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A NATURAL HISTORY OF TEASING: BRITISH WOMEN WRITERS AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN COURTSHIP NARRATIVE, 1677-1818

By

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2009

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Abstract

This dissertation considers the complex roles that nascent Bardolatry, the rise of women writers, and the persistence of satiric impulses played in engineering the teasing relationships of eighteenth-century courtship fiction. I argue that in a period reputedly dominated by sentiment, women's comedy largely hinged on anti-sentiment, particularly in its appropriation of the antithetical wooing practices so pervasive in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Such a perspective endows female authors (and their protagonists) to assume control of the discursive field and resituates the love story into a love game. I begin by tracing the continued influence of the Elizabethan culture of jest, aligning it with eighteenth-century debates regarding women's speech and sexual propriety. I then illustrate, through satirical cartoons and ephemera, the growing taste for levity in love. Contravening the mawkish declarations of sentimental couples, these couples revel in biting vitriol and acerbic wit.

In my analysis, I use three representative plays from Shakespeare to exemplify three distinct facets of adversarial couples. *As You Like It* anticipates those romantic bonds which are engineered through physical or emotional disguise, *The Taming of the Shrew* forecasts those couples whose affection stems from splenetic humour, and *Much Ado about Nothing* prefigures those pairs whose temperaments are more alike than they are different—even if they affect otherwise. To illustrate Shakespeare's influence on women writers, I draw on select works from the following authors: Aphra Behn, Mary Davys, Susannah Centlivre, Charlotte Lennox, Eliza Haywood, Frances Sheridan, Joanna Baillie, Hannah Cowley, Elizabeth Inchbald and Jane Austen. Using a synthesis of game theory, speech act theory, philosophies of language, and play theory, I outline the ways in which teasing couples exhibit true attachment even as they

ostensibly refuse it. In so doing, they create egalitarian relationships which depend upon mutual love and affective choice.

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I am also obliged to Dr. Timothy Erwin and Dr. Evelyn Gajowski, who each exposed me to foundational concepts which pervade this project. It was in Dr. Erwin's seminars that I first learned about visual culture and the popularity of caricatures and prints, and it was through Dr. Gajowski's course that I was originally exposed to the history of Petrarchan and Ovidian

discourses. Some portions of this project have as their origin my final paper for her 2012 class on the intersections of Shakespeare and gender.

Within the broader academic community at UNLV, I would like to extend a special thanks to our Humanities Librarian, Priscilla Finley. Her generosity of time and expertise are much appreciated, as is her nearly preternatural response time to any e-mail (even on weekends!). I also thank the countless unseen hands behind our Link+ and Interlibrary Loan services that swiftly and efficiently ensured that I could have access to vital sources in order to complete this dissertation. Lastly, I am very appreciative of the guidance that the Graduate College has provided throughout this journey, particularly in these last few weeks of its completion.

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To my parents, for teaching me the importance of hard work, but more importantly for teaching me that if I found something I loved, then all work would amount to play.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In *Northanger Abbey*, Henry Tilney's claim that "nothing advances intimacy so much as [teasing]" is as assertive and conclusive as Austen's more famous opening line to *Pride and Prejudice,* but rarely does it receive its due critical attention (17).[1] Encapsulated in his assertion is a new view of courtship, one stripped of the decorous social norms and sentimental rhetoric which ran rampant in contemporary literature and guidebooks of the long eighteenth century, and founded instead on good-humor and parity. For a period virtually dominated by the courtship novel and female *bildungsroman*, an avowal of a single, particular discursive agent to engendering intimacy is significant. Nothing could then be more important to an examination of the genre than looking at how couples end up together, and particularly at how they talk to one another.

Such is my central task in the following pages: to unite disparate branches of scholarship into an analysis of the social and literary changes which allow Austen, through Tilney, to make such a claim. This dissertation takes the author at her word and explores how teasing talk impacts the development of romantic bonds from the late seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries, offering an overview of its various uses and effects. It first surveys the language debates of the era, chronicling the tensions between the sentimental discourses of the justly amiable to the cutting satires so pervasive onstage and in print. Through this synopsis I highlight the troublesome role that language played in determining the agency of the female

[1] Susan Allen Ford's cogent essay, "Ingenious Torments, or Reading Instructive Texts in Northanger Abbey: The Mirror, The Rambler, and Conduct Books," remains the sole source I have found which details the importance that teasing bears on *Northanger Abbey* and on courtship more generally. She too links Austen's novel with Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*. This dissertation seeks to build upon her study, repositioning Austen with other prominent writers of the era, and negotiating the ways in which teasing discourse develops across the long eighteenth century. Kay Young also briefly mentions this line in her study *Ordinary Pleasures,* claiming that it "suggests that even to arrive at the conversation of love requires first other forms of shared talk, which have, apparently, nothing to do with love" (17-18).

voice, not only for the average young woman seeking matrimony but for the female authors and actresses who wrote and played out such courtship narratives. I then examine how theatrical language influenced teasing speech, a language which increasingly became more lighthearted and humorous as eighteenth-century audiences began to prefer jeers over tears. Such an examination would be incomplete, however, without considering how the period's cultural fascination with Shakespeare played a role in this transformation. I chart the era's penchant for the Bard's comedies and argue that female authors found, through their appropriation of his tropes and plots, a vehicle to redefine courtship according to proto-feminist models. In these texts, which comprise the second half of the project, women writers vocalized the importance of both choice and mutual compatibility through the semiotic exchange of stichomythic banter. *As You Like It*'s Rosalind, *The Taming of the Shrew*'s Katharine, and *Much Ado about Nothing*'s Beatrice subsequently become the maternal models for a vast array of literary progeny. Ultimately, the Shakespearean courtship narrative, permutated by countless female hands, becomes the dominant courtship narrative throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.

Background and Methodology

While much scholarship on courtship has focused on the periods which bookend the eighteenth century, there yet remains a notable gap in terms of the changes in wooing discourse which occur within it. The "culture of jest" in Elizabethan England has enjoyed a wealth of critical treatment in the last thirty years, particularly through Andrew K. Kennedy's *Dramatic Dialogue* (1983), Chris Holcomb's *Mirth Making* (2001), Pamela Allen Brown's *Better a Shrew than a Sheep* (2003), and Madhavi Menon's *Wanton Words* (2004). John Harrington Smith's seminal *The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy* (1948) is a thorough catalogue of what he terms "sex-antagonism" throughout the late seventeenth century stage and into the eighteenth. He

describes the comedic effect engendered by "young people [who] … while wanting love, may at the same instant not want it, and that love may be complicated by a kind of pride which has its basis in the individual's consciousness of his sex as well as his individuality… a courtship may be characterized by an element of sex-antagonism as well as sex attraction" (5).

His definition largely informs the way that I see teasing speech, and is invaluable to this study. Though exhaustive in his catalogue of plays written by both men and women, however, Smith's text lacks sustained analysis of female-authored material. Additionally, he sees a decline of the gay couple at the turn of the eighteenth century and a subsequent rise of the man and woman of sense, a couple for whom "reason and virtue go hand in hand" (205). This couple is solely defined by how they are *not* the gay couple, and Smith dismisses them with the following: "Obviously not much that was comic could be done with them" (217). Despite Smith's perception that morality and comedy are perhaps mutually exclusive, several didactic works yet retain a patently humorous spirit. Although he argues for a decline of the truly gay couple, their speech patterns are nevertheless retained, and jesting spirit preserved (even if this spirit does serve the most amiable of purposes). In this dissertation I account for what happens to the sex-antagonist duo in eighteenth century theatre and also illustrate how women writers utilize this motif in the early novel to bolster the feminine agency of their heroines.

Because teasing discourse may initially appear similar to other types of flirting across the period, it is important to delineate how exactly it differs from the "coquetry" which has been the subject of recent, and important, critical discussion.[2] Coquettes of the time flirted with many, but settled down with none, delighting in what Theresa Braunschneider terms their "capacious desire" and the power that comes with it. Teasers, on the other hand, tend to fixate on one romantic interest, and as such are much more closely related to the "sex-antagonists" of Smith's

[2] See Theresa Braunschneider's *Our Coquettes* (2009) and Gill Perry's *Spectacular Flirtations* (2007).

treatise. Richard A. Kaye's *The Flirt's Tragedy* also recounts the prevalence of coquetry in Victorian fiction, a trope that for him reflects the shifting novelistic techniques of the period. He describes the era as one in which "flirtation is not simply an order of experience distinct from love but an antithetical shadow game that mocks true romantic ardor" (35), and during which "the Victorian novel thrived not on myths of courtship but by flirtatious energies that were inassimilable to plots of marriage" (39). While Kaye's work is persuasive and convincing, it does not provide for the host of novels in which desire is not deferred indefinitely, as it is for his flirts, but rather engendered by its deferral and culminated in a traditional courtship narrative. Teasers, instead of experiencing a decline in courtship fiction, continue to develop throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, as I briefly show in the conclusion to this study. There is yet room to develop the trajectory of teasers in the Victorian period, as they are in fact disparate from the coquettes of Braunschneider's and Kaye's studies. For example, we would no more conflate Jane Eyre and Blanche Ingram than we would Elizabeth Bennet and her sister, Lydia. Ultimately, the relationship between Jane and Rochester has all of the tempestuous teasing readers would learn to expect from the courtship novel, affected as it is by what has come before it and heavily influencing what comes after.

It is the romantic comedies of Shakespeare, though, that are tantamount to this study. I argue that women writers in the long eighteenth century found in emergent Bardolatry a literary safe-zone within which they could write transgressive and innovative takes on the traditional courtship novels. Shakespeare's appearance in the period is not a new area of study by any means. *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2012), edited by Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor, exhaustively outlines Shakespeare's ubiquity onstage and in literature. It covers his celebrity, especially as seated in the Stratford Jubilee and Shakespeare Gallery. Several scholars have

addressed the problems of editing or changing Shakespeare's language, especially Jean I. Marsden's *The Re-Imagined Text* (1995), Marcus Walsh's *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* (1997), and Joanna Gondris' *Reading Readings: Essays on Shakespeare Editing in the Eighteenth Century* (1998). Much scholarship has also examined the interaction of women and the Bard throughout the period, particularly Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014), which focuses mainly on female criticism of Shakespeare's texts, the figure of the eighteenth-century actress, and the role of women audiences.

However, the subject of how women authors throughout the era appropriated, restored and renovated Shakespearean plots—specifically his comedies of courtship—has yet to be exhausted.[3] For example, Marianne Novy's excellent anthology *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* (1990), while thorough in its selection, features only Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear* as a representative from the entire long eighteenth century.[4] Novy's later *Engaging with Shakespeare* (1994) addresses the use of Shakespeare in Jane Austen's novels, but soon moves on to Charlotte Bronte.[5] There does, however, seem to be a critical willingness to see echoes of Shakespeare in the works of Jane Austen, as John Wiltshire points out in his

[3] Tabitha Kenlon's dissertation, *Performances of Womanhood in the Eighteenth Century English Theatre and Novel* (Northeastern University, 2014) does include a chapter on four of Hannah Cowley's plays; while she makes the observation that her "heroines follow a Shakespearean tradition and anticipate Austen," her study focuses more on the performance of gender and its intersection with contemporary conduct books.

[4] While the introduction does make brief reference to Aphra Behn, Elizabeth Montagu, and Margaret Cavendish, Lamb is the only author to receive sustained analysis within the text.

[5] Nalini Natarajan's 1983 dissertation, *The Witty Woman in Nineteenth Century English Comic Fiction*, perhaps comes closest to such an investigation in her introduction. In it, she ably charts the development of the witty woman from Shakespeare through the Restoration, but maintains that the eighteenth century saw a decline in the trope until Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), which runs counter to the aims of this project. She does credit Sheridan and Goldsmith for helping to "pave the way for Jane Austen" (24), but does not spend prolonged time on female playwrights. Similarly, Margaret Lamb McDonald's *The Independent Woman in the Restoration Comedy of Manners* (1976) chronicles how Shakespeare's Benedick and Beatrice are the primogenitors of a later tradition, but spends the majority of the study examining male playwrights of the Restoration.

Recreating Jane Austen (2001) and as Jocelyn Harris ably traces in her *Jane Austen's Art of Memory* (1989). A 2010 special issue of the journal *Shakespeare* had as its primary theme the interrelationship between Shakespeare and Austen. In this project I aim to broaden this critical willingness by illustrating how other women writers perform iterations of Shakespeare's plot structures.

Though each of the sections in Act Two is anchored in a specific Shakespearean play, this project concerns itself solely with women writers, and how they appropriate and repurpose teasing discourse to demonstrate both companionate equality and rhetorical power. The parameters extend from Aphra Behn's *The Rover* in 1677 to Jane Austen's *Persuasion* in 1818; however, I have chosen to eschew a chronological reading of the period in favor of a more thematic organization, focusing instead on the archetypal figures and plots which emerge from an overview of the long eighteenth century. In doing so, a hybridized methodology of both distant and close reading emerges, one which generates a loose catalogue of teasing instances while yet allowing for textual analysis. This approach permits a repositioning of what Franco Moretti terms "the Great Unread" (180) alongside the canonical. It frees established authors such as Austen from becoming merely the introduction or conclusion to a study and instead places them in conversation with the writers, engravers, and ordinary people who shared their historical moment. At the same, by retaining close reading strategies, I aim to avoid Moretti's "*Walpurgisnacht* of discordant voices," or the "loss of distinction, slowness, boredom… [which results in] Too much polyphony, and too much monotony" (180-81). Though this project is certainly not a wholesale answer to Moretti's desire for a fusion of these two halves of literature (the canonical and peripheral, and indeed of the strategies of close and distant reading), I do hope it helps advance the approach to such a harmony.

In my analysis, I have used as my theoretical foundation a synthesis of Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1949), J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (1955), Kay Young's *Ordinary Pleasures: Couples, Conversation, and Comedy* (2001), and Michael Suk-Young Chwe's *Jane Austen, Game Theorist* (2013). Huizinga's notions of play enable me to examine teasing wooers as agents of fun, heightening the comic scope of their respective texts. Austin's concept of speech-acts also helps to clarify how couples actively perform their courtship, effecting romantic bonds through combative speech. Young's text looks at the conversation of couples as narrative formation, the building of a shared story between lovers. Her philosophies regarding rhetoric and narrative structure, applied to various romantic comedies, support my interaction with eighteenth-century courtship tales and reinforce their inherently humorous natures. Lastly, I use Chwe's text as a model for applying game theory to works of fiction, a burgeoning field of study. Taken together, these conceptual frameworks allow me to discuss teasing speech as a game with set rules and procedures, processes which perform the action of courtship as couples speak to one another. I argue that the suitability of a pair is determined both by their theory of mind (or their ability to discern the needs and wants of their partner), and their use of strategic thinking (or the executions necessary in order to make those needs and wants a reality). Although wooing is a serious business, for teasing couples it is always rooted in a spirit of play, the same spirit that imbues the eighteenth century more largely in its penchant for satire and comedy.

In this project I have also devoted my attention to analyzing how eighteenth century ideological debates are reflected in contemporary print culture. Despite an array of excellent scholarship, including Diana Donald's *The Age of Caricature* (1996), Cindy McCreery's *The Satirical Gaze* (2004), Vic Gatrell's *City of Laughter* (2007) and Constance C. McPhee and

Nadine M. Orenstein's *Infinite Jest* (2011), this vast archive is still underrepresented in current academic discourse. I aim to continue and build upon these studies within this dissertation. Several of the prints discussed in this project have not (to my knowledge) been addressed before, ripe though they are for examination. As visual jokes, these prints and caricatures literalize abstract discussions in an immediately palpable way and reflect a people and culture which would have readily understood the humor behind them. Although my subject is largely a verbal one, these visual texts also align with the type of spectatorship engineered by teasing courtships. Satirical prints function as a kind of visual tease, taunting readers to discern meaning even in their total absurdity.

In order to garner as comprehensive a sample as possible within the constraints of both time and space, I have also utilized digital resources, especially Artemis Primary Sources (to illustrate trends in word usage), online archives such as Early English Books Online (EBBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), ProQuest's British Periodicals and Literature Online, the Library of Congress' Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, and literary bibliographies of the period such as *British Fiction 1800-1829*. As it is (in part) a natural history, this project additionally surveys a wide range of archival material (including contemporary cartoons from The Lewis Walpole Library and the British Museum's online collections, dictionaries, conduct literature, journals, and letters) to illustrate the variety of ways in which the sexes spoke not only to each other, but also amongst themselves.

As with any project, this one has had as its constraints both time and space, which lends room for additional study in the following areas. Most obviously, I have limited my investigation to women writers, yet there are several works by male authors that also lend insight into this

larger discursive trend.[6] I additionally limit my examination solely to those pairs actively involved in a courtship, and thus have had to eliminate from my purview the sparkling, witty, and vivacious older matrons who often permeate narratives. While not seeking matrimony themselves, these female characters use their wit to tease and torment those around them, and largely contribute to the comic nature of various texts, particularly in the works of Maria Edgeworth and Frances Burney.

Additionally, I do not consider here the Fielding-esque narrator as another permutation of the tease, or as another iteration of the novel's relationship with theatre. These self-aware narrators often toy with the reader, withholding information or breaking the fourth wall of narrative in order to comment on the goings-on of the plot. A notable example of this is Austen's narrator in *Northanger Abbey*, who proclaims at the engagement of Henry Tilney and Catherine Morland that her "own joy on the occasion is very sincere" (173). Such metaliterature allows for sardonic self-awareness, as readers come to understand that they are simultaneously engaged in fictional happenings but also serving as mere spectators of the action at hand.

Lastly, I have limited the scope of the study to those works that resemble in part *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*. However, there is much yet to be written about how and where Shakespeare's other plays become repeated across the period, particularly the tragedies and histories, as well as comedies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* or *All's Well That Ends Well*. If Shakespeare had such an immense influence in nearly every other aspect of eighteenth-century culture, as able scholarship has proved, then it is also time to investigate how his various plots and tropes impacted the kinds

[6] Most tempting for the title of this study are Sheridan's figure of Mrs. Teazle as well as Thomas Morton's *How to Teaze and How to Please* (1810) and Robert Francis Jameson's *Teazing Made Easy* (1817).

of courtship narratives at work on the eighteenth-century stage as well as the pages of the early novel.

In terms of methodology, this project contributes to the growing application of game theory to works of fiction, a multidisciplinary approach which places the social sciences into conversation with the humanities. Especially for the courtship narrative, game theory provides a framework to analyze why certain couples maintain lasting bonds while others fall by the literary wayside. In its reference to several prints and caricatures of the period, this project also helps to promote the study of these often forgotten texts. By attempting a natural history in the earlier portions of this project, particularly chapters one and two, I also seek to reposition the ephemera of magazine and print culture into conversation with the texts that shared their historical moment.

Chapter Outline

In order to develop the nuances which shape discursive practice throughout the period, the first chapter ("Talking about Talk and Talking about Love") first presents the "problem" inherent in eighteenth-century wooing practices, as reflected in contemporary ephemera and prints. Sharply divided between sentimental courtship and satirical portraits of marriage, they expose what were essentially incongruous expectations of matrimonial felicity and its sometimes harsh realities. I then posit that teasing discourse emerges as a partial solution to this conjugal quandary. In this section, I outline select critical frameworks in order to discuss how language, gender, and power align. The chapter then provides an overview of the Elizabethan culture of jest, an ethos and trope which greatly influences the comic enthusiasm of the eighteenth century.

Chapter two, "Sex and Language in the Eighteenth Century," outlines the emergence of two social pressures that begin to regulate proper societal interaction, particularly anxieties

regarding women's speech and the emerging cult of sensibility. The first stems from the development of the two-sex model, which increasingly asserted that female dialogues, as well as female minds, were innately different from those of men. It is within this model that women's talk becomes fused with their sexual activity; thenceforward, having loose lips in discourse came to intimate a possession of loose morals as well. At the same time, several tracts espousing appropriate conduct in conversation emerge, advocating restraint of one's personal desires and genial affability in indulging those of others. In the eyes of many, these tracts reduced speaking "like a gentleman" to a simple science, and genuine sensibility to a discrete set of steps. For them, the cult of amiability only succeeded in effacing candid interaction.

In reaction to this boon of etiquette literature, anti-conduct works such as Jonathan Swift's *Guide to Servants* (1724), Benjamin Bourn's *A Sure Guide to Hell* (1750), Jane Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753), Maria Edgeworth's "An Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification" (1795) and *Chesterfield travestie, or, School for modern manners* (1808) steadily arise, implicitly offering a critique of sentiment and promoting frank communication. By assuming the guise of a well-meaning social tutor, these works effectively create a type of satirical discourse akin to a meta-tease, lending paradoxical instructions of how to best vex fellow humans and illustrating the persistence of satiric discourse in the face of more earnest fare. These texts are connected to a larger contemporary vocabulary which was used to describe light-hearted banter between individuals; one can tease, but also rail, vex, torment or quiz. In this section I select five "keywords" to trace the permutations of humorous speech, and survey archival material in order to analyze how these concepts are interrelated and where they diverge into discrete behaviors. Through these various examples, this section helps to elucidate the

gradations between different types of speech, as eighteenth century men and women would have understood them.

Chapter three, "Courting Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Women Writers," serves three major purposes. It first explores not only Shakespeare's rise as a national icon, but also the eighteenth century's growing penchant for Shakespeare's comedies and its satiric lampoons of the celebrity culture which imputed him with gratuitous gravitas. It then situates women writers as both able participants in contemporary dialogues regarding the Bard as well as perpetuators of his comic spirit. I begin by providing an overview of Shakespeare's growing celebrity in the eighteenth century, informed by Fiona Ritchie's recent *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2012, with Peter Sabor) and *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014). Additionally, I chronicle the growing number of satires (in drama, prose, and caricature) of Shakespeare's tragedies, ironic depictions which undermine the playwright's traditional gravitas and instead bolster the period's burgeoning penchant for his comedies. Counter to J. H. Smith's view, the humorous spirit of these works, as well as the acerbic wit of Restoration drama, do not taper out in the gust of sentiment but rather pervade and shape the later drama of the period and even the development of the incipient novel form, as written by women writers.

In the "Intermission" or chapter four, "Comedies of Error: Game Theory, Play, and Establishing the 'Raillery Rules,'" I illustrate how game theory may be applied to antagonistic, flirting speech. In Michael Suk-Young Chwe's *Jane Austen, Game Theorist* (2013), he describes the important role that a well-developed theory of mind and choice play in literature, particularly in Austen's canon (15). He sees Austen as "interested not just in interacting knowledge or intersubjectivity, but in interacting actions: how a person's choices interact with the choices of others" (34). When couples engage in a badinage of wit, they often demonstrate a capacity for

analyzing (or pretending to analyze) the other's state of mind, often pinning down *why* their opponