking for their own pleasure and to take advantage of commercial exchanges in a world which was increasingly defined by the production and consumption of images.

By drawing attention to the ambiguities of female visual experiences formed in and through a new world of consumerism, this study contends that the unprecedented shifts brought about by commodity culture were fundamental to how eighteenth-century

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[35] Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995); Jean Baudrillard. "Simulacra and Simulations" from Selected Writings, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1988), 166-184.

[36] Barbara Stafford. Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), xvii.

culture experienced and defined its social and epistemological categories. These changes also brought into view the problematic and often contradictory nature of eighteenth-century visuality, which belies what is commonly referred to as the Enlightenment gaze. By speculating on the implications of women's vision and their participation in alternative ways of seeing, this dissertation insists that eighteenth-century visuality cannot be seen simply as a unified or single scopic regime, but is rather complex and contradictory, fraught with anxieties and problems linked to its specific cultural and historical conditions.

In fact, the problematic nature of seeing in the eighteenth century is evident in widespread debate over the proper role of seeing itself. In Essay Concerning Human Understanding, John Locke rejected the concept of innate ideas and grounded all knowledge on the sensory perception of external objects. Locke emphasized disinterested observation and physical sensations as sources of knowledge, yet he deemed such 'sensations' inferior to what he perceived as important 'ideas.' Even though Locke acknowledged that 'sensations' or 'impressions' were an important source of transcendental 'ideas,' he struggled to distinguish 'ideas' from 'sensations.' [37] This distinction suggests that Locke remained skeptical about seeing as a reliable source of knowledge, just as Western philosophers had long devalued visual phenomena and images as affording the mind only superficial access to reality. Yet, under the sway of empirical science, and with the invention of the microscope and telescope, seeing paradoxically became an end in itself. In her study of eighteenth-century curiosity, Barbara Benedict argues that seeing as a source of information became an end in itself to

[37] Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 121.

the extent that seeing became equated with curiosity, a "transgression visually received." [38] Curious seeing embodied the threatening and unstable essence of inquiry itself, often accompanied by visual delights and unregulated appetite.

Indeed, the proliferation of novelties and exotic or strange imported goods into Britain from newly opened global trade routes made everyday life a spectacle for middle and upper-classes, pulling spectatorship into the center of the culture. Discoveries of new species and lands overseas and the appeal of new commodities available in newly configured marketplaces provided eighteenth-century viewers with sources of visual pleasure, intensifying acquisition and stimulating consumption. As Britain made the transition to commercial capitalism, the consumption of luxuries was no longer limited to an elite few. Instead, the increasing availability of goods, the rapid spread of new fashions, and the growth of emulative spending helped to destabilize fixed social categories and transform identities. As a result, the need to redefine and enforce social divisions and class relations often led to preoccupations with questions concerning spectatorial comportment and behavior in a time of conspicuous consumption. Not only did the acceleration of material accumulation provoke debate over luxury, pitting self-interest against the public good, but it radically transformed how people conceptualized themselves and the world. The proliferation and circulation of new exchangeable forms of goods, currency and credit, as well as new retail practices and systems of finance undermined prevailing norms and the categories that people had formerly invoked to explain their world. As I will develop further in my analysis of Daniel Defoe's Roxana, the increasing centrality of speculative investment, credit, and currency shifted the nature

[38] Barbara Benedict, Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 3.

of property from visible, material forms to fluid, intangible and unsubstantial ones. Furthermore, there was a deep anxiety about being consumed by market relations as objects and individuals seemed to become increasingly undistinguishable under the logic of exchangeability and commodification, just as gender identity and class relations became more fluid and uncertain. Through my close readings, I explore how female consumers exploited these contradictions and manipulated the terms of their specularity for their own interests.

The instability and mobility that characterized eighteenth-century culture, in fact, seem to counter what Crary claims as the visual paradigm of the period: a classical model of vision typified by the camera obscura and offering "stable and fixed relations" that guaranteed access to an objective truth about the world. [39] Indeed, Crary risks subsuming the "singularities and immense diversity that characterized visual experience" (7) into a binary model when he argues that the camera obscura was a dominant visual paradigm from the late 1500s to the end of the 1700s, when nineteenth-century developments in science and technology, particularly physiological optics, gave way to a more subjective and corporeal account of perception. Rather than equating eighteenth-century visuality with a camera obscura model that assures an infallible vantage point on the world with a monocular perspective in which "any inconsistencies and irregularities are banished to insure the formation of a homogeneous, unified, and fully legible space," it seems that eighteenth-century visuality can be better understood as contested and

[39] Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 14.

problematic. [40] Although Locke's empirical methods maintained faith in Cartesian ideas of rationality and lucidity, persistent uncertainties and doubts remained about seeing as a source of truth. In fact, seeing failed to guarantee immediate, true transmission of the outside world and objects, especially when increasing consumerism with its new logic of commodification and exchangeability destabilized and cast doubt over the notion of vision as absolute and stable.

By drawing attention to multiple and competing modes of female spectatorship in eighteenth-century Britain, this dissertation attempts to complicate and add nuance to totalizing theories about eighteenth-century scopic regimes. Instead of providing sweeping schematization about female spectatorship, I suggest that complex and often conflicting dynamics of the female consumer's gaze in relation to other discourses of gender, domesticity, class, race, nation, and authorship can be seen as alternatives to dominant masculine ways of seeing. By highlighting how the figure of woman forms a crucial nexus in the representational systems supporting consumer culture, this study proposes that eighteenth-century women were able to take advantage of their dual roles as consumers and commodities in the marketplace in order to destabilize and challenge oppressive scopic regimes.

Methodology

Using feminist and cultural studies approaches, I follow a materialist methodology by presuming that visuality is mediated and shaped by material culture, cultural discourses, and social experiences. Whereas other studies of eighteenth-century

[40] Jonathan Crary, "Modernizing Vision" Vision and Visuality ed. Hal Foster. (New York: The New Press, 1988), 33.

visuality –such as those by Crary, Conway, and Stafford—have focused on optics, visual technologies or visual arts, I am more interested in the imbrication of visuality and textuality in which eighteenth-century literary texts represent and deploy various visual discourses in connection with other discourses of eighteenth-century consumer culture. Just as individuals do not have prediscursive or presocial selves, so our visual experiences are at any given time part of a complex web of political, social, economic and discursive practices and their accompanying ideological values. Implicit in this project is the assumption that both visuality and textuality are historically contingent discursive practices which are essential to our understanding of how a specific culture operates, particularly with respect to the complex interplay between representation and cultural power. By examining how eighteenth-century writers deployed various discourses of seeing to address political, social, and economic changes arising from the consumer revolution, I will be tracing not only how the enmeshing of visuality and textuality is shaped by historical conditions, but the extent to which this imbrication can recreate and intervene in relations of power and ideologies.

Whereas previous scholarship on eighteenth-century visuality has tended to privilege the novel, my aim is to examine a variety of popular genres including travelogues, periodicals, and novels, which comprise early eighteenth-century English print culture. This thesis suggests that the proliferation of printed materials in eighteenth century, such as the periodicals, the travel narrative, and the novels considered in this dissertation, relied on the overarching concept of spectatorship to engage with the problems and fears arising from commercial culture. Through readers' imaginative participation in the private consumption of these texts, readers could visualize themselves

differently and reinvent themselves. It is a commonplace that the eighteenth century was a period preoccupied with questions of how to see or how to be seen in every aspect of life ranging from public masquerade to the most popular periodical entitled The Spectator. At the same time, the period provides a rich site for inquiries about visuality, gender and consumerism because it was a pivotal moment when new practices of consumption and gender identity mutually constitute each other. The primary texts I have chosen to examine are significant in that they foreground the complex relationships among visuality, gender, and commodity culture, and offer a fertile ground for exploring and reconceptualizing female spectatorship in the eighteenth century. While I try to ground my arguments historically by juxtaposing literary texts with other relevant philosophical, cultural, and aesthetic texts of the period, my practice is mainly grounded in close reading.

My dissertation explores the female consumer's gaze in the following texts written between 1711 and 1796: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's The Turkish Embassy Letters (1716-1718), Daniel Defoe's Roxana (1724), Eliza Haywood's The Female Spectator (1744-46), and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751). My conclusion provides a brief reading of Frances Burney's Camilla (1796) and ends with a discussion of British female consumers' role in the antislavery movement. I have chosen to order my readings chronologically in order to trace a genealogy of the female consumer: from an aristocratic traveler to middle-class shoppers, from transgressive coquettes to domestic spenders, from shopgazers to political radicals. [41] Whereas my two chapters on Montagu and Defoe focus on British women's consumption of foreign luxuries and their scopic desires in relation to their sexual, domestic, national, and imperial identities, my chapter

[41] Michel Foucault, The Foucault Reader. ed. Paul Rabinow. (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 88.

on Haywood concentrates on her critique of Addison and Steele's domestic surveillance through women's fashionable consumption and strategic self-display both in private and public spheres. While the arrangement of the chapters suggests that female consumerism became increasingly conflated with domestic ideology by the turn of the nineteenth century, my conclusion nonetheless proposes that female domestic consumers were able to exercise their visual authority and political agency through their power to shop and boycott specific colonial products. Using Foucault's idea of genealogy, the chapters do not offer a progressive narrative of female spectatorship and resist the tendency to reproduce history as continuous and totalizing. Rather than offering an overarching, essentialized reading of female spectatorship, my goal is to recover a rich and varied discursive history of female vision in English culture from the early eighteenth century forward that engages with contemporaneous discourses of consumerism, domesticity, orientalism, and nation etc.

My first chapter addresses how the female traveler's gaze is intertwined with other eighteenth-century discourses of commerce, orientalism, and British imperialism by examining Montagu's attempts to establish visual authority as a female consumer in her Turkish Embassy Letters. Recent studies of travel writing have pursued the question of whether women travelers experience and write differently from men. If the viewing subject, whose powerful survey subjects the landscape to an imperial gaze, is assumed to be predominantly male, then the very act of seeing becomes problematic for the woman observer/traveler. Montagu deliberately deploys the material and economic discourses available in an increasingly commercialized eighteenth-century culture to fashion herself as a powerful viewing subject in a way that enables her to contest the spectatorial

paradigms of male travel narratives. Simultaneously, I argue that Montagu's preoccupation with the accumulation and consumption of commodities ranging from exotic luxury items and foreign goods ultimately implicates her within the consolidation of British national identity. By foregrounding the material aspect of Montagu's visual authority, I argue that her spectatorial authority is linked more closely with the commercial values of the marketplace and with emerging bourgeois domestic ideals than has been generally recognized. I will demonstrate that Montagu's consumer gaze in Europe, Asia, and Africa underscores her active involvement in commodifying foreign 'others' for British domestic consumption and ultimately validates British identity.

Chapter 2 considers how discourses of female consumerism and visuality are related to English domestic identity by focusing on Roxana's masquerade in Defoe's Roxana in conjunction with his other writings on credit and commerce. Defoe's active engagement with the broader economic issues of eighteenth-century Britain is well-known. His numerous polemical writings and tracts reflect his complex views on the significant economic developments of the financial revolution in early eighteenth-century Britain. Rather than oversimplifying Defoe's economic stance, my aim is to explore how Defoe deploys the visibility of the female body to express his profound anxiety about a newly emerging credit culture and women's growing presence in what he sees as a masculine public space. Roxana's display of clothing and her accumulation of material goods not only testify to the power of English mercantile expansion and imperial expansion but also epitomize the speculative and contingent nature of a credit-based economy that threatens to be uncontrollable. While Roxana's masquerade exemplifies the ways she uses foreign consumption to fashion and empower herself, her failure as a

mother dramatizes Defoe's fears about foreign trade's corrupting influence on English domestic virtues. While Roxana's masquerade has often been discussed in moral or sexual terms, my aim is to show that Roxana's foreign consumption and her manipulation of visibility has a wider significance in the context of economic, political, and cultural concerns about English national identity.

Chapter 3 analyzes how Haywood's The Female Spectator (1744-46) and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751) critique and revise the visual authority of Addison and Steele's The Spectator papers (1711-14). My first objective is to delineate in specific terms the configuration of eighteenth-century visuality by insisting that Mr. Spectator, the narrator of Addison's periodical, can be seen as paradigmatic of the profound ways the act of seeing functions as an organizing trope in eighteenth-century culture. While Mr. Spectator's privileged and all-knowing gaze aligns him with a Cartesian position, his disciplinary model of seeing relies on women's visibility for consolidation of the bourgeois public sphere. I will claim that his scopic power becomes problematic and uncertain at best, since his disciplinary gaze cannot help but be indebted to the feminine properties of fashionable display and the marketplace that he attempts to contain and exclude from the public world. In fact, such ambiguity and anxiety underlying the Enlightenment's scopic regime enable the female subject to assume a viewing position from which a dominant male perspective and ideology could be challenged. In The Female Spectator, I argue that Haywood deploys commercial and market discourses to fashion a different way of seeing that contests The Spectator's model of domestic surveillance. Haywood suggests that women can become powerful discerning spectators through the strategic use of fashionable display and the

manipulation of their status as objects of commercial exchange. Haywood also explores the possibilities for a radical female vision through the coquette's fashionable consumption in The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless. While Haywood's latter works are often viewed as endorsing domestic ideals, my purpose is to demonstrate that neither The Female Spectator nor The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless are part of conservative conduct literature but are, in fact, radical in their critique of masculine visual authority.

My conclusion takes up Burney briefly to consider female spectatorship within the rapidly changing realms of shopping and the retail trade at the end of the eighteenth century. Burney's novels are preoccupied with women's economic and social status, the institution of marriage, the distribution of property, fashion and consumption. Yet it is perhaps Burney's third novel Camilla (1796) that depicts the most powerful picture of the emergent consumer culture in which consumption in the marketplace provide women with opportunities to negotiate and transform modes of subjectivity. Whereas Camilla's victimization by the fashionable world's demands is generally seen as Burney's critique of a commercial society that often reduces women to objects of male exchange, I will show that Camilla's subjectivity is in fact not constructed in opposition to the effects of consumer culture, but rather is secured through her experiences of dealing with the commodities that surround her. Through examples of Mrs. Arlbery and Mrs. Mittin, I will also interrogate the various ways in which women's increasing visibility and public mobility played an increasing role in shaping feminine subjectivity and spectatorial agency. I conclude with a brief but hopefully suggestive discussion about female consumers and their active involvement in the abolitionist movement of the 1790s.

Whereas Camilla exemplifies how female consumerism becomes circumscribed within the domestic sphere by the turn of the nineteenth century, my purpose in ending with the female consumers' boycott of sugar is to reveal the crucial role played by British female consumers in the domestic sites of their consumption. By tracing how female consumers deployed their sympathetic gaze and consumption to undermine the institution of slavery, my dissertation highlights how female consumers successfully exercised the privilege of seeing for political ends.

CHAPTER 1

THE FEMALE TRAVELER'S GAZE & CONSUMERISM IN MONTAGU'S THE TURKISH EMBASSY LETTERS

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's The Turkish Embassy Letters, written during her journey to the Ottoman Empire (1716-1718) and posthumously published in 1763, raises many vexed questions about travel and gender, the politics of visual representation of the cultural and racial other, women's roles and implication in colonial discourse, and the orientalist assumptions underlying European narratives of the East. Accompanying her husband, the British ambassador, through Europe to Turkey, Montagu is regarded as one of the first European women to write extensively about her experiences in the Ottoman Empire on her actual travel. [1] Montagu, who had access to realms forbidden to male travelers and was privileged on account of both her class and gender, is particularly interested in making systematic observations related to Turkish women and their everyday conditions. She is recognized as one of the first European women to provide a glimpse into Turkish women's baths and the interiors of several harems and to celebrate Turkish women's beauty and freedom in a way that challenged earlier male voyage writers working in the orientalist tradition, most of whom depicted Turkish women as enslaved and corrupt.

Unsurprisingly, much of the past scholarship surrounding Montagu's letters has centered on feminist and postcolonial perspectives: the overlapping discursive formations of gender and orientalism, and Montagu's negotiation of these discourses in

[1] Billie Melman, Women's Orients, English women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 78. Billie Melman contends her letters are "the first examples of a secular account, by a woman, on the Muslim Orient."

the text. Critics have primarily diverged on the question of whether Montagu is orientalist or feminist or both. Joseph W. Lew contends that her letters are "powerful critiques of both Ottoman and British culture," a subversion of both orientalist discourses and the eighteenth-century patriarchy.[2] Lisa Lowe also argues that Montagu makes use of a feminist discourse which "speaks of common experiences among women of different societies" to disrupt the monolithic narrative of orientalism.[3] On the other hand, Meyda Yenenoglu emphasizes how western feminism is inevitably implicated in orientalism.[4] She points out that Montagu's positive representation of oriental women, however well-intentioned, replicates orientalist /phallocentric discourses, as Montagu ultimately takes a masculine position in relating to a feminized orient. Similarly focusing on the complicity between orientalism and Western feminism, Srinivas Aravamudan maintains that Montagu's masquerading as a Turkish woman is at best "partial identification."[5]

While scholars have been influential in showing how discourses of gender and imperialism can be mapped onto each other, they have largely ignored the economic and material context of both these discourses of orientalism and feminism. Despite the fact that eighteenth-century England in general witnessed a vast expansion of wealth and luxury that was accompanied by the production of new desires and the accelerating demands of consumption across classes, there has been to date no significant work focusing on Montagu's relation to the eighteenth-century's emergent commodity culture.

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[2] Joseph Lew, "Lady Mary's Portable Seragio." Eighteenth-Century Studies (24: 1991), 433.

[3] Lisa Lowe, Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms. (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991).

[4] Meyda Yegenoglu, Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[5] Srinivas Aravamudan, "Lady Mary Wortley Montague in the Hammam: Masquerade, Womanliness, and Levantinization" ELH. (62:1995), 69-104.

Rather than reductively generalizing Montagu as unquestionably orientalist or feminist, my examination of the role of consumerism in Montagu's text attempts to illuminate the paradoxical construction of the modern female subject in relation to the discourses of consumerism, and to undertake the project of conceptualizing Montagu's female consumer gaze. While this chapter will delineate how Montagu constructs herself as a viewing subject by confronting Western patriarchal discourse, it will also foreground the complicity between the eighteenth-century European feminist position and western commercial interests, which are both a product of and at the same time constitutive of the scopic regime of the eighteenth century. In doing so, I will suggest that Montagu's consumer gaze appropriates the active spectatorial subject position culturally assigned to the man, even as this privileging of seeing was inextricably tied to the dominant Western scopic tradition which is characterized by a desire to know, control, and master the world through a scrutinizing and objectifying gaze.

In seeking to draw attention to the ways in which Montagu's travel experience is bound up with the material conditions of the eighteenth century's culture of consumption, I am particularly interested in how Montagu's spectatorship is shaped by the larger discourses of consumerism in the eighteenth century, particularly its concerns about fashion, clothing, and commodities in her interactions with women from different parts of the world, both western and nonwestern. Critics have tended to focus exclusively on Montagu's letters written within Turkey but have paid relatively little attention to her letters written during her journey through continental Europe. Rather than privileging Montagu's "Turkish" letters over her "European" counterparts, this chapter suggests that Montagu's letters written in various western cities such as Rotterdam and Vienna are just

as crucial to understanding her paradoxical role as a female consumer who attempts to negotiate the tensions between women's power as agents in the consumer environment and their subjection to a logic of commodification that reduces them to objects of exchange and possession in the eighteenth century. The vexed condition of the woman shopper in Montagu's "European" letters also anticipate the ways in which the delights and dangers of female consumerism become amplified in Montagu's "Turkish" letters, changing the way we read the "Turkish" letters so as to foreground women's involvement in commodifying the foreign 'other' for western consumption.

Through a careful examination of the commercial discourses of exchange and consumption interwoven in Montagu's observations throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, I will trace how Montagu fashions herself as a powerful viewing subject with a uniquely female authority that enables her to contest the spectatorial paradigms of male travel narratives. Travel writing is often inextricable from the powerful shaping force of mercantilist and colonial expansion, as travel accounts by Europeans about non-European parts of the world often constructed the rest of the world as a form of domestic consumption for European readers. At one level, Montagu's preoccupations with commerce and commodities (from exotic luxury items to household goods) can be seen as participating in the project of British economic expansion and mercantile imperialism. Montagu, nevertheless, deliberately deploys fashionable commodities to explore, destabilize, and renegotiate sexual, national, and imperial identities. By focusing on how commodities serve as important sites of exchange between self and other, the civilized and the primitive, the familiar and the foreign, East and West, I will argue that Montagu's engagement in consumerism represents a feminist departure from previous

orientalist patriarchal discourses that are dependent on an objectified other, even as her newly configured visual mastery as a female British consumer ultimately implicates her within the consolidation of British national identity. By acknowledging the complex dynamics of voyeurism, pleasure, and commodities in Montagu's letters, I attempt to underscore the centrality of the discourses of female consumerism in the debates about British women's complicity in the formation of empire and nation, and stress how these female consumers were active agents in the political arena, not only as shoppers, but also as observers.

"Handsome clean Dutch citizen's wife" and the "Poor town lady of pleasure"

Montagu was a member of the aristocracy, recognized by her peers in her lifetime for her literary and intellectual discernment. Although she admits that "the silly prejudices of my education had taught me to believe I was to treat nobody as Inferior," it is evident that her station and aristocratic privileges shaped her perspective throughout her life. Montagu insisted that she had found "the greatest examples of Honor and Integrity ... amongst those of the highest Birth and Fortune," [6] and her strong admiration of Turkish women as the "only free people" restricted itself to wealthy Turkish women. She rallied against the social upheaval she observed in her society brought on by the foundational changes in the structuring of the English economy and social relations. Opposed to the increasing commercialism and the growing economic success of the middle class, she complained that the "confounding of all Ranks and making a jest of order has long been growing in England." (35) She also considered

[6] The Complete Letters of Lady Montagu, ed. Robert. Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 36.

writing for money beneath her station: "If writing for publication was unfashionable among the aristocracy, writing for money was considered even worse, as it turned one of 'the most distinguishing prerogatives of mankind' into a 'trade' and thus demeaned it." [7]

Yet as this chapter will argue, as much as she sought to distance herself from the commercial changes she witnessed around her due to an increasingly commercialized market society, Montagu's writing is shaped by and produced in the broader material context of the eighteenth-century's market economy. Critics for the most part have focused on Montagu's relationship to feminist and orientalist discourses while largely ignoring the role of commerce or economics in her writing. Some critics, such as Anita Desai, have even argued that Montagu "took no apparent interest in the politics of the place or period" except to aestheticize. [8] Yet it is evident that the very nature of her journey to a distant Ottoman Empire is closely bound up with the interests of British commerce, since the purpose of Montagu's travel was to accompany her husband, who had been appointed British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1716. His diplomatic mission was to negotiate peace between the Ottoman Empire and Austria. Although Montagu's travel letters contain no reference to her role in her husband's political negotiations, her texts can be seen as intimately engaged with the market forces of eighteenth-century mercantile capitalism that deepened British-Turkish diplomatic and commercial ties in the period. Wortley's diplomatic task was particularly important because it was directly related to maintaining British commercial and naval interests in the East. England needed to have Austria in the Mediterranean to offset Spanish power

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[7] Robert Halsband, The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 255.

[8] Anita Desai, "Introduction" to The Turkish Embassy Letters. (London: Virago Press, 1994), xxxi.

in an effort to ensure British commercial monopoly of overseas trade and the transportation of goods between England and its expanding foreign markets. [9] Moreover, Wortley was to represent the Levant Company that held the charter for trade in the Near East. Founded in 1581, the Levant Company was one of England's most important commercial ventures, like the East India Company and the Royal African Company, that secured England's domain over the eastern trading routes and helped to usher in England's first empire. Wortley's diplomatic goal was also to maintain open trade with Ottomans. Anglo-Turkish diplomatic and commercial ties allowed the import of luxury goods (including silks, spices, cotton, soaps, oils, carpets from the East) for its consumers in their expanding domestic market in promotion of free trade and its mercantile expansion. Montagu makes the journey to Turkey as the "obedient, invaluable wife" [10] who accompanied her husband on his diplomatic post, yet it is evident that her travel supported British commercial interests implicitly, given the fact that her husband's task of negotiating peace between the Ottoman Empire and Austria helped to safeguard British commercial and naval interests in the East and to promote British mercantile expansion and imperialism.

Montagu also expresses a keen interest in the public issues of her era, for she was very conscious of the operations of commerce and the politics of female consumption in domestic and global market. While Montagu's letters are mostly well known for her detailed account of female society and customs in the Ottoman Empire, critics have largely overlooked how her travels through continental Europe also contain many rich observations about female fashion, commodities and commerce which become a

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[9] Ibid., xvi.

[10] Isobel Grundy. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.

powerful locus for her self-definition as a female subject. Through her encounter with various female consumers in Rotterdam, Germany and Austria, Montagu foregrounds the paradoxical status of the female consumer as at once feared and necessary. While female consumers were indicted for their unscrupulous appetites and degenerate sexuality, women were also expected to serve the interests of the nation by controlling their consumer behaviors through disciplinary practices. By focusing on the intersections of femininity, appetite, and the commodity, Montagu's letters written before her arrival in Turkey demonstrate how female subjectivity is mapped onto anxieties about undisciplined female desire for material objects and thus aligned with a culture's larger economic and political imperatives.

From the beginning, Montagu's letters reveal her preoccupation with the growth of expanding commerce and the proliferation of consumer commodities. Her opening account of her visit to Rotterdam not only establishes the close relation between her experience and the world of goods, but also exemplifies how her encounter with other cultures and with women in particular is mediated by the discourses of consumerism. When Montagu arrives at Rotterdam, she is not only "charmed" but struck with "a new scene of pleasure" at the sight of the little town. She is fascinated by its strong economy, material prosperity and its vibrant commercial activities.

> Tis certain no town can be more advantageously situated for commerce. Here are seven large canals, on which the merchant ships come up to the very doors of their houses. The shops and warehouses are of a surprising neatness and magnificence, filled with an incredible quantity of fine

merchandise, and so much cheaper than what we see in England I have much ado to persuade myself I am still so near it...(3)

Here Rotterdam is depicted as a quintessentially thriving center of mercantile capitalism where consumers can find a vast variety of merchandise for their cultural consumption. Its canals and ships provide access to world trade and serve as conduits for transactions in luxury goods. When Montagu marvels that "the shops and warehouses are of a surprising neatness and magnificence, filled with an incredible quantity of fine merchandise," she becomes fascinated by the visual allure of sensuous objects and fashionable goods. At first glance Montagu seems to epitomize a particular eighteenth-century discursive construction of femininity: as a shopper who becomes enthralled by her innate female desire for material objects and easily lured by the display of commodities.

Such a close relationship between women and commodities has been noted by many historians of the emergence of modern consumer society. Thorstein Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) is widely regarded as the foremost study articulating the contradictory relation of women to modern consumer culture. According to Veblen, the wife has "become the ceremonial consumer of goods" that the husband produces, so that her "conspicuous" spending provides tangible evidence of his wealth and status.[11] Woman becomes identified as the primary consumer of Western society and acts of consumption usually are gendered as female. Woman's consumption also demonstrates her status as a property in that her spending is for her husband, not her. Woman becomes marked culturally both as consumer and commodity.

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[11] Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions. (New York, 1972), 65.

Although women's unruly impulses and prodigious appetite had long been asserted, it was not until the birth of a consumer culture and the vast expansion of commerce in the eighteen century that the specific connection between female consumption and the world of goods was made. Questioning the 'natural' link between women and the commodities they buy, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace documents how women's "appetite was diverted toward goods, how shopping became gendered as feminine, and how women's bodies became configured in relation to consumption." [12] She reveals the contradictory position of women, who were presumed to desire fashionable and foreign luxury goods, while their appetite for such goods was denigrated as voracious, disruptive, and a threat to the patriarchal order. This contradictory representation of the female consumer was pervasive in eighteenth-century literature. Moralists like George Berkeley deplored women's propensity to consume luxury goods, inquiring "whether a woman of fashion ought not to be declared a public enemy?" [13] Similarly Jonathan Swift denounced female consumers for employing "their stock of invention in contriving new arts of profusion, faster than the most parsimonious husband can afford" and identifying their desire for imported luxuries as a feminine propensity. [14]

Although Montagu is fascinated by the allure of commodities, she does not represent herself as an irresponsible consumer with an unscrupulous appetite. As seen in several of her letters, Montagu presents herself as a careful shopper who does not engage in mindless spending but constantly compares the price of merchandise she desires. She

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[12] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), 13.

[13] T. E. Jessop, The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, 8 vols, (London: Thomas Nelson, 1953), 6: 117.

[14] Jonathan Swift, "A Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin, Concerning the Weavers." Herbert Davis, ed., Irish Tracts, 1728-1733 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 67.

is unwilling to be controlled by the market price in Rotterdam and turns out to be a powerful consuming subject who can negotiate and "make a good bargain" (4), while she apologizes to Jane Smith for not being able to send her the lace she ordered: "upon my word I can yet find none that is not dearer than you may buy it in London" (5). Montagu abstains from shopping in Vienna where "all things of that kind [are] at least double the price" (34), but seizes the opportunity for "buying pages' liveries, gold stuffs" for herself in Leipzig. Like Montagu herself, who resists giving in to dissipated desires for luxury goods, Montagu's travel letters suggest that women's consumer behavior can be controlled and regulated.

Just as Montagu approves of women who regulate themselves in the consumer economy, she emphasizes the importance of order and discipline in civic economy. In the passage below, Montagu is foremost struck by the cleanliness of Rotterdam, the "neatly kept" streets and the "surprising neatness" of its shops, as she notes the absence of poverty or "loathsome cripples" like those who beg in the streets of London:

> Here is neither dirt nor beggary to be seen. One is not shocked with those loathsome cripples so common in London, nor teased with the importunities of idle fellows and wenches that choose to be nasty and lazy. The common servants and the little shop woman here are more nicely clean than most of our ladies, and the great variety of neat dresses (every woman dressing her head after her own fashion) is an additional pleasure in seeing the town (4).

While Montagu's condescension towards poor and disabled people seems strangely at odds with the "compassion" she shows to the poor "wretches" she later encounters in Missa, the capital of Serbia (56), her contempt of the beggarly and idle body is consistent with her critique of those who "choose to be nasty and lazy" (4) and fail to manage themselves properly. Her strong disgust towards the vagrants and cripples veils her sharp criticism of a dysfunctional English economy which has failed to produce docile and useful subjects. Through her juxtaposition of active, industrious, and efficient Dutch workers and the delinquent and lazy English, Montagu illustrates how commerce plays a vital role in shaping of bodies, manners, and morals to produce ideal bourgeois subjects.

Foucault has argued that the human body has no intrinsic meaning but is subject to various forces: social, economic, political , and sexual. Just as one is subject to changing economic interests and pressures, the capitalist marketplace becomes an important instrument in the regulation of the body and its behavior. The body, placed within an economic system that both interprets it and inscribes it with meaning, is not only expected to be an active participant in the capitalist economy, but also to be subject to (and in need of) internal disciplinary processes: the exclusion of laziness and unruliness is necessary to the production of diligent, sensible and productive members of the system. Foucault explains:

> The body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immense hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political

> investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relationships, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but on the other hand, its constitution as labor power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection... the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. [15]

While both men and women are disciplined to become docile, as resources to be tapped for commercial economy, Montagu especially emphasizes the female body through the image of a female consumer displaying a "great variety of neat dresses." In this display of conspicuous consumption, the female body, instead of being "nasty and lazy," regulates itself to become the site of decorous restraint in which the disruptive potential of feminine appetite is controlled and regulated. By emphasizing the opposition neat/clean versus dirty/nasty, Montagu's letters reveal the cultural process whereby women are constructed as self-regulating subjects who support an industrious, commercial economy by means of proper consumption. The neatly dressed female shoppers who carefully manage their consumption of "fashion" and the "nicely clean" shop women with their diligent labor are praised as compliant, respectable female bodies. Their controlled consumerism allows them to become productive members of the society in contrast to the "nasty and lazy wenches" who are condemned for their self-indulgence and impropriety.

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[15] Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 26-7. While my approach stresses Foucault's concept of disciplinary gaze from his 'middle-works,' such as Discipline and Punish, Foucault's later works offer a number of issues related to feminist agency and identity politics. Dianna Taylor and Karen Vintges, eds. Feminism and the Final Foucault. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

Here the binary between filthy and clean distinguishes the virtuous domestic woman from the wench.

Similarly, it is through the female body that civility is defined when Montagu makes observations about women's fashion from various parts of the world. Tropes of gender and commerce become interlinked as Montagu, traveling through Germany, employs the figure of a "handsome clean Dutch citizen's wife" to describe a "free" town, with an "air of commerce and plenty," while the city of "vice and poverty" is figured as a "lady of pleasure."

> I have already passed a large part of Germany. I have seen all that is remarkable in Cologne, Frankfurt, Wurtzburg and this place, and 'tis impossible not to observe the difference between the free towns and those under the government of absolute princes, as all the little sovereigns of Germany are. The streets are well built and full of people, neatly and plainly dressed, the shops loaded with merchandise and the commonality clean and cheerful. In the other a sort of shabby finery, a number of dirty people of quality tawdered out, narrow nasty streets out of repair, wretchedly thin of inhabitants, and above half of the common sort asking alms. I can't help fancying one under the figure of a handsome clean Dutch citizen's wife, and the other like a poor town lady of pleasure, painted and ribboned out in her headdress, with tarnished silver-laced shoes and a ragged under-petticoat, a miserable mixture of vice and poverty (8-9).

Here, commerce becomes synonymous with prosperity and civility, as Montagu depicts the difference between the "free" towns and those under the tyranny of "absolute princes" in terms of "commerce and plenty." Like England, where people "are blessed with an easy government under a king who makes his own happiness consist in the liberty of his people and chooses rather to be looked upon as their father than their master" (57), Montagu associates "free" towns with the Enlightenment values of liberty, civility, and progress associated with industry and trade. Furthermore, by depicting the contrasting towns in gendered terms, Montagu links the ideal of a rational, civilized commonweal with appropriate female consumer behaviors, so that female consumption becomes a visual marker for a civilized society.

By equating "free" towns with "neatly and plainly dressed" people, Montagu's letters seem to valorize moderate consumption that shows decorous restraint over uncontrolled spending. The people who reside in the city of vice and poverty, in contrast, are shown to be engaged in excessive and unregulated spending for inappropriate commodities, making a spectacle of themselves with cheap, gaudy and hideous ornaments. Ultimately, the figure of the "handsome clean Dutch citizen's wife" emblematic of the "free" towns epitomizes an eighteenth-century discursive construction of femininity that suggests an ongoing effort to define and control feminine desires and female spending and dressing practices. By drawing attention to the class difference between the "lady of pleasure" and the Dutch wife, Montagu's letters suggest that this attempt to discipline female bodies aligns with middle-class values and domestic ideals. Belonging to the aristocratic or the upper class, the "lady of pleasure" spends extravagantly—her appetite for fashion and luxurious commodities like headdresses,

shoes, under-petticoats, and ribbons is out of control. Not only is the "lady of pleasure" vain and indolent, but she is also morally corrupt. Turning herself into a spectacle with frivolous ornamentations and gaudy clothing in her narcissistic display of her body, the "lady of pleasure" becomes commodified within a consumer transaction. Montagu furthermore implies that upper class libertine ladies are no different from the lower class cheap prostitutes who are reduced to an object of consumption in the marketplace, offering "tarnished" sexuality for the male gaze.

Just as Montagu insists on curbing female sexuality, she celebrates the virtuous, chaste Dutch wife with exemplary spending habits, endorsing an emerging bourgeois domestic ideal instead of decadent aristocratic values. If aristocrat women were expected to display signs of status in public and their bodies and wealth as public spectacle, Montagu rejects such lavish aristocratic display in favor of new domestic ideals which combine inner virtues with proper consumption. The impetus toward disciplining the female spectacle seems to participate in the rise of domestic ideology in the eighteenth century England. Nancy Armstrong argues that middle-class women gained more cultural agency as they were encouraged to relinquish their desire to become part of a public spectacle and instead assume power over the domestic realm. Montagu's comments can be seen as consistent with the new cultural shift which depended on denigrating "the ornamental body of the aristocrat to exalt the desiring and yet ever vigilant domestic woman." [16]

Montagu's valorization of the middle-class ideal of industry and cleanliness presents an interesting tension with her own aristocratic class status. She herself was satirized by Pope and others for being slovenly. Although Valerie Rumbold points out

[16] Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 71.

that "there is no good reason to doubt that she [washed and changed her smock] as frequently as other people,' [17] Montagu was often vilified as being dirty and sordid. Consider Horace Walpole's comment on her in 1740: "She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat." In his "An Epistle to a Lady," Pope also ridicules Montagu through an image of Sappho that represents a stark contrast to what he sees as the ideal, virtuous woman, embodied by Martha Blount, to whom the poem is addressed. In now well-known lines, he offers a series of grotesque images comparing:

> ...Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
> Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
> With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask:
> So morning insects that in muck begun,
> Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun. (23-27)

As seen in Sappho's "greasy task," which amounts to "muck," Pope repeatedly stresses that there is something fundamentally unclean and morally corrupt about Montagu and women in general. Yet ironically Montagu resorts to the same kind of rhetoric when she describes the dirty "lady of pleasure" in her letters. Pope's negative comments about Montagu's uncleanliness and suspected of sexual laxity clearly demonstrate how Montagu was often subjected to being an object of vision, rather than a privileged viewer.

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[17] Valerie Rumbold, Women's Place in Pope's World, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 158-159.

Montagu seems to be particularly aware of ways in which fashionable aristocratic women were in danger of being reduced to a scandalous spectacle so that their bodies become synonymous with the corruptions of femininity. For Montagu, being seen was particularly crucial. Not only was she an aristocrat who had to appear at the right occasions in court society, but she was also painfully conscious of her appearance due to her scarring from smallpox. As I will elaborate later, Montagu was acutely aware of the need to maintain a balance between controlling how one was seen and appropriating the right to look, which also becomes manifested in her travel letters from Turkey.

While Montagu is primarily concerned with the visual nature of female consumption and its political significance, it is important to note that she does not limit her analysis of consumption to women, but extends it to both men and women, as her letters from Nuremberg demonstrate. As seen in the passage below, Montagu critiques the folly of overconsumption that can lead to extravagance and economic misery:

> When one considers impartially the merit of a rich suit of clothes in most places, the respect and the smiles of favour it procures, not to speak of the envy and the sighs that it occasions (which is very often the principal charm to the wearer) one is forced to confess that there is need of an uncommon understanding to resist the temptation of pleasing friends and mortifying rivals, and that it is natural to young people to fall into a folly, which betrays them to that want of money which is the source of a thousand basenesses. What numbers of men have begun the world with generous inclinations that have afterwards been the instruments of bringing misery on a whole people, led by a vain expense into debts that they could clear

> no other way but by the forfeit of their honour, and which they would never have contracted if the respect the many pay to habits was fixed by law, only to a particular colour or cut of plain cloth! (9)

Montagu's reflection on fashion and excessive spending situates consumption within a wider economic context while drawing attention to class implications. Although Montagu acknowledges the "temptations" of social emulation through dressing, she argues that this desire to surpass one's peers or imitate one's superiors can be disastrous. Social emulation is not only damaging to one's honor or finances, but also can endanger society. Sounding rather puritanical, Montagu urges people to abstain from luxuries and wear "plain cloth," apparently inculcating the recognizably middle-class values of modesty and frugality.

Montagu's negative view of lavish spending and inordinate appetite is also reflected in her stance on sumptuary laws. Upon seeing that sumptuary laws are in effect in Nuremberg, Montagu points out the benefits of sumptuary laws: "They have sumptuary laws in this town, which distinguish their rank by their dress and prevents that excess which ruins so many other cities and has a more agreeable effect to the eye of a stranger than our fashions" (9). Consistent with her disciplinary gaze towards female consumption, Montagu suggests that it is necessary to curb the "excess" -- which is often associated with femininity and regulate one's spending, underscoring the gender aspect of consumption. At the same time, Montagu's endorsement of sumptuary laws also reflects her class interests. Lamenting the fact that English sumptuary law had lapsed, Montagu declares: "I need not be shamed to own that I wish these laws were in

force in other parts of the world" (9). Montagu's biographer Grundy elaborates that Montagu supported sumptuary laws to "prevent many self-inflicted debt crises." [18] Yet she overlooks how Montagu's validation of sumptuary display is bound up with her aristocratic class status. Sumptuary laws, which forbade dressing above one's station, become important for Montagu because clothing is a visual marker of rank that can prevent "disorder" between classes. Most importantly, Montagu's comments suggest an underlying anxiety over rampant consumption activities that might result in blurring the hierarchies between classes, especially through middle-class women aping aristocratic fashion instead of observing decorous spending and sensible fashion. As an aristocrat, she may have been uneasy about the potential threat middle-class consumers posed to the existing ruling class. Her defense of sumptuary laws, in other words, can be seen as conservative and self-serving, as she believed that consumption should not level the traditional social structure through manipulation of fashion and conspicuous spending. Even when she observes how some ladies in Prague imitate the ladies at Vienna, she argues that the imitation is inferior to the original and condemns its derivativeness:

> I have already been visited by some of the most considerable ladies, whose relations I knew at Vienna. They are dressed after the fashions there, as people at Exeter imitate those of London; that is, their imitation is more excessive than the original and 'tis not easy to describe what extraordinary figures they make (31).

Just as Montagu perceives conspicuous consumption to be an important signifier of class, she also perceives how fashion can be crucial in the construction of national

[18] Grundy, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 121.

identity. She regularly makes unfavorable comparisons between the bizarre fashion of other countries and decorous English fashion, provided that the "excess of British fashions" (9) that causes "misery and debt" is kept in check. Hence, Montagu forms a judgment of Austrian fashion as "monstrous, and contrary to all reason and commonsense" (17), and French ladies as "nauseous [and] fantastically absurd in their dress" (161) while she extols the British as "dear pretty country women" (161).

Montagu addresses the same concerns in a periodical called "The Nonsense of Common–Sense" (1737-38), where she brings one of England's most basic economic problems, "the present pressure of national debt," to the attention of her female readers, "the Fair Sex." She urges female consumers to purchase English wool, instead of imported foreign goods, to promote Britain's wool manufacture. [19] Using the fashionable lady, dressed in expensive imported cloths, as her central image, Montagu criticizes the habit of mimicry that drives excessive consumption. By miming each other and the decadent rich, "Ladys" ultimately spread poverty -- "the poor [are] reduc'd now to low ebb by the Luxury and ill taste of the Rich, and the Fantastic mimicry of our Ladys, who are so accustomed to shiver in Silks" (106-7). In "The Nonsense of Common-Sense No.2," Montagu juxtaposes feminine interest and that of the nation, as she deplores how these fashionable ladies who buy foreign goods only care for their "imaginary Empire of Beauty" without any regard for worsening government debts or the decline of domestic industry. While Montagu complains about the vanity and self-indulgence of English ladies of fashion, she attributes these female deficiencies to "the Foibles to which

[19] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "The Nonsense of Common-Sense." Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy. eds. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 105-149.

Education has enclin'd them" (109), and thus attempts to instruct and reform women. As Sandra Sherman rightly points out, Montagu "appeals to women's latent rationality, offering an alternative to irrational attire that is good for the nation and for women."[20] By suggesting the significant impact women's dress codes can have on pragmatic economic and trade policies, Montagu's letters reiterate that fashion and taste are necessarily linked with "the common Welfare of the Nation" (109). In other words, Montagu's emphasis on the politics of female fashion suggests that women's consumption is not merely about female vanity but a means for women to participate in the domestic economy and national prosperity of England. By purchasing English rather than foreign goods, she suggests, women can participate in national politics and thus "find in the imaginary Empire of Beauty, a consolation for being excluded every part of Government" (109).

As seen in various comments made by Montagu linking women to consumption, Montagu makes it evident that female consumption is not limited to the private arena but clearly operates within a broader economic and political framework. As female consumers come to see themselves capable of choosing among a multitude of goods, female consumption is no longer simply equated with excessive appetite but can potentially redefine women's socioeconomic status. As Charlotte Sussman and Moira Ferguson have shown, female consumers' boycott of sugar and tea was an important act of political activism and challenged cultural constructions of unscrupulous female appetite. From women consumer's participation in abolition campaigns and in economic dynamics of colonial trade, female consumption becomes reimagined as a new form of

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[20] Sandra Sherman, "Instructing the "Empire of Beauty": Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Politics of Female Rationality." South Atlantic Review (60:1995), 4.

political agency- consumer power – that can have a direct effect on commerce and politics. [21] Likewise, Montagu calls into question the 'natural' link between women and commodities, and exposes how the process of female consumerism entails ideologically fraught notions about gender, revealing cultural anxieties about the female consumer's relationship to the vicissitudes of female appetite. As the opposition between the compliant Dutch wife and the disruptive lady of pleasure demonstrates, the female consumer is figured as an ambiguous presence: she is sometimes depicted as disciplined, at other times threatening to the social order. The female consumer's desires were perceived as potentially unruly and disruptive in the culture at large, yet indulged when they contributed to the commercial and political interests of its nation. In this connection, my next section will argue that Montagu's encounter in Turkey as a female consumer exemplifies both the dangers and the delights of an English shopper who comes to identify with Turkish foreign consumer goods and female consumption practices. While most scholarship on Montagu has largely ignored Montagu's travels through continental Europe and concentrated exclusively on her Turkish experience, it is crucial to recognize the continuity between these experiences and corresponding texts. Montagu's understanding of the paradoxical aspects of female consumption in Europe prior to visiting the Ottoman Empire allows her to reconceptualize the idea of consumption for her visual agency through her relationships with Turkish women and their fashionable

[21] Moira Ferguson, Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 182-83; Charlotte Sussman, Consuming Anxieties. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 129. Moira Ferguson argues that white women's participation in the sugar boycotts of the 1790s helped to advance a discourse of rights and helped to dismantle the blanket of objectification of Africans and African-Caribbean slaves. On the other end, postcolonial approaches like Charlotte Sussman argue that consumer behavior in England cannot be separated from the more complicated structures of the British Empire as a whole, for "women's political power---lay in their ability to regulate the domestic space, keeping its contents separate from the economic dynamics of colonial trade."

activities. As I turn to her account of her Turkish travels, I will demonstrate that Montagu's experience as an English female shopper in the eighteenth century enables an active, even transgressive agency in the marketplace, through her appropriation of the foreign goods and emancipatory consumption behaviors of aristocratic Turkish women. Furthermore, as consumerism becomes productive of female pleasure and freedom for Montagu, her consumer gaze ultimately participates in the commodification of non-European bodies to reconstitute her as an English subject and to affirm the importance of the English nation.

"New Scene of Pleasure": Conceptualizing the Female Consumer Gaze

Just as her letters foreground the paradoxical status of the female consumer in emerging consumer culture, Montagu's depiction of her encounter with material culture during her travels abroad reflects a similar tension, positioning her simultaneously as a desiring female subject and a passive object in the world of goods. Montagu's observations about female consumers in Europe emphasize the extent to which women were increasingly being placed under the disciplinary gaze of domestic ideology in the eighteenth century. Because of their proximity to commodities, female consumers were often reduced to objects on display, and denied their own viewing experiences. The difficulties women faced as viewing subjects are illustrated in Addison's The Spectator letters No. 10. Addressing a male audience of "Polite Imagination," Addison states that women, the "Fair ones," cannot help being positioned as desirable objects to be viewed by "male-Beholders" due to their love of "Trifles," and that their "principal Employment" consists of their Toilet and "Ornaments of Dress." Montagu, on the other

hand, challenges what Addison sees as women's liabilities by exploring the power and pleasures of looking entailed in women's consumption. I will argue that Montagu configures her travel experiences as a shopping expedition in which she seeks to gain experiences and fulfill desires through her elations with the commodities she encounters on her trip. That is, by deploying the shopper's gaze—in taking in foreign sights and commodities—Montagu is able to carve out forms of scopic desire that transcend the dominant patriarchal limitations imposed on women.

For a long time, traveling the Continent was primarily regarded as a male preserve, since the Grand Tour was initially viewed as rite of passage for men of leisure. It was only when travel became easier and safer that recreational traveling become more available for the leisured middle classes, a trend that culminated in the tourism of the later eighteenth century, when the consumption of culture abroad was becoming increasingly fashionable. Although women have always traveled, women travelers were less common than men in the eighteenth century and were mostly accompanied by their husbands and families. Because the circumstances, motivation, and significance of travel were different for women than for the 'stronger sex,' many prejudices stood in the way of women traveling and writing about their experiences. Traveling for women was seen as more problematic than for men because their departure from the domestic sphere demanded greater justification and management. As such, most female travelers were met with resistance, especially if they ventured forth unchaperoned, for they were seen as traversing the boundaries of sexual propriety. As Barbara Korte notes, women who

travelled in the eighteenth century were associated with the dangers of "sexualization, moral risk and uncontrolled freedom." [22]

Montagu's letters demonstrate a deep awareness of how women travelers have always been subject to a range of constraints that differ from those affecting the behavior and writing of men. From the start, Montagu emphasizes the gendered nature of travel, calling attention to herself as a female traveler who is undertaking a task which has been deemed inappropriate and even dangerous for a lady. In her letter to her friend Jane Smith, Montagu declares, "after all the dreadful fatigues you threatened me with, I am hitherto very well pleased with my journey," (4) and promptly eliminates any doubts that women may be incapable of handling the difficulties of traveling. Not only does she reassure her female readers from the beginning that she is capable of overcoming the strenuous physical nature of her travel, but she also self-consciously fashions herself as a bold, intrepid traveler in her attempt to overcome her anxiety about being dismissed as an inept female traveler. During her sea passage to Rotterdam, she even goes so far as to reverse gender hierarchies by suggesting that she may be more masculine than the male captain in terms of bravery and physical strength. Addressing her sister Lady Mar, Montagu mocks the idea of travel as a symbol of masculine power, thereby effectively emasculating the male captain: "I never saw a Man more frightened than the Captain. For my part I have been so lucky neither to suffer from fear or sea-sickness" (3).

While Montagu recognizes how traveling women can unsettle traditional assumptions about femininity, it is predominantly through her engagement with the material world and indulgence in visual pleasures that she challenges the patriarchal

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[22] Barbara Korte, English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations. (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000), 111.

constraints around her. For her, shopping is not just about physical appetite; it is about fantasy and desire. As Erin Mackie notes in her examination of the early eighteenth-century commodity culture, the "links between commerce and fantasy, pleasure and amusement were forged well before the nineteenth century" (53). Like a typical shopper who longs to purchase goods on display, Montagu wields the power of the consumer's gaze to incorporate the pleasurable experience provided by the very goods it beholds.

Hence, when Montagu arrives in Rotterdam, the sight of the commercial activities of the town offers a "new scene of pleasure," (3) just as the very sight of fashionable goods and "great variety of neat dresses" gives her "an additional pleasure in seeing the town" (4). Interestingly Montagu's pleasure derives not just from contemplating purchases, but from the act of looking itself. The act of browsing through lace and Indian goods is inextricably linked with the "same pleasure" of seeing "every agreeable novelty or pleasing prospect." Here, female consumption converges with spectatorship, as the transformation of merchandise into a desirable display enables the female consumer to become a spectator, rather than a spectacle. This experience of shopping as a visual activity is investigated by Rachel Bowlby in Just Looking, where she describes how "modern consumption is a matter not of basic items bought for definite needs, but of visual fascination and remarkable sights of things not found at home." [23] Bowlby's study is focused on nineteenth-century consumerism and identifies the emergence of the department store as the crucial setting for the beginning of modern consumer culture. The nineteenth century's modern department stores with their large expanses of display windows become the new location of consumption, offering women the pleasures of

[23] Rachel Bowlby, Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreisier, Gissing, and Zola. (New York: Methuen, 1985), 1.

escape from dull domesticity. [24] Montagu's pleasurable identification during her window-shopping suggests that shopping for goods was increasingly transformed from an everyday task to a leisure activity, from duty to pleasure. Montagu's emphasis on consumerism and the structure of looking suggests that this particular modern connection between looking, desiring and buying can be seen in place as early as the eighteenth century.

When Montagu arrives in Rotterdam, the entire town becomes a "celebrated fair," as she examines the spectacular goods on display. She remarks: "The town seems so full of people, with such busy faces, all in motion, that I can hardly fancy that it is not some celebrated fair, but I see it is every day the same." (3). Eighteenth-century places like fairs, bazaars, and marketplaces were among the few public spaces where female shoppers were able have somewhat unrestricted movement and relative freedom to browse at various sights. Observing the constant movement and fluidity of the space "all in motion," Montagu walks among the streets and exercises the privilege of looking, finding pleasure in the flow and exchange of the city. Similarly when she strolls through the oriental bazaar filled with exotic commodities in Turkey, her new-found mobility allows her to participate vicariously in the public realm of commerce and exchange, very much as the persona of Mr. Spectator (No. 69 of The Spectator) does at the Royal Exchange.

The experience of being a shopper provides Montagu an unprecedented freedom of movement in public space, allowing her to exercise a visual prerogative traditionally marked as masculine, namely, "the opportunity of making an observation" (11) in a

[24] See Walter Benjamin, Das Passagen-Werk, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 1034. He writes, "What was sold in the Passages were souvenirs [Andenken]. The [Andenken] was the form of the commodity in the Passage."

foreign environment. Emphasizing how she "take[s] pains to see everything," and is the "first foreigner ever to have had the pleasure" (132), Montagu is primarily concerned with establishing her position as a mobile, active observer of the non-English world. For Montagu, this desire to see is primarily motivated by curiosity: she seeks to satisfy "a very diligent curiosity" (29) and is ready to "see all that is curious in the town." In Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry, Barbara Benedict examines the relations between curiosity and empire, curiosity and travel, and, especially, curiosity and commerce. While curiosity was for the most part prized as a desire for knowledge, it was also seen as threatening. Curiosity was increasingly represented as an aggressive visual mode inseparable from imperialistic ambition that "arrogates the power to determine value and subordinates the observed as object." [25] Curiosity's desire for novelty encourages the acquisition not only of material objects but of observations, experiences, and the facts of immaterial culture. As collecting spread from the social elite to the newer moneyed classes, objects of curiosity inevitably became commodified in eighteenth century's new commercial culture.

This sort of consumerist curiosity has a profound influence on the way Montagu relates to the unfamiliar people and landscapes she encounters. For Montagu, Nigmegen's tower, rather than a fortification or a rampart, becomes a "pretty walk," a female territory for women like a tea table, where "people go to drink coffee, tea, etc., and enjoy one of the finest prospects in the world." (6). By aestheticizing and then idealizing the view, Montagu domesticates it, removing any potential threats from the martial scenery. More importantly, she objectifies what she beholds by making the

[25] Barbara Benedict, Curiosity: a Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 5.

foreign landscape more 'familiar' to her English consumers. Additionally, Montagu's desire of "seeing all that is curious in it" reifies the object of her vision by fetishizing the sheer extravagance of commodities. For instance, her admiration of the magnificence of the Catholic churches is equally driven by the allure of the sensory pleasures associated with looking at precious commodities as by her Protestant curiosity about the Catholic church. The Reformation opposed iconic and idolatrous Catholic beliefs and practices which invested inanimate objects with sacred meanings whereby the aura and fantasy of the spectacle became consumable commodities for worshippers. Although Montagu remains skeptical of the Catholic church's worship of relics and rituals, she cannot help being mysteriously attracted to the sight of the "profusion of pearls, diamonds and rubies bestowed on the adornment of rotten teeth, dirty rags, etc" as she gazes at the ostentatious display of Catholic relics. Sacred religious objects become mere ornaments for women when Montagu expresses desire to acquire curiosities for her own possession, admitting for example that she had "wickedness enough to covet St. Ursula's pearl necklace" (7).

Similarly, her elaborate description of an apartment in Vienna lists a catalogue of an incredible quantity of fine merchandise and riches brought together from all corners of the world.

> ....the hangings of the finest tapestry of Brussels, prodigious large looking glasses in silver frames, fine Japan tables, beds, chairs, canopies and window curtains of the richest Genoa damask or velvet, almost covered with gold lace or embroidery, the whole made gay by pictures, and vast jars of japan china, and almost in every room large lustres of rock crystal. (13)

These commodities of "good taste and magnificence" are the signs and products of global trade and mercantile expansionism. Because these fashionable objects – looking glasses, furniture, clothing, china – are inseparable from women's adornment, they also reflect the acquisitive nature of a specifically female sensibility that is inextricable from the enterprise of mercantile commerce. As Laura Brown has shown, the commercialized materiality of the accumulated objects adorning the female figure serves primarily as a synecdoche for mercantile capitalist accumulation as well as imperialist exploitation. In this regard, Montagu's emphasis on the connection between female consumption and mercantile capitalism suggests the complicity between the woman and trade in such a way that she becomes a proxy for male acquisition and commercial exploitation. As such, Montagu's admiration of fashionable items reveals the process of fetishizing goods in which the economic realities of commercial exchange and violence are mystified under fashionable appearances.

Just as Montagu's observations of Vienna are grounded in mercantile imperatives, so is her treatment of landscape situated in an economic context. When she admires the view across the Bosphorus, her depiction of the scenic view departs from traditional landscape aesthetics that distance the beholder from any economic and material concerns associated with the prospect. Elizabeth Bohls in her book Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics 1716-1818, demonstrates how the aesthetic experience of the landscape came to be understood as disinterested and virtually disembodied. [26] Similarly, when Addison declares in paper No. 411 of The Spectator in 1712 that "A Man of a

[26] Elizabeth Bohls, Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818 (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1995), 159.

Polite Imagination, is let into a great many Pleasures that the Vulgar are not capable of receiving," he makes it clear that the aesthetic subject is none other than a property-owning gentleman who can afford to be autonomous and detached from material needs or interests. Montagu, however, challenges such masculine modes of aesthetic contemplation in her admiration of the landscape when she beholds Constantinople across the Bosphorus. In contrast to conventional picturesque, which insists on the typically masculine viewer and his distance from the scene, Montagu takes on a powerful role as a female spectator, asserting her feminine aesthetic authority forcefully by unsettling the distancing of the practical and feminine as well as domesticating the landscape by reimagining it as a British interior:

> The Asian side is covered with fruit trees, villages and the most delightful landscapes in nature. On the European, stands Constantinople, situated on seven hills. The unequal heights make it seem as large again as it is (though one of the largest cities in the world), showing an agreeable mixture of gardens, pines and cypress-trees, palaces, mosques, and public buildings, raised one above another with as much beauty and appearance of symmetry as your ladyship ever saw in a cabinet adorned by the most skillful hands, jars showing themselves above jars mixed with canisters, babies and candlesticks. This is a very odd comparison; but it gives me an exact image of the thing. (127)

Montagu's treatment of "the most beautiful variety of prospects" at first glance follows the neoclassical ideal of moderation and harmony in its "agreeable mixture" in that the

perceiver frames what she sees into "much beauty and appearance of symmetry." As evident in the process in which the exterior world becomes subordinated to the domestic interior scene, Montagu's prospect succeeds in domesticating the unknown foreign landscape into a familiar "thing" for English consumers. The open prospect consisting of nature and monuments becomes contained in an enclosed domestic interior, just as the foreign world becomes encapsulated in small household objects commonly found in England. In this way, Montagu's prospect tames unfamiliar sights into objects that can be easily enjoyed and consumed by English readers. Here, any potential anxieties associated with "one of the largest cities" is removed from the landscape, just as "unequal" aspects become tamed into a scene of "beauty and appearance of symmetry."

She also profoundly revises the conventions of the picturesque by deliberately including domestic consumer objects –which were seen as inappropriate subjects for pictures— as seen in her catalogue of household items like jars, candlesticks, and cabinet. If William Gilpin's stricter picturesque is typically devoid of traces of human life to ensure the viewer's distance from the concrete particularity of the place, Montagu's "delightful landscape" deliberately transgresses this convention of detachment by adding details that reflect the material needs of its inhabitants. [27] By shifting the viewer's attention from an exterior landscape to interior domestic objects which represent human habitation, industry, or commerce, Montagu foregrounds human activities, especially the importance of the body's labor. In doing so, she emphasizes women's primary activities

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[27] William Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770, fifth ed. (London, 1800); Three Essays, (London, 1792). According to William Gilpin, the eighteenth-century tradition of viewing a picture relied on a model of detachment and disinterested contemplation on the part of the viewer. The eighteenth century picturesque viewing tradition is closely connected to a tradition of estate gardening that constructed its subject as masculine and property-owning, foregrounding the nexus of vision, power, and possession. Figures in picturesque landscape are typically peripheral, faceless, and grouped without individuality.

as consumers and emphasizes practical considerations, which were previously excluded from conventional landscape. By stressing both domestic and feminine elements in the her prospect, Montagu not only reveals the underlying assumptions that belie the supposed disinterestedness of landscape aesthetics but also situates visual pleasure in the realm of female consumption. In doing so, Montagu proves herself to be an active agent in appropriating male visual prerogatives for her own pleasure.

By taking account of these feminine domestic concerns, Montagu's subjective approach undermines masculine viewing assumptions. Many male travel writers of the eighteenth century modeled their writing on objective information and disinterested description where personal impression played a secondary role.[28] Joseph Addison's Remarks on Several Parts of Italy (1705), which Montagu had read, exemplifies the early dominant eighteenth-century tradition of describing in detail classical art and monuments as well as its trade, historical and political organizations. [29] In sharp contrast to such objective, detached modes of description, Montagu's mode of spectatorship is more subjective and empathetic. Instead of distancing herself from what she observes and portrays, Montagu is sometimes deeply affected by what she experiences. She reaches out with an empathy that is incompatible with the conventional disinterestedness of the aesthetic perceiver, as she expresses genuine concern for the conditions of the poor she encounters during her trip. For example, she expresses "remorse" when the poverty and unhappiness of the "oppressed people" of Serbia prompt "a new occasion for [her] compassion" (56).

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[28] Paul Fussell, Aboard: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 354.

[29] Korte, English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations,. 49.

Ultimately, Montagu's letters draw attention to the fact that travel writing is an act of representation that is mediated by the viewing subject. Travel can be a radically liberating experience that allows the viewer to explore the positionality that determines perception. Montagu's observations inevitably reflect and reinscribe her feminine concerns that partake in the emerging consumer culture and mercantile economy. Mary Astell was one of her contemporaries who noticed that Montagu's travel writing was radically distinct from accounts written by men. Astell notes:

> I confess I am malicious enough to desire that the World shou'd see to how much better purpose the LADYS Travel than their LORDS, and that whilst it is surfeited with Male Travels, all in the same Tone and stuft with the same Trifles, a Lady has the skill to strike out a New path and to embellish a worn-out Subject with variety of fresh and elegant Entertainment.... [30]

Astell insists that Montagu's writing is superior to men's accounts, which often suffered from predictable materials and dullness of style. But most significantly, Astell suggests that the greatness of Montagu's writing lies in her ability to produce a commodity that can arouse pleasure by incorporating new and unique female perspectives. Astell's comments parallel Montagu's attempt to carve out an alternative way of seeing, to provide "an account so different from what you have been entertained with by the common voyage writers, who are very fond of speaking of what they don't know" (85).

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[30] Quoted in Cynthia Lowenthal, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 93.

Through its articulation of feminine, domestic concerns, her consumerist gaze effectively subverts the transparent, disinterested or autonomous mode of masculine visual perception. Montagu's reinvention of spectatorship seeks the potential for power and self-expression through its manipulation of the discourses of consumerism, even as it reveals the conflict between woman's conventional role as a commodity and her potential for agency as a consumer.

"Pleasure in Looking": Feminist and Orientalist Gazing

Perhaps the single feature of Montagu's letters that has attracted the most attention is her description of Turkish women. Famous for her claim that Turkish women have more liberty than British women, her letters are well-known for her portrayal of the beauty and hospitality of the Turkish women she encountered. Privileged by her gender and status as the wife of the British Ambassador, she was one of the first European women writers who was allowed access into their private quarters, including harems and women's baths, while providing an unprecedented glimpse into intimate everyday rituals of Turkish women and their society. Here, I argue that many of Montagu's perceptions of Turkish women are framed through her consumer subjectivity, at the same time that her keen interest in consumer goods and fashion permeates her mode of observation during her journey through Europe and powerfully revises male viewing assumptions. If consumerism is about the pleasure and wish-fulfillment that go along with fantasies of shopping, Montagu's experience in Turkey allows her to conceive and mobilize a potentially subversive desire to challenge traditional patriarchal assumptions about femininity.

Using her power as an agent in the consumer environment, Montagu can be seen as a prototype of a female consumer who goes out shopping for different experiences and tries on a variety of identities without obligation. Most notably, in her masquerade in Turkish dress, she utilizes a commodity to create a transgressive space where she can identify across ethnic and cultural divides while also imagining an alternative space of female freedom. If her letters foreground the pleasures and mobile possibilities of an identity forged through commodities and consumer practices, they also reveal underlying anxieties about undisciplined female appetite for 'other' commodities and foreign experiences. For while her identification with Ottoman women and their consumer practices allows her to indulge in feminine desires that subvert English patriarchy, she is simultaneously threatened by the very excess of those desires and her letters are increasingly characterized by efforts to curb and regulate her own vicarious consumption of 'other' subjectivities. Despite her admiration of Turkish women and their society, Montagu distances herself from the objects of her consumption and ultimately ends up commodifying Turkish women as consumable images for a British domestic audience. Although she goes farther than other male travel writers in counteracting traditional orientalist stereotypes, I will argue nevertheless that Montagu's observations partake of an objectifying consumerist gaze that finally reaffirms her English identity.

Upon arriving in Adrianople, "the first European seat of the Turkish empire," Montagu becomes acutely conscious of the sense of novelty in her encounter with Turkish culture, as she exclaims excitedly : "I am now got into a new world, where everything I see appears to me a change of scene" (57). The sight of the uncommon and the unfamiliar brings Montagu visual pleasure, and this pleasure in visual novelty helps to

characterize her as a female consumer whose fascination with variety creates a desire for more consumption of the latest fashion. Although Montagu views Turkey as totally distinct from Europe, with its strange and "odd" "Eastern manners," her preoccupations about consumerism inform and frame her depictions of both cultures. Her letters written in Turkey contain elaborate and detailed accounts of Turkish female culture ranging from women's beauty, hair, and dress to their consumer practices.

Much as Montagu's shopping experiences allowed her to roam the streets of Vienna on her own, Montagu's Turkish encounter is characterized by the itinerant looking facilitated by consumerism. Even before she reports on her visit to the women's baths in Adrianople, her detailed description of her Turkish coach dramatizes how commodities help to construct a mobile spectatorship. The Turkish coach decorated with "scarlet cloth, lined with silk, and very often richly embroidered and fringed" is a luxurious commodity, but serves a "more convenient" purpose for Montagu as a consumer. It allows her to look out and see the world while remaining entirely concealed: "it entirely hides the persons in them, but may be thrown back at pleasure, and thus permits the ladies to peep through the lattices" (58). Like Montagu's exhilarating experience of walking "incognito" in Rotterdam, her Turkish coach allows her freedom to gaze outside anonymously and to indulge in pleasures associated with female viewing.

By the same token, Montagu's admiration of the Turkish dress and its ferace attests to her interest in the concealment that allows women freedom to venture into the public realm. Fascinated by the liberating sense of freedom offered by the Turkish veil, Montagu takes advantage of the anonymity provided by Turkish women's clothing for a masked performance of her own that grants her visual agency. She puts on the "Turkish

veil" and masquerades as a Turkish woman to explore and to walk around the city without being perceived as a foreign traveler. In one sense, Montagu becomes a prototype of a female flaneur who is able to move with ease around the urban space with increased mobility and is endowed with an empowered gaze. Like the all-seeing Mr. Spectator, who surveys London from his privileged position as an invisible "Looker-on," (No 1), Montagu roams freely disguised in her Turkish habit and offers vivid depictions of the new landscape, mosques, gardens, palaces, furnishings, and fashions she encounters, while demonstrating her firsthand knowledge of Turkish politics, religion, culture, and literature.

What seems to interest Montagu particularly, however, is the commercial aspect of Turkish culture, which offers a new visual spectacle, and she devotes an extensive part of the letter to describing the bazaar of Constantinople in detail. Like Mr. Spectator, who claimed that "There is no Place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange," Montagu is captivated in the Turkish marketplace by the sight of a vast array of magnificent merchandise from around the world, all arranged in a "wonderfully neat" manner:

> The exchanges are all noble buildings, full of fine alleys, the greatest part supported with pillars, and kept wonderfully neat. Every trade has their distinct alley, the merchandise disposed in the same order as in the New Exchange at London. The Bedesten, or jewellers' quarter shows so much riches, such a vast quantity of diamonds and all kind of precious stones, that they dazzle the sight. The embroiders' is also very glittering, and

people walk here as much for diversion as business. The markets are most of them better than in any other part of the world (130).[31]

As seen in her celebratory depiction of the Turkish bazaar and its commerce, Montagu's sheer delight at the sight of the proliferation of commodities in the marketplace emphasizes how shopping allowed not only consumer access to goods but also the opportunity to look with pleasure. Montagu clearly enjoys eye-shopping as she engages in speculative consumption in "three hundred and sixty-five shops, furnished with all sorts of rich goods, exposed to sale in the same manner as at the New Exchange in London" (92). Just as Montagu enjoys looking without purchasing, being surrounded by consumer goods can be seen as part of the pleasure of consuming, for one can enjoy a display of merchandise, but not necessarily buy. Montagu's visual consumption, like window-shopping, reveals the extent to which female consumers can formulate desires and fantasies of their own from visual acquisition of goods while disrupting the masculine logic of capitalist exchange which reduces women to objects of male desire in the visual field.

Because Montagu's use of Turkish clothing leads to increased mobility and visual authority, she observes that the ferace used by the Turkish women allows Turkish women to enjoy independence and freedom. As evident in Montagu's remark that "[t]his perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery" (43), the disguise of the veil allows them to confound categories of

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[31] The New Exchange took over business from the Royal Exchange after the fire of 1666. It contained two long and double galleries, with hundreds of shops distributed in several rows, from very rich shops of drapers and mercers filled with goods of every kind, to products of the most beautiful description.

difference so that "there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave and 'tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her...." (71). Of course, Montagu's reference to masquerade suggests the transgressive aspect of masquerade, a popular form of public entertainment in eighteenth-century Britain. By deflecting the male gaze, veiling allows women to enjoy greater sexual freedom and to undermine patriarchal restraints. Montagu is chiefly interested in the specific ways in which the consumption of fashion enabled women visual agency and access to the public realm. She proceeds to discuss the freedom of Turkish women:

> Turkish Ladies, who are (perhaps), freer than any ladies in the universe...are the only women to live a life of uninterrupted pleasure, exempt from cares, their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing or the agreeable amusement of spending money and inventing new fashions. A husband would be thought mad that exacted any degree of economy from his wife, whose expenses are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get money and hers to spend it, and this noble prerogative extends itself to the very meanest of the sex. (134)

Here, Montagu suggests that fashion, leisure, and consumption can be harnessed as sites of female empowerment, as she portrays the Turkish woman as an ideal consumer, whose "spending money and inventing new fashions" become transformed into a positive virtue, a "noble prerogative." Turkish women possess greater autonomy than British women over their consumption; "expenses are no way limited but by her own

fancy," without her husband's control. Moreover, Montagu implies that practices often viewed in England as frivolous feminine diversions, such as the "agreeable amusement of spending money and inventing new fashions," can be effectively deployed for women's own advantage.

Furthermore, Montagu comments on how shopping allows Turkish women a convenient alibi for discreet affairs without the "resentment of their husbands":

> The perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery. The most usual method of intrigue is to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady at a Jew's shop, which are as notoriously convenient as our Indian houses, and yet, even those that don't make use of them do not scruple to go to buy pennyworths and tumble over rich goods, which are chiefly to be found amongst that sort of people. (71)

In the passage above, Montagu points out how the "Jew's shop" filled with "rich goods" provides opportunities for Turkish women to enjoy sexual liberties beyond the bounds of patriarchal constraint, just as English women were able to engage in illicit encounters in luxury shopping emporia such as Indian Houses, which offered the exotic pleasure of imported oriental goods to eager consumers. If shopping allowed women to indulge their desires for material goods, it simultaneously enabled them to explore and pursue sexual agency in the gratification of other forms of desire. According to Jennifer Jones, shopping in the eighteenth century can be seen as a form of "male entertainment in which

the line between the shopping for licit pleasures of luxury consumption and the illicit pleasures involved in the sexual consumption of women was often blurred." By foregrounding the proximity of female desires to the world of consumer goods, Montagu's letters suggest that women, just as men, were able to take advantage of these prerogatives of consumption by frequenting "shops [that] spatially linked licit and illicit pleasures" to formulate and gratify their own desires outside the constraints of patriarchal authority. [32]

Turkish Bath Letters: Exploring Female Visual Pleasure

Another liberatory aspect of female consumption is exemplified in Montagu's oft-cited depiction of the women's bagnio in Turkey. Many scholars have repeatedly discussed Montagu's well-known account of her visit to a Turkish bath in the context of interlocking discourses of gender and orientalism. Montagu has been praised as one of the earliest travel writers to challenge the common representation of Turkish woman as oppressed and licentious by presenting them as free and civilized in that scene. Teresa Heffernan views Montagu as a progressive feminist figure who promotes cross-cultural understanding by "challenging... voyeuristic tales about Turkish women and their enslavement" (207). Similarly Lisa Lowe proposes that "Montagu's interventions in the orientalist tradition are primarily articulated in a feminist rhetoric" (49), citing especially Montagu's rhetoric of identification with Turkish women's culture. While these critics read Montagu as a progressive feminist figure for her "reciprocal or dialogic" relationship with another culture, critics working within the post-colonial paradigm debate the

[32] Jennifer Jones, "Coquettes and Grisettes" Victoria de Grazia, ed., The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 32.

question of Montagu's complicity with western European imperialism in the bath scene. Yegenoglu, for instance, has sharply criticized Montagu's positive images of Turkish women as merely repeating and reproducing "all the existing tropes and concerns that characterize the Orientalist/phallocentric discourses." [33] Aravamudan also insists that Montagu's cultural identity, though unsettled, is not reversed by foregrounding her return to "cultural reaggregation" after the gesture of levantization exemplified by her partial identification with aristocratic Turkish women. [34]

While these critics have not paid much attention to various aspects of female consumerism in the scene, except with respect to Montagu's strategic uses of clothing, my reading of the letters focuses on Montagu's female consumerist gaze to demonstrate the crucial role of female consumption within the workings of the intertwined discourses of feminism and orientalism. Female consumerism becomes the frame through which Montagu views the cross-cultural encounter itself in her effort to experiment with and reformulate different subjectivities and modes of spectatorship. Although Montagu's consumerist gaze in the Turkish bath letters serves feminist liberatory ends, it also highlights her participation in the project of British mercantile imperialism. Her objectifying consumerist gaze ultimately helps to reaffirm her British identity and thus implicates her in the larger aims of orientalism, particularly in its privileging of the western "I" in representing and knowing the Orient.

Montagu's bath house scene exemplifies the problematic of female spectatorship in which woman becomes both the subject and the object of looking. When Montagu surveys the bodies of Turkish women in the bathhouse, she finds herself too close to the

[33] Yegenoglu, Colonial Fantasies, 93.

[34] Aravamudan, Tropicopolitans, 184.

object of her vision. Montagu's female consumerist gaze raises issues important to feminist film criticism, which has struggled with the problem of female spectatorship. Heavily influenced by the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan, feminist investigations of Hollywood film have claimed that spectatorship is fundamentally masculinized regardless of the actual sex of the person watching the film. Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) has emphasized the masculine system of looking, one which inevitably makes the woman a passive object of the aggressive male look. Mary Ann Doane also points out that female spectatorship is especially difficult because of the woman's proximity to the image itself. [35] When a woman looks, she is typically given an objectified image of a woman to look at. Because the female spectator lacks the distance from what she sees, she often becomes the image itself rather than the viewer. Likewise, although Montagu's affinity with Turkish women in the bathhouse puts her at risk of becoming the spectacle she her views, she ultimately manipulates her proximity to the world of commodities so as to unsettle the male gaze. As I will elaborate next, Montagu's bathhouse letters suggest the possibility of constructing a female spectator who explores transgressive pleasure outside the heterosexual economy of men looking at women.

Montagu's depiction of the bathhouse scene breaks with the scopophilic masculine gaze by highlighting the ways in which female consumption may be deployed to articulate desire and pleasure for women. Reversing the conventional patriarchal order in which the woman is only an object, Montagu presents the Turkish women in the bathhouse as powerful subjects of desire. "Without any distinction of rank by their

[35] Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator." Feminist Film Theory. ed. Sue Thornham. (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

dress," the naked Turkish women form a female community where they can engage in many forms of cultural consumption and fashionable activity, while enjoying freedom from patriarchal authority. Turkish women in the bathhouse scene are emblematic of how women's consumption and leisure can be crucial in establishing a female domain, a "feminotopia," or "idealized world of female autonomy, empowerment, and pleasure." [36] For Montagu, the liberty and independence of Turkish women is inextricable from their delight in the material of commodities they consume.

By comparing the Turkish bathhouse to a "women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented etc," Montagu makes a radical claim for an exclusively female space where women can actively socialize and engage in conversations as freely as men assembled in London coffeehouses for the exchange of ideas. Coffee was a popular foreign luxury in the eighteenth century, and coffee consumption was bound up with sociability, free conversation, and urban civility. Coffeehouses in the eighteenth century offered "a radically new kind of social space, at once free from the 'grotesque bodies' of the alehouse and yet (initially at least) democratically accessible to all kind of men---though not, significantly, to women." [37] If coffeehouses were often associated with the exclusively male domain in which men promoted sociability through their ideal of polite conversation and egalitarian dialogues, Montagu insists that women's consumption of coffee can also be a scene of conversational, dialogic sociability for women. The inclusive all-women community becomes an act for women to freely communicate, socialize, and engage in productive

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[36] Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. (London: Routledge, 1992), 167; Felicity A. Nussbaum, Torrid Zones. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ Press, 1995), 139.

[37] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 96.

leisure activities wholly devoted to their pleasure. Similarly, the nudity of the women lends itself to an egalitarian atmosphere where everyone is civil and tolerant of others regardless of fashion. Turkish women possess, as Montagu points out, "all the obliging civility possible" without "surprise or impertinent curiosity" (58) with "none of those disdainful smiles or satirical whispers that never fail in our assemblies when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in fashion."

Montagu's appreciation for the civility and excellence of Turkish women in manners and etiquette evidently leads to Turkish women's possession of a degree of freedom not available to Western women, as she comments: "Tis very easy to see [the Turkish women] have more Liberty than we have." Critics generally acknowledge that Montagu's account of Turkish women's freedom challenges much travel writing by men, such as the familiar stories by Dumont and Aaron Hill about the oppressed, veiled Turkish women and their enslavement in harems that satisfied the western reader's desire for tales of an'exotic' east while stereotyping the orient as barbaric, irrational, and in need of rescue by civilized and rational westerners. While these oriental tales enabled the typical English reader to satisfy his "fantasies of penetration and domination" [38] by labeling the Ottoman empire as uncivilized and corrupt, Montagu's reappraisal of Turkish women and their culture primarily stems from her understanding of and identification with their female consumer practices. Turkish women's consumption reveals them as refined and autonomous individuals who can actively fulfill their desires, overturning earlier travel writers' clichés about Turkish women as exotic sexual objects.

[38] Teresa Hefferman, "Feminism against the East/West Divide: Lady Mary's Turkish Embassy Letters." Eighteenth-Century Studies. (33: 1999-2000), 205.

Just as consumption becomes profoundly empowering for Turkish women, so the consumption of Turkish culture becomes a source of power and pleasure for Montagu. If Montagu enjoys increased freedom in public by her deployment of Turkish clothing and carriage, she also finds it liberating to survey Turkish women. Montagu's admiration of Turkish women in the bathhouse has often been read in the context of homoeroticism by critics. Aravamudan, for instance, has called attention to the "lesbian possibilities" despite Montagu's attempts at "ladylike disavowal." (179). In his study of sapphism and Montagu, John Beynon also argues that Montagu's encounter with the women of the Levant develops an erotics of female vision that challenged both masculine norms of female sexuality and orientalist assumptions about Islamic culture. These readings are helpful in accounting for Montagu's gaze and her sapphic pleasure, yet they fail to consider that Montagu's delight in looking at Turkish women is informed by her consumer subjectivity formed in and through the new world of consumerism she encounters in her journey overseas. By demonstrating that Montagu's pleasures are formed within the marketplace rather than outside of it, my reading invites us to view Montagu less as an aristocratic intellectual than as a skillful female observer who self-consciously deploys commercial discourses to renegotiate rigid gender boundaries. Like a shopper who is fascinated by the sight of exotic goods, Montagu finds pleasure in observing foreign cultural practices which allow her to explore fantasies and desires that depart from normative models of British femininity. Montagu's consumption of idealized images of Turkish womanhood not only acknowledges the legitimacy of female scopic agency but also constitutes her as a powerful desiring subject who can imagine freedom that challenges the prescriptions of British gender norms.

As such, Montagu's heightened admiration of Ottoman women's consumption activities enables her to explore transgressive pleasures and try on alternative experiences unavailable to British women, recapitulating the ways female consumers were able to indulge in unfettered desires concomitant with the experience of shopping for exotic commodities. Nonetheless, Montagu's letters do not offer an unequivocal vision of a female utopia, as Montagu is preoccupied with keeping those desires for transgressive consumption at bay, perhaps for fear of turning into the very objectified spectacle with which she identifies. If these tensions result in part from the female viewers' close identification with the object of her gaze, Montagu's identification with the Turkish women leads to a reminder of her status as a spectacle. Even if she entertains fantasies of alternative sexual desires through her identification with the Turkish women, she remains anxious about how she might appear to English readers. Concerned that she might be perceived as sexually immoral, Montagu preemptively disavows eroticism early in the bathhouse letter, remarking that "there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst" the women she encounters. She also insists on her modesty in recounting that she refused to remove her English stays, and she appears to be submissive to her husband's authority. "I was at last forced to open my skirt, and show them my stays, which satisfied them very well, for I saw that they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband" (59-60).

Nevertheless, Montagu's effort to maintain a proper British femininity can be seen as part of a conscious masquerade. By intentionally producing herself as a spectacle that enacts a submissive female role, she exploits her specular status for her own

subversive ends. In fact, despite her protestations about the sexual impropriety of the Turkish bathhouse, Montagu remains quite playful about the homoerotics of the baths, especially when she confesses the "wickedness" of her thoughts about the scene. Montagu's refusal to undress farther emphasizes her sexuality by titillating readers with a display of her corseted body. Throughout her intentional production of a spectacle that "satisfie[s]" the desires of her Turkish hosts and English readers at the same, she maintains her guise as a proper English lady while simultaneously offering radical hints of female desire, authority, and emancipation. In this regard, Montagu can be seen as a strategic shopper whose consumer gaze enables her to exercise powerful agency while she successfully manipulates her status as a spectacle to gratify her desires.

If Montagu's delight in seeing the naked women of the Turkish bathhouse is inflected by self-conscious reflections on her own status as an observer, Montagu is also interested in destabilizing the male gaze in order to appropriate the look for her own pleasure. Upon Montagu's entrance into the bathhouse, her frank admiration of the physical beauty of the Turkish women, especially her anatomizing perception of their "[fine] skins and most delicate shapes" and their naked, reclining postures, appears to replicate the masculine voyeuristic gaze that panders to male desire by reducing women as beautiful sexual objects. When Montagu admits that she "had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervase could have been there invisible," she is not merely appropriating a masculine voyeuristic position but calling attention to gendered power relations of aesthetic experience within the eighteenth century, where the privileges of looking belonged to male artists while women were often reduced to objectified spectacles. Also, women did not have the privilege of subjecting other women to an

erotic gaze. Her invocation of Mr. Gervase paradoxically foregrounds her status as a mere art object, for Mr. Gervase whom she invites to observe the Turkish women is the very male artist who had painted her. Montagu's ambiguous position as both the spectator and the spectacle within this scopic economy leads her to reject the masculine paradigm of aesthetic contemplation altogether. When Montagu speculates, "I fancy it would have very much improved his art to see so many fine women naked, in different postures..." (59), she radically points out the deficiency of his artistry. She then proceeds to exclude Gervase and the masculine aesthetic tradition from the scene, warning that "'tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places" (60). While Jill Campbell maintains that Montagu can only take up a position as a male gazer and "fantasizes herself replaced in the baths by an invisible male artist," [39] it seems that Montagu only invokes his presence in order to critique and to discredit the model of the male gaze altogether.

Another way that Montagu rejects this model of the "invisible" male gaze is by disrupting its mastery of the field of vision. The reified look operates very much like the camera obscura, which Jonathan Crary has identified as the paradigmatic structure for scopic relations in this period. The model of the camera obscura constructs the observer as the embodiment of an autonomous, disinterested gaze that neatly separates from "the physical body of the observer, to decorporealize vision." [40] Rather than assuming a framing vision with a disembodied authority, Montagu disrupts the distance between the

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[39] Jill Campbell, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Historical Machinery of Female Identity." History, Gender and Eighteenth-Century Literature, ed. Beth Fowkes Tobin. (Athens: Georgia University Press 1994), 80.

[40] Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteeth Century. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 39.

framed scene and the perceiver by intentionally becoming a spectacle herself, foregrounding her English attire in sharp contrast to the naked Turkish women. Instead of viewing through the dominant frame belonging to the privileged male artist, she sees herself through the eyes of the women she describes, remaining conscious of the fact that she appears just as foreign to the Turkish women as they appear to her: "I was in my traveling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them" (58). The scene in which Montagu refuses to undress hints at the status of English women's oppression under British patriarchy, by recounting that the Turkish women believe that "she was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband" (60). Nonetheless, her refusal to undress and her deliberate display of "stays" can be attributed to her unconscious desire to maintain her English femininity intact from the potential leveling effect of the Turkish baths. If her appropriation of the Turkish dress enables her to experience the possibilities of "becoming" (69) or self-fashioning by trying on a Turkish identity temporarily, her deployment of English clothing functions to reassert her Englishness. As Aravamudan correctly observes, Montagu's "cautious celebration of heterogeneity is tempered by a fear of the loss of an Englishness that she still prioritizes as prima inter pares" (187). By keeping herself partially dressed, she strategically keeps her opacity and refuses to allow others to read "her beauty" or "defects." [41] Rather than being a transparent object to be seen or a text to be read, Montagu carefully manipulates the terms of how she is observed and controls the terms of her own representation.

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[41] Marcia Pointon, Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 152-54. Marcia Pointon points out that because Montagu had a severely disfigured face by smallpox in 1715, the notion of an opaque society in which "the face would be hardly observed" would have personal relevance to Montagu herself.

But despite Montagu's dismantling of the male gaze through her rejection of Mr. Gervase, her assumption of visual authority inevitably ends up reproducing the dominant masculine structure of the western gazing eye/I. Her depiction of the Turkish women's "shiningly white" skin fetishizes the 'whiteness' of their skin color; it also shows how her praise of their physical beauty is dictated by standards of European taste. Even when Montagu valorizes Fatima's beauty as superior to that of Europeans, asserting that "... our most celebrated English beauties would vanish near her" (81), it is the norm of European beauty that is being invoked for comparison. Additionally, Turkish women become located in the distant past within the world of European classical tradition, as they are likened to Milton's Eve or to goddesses drawn by Guido and Titian. In this way, Montagu's treatment of Turkish women participates in what Johannes Fabian calls a "radical contemporaneity" whereby Western travelers place alien cultures in the distant past of their own culture's history and deny the contemporaneity of those cultures. [42] Similarly when Montagu foregrounds the commonalities between Turkish and English women, claiming that Turkish women's "morality or good conduct... 'tis as 'tis with you" (71), this "rhetoric of similitude" does not merely function as a "means of intervening in the differentiating rhetoric of orientalism" [43] as Lowe argues, but functions as an appropriative gesture where observations of cultural otherness are always registered and defined in one's own cultural terms. As Meyda Yegenoglu asserts, Montagu's deployment of the positive images of Turkish women stems from "its power to construct the very object it speaks about and from its power to produce a regime of truth about the

[42] Johannes Fabian, Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 95.

[43] Lowe, Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms, 51.

other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it." [44]

As Montagu draws near the end of her stay in Turkey, she relies on such a rhetoric of similitude and difference to consolidate her position of power as an English observer. Although she insists that "the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us believe" (72), suggesting her Enlightenment belief in constant and universal principles of human nature, she ends her letter with an assertion of nationalistic identity that valorizes Englishness above other national identities. In sharp contrast to the "most beautiful prospects in Europe and Asia" (140), African Tunis becomes a "very disagreeable prospect to the eye" filled with monstrous images of mixed "mulatooes" (149) and the "most frightful creatures that can appear in a human figure," creatures marked by "natural deformity." Similarly, the Tunisian women are denigrated as having the appearance of "baboons": 'tis hard to fancy them a distinct face, and I could not help thinking here had been some ancient alliances between them" (151). This ultimately leads to her celebration and validation of an English identity that appropriates the powerful discourse of the prospect in surveying the non-European landscape: "And after having seen part of Asia and Africa and almost made the tour of Europe, I think the honest English squire more happy" (165). Crossing Dover, she ends up valorizing British national identity, as she comments to Abbe Conte that "I cannot help looking with partial eyes on my native land" (164), and celebrates the idyllic life of her home country: "[i]n short, there is no perfect enjoyment of this life out of Old England" (165).

Montagu's reaffirmation of her Englishness suggests that the project of representing the 'other' woman is inseparable from the mechanism of an objectifying

[44] Yegenoglu, Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism, 90.

gaze that is driven by the desire to know her. As Homi Bhabha insists, the visual or scopic drive implicit in all representation is more evident in the field of colonial power: "in order to conceive of the colonial subject as the effect of power that is productive... one has to see the surveillance of colonial power functioning in relation to the regime of the scopic drive." [45] Although Montagu strives to correct the accounts of men who "can only speak of the outside" (85), her consumerist gaze, which attempts to provide an accurate portrayal of Turkish women's lives and to reveal what has been forbidden to western men, ultimately participates in a larger orientalist project buttressed by a Western scopic regime. While Montagu's strategic deployment of fashionable commodities at times explores alternative cultural identities and sexually liberating possibilities, it ends up serving her interests as an English female consumer for the benefit of the English nation.

Montagu's cross-cultural experience in Turkey allows her to explore and celebrate a utopian vision of female power while it simultaneously represents a 'safe' form of display whose unruly elements are domesticated and appropriated in validation of British identity. Yet Montagu's letters simultaneously suggest that her desires for the dangerously seductive 'other' may destabilize her English self, just as she is defined by a foreign world of consumer goods and practices. The threat of the "daily decay" of her English identity leads Montagu to reassert herself as an English consumer preoccupied with transforming Turkish culture into commodified images for the pleasure of English readers. As Ruth Yeazell has documented, it is known that Montagu's descriptions of the Turkish women's baths became the basis for Ingres's painting *Le Bain Turc* (1862), whose exotic images of oriental women became profitable commodities for the popular

[45] Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," Screen 24/6 (December 1983).

consumption of western orientalist consumers. [46] Even as she negotiates between the tensions of being both spectacle and spectator in the Turkish bathhouse episode, Montagu's newly found visual authority underscores the status of Turkish women as a commodified spectacle for the consumption of European viewers.

Montagu recognizes, moreover, that the primary aim of a traveler's account is to "entertain [her reader's] curiosity" even as she professes to tell "a plain truth" that does not "attempt to entertain ... with as many prodigies as other travelers use to divert their readers with" (41). Her letters thus indicate the contradictory position she is placed in:

> We travelers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us we are dull and we have observed nothing. If we tell anything new, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic, not allowing for the difference of ranks, which afford difference of company, more curiosity, or the changes of customs that happen every twenty year in every country (118).

Although she is careful to distinguish her travel account from those of others who have exaggerated and perpetrated lies about "anthropophagi and men whose heads grow below their shoulders" (44), Montagu is anxious that her account might not measure up to reader's expectations. She is therefore careful not to be tedious for fear that she might write "a whole quire of the dullest stuff that was ever read, or printed without being read" (26). She is concerned that her "Letter out of Turkey that has nothing extraordinary in it

[46] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, "Public Baths and Private Harems: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Origins of Ingres's Bain Turc." Yale Journal of Criticism (7: 1994), 111-38, 122.

would be as great a Disappointment as my visitors will receive at London if I return thither without any rarities to show them" (82). Thus even as Montagu denounces male travelers who have been motivated by commercial profit to exaggerate and falsify their travel accounts, her "enquiries and observations" (83) cannot help being embedded in the same rhetoric of commerce that privileges novelty: "Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and religion of these people, this part of the world being seldom visited by merchants, who mind little but their own affairs, or travelers who make too short a stay to be able to report anything exactly of their own knowledge." (61) Similarly, when she vehemently objects to other male travelers like Hill, Rycault, or Dumont, who write with "equal ignorance and confidence" and are "so far removed from Truth and so full of Absurdities" in order to provide an alternative "account of the women" (104), she relies on the novelty and uniqueness of her experience to legitimize her rendition: "I have now, madam, passed a journey that has not been undertaken by any Christian since the time of the Greek emperors" (55).

Montagu's commodification of the non-western world as both desirable and potentially dangerous for domestic English consumers ultimately suggests that her travel is implicated in the larger discourses of orientalism. As Aravamudan points out, Montagu's travel abroad provides a "symbolic inoculation" against the temptation of cultural passing by reidentifying with Englishness; "travel narrative, after flirting with cultural crossover, becomes a complicated acknowledgement of the superiority of the return home," [47] in much the same way that the technique of inoculation, which she was instrumental in bringing to England, protects the body against disease through exposure to a weaker version of it. Yet Aravmudan suggests that Montagu's "return" to her

[47] Srinivas Aravamudan, Tropicopolitans. (Durham, Duke University Press, 1999), 184.

English self is bound up with her affinities for "classicism and cultural antiquarianism," [48] privileging her aristocratic affiliations rather than her status as a consumer governed by bourgeois taste and an emphasis on practicality and modesty in contrast to aristocratic excess and personal ostentation. Just as Montagu had praised female shoppers in continental Europe for their pragmatic, self-disciplined consumer behaviors, Montagu values goods for their utility. Thus, inoculation, for Montagu, consists of bringing a "useful invention into fashion in England" for English consumers. For example, she considers importing stoves from Hanover for the benefit of the English people: "I am surprised we do not practice in England so useful an invention." (38).

In short, in spite of her attempts to demystify and to instruct her readers about foreign culture and its scenes, Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters underscore the extent to which travel writing is bound up with consumerism, offering wondrous and novel impressions and accounts that themselves become cultural objects to be consumed. By addressing her letters to various personages, Montagu capitalizes on the sense of novelty her travel account promises and affords her readership a vicarious role in the appreciation and consumption of her cultural product. As seen in Montagu's emphasis on the 'pleasure' of seeing, it is the pleasure of novelty that motivates the production and consumption of travel writing, just as Montagu's letters suggest the process by which the eighteenth century's curiosity about foreign lands and exotic objects incites European consumers to desire and consume more imported goods. Despite Montagu's well-intentioned depictions of Turkish women and Turkish culture, her female emancipatory vision is inevitably caught up in and empowered by an English consumerist gaze that produces and commodifies its knowledge about the alien other for its own interests. By

[48] Aravamudan, 187.

recognizing how Montagu's consumerist gaze accommodates both radical female desires and the "charm of novelty" (29), my discussion provides a reassessment of Montagu as a skillful spectator who consciously deployed commercial and mercantile discourses to subvert patriarchal viewing assumptions and establish the legitimacy of women's scopic desires in marketplace.

CHAPTER 2

THE PLEASURES AND PERILS OF FEMALE CONSUMPTION IN DANIEL DEFOE'S ROXANA

With the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694 and the increase of the National Debt, early eighteenth-century British society witnessed the explosive growth of a credit-market economy. The development of credit relations from the seventeenth century onward entailed a new speculative sector that included the stock market, promissory notes, paper notes from countless government funds and the stock exchange. These unprecedented transformations in the financial economy brought radical shifts to sociopolitical relations and individual consciousness. Under the influence of modern finance and rapid capitalization, participation in exchange, rather than the possession of real property, became the foundation of economic advancement. [1] Wealth was fundamentally changed from a concrete material to a mobile, exchangeable form of capital. Amidst Britain's struggle with the National Debt, liquidity crises, foreign wars, international markets and bankruptcies, the pervasiveness of credit and debt brought forth a highly speculative and volatile economy with constant fears of uncertainty on the part of early eighteenth-century contemporaries.

Perhaps no writer of the early eighteenth century was more prolific in the production of evolving discourses of capitalism than Daniel Defoe. Generally considered the preeminent economic, political, and social commentator of the early part of the century, Defoe vigorously expressed his views on the extraordinary development of English commerce and finance in his voluminous writings. In his political pamphlets and

[1] J. G. A. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 103-124.

periodicals – including A True State of Publik Credit (1721), The Complete English Tradesman (1726), A Plan of the English Commerce (1728) and The Review (1709), Defoe promoted the wonders of trade and other types of mercantile commerce over an agricultural system of wealth production. Unlike many Augustan satirists (which included Tory intellectuals like Pope, Swift, and John Gay) who were openly opposed to the financial revolution and the commercial middle class—at least the "money'd interest," [2] Defoe had faith in the new financial institutions and the superior energies of the commercial economy. Indeed, many critics have associated Defoe with the triumph of capitalism itself. Ian Watt, in his famous The Rise of the Novel, celebrates Defoe as the "optimistic spokesman of the new economic and social order" (89), while Bram Dijkstra considers Defoe an apologist for capitalism who "rejoiced" in "the exploitative and predatory aspects of the capitalist experience." [3]

Scholars have similarly emphasized the economic underpinnings of Roxana, a novel that has most often been appraised as a story in which the heroine progresses from poverty to prosperity. The novel's keen attention to the workings of capitalism as well as Roxana's preoccupation with material wealth and her insatiable appetite for commodities have invited many critics to investigate Defoe's complex treatment of the emergent commercial economy in relation to gender. Laura Brown, for instance, has addressed the logic of commodification in Roxana within the larger framework of a

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[2] Colin Nicholson. Writing and the Rise of Finance. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-71. Tory satirists considered aristocratic social and political order undermined by money and complained about the commodification of their literature. Despite their attacks on the "money'd interest," they willingly and unwillingly participated in aspects of the financial revolution, by investing money in the South Sea Company.

[3] Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel. (Berkeley: The University of California, 1957), 89; Bram Dijkstra, Defoe and Economics: The Fortunes of Roxana in the History of Interpretation. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 23.

mercantile imperialist economy; Carol Flynn has discussed Roxana's consuming desires in terms of the female body. [4] While these approaches are useful in foregrounding the extent to which women were constructed in relation to the capitalist logic of accumulation and consumption, they do not fully account for the vexed issue of female consumption in the context of the rapidly developing consumerism of the eighteenth century. To emphasize only women's affinity with the commodity is to risk identifying women as no more than objects of exchange and thus to limit the agency and subjecthood women often exercised through the act of consumption.

Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace's work on eighteenth-century consumer culture has called into question the essentialist conflation of women's bodies, appetite, and consumption. [5] Kowaleski-Wallace demonstrates how the notion of gendered consumer subjectivities first emerged at this historical moment, as appetite "was diverted towards goods" so that "women's bodies became configured in relation to consumption." As historians such as Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb have documented in The Birth of a Consumer Society, a greater variety of goods, including non-European imported luxuries, was newly available for consumption to an unprecedentedly broad segment of society in the period from about 1720 on. [6] This new culture of consumption provided more opportunities for women to assume an active status as consuming subjects of material goods, both in the purchase and use of commodities. At the same time,

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[4] Laura Brown, Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature. (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1993); Carol Flynn, The Body in Swift and Defoe. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[5] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace. Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), 13.

[6] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commericalization of Eighteenth-century England. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

women were increasingly aligned with the commodity and equated with excessive consumer appetite, as British culture's "fondest wishes for the transforming power of consumerism and its deepest anxieties about the corrupting influences of goods" were displaced onto women. [7]

This chapter seeks to address Roxana's paradoxical relationship to the world of goods by examining how her consumption of material goods defines her subjectivity. By highlighting Roxana's ideological construction as both a consumer and a commodity in the broader framework of emergent commodity culture in the eighteenth century, I will consider how Roxana can be seen as the paradigmatic female consumer in the new economic order in which she becomes both a subject and an object of exchange. By emphasizing consumerism as productive of pleasure rather than seduction or loss, I will argue that Roxana becomes an active, even transgressive, agent in the marketplace, one who uses the delights of commodities and consumption to fashion and empower herself, even as she often becomes reduced to an object of exchange. My aim is to analyze the diverse ways in which Roxana's consuming desires intersect with questions of gender and visuality to reveal a deeper understanding of the ways in which female subjectivity and spectatorship become newly configured in relation to consumerism in the early modern period. Through Defoe's conflicting treatment of consumption, Roxana dramatizes radical new possibilities for female spectatorship and agency within developing consumer culture, yet it also attempts to contain and regulate these transgressive female desires within a prescribed ideal of domesticity.

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[7] Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century, 5.

My reading of Roxana is deeply influenced by Kowaleski-Wallace in its emphasis on the ideological construction of the modern female subject in relation to emerging consumer culture in the eighteenth century, although Kowaleski-Wallace does not discuss Defoe's Roxana in her Consuming Subjects. Kowaleski-Wallace illustrates how early modern society projected its own ambivalence about consumer culture onto women in an effort to regulate unruly appetites. My reading, however, suggests that Roxana's consumerism is not easily contained, because her consumption activities, particularly her masquerades, invoke the perceptual instability and uncertainties associated with speculative economic practices. At the same time, I argue that Defoe's attitude to the changes wrought by the commercial and financial revolutions is more complex and ambivalent than is acknowledged by critics like Watt and Dijikstra, who consider Defoe as an unequivocal champion of capitalism. Defoe sees the transformations as necessary and desirable, yet nonetheless hazardous and subversive to traditional class and gender relations.

By highlighting Roxana's engagement with credit and debt discourses through an exploration of her close affinities with the figure of Lady Credit —a powerful allegory with rich cultural implications, I contend that Defoe deploys the figure of woman to express his ambivalence about female consumption and to negotiate the experience of a speculative marketplace that was pervaded by a sense of fluctuation and indeterminacy. By representing the British economy in the imaginary female figure of Lady Credit, Defoe was drawing upon an already familiar trope that can be traced to the tradition of female Fortuna, a figure associated with the unpredictability of history. Indeed, the

eighteenth-century's credit economy was often represented as feminine, with all the connotations of fantasy, instability, and danger that attend that assignation.

Roxana depicts Defoe's implicit anxiety about what Craig Muldrew has identified as a "culture of credit." [8] For the development of eighteenth-century economic ideas, credit—with its problematic fluidity and insubstantiality—played a key role in part because it was interwoven with and inseparable from major epistemological considerations: questions of credibility, value, and truth. How far and upon what basis to trust —how much "credit" should be accorded—was problematic. Aligning financial credit with epistemological credit, J. G. A. Pocock has shown how notions of speculative and "imaginary" value destabilized questions of truth and produced unstable perceptual paradigms, contrary to the assumption that Enlightenment culture expressed an undistorted faith in rationality and reason. [9] Roxana, written in 1724, likely reflects the growing concern caused by the financial crisis of the "South Sea Bubble" of the 1720s, when the disastrous collapse of stock suggested the dangers of a weak economy built on new credit properties that were potentially fertile but empty and hazardous.

Defoe's 1710 pamphlet "An Essay upon Publick Credit" provides insight into the paradoxical nature of financial credit as Defoe perceived it:

> Like the Soul in the Body, it acts all Substance, yet is it self Immaterial; it gives Motion, yet it self cannot be said to Exist; it creates Forms, yet has it self no Form; it is neither Quantity or Quality; it has no Whereness, or

[8] Craig Muldrew, The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 4.

[9] Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth century. 69.

> Whenness, Scite, or Habit. If I should say it is the essential Shadow of Something that is Not: should I not Puzzle the thing rather than Explain it, and leave you and my self more in the Dark than we were before? [10]

Credit is vexing to Defoe, as it embodies many contradictions. He attempts to explain the elusive nature of credit, not by offering positive definitions, but through negative examples. Indeed, it can only be defined by its lack—"something that is not." Credit has insubstantial existence, yet it has real tangible effects. Credit is the "assurance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen" (51). Defoe furthermore elaborates on the generative power of credit. Like a wild plant, credit springs up from natural causes and has the power of "quickning":

> Credit is a consequence, not a Cause; the Effect of a Substance, not a Substance, 'tis the Sun-shine, not the Sun; the quickning SOMETHING; call it what you will, that gives Life to Trade, gives Being to the Branches, and Moisture to the Root; 'tis the Oil of the Wheel, the Marrow in the Bones, the Blood in the Veins, and the Spirits in the Heart of all the Negoce, Trade, Cash, and Commerce in the World (53). [11]

As seen above, Defoe figures credit as a life-giving, creative energy much like the power of the imagination. Although Defoe clearly recognized the liberating possibilities offered

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[10] Daniel Defoe, "An Essay upon Publick Credit." Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe. (London : Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 51. All future references will be indicated by page numbers inserted parenthetically in the text.

[11] According to Oxford English Dictionary, 'negoce' is defined as business, commerce. (1617)

by the notion of credit as a productive force, he was nevertheless suspicious about the speculative nature of an increasingly credit-dependent economy. This can be seen in his criticism of stock-jobbing in the summer of 1719, before the South Sea stock mania reached its height. In "The Anatomy of Exchange Alley," Defoe insisted that trade itself was a "compleat System of Knavery... founded in Fraud, born of Deceit, and nourished by Trick, Cheat, Wheedle, Forgeries, Falsehoods, and all sorts of Delusion. " [12] His sharpest attack on the illusion of substance upon which so many stock-jobbing schemes were based is also seen in a pamphlet of 1719 entitled "The Chimera," where he criticized the French government's financial scheme to raise "an inconceivable Species of meer Air and Shadow, realizing the Fancies and Imaginations, Visions and Apparitions, and making the meer Speculation of Things, act all the Parts, and perform all the Offices of the Things themselves." [13] After the frenzy of wild speculation and investment in the rapidly inflating shares of the South Sea Company, the disastrous collapse of the South Sea Bubble as it has become known, dramatized the dangers and vicissitudes of an of unpredictable credit-based economy.

Recently, scholars have explored the complexity of credit in Defoe's fiction by linking the idea of financial credit to the problematic of belief or credibility. By focusing on "the question of epistemological credit" in Defoe's fiction, Patrick Brantlinger suggests that Defoe approves and even champions the concept of credit, as his novels are

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[12] Daniel Defoe, "The Anatomy of Exchange Alley." Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe. (London : Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 130.

[13] Daniel Defoe, "The Chimera." Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe (London : Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 160-161.

presented as "unironic narratives for readers to credit as quite simply true." [14] Similarly Sandra Sherman dramatizes how credit represents "a new kind of narrative" in Defoe's fiction by drawing a homology between financial credit and textual fictionality in his writing. [15] While my chapter shares the aims of these scholars in extending the economic to other cultural discourses, my reading of Roxana diverges from them in its greater emphasis on gender relations. Focusing on the intersections between economic and gender discourses, I seek to demonstrate how Defoe deploys the visibility of the female body to reflect and reinscribe his underlying anxiety about women's growing participation in consumerism, which he links to the unstable perceptual paradigms of the newly emerging credit culture. Roxana's masquerade, I shall argue, becomes a crucial site where the complex relationships among visibility, the female body, and the material world converge. If Roxana articulates the condition of the commercial market through her proliferation of various displays and impersonations, the text as a whole attempts to control unruly consumerist desires through the monitoring gaze represented by Susan, who would ultimately limit Roxana to a private, domestic role.

"Speaking Sight": Becoming a Female Consumer

It is commonplace to praise Roxana as a successful entrepreneur who possesses economic prowess in amassing substantial wealth by mastering emerging capitalism's market forces and exchange economy. Some critics, however, have criticized Roxana's moral failings as she moves from "virtuous poverty to corrupt wealth" with the cold,

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[14] Patrick Brantlinger, Fictions of State. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1996), 75.

[15] Sandra Sherman, Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

relentless possessive individualism of a woman who transgresses the bounds of morality through her avarice and materialism, turning her back on "her honest, middle-class background to step into the world of riches and high finance." [16] Nevertheless, despite their differences, both approaches draw attention to the central issue of Roxana's pursuit of wealth and preoccupation with goods, while overlooking the ways in which Roxana's relations with the commodities around her become the basis for her formation into an active and desiring consumer.

Roxana begins the story of her life wanting "neither Wit, Beauty, or Money" with "all the Advantages that any Young Woman cou'd desire" while "living in good Fashion." Prepared only for the "social Part of the World," Roxana subsequently finds herself paralyzed by destitution after she is deserted by an incompetent husband with "no Genius to Business...[and] no Knowledge of Accounts" (42). [17] Not only is her husband "a Fool" (40) who fails miserably in his business; he also turns out to be a "weak, empty-headed, untaught Creature" (40), an effeminized figure who is more interested in keeping up appearances with his "Equipage, his Horses or Servants" (43) and more concerned with frivolous pursuits than with tending to his own business. He is criticized not simply for being a "Fool" who merely puts on a "Face of Business" (42) and "could not carry his Business" (42), but also for his undisciplined practices of consumption: his excessive appetite for trivial things and his profligate spending habits. Indeed, Roxana's husband ironically exemplifies the very characteristics typically associated at the time with the

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[16] Maximillian Novak, Economics and the Fictions of Daniel Defoe. (Berkeley, University Press of California: 1962), 128.

[17] Daniel Defoe, Roxana. ed. David Blewett. (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 38. All future references will be indicated by page numbers inserted parenthetically in the text.

undesirable figure of a the female consumer: an inordinate appetite and an unchecked desire for material goods.

Unlike her husband, who becomes a victim of his insatiable desires, Roxana learns to master and manipulate the world of commodities surrounding her in order to escape from her "Wretched Condition" and attain financial independence (44). When abandoned with five children and faced with debt, she first turns to household goods and tries to pawn them: "I began to make away one Thing after another, till those few Things of Value which I had, began to lessen apace" (46). When her aunt and an acquaintance come to see her, Roxana positions herself among "a great Heap of old Rags, Linnen, and other things" (50) and deliberately uses her body as a spectacle, drawing attention to the extremely horrific nature of the situation. Here Roxana does not allow herself to become reduced to a mere object, but rather deliberately uses the close link between the female body and the world of commodities (the disorder and confusion of things strewn on the ground) to illustrate her predicament. She carefully dramatizes her "Distress," staging herself in "that Posture" of poverty and putting on "the Face of Ruin." As Roxana recounts, there was no need of discourse about her situation as the "Thing spoke itself" (50). She consciously transforms herself into a "speaking sight," a spectacle to fascinate viewers while she carefully controls the terms in which she is viewed.

The striking parallel between the female body and a commodity becomes more evident in what follows. The house is compared to a ravaged woman's body—"[t]he House, that was before handsomely furnish'd with Pictures and Ornaments, Cabinets, Peir-Glasses, and every thing suitable that was now stripp'd, and naked" (50), suggesting a close relationship between women and goods, spectacle and eroticism, and between

sexual and commodity fetishism. The description of the house, which goes from being richly decorated to barren, parallels the transformation of Roxana's body, which goes from "fat and beautiful" to "thin, and looking almost like one Starv'd" (50). The sexualized depiction of the house reinforces the affinity between women and objects and highlights the status of women as marketable commodities whose value can easily depreciate. As Laura Brown has pointed out, there is a close proximity between the representation of women and their things in mercantile capitalist discourses, to the extent that "female adornment becomes the main emblem of commodity fetishism." [18] The threats posed by newly available goods and the influx of commodities brought about by the expansion of mercantile trade are often equated with the problematic issue of female appetite. Brown has argued convincingly that mercantile imperialism deflected or displaced its desires and fears onto women, who were ultimately held responsible for imperialism through their identification with insatiable desires. In keeping with these tendencies, Defoe's representation of the female body as an eroticized commodity underscores the aspects of feminine sexuality that are bound up with unruly appetite and uncontrollable desires, for which female consumers were often indicted within the discourses of mercantile capitalism.

The overwhelming nature of Roxana's consumerist desires is also seen when she deliberately brings up the image of a mother devouring her own children. While her affliction is genuine enough, it is also elaborately staged. Her allusion to traditional figures of suffering mothers exaggerates her emotional state, as she performs the role of a helpless, victimized mother who has no choice but to "harden [her] heart against [her]

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[18] Brown, Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature, 119.

own flesh and blood"(51). Roxana stresses the performative nature of her display in order to achieve the most sensational impact on her spectators, the two women in the scene: "both of them cry'd as fast and as heartly as [she] did" (50).

At the same time, this scene underscores the potential danger of female consumption. Roxana's dire hunger leads to cannibalizing of her own children. While the potential cannibalism of Roxana's consuming appetite heightens the despair and extremity of her predicament, it also anticipates how her all-consuming desire may be at odds with a society that prescribes her role as that of a mother. If eating can be seen as a form of consumption, Roxana suggests that the very deprivation may produce excessive appetites that are unnatural and even violent. Roxana's extreme hunger drives her to abandon her children who become a liability to her, just as she refuses to acknowledge Susan as her daughter at the end. In her study on the impact of consumerism on European colonialism, Charlotte Sussman draws attention to the ways the rhetoric of cannibalism articulates the anxieties about the consumption of commodities, although she does not discuss Defoe's works. [19] Sussman shows that cannibalistic consumers can carry the reification of human relationship to an extreme in the capitalist society increasingly invested in things. For instance, her examination of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" foregrounds the association between the Irish and cannibalism by representing the Anglo-Irish as cannibalistic consumers and the native Irish as "dehumanized and exportable commodities" more "valuable as things than as laborers who produce things" (77). Likewise, Roxana's consumption perverts the conventionally nurturing relationships between mother and child and even leads to the possible murder of her own daughter Susan. Defoe links excessive economic consumption with gluttony,

[19] Charlotte Sussman, Consuming Anxieties. (Stanford: Stanford Press, 2000).

when Roxana proceeds to devour "a small Breast of Mutton, and two great Bunches of Turnips, which she intended to stew for [her] Dinner" (51) to satisfy her appetite. The consuming nature of the self's own desires in a capitalist society may be seen as part of a dysfunctional society. This is seen when Roxana's overwhelming hunger leads her to "prostitute her Virtue and Honour" (63). Here Roxana seals her unnatural relationship with the landlord with a meal of a "large very good Leg of Veal; the other a Piece of the Fore-Ribs of Roasting Beef" (59), collapsing economic consumption and oral consumption.

For Roxana, the dispossession of her consumables is not just a loss of things for survival, but also a loss of her former self. With an explosion of new goods and a spirit of emulation which stimulated people to buy more commodities, Britain's rapidly expanding middling classes in the eighteenth century increasingly came to identify themselves with the nature and quantity of their possessions. Thus, Roxana's preoccupation with material things around her—"Household-Stuff, [and] Plate, &c." (85) —is not simply a "Necessity" (46) for her basic needs, but also an attempt to reconstitute her previous self. Whereas the landlord "had torn the Goods out of [my] House like a Fury" (59), Roxana seeks out "Bounty" (59) from her landlord, attempting to redress her needs through material fulfillment: "so the House began to look in some tollerable Figure, and clean" (66).

Just as Roxana depends on the close connection between the individual and the world of goods for her survival, she also exploits this marketplace logic by consciously presenting herself as a commodity. When she finally decides to become the landlord's mistress, she successfully controls her transactions with careful calculations, successfully

taking advantage of the commercial system. Despite her belief that "a Woman ought rather to die, than to prostitute her Virtue and Honour, let the Temptation be what it will" (63), Roxana knowingly chooses to be a whore, being fully aware that showing an "Air of Tenderness" (67) and compliance to her landlord will "recover" her from the "Brink of the Grave" and that "Expectations of what he might still do for [her] were powerful things" (67). Hence, the language of business dominates the novel, in which terms like 'business,' 'advantage', 'profit,' and 'loss' are insistently deployed to describe people and relationships. She recognizes that her relationship with the landlord is a business transaction, an exchange relation in which the consumer purchases the item from the seller in terms advantageous to both parties: "Thus, Amy and I canvass'd the Business between us; the Jade prompted the Crime, which I had but too much Inclination to commit...and I even resolv'd, before he ask'd, to give my Virtue to him, whenever he should put it to the Question" (75). The transaction is, further, sealed by "a Contract in Writing"(76). Roxana presents herself as a desirable object to the landlord using her sexuality in exchange for food and lodging, while he "restores" her "great House" to plenitude and turns her "Wilderness" (66) into a garden.

Certainly one might argue that Roxana's whoring objectifies her as a commodity, reinscribing her within an endless cycle of capitalist exchange, where she is unable to alter the economic construction of femininity. Roxana's vacillation between her status as a subject and an object of consumption reenacts the conditions of market capitalism, which are closely bound up with consumerism. As Karl Marx reminds us, capitalism produces commodification in which the individual becomes reduced to its price in the market and alienated from its true nature: "Since money, as the existing and active

concept of value, confounds and exchanges all things, it is the general confounding and compounding of all things – the world upside-down—the confounding and compounding all natural and human qualities." [20] In a sense, Roxana undergoes such alienation, for as she admits late in the novel, she "was very far from knowing [herself]," and had become reified as a "meer Roxana" (223).

Yet to posit Roxana's commodification as entirely negative seems to neglect the specific conditions under which market capitalism emerged and does not fully account period's understanding of the relationship between economics and the self. Although he does not analyze Defoe's novels, Ross Pudaloff offers an alternative approach to seeing commodification as damaging to selfhood. He points out that eighteenth-century narrators often deployed newly emergent consumerist discourses to empower themselves. For instance, Equiano achieves a "newly produced I" through processes of exchange and commodification, just as female narrators of published captivity narratives deploy exchange as the means by which they were able to achieve public and recognizable identity. [21] Women, especially those who had difficulty possessing a public identity, were able to draw upon consumerism's logic of exchange and consumption to redefine themselves.

My reading of Roxana similarly argues that public access to a greater variety of commodities and a growing acceptance of consumption for women in the early eighteenth century were crucial in defining female identities in Roxana. Boasting that she lived "in a very good Figure, and might have liv'd higher if [she] pleas'd" (86),

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[20] Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.

[21] Ross Pudaloff, "No Change without Purchase: Equiano and Economics of Self" Early American Literature (40: 3, 2005), 499-527.

Roxana derives deep pleasure from her material possessions so that dress, equipage, and house become important material adjuncts to her identity and status: "Never Woman, in such a Station, liv'd a Fortnight in so compleat a fullness of Humane Delight." (193). At the same time, she organizes selfhood around moveable goods, just as she quickly learns to convert her material goods into more portable forms of wealth. Upon hearing of the jeweler's death, she quickly assumes the role of the jeweler's legitimate wife, by means of possessing the jeweler's riches – his "Jewells, his Ring, ... his Watch; ... the 700 Pistoles" that "amounted to a very considerable Value" (90), even though she had scruples against calling herself a wife when he was alive. With her newly acquired wealth, Roxana puts on another public identity; taking care to "appear" as a Widow in "Affliction," she succeeds in constructing a "very publick" identity, as she becomes known by the "Name of La Bella veuve de Poictou; or The pretty Widow of Poictou" (93). She announces that she "did not forget to set [her]self out with all possible Advantage, considering the Dress of a Widow, which in those Days was a most frightful thing"(93). Just as she is quick to convert her possessions into cash, she is adept at producing different new personas by virtue of the acquisition, possession and sumptuary display of goods.

If Roxana fashions new selves through her use of commodities, her skillful adoption of various elusive personas also demonstrates her mastery of the marketplace. Roxana's masquerades recapitulate the unpredictable and uncertain logic of the eighteenth-century British market and its discourses, making it possible for her to manufacture and circulate different selves for her own profit. In short, Roxana reinscribes the fluidity of the market through her self-conscious role-playing and

dissembling. Like a credit-based economy which defers what it promises, Roxana does not remain constant or static, but her identity remains suspended, indeterminate and contingent.

"Object Perfect": Female Adornment

If she employs a self-conscious display of commodities to signify her status as a widow in public, Roxana's relationship with the Prince is also governed by a similar concern with the public gaze. As his secret mistress, she is careful to keep her relationship with the Prince private by maintaining a modest display of her wealth to the public. She lives in "Confinement" (103), in her "Dwelling" safe from prying eyes of her "Neighbours" (102) and agrees to forgo "any more Servants, or set up any Equipage" (102) during her discreet long affair with the Prince. Yet, despite this modest façade, she cannot repress her consumerist desires. Even though her collection of jewelry, china, and clothing cannot be openly displayed in public, the "unparalell'd Bounty" from a "Prince of such Grandeur, and Majesty, so infinitely superior to me" bolsters her vanity and arrogance. She asks, "what could be more inexpressibly pleasing, and especially, to a Woman of a vast deal of Pride, as I was?" (104) For Roxana, commodities are not merely objects but extensions of herself. Through the spectacle of wealth, Roxana not only affirms her position as a satisfied female consumer but also seeks to emulate the aristocratic society she aspires to: "[h]e... bought me a Suit, or whole Piece, of the finest Brocaded Silk, figur'd with Gold, and another with Silver, and another of Crimson; so that I had three Suits of Cloaths, such as the Queen of France would not have disdain'd to have worn at that time; yet I went out no-where" (106).

More importantly, the intertwined nature of commodities and female identity becomes central in the dressing room scene where Roxana invites the Prince to rub her face to satisfy himself that she wears no paint. As Laura Brown has demonstrated, the question of female identity in the eighteenth century was primarily negotiated through the representation of the female toilet, often through the lady's dressing room or through the list of objects adorning the female body. Appealing to the Prince, Roxana asks, "Have you kiss'd me so often, and don't you know whether I am Painted, or not? Pray let your Highness satisfie yourself, that you have no Cheats put upon you; for once let me be vain enough to say, I have not deceiv'd you with false Colours" (108). Urging the Prince to wipe her face with a "Handkerchief," Roxana attempts to seduce the Prince with "an undeniable Demonstration" of her physical beauty. Roxana also proceeds to wash her face with water, as she seeks to prove to the Prince that her beauty "is the meer Work of Nature" (108). These actions of wiping and washing her face confirm that Roxana wears no "Paint," but the scene nonetheless evokes objects necessary for female adornment — e.g., "Paint" or cosmetics —and thereby links the world of commodities and female identity. Even in the act of asserting her authenticity, Roxana displays herself as a beautiful "Object" that strikes the Prince with speechless admiration and "astonishment" (107). Despite Roxana's disavowal of "Paint," this toilet scene draws attention to complex issues of commodification and female adornment, implicating Roxana in the material world.

As Brown points out, moreover, the act of wiping alludes to the word "sponge" which had a concurrent meaning as a toilet accessory and financial payment in the

eighteenth century. [22] Defoe describes in his Review how Lady Credit refers to the word "Spunge" to express her despair that Parliament might postpone or stop the payment of interest on government securities: "And now my Face is Threatened to be wash'd with a Spunge." (535) [23] Unlike Lady Credit who views the act of having her face washed as a threat to her identity, Roxana uses the same act to empower her identity. By presenting "an undeniable Demonstration" of her genuine beauty, she maximizes her value as a commodity. Although she affirms her authentic nature and insists that she has not "deceiv'd him with false Colours," it is nevertheless through her carefully orchestrated artifice that Roxana deliberately turns herself into an object of beauty in which she becomes a commercialized fetish of his desire.

Despite her insistence that she is a "Meer Work of Nature," Roxana's commodification is evident when her beauty is reduced to bodily parts only: "a fine lac'd Head; a fine Face and Neck." Her transformation into "the Object perfect" is complete when the Prince clasps her neck with a "fine Necklace of Diamonds." Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that Roxana's self-commodification is accompanied by her newly gained visual power. She deliberately displays herself in the most advantageous terms, as she allows the Prince to take "his View of [her]" as she boasts: "Nor was I a very indifferent Figure as to Shape; tho' I had had two Children by my Gentleman, and six by my true Husband, I say, I was no despicable Shape." Roxana even becomes enamoured with herself, as she finds pleasure in her appearance: "I was now become the vainest Creature upon Earth, and particularly, of my Beauty" (97). Roxana's response to the

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[22] Laura Brown, Fables of Modernity. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press: 2001), 117-118. According to Oxford English Dictionary, "sponge" can be defined as to deprive, to press for money, to drain or empty, or to divest debt.

[23] Ibid., 117.

reflection of herself in the "Peir-Glass" reaffirms her identity as female consumer with powerful desires: "I was all on fire with the Sight, and began to wonder what it was that was coming to me" (109).

Just as Roxana feels empowered by her commodification, she maintains control over the commercial exchange relationship she has established with the Prince. As seen in the passage below, Roxana contemptuously points out the shortcomings of men like the Prince:

> They raise the Value of the Object which they pretend to pitch upon, by their Fancy; I say, raise the Value of it, at their own Expence; give vast Presents for a ruinous Favour, which is so far from equal to the Price, that nothing will, at last, prove more absurd, than the Cost Men are at to purchase their own Destruction (110).

By arguing that men pay more "Value" for an object than it's worth, Roxana criticizes the men for their foolish and reckless habits of consumption. In short, men become "absurd" consumers, for they end up purchasing their "own Destruction" (110). In addition, Roxana learns that if she masquerades as a subservient female, she can manipulate the system that depends upon women submitting to men in power. Even as she commits to prostitution, Roxana feigns the submission of a "Woman of Virtue and Modesty" (67). Just as she had dressed up for her landlord, Roxana feigns a submissive, compliant femininity for the benefit of the Prince. Her impersonation of proper femininity is also a commodified form of femininity that trades on stock images of women. Dressed up in

clothes he likes best to please the Prince, she is careful to restrain her "avaricious" (112) appetites and makes it a policy to ask for nothing directly in order to obtain generous gifts from the Prince:

> His Presents were, after that, in Gold, and very frequent, and large; often a hundred Pistoles, never less than fifty, at a time; and I must do myself the Justice, that I seem'd rather backward to receive, than craving, and encroaching; not that I had not an avaricious temper (112).

Here, Roxana's masquerade of hyperfemininity does not simply reveal the constructed nature of gender. It also shows how she can achieve autonomy and control over the Prince through her "Harvest" (112) of goods. In contrast, the Prince exemplifies the potential pitfalls of consumerism by excessive spending and undisciplined urges: Roxana draws a picture of him as "a man enslav'd to the Rage of his vicious Appetite; ... he defaces the image of God in his Soul; dethrones his Reason; causes Conscience to abdicate the Possession, and exalts sense into the vacant Throne; ... he deposes the Man, and exalts the Brute" (111).

Roxana's practice of feminine mimicry can be illuminated by Joan Riviere's concept of "Womanliness as a Masquerade." Riviere theorizes that the female masquerade occurs when a woman adopts exaggeratedly feminine gestures—such as helplessness, deference, coquettishness—to compensate for the need to act out the prerogatives of masculinity. She argues that "women who wish for masculinity may put

on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men." [24] In the same manner, Roxana's performance of submissive femininity becomes an effective means of disguising her transgressive desire for the prerogatives of masculinity, the privileges of independence and agency.

"A Lady of Pleasure, A Woman of Business"

Up to this point in the novel, Roxana's construction of self through exchange and consumption remains largely private in nature and has appealed mostly to her sense of vanity and pride, yet her consumerism also enables her to produce a public identity when she transforms herself from "a Lady of Pleasure" to "a Woman of Business" (169). While Roxana had defined herself previously using commodities and moveable objects she can hoard and carry, she evolves into a more sophisticated consumer when she acquires lessons in dealing with the complicated demands of capital management and commercial transactions through men like the Dutch Merchant or Sir Robert Clayton.

The Dutch Merchant is known to be "a Person of great Reputation for a Man of Substance, and of Honesty" (149), just as Dutch society was often regarded as a model of efficiency and industry during this period. Joyce Appleby notes that the "sustained demonstration of this Dutch commercial prowess acted more forcefully upon the English imagination than any other economic development of the seventeenth century." [25] Whereas Roxana had been primarily obsessed with objects as a source of wealth, she soon becomes skilled in the methods of exchange and circulation of capital necessary to

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[24] Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade." Formations of Fantasy. eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan, (Methuen: London, 1986), 35.

[25] Joyce Oldham Appleby, Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 73.

the workings of consumer culture. Roxana's consumer activities become more intricate as she masters the handling for her own purposes of more fluid forms of wealth, such as credit, banking and investment. Indeed, consumerism in the eighteenth century required increasingly complex ways of negotiating a radically unstable credit economy with new mechanisms of speculation, such as notes issued by the Bank of England, promissory notes, or shares in joint-stock companies.

Roxana realizes that she can't carry or transport much of the wealth she has secured in the form of objects and jewels. These things even become a liability to her when she finds out to her dismay that her jewels can be easily identifiable and traceable: "As soon as the Jew saw the Jewels, I saw my Folly; and it was ten Thousand to one but I had been ruin'd, and perhaps, put to Death in as cruel a Manner possible" (150). To Roxana, tangible objects have limited exchange value, like the "items of value representative of pre-capitalist systems of value, wealth and exchange," [26] whereas newer forms of wealth—like bills, credit, capital—are seen to be more advantageous: these new forms of paper money can be easily transformed into money anytime or anywhere, as long as they are taken at face value or "credited" among trusted parties. Upon consultation with the Dutch merchant, Roxana proceeds to convert her valuable goods and material wealth into the elusive form of Bills and paper currency, having been introduced to the principles of the international transfer of funds and the liquidity of capital. Such mechanisms of exchange and circulation bound the commercial world together—money circulated through society in the way objects become exchanged, swapped, bought by the consumers.

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[26] Dijikstra, Defoe and Economics: The Fortunes of Roxana in the History of Interpretation. 43.

Roxana becomes proficient in the workings of high finance and capital management under Sir Robert Clayton's counsel, when she learns successfully to invest her existing capital for a higher return. Ultimately, her skillful engagement in various financial transactions and in capital management signals her transformation from "a Lady of Pleasure" to "a Woman of Business, and of great Business too" (169). Roxana comments, "by managing my Business thus myself, and having large Sums to do with, I became as expert in it, as any She-Merchant of them all; I had Credit in the Bank for a large Sum of Money, and Bills and Notes for much more" (170). Regardless of Roxana's objection that "I was a young Woman; that I had been us'd to live plentifully, and with a good Appearance; and that I knew not how to be a Miser" (208), she restrains her extravagance, lays up "an incredible Wealth" (223) and manages to find "Ways to live without wasting either Principal or Interest" (224).

For Roxana, marriage is a bad business, so she refuses to give up her money and independence:

> I then did as good as confess, that it was upon the Account of my Money that I refus'd him; and that tho' I cou'd give up my Virtue, and expose myself, yet I wou'd not give up my Money, which , tho' it was true, yet was really too gross for me to acknowledge, and I cou'd not pretend to marry him upon that Principle neither; then as to having him, and make over all my Estate out of his Hands, so as not to give him the Management of what I had (186).

She rejects the Dutch merchant's marriage proposal for fear of being in "a State of Inferiority, if not of Bondage" (211), insisting that she would rather be a mistress than a wife: a "wife is look'd upon, as but an Upper-servant, a Mistress is a Sovereign" (170). Thus it is not surprising that Roxana chooses to describe herself in masculine terms associated with the world of commerce and business, insisting that woman was "Masculine in her politick Capacity" and "as fit to govern and enjoy her own Estate" (188). Speaking an "Amazonian Language," Roxana declares that "seeing Liberty seem'd to be the Men's Property, I wou'd be a Man-Woman" (212). Here, her self-proclaimed status as a "Man-Woman," neither male nor female, suggests the monstrosity of "something shocking to Nature" (196), for her mastery of the capitalist system also undermines the patriarchal order which is largely based upon clear gender difference.

Just as Roxana learns the importance of investment in financial matters, she also decides to capitalize aggressively on her marketability. Roxana knows her beauty is her best physical asset, "the Great Article that supported my interest" (143), yet she becomes painfully aware that the value of her beauty might decline. Fearing that her multiple pregnancies and advancing age might cause "scandalous Use of [her] Prostituted Body"(110), she coldly assesses her pregnancy as a negative factor that would depreciate her worth: "if I bred often, it wou'd something impair me in the Great Article that supported my Interest, I mean what he called Beauty; that as that declined I might expect the Fire would abate, and the Warmth with which I was now so caressed would cool, and in time, like the other Mistresses of Great Men, I might be dropped again"(143). Realizing that women are especially perishable commodities with a short shelf life, Roxana is driven to more effective management of her sexuality. If she depicts herself as

a common household object that has outdone its use—"an old Piece of Plate that had been boarded up some Years, and comes out tarnish'd and discolour'd'" (224), she insists that she is "not at-all impair'd in Beauty" (224). Rather, she is determined to market her best assets, using her body as eroticized material in the public realm and turning herself into a famous whore, or Roxana, ultimately.

"Why am I a Whore Now?": Redefining Prostitution

At first glance, prostitution may seem to present the female body as a product in a cash nexus wherein female labor is constructed as a commodity for male desire. Roxana, however, does not merely sell her sexuality but becomes an active agent in marketing her labor for the sake of economic self-sufficiency and liberty. Rather than being subjected to the terms of the masculine world of business, she single-handedly turns the tables and becomes an active agent of commercial transactions. She thus successfully obtains female economic independence and agency in what has traditionally been seen as a masculine monopoly of the socioeconomic public sphere. Roxana's 'business'—a commercial exchange in which she contractually traffics her sexual labor for profit--serves to redefine the nature of women's work at a time when women were losing economic ground and becoming increasingly disenfranchised from the labor force due to the radical shift brought about by male-controlled capitalist production. Roxana's use of her financial knowledge in the marketing of her physical body warns against noncontextual approaches that excessively minimize women's participation in the economy and overstate their subordination. Maxine Berg, for examples, argues against "ahistorical assumptions of static structures which entail unidirectional accounts of

women's subordination," insisting that women's work "dissected as a changing part of a dynamic process of industrial and capitalist growth or decline... can help reveal undiscovered directions and possibilities." [27]

Historians have pointed out how the business of female prostitution in a newly commercialized and increasingly urbanized eighteenth century coincided with emergent consumerism. Along with a growing number of female consumers and with the codification of retail space and advertising, prostitutes were frequently seen as engaging in public display or advertising themselves in public space, and thus conflating the space of business with their business. This rising presence of women in the city streets caused deep underlying anxieties among contemporaries. For example, reformer Saunders Welch complained about seeing "women publickly exposing themselves at windows and doors of bawdy-houses like beasts in a market for public sale, with language, dress, and gesture too offensive to mention." [28] Couched in business terms, Welch's denunciations against prostitution suggest that the merchandizing of sex was threatening because it suggested the possibility of female economic self-sufficiency. Prostitution also was disturbing because it offered for public sale what was officially regarded as a private affair, making the public realm of business indistinguishable from the private realm of domesticity.

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[27] Maxine Berg, "Women's Work, Mechanization and the Early Phases of Industrialization in England," in ed., Patrick Joyce, The Historical Meanings of Work. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 89.

[28] Saunders Welch, "A Proposal to Render Effectual a Plan to Remove the Nuisance of Common Prostitutes from the Streets of This Metropolis." Quoted from Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century, 136.

If some historians, like Janet Wolff, have argued against the female counterpart of the flaneur, asserting that "women could not stroll alone in the city," [29] others, like Judith R. Walkowitz and Deborah Epstein Nord have claimed in their work on Victorian urban female strollers the existence of flaneuses. [30] They have identified prostitutes and emerging middle-class female shoppers in the late nineteenth century as 'flaneuses,' who were seen as transgressive in their ability to roam outside in public, not just as women of the streets but as perceiving subjects. The role of the flaneuse was fraught with cultural contradictions, for women risked becoming spectacles in order to become spectators in the public realm, traditionally a male domain.

While no scholarship has yet made the connection between Roxana and flanery, this chapter contends that Roxana can be characterized as a prototype of the transgressive flaneuse. By being both a prostitute and a businesswoman, Roxana participates in the public realm and competes with men, as she carefully maintains her consumer activities and business transactions. Whereas her whoring constitutes her body as a valuable commodity, Roxana undermines being reduced to a mere object, a "to-be-looked-at," by assuming the position of a powerful viewing agent who vigorously exercises the right to observe. Indeed, Roxana is largely concerned with achieving the role of a powerful spectator throughout the novel. The scene in which Roxana strips and thrusts Amy into bed with her landlord "husband" (70) can be seen as an instance where Roxana demonstrates her desire to assume visual authority. Aware that her whoring has been reduced her to a dependent position, she makes Amy an objectification of her own

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[29] Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin, ed. Andrew Benjamin. (London: Routledge, 1989), 148.

[30] Judith Walkowich, City of Dreadful Delight. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,) 1992; Deborah Epstein Nord, Walking the Victorian Streets. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

condition. By placing Amy in her own vulnerable position and watching her, Roxana is permitted to appropriate the powerful male gaze. Her power comes from standing apart but nevertheless watching: "She stood-by all the while," while the landlord did "what he woul'd with Amy" (81). By instrumentalizing her body, her pleasure, and her experience, as William Warner rightly observes, Roxana "masters herself and others through a cool act of voyeurism." [31]

Similarly, Roxana becomes a powerful spectator with her itinerant gaze during "several Perambulations" she undertakes with the foreign Prince. She experiences much freedom and mobility as she journeys across such metropolitan commercial sites as Paris and London. Furthermore, her role as the Prince's mistress gives her the prerogative to embark on a Grand Tour, an activity usually reserved for men during the eighteenth century. Despite her disavowal that she has no mind "to write the History of my Travels on this side of the World, at least, not now, [as] it would be too full of Variety" (140), Roxana delights in telling her readers of the cultural differences she encounters during her travels across the Continent. While she expresses her distaste for Rome with its "Ecclesiasticks and scoundrel Rabbles of the Common People" (140), her firsthand accounts are more concerned with observing female behaviors and manners that later shape her sense of autonomy. Her roving gaze allows her to make "very diverting and useful Observations in all these Places; and particularly, of the Conduct of the Ladies" (139). She becomes proficient in Italian books and language, just as she expands her knowledge of "all the intrieguing Arts of that Part of the World" (140). But more

[31] William B Warner, Licensing Entertainment. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1998), 157.

importantly, Roxana's itinerant consumerist gaze enables her to acquire many foreign commodities that prove to be instrumental for her transformation:

> Here my Lord bought me a little Female Turkish Slave, who being Taken at Sea by a Malthese Man of War, was brought in there; and of her I learnt the Turkish Language; their way of Dressing, and Dancing, and some Turkish, or rather Moorish Songs, of which I made Use, to my Advantage, on an extraordinary Occasion, some Years after, as you shall hear in its Place. (214)

With the help of this captured Turkish slave, Roxana masters both the "Turkish Language" and "their Way of Dressing, and Dancing" (214), that she later makes use of during her Turkish masquerade in London. Here, her travelling intersects with proliferating discourses of consumerism and global commerce: Roxana proceeds to engage in a flurry of shopping activities where she becomes an owner of a Turkish Slave as well as many fine exotic spoils of mercantile trade. The acquisition of the slave, captured as one of the spoils of a Turkish ship by a "Malthese Man of War" (140) underscores mercantile violence during her travels overseas. Here, the non-European slave becomes an item of curiosity, a piece of merchandise to be purchased and traded. Later, Roxana appropriates the exotic other to refashion herself, using consumables like her Turkish dress to enhance her sexual appeal in English court society.

As a counterpart to the slave she procures, Roxana also purchases a luxurious commodity, as she reports: "...and with this Turkish slave...I bought the rich cloathes

too ... as a Curiosity, having never seen the like" (174). Much like Montagu in her elaborate description of Turkish dress, Roxana takes pleasure in her sensual description of the ornate garment: The "dress was extraordinary fine indeed ... the Robe was a fine Persian, or India Damask ... embroider'd with Gold, and set with Pearl in the Work, and some Torqouis stones." At the same time, Roxana's "rich Cloaths," with their display of valuable gems, are a product of commerce geared towards female consumers who become proxies for male acquisition and mercantile expansionism, in much the same way that Belinda in The Rape of the Lock, decked with the "the glitt'ring Spoil" of "India's glowing Gems" and all that "Arabia" has to offer, becomes a proxy for the products of domestic and international commerce. [32] Roxana's appropriation of these exotic commodities underlines how her prosperity and independence are intermeshed in mercantile capitalism and suggests British women's complicit role in the "male acquisitiveness" of British mercantile commerce. After all, Roxana ends up marrying the Dutch merchant, whose wealth is bound up with investment in "stock in the English East-India Company" (302). Her two sons, moreover, become successful merchants who participate in overseas trade, as Roxana proudly mentions: "I have hinted at large, what I had done for my two Sons, one at Messina, and the other in the Indies" (311).

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[32] Alexander Pope, "The Rape of the Lock. "Alexander Pope. ed. Pat Rogers. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 82. Louis Landa, "Pope's Belinda, The General Emporie of the World, and the Wondrous Worm," Essays in Eighteenth English Literature. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Laura Brown, Ends of Empire (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1993). As Louis Landa and Laura Brown have argued, the woman's body, "deckt with all that Land and Sea afford,"(Canto V, line 11) provides early eighteenth-century writers with a convenient trope for both the celebratory and the alarming aspects of overseas trade. While noting the complaints of those "balance of trade" mercantilists who viewed all consumption of imported goods as detrimental to the nation's welfare, Landa sides with those writers who praise the benefits of what he describes as "economic expansion." Brown, on the other hand, is focused on uncovering the ideological underside of those economic relations she defines as "imperialist"; as "women become the proxies for men, object and agent of accumulation are reversed, and thus the female figure is made to bear responsibility for empire" (16).

Turkish Masquerade

Perhaps the epitome of Roxana's commodification of Turkish culture can be seen in the episode of her "Turkish masquerade." Both Roxana and Montagu's masquerades emphasize the ways in which women's consumption of exotic, foreign fashion becomes the basis for their formation as active, desiring subjects. Whereas Montagu disguises herself in a Turkish habit to gain increased mobility and visual authority as a spectator, Roxana's deployment of the Turkish habit is more concerned with manipulating her status as a spectacle for her own pleasure and interest. "[P]ossess'd with so vain an Opinion of [her] own Beauty" (212), Roxana maximizes her value by making a spectacular display of her Turkish "costume" "to all the Advantage possible," impressing many "admirers and Persons of very great Figure" (214) from the court. Dressed in the "extraordinary fine" (215) "habit of a Turkish Princess" (214), Roxana participates in British mercantilism and consumption of exotic commodities. Her Turkish dress evokes images of slave trading, violence, and the exploitation of raw materials: "A Malthese Man of War had. ... taken a Turkish Vessel going from Constantinople to Alexandria...and as the Ladies were made Slaves, so their fine Cloaths were thus expos'd" (214).

By performing a dance in her seductive Turkish dress, Roxana not only appropriates the clothing but literally comes to embody the identity of an exotic "Roxana," a term synonymous with a whore: "I had the Name Roxana presently fix'd upon me all over the Court End of Town, as effectually as if I had been Christen'd Roxana (217). Throughout the eighteenth century, the name "Roxana," eastern in origin, was associated with sexual license and seduction, since the Turkish Empire stood not so

much as one colonized by England but as a weakened empire that was seen by Europeans as synonymous with sexual profligacy and excessive appetites. To the western European imagination, "Roxana" represented such troubling aspects of the oriental empire as sexuality, duplicity, and violence. [33] From the historical Roxolona of the sixteenth century to Defoe's Roxana, "Roxana/Roxona/Roxolana," the figure of an Orientalized, exotic female with beguiling beauty, was a sign of oriental excess, an embodiment of both the attractions and corruptions that exotic luxury represented for the eighteenth century.[34]

Despite significant instances of disguise in Roxana, critics have not paid much attention specifically to the relationship between Roxana's masquerade and the rise of consumerism in the eighteenth century. Catherine Craft-Fairchild and Mary Ann Schofield both uncover many largely neglected works about masquerades by women writers, but they are solely interested in the women's treatment of female masquerade and fail to account for interest in the topic by male writers. [35] Terry Castle examines the function of masquerade scenes in several novels of the period, by both men and women, but except for few passing comments, she leaves out Roxana. [36] Blewett, in a very short article, "Roxana and the Masquerade," is one of the few who have addressed the

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[33] David Blewett, Defoe's Art of Fiction-Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack and Roxana. (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1979), 123, 165. David Blewett notes that Roxana is the rebellious wife who tried to overthrow Usbek's despotic rule in The Persian Letters, as well as the courtesan of Alexander who killed his queen Statira in jealousy.

[34] Ros Ballaster, "Performing Roxane: The Oriental Woman as the Sign of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century Fictions." eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, Luxury in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 176.

[35] Catherine Craft-Fairchild, Masquerade and Gender, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993); Mary Anne Schofield, Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

[36] Terry Castle, Masquerade and Civilization (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

masquerade in Roxana, which he reads as Defoe's satiric attack on the decadence of Restoration court society. [37] Warner in Licensing Entertainment sees Defoe's use of masquerade in Roxana as a part of an effort to rewrite and appropriate the formulaic convention of the novels of amorous intrigue written by women. [38]

But in general scholars have ignored how Roxana's masquerade is indebted to consumerism in the eighteenth century. My approach differs from those of the above critics by proposing to read Roxana's masquerade within the context of the ongoing controversies over the pleasures and perils of consumer culture. Against the backdrop of emergent commodity culture, Roxana's impersonation of the exotic 'other' can be seen as a consumer practice which depended on the foreign 'other' for its sense of novelty and luxury. By dressing up as the exotic 'other,' she transforms herself into a new, tantalizing commodity that caters to the Orientalist fantasies and pleasures of consumers.

Roxana's Turkish masquerade corroborates Brown's argument that English women's bodies become an index for material consumption and mercantile capitalism. Goods for female consumption—dress and ornamentations—came to stand for the economic enterprise of the English empire, in which "the agency of the acquisitive subject and the urgency of accumulation are concealed and deflected through...the dressing of the female body." [39] Brown explains that the figure of the woman becomes a proxy for imperialist acquisition or a scapegoat for imperialistic violence, as she is made to bear responsibility for the system by which she is adorned. In contrast, I would argue, Roxana actively participates in the commodifying process which implicates her in the

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[37] David Blewett, "Roxana and the Masquerades" Modern Language Review. 65 (1970): 499-502.

[38] Warner, Licensing Entertainment, 154.

[39] Brown, Ends of Empire, 116.

imperialist aims of mercantile capitalism. She also illustrates how a larger cultural obsession with consumption operates predominantly through realms of desire, fantasy and personal identity. In other words, if eighteenth-century's Britain's mercantile expansionism opened up a new world of strange sights and tantalizing goods, Roxana's masquerade is deeply embedded in the workings of consumerism, which involves commodifying herself to emphasize her desirability as a spectacle that offers a sense of pleasure and wonder to its viewers. In such a spectacle-oriented commodity culture, the foreign 'other' often becomes central in the process of creating consumerist fantasy and desire.

Dressed in her "extraordinary fine" Turkish dress, Roxana emphasizes her desirability as a foreign exotic commodity that can be readily purchased and owned, thus creating and fulfilling a consumer fantasy. Fully ensuring that all the people had "full View of [her] Dress" (215), she pulls off an elaborate and carefully staged theatrical performance in which she reproduces the foreign 'other' for domestic consumption. Indeed, Roxana typifies an average female consumer when she expresses pleasure at the bargain price she had paid for her Turkish habit, for she paid "sixty Pistoles in Italy, but [it] cost more in the Country from whence it came." She is even more delighted with its use-value, exclaiming that "little did I think, when I bought it, that I shou'd put it to such a Use as this" (215). Roxana's process of identification with her Turkish dress is so complete that she becomes interpellated as Roxana, when one of the Gentlemen cries out, "Roxana! Roxana!" (217) Roxana's spectacular display of herself thus transforms her into a powerful courtesan : "I had the Name of Roxana presently fix'd upon me all over the Court End of Town, as effectually as if I had been Christen'd Roxana" (217).

By positioning herself as a commodity on display for viewers with her seductive Turkish dress, Roxana self-consciously performs as the 'other,' fulfilling the exotic fantasies of her audience. Here, Roxana's Turkish masquerade is paradigmatic of growing consumerism in which a taste for exotic luxuries from overseas continued to arouse consumer desires in the eighteenth century. British consumers coveted these new foreign commodities which were closely intertwined with their deep desire for novelties and unattainable luxuries. When Roxana's dress draws praise from its viewers, it is because of its novelty and uniqueness, it being "perfectly new": "The Company were under the greatest Surprize imaginable; the very Musick stopp'd a-while to gaze; for the Dress was indeed, exceedingly surprising, perfectly new, very agreeable, and wonderful rich" (216).

Simultaneously, through her display of the non-European 'other' for the visual pleasures of European consumers, Roxana's masquerade reproduces a type of fetishistic scopophilia in which viewers are able to gain control of and possess the object of their gaze. [40] Dressed in a seductive Turkish habit, Roxana transforms herself into a "admirably fine" spectacle so that "every-body look'd....with a kind of Pleasure..." (221). Roxana's masquerade engages her audience in the process of fetishized scopophilia wherein her spectators, the King and company, obtain pleasure from the act of looking. In much the same way that the male gaze could assume control over the

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[40] Laura Muvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," eds. Robyn Warhol and Diane Herndl. Feminisms. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 444. Although it is primarily concerned with the male gaze, Laura Mulvey's discussion of cinematic spectatorship can be helpful in thinking about European consumers' spectatorial pleasure in non-European commodities. Mulvey argues that in mainstream Hollywood films that women become objects of male viewing pleasure through scopophilia and voyeurism. Women are displayed as the objects of fetishistic or voyeuristic gazes, which make them concurrently alluring and threatening. By substituting the real with its replacement, "a thing satisfying in itself," fetishistic scopophilia enables a male or a masculinized spectator to achieve visual mastery over the 'other' so that the female figure becomes "reassuring rather than dangerous" (591).

female 'other' in classic cinema by fetishizing the image, the European consumer gaze in Roxana's account of her Turkish dance gains a sense of control over the foreign 'other' by fetishizing the object. If a fetish serves as a substitute for the real, Roxana's masquerade exemplifies the process in which non-European experiences become transformed into fetishized objects, in the absence of the real or authentic 'other.' In fact, Roxana's masquerade becomes a highly desirable commodity for eager European consumers, because it is only a copy, a substitute for the real. Roxana's Turkish dance, like the fake diamonds on her Turkish dress, is fraudulent, for the spectators are convinced that it is "Mahometan" while, as she tells us, it is actually French in essence (216).

In fact, Roxana's dance appeals to European consumers even more than the authentic "Persian" (215) dances by "Georgian and Armenian" (221) slaves because her commodification of the 'other' ultimately also domesticates it into a manageable form that can easily be circulated and reproduced. As Nussbaum aptly puts it, "Roxana's colonizing novelty supersedes the other women's barbarous nativism." [41] However, Nussbaum does not consider the role of consumerism that reinforces these oppositions. Despite its true "Novelty" (221), the authentic dance by slaves is condemned as being "wild and Bizarre" (211) by the audience. In contrast, Roxana's imitation of fashionable Turkish dance is more pleasing to British viewers because its novelty serves to reinforce Britain's consumption of foreign goods:

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[41] Felicity A. Nussbaum, Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1995), 36.

> They danc'd three times all-alone, for no-body indeed, cou'd dance with them: The Novelty pleas'd, truly, but yet there was something wild and Bizarre in it, because they really acted to the Life the barbarous Country whence they came; but as mine had the French Behavior under the Mahometan Dress, it was every way as new, and pleas'd much better, indeed. (221)

Roxana's dance strikes the audience as superior because it adeptly transforms "barbaric, exotic" experiences into desirable objects for British consumers. In other words, her Turkish masquerade typifies the process by which foreign experiences and bodies became potential raw materials to be sold at the European markets in response to increasing consumers' desire for the latest fashion and novelty.

Roxana's Turkish masquerade is exemplary of display-oriented commodity culture in which foreign 'otherness' catered to consumers' visual pleasure. Through her appropriation of such "otherness," Roxana manages to create a voyeuristic spectacle in which she turns both the foreign 'other' and herself into a tantalizing commodity for her audience's consumption in a way that gains her currency through the act of self-display. Although one might argue that such visibility risks Roxana's reduction to a passive object within commercial systems of exchange, she undeniably ends up exercising power by controlling the terms in which she is viewed by others. This agency is enabled by consumer activities in which she carefully selects and displays novelties in a way that gives her both a commercial and visual "Advantage" (214).

The Domestic Gaze

Whereas the early part of Roxana seems to celebrate the heroine's ability to forge new selves through self-commodifying consumerism, its later sequences suggest Defoe's reservations about female consumerist desires by setting them in tension with the imperatives of domesticity. In what follows, I shall argue that the figure of Susan, who is obsessed with establishing Roxana's maternity, represents the domestic gaze that attempts to discipline the dangerous power Roxana wields as a female consumer. Most critics have failed to account for Susan's function as a monitoring gaze for Roxana, particularly in the context of Roxana's consumerism, despite the crucial role Susan plays in revealing Roxana's past dissolute life and her consumption of exotic foreign 'otherness.' Warner comes close to seeing Susan as serving a policing function for Roxana by equating Susan with a "remorseless superego, an emanation of a Law that Roxana cannot elude, because it comes from within the self," yet he considers Susan solely as Roxana's surrogate, "the original unmasked self." [42] Other recent scholars tend to view Susan as Roxana's nightmare reader who is determined to expose Roxana's fiction no matter the cost. Following David Marshall's interpretation of Susan as the "reader" who is intent on detecting the fiction of Roxana, [43] Sandra Sherman also conceives Susan as the reader who "refuses indeterminacy; refuses to accept textuality as the limit case; who penetrates Roxana's persona despite frantic efforts to elude her." [44] But while both Marshall and Sherman agree in seeing Susan as an astute reader of

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[42] Warner, Licensing Entertainment, 170.

[43] David Marshall, The Figure of theater: Shaftesbury, Defoe, Adam Smith, and George Eliot. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 132.

[44] Sherman, Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century, 158.

Roxana's history, their preoccupation solely with the relationship between Roxana and Susan as that between reader and text/author fails to address other larger concerns, such as gender and socioeconomic context.

My approach seeks to go beyond such formalist analysis by emphasizing gender in relation to consumerism. By grounding Roxana in an historically specific moment of consumerism and linking it with gender ideology, I seek to emphasize Susan's function as a policing gaze intent on containing Roxana as a consumer and exposing her violations of codes of domesticity. Susan serves to critique Roxana's female consumption by revealing the latter's neglect of domestic responsibilities as a mother. But the idea of domesticity that Susan represents also takes on added significance in the context of Roxana's masquerade, which relies heavily on the consumption of foreign goods. Through her fetishization and commercialization of oriental delights, Roxana's masquerade constructs her spectators as domestic consumers who are easily seduced by the allure of exotic luxuries into a dissolute lifestyle. In this sense, Defoe seems to be concerned not only with the ways Roxana's consumer activities challenge emerging eighteenth-century beliefs about women's prescribed domestic role, but also with the way her consumption of foreign goods posed a threat to the prosperity of Britain's domestic economy. [45]

After her successful career as a courtesan who capitalizes on her exotic image as a 'Roxana,' Roxana decides to discard her dissolute past and reinvent herself as a respectable domestic woman. Determined to "transform... into a new Shape" (251) by taking up life as a Quaker woman, she admits: "I had begun a little, as I have said above,

[45] I understand the term "domestic" to mean both home and nation, and read the domestic home as figured in close relation to the domestic nation.

to reflect upon my Manner of Living, and to think of putting a new face upon it" (250). The analogy between Roxana's newly imprinted identity and a freshly minted coin with a "new face" foregrounds Roxana's skillful use of the evolving financial discourses of the emergent market society for her own purposes. Along with radical changes brought about by new systems of finance and banking that were dependent on paper-money and systems of public credit, the concept of money was increasingly becoming unstable in the early eighteenth century. It no longer reflected the intrinsic value of real, solid things, but was contingent upon the uncertainties of a speculative marketplace. Even metallic coins, which were traditionally seen to have a tangible, solid value, were no longer seen as the sole legitimate source of worth due to the monetary conversions and different currencies entailed in global trade and commerce. In this regard, Roxana's numismatic trope illustrates how the financial revolution changed in decisive ways how people thought about themselves and their world. Deidre Lynch, for example, argues that the eighteenth century's understanding of character or subjectivity coincided with contemporary discussions about "legible faces, minted money, and imprinted texts." Similarly, Roxana's ability to acquire, collect and exchange different identities is inseparable from marketplace discourses. [46] Taking advantage of the volatility and liquidity of currency to fashion herself, Roxana not only alters her clothing to look like a real Quaker, but also adjusts her ways of speech and her consumption habits to blend in with the simple ways of the Quakers. Her transformation into a plain and modest Quaker is so complete that even her "very Face" (251) appears different to the point of being unrecognizable to her closest companion, Amy. Indeed her counterfeiting is so effective that she appears even

[46] Deidre Lynch, The Economy of Character. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 8, 35.

more authentic than the actual Quakers: "There was not a Quaker in the Town look'd less like a Counterfeit than I did: But all this was my particular Plot to be the more compleately conceal'd, and that I might depend upon being not known" (256).

However, if Roxana's successive masquerades participate in the fluidity of the marketplace by taking advantage of uncertain perceptual paradigms in which the line between the real and the counterfeit is blurred, Defoe's novel simultaneously betrays an underlying anxiety about the instability of a system that makes counterfeiting possible. Whereas Roxana's Turkish masquerade succeeds in domesticating the 'barbaric and wild' elements of the foreign 'other' for domestic consumption, Roxana's masquerade as a modest, domestic Quaker turns out to be less successful. Accordingly, when Roxana leads a "life of modest expenditure" as a Quaker in "the delightful Retirement of a Country-Life" (276) putting on "a scheme of Frugality," she still cannot abstain from luxury and conspicuous consumption. She confesses to her "weakest Part, namely, that [she] lov'd great things, and that [she] lov'd to be flatter'd and courted" (275) and even considers a marriage to the Prince out of vanity. Despite Roxana's attempt to maintain a respectable, domestic veneer, she succumbs to the pleasures of material consumption. Secretly proud of her past feats, Roxana can't help displaying herself in her old Turkish dress in front of her Dutch merchant husband and her Quaker friend:

> Amy dress'd me in my old Turkish Habit which I danc'd in formerly,...
> When all the Dress was put on, I loaded it with Jewels, and in particular, I plac'd the large Breast-Jewel which he had given me, of a thousand Pistoles, upon the Front of the Tyhaia, or Head-Dress; where it made a

most glorious Show indeed; I had my own Diamond-Necklace on and my Hair was Tout Brilliant, all glittering with Jewels (292).

When Susan, once employed as a servant in Pallmall where Roxana led a dissolute life as a courtesan, recounts a story of "how handsome and how fine a Lady this Roxana was" and of her dancing in a "fine Outlandish Dress" (334), Roxana cannot help but feel "Please'd and tickl'ed" secretly. But if the extravagant Turkish habit provides an outlet for Roxana's extravagant self-display, ironically it is her Turkish dress that finally makes Susan suspect her mother's true identity. To reveal herself as a mother, Roxana would necessarily have to disclose her past identity as a famous courtesan, and divulge that her "ill-gotten Wealth" was built on the commodification of her own labor and of the image of the non-European 'other.' Roxana fears the moment of recognition: "if the Girl knew me, I was undone; and to discover any Surprize or Disorder, had been to make her know me, or guess it, and discover herself" (322). The fear of being exposed as a "counterfeit," a "Sham-Lady" or "Cheat" threatens her life of masquerades.

If Roxana purchases and maintains her material prosperity at the cost of the denial of motherhood, her struggle to keep her identity as a Roxana and mother distinct from each other suggests that "the impossibility of reconciling motherhood with sexual freedom is painfully clear in Roxana." [47] Although Nussbaum overlooks the crucial role of consumption in forging Roxana's sexual and economic power, the novel illustrates that Roxana's powerful attraction to consumerism may be at odds with domesticity ultimately. Hence, the novel attempts to contain the extent of Roxana's consumption by advocating domesticity through the figure of Susan. Roxana finds herself constantly exposed to

[47] Nussbaum, Torrid Zones, 40.

Susan's scrutinizing gaze, a gaze that confines her both physically and emotionally. Susan seems to appear everywhere: on the ship, at the Quaker woman's home, in the captain's remarks to the Dutchman, at Tunbridge, and most persistently, in Roxana's thoughts and dreams. Like Foucault's Panoptic gaze, Susan scans and follows Roxana's actions despite her mother's attempts to hide. As Foucault describes the Panopticon, the inhabitants of the outer ring of the prison never know if they are being watched at any moment, yet know that they can be watched at any time. [48] In the same manner, even when Roxana reassures herself that Susan has not "fix'd her Eyes much upon [her]" (325), she shows that she has internalized the sense of being watched to the extent that she is constantly in "Disorder" (324) and "Uneasiness" (358), even frightened and threatened. Even after Susan disappears mysteriously from the story, Susan continues to dominate Roxana's consciousness: "As for the poor Girl herself, she was ever before my Eyes; I saw her by-Night, and by-Day; she haunted my Imagination" (374).

Finally, it is Susan's perspective that fixes Roxana into a patriarchal framework. John Richetti has rightly argued that Susan thus functions as a monitory gaze that "marks the re-establishment of a biological and psychological necessity." [49] Nevertheless while I fully share the view that Susan's role is to reinforce gender ideology, I am more concerned with demonstrating how consumerism plays a crucial role in the construction of gender ideology. If Roxana's consumerism allows her to manipulate and master the exchange economy of eighteenth-century England, Defoe's novel suggests implicitly that the threat posed by her ability to exploit the system and to dissemble at will is so great

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[48] Michael Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 292.

[49] John Richetti. "The Family, Sex, and Marriage in Defoe's Moll Flanders and Roxana, Studies in the Literary Imagination. (15: 1982), 33.

that it must be neutralized by reinscribing woman's role within the dominant patriarchal system.

While Defoe clearly admired Roxana's exploitation of shifting market discourses by portraying her successful rise to material prosperity and financial independence, he was simultaneously troubled about the issues of female consumption. His anxieties are visible in the Review, as early as 1712, when he expresses his concern about the state of commerce, "that neglected, sinking, languishing Thing, call'd TRADE, among us." Here he condemns the greedy and irresponsible behavior not only of stockjobbers but of fashion-conscious women who are responsible for displacing "True-born English Broad-Cloth" with exotic imported goods such as "Baubles and ridiculous Knick Knacks," and "foreign Novelties" of "Vice and Luxury." [50] Invoking traditional debates over luxury in the early eighteenth century that focused attention on the behavior of female consumers, Defoe condemns women for their proclivity for foreign luxuries and frivolous items, associating femininity with uncontrollable desires. In short, women are criticized as extravagant and irresponsible consumers who indulge in "Vice and Luxury." More importantly, women's consumption of imported goods is seen not only as morally wrong but as damaging to English trade and economy. Preferring trivial objects and sinful luxury items to domestic goods, women are depicted as irresponsible and fickle consumers whose consumption behaviors undermine domestic economy. Just as Defoe accuses women of ruining England's domestic textile industry when he alludes to in "True-born English Broad-Cloth," he continues to attack English female consumers during the 'calico crisis' of 1719-21. In the controversy surrounding the importation of printed Indian calicoes and chintz in English trade, Defoe also blames "the Folly of our

[50] Daniel Defoe, The Review. 1:38, 20 December 1712.

Women" for creating a "trade-Plague among us," for allowing "the Home-Consumption of our own Manufactures [to] languish and decay in such a manner, as bids fair to starve our Poor, and put the whole Woollen Trade of this Nation ... into the utmost Confusion." [51] He fears that women's consumption of imported fabrics will ultimately wreak havoc on the national economy by ruining Britain's domestic wool manufacturing. Promoting the craze for foreign goods, women's wanton spending on imported clothing represented for him a social, moral and economic threat that placed the nation in peril.

In light of Defoe's emphasis on the deleterious effect of female consumption of foreign fashion on the domestic economy, Roxana's flaunting of her extravagant Turkish dress in front of English viewers takes on implicit political implications. Indeed, Defoe seems to be worried that the consumption of foreign fashion could enervate the domestic economy in a way analogous to that in which Roxana's Turkish masquerade seduces her viewers into creating and manipulating a demand for objects of luxury, desire, or fashion from around the world. In her lavishly decorated Pall-Mall housing, Roxana hosts luxurious balls and leads an extravagant life as a courtesan, just as the King and the company indulge in ostentatious wealth and a decadent aristocratic lifestyle. Roxana in effect embodies two sources of foreign luxury, France and Turkey, as she admits that her dancing "had the French Behavior under the Mahomatan Dress" (221). At the same time that Turkey was widely perceived as being a source of sensuous pleasures and indulgence in luxury during the early eighteen century, France was generally feared and hated by the English due to its association with Roman Catholics and the Old Pretender, who posed a threat to the English throne. By deliberately setting the novel in the reign of Charles II, who was well-known for the extravagant consumption of European luxuries, particularly

[51] Daniel Defoe, The Just Complaint of Poor Weavers. (1719), 6-7.

in clothing styles, music, and the theater, as well as for his decadent and lascivious lifestyle, Defoe suggests that the widespread consumption of foreign goods had the potential to threaten English values and the country itself.

The tension between the domestic and the foreign is also repeated at the personal level within Roxana. Roxana is a hybrid --not quite English and not quite French, for she was born at the City of Poictiers in France yet raised and educated as English. Although Roxana deems herself "Natural English, as if [she] had been born here" (38), she tends to have relationships with foreign men--from the prince living in France to the Dutch merchant, suggesting her intimate affinity with the foreign 'other.' Even when Roxana settles down to lead a life of a respectable, modest Quaker woman, she has irrepressible consumer desires for foreign luxuries, just as she finds pleasure talking about her previous life as a famous 'Roxana' and displaying her extravagant Turkish habit to others. Indeed, Roxana's persistent desires for foreign luxury commodities seems to indicate Defoe's uneasiness that the contaminating vices of foreign 'others' may not be easily domesticated and serves to register underlying anxiety about the eighteen-century's foreign consumption and its inimical effect on the prosperity of British nation.

Despite Defoe's admiration of Roxana's financial success, her skillful manipulation of the marketplace is seen as a challenge to patriarchy, to the extent that it is even seen as monstrous—"something shocking to Nature" (196). Similarly, Roxana's Amazonian status symbolizes her transgression against the society's patriarchal control over women. Shawn Maurer has shown how Roxana's close association to Amazonians, who were regarded as threatening with their martial prowess, economic self-sufficiency, and non-monogamous, matrilineal sexuality, can be seen as a projection of the culture's

and Defoe's own fears about female independence from men.[52] Although Maurer does not focus on consumption, it is evident that Roxana's monstrous challenge to the domestic patriarchal system stems partly from her role as a female consumer. Roxana's consumption effectively deploys the logic of exchange and commodification of capitalist economy to undermine male-dominated society, where an exchange of women was often a used to establish relationships among men. Attending to the correspondence between the larger public economy and the private economy of the family, Gayle Rubin in her perceptive study "The Traffic in Women" has illustrated the specular logic of patriarchy that subjects the female to a male system of valuation and exchange. [53] Through her transactions of selves from an abandoned wife into a "whore," Roxana exploits a broader cultural economy predicated on the construction of woman as currency among men and thereby challenges male dominance.

Simultaneously, Defoe implies that perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the Roxana's consumerism is its close connection with the realm of the foreign, which, according to Defoe, has the potential to alter British domestic economy. In this sense, Defoe posits that female consumption is not solely concerned with what is the seemingly private realm of domesticity, but that domesticity exists on a continuum with the larger public spheres of politics, economy, and trade, and that it is itself political. Accordingly, if the novel draws attention to the ways in which Roxana's consumption of foreign goods may be potentially dangerous to British domestic economy, Defoe, by the same token, suggests that female purchasing power and tastes in fashion have the power to transform

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[52] Shawn Lisa Maurer, "I wou'd be a Man-Woman": Roxana's Amazonian Threat to the Ideology of Marriage." Texas Studies in Literature and Language. (46: 2004), 363-386.

[53] Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy of Sex" Ed Rayna R. Reiter. Toward an Anthropology of Women, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157-210.

politics and the nation itself. In this regard, Roxana's consumption is not only about her personal moral decline or a failure of domestic virtues, but also has wider repercussions in economic, political and cultural realms.

As demonstrated in Defoe's complex attitude towards Roxana's consumerism, this reading of Defoe complicates a polarized reading of Defoe as either a staunch supporter of British trade and mercantilism or (Watt, Dijkstra) or a strong opponent of speculative capitalism (Novak). Defoe's ambivalent treatment of female consumption in Roxana may reveal Defoe's complex views on a host of social and economic issues in response to major economic events such as the South Sea crisis and the calico conflict. On the one hand, Roxana at the outset illustrates that consumption can be productive and potentially empowering for the female consumer. Roxana deftly exploits the world of commodities around her and negotiates it for her own transgressive ends. Like a savvy investor who takes advantage of the rise and fall of the speculative market, Roxana becomes skillful in promoting and marketing herself, manipulating the terms of her own circulation and transacting her own sexuality. Shifting between different personas and nations—"Mademoiselle de Beleau, afterwards call'd The Countess de Wintselsheim, in Germany, Being the Person known by the Name of the Lady Roxana," the title of Roxana itself registers the instability associated with the new fluid and mercurial capitalist ethos in the early eighteenth-century economy, establishing a close connection with the heroine to the figure of Fortuna, who typified the instability of fortune, much like the figure of Lady Credit.

Yet, even as Defoe recognized that both consumption and credit were central to commerce, he also considered the fluidity of the marketplace as a potential threat to

England's commercial prosperity. If credit was creating illusions of substance in the financial realm, so was consumption in the social realm. Just as Defoe condemned greedy stock-jobbers for their irresponsible speculation in the marketplace, he was critical of the ways consumption promoted pretense and aspiration toward social mobility among men and women. [54] Although Defoe was not against all social mobility, he was ultimately anxious about the ways Roxana was able to obscure social markers and even blur gender boundaries, for she transforms from a whore to a titled lady and a "Man-Woman." Furthermore, if Roxana relies upon her consumption of foreign luxuries to refashion herself and furthermore requires to be seen on her own terms, Defoe paradoxically attempts to control the field of vision by framing Roxana within the imperatives of domesticity.

This chapter's focus on female consumption broadens our understanding of the relationship between the role of domesticity and mercantile capitalism. As Laura Brown has argued, Roxana's sumptuary display of herself in foreign luxuries links her to the imperialist project of mercantile capitalism. Yet Brown's analysis does not provide an adequate way to account for the ways consumption and domesticity were mutually implicated in the project of articulating a coherent British identity. Felicity Nussbaum has demonstrated the ideological importance attached to female virtue politicized the private realm of the domestic home. In fact, Defoe's preoccupation with Roxana's failure as a mother reveals that domesticity can be deployed as a strategy to dramatize fears about growing foreign trade's corrupting influence on English domestic virtues. Yet, despite the

[54] In the summer of 1719, Defoe published anonymously, The Anatomy of Exchange Alley, his most comprehensive attack on stock-jobbing. He writes that the trade itself was a "compleat system of Knavery... founded in Fraud, born of Deceit, and nourished by Trick, Cheat, Wheedle, Forgeries, and all sorts of Delusions."

novel's attempt to contain and discipline the threats that accompanied female consumption—such as counterfeiting and excessive desires or the contamination of the foreign 'other'—the sudden, incomplete ending of the novel ultimately reiterates that female consumers cannot be controlled and may not always be domesticated. By drawing attention to how the domestic home or the nation is inseparable from the female consumer, Roxana ultimately demonstrates how the discourses of female consumerism are central to understanding both female identity and British national identity in the early eighteenth century.

CHAPTER 3

CONTESTING THE SPECTATOR'S DISCIPLINARY GAZE: HAYWOOD'S THE FEMALE SPECTATOR AND THE HISTORY OF MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS

Eliza Haywood, a prolific British woman writer of the eighteenth century, is a significant figure in the history of female authorship because of the sheer size and variety of her canon, and the length of her career as a professional writer over the course of nearly forty years. In addition to being a celebrated novelist of widely-read novels such as Love In Excess (1719), she was also a playwright, publisher, journalist, actress, and the editor of The Female Spectator from 1744-46, the first English periodical written by a woman primarily for women. Despite her solid position within the literary marketplace and the wide range of her writings, Haywood was often associated with sexuality and public scandal. Mostly known for her amatory fictions which titillated eighteenth-century audience with frank and explicit depictions of female sexual desire, she was dismissed by her male literary contemporaries as an inferior writer and even castigated as being sexually promiscuous.

When Haywood turned away from scandalous fictions to respectable novels of domestic sensibility and conduct periodicals, her shift to propriety has generally been interpreted by her contemporaries as evidence of her own moral conversion. For instance, in The Progress of Romance, Clara Reeve praises Haywood on her "singular good fortune to recover a lost reputation and yet a greater honour to atone for her errors," establishing a bifurcated view of Haywood's life and career—a 'before' and 'after' her

moral transformation. [1] Even feminist scholars who have attempted to recover Haywood from scholarly neglect tend to reproduce this polarized view of Haywood and her career as a woman writer. Jane Spencer points out that Haywood's career is "a paradigm for that of the eighteenth-century woman novelist generally: at first praised as amorous, then castigated as immoral, and finally accepted on new, and limiting, terms." [2] Despite her revisionist feminist readings which brought attention to radical female desire in Haywood's fictions of seduction, Ros Ballaster also maintains that Haywood's amatory fictions—like those of Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley—were "negative precedents" that needed to be purged for subsequent women writers to gain respectability, implicitly reinstating the divide between the earlier and the later works. [3]

More recently, literary critics have tended to regard Haywood as a skillful professional writer who was able to achieve a successful career due to her ability to adapt to changes in the literary marketplace. [4] In addition to feminist reassessment of Haywood's amatory fiction, recent critics have increasingly attempted to historicize Haywood's texts by exploring their engagement with the critical social, aesthetic, economic and political discourses of her day. These reconsiderations suggest that her shift may have been financially rather than morally motivated, as the market for licentious amatory fiction was increasingly giving way to a demand for domestic novels in which female subjectivity was increasingly configured in terms of private life.

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[1] Quoted from eds. Kirsten Saxton and Rebecca Boccicchio, The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work, (Lexington: The University of Kentucky, 2000), 9.

[2] Jane Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 77, 141.

[3] Ros Ballaster, Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 3.

[4] Katherine Shevelow, Women in Print Culture. (London: Routledge, 1989)

While Katherine Shevelow's Women in Print Culture (1989) demonstrates how Haywood took a vital role in print culture as a producer of domestic ideology, William Warner, in Licensing Entertainment (1998), argues that Haywood, especially through her amorous intrigue novels, participates in what he calls 'media culture,' "the practices of production and consumption associated with print media." [5] He insists that Haywood's best-selling amorous intrigue novels can be seen as the first formula fiction in the market that offers diversion and entertainment to consumers. Catherine Ingrassia in Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England (1998) also demonstrates how Haywood took advantage of her 'paper credit' to negotiate sexual and financial economies: "she capitalized on the allure of her texts and the marketability of her constructed authorial persona – both intangible, imaginatively based commodities." [6] By drawing an analogy between activities in the new financial economy and pursuits in the literary marketplace, Ingrassia shows how the volatile, speculative worlds of both Exchange Alley and Grub Street created a significant new space for women to gain cultural agency in the literary market.

My discussion of Haywood has inevitably benefited from scholars like Warner and Ingrassia who attempt to contextualize her within socio-economic history. Rather than divide Haywood's literary works between her early scandalous and latter domestic texts, it seems more valuable to see a contiguity between them by focusing on Haywood's engagement with emergent consumer culture. At the same time, however, Ingrassia's argument is beneficial in showing how Haywood's success as a professional

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[5] William Warner, Licensing Entertainment.(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 93.

[6] Catherine Ingrassia, Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12.

woman writer depended on her ability to negotiate and reinvest her cultural currency within print culture, it ignores the ways in which Haywood's attempt to exploit the literary marketplace was also limited by a scopic regime in which, as a woman writer, she was often reduced to an object under the public gaze.

Alexander Pope's satire on Haywood in his poem "The Dunciad" illustrates the dangers faced by women writers, for contemporary sexual ideologies dictated that venturing into print entailed turning both one's body and one's work into commodities for sale in the marketplace. [7] As seen in the passage below, Haywood, though in reality a successful female author, is reduced to a sexual object under Pope's objectifying, specularizing gaze. Instead of being recognized as the subject or producer of literary commodities, Haywood becomes a commodity for masculine pleasure, a prize in a urinating competition between rival booksellers.

> See in the circle next, Eliza plac'd
> Two babes of love close clinging to her waste;
> Fair as before her works she stands confess'd.
> In flowr's and pearls by bountaeous Kirkall dress'd.
> The Goddess then: 'Who best can send on high
> 'The salient spout, far-streaming to the sky;
> 'His be yon Juno of majestic size,
> 'With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes.
> 'This China-Jordan, let the chief o'ercome

[7] Alexander Pope, "The Dunciad. "Alexander Pope: A Critical Edition of the Major Works. ed. Pat Rogers. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 411-571.

'Replenish, not ingloriously, at home' (ii. 149-58).

Pope satirizes Haywood's notoriety as a prolific author of scandalous writing by referring to her literature as "two babes of love," the offspring of illicit sexual liaisons between the female writer and the corrupt Grub Street. Just as a female writer is seen to prostitute herself and her works in the literary marketplace, both her body and her productions become commodities shamelessly exposed to public view to be sold to the highest bidder.

My reading is concerned with examining the ways in which Haywood challenges the supremacy of the male gaze through her treatment of female consumerism in her texts, The Female Spectator (1744-46) and The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751). Haywood's preoccupation with seeing and vision has been interrogated recently by Juliette Merritt in Beyond Spectacle, which focuses on the "visual/linguistic nexus for its capacity to increase women's access to knowledge and power." [8] By exploring how the "discursive potential of the connection between spectatorship and writing is made explicit" (141) in Haywood's texts, Merritt demonstrates that Haywood's exploration of female visual agency is closely linked with her discursive authority as a professional author. Merritt concludes that Haywood's "conscious effort to capitalize on the authority of the observing subject" (23) makes her a "committed strategist, both materially, on her own behalf as a professional writer, and discursively, on behalf of the cause of female agency" (20). My reading of Haywood seeks to complicate Merritt's approach by situating Haywood's manipulation of the visual order within the context of the age's speculative and competitive commercial culture. Such an approach makes it possible to

[8] Juliette Merritt, Beyond Spectacle: Eliza Haywood's Female Spectators. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 9.

examine how women could take advantage of their material circumstances to exercise power both within and beyond the constraints of their role as objects of display and exchange in a marketplace culture. By extending Ingrassia's concept of 'cultural credit' to consumerism, I will illustrate how Haywood negotiates the subject/object relations of commercialized material culture for female visual authority.

In order to fully understand Haywood's treatment of spectatorship and consumption, it is vital to examine Addison and Steele's The Spectator first, since it becomes the basis of Haywood's critique of male spectatorial authority. Generally considered one of the most influential texts of the eighteenth century, The Spectator addresses a broad range of topics crucial to everyday life in a world of financial, commercial, and sociopolitical transformations. My first section will examine how Mr. Spectator's male gaze is closely associated with his attempts to regulate female consumption and fashion. It will treat Mr. Spectator as emblematic of the dominant masculine mode of viewing that reduces women to commodified objects. My next section will focus on Haywood's Female Spectator and on the complex ways Haywood challenges and revises the male gaze by exploring how female consumerism can empower women with visual agency. My last section will continue to explore Haywood's preoccupation with the complex relationships among sight, gender, and power in the marketplace by reexamining the figure of the coquette in The History of Miss Betsy of Thoughtless as a consumer who can negotiate the sexual and material economies of the eighteenth-century for her own benefit.

The Spectator Papers

The Spectator has been widely understood in the context of the emergence of bourgeois capitalism. Jurgen Habermas identifies The Spectator as a major institution of the bourgeois public sphere as it emerged in early-eighteenth-century western Europe. [9] Terry Eagleton, in his book The Function of Criticism, also reaffirms the periodical's role in the transformations whereby the "European bourgeoisie begins to carve out for itself a distinctive discursive space, one of rational judgment and enlightened critique rather than of the brutal ukases of an authoritarian politics." [10] In the wake of intensified capitalism, popular periodicals like The Spectator play an important part in bourgeois hegemony by constructing a polite public comprised of citizens with common sense and good taste. Formulating new codes of conduct and values suitable to the formation of a bourgeois public sphere, The Spectator served as a model for self-identification as well as for disseminating ideologies for the rising middle-class identity.

Foregrounding operations of taste and style that have been largely unexplored in Habermas's account of the bourgeois public sphere, Erin Mackie's Market A La Mode convincingly demonstrates how fashion and material culture in The Spectator contribute to the formation of bourgeois identity by shaping "each strand of the fabric of everyday life through the management of taste, style, and manners." [11] Mackie's argument is useful in exploring how trivial fashion items or mundane activities—such as fans, dresses, shops, and masquerades— produce meanings precisely because taste and decorum are instituted through persuasion, not coercion, as people come to experience

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[9] Jurgen Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

[10] Terry Eagleton, The Function of Criticism. (London: Verso, 1984), 9.

[11] Erin Mackie, Market A La Mode. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997), 262.

choices of style freely and independently (21). According to her, The Spectator takes on the role of cultural arbiter of bourgeois values by appealing to refined taste that emphasizes principles of modesty, restraint, and decorum as opposed to vulgarity and avarice, thereby allowing each individual to identify voluntarily with the ideals of the public sphere in contemporary everyday life.

Mackie also underscores the profound effects of increased commercialization on gender and vision in the eighteenth-century. She points out that one of the aims of bourgeois ideology was to legitimize a proper mode of vision by attempting "to police boundaries between subject and object, consumer and consumed, spectator and spectacle" (63), especially when fashion and style were "often negatively evaluated as at best empty, and at worst deceptive, signs" (147). This project involves distinguishing between "good and bad sorts of looking and acquiring" (60). On the one hand, the "good" looking mirrors the workings of the polite imagination, which "guarantees the mind's appropriation of objects" (84). Like Addison's "man of Polite Imagination" who acquires "a kind of Property in every thing he sees" (No. 411), [12] the spectator assumes mastery over the spectacle, maintaining the hierarchy between the subject and the object. On the other hand, the "bad" looking occurs when the spectator loses full control of the objects of desire. This often happens in fashionable consumption, "as is the cases of the

[12] References are made parenthetically by the number of the paper. The Spectator, ed. with an introduction and notes, Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965); The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Spectator, ed . The Spectator with introduction, notes, and index, Henry Morley, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, Volumes 1, 2 and 3 (2004).

"The 'man of Polite Imagination' often feels a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of Property in every thing he sees" (No. 411).

beau, the coquette, and the old woman" whose minds become "coloniz[ed] by objects" (84).

My reading of The Spectator draws on Mackie's insights in acknowledging the various ways fashion and consumerism shaped discourses of seeing in the eighteenth century. Yet even though Mackie's aim is to "tease out the implications of the overlap between ... good and bad sorts of looking and acquiring" (60), she seems more concerned with making the distinction than with elaborating on the "overlap" between them. If The Spectator embodies the "good" mode of viewing, I would contend that it also engages in the very mode of gazing and consuming it condemns. Despite The Spectator's critique of female consumption and its "bad" viewing, the periodical's treatment of seeing is inextricably bound up with the female commodity world it disavows. Whereas Mackie implies that Mr. Spectator's gaze is characterized by "perceptual self-mastery" (84) or full control of his objects of vision, I will show that his gaze is compromised by his underlying anxieties about female consumption. Mr. Spectator's surveillance of women as the proper objects of his visual and moral scrutiny is crucial because it functions as an imaginative tool to make sense of the realm of exchange and instability closely associated with expanding commerce. By questioning The Spectator's gaze, I agree to some extent with Scott Paul Gordon who argues that it represents a "disciplinary *fantasy*" or an imaginary one, which "testifies less to the success of the spectatorial regime than to the intractability of the readers it hopes to control." [13] While Gordon suggests that "revolts against the gaze" are possible and that subjects can resist disciplinary regimes, he overlooks the extent to which female

[13] Scott Gordon, "Voyeuristic Dreams: Mr. Spectator and the Power of Spectacle." The Eighteenth Century. (36: 1995), 4.

consumers can be resistant subjects of spectatorial control. If Mr. Spectator's omnipotent surveillance can be seen as his effort to contain "aggressive spectacles," I argue that female consumers who engage in "disguise or strategic self-fashioning" (20) can pose a threat to such authority. By focusing on the relationship between Mr. Spectator's gaze and female consumption, I will show that the scopic authority of Mr. Spectator is characterized by his own deep-seated anxieties about his ability to control female consumption, and that female consumers indeed prove resistant to his discipline regime.

"Mere Objects of Sight": Disciplinary Fantasy

The preeminence of the trope of seeing in The Spectator is indisputable. The first number of the journal establishes the unique authority of the Spectator as a "Looker-on" (No. 1). Mr. Spectator introduces himself in the first number of his periodical as rather a "Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species...a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant, and Artisan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life" (No. 1). As evidenced in his refusal to be seen as "one of the Species," Mr. Spectator's detachment from social and human affairs grants him "more than ordinary Penetration in Seeing," an authority to "discern the Errors in the Economy, Business, and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them" (No. 1).

Although he insists that he is unencumbered by the material world he lives in, ironically his sight is inextricably bound up with the commercialized culture of the eighteenth century. As he strolls from marketplace to the Royal Exchange, the sight of the rich goods on display and various commercial activities provides him with intense pleasure: "It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as

I am an Englishman, to see so rich an Assembly of Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth" (No. 69) For Mr. Spectator, simply looking at things is synonymous with consumption, as his visual appreciation of the urban spectacle celebrates the "Benefits and Advantages of Commerce" and glorifies the beneficial, harmonizing effects of England's international trade, to the extent that London becomes an "Emporium" (No. 69). Mr. Spectator, like a flaneur who can decipher what he encounters, engages in ordering and classifying the profusion of exotic luxury imports: "Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of China, and adorned with the Workmanship of Japan... [We] repose ourselves under Indian Canopies... Our Eyes are refreshed with the green Fields of Britain, at the same time that our Palates are feasted with Fruits that rise between the Tropicks" (No. 69). As seen in his cataloguing of goods from all over the world that converge for domestic consumption, Mr. Spectator's looking operates as a mode of acquisition whereby his gaze legitimates England's global expansion and commercial activities.

The Spectator's powerful gaze is also a result of the anonymity that allows him to be invisible yet discerning. Withholding his own personal identity as to his name, age, or address, he remains unidentifiable: "I have been taken for a Merchant upon the Exchange for above these ten Years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the Assembly of Stock-jobbers at Jonathan's." His carefully constructed "Obscurity" (1) adds to his capacity to present himself as a voyeur who can be present everywhere and see everything at all times, as he admits: "there is no Place of general Resort, wherein I do not often make my Appearance." Indeed, he appears to be less human than godlike, an omnipresent figure

whose gaze allows him the penetrating clarity of vision. He boasts that "I have looked into the Highest and Lowest of mankind, and made shrewd Guesses, without being admitted to their Conversation, at the inmost Thoughts and Reflections of all whom I behold" (4). While he enjoys the privilege of a panoramic view that can survey all scenes of urban life—"every Parish, Street, Lane, and Alley of this Populous City" (92), he even claims that he can read the "inward Disposition of the Mind" of those he sees by merely observing their "Looks," "Countenance," and the "Lines" of the "Face" (86).

In many ways, Mr. Spectator's detached, critical, and penetrating gaze can be closely associated with the Cartesian system of vision which emphasized rationality and objectivity. Martin Jay explains that Cartesian perspectivalism "no longer hermeneutically read the world as a divine text, but rather saw it as situated in a mathematically regular spatio-temporal order filled with natural objects that could only be observed from without by the dispassionate eye of the neutral researcher." [14] Similar to the ways the three-dimensional space of perspectival vision could be rearranged on a two-dimensional surface by a single viewing eye, the Cartesian perspectivalist tradition produced a visual take that reduced diverse perspectives into one 'point of view.' Mr. Spectator's attempt to impose a singular, fixed order of looking can be seen in Spectator No. 250, which discusses the distinctions between good and bad seeing:

> As for the various Turns of [the] Eye-sight, such as the voluntary or involuntary, the half or the whole Leer, I shall not enter into a very

[14] Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," ed. Hal Foster. Vision and Visuality. (New York: The New Press, 1988), 9.

> particular Account of them; but let me observe, that oblique Vision, when natural, was anciently the Mark of Bewitchery and magical Fascination, and to this Day tis a malignant ill Look; but when tis forced and affected it carries a wanton Design, and in Play-houses, and other publick Places, this ocular Intimation is often an Assignation for bad Practices: But this Irregularity in Vision, together with such Enormities as Tipping the Wink, the Circumspective Rowl, the Side-peep through a thin Hood or Fan, must be put in the Class of Heteropticks, as all wrong Notions of Religion are ranked under the general Name of Heterodox. All the pernicious Applications of Sight are more immediately under the Direction of a SPECTATOR; and I hope you will arm your Readers against the Mischiefs which are daily done by killing Eyes, in which you will highly oblige your wounded unknown Friend, T. B. (No. 250).

In the passage above, the reader complains about "oblique Vision," a "malignant ill Look," or "Irregularity of Vision," which all describe the same "bad Practices" of looking. These improper modes of seeing, mostly found in "publick places" like Play-Houses, can produce anarchic performative behaviors. Moreover, these disruptive modes of looking are primarily associated with feminine traits. The imagery of women involved in "tipping the Wink, the Circumspective Rowl, the Side-peep through a thin Hood or Fan" emphasizes willful women who indulge in their own pleasurable looking by engaging in secretive winks, cautious scans, and furtive glances with their use of fashion

items such as "hoods" or "fans." [15] These "pernicious Applications of Sight" are even more threatening because they allow women to dissemble with "a wanton Design." In this regard, one of the Spectator's central jobs is the policing of the look closely associated with consumption, fashion, and women. If the Cartesian mode of seeing strives to guarantee access to objective truth about the world, the Spectator's project similarly is concerned with ordering and managing "Heteropticks" under "the Direction of a SPECTATOR," so that dissimilarities and irregularities are excluded to ensure a singular and determining way of seeing. Mr. Spectator's omnipotent sight is again affirmed as he compares his ultimate spectatorial privilege to that of the sun, the "First Eye of Consequence," as well as to the "invisible Author of all" (250).

Scott Gordon observes that Mr. Spectator's empirical, detached mode of seeing can be compared to the camera obscura model of vision that "necessarily defines an observer as isolated, enclosed, and autonomous within its dark confines" and "impels a kind of ... withdrawal from the world, in order to regulate and purify one's relation to the manifold contents of the new 'exterior' world." [16] Nevertheless, when Gordon asserts that "an isolated and withdrawn technology applies to Mr. Spectator himself," he seems to overstate Mr. Spectator's removal from the everyday material world and overlook the extent to which Mr. Spectator's scopic regime is bound up with the rapidly changing

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[15] According to Oxford English Dictionary, "Tipping the Wink" is to direct a wink or to give someone a piece of secret or private information that might bring an advantage to them. "the Circumspective Rowl" can be defined as cautious looking around or scanning on all sides. The "Rowl" (now obsolete) also refers to a round cushion or pad of hair or other material, forming part of a woman's head-dress.

[16] Gordon , "Voyeuristic Dreams," 18. See also Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 39.

commercial milieu around him. In contrast, I will suggest that Mr. Spectator's powerful gaze, despite its guise of neutrality and politeness, can be seen as a defensive strategy that allows him to control what he considers threatening about the fluctuation and instability of the commercial world, a world intimately tied up in his mind with unruly female desires.

The Spectator's disciplinary gaze is foremost concerned with policing women and their consumption because, unchecked, such consumption represents what is troubling to him about capitalism. Throughout The Spectator, women are associated with the fantastic and insubstantial characteristics of fashion, credit, and the market that the periodical itself attempts to regulate and order. In Spectator No 15, Mr. Spectator remarks: "I have often reflected with my self on this unaccountable Humour in Woman-kind, of being smitten with every thing that is showy and superficial; and on the numberless Evils that befall the Sex, from this light, fantastical Disposition." Represented as vain and vacuous, women are seen as needing masculine direction. Mr. Spectator criticizes women for their vanity and frivolity, ridiculing female fashions such as hoop-skirts, patches, shoes, and hats. By deploring the dangers of the consuming passions of women and their attempts to emulate the higher fashion, Mr. Spectator draws attention to the perils of fashionable consumption in which women in turn become consumed by commodities. In doing so, he affirms men's need to regulate the female sex, thereby reiterating the traditional view of women as lacking the rational ability to control their own voracious appetites.

In Spectator No. 275, Mr. Spectator censures women's consuming desires by showing a dissection of a coquette's heart filled with inventories of fashionable things:

> Ribbons, Lace and Embroidery, wrought together in a most curious Piece of Network... invisible Billetdoux, Love-Letters, pricked Dances, and other Trumpery of the same Nature... a kind of Powder, which set the whole Company a Sneezing, and by the Scent discovered it self to be right Spanish. The several other Cells were stored with Commodities of the same kind, of which it would be tedious to give the Reader an exact Inventory (275).

By illustrating how the coquette's heart is full of frivolous things, the Spectator satirizes the ways these things come to replace human identity. A miniature portrait of a "Deceased Beau" found in the center of the coquette's heart symbolizes the reification of human beings insofar as an inanimate object comes to replace a human being. As Erin Mackie points out, these representations of the anatomized, objectified heart emphasize the pernicious effects of consumption and commercialization on human identity: "the problem with investing too greatly in consumption is that it implicates both men and women in sexual, social, and cultural networks that produce superficial relationships, debased, and vacant thoughts" (66). While Mackie is right to point out the dangers of consumption for both sexes, it is worth remembering that Mr. Spectator has already announced the primary target of his reformative project generally: "there are none to whom this Paper will be more useful, than to the female World" (10). By subjecting the coquette's heart to his penetrating scrutiny, he is primarily concerned with exposing and managing the female consumption.

Female consumers are not only intractable but also consciously use their fashionable appearances to challenge Mr. Spectator's visible authority. A female reader in paper No. 296 reveals that she dresses "often at a Window which fronts the Apartments of several Gentlemen" to solicit men's gazes. Instead of being a passive spectacle, she strategically fashions herself as a spectator who actively looks back at men: "I must own I love to look at them all, one for being well dressed, a second for his fine Eye" (No. 296). Another compelling instance of the female consumer's capacity to elude the Spectator's voyeuristic gaze is when a male reader complains about women and their use of hoop petticoats in paper Spectator No. 127. Addressed to Mr. Spectator, who has been absent from the town for a whole month, the reader urges "Revenge" on the "Fair Sex" for their "great Extravagancies" (No. 127). In the following passage, the male correspondent scrutinizes the female body and fashion censoriously, objecting strongly to the extravagance and senseless vanity of female consumption:

> You have diverted the Town almost a whole Month at the Expence of the Country, it is now high time that you should give the Country their Revenge. Since your withdrawing from this Place, the Fair Sex are run Into great Extravagancies. Their Petticoats, which began to heave and swell before you left us, are now blown up into a most enormous Concave, and rise every Day more and more: In short, Sir, since our Women know themselves to be out of the Eye of the SPECTATOR, they will be kept within no Compass. You praised them a little too soon, for the Modesty of their Head-Dresses; for as the Humour of a sick Person is

> often driven out of one Limb into another, their Superfluity of Ornaments, instead of being entirely Banished, seems only fallen from their Heads upon their lower Parts. What they have lost in Height they make up in Breadth, and contrary to all Rules of Architecture widen the Foundations at the same time that they shorten the Superstructure. Were they, like Spanish Jennets, to impregnate by the Wind, they could not have thought on a more proper Invention. But as we do not yet hear any particular Use in this Petticoat, or that it contains any thing more than what was supposed to be in those of Scantier Make, we are wonderfully at a loss about it (127).

Paradoxically the very insistence on the need for these extravagant women to be monitored by the "Eye of the SPECTATOR" suggests the potent threat posed by these fashionable women to men. The women in hoops easily evade male surveillance, as "they will be kept within no Compass." Moreover, the image of "enormous" hoop illustrates the extent of masculine anxiety about femininity and sexuality. Not only does the size of the hoop threaten men, but the hoop becomes an object of masculine fear because it allows women to control their own sexuality. The hoop can serve as a tool for female autonomy and power; it can be used as an armor to keep men at a distance, as well as a shield to conceal a pregnancy: "It is generally thought some crafty Women have thus betrayed their Companions into Hoops, that they might make them accessory to their own Concealments, and by that means escape the Censure of the World" (127). In short, The Spectator is denouncing not simply women in hoops but also the ways female

consumerism offers women an arena of empowerment in the public sphere. Constantly shifting their shapes and creating unsettling effects, the hoops embody the arbitrary, mercurial fluctuations of a marketplace that can be threatening to male disciplinary control.

Accordingly, one of the main objectives of Addison and Steele in The Spectator is to curtail female autonomy by replacing the artificial, extravagant, hooped female body with a modest, natural woman who abides by domestic values. The Spectator's efforts to dictate female fashion is, in short, an attempt to regulate "monstrous" female desires into a manageable form. Here, the figure of the fashionable woman becomes a focal point for the discursive construction of domestic femininity, similar to the way the adorned female body plays a central role for the constitution of mercantile capitalist ideology, as Laura Brown has shown in her Ends of Empire (3). The Spectator's attempt to monitor female consumption through a male disciplinary gaze plays a crucial role in the bourgeois ideological projects that Kathryn Shevelow traces in the popular print culture of the early eighteenth-century England. She explains that early periodicals constructed a normative definition of femininity by addressing their women readers "not only as consumers, but also as potential producers of the text." [17] The Spectator's effort to regulate female consumer desires also participates in producing the bourgeois private realm in which unruly fashionable women of the world are devalued in contrast to modest, sensible, domesticated women. For instance, Spectator No. 73 sets vain, extravagant ladies of fashion who "appear in all publick Places and Assemblies, in order to seduce Men to their Worship" in contrast to sensible women who find recognition not through personal display but instead "by the Education of their Children, Care of their Families, and Love

[17] Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, 23-24.

of their Husbands." This dichotomy between worldly and fashionable women on the one hand, and modest and retired women on the other hand, is characteristic of bourgeois ideologies of domesticity. [18] This construction of a private world of feminized domesticity ensures that women become identified exclusively with a domestic realm of consumption immune from the corrupt public world of the marketplace. Yet even as the domestic, private sphere is defined as outside the marketplace, the new domestic ideal depends on the constant supervision and the regulation of female consumption. Thus, The Spectator participates in consolidating a bourgeois private sphere not so much by eradicating as taming female consuming desires that threaten male power and by reforming women as virtuous, domestic beings.

Mr. Spectator's disciplinary regime testifies less to his power than to the potent threat which he tries to manage in the world because women can potentially elude his surveillance through their strategic deployment of fashion. Just as women wearing hoops can conceal and disguise pregnancy and sexual promiscuity, fashionable commodities can allow women to dissemble their outward appearance in order to indulge their transgressive desires. Spectator 41, for example, strongly censures women's use of paint, or cosmetics, by referring to fashionable ladies as female "Picts" or primitive Scottish warriors. Heavily painted "Picts" are threatening because they appear inscrutable and impenetrable to male viewers. Far from being "the most amiable Object that the Eye of Man can possibly behold" (No. 435), female Picts "behold all things with the same Air,

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[18] Mary Poovey's Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and Nancy Armstrong 's Desire and Domestic Fiction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) are two groundbreaking work on domestic fiction that have argued for the centrality of domesticity in eighteenth-century literature. Recent critics, such as Felicity Nussbaum, Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) have reconceptualized domesticity by linking it to colonial and imperialistic discourses.

whether they are Joyful or Sad; The same fix'd Insensibility appears on all Occasions," undermining the male gaze through the female capacity to look (No. 41).

Spectator No. 53 again expresses male anxiety about women who use fashion items such as wigs or patches. In this letter, a "reformed starer" writes to complain of "Peepers," women who deploy "both Fan and Eyes" to actively solicit the male look. The male writer's protest against "one of the young Ladies, who is a Peeper, resolved to bring down [his] Looks, and fix my Devotion on herself.... a Peeper works with her Hands, Eyes, and Fan" recapitulates the male anxiety that comes from women's strategic use of fashionable display. Despite his efforts to keep his "Eyes from wandering," the writer finds himself helpless as he becomes transfixed by the sight of her: "It was not in Nature to command one's Eyes from this Object; I could not avoid taking notice also of her Fan, which had on it various Figures, very improper to behold on that Occasion." Although the peeper's fan, which contains an erotic scene (showing a half-naked Venus with a peeping Satyr) seems to reproduce the male voyeuristic gaze, the fan also functions as a screen to mask her active female desire and to control her own display. His "[r]esentment" over "an Inundation of Ribbons and Brocades, and ... many new Vanities," and his fear of the "Fascination of the Peeper's Eyes, who had long practised a Skill in them, to recal the parting Glances of her Beholders" (53) demonstrate his uneasiness about ways female consumers can undermine and redirect the male gaze through their fashion choices.

As seen above, The Spectator stands out as a text that consciously attempts to define spectatorial privilege as male. By directing its penetrating gaze at the adorned female body, the periodical undertakes the correction and management of excessive

consumption. Rather than have women exercise agency through consumption within the public sphere, The Spectator's mode of surveillance defines women as "mere Objects of Sight" and designates the private domestic sphere as a site of consumption rather than production. When a distraught correspondent in No. 328 complains about the "prospect of being ruin'd and undone, by a sort of Extravagance which of late Years is in a less degree crept into every fashionable Family," The Spectator strives to mold female consumers to an ideal of domestic femininity—modest, restrained, and virtuous women. Nevertheless, Mr. Spectator's attempt to contain potentially aggressive spectacle serves less to establish his scopic power than to reaffirm the power of fashionable women who elude male surveillance through strategic display and deceptive appearances. Addison and Steele's periodical demonstrates that women consumers of the eighteenth century occupy a paradoxical position, for they are both valued as necessary consumers whose spending provides the rationale for British commercial expansion and trivialized as volatile consumers whose lavish consumption and sartorial display are potentially threatening to society. While recognizing the importance as well as the dangers of the burgeoning consumer revolution, Addison and Steele seek to mitigate their apprehensions by carefully monitoring the appearances and manners of women and regulating the excesses of female consumption. Far from being an omnipotent disciplinary regime, The Spectator's persistent efforts to establish its surveillance over female consumers demonstrate the authors' own anxieties about the capacity to control women even as they reaffirm the power of female consumers to resist The Spectator's scopic authority.

The Female Spectator

Among the many journals that imitated the The Spectator papers, one of the most celebrated was Eliza Haywood's The Female Spectator (1744-46). [19] Just as the title of The Female Spectator itself invokes The Spectator, The Female Spectator's persona explicitly announces her intention to "closely tread in the steps of her late brother and predecessor, the SPECTATOR" (FS Bk 1). While The Spectator was a daily paper and The Female Spectator a monthly, both periodicals share common features: the fictional spectatorial 'club' of friends, the correspondence from readers, and the single-essay format illustrated by anecdotes and short stories. The Female Spectator also claims to engage in the same program of reforming the manners and morals of its readers and to target a largely female readership. Most early critics have tended to consider The Female Spectator at best a failed imitation of the period's most influential periodical in terms of purpose, method, and style. For example, George Whicher, Haywood's first biographer and critic, dismisses The Female Spectator as a "bold attempt to rival Addison upon his own ground," just as J. B. Priestley mocks Haywood as "an Addison in petticoats" in his introduction to his sister's edition of The Female Spectator." [20]

This view of The Female Spectator is now outdated and transformed by an array of new critical approaches—especially feminist and cultural studies—that have recovered and reassessed many works by female authors long overlooked or intentionally neglected. Reappraisal of Eliza Haywood as one of the most prolific and versatile women writers in the eighteenth century has led to a revisioning of The Female Spectator as deserving

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[19] Eliza Haywood, The Female Spectator, 4 vols. (London, 1775). The twenty-four books were collected into four volumes. All references to The Female Spectator are taken from the PAO British Periodical Collection available online. I will refer to the text as FS with book numbers.

[20] George Whicher, The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood. (New York: Columbia University Pres, 1915), 144; The Female Spectator,:Selections from Mrs. Eliza Haywood's Periodical (1744-1746), ed. Mary Priestley, intro. J. B. Priestley (London: Bodley Head, 1929).

more intense critical attention that goes beyond identifying the superficial resemblances between Haywood's periodical and its predecessor. Critics—such as Helene Koon and Ann Messenger—overwhelmingly agree that Haywood was the first periodical writer to address women's issues from a woman's point of view. [21] While most critics have acknowledged The Female Spectator's attempt to correct Mr. Spectator's representation of issues, they also find Haywood's focus on the role of domestic women within the private sphere rather conservative, as she is seldom seen to challenge male authority openly. For instance, Kathyrn Shevelow argues that The Female Spectator exemplifies how eighteenth-century English periodicals advocated "an ideal of femininity based on patriarchal conceptions of women's sphere and women's nature. [22] Although Mary Ann Schofield notes that Haywood engages in "quiet rebellion," she concludes that Haywood "does not question the validity and rightness of women's place in the home" and thus perpetuates domestic ideology within the patriarchal system. [23] I take issue with the notion that The Female Spectator functions as a passive conduit for patriarchal norms and propose in this section that Haywood significantly undermines the patriarchal order by challenging Mr. Spectator's visual authority. I will demonstrate that Haywood contests The Spectator's gender ideology by reinventing a new model of spectatorship which can disrupt masculine authority. If Mr. Spectator's supervisory gaze attempts to contain

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[21] Helene Koon, "Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator," The Huntington Library Quarterly. (42:1978), 45. Koon argues that Haywood's female perspective "profoundly affects the presentation and treatment of every subject." Ann Messenger, His and Hers: Essays in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 141. By comparing differences in tone, rhetorical strategy, emphasis, and issues in both The Spectator and The Female Spectator, Messenger also stresses Haywood's emphasis on female education and its role in helping women's survival in terms of "what works, what is practical."

[22] Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, 2.

[23] Mary Ann Schofield, Eliza Haywood. (Boston: Twayne, 1985), 110; Koon, "Eliza Haywood and The Female Spectator," 43-55; Messenger, "Educational Spectators: Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, and Eliza Haywood," 108-47.

women within the private, domestic sphere and exclude them from the public sphere, The Female Spectator is deeply concerned with articulating a new way of seeing that can empower women in both private and public realms. Not only does the Female Spectator urge her readers to become spectators like herself, she also explores how women can empower themselves through manipulating their status as objects of consumer exchange and visibility.

Redefining Spectatorship

As the gendered reversal of Addison and Steele's title and persona indicates, Haywood's periodical begins by drawing attention to the ways female perspectives have been excluded from The Spectator under the guise of its supposed neutrality. By replacing the male spectatorial figure with a female commentator, Haywood legitimates women's spectatorial authority in engaging in a similar program of reforming the manners of readers. Like her predecessor, the Female Spectator aims to be "both useful and entertaining," but she communicates her observations about human nature in a different way so that her audience may learn "to regulate their own affairs (FS Bk 1). Instead of subjecting her readers to a critical judgment, Haywood asserts that all her readers, regardless of whether they are men or women, "have it in their Power" to manage themselves and to become "worthy of that Character which [they] are all ambitious of attaining" (FS Bk 15). Although the Female Spectator demurs that she is not so arrogant as "to imagine that any Thing offered by a Female Censor would have so much Weight with the Men as is requisite to make...[a] Change in their Conduct" (FS Bk

15), numerous letters from male admirers who "confess[ ] the Merit of [her] Writings (FS Bk 15) testify to the success of her cultural authority as a female author.

The Female Spectator also departs from her brother by redefining the nature of authority. Whereas Mr. Spectator's authority is legitimated by his distance from the transgressions he critiques, the Female Spectator declares her own involvement in scandalous experiences—the "many Scenes of Vanity and Folly [she had] as the greatest Coquet of them"—as the basis of her ethical authority. In contrast to Mr. Spectator's radical detachment and objectivity, the Female Spectator offers her personal experience and the knowledge she has gained from it to "teach every one to regulate their own" (FS Bk 1). She recounts of her past indulgences that:

> Dress, Equipage, and Flattery, were the Idols of my Heart.—I should have thought that Day lost which did not present me with some new Opportunity of shewing myself – My Life, for some Years, was a continued Round of what I then called Pleasure, and my whole Time engross'd by a Hurry of promiscuous Diversions" (FS Bk 1).

If Addison and Steele repeatedly castigate the figure of the coquette who indulges in the vices of vanity, overconsumption, and self-display, the Female Spectator relies on her experience as a coquette to assert her authority. As she tells readers in her introduction, "I never was a beauty, and am now very far from being young." The Female Spectator goes so far as to disclose her private history, her age, and personal appearance in order to reach out to her readers, in contrast to Mr. Spectator, who acknowledges only a disembodied

gaze. Unlike her brother whose detached, critical gaze sets him in an elevated position of moral superiority over his readers, the Female Spectator's excessive desires and past "promiscuous Diversions" have endowed her paradoxically with an education far "more liberal than is ordinarily allowed to persons of her Sex" (FS Bk 2). Although this admission of her past immoralities may risk her "own interest and reputation," she self-consciously deploys this scandalous display of her body so "that the Public may reap Some benefit from it." It is her former experience as a coquette who has indulged in indiscriminate consumption that paradoxically has transformed her into a discriminating observer with more discerning vision than Mr. Spectator. Hence, she claims that she can "see into the secret springs which gave rise to the actions I had either heard or been witness of;...judge of the various passions of the human mind, and distinguish those imperceptible dangers by which they become masters of the heart, and attain the dominion over reason" (FS Bk 1).

The Female Spectator's visual authority is also shared and expanded by three fictional characters, each with a distinct voice representing a different age and social status—a vivacious widow, the young and happily married Mira, and Euphrosine, the virgin daughter of a wealthy merchant. By emphasizing the unique opinion of each of these characters, the periodical relies on multiple, dialogical discourses in a way that contrasts with the monological authority of Mr. Spectator. Mira tells the readers, "two Evenings in every Week... we communicate to each other what Intelligence we receive, and consider on what Topicks we shall proceed... we lay our several Productions on the Table, which being read over, every one has the Liberty of excepting against, or censuring, whatever she disapproves; nothing being to be exhibited to the Publick,

without the joint Concurrence of all" (FS Bk 2). Here, the female community becomes a space for interactive and egalitarian dialogue, in which women share stories, read letters collaboratively, and exchange opinions on issues that concern the female world. In contrast to Mr. Spectator's all-knowing, neutral, transparent gaze, Haywood foregrounds mutual, reciprocal visibility in intersubjective exchanges based on the commonality of lived experiences.

Haywood is also aware that a cabal of females can be easily charged with gossip-mongering and scandalous news. She recognizes that women are both victims and purveyors of information that becomes the "Talk of the Town," just as women's reputations are easily ruined by "the Mischiefs occasion'd by a Tongue delighting in Scandal" (FS Bk 1). She carefully distances herself from the type of gossip that ferments in "a weak and degenerate Mind" and takes "delight in whispering about every idle Story ... told." Likewise, she dignifies her coterie of female correspondents as those "who in no other Respect can be accused of Ill-nature, [and] take a prodigious Pleasure in reporting every little Scandal they hear, even tho' it be of Persons whom they have neither any Quarrel against, nor can any way be supposed to envy" (FS Bk 13). At the same time, the Female Spectator deploys the scandalous aspect of gossip for her own edifying purposes. Just as the Female Spectator's scandalous display of her body stimulates and heightens readers' interest, her frequent stories about love, courtship, and suffering aim to "regulate" and instruct her readers through the "Gratification" of their "Curiosity" to be "made acquainted with other People's Affairs" (FS Bk 1).

In order to engage her readers' desire for scandal, the Female Spectator constructs herself as a spectator who can "secure an eternal Fund of Intelligence" by placing an

army of spies throughout Europe, such that "nothing curious or worthy of Remark can escape [her]" (Bk 1). Vowing to "have all the Secrets of Europe... laid open at one View" in her papers, she appears to be engaged in powerful surveillance that can penetrate the hidden truth under the surface. While her program seems to be consonant with Mr. Spectator's ever-present panoptic gaze, the Female Spectator's sight is more far-reaching and ultimately more subversive. By stressing that her spies are to "penetrate the Mysteries of the Alcove, the Cabinet, [and the] Field," Haywood implies that she can see into both private and public realms, including the sexual, political and military forms of patriarchal power. In other words, her mode of viewing does not extend existing power relations, but rather seeks to expose the secrets of masculine authority and its various aspects. By uncovering and publicizing knowledge about these masculine realms, the Female Spectator aims to serve the potentially critical function of making patriarchal systems visible, especially to her female readers.

Challenging the "scrutinous" male gaze

> Men are so censorious, that they look on all those of our Sex, who appear too much at public Places, as setting themselves up for Sale, and, therefore, taking the Privilege of Buyers, measure us with their Eye from Head to Foot; and as the most perfect Beauty may not have Charms for all who gaze upon her in this scrutinous Manner, few there are, if any, who

have not found some who will pass by her with a contemptuous Toss, no less significant than the most rude Words could be. (FS Bk 5)

Haywood's intense awareness of the gender politics of looking becomes explicit in her discussion of men's "scrutinous gaze" in Book 5 of the Female Spectator. In the passage above, the Female Spectator criticizes sharply the way the male look transforms women who "appear in public" into goods "for Sale" in the marketplace. For women, to be visible is to be made into a public spectacle, submitted to the male gaze, as the visual field of publicness is fraught with troubling implications for women. Here, Haywood foregrounds the complex workings of vision, gender, and commerce as the men, powerful consumers with the "Privilege of Buyers," scrutinize and objectify women in commercial transactions. The male gaze not only commodifies women but also disciplines women so that a woman cannot willingly "set herself up for sale."

The Female Spectator's emphasis on the "scrutinous gaze" of men also draws attention to the ways Addison and Steele's papers consistently establish women as objects of the male disciplinary gaze. It is hardly surprising that Haywood calls the masculine gaze "censorious," when Mr. Spectator calls himself the great "Censor" of the British Isles. Often portraying women as coquettes, prostitutes, Amazons and fashionable ladies, Mr. Spectator calls for the women to be reformed and to fulfill "all the becoming Duties of Virginity, Marriage and Widowhood" (No. 4). Haywood implicitly warns about the dangerous implications of the masculine look. Under the male gaze, the woman becomes so thoroughly commodified that she is reduced to an object. Haywood also attempts to appeal to her female readers' experience of the spectatorial

objectification which injures women considerably more than "rude Words," admitting that there are "[f]ew ... if any" who have not experienced the critical look of the male buyer. Consequently, Haywood admonishes those men who "loiter away so many Hours at Coffee-House Windows merely [sic] to make their Observations and ridicule everyone that passes by," fully aware that these men exemplify the "scrutinous" gaze that attempts to shape women into a patriarchal ideal of femininity.

In order to challenge the pernicious effects of the "scrutinous" male gaze, Haywood advises women readers to become spectators themselves. Lamenting that women "have no Ideas of their own, and only through Custom and a genteel Education are enabled to talk agreeably on those of other People," (FS Bk 4) Haywood urges women to interrogate the status quo. Thus, when she is asked about women's proper place in society, she retorts in Book 10, "Would it not be better if she performs those duties more through Principle than Custom?" In order to see clearly, women must be free from the shackles of "Custom" or "Prejudice." Haywood provides an account of prejudice's effects in visual terms, as follows: "when Prejudice has shut our Eyes against [truth]:—We are rendered by it wholly incapable of examining any thing, and take all upon Trust that it presents to us" (FS Bk 21). She thus urges women to see properly, insisting that "Observation and Discernment [can] point out the present with their Causes" (FS Bk 4). Haywood's ultimate objective is not so much to reform "Manners and Morals" as to effect a fundamental change in how one sees, to "correct those Errors in the Mind which are most imperceptible, and for that Reason the most dangerous" (FS 4). Rather than "being always concerned with what works, what is practical" (140), as Ann Messenger argues, The Female Spectator suggests that women must learn to see

differently first before they can take immediate actions. The more women see, the more they know, and the stronger their judgments become. Haywood's ultimate objective is to have women assume the role of spectators who can "divest [themselves]...of the Prepossessions [they have] received and to examine all Things with the unbiased Eye of Reason" (TS 633). In short, she is encouraging women to be Enlightenment knowing subjects.

Lamenting women's lack of insight, Haywood sharply criticizes the way women are educated to accept their limited role in society. She points out that "it is entirely owing to a narrow Education" that women are "insensible of the Injustice which has long been done them, and find a Vacuum in their Minds, which, to fill up, they, of their own accord, invented the way of sticking little Pictures on Cabinets, Screens, Dressing-Tables, and other little Pieces of Chamber-Furniture, and then varnishing over so as to look like one Piece of Painting" (FS Bk 10). Haywood deplores the deficiencies of women's education that make women vain and shallow. Instead of being critical, discerning spectators, women are concerned only with the superficial appearances of commodities, as they turn household objects into display items.

The Female Spectator's discussion of the microscope is important in this context. In "The Microscope and English Imagination," Marjorie Hope Nicolson notes the popularization of scientific studies made possible by advances in optic technology and briefly comments on Haywood's interest in promoting scientific study among women. [24] In Book 15, the Female Spectator and her club take advantage of the new optic technology by taking a microscope into the country, where they use it to study insects.

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[24] Marjorie Hope Nicolson, "The Microscope and English Imagination." Smith College Studies in Modern Language. (16:1935), 428-462.

The next book finds the Female Spectator paying a visit to a neighbor whose telescope affords a clear view of Venus. While it is possible that, as Nicolson suggests, the Female Spectator's interest in optical technologies demonstrates her growing awareness that the "new science" was as readily available to women as it was to men (49), the Female Spectator's enthusiasm for these optic instruments mirrors Haywood's belief in women's capacity to be rational spectators as opposed to merely passive spectacles. Urging women to "throw off those senseless Avocations, that make the finest among us of no more Account than a pretty Plaything" (FS Bk 12), the Female Spectator recommends that women should take advantage of "Science, which has hitherto been looked upon as too abstruse for Female Observation" (FS Bk 17), so that they can take on the role of observing subjects with active minds.

Haywood also insists that numerous forms of knowledge —natural history, philosophy, astronomy, and geology —can improve women's intellectual vision. Speculative enquiry is fundamental to her program for female education, since books can allow female readers "to compare past ages with the present; to discover what in [their] fore-fathers was worthy imitation, and what should be avoided; to improve upon their virtues, and take warning by their error" (FS Bk 7). The Female Spectator's own periodical, of course, is intended to perform this same valuable function, for Haywood seeks to "improve" and correct the "error[s]" of the widely influential Spectator papers for her own purposes. Whereas Mr. Spectator's notion of female education consists of "accomplishments' and "embellishments" in which home becomes "the proper Province for Private Women to shine in" (SP 81), Haywood insists that masculine "learning" and rational employments are vital for women. If men deprive women of learning and

encourage them to "trifle away [their] Time in Follies, which renders [women] ridiculous Abroad and insignificant at home" (FS Bk 12), Haywood urges women to "make him asham'd to exert that Authority that he thinks he has a Right to over [them]" (FS Bk 10) through their capacity for reflection, judgment, and discernment, all features of a rational, observing subject.

Female "Spectatorial Observation" of Consumption

Haywood's agenda for women to change how they see is also intimately connected to the problematic issue of increased consumption in her society. She recognizes the debilitating effects of unrestrained consumption as people blindly become victims of their excessive consumer appetites for fashionable luxuries and leisure pastimes: "Diversions ... in this age of Luxury, serve as Decoys to draw the Thoughtless and Unwary together, and as it were, prepare the Way for more vicious Excesses" (FS Bk 4). In contrast to Addison and Steele, who repeatedly associate the dangers of excessive consumption with the figure of women, the Female Spectator suggests not only that these vices are not limited to women but that men are more responsible for them and pose a greater threat to the welfare of English society. If Addison and Steele ridicule women who value goods above their own husbands in Book 2, Haywood focuses on criticizing fine gentlemen who wear "foreign Silk Brocades instead of English Cloth" and military Gentlemen who are "infected" with "Over-Delicacy." In the "Copy of a Bill" that contains a detailed list of soldiers' fashionable items such as cold cream, mask, and comb, she laments how these trifles have become "Ammunition" for men in battles and "more Concern than the routing of the whole Army" (FS Bk 2). Instead of paying

attention to their duties or the situation of their nation at war, these military men are more preoccupied with "the Want of any of those Commodities, [which] the Interruption of our Commerce prevents from being imported." This "infect[ion] from "Over-Delicacy" and "softening Luxuries" causes men to neglect their "Obligations" as soldiers and even renders them "Effemin[ate]" (FS Bk 2).

Just as Haywood illuminates how the male desire for luxury can be potentially destructive, she also contends that the "Vice of Gaming" has similarly resulted in endangering England's economy so that "so many Shops well stock'd and flourishing, are now shut up even in the Heart of the City, and their Owners either Bankrupts or miserable Refugees in foreign Parts" (FS Bk 3). Although Haywood admits that women are "known to be so fond of appearing fine and gay, that it is no wonder the Tradesmen's Wives should even exceed their Husbands in the Article of Dress," she does not blame such lavish feminine display for the dire situation. Instead, she accuses primarily the men who neglect their shops in the hope of "getting more of Play." As she reiterates in Book 15, men are more culpable than women since "Vanity, Affectation, and all Errors of that Nature are infinitely less excusable in the Men than in the Woman" in that men have "so much greater Opportunities than [women] have of knowing better" (FS Bk 3).

Furthermore, Haywood offers broader insight into the ways private gambling and excessive consumption are tied to the proliferation of speculative investment precipitated by the South Sea Bubble, but she confines her attack to men whose fervor for affluence without the requisite toil has ruined the nation's economy. The Female Spectator associates "the extravagant Itch of Gaming" with "the fatal Year 1720," when the "alluring Prospect of making a great Fortune at once, and without any Labour or Trouble,

so infatuated the Minds of all the Ambitious, the Avaricious, and the Indolent that for a Time there seemed an entire Stagnation of all Business but what was transacted by the Brokers in Change-Alley" (FS Bk 3). Here Haywood's main objective is to condemn male indulgence and idleness, as she is not entirely opposed to the opportunities generated by the development of speculative investment in a fluctuating market. As I will discuss later, Haywood takes advantage of the new economic system to invent herself as a producer of commodities while constructing her readers as consumers in the literary marketplace.

Another way Haywood objects to Mr. Spectator's depiction of women as victims of overconsumption is through her response to a male correspondent whose wife engages in immoderate tea drinking. Tea, imported from Asia, was expensive and had only relatively recently become fashionable. By the time Haywood wrote, social tea drinking had become a common practice for upper-class women in particular. In Book 8, the male shopkeeper John Careful complains about women's "immoderate use of Tea," which he calls "the Bane of good Housewifery" and "the utter Destruction of all Oeconomy." He inveighs against the financial extravagance of tea drinking as well as its moral perils as a form of self-indulgence and laziness that infects servants. The Female Spectator to some extent shares Mr. Careful's viewpoint by exclaiming, "But alas! The Passion we have for exotics [like Tea] discovers itself but in too many instances, and we neglect the Use of what we have within ourselves, for the same Reason as some Men do their wives, only because they are their own" (FS Bk 8). Nevertheless, by comparing a wives' excessive tea drinking to husbands' adultery, Haywood calls attention to men's objectification of women and condemns men's moral vices. By undermining the legitimacy of husbands'

complaint against wives' tea-drinking, Haywood suggests that a husband's tirade against his wife's excessive tea consumption is not so much about tea-drinking or its hazards but ultimately about his desire to control and monitor his wife. She also addresses her female readers directly: "I dare say one Half of my Readers will expect me to be very angry at this Declamation against an Amusement my Sex are generally so fond of" and successfully appeals to the interest of women to question the bias that women are often accused of. In doing so, she produces her own "Spectatorial Observation" on the issue of women's much exaggerated tea-drinking, thereby revealing the male anxieties underlying the representation of female consumption.

The Consumption of Display

Haywood's interest in the nexus between spectatorship and consumption also extends to her text's relationship to her female readership. Unlike Mr. Spectator, whose authority is mostly based upon his surveillance, the Female Spectator relies primarily on the visibility of the female body to engage her readers. Haywood presents lengthy narratives that she identifies as "true stories" about women to make her periodical more appealing to her readers. In Book 13, Haywood insists that these sensational stories are a more successful means of reform than Mr. Spectator's disciplinary gaze because they combine both entertainment and instruction:

> People, especially those of condition, are more easily laughed out of their follies, than reasoned out of them. Nothing indeed is more certain, than that if a gay, thoughtless person takes up a book, which he imagines is composed only for

> amusement, and before he is aware, happens to meet with some favorite vice of his own, artfully and merrily exposed, he will start at the resemblance of himself, and perhaps be reclaimed by it: whereas he might hear a thousand sermons on the same occasion, without being moved, though ever so learned, or with the greatest grace delivered (Bk 13).

These stories not only allow the instructional identification between the reader and the persona but also construct readers as consumers who can purchase literary commodities for their pleasure and instruction. Haywood's periodical promises to gratify her reader's voyeuristic desires and "eager[ness] to pry into Affairs of others," a trait she finds predominant in most human beings (FS Bk 13). By illustrating important issues related to the female world, these sensational "true stories" become a primary vehicle of her agenda in educating women to become discerning spectators.

On the one hand, Haywood engages her readers' curiosity by drawing attention to victimized innocent women suffering under the oppression of duplicitous or tyrannical men. Soliciting readers' identification with the suffering of her wronged female characters, she hopes they will sympathize with the victims of oppression and question the injustice that has caused it. Just as the editor of the Female Spectator draws attention to her now-reformed vice of coquetry for "publick Benefits," so too the violated female figures in Haywood's scandalous tales stimulate readers' interest and outrage. Directing readers' sympathetic gaze to violated female bodies, masquerade episodes in The Female Spectator—(such as the story of a woman who is nearly raped at a masquerade by a man who looks like her husband) or the story of Erminia (who is ruined by a dissembling man

who looks like her brother) (Bk 1)—warn readers about the dangers of masquerade and predatory men who practice deception.

On the other hand, these cautionary stories about women's impropriety and scandalous behaviors allow readers to explore the transgressive pleasures of female desire. Perhaps no story in The Female Spectator more clearly demonstrates this model of female empowerment than does "The Lady's Revenge," which is retold by a reader named by Elismonda. When abandoned by her false suitor, the female protagonist Barsina does not remain a passive victim but successfully avenges a false suitor through various visual stratagems and dissimulations. She derives her position of scopic dominance over her suitor Ziphranes by masquerading as a submissive woman who "assumed... much Softness in her Eyes and Voice" in order to carry out her revenge (FS Bk 14). Through her guise of femininity, she tricks him into drinking poison and ruins his life financially, physically, and socially. She also disguises her own death and carefully controls the terms of how she is seen publicly so that Ziphranes becomes "confounded at the Sight of her." By making a public spectacle of herself, Barsina becomes "the Object of his Terror" and impairs his power to see clearly to the extent "his Sight forsook his Optics" and he becomes powerless.

Through a rare example of a woman who executes a successful revenge, Haywood's aim is to show her readers that women's strategic self-display can destabilize the male gaze and maximize female power. The Female Spectator emphasizes Barsina's theatricality: "It must be own'd Barsina acted her Part admirably well." Barsina's careful dissembling allows her to reverse the conventional specular relationship between men and women, so that Ziphranes becomes reduced to "an object of public Contempt."

If Barsina's conscious self-display empowers her, it also gratifies female readers' voyeuristic impulses. Barsina's narrative gains strong approval from female readers as offering "a double Pleasure in the reading," and her revenge is deemed fully justifiable by her community: "Those who loved Barsina highly approved of the Method she took to punish his Inconstancy, and even the Friends of Ziphranes could not condemn it." The narrator even suggests that Barsina should be regarded as a role model for female readers, as she adds: "I Heartily wish... that all Women who have been abandoned and betrayed by Men... would assume the Spirit she did, and rather contrive some Means to render the ungrateful Lover the Object of Contempt, than themselves, by giving way to fruitless Grief, which few will commiserate" (FS Bk 14).

The Female Spectator's open endorsement of Barsina's spectacular revenge seems to be at odds with her observation in Book 6: "when a Woman unwomanizes herself, [she] renounces the Softness of her Nature, and idly boasts of having it in her Power to conquer" (FS Bk 6). The story of Alithea, a story about an exemplary wife, who reforms a philandering husband through an "excelling Pattern of Good-Nature and Conjugal Love," seems to support this ideal of submissive, domestic femininity (FS Bk 6). The story appears to vary little from most eighteenth-century conduct books that instruct women to influence a "Man of mean capacity" through their feminine virtues rather than by being "the Virago." Yet, far from idealizing Alithea, the Female Spectator cautions her readers that she "would have no husband... depend on this Example, and become a Dorimon in Expectation of finding an Alithea in his Wife:—It is putting the Love and Virtue of a Woman to too severe a Test." She acknowledges that only few women can actually follow Alithea's example. In the end, Alithea's story does not

instruct women to become unattainable ideals of virtuous women, but only to cultivate the appearance of being virtuous. The Female Spectator's well-known comment—"I again repeat it as the most infallible Maxim, that whenever we would truly conquer we must seem to yield"—advises women to act in a way that magnifies the qualities that make women desirable. In other words, she asks women to engage in strategic artfulness that allows them to manipulate outward appearances and exercise power while seeming to appear as virtuous women.

Just as Haywood urges women to throw off restraints and transgress social boundaries through their manipulation of display, she engages in theatricality to revise the role and nature of the female author in The Female Spectator. Whereas one of the aims of The Spectator was to exclude women from the public sphere, The Female Spectator is concerned with establishing the legitimacy of the woman writer in an environment hostile to women writers. Haywood's prolific career as a professional writer demonstrates women's active participation in print culture. Not only did she have a successful career as one of the most popular writers of amatory fictions, she also produced political writings in addition to establishing her own publishing and bookselling business. The wide range of her literary productions and the versatility of the strategies she employs as a female writer demonstrate how she capitalized within a marketplace where aristocratic literary tastes were losing ground on the commercial values of the middle-class. Women's involvement as producers and consumers in the market for literary commodities posed a threat to male writers who, as Addison and Steele's Spectator clearly demonstrates, strive to enclose women within the private sphere of the home.

In response to Mr. Spectator who advocates that women should not be "Scholars" but "better Daughters, Wives, Mothers and Friends" (95), the Female Spectator deliberately includes one "very angry Letter" from a male reader, Curioso Politico to challenge Mr. Spectator's denigration of women writers. The Female Spectator emphasizes the rude manners of Curioso to reveal his misogynistic attitude as well as the absurdity of his argument to her readers. Representing the opinion of "most of the Wits, as well as Men of Fashion," Curioso accuses the Female Spectator of being "an idle, prating, gossiping old Woman fit only to tell long stories by the Fire-side for the Entertainment of little Children or Matrons" (FS Bk 8). Admitting to the Female Spectator that he "never had any great Opinion of [her] Sex as Authors," he complains that her limited focus on feminine issues such as "Home-Amours, Reflections on Human Nature, the Passions, Morals, Inferences, and Warnings to her own Sex" makes her "in no way fit for the polite Coffee-Houses, or to satisfy Persons of an inquisitive Taste." Curioso's insistence that women authors should "confine [them]selves within [their] own Sphere" (FS Bk 8) can be read as an attempt by men to seal off the field of professional writing from the incursion of successful female authors like Haywood. This attempt to construct the world of politics and print as a masculine sphere separate from the feminine, private sphere is also shared by Mr. Spectactor when he expresses his anxiety towards the encroachment of the female sex in the public world. As Mr. Spectator puts it: "[w]e have indeed carried Women Characters too much into publick Life, and you shall see them now-a-Days affect a sort of Fame" (SP 342).

In addition to using letters purportedly from male correspondents to critique a masculine field of vision that is too narrow and sexist, the Female Spectator also

undermines male authority by masking her critique by seeming to endorse socially prescribed feminine conduct. Rather than challenging patriarchal order outright, Haywood intentionally adopts a submissive, proper femininity to subvert Addison and Steele's disciplinary regime. Despite her seemingly modest disavowal that she is not so arrogant as "to imagine, that any Thing offered by a Female Censor would have so much Weight with the Men as is requisite to make that Change in their Conduct" (FS Bk 15), the Female Spectator's aim is to redirect the focus onto men's shortcomings by adding that such "Change in their Conduct" is what "a great many of them stand in very great need of." The Female Spectator's use of the term "Female Censor" also suggests that she is clearly aware of transgressing the proper domain of women. By describing herself as a "Censor," a term that evokes the British government's Stage Licensing Act of 1737, the Female Spectator shows that her "Capacity" is not merely limited to feminine matters but has a larger political significance, thus blurring the divide between private/feminine and public/masculine realms. Just as the Female Spectator had previously shown that male consumption of luxury can endanger the nation's strength and English manliness, and had urged that "those Gentlemen who stay'd at home would...exchange their foreign Silk Brocades for downright English Cloth" (FS Bk 2), she insists that reformation of private vice can lead to public benefits. Indeed, numerous letters from male correspondents admiring her as the great female Moralizer and "agreeable Monitor" (FS Bk 15) validate her role as a critical spectator who can exert influence beyond the private, domestic sphere. As she puts it: "The better we regulate our Actions in private Life, the more we may hope of public Blessings, and the more we shall be enabled to sustain public Calamities" (FS Bk 8). This emphasis on the connection between private and public

spheres effectively challenges the scopic authority by which Mr. Spectator attempts to enclose women within the private sphere of the home.

Throughout The Female Spectator, Haywood is greatly concerned with undermining Addison and Steele's spectatorial authority by foregrounding ways in which the their fantasy of an omnipotent disciplinary gaze is inextricable from their anxieties over consuming women. Whereas critics have often considered Haywood's Female Spectator as promoting the domestic ideology exemplified in the periodicals of Addison and Steele, I have demonstrated that Haywood's periodical is not part of conservative conduct literature but rather a radical intervention in reformulating spectatorship in ways that empower women. Instead of being reduced to passive objects of the Spectator's "scrutinizing gaze," women can take advantage of their conventional status as both consumers and commodities to gain visual agency. By drawing extensively on the power of the spectacle to appeal to readers' voyeuristic desires, Haywood challenges male perspective and ideology by constructing women readers as active consumers of her periodical. Through its strategic display of women as spectacle, which range from representations of scandalous to decorous women, the periodical demonstrates how women can manipulate their customary position as commodified objects of the male gaze to empower themselves. By establishing her authority as a discerning female spectator who is able to challenge Addison and Steele's regime of surveillance, Haywood not only becomes a powerful model for her readers but insists on women's participation in both private and public realms.

The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless

Haywood's The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751), which appeared five years after the final number of her periodical, can be read as a continuation of her attempt to challenge Addison and Steele's surveillance regime. If The Female Spectator interrupts the fantasy of visual omnipotence that The Spectator strives to maintain, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless turns to the figure of the coquette to further explore how the masculine reifying look can be disrupted. Whereas The Female Spectator is primarily concerned with redefining spectatorship to legitimate the female writer's authority in the public sphere, Betsy Thoughtless is more interested in the ways women can deploy coquetry to pursue their visual pleasure within the domestic sphere. Challenging the stereotype of the coquette as a mindless, superficial flirt, Haywood's Betsy Thoughtless focuses on the figure of the coquette to formulate alternative forms of visual agency for women.

The coquette has long been a familiar figure in eighteenth-century literature and culture, along with her male counterparts, the rake and the libertine. [25] With her predatory sexual behaviors and pleasure-seeking self-indulgence, the coquette was often reviled as a transgressive figure during the eighteenth century. As seen in Mary Davy's The Reform'd Coquet (Memoirs of a Coquet or the History for Miss Harriet Airy) (1765) and Amelia Opie's anonymously published Dangers of Coquetry (1760), the coquette is frequently satirized or vilified in eighteenth-century literature. Similarly a range of conduct books or didactic novels feature the coquette as a negative moral example whose predatory desires must be contained or disciplined.

[25] According to the OED, the coquette is a woman who "uses arts to gain the admiration and affection of men, merely for the gratification of vanity, or from a desire of conquest, and without any intention of responding to the feelings aroused."

The coquette becomes an object of ridicule in Addison and Steele's Spectator essays as well. Addison and Steele's depiction of the coquette as a voracious consumer who is preoccupied with fashion is inseparable from their deep-seated anxieties about the changing and fraught relationships between people and things. For instance, Spectator No. 281's dissection of a coquette's heart, which is found "stuffed with innumerable sorts of Trifles" reveals Addison and Steele's broader concerns about a society increasingly invested in acquiring and displaying material goods. The coquette cares more for fashionable things than for the people around her, as her heart is devoid of "the Impression of Multitudes of Faces" of men she had seemed to look upon with "an eye of Kindness" (No. 281). The coquette is seen as inherently not only deceptive but also as volatile and capricious; her heart is mercurial, having "all the Qualities of that Spirit which is made use of in the Thermometer, to shew the Change of Weather." Despite their embrace of trade and consumption, Addison and Steele's critique of the coquette's "Passion for Dress and Show" (No. 15) demonstrates how eighteenth-century society projected its anxieties about consumer culture onto women. Simultaneously, their preoccupation with reforming the coquette reveals her threat to patriarchal authority through her consuming appetites.

Feminist criticism has shown how the coquette poses a challenge to patriarchal norms of courtship and marriage through her insistence on her own agency. With her predatory sexual behaviors and self-indulgence, the coquette can be considered a potent figure who openly defies the conventional role of a virtuous woman. But these discussions of the coquette have typically been confined to considering her challenges to gender norms instead of her relation to the changing economic world. Neglecting to note

the consistency with which the coquette is identified as an avid consumer of luxury goods elides the ways that the discourses of gender intertwine with debates about emergent consumer economy. The coquette—acquisitive, fickle, and pleasure-seeking—not only embodies the worst tendencies of female sexuality but also registers cultural anxieties underlying emerging consumer capitalism. By allowing women to be subjects within consumer culture, the market encourages women to desire in ways that threaten the established sexual order. Ellen Pollak, for example, asserts that coquettes, like prudes, are denigrated as "stock deviants" because they "are typically women who endeavor to become subjects of desire within an ideological context that objectifies female sexuality as property." [26] The coquette becomes a source of danger because she masterfully exploits the marketplace for her own personal pleasure and profit.

This relation between the coquette and consumerism has not been fully examined in eighteenth-century scholarship. Instead of viewing coquetry as involving solely moral or sexual behaviors, my reading of The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless redefines coquetry as a mode of consumerism. By contextualizing coquetry within the economic order, I will examine how Betsy's coquetry allows her to play an active role as a paradigmatic consumer of goods who masterfully exploits the marketplace for her own pleasure and profit. The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless illustrates how everyday acts of shopping or choosing fashions in an increasingly commercialized culture can offer the coquette an opportunity to define herself as a desiring subject. Catherine Ingrassia's study on the culture of eighteenth-century paper credit is helpful in understanding how Haywood's authorship is grounded in "specific details of material culture" in a way that

[26] Ellen Pollak, The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 65.

demonstrates how women authors "can control the currency available to them as they act as economic and political subjects." [27] I would add that female coquetry can be seen as part of the novel's participation in the new commercial and financial milieu that Ingrassia identifies. Whereas Ingrassia focuses on Haywood's ability to manipulate the speculative financial economy as a professional author, I am more interested in exploring how her coquettes use their consumer power as a form of cultural capital to achieve visual agency. Haywood's insistence that coquetry can be harnessed for women's pleasure directly challenges Addison and Steele, who castigated coquettes and sought to regulate their consuming desires. I will argue that The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, far from concluding with the happy marriage of a reformed coquette who renounces the art of self-display, in fact explores the possibilities for radical female vision opened by the coquette's consumerism.

By demonstrating the complex ways Betsy's coquetry functions as a form of female agency, I align with scholars such as Shea Stuart and Deborah J. Nestor, who emphasize the subversiveness of The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless. Whereas earlier critics such as Jane Spencer regard Haywood's later novel as belonging to conservative conduct literature by focusing on the plot of female education or the "reformed heroine," [28] Nestor argues that Haywood's use of narrative techniques subverts conventional bourgeois morality. [29] Stuart even asserts that The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless can be read as a "feminist message" in its "breakdown of the

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[27] Ingrassia, Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England, 136.

[28] Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, 141.

[29] Deborah Nestor, "Virtue Rarely Rewarded: Ideological Subversion and Narrative Form in Haywood's Later Fiction." Studies in English Literature 1500-1900. (34: 1994), 579-598.

current sex-gender system" through the story of a reformed coquette. [30] By focusing on how coquetry articulates with consumption and visuality, I will claim that Haywood's The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, like her periodical, can be seen as radical in its subversion of domestic ideals through its strategic deployment of coquettry as a form of female agency.

"the choice of ...cloaths": Betsy's Consumer Desires

At first glance, Haywood's novel tells the story of a young coquette who, after her flirtous relationship with many suitors and a catastrophic marriage to Mr. Munden, is ultimately rewarded with a happy marriage to her true love, Charles Trueworth. Portrayed as "too volatile for reflection" and "hurried by an excess of vanity, and [a] love of pleasure," (56) Betsy Thoughtless appears to conform to the conventional image of the coquette who is satirized in many texts of the eighteenth century. Betsy starts out as the quintessentially vain and self-indulgent pleasure-seeker. Rather than "examining the heart, and what actions are most becoming of the character," Betsy spends her time at her toilet or "in consulting what dress is most becoming to the face" (27). The narrator gently chides Betsy for being a superficial, narcissistic female incapable of serious reflection. While the novel seems to critique excessive vanity and desires of the coquette, it also illustrates how the profusion of material objects can allow women to become active, transgressive agents in the marketplace. Although the workings of London's commercialized world can be perilous to women, Betsy finds London, a "great metropolis" filled with "promiscuous enjoyment" (33). Through acts of shopping,

[30] Shea Stuart, "Subversive Didacticism in Eliza Haywood's Betsy Thoughtless" Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 . (43: 2002),559.

spending, and desiring commodities in the everyday world of fashion, Betsy not only experiences pleasure in looking but also learns to manipulate the marketplace for her own purposes.

The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless is foremost a novel that underscores the importance of economics. Haywood takes care to describe the price and specifics of clothing, carriages, and other luxury goods in a manner that emphasizes their significance for women in the novel. For instance, Betsy's preoccupation with dress and fashion is intimately linked with her awareness that material commodities can "shape" her in a way that empowers her: "As she was extremely curious in every thing relating to her shape, she made choice of a pink-coloured French lustring, to the end, that the plaits lying flat, would shew the beauty of her waist to more advantage" (62). Ingrassia suggests that this passage demonstrates Betsy's understanding of clothing's "ability to enhance her desirability as a type of commodity." [31] This reading, however, neglects the extent to which Betsy's identification with dressing signals her desire for power. In the following passage, for example, she demands to choose her own dress, instead of passively accepting the silk dress her guardian Lady Mellasin had purchased for her:

> The young ladies fell to reviewing their silks; but Miss Betsy was no way satisfied with hers: the more she looked upon it, the worse it appeared to her. "I shall never wear this with any pleasure." Said she; "I wish the man had it in his shop again, for I think it quite ugly." Miss Flora told her, that she wondered at her, that the thing was perfectly handsome, and that my lady's judgment was never before called in question. "That may be," replied Miss Betsy, "but certainly every one

[31] Ingrassia, Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England, 129.

ought to please their own fancy in the choice of their cloaths; for my part, I shall never endure to see myself in it" (61).

For Betsy, selecting her own dress is synonymous with her own independence, as she insists: "I think I am now at an age capable of choosing for myself, in the article of dress" (61). Betsy is also sharply aware that her agency is grounded in the material economy. Her request to keep a part of her income for her own expenditure is indicative of the degree to which she desires autonomy. She cries out: "twenty pounds for my pocket expenses, and fifty for my cloaths, I think I ought to have two latter entirely at my own disposal, and to lay it out as I think fit, and not be obliged, like a charity-child, to wear whatever livery my benefactor shall be pleased to order" (6).

Whereas her guardian Mr. Goodman dismisses Betsy's consumer impulses as a "frivolous matter," Haywood implies that Betsy's consumerism is not an idle feminine indulgence but is crucial in the process of constructing her autonomous self and in her retaining a measure of control over the marketplace. Mr. Goodman fears that Betsy is a vain coquette with an undisciplined consumer appetite. He urges her to "lay up" her money and invest, as he advises against excessive spending: "You shall have the sum you mention, Miss Betsy...but I would have you manage with discretion, for you may depend, that the surplus of what was at first agreed upon, shall not be broke into, but laid up to increase your fortune, which, by the time you come of age, I hope, will be pretty handsomely improved" (132). Rather than conforming to the persistent cultural notion of the coquette as a frivolous spender with uncontrollable impulses for fashionable goods, however, Betsy proves to be a responsible shopper who demonstrates careful choice over

her shopping expenses. She returns the dress chosen for her by Lady Mellasin and acquires more items in exchange—a dress of her own choice, one that would display her beauty to "to more advantage," a riding habit, and a silver trimming: "all of which, with the silk she disliked in exchange, did not amount to the money she had received from Mr. Goodman" (63).

If Betsy's use of consumption is intimately linked to her increased agency, her strategic use of consumerism manifests itself equally in the relationship she maintains with her suitors. Just as she desires to manage her own monetary capital, she seeks control over the sexual capital she possesses. While Ingrassia is correct in suggesting that consumerism is one of the ways " women can control the currency available to them as they act as economic and political subjects" (136), her analysis does not go far enough in addressing how Betsy uses consumerism to alter or manage appearances to increase her desirability. The pleasure Betsy takes in watching visually delightful fashionable goods and spectacles of public diversions such as plays, balls, and operas encourages her to model herself as an object on display while carefully controlling how she is viewed by others. In other words, her deliberate public display of her beauty is an attempt on her part to acquire power over her suitors as well as to control the terms on which she is circulated within the sexual economy. As seen in the passage below, Betsy takes pleasure in flirting with men, without any intention of marriage:

> It was not till after Miss Betsy had reason to believe she had engaged the heart of her lover too far for him to recall it, that she began to take a pride in tormenting him... for as she had not the least affection, or even a liking towards him, his

> submissive deportment under the most cold, sometimes contemptuous carriage, could afford her no other satisfaction, than, as she fancied, it showed the power of her beauty, and piqued those ladies of her acquaintance, who could not boast of such an implicit resignation, and patient suffering from her lovers, in particular Miss Flora, who she could not forbear imagining looked very grave on the occasion. (39).

Like a female rake, Betsy dominates her "submissive" admirer using the "power of her beauty" to overturn the conventional power relations between men and women. Her coquettish behavior, in this regard, is closely tied to her desire to maintain her "maiden pride" (492), for marriage would mean a loss of her liberty and independence. By delaying her entrance into marriage, Betsy can also continue circulating as a highly-sought commodity within the marriage market. As such, she critiques the oppressive structure of marriage, in which women must submit to male authority. Fully aware of the ways women become powerless in marriage, she strongly opposes the idea that she should marry. She exclaims: "what can make the generality of Women so fond of marrying? — It looks to me like an infatuation. — Just as if it were not a greater pleasure to be courted, complimented, admired, and addressed by a number, than be confined to one, who from a slave becomes a master, and perhaps uses his authority in a manner disagreeable enough" (488).

Instead of choosing a suitable husband, Betsy prides herself on making "new conquests" of numerous men from Mr. Savings to Mr. Trueworth, Mr. Staple, and Mr. Hysom, for the pleasure of exercising her power over them: "all the idea she had of either

of them served only to excite in her the pleasing imagination how, when they both came to address her, she should play the one against the other, and give herself a constant round of diversion, by their alternate contentment or disquiet" (101). Far from respecting each suitor as an individual, Betsy regards all her potential spouses as the same: "Pleased with the praise, she regarded not the condition or merits of the praiser, and suffered herself to be treated, presented, and squir'd about all public places, either by the rake, the man of honour, the wit, or the fool, the married as well as the unmarried, without distinction, and just as either fell in her way." (142) Like coquettes who "value themselves on the number and quality of their lovers, as they do upon the number and richness of their cloths," Betsy treats men like any other fashionable items she can purchase and collect (142), displaying her power as a consumer.

To "Out-Stand Her Market": The Power of the Coquette as a Consumer

Betsy's coquettish behavior toward her suitors coincides with her desire for public display, for she derives intense pleasure in the responses she elicits from her lovers. She "wished nothing beyond what she enjoyed, the pleasure of being told she was very handsome, and gallanted about by a great number of those who go by the name of pretty fellows" (56). Similarly, she spends most of her time and money either in ornamenting her body or showing it off at fashionable gatherings. At the same time, Betsy uses her status as a spectacle to assert power over men. While Betsy notes that married women are "condemned to … a scene of disquiet" (213), she is also fully aware that unmarried women can deploy "the prerogative of youth and beauty in the one sex" (142) to arouse male desire by deliberately controlling how they are displayed. The delight she takes in

presenting herself in public places, such as "[t]he court, the play, the ball, and opera, with giving and receiving visits" makes Betsy very similar to the editor of The Female Spectator in her early days, when she "should have thought the day lost, which did not present [her] with some new opportunity of shewing [herself]" (FS Bk 1).

The very characteristics that define Betsy as a coquette also epitomize the stereotype of the typical female consumer, who is vain, fickle, acquisitive, and especially desirous to be admired. Betsy utilizes the world of fashion and her mastery of courtship to arouse interest and consciously perform desirability within the sexual marketplace. By extension, Betsy's flirting with various men also mirrors the unrestrained nature of female consumer desire, which is deemed excessive, capricious and indiscriminate. By deliberately choosing multiple suitors for her own pleasure, she subverts the power dynamics within courtship by positioning herself as the chooser rather than the chosen. In this regard, the novel's critique of coquetry also registers anxiety about modern consumer capitalism in which commodities encourage women to desire in ways that threaten the established sexual order. The intense pleasure Betsy gains from her relationship with men and her dominance over her suitors underscores how female consumers may be seen as transgressive within eighteenth-century society. Like a "tyrant," she treats her lovers as mere ornaments or diversions: "she played with her lovers, as she did with her monkey, but expected more obedience from them" (296). For Betsy, men become "the most valuable prize of all that her beauty had ever gained" (349). Through her conflation of her suitors with objects that can be bought with capital, Betsy exercises increased consumer choice, underscoring the sexual and social power made possible for women by economic practice.

Betsy is also a shrewd shopper who acquires and collects numerous suitors without committing to marriage. She is more interested in the play of courtship rituals than in following through on their promise, as seen in her repudiation of marriage. Moreover, her excessive consumer desire even disrupts the conventional terms of exchange and "returns" of the established sexual economy in which courtship is reciprocated with a marriage. She is described as being "covetous, even to greediness, of receiving all, without any intention of making the least return" (349). Rebelling against the standard rules of courtship, she refuses to be reduced to an object to be purchased by male buyers within the sexual market but instead, flatters, deceives, and toys with them simultaneously.

For example, Mr. Gayland's letter to Betsy illustrates how he interprets Betsy' s coquetry as a transaction gesture in which he must reimburse her "with interest" or a marriage:

> Dear Miss,
>
> I must certainly be either the most ungrateful, or most consumedly dull fellow upon earth, not to have returned the advances you have been so kind to make me... I have found out a way to pay you the whole sum with interest (42).

In the passage above, Mr. Gayland makes it apparent that he perceives his relationship with Betsy as a transaction in which he should reciprocate the same "favour" he has received from Betsy. Betsy is conscious of "having, by a too free behavior toward him, emboldened him to take this liberty," yet she declines to return the "favour" by persisting

in coquetry, thus undermining the patriarchal exchange economy. Similarly, during her visit to her brother in Oxford, Betsy refuses to acknowledge that she is expected "to pay the debt, which love, youth, and beauty challenge" (73), when her coquetry provokes her male company to try to take "greater liberties." Even though Betsy comes to realize that her coquetry places her in a compromising position in the sexual marketplace, she attempts to retain her agency as a consumer by refusing to be considered an object to be taken advantage of in the established discourse of sexual courtship.

Captain Hysom, an "immensely rich" merchant who has "twenty-five years in the service of the East India Company" regards his courtship of Betsy as a "business" transaction which has gone awry. His request, "[M]adam, I should be glad to know some answer to the business I wrote to you upon," indicates that courtship to him is just another business dealing. He considers Betsy's rejection of his marriage proposal a waste of his valuable time and a bad investment. As Ingrassia rightly points out, Betsy "repeatedly finds herself owing men sexual currency she is unwilling (often unaware of needing) to pay." [32] At the same time, I would add that Betsy's unwillingness to pay back the sexual currency she owes to men undermines the courtship economy that culminates in marriage. By refusing to marry, Betsy consciously arouses desire only to withhold its final satisfaction. Hence, Mr. Goodman's concern that Betsy's coquetry will make her value fall within the heterosexual economy simultaneously suggests his fear that she will "out-stand her market" (135) and control the terms of the sexual marketplace.

If coquetry attempts to delay marriage, it is in part because marriage is an institution that disciplines the coquettish behavior that threatens patriarchal authority.

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[32] Ingrassia, Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England, 134.

Through her abusive and humiliating marriage with Mr. Munden, Betsy realizes painfully that she is ultimately an object, "the property of Mr. Munden" (557). Even when she finds herself admired by her husband's patron, Lord ___, she soon discovers that she is reduced to an object of exchange between men, as her husband places her "on the very verge of ruin"—when he deliberately arranges for her to be seduced by Lord ____ for the "prospect of interest and preferment he had flattered himself with from" that gentleman (556). This incident leads her to a crucial moment when she come to terms with "her vanity, ... mistaken pride... [and] false delicacy" (558):

> "How strange a creature have I been!" cried she, "how inconsistent with myself! I knew the character of a coquet both silly and insignificant, yet did every thing in my power to acquire it: --I aimed to inspire awe and reverence in the men, yet by my imprudence emboldened them to the most unbecoming freedoms with me: --I had sense enough to discern real merit in those who professed themselves my lovers, yet affected to treat most ill those, in whom I found the greatest share of it" (558).

According to Spencer, this emphasis on Betsy's acquired self-awareness is one of the major achievements of The History of Betsy Thoughtless: "By using interior monologue at this point, Haywood shows Betsy's reform taking place in her mind." [33] Her self-reflection, contrary to a coquette's vacuity, appears to indicate Betsy's disavowal of coquetry and its affinities for self-display and artfulness. By the same token, Betsy's

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[33] Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, 152.

transition from "thoughtless" to "thoughtful" woman seems analogous to the making of Nancy Armstrong's "new domestic woman," in which women were encouraged to abstain from their desire to become a part of a public spectacle and to assume the authority of a male disciplinary gaze within the domestic sphere.

Nevertheless, while it may appear that Haywood is endorsing domesticity and indicting the follies of coquetry though Betsy's reform, Betsy's deep reflection on "the errors of her past conduct, in their true light" (557) seems to suggest less her transformation into a proper, virtuous woman who fulfills the domestic ideal than her indictment of Mr. Munden's treachery and tyrannical authority. The narrator emphasizes Betsy's lack of culpability, by pointing out that her coquettish desires to be "admired and loved" were "perfectly uncorrupt and pure" (544). Rather than focus on the potentially tragic results of Betsy's coquetry, the novel calls attention to the dangerous nature of masculine sexuality. Betsy often faces the physical danger of being raped by men, and her friend Miss Forward turns to prostitution out of necessity after she loses her chastity during Mr. Wildly's sexual assault. Even respectable men indulge in libertine pleasures and treat women as sexual objects without any moral repercussions: Mr. Trueworth is easily seduced by Incognita (who turns out to be Miss Flora Mellasin), and Betsy's brother, Thomas Thoughtless, keeps a clandestine mistress, Mademoiselle de Roquelair. More importantly, Mr. Munden fails in his moral duties as a husband, for he proves to be cruel and domineering and even has an adulterous affair. By turning its attention from Betsy's coquetry to the shortcomings of patriarchal authority, the novel represents men's scandalous behaviors as a spectacle to the readers' inspecting gaze and

suggests that proper conduct should not be limited to women only but should be expected from men as well.

"To indulge herself in looking": the Visual Pleasures of the Coquette

While Betsy is ostensibly committed to "improving those perfections of the mind which she was sensible could alone entitle her to the esteem of the virtuous and wise," the novel continues to dramatize different ways in which Betsy derives pleasure from consumption. Even after her disastrous marriage to Mr. Munden, Betsy finds ways to increase her value within the novel. Contrary to Mr. Munden's preconception of her as "a bad economist" (499), she proves to be an exemplary consumer in her frugality and home management. Whereas Betsy's consumerism seems to place her within the confines of the domestic sphere, it is also associated with advancing her own personal interest, as she admits, "I expected that the trouble I have been at deserved at least to be rewarded with what I have saved by my frugality" (539).

Another significant instance of Betsy's consumerism that affords her pleasurable voyeurism is when she schemes to gain possession of Mr. Trueworth's miniature portrait. For Betsy, the miniature portrait becomes a valued commodity that she must possess, especially since Mr. Trueworth is engaged to Miss Harriot and no longer available to Betsy; Betsy thus "longed to have in her possession so exact a resemblance of a man, who once had loved her" (445). It is a "copy" of Trueworth Betsy can own, an object she can slip into her pocket and enjoy whenever she wants. It also symbolizes her power as a consumer, for she behaves "with caprice" and "plotting" (444) to purchase the portrait intended for Mr. Trueworth's fiancé. Like Fantomina, who engages in

masquerades, Betsy disguises herself to buy the painting so that she will not be recognized should Mr. Trueworth come to inquire who had taken away his picture. This incident also gives Betsy intense pleasure that compensates for her previous humiliation by Sir Frederick Fineer, who had attempted to ravage her: "All her remorse, — all her vexation, for the base design laid against her... were dissipated the moment she took it into her head to get possession of this picture" (444). Not only does the portrait offer Betsy pleasure in looking at Mr. Trueworth's image but it also provides a means for her to exercise her power to control men and their images. It enables her to indulge in her sexual desire while offering "a possibility of becoming the mistress of what she so much desired" (445).

Even the novel's assertion of Betsy's virtue at the end is undermined by dynamics of display closely associated with earlier representations of her coquettish behavior. Betsy rebels openly against the institution of marriage by seeking a legal separation, from bringing the threat of public scandal against her husband: "when the affairs of a family are laid open, and every dispute between the husband and the wife exposed before a court of judicature, or even in a petition to a lord chancellor, the whole becomes a public talk, and furnishes a matter of ridicule for the unthinking scoffers of the Age" (598). Instead of being the one at fault, she is seen as the victim of injustice, as she appeals to the public for her right: "I have discharged the duties of my station; I have fully proved I know how to be a good wife, if he had known how to be a tolerable husband" (590).

The novel's emphasis on Betsy's manipulation of visibility becomes more striking in her treatment of Mr. Trueworth's portrait in a garden during her stay at a country home in Surrey. Remarking that "this private recess seemed a certain defense against the sight

of Mr. Trueworth," Betsy refuses to be exposed to Mr. Trueworth's gaze for fear that he will discover her theft of the portrait and her feelings for him. She demonstrates her visual agency by repeatedly gazing at his portrait. "She was rejoiced indeed to have this picture once more in her possession ... because she thought she might indulge herself in looking on it, without any breach of that duty, to which she was resolved so strictly to adhere" (611). Despite her seeming renunciation of coquetry's love of self-display, she remains attached to her old self as the coquette who revels in admiration from the world. She wonders: "What though my heart was insensible of love...my reason.—nay my very pride, might have influenced me to embrace a proposal, which would have rendered me the envy of my own sex, and excited the esteem and veneration of the other" (602).

The novel also undercuts the heroine's transformation into a modest, domestic woman with its explicit description of the scantily-clad Betsy standing in a garden, as in the typical garden scenes of Haywood's amatory fiction. Serving as a setting for Miss Forward's flirtation with her lover Mr. Sparkish, the garden is closely associated with sexuality and seduction in Haywood's amatory tales. Like a passionate female character of amatory fiction, Betsy becomes an embodiment of female desire and uncontrollable sexuality when the narrative recounts that "tears filled her eyes, and her breast swelled with involuntary sighs" (606) just as she gazes at the portrait of Mr. Trueworth "with the utmost tenderness" (606). The eroticism of the scene is underscored when Mr. Trueworth enters into the garden scene and discovers that he is the object of Betsy's spectatorial desire:

> He had a full view of every thing she did.—Though she was in the most negligent nightgown that could be, she seemed as lovely to him as ever; all his first flames rekindled in his heart, while gazing on her with this uninterrupted freedom,—he longed to speak to her, but durst not, lest by doing so he should be deprived of the pleasure he now enjoyed, till observing she had something in her hand, which she seemed to look upon with great attention, and sometimes betrayed agitations he had never seen in her before, he was impatient to discover if possible the motive... he had a full opportunity of beholding all that the reader has been told: —but what was his amazement to find it was his own picture! That very picture, which had been taken from the painter's, was the object of her meditations! (607-8)

Mr. Trueworth's looking at first appears to be voyeuristic, when he feels pleasure at "gazing at her with ... uninterrupted freedom." Nevertheless, his voyeurism is far from being domineering or objectifying. Mr. Trueworth's male gaze is complicated by the intensity of Betsy's visual pleasure, unsettling the spectator/spectacle structure beyond that of male subject and female object. Similarly Mr. Trueworth's pleasurable voyeurism is suddenly ruptured by "the first glance of [Betsy's] eyes." He becomes conscious of his status as a spectacle when he discovers that he is the object of Betsy's gaze. His knowledge that Betsy "well deserved [his] love" (609) derives less from his spectatorial authority than from the power Betsy commands as a spectacle and her desiring look at his miniature portrait. In this regard, the portrait becomes the central focal point in which Mr. Trueworth, Betsy, and the readers' perspectives merge into one

spectatorial position. Just as both Mr. Trueworth and Betsy indulge and confirm sexual desire for each without actual loss of virtue, so are Haywood's readers able to be titillated by sexual intrigue and passion safely within the framework of domestic narrative that upholds bourgeois morality. The narrator comments that her readers "all in general must applaud the conduct of Mrs. Munden; till this dangerous instance, she had never had an opportunity of shewing the command she had over herself" (610). If amatory fictions typically focus on sexually explicit scenes, Haywood appropriates these scandalous elements for the readers' gaze while carefully reconciling these powerful sexual desires with the female virtues required by conduct literature.

At first glance, the ending of the novel stresses Betsy's transformation as a result of her understanding of virtue, which is rewarded by her marriage with Mr. Trueworth. Behaving like a proper conduct-book heroine, Betsy recognizes the importance of self-restraint and domestic duties over the coquettish love of self-indulgence and vanity. Admitting that "she ought not to indulge ... so dangerous an invader of her duty" (612), she learns to restrain her "excess of passion" (618) until she is married to Mr. Trueworth. Despite the "extreme force of the passion" (622) Betsy and Mr. Trueworth feel for each other other, Betsy must endure her unhappy marriage to Mr. Munden and demonstrate her "virtue and ... prudence" (619) towards her unfaithful husband. With "all the errors of her conduct reformed" (619), Betsy is eventually rewarded with a happy marriage to Mr. Trueworth.

Yet Haywood simultaneously undermines Betsy's reformation into a virtuous heroine. Haywood maneuvers the plot so that it is Mr. Munden's rather timely death, rather than Betsy's own decorous conduct, that enables Betsy's marriage to Mr.

Trueworth. Even though Betsy seems to have learned the dangers of coquetry, Haywood suggests that she does not completely renounce the pleasures she derives from her past coquetry. Although Betsy is praised for "her virtue and her compassion" (615) for the dying Mr. Munden, Haywood questions whether the "grief [Betsy] appeared in was undissembled" (616). Even her acquaintance Lady Loveit suggests Betsy's "dissembl[ing]" skill, linking Betsy with the coquette's capacity to deceive through one's manipulation of appearance. Lady Loveit addresses Betsy: "I should take you to be the greatest dissembler in it, —for it would be very difficult for any one less acquainted with you to believe you could be really afflicted at the death of a person whose life rendered you so unhappy" (617). Even after her marriage to Mr. Trueworth, Betsy is still able to indulge in the visual pleasures she had experienced as a coquette. Upon her marriage to Mr. Trueworth, she is struck by Mr. Trueworth's public display of wealth: "The first object that presented itself to [her], was a very neat running footman, who on the gate being opened, came tripping up towards the house, and was immediately followed by a coach with one gentleman in it, drawn by six prancing horses, and attended by two servants in rich liveries, and well mounted" (630). In spite of Betsy's protestation that she prefers "the soft serenity of a country life" to "all the noisy giddy pleasures of the tumultuous town" (606), she still derives pleasures from the excessive spectacle of luxury objects. Haywood also points out that Betsy has "many advantages [from] an alliance with Mr. Trueworth" (631), since she thereby gains both true love and material prosperity. [34]

[34] From her marriage to Mr. Trueworth, Betsy agrees to receive a marriage settlement of eight pounds a year (which is substantially more that she could hope to gain from her other suitors) from her marriage to Mr. Trueworth (634).

The novel's final paragraph calls attention to the moral didacticism of the story: "Thus were the virtues of our heroine (those follies that had defaced them being fully corrected) at length rewarded with a happiness, retarded only till she had render'd herself wholly worthy of receiving it" (634). Nevertheless, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless undermines its own moral by validating the very characteristics that Betsy was originally condemned for indulging. Like Female Spectator, which emphasizes the discerning sight of its editor, the respectable, reformed coquette, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, offers on the surface a conduct novel that insists on the importance of virtue and the need for a disciplinary gaze. At the same time, the novel complicates the conservative conduct-book tradition by acknowledging the complex ways that Betsy's coquetry, especially her manipulation of her visibility, gratifies her sexual desires even as she attains the virtue of a domestic heroine. The novel acknowledges the dangers of coquetry mainly through the example of Miss Forward. Abandoned by her family and educated only to be vain and pleasing to men, Miss Forward is unprepared for the economic realities of her life and ultimately turns to prostitution. Because Miss Forward lacks the necessary consumer skills to manipulate the material conditions she confronts in her life, she ends up in destitution. Betsy, however, skillfully utilizes her coquetry to negotiate a culture defined by material as well as sexual economies. By highlighting the ways women can appropriate coquetry to promote their interests and renegotiate their position within the visual order through consumption, Haywood's novel redefines coquetry and radically challenges the prevailing attitudes toward it found in Addison and Steele's The Spectator.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICS OF THE FEMALE CONSUMERIST GAZE IN BURNEY'S CAMILLA AND CONCLUSION

Haywood's treatment of female consumerism in The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1751) provides a useful point of comparison to Frances Burney's treatment of the same subject in Camilla (1796). [1] Written forty-five years apart, both stories illustrate how the consuming desires of women play a crucial role in defining female subjectivity. The female protagonists of both these coming of age stories must learn the proper virtues demanded of them as consumers in their society. Like Betsy Thoughtless, who changes from an acquisitive coquette to a thoughtful domestic heroine, Camilla learns that she must control her fashionable consumption when confronted with the tragic consequences of her financial irresponsibility and debt. Both narratives seemingly conform to the conduct novel tradition, concluding with marriages in which the heroines enclose their consuming appetites safely within the domestic space.

As we have seen, while Haywood's novel purportedly shows domestic ideology harnessed by patriarchal society's regulation of female consumerism, it also calls attention to female consumerism's more positive, liberating effects. Betsy, even as a reformed coquette, continues to manipulate fashionable consumption for her own ends, carefully negotiating her own desires with the demands of her patriarchal society. In contrast, Burney's Camilla exemplifies how female consumption is rigorously controlled by male surveillance and specularization, although Mrs. Mittin remains a more subversive and empowered female consumer throughout the novel. I would suggest that

[1] Frances Burney, Camilla or A Picture of Youth ed. Edward Bloom. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972)

by the turn of the nineteenth century, the connection between female consumerism and domesticity becomes more pronounced as excessive female consumption becomes the target of male surveillance in a period that witnessed more active participation of female consumers within the rise of retail industry, amusement, and commercial culture. Burney's depiction of the problematic nature of female consumer desires reflects her uneasiness about women's growing vulnerability in commodity capitalism by underscoring the correlation between female consumption and the patriarchal gaze. Nevertheless, Burney simultaneously recognizes how female consumption can significantly challenge patriarchal authority.

Camilla

As many commentators have observed, Camilla revolves around a frustrated and complicated courtship between its heroine and hero.[2] Camilla Tyrold, the daughter of the Reverend Augustus Tyrold and niece of Sir Hugh Tyrold, suffers through a series of ordeals, both financial and emotional, before she finally marries Edgar Mandelbert, Mr. Tyrold's charge and a wealthy heir. Yet what seems to be striking about Camilla is the extent of her physical suffering and the psychological torment attendant on her loss of autonomy as a result of excessive spending. It is especially ironic that Camilla's debt, which seems so modest compared to that of the male characters in the novel (who resort to more despicable actions to resolve their debt), should cause her father's imprisonment and cause so much pain to her family. The intensity of suffering caused by Camilla's lack

[2] Julia Epstein, Frances Burney: The Life in the Works. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 221; Claudia Johnson, Equivocal Being: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 142. Julia Epstein notes that "Camilla tells the story of love postponed, thwarted, frustrated, misled, and deliberately unspoken." Claudia Johnson even argues that female suffering in Camilla has a "masochistic edge."

of financial knowledge and her irresponsible spending seems to teach the lesson that female consuming appetites should be carefully controlled. Camilla, who embodies spontaneity, liveliness and "volatile" spirits at the beginning of the book, realizes the importance of self-control and restraint under the careful, scrutinizing eyes of Edgar, her suspicious suitor, and her father Mr. Tyrold, who lectures her on exemplary female virtue and conduct. What seems particularly significant about Burney's Camilla, compared to the other texts I have discussed, is the pervasive nature of male surveillance within it to the extent Camilla becomes active in regulating her own consuming desires in accordance with ideal femininity.

Criticism on Camilla in general has tended to focus on Burney's strategies of self-fashioning or her authorship in the literary marketplace. For example, Kristina Straub comments that Burney's texts are marked with cultural paradoxes implicit in the role of a woman novelist; Burney, Straub argues, is "both an informed and carefully self-conscious writer and a woman with a commitment to ideologically orthodox femininity."[3] Catherine Gallagher discusses how Burney's self-effacing use of "nobody" or the "explicit fictionality" of her text allows her to build up cultural capital by appealing to the new readers in the expansion of the literary marketplace in the 1790s.[4] While these approaches provide a useful lens through which to contextualize Burney's professional life, they tend to focus solely on her cultural production of literary commodities without fully addressing the other aspects of female consumerism that influenced Burney's textual authority. Deidre Lynch's The Economy of Character, on the other hand, focuses

[3] Kristina Straub, Divided Fictions. (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 7.

[4] Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), xvii.

on the "reciprocal shaping of eighteenth-century Britain's market culture and its culture of character" and illustrates how the new consumer society and its growth of retail markets produce Camilla's psychological complexity as a female character. [5] I agree with Lynch's assertion that the self cannot be conceptualized as a "presocial, prediscursive entity located well outside the marketplace" [6] and that Camilla allows us to attend to ways in which female characters define themselves through their newly intimate relationship to commodities. While Lynch helps to clarify how a consumer culture is also a psychological culture, I am interested in exploring the ways in which the new consumer subjectivity that was emerging in the eighteenth century empowered women, especially in terms of their way of looking. In this connection, Anne Friedberg's work on modern female consumers is useful. Friedberg explains that the rise of metropolitan urban culture with new retail spaces like arcades, department stores, and new forms of protocinematic entertainment such as the panorama (1287) and the diorama (1823) at the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century facilitated a "mobilized 'virtual' gaze" for female consumers. These pleasure venues of eighteenth-century London allowed women not only increased mobility but also the exercise of a new kind of "virtual" subjectivity enabling them to shop and gain pleasure beyond the commodified experience of everyday life. [7] I will suggest in what follows that the shopping experience of Camilla and Mrs. Mittin in Burney is linked in many ways to what Friedberg defines as modern consumer

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[5] Deidre Lynch, The Economy of Character (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 19.

[6] Ibid., 169.

[7] Anne Friedberg, Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

subjectivity in its activation of a mobile gaze and its subversion of a masculine ocular regime.

"The scrupulous, the scrutinizing": male surveillance of female consumption

As a tale of a young woman attempting to make her way around the fashionable societies of Tunbridge, Southampton and London, Camilla highlights the problematic status of the female subject within emerging consumer society. In Burney's writings, a female protagonist enters into the world as a spectacle to the male gaze. Just as Evelina in the Pantheon is reduced to a silent "sight" by the men she encounters, the female characters in Camilla circulate as objects of male desire. Camilla's cousin, Indiana, with "all the secret triumph of conscious beauty" (60), is coveted by men for her physical beauty while Camilla's sister, the crippled Eugenia, is regarded as a "valuable ... acquisition" (61) by speculating suitors because of her inheritance. As commodities within circuits of exchange, women are easily interchangeable. Just as Sir Hugh changes his heir from Indiana, to Camilla and finally to Eugenia, Edgar substitutes Indiana for Camilla as his object of courtship, and Melmond shuttles from Indiana to Eugenia. This emphasis on the exchangeability of women suggests Burney's indictment of the way women become reduced to commodified objects of transaction within the marriage market. Like Betsy Thoughtless, who realizes the impropriety of her coquettish ways, Camilla must learn to repress her spontaneous, "volatile" (52) nature and renounce her consumer desires in order to comply with the sanctions governing the conduct of the new domestic woman.

The narrator's extensive accounts of the shopping expeditions and financial transactions that entangle Camilla in heavy debt suggest duplicity in the way the female consumer is inscribed by the commercial culture: she is interpellated as both an agent and object of commercial exchange. Even though a woman may be economically powerless, she is expected to spend in ways that fulfill the female dress codes of fashionable society. Camilla is a poor but respectable clergyman's daughter, yet she is confined by the imperatives of consumption imposed upon a genteel woman who must maintain her appearance as a lady and display herself as a valuable commodity in the marriage market. Aware of the public gaze that continually judges her by her conspicuous consumption, she is forced to reproduce herself in the image required by fashionable society. Realizing that her "little wardrobe exhibited a worse quality than that of not keeping pace with the last devices of the ton" (689), she strives to conform to conventional standards of femininity by purchasing many fashionable items regardless of her ability to afford them.

Camilla is "too inexperienced to know, that in gay circles, and public places, the demands for wealth are endless and countless; and that economy itself, which is always local, is there lavish and extravagant, compared with its character in private scenes and retired life" (518). Her indulgence in "trifling" leads her to incur debts to people around her, including the rakish Sir Sedley, who calls her his "little debtor" (523) and the money lender Mr. Clykes, who charges her a "handsome premium and handsome interest" (743). Nevertheless, Camilla's debt, which is smaller than those of such male characters as her brother Lionel and her cousin Claremont, who engage in dissolute and extravagant lifestyles, leads to a far more damaging outcome in the book. When Camilla fails to pay her debt, her financial disaster ultimately places her family in disgrace; her father is

imprisoned and her uncle displaced from his estate. Banished from her house, Camilla, overcome with "self-accusation" (875), suffers a nearly fatal illness: "I have become an alien to my family, and a burthen to myself! Ordered from my home by my Father, lest my sight should be destructive to my mother" (839).

By underscoring the destructive effect of female consumer appetites on private domestic life, Camilla suggests at first glance that female consumption needs to be managed properly. Through her horrendous ordeal, Camilla realizes the impropriety of her acquisitive desires and ends up deploring her lack of self-restraint in her purchases. But revealing the ideological process whereby the female consumer is constructed as an extravagant shopper with an unruly appetite, Camilla also draws attention to the pervasive ways in which patriarchal culture attempts to regulate female consumption through the male gaze. The explicit project of surveillance by male characters in the novel exemplifies the visual technology by which Camilla's consuming desires become regulated by patriarchal authority. Edgar, whose gaze is reminiscent of Mr. Spectator in its power, best represents the repressive role of male surveillance. Appropriately described by Mrs. Arlbery as "a watcher" (482), he monitors Camilla carefully with "positively distrustful" eyes that prove him suspicious of her actions and motives. He constantly scrutinizes Camilla to judge whether she is worthy to be his wife, in the same way that careful purchaser would evaluate a commodity. Rather than appreciating Camilla for who she is, he allows his fluctuating, selfish desires to determine her value. Influenced by his misogynist tutor Mr. Marchmont, who warns him that "[w]hatever is her appearance of worth, try and prove its foundation, " Edgar becomes "the scrupulous, the scrutinizing" (161) observer who attempts to decipher Camilla through his

penetrating gaze. Edgar seeks to "study her... with new eyes, new ears, and new thoughts" (158), with scientific observation and empirical knowledge. Yet despite his desire for transparency, Edgar's observation of Camilla is limited by the "mischief of appearances" in that he is unable to gauge how her actions differ "from the sincerity of reality" (681). The more Camilla appears in fashionable society, the more Edgar suspects her of being a "confirmed coquette" (681), who easily manipulates others through appearances.

Camilla, however, is trapped by a society with strict rules not only about female conduct but also about the public interpretation of conduct. Because she is instructed by her father, Mr. Tyrold, to conceal and resist her emotions, her behavior can never be equated with her inner feelings. Mr. Tyrold's sermon on female virtues functions as a form of male surveillance that attempts to discipline female conduct. Not only is Camilla forced to repress her desires but she also is urged to spy on herself. She must monitor herself so that she can "conquer ... weak emotion, and no one shall ever know" that she has "a feeling she ought to disguise!" (345) In short, Camilla must internalize the patriarchal gaze in policing her own behavior and desires.

Just as Camilla is expected to conceal her desire for Edgar, she is expected to curb her consumer desires for commodities. Camilla's episode with the beautiful locket offered as a raffle object illustrates her struggle over a luxury item which she longs to possess but is pressured to renounce. The "magnetic power" of the locket, as seen in its elaborate details, emphasizes the intense pleasure Camilla derives from its acquisition: "A beautiful locket, set round with pearls, ornamented at the top with a little knot of small brilliants, and very elegantly shaped, with a space left for a braid of hair, or a cipher,

was produced; and, as if by magnetic power, attracted into almost every hand" (92). While the locket exemplifies Camilla's powerful appetite for commodities, conventional femininity requires Camilla to relinquish her desire and refrain from even looking at it: "She knew not, however, till now, how hard to resist was the contagion of example, and felt a struggle in her self-denial, that made her, when she put the locket down, withdraw from the crowd, and resolve not to look at it again" (93). When Camilla withdraws her bid at the raffle for "what she felt ... an extravagance" (94) and instead donates the money to "poor starving people" (98), Edgar is pleased by her unselfish gesture. For Edgar, it is Camilla's charity, not fashionable consumption, that increases "her value" to him.

"Routing over every body's best goods": the Pleasures of Shopping

Whereas Camilla is urged to repress her desires through self-surveillance, fashionable consumption offers possibilities for alternatives to this gender ideology. Edgar's disapproval of Mrs. Arlbery suggests the male anxiety inspired by the consumer's power to disrupt patriarchal control. Criticizing Mrs. Arlbery as an "idle, dissipated" lady of fashion (202), Edgar deems her a "dangerous acquaintance" for Camilla, fearing that the "lively, the unthinking, the inexperienced Camilla" will "degenerate[e] into the character of a coquette" (463). Mrs. Arlbery openly defies social conventions with her "air of fashion almost to insolence." Appearing in a "complete but becoming undress," she uses her clothing to assert autonomy, displaying "a decided superiority to all she saw, and a perfect indifference to what opinion she incurred in return" (73). Mrs. Arlbery not only manipulates attire to pursue her individual

desires but also challenges gender roles by denying her dependence on male approval. She also criticizes Edgar's surveillance of Camilla, sharply pointing out that his need to monitor her stems from his insecurity: "[h]e is a watcher; and a watcher, restless and perturbed himself, infests all he pursues with uneasiness" (482). She thus advises Camilla to take on the role of an active consumer within the marriage market by urging her to exercise her own choice in courtship instead of being chosen by a man. She remonstrates to Camilla: "This is all the romance of false reasoning. You have not sought the man, but the man you. You would not have solicited his acceptance, but yielded to his solicitation of yours" (780).

Camilla also uses fashionable consumption to conceptualize a notion of the self that accommodates her own desire and agency. In Southampton, she purchases an expensive dress, hoping to attract Edgar's attention despite her shortage of money. The "sight" of her new ball dress, "superfluous as it was expensive," is "sure of a welcome for Camilla" (710), since she longs to impress Edgar in her new attire. Here, her material desire for the dress becomes synonymous with her sexual desire for Edgar. The detailed inventory of her dress also reveals the extent to which Camilla derives pleasure from the spectacle of her elaborate ball gown: "Her robe was everywhere edged with the finest Valencienne lace; her lilac shoes, sash, and gloves, were richly spangled with silver, and finished with a silver fringe; her ear-rings and necklace were of lilac and gold beads; her fan and shoe roses were brilliant with lilac foil, and her bouquet of artificial lilac flowers, and her plumes of lilac feathers, were here and there tipt with the most tiny transparent white beads, to give them the effect of being glittering with the dew" (721).

After being disappointed with Edgar's absence at the ball, Camilla gazes at her own image and the "expensive elegance of her whole dress" in front of the mirror, and realizes the "impropriety of having risked so much" in the context of her mounting debt. Whereas this scene may be indicative of Camilla's identification with "Edgar's reproachful way of seeing --- of glaring at --- her" (183), her ultimate dismissal of the dress also stresses her capacity to make willful consumer choices, instead of reinforcing the conventional notion of a female consumer with an indiscriminate appetite. When Camilla confronts her attired image in the mirror, she does not merely accept the image she sees but carefully chooses to be different from what she sees, similar to the ways a careful shopper might shop around by trying on and discarding different identities. Deidre Lynch notes that this scene in which Camilla contemplates her reflection is indicative of how a consumer culture mobilizes psychological complexity, signifying the "momentum of the consumer economy ... when someone stands in front of a dressing-room mirror, or contemplates the layout in a fashion magazine, and says, "It's not me" (182). Camilla's changing self in relation to the dress suggests that there is no determinate self but that her identity is always in process.

Burney demonstrates how consumption can enable fluid forms of identity that are liberating for women, and her extensive account of shopping and retail practices in Camilla emphasizes the empowering aspects of female consumerism. By the late Georgian period, increased numbers of shops, spas and resorts, and sightseeing sites became showcases for a wide array of consumer goods, anticipating the appearance of Victorian department stores and modern pedestrian malls. [8] These public arenas offered

[8] Britain's first department store opened in 1863.

women new opportunities for public mobility and urban spectatorship, resulting in the emergence of what Anne Friedberg sees as "the female flaneur" who was "free to roam the city" and assume "the privilege of shopping on her own." [9] When Camilla decides to go shopping in High Street in Southampton with Mrs. Mittin, they behave in ways that challenge conventional feminine consumer behaviors. Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace argues that, although both men and women were sellers and buyers, the relation between the seller and the buyer was often seen in gendered terms in the eighteenth century: "In the language of trade, buyers are most often rendered feminine and submissive, regardless of their actual gender. The seller, in contrast, assumes a dominant, masculine position" [10] Instead of yielding to male shopkeepers' authority, Camilla and Mrs. Mittin wander around the stores freely and examine goods with pleasure without actually buying anything. In short, they participate in what may be seen as a radically new practice of shopping; browsing or window-shopping, which is driven by feminine desire than need. Camilla and Mrs. Mittin indulge in visual pleasure, seeing "what there's to see in town" and "all that was smartest, without the expense of buying anything." Their shopping experience makes it possible for them to be powerful female spectators as opposed to merely "object[s] to be stared at without scruple" (613) by men. Camilla's act of "indulging with impunity such unbridled curiosity" (608) and Mrs. Mittin's free-roving eyes, which "rou[ted] over every body's best goods, [without] laying out a penny" (611), emphasize the undisciplined feminine pleasures women were able to experience as

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[9] Anne Friedberg, Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern, , 35-36.

[10] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace. Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century. (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), 78.

shoppers. Here shopping, no longer a chore for necessities, constitutes an enjoyable diversion in which female consumers can exercise the privilege of looking.

Although Camilla's shopping episodes in Southampton present a compelling example of roving female shoppers who elude an objectifying male gaze through their itinerant spectatorship, Burney ultimately implies that in the public realm, this empowered female shopper is at odds with prescribed ideals of femininity. The enormity of Camilla's debt and the serious consequences of her fashionable consumption suggest that female consumption needs to be controlled and monitored by society and the self. Camilla, repentant of her self-indulgent luxuries, returns to the safety of the patriarchal home and marries Edgar in domestic bliss at the ending. But while Camilla illustrates that female consumption for a respectable middle-class woman like Camilla must be circumscribed within the domestic sphere, Mrs. Mittin, who comes from the working class, epitomizes a more transgressive aspect of female consumerism in the novel. Like Mrs. Arlbery, who uses fashionable consumption for her own advantage, Mrs. Mittin is a skillful manipulator of clothes, both for herself and others. Not only does she profit from being a personal shopper for Camilla but she uses clothes to negotiate class boundaries, in much the same way that Roxana uses masquerade. Having moved up the social ladder from a "small country milliner" to a "gentlewoman" (688), Mrs. Mittin dresses appropriately to gain freedom to act as she desires. She remarks: "people take me for a mere common, and I walk on, ever so late and nobody speaks to me; and so by that means I get my pleasure, and save my money; and yet always appear like a gentlewoman when I'm known" (424). Blending into new surroundings, she appeals to "every rank and class of society," capitalizing on her knowledge of different fashions. Just as she is

able to shift between different classes, she can easily assume different identities: "a parasite, a spy, an attendant, a drudge: keep a secret, or spread a report; incite a quarrel, or coax contending parties into peace; invent any expedient, and execute any scheme" (688). Although the narrator implicitly disapproves of Mrs. Mittin's "egotism," which is "as prevalent in her mind as in that of the more highly ambitious, though meaner and less dangerous" (689), Mrs. Mittin can be seen as admirable in her extreme adaptability and versatility, for she freely moves through the streets or social world manipulating the terms of her appearance without fear of recrimination. In her roving and her gazing, Mrs. Mittin constitutes a form of urban strolling that circumvents the norms of femininity.

The Politics of the Female Consumerist Gaze

Camilla and Mrs. Mittin's shopping excursion presents us with a common theme that runs through this study. The actively desiring gazes of women shoppers of the late eighteenth-century are seen in Montagu's admiration for Turkish women and their culture and in Betsy's longing looks at Mr. Trueworth's portrait. These women's uses of consumption for pleasure rather than utility enables a new understanding of self, one that is constituted through material commodities. Shopping is not just about economic activity but about desires, fantasy, and identification, among other things. Rather than being constituted monolithically as an object of exchange, the figure of the female consumer also emerges as an active, even transgressive agent in the marketplace. Montagu's shopping episodes in Turkey allow her to explore alternatives beyond the constraints of the British aristocratic self. Roxana uses her possessions to transgress the boundaries of class and sexual norms. Betsy's tactical engagement with coquetry enables

her to disrupt the expectations of proper femininity. Browsing for pleasure without being compelled to purchase merchandise, Camilla and Mrs. Mittin actively construct themselves as agents rather than serving as objects of others' gazes. Through their mobile, browsing looks, Camilla and Mrs. Mittin challenge the dominant scopic regime that constructs women as commodified objects of the male gaze.

Because the female consumer was seen as threatening to male order, eighteenth-century society sought to control her through disciplinary practices. My discussion reveals the ideological process whereby the bodies of female consumers become increasingly regulated and disciplined into compliant domestic women by male surveillance. Whereas Montagu's celebration of Turkish commodity culture is largely limited to her aristocratic affiliation, her consumerist gaze in Continental Europe valorizes bourgeois domestic ideals. Roxana's series of masquerades, which is made possible by foreign commodities, is curtailed by her maternal role, in which domestic consumption becomes favored over foreign consumption. The most explicit example of the link between female consumption and domesticity is Addison and Steele's The Spectator papers. Mr. Spectator is paradigmatic of the masculine gaze that attempts to monitor and contain those threatening aspects of female consumption within the private domestic world. In contrast, Haywood's conduct literature rejects the conventional notion that female consumers have insatiable appetites, and suggests instead that female consumers can negotiate their visual agency within the private domestic sphere through the strategic use of coquetry. As the end of the eighteenth century witnesses rapidly expanding consumer practices against the backdrop of the development of retail shopping

and tourism, Camilla's financial disaster suggests that the proper regulation of female consumption is necessary for a domestic woman within patriarchal economy.

There is much at stake for patriarchal ideology in disciplining female consumption in accordance with domestic ideology, but historical accounts show that female consumers in Britain nonetheless exercised political power by the end of the eighteenth century. For example, the participation of British women in the sugar boycotts of the 1790s provides insight into the crucial role of female consumers in the abolitionist struggles to end slavery in the British Caribbean. West Indian sugar, a luxury item which increasingly became an everyday necessity, became an important symbol of England's involvement in the slave economies of the Caribbean in the last decade of the eighteenth century, thus linking domestic consumption with colonial production. The campaign to boycott slave-grown sugar attests to the power of white female consumers in convincing the public to abstain from sugar consumption in protest against slavery, emphasizing the consumer's discretionary power to buy or not to buy a product. An antislavery pamphlet clearly acknowledges the domestic power of British women: "refusing to use any articles which have been cultivated by Slaves, woman, feeble as she is, may do more for the suppression of the inhuman Slave Trade, than all the ships of war that have ever ranged the coast of Africa." [11] Here, it is evident that abolitionists depended on the female capacity for compassion and moral influence, for they consciously called on domestic female consumers' ability to imagine and sympathize with colonial suffering. Charlotte Sussman argues that antislavery discourse was potentially racist in that it often deployed a rhetoric of physical contamination by African

[11] "To the Women of Great Britain and Ireland, on the Disuse of Slave Produce." London: circa 1828. Quoted in Charlotte Sussman, Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833. (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000), 128

slaves. Domestic consumption of sugar, for example, was represented as equivalent to ingesting the blood of slaves and thereby incorporating the dangers of the colonial 'other.' Thus, the boycott of sugar was simultaneously tied to the making of English identity in that it consciously called on women's power to regulate domestic consumption and to ensure that the domestic space remain distinct from the source and threat of colonial contamination.

The female consumer's political power lay not only in purchasing of colonial products but also in her active consumption of images. As active agents in the market, women consumers were also responsible for purchasing fashionable items to promote abolition. According to Thomas Clarkson, it became fashionable for women to wear and display ceramic medallions created by Josiah Wedgwood in 1788:

> Of the ladies, several wore them in bracelets, and other had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for their hair. At length, the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honorable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom. [12]

Josiah Wedgewood's popular medallion features an emblem of a kneeling slave inquiring, "Am I not a man and a brother?" If women's consumption of this ornament drew the male gaze to the body of the woman who wore it, it also redirected male attention on the medallion representing a black male slave in a suppliant position. By focusing attention

[12] Clarkson Thomas, The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament. (Philadelphia: J. Parke, 1808)

on the suffering image of the black slave, female consumers consciously deployed the dynamics of the gaze to promote the antislavery cause as a moral imperative. [13] Here, the consumption of a household fashion item becomes part of a political agenda. Through their sympathetic identification with the suffering of Caribbean slaves, women not only brought the supposedly feminine qualities of compassion and sympathy to bear on the colonial world but also urged other consumers to follow their model as a moral exemplum. As Nancy Armstrong has shown, the rise of the domestic woman by the end of the eighteenth century revolutionalized the status of women in English culture. Armstrong underlines the important element of cultural agency that this new domestic woman exercised: "The domestic woman's capacity to supervise was clearly more important than any other factor in determining the victory of this ardently dazzling creature over all her cultural competitors. For this reason, the peculiar combination of invisibility and vigilance personified in the domestic woman came to represent the principle of domestic economy itself." [14] If a woman became valued not for her physical attributes but her inner qualities, these female domestic virtues had a powerful impact on the economic and political world. Abolitionists consciously called on female domestic virtues to preserve the home as a symbol of English identity and to ensure that the domestic sphere remained safe from colonial contamination. Although it can be argued that the female consumer's gaze stems from her privileged position as a white domestic

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[13] For the image of the medallion, see "Slave Medallion," Josiah Wedgwood. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Staffordshire, England. The image of the black slave in contrast with the white background can be seen as reinforcing the superiority of the white consumers, just as the kneeling, prostrated position of the black slave's helpless face raised to the white audience appealing for help naturalizes the hierarchical relationship between the Caribbean slave and the white.

[14] Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 80-81.

woman and assumes an unequal relation with the black slave, the example of the slavery medallion is evidence of how female consumers deployed the power of the gaze to undermine the institution of slavery and to reconfigure consumer behavior for political ends.

By concluding with the example of the female consumer's boycott of sugar, my study insists that female consumerism in the eighteenth century opens up space for cultural and political agency. By negotiating their dual status as both autonomous agents desiring goods and dependent objects of consumption under the male gaze, female consumers, like the women in all the texts I have discussed throughout this study, successfully exercised the privilege of seeing and controlling the terms of being seen by others. An understanding of eighteenth-century consumerism in relation to visuality is crucial because it helps to challenge the workings of male visual dominance. It also underlines how women's consumption in particular had the capacity to disrupt stable notions of gender, class, nation and subjectivity through the production of new and more mobile forms of identity and pleasure.

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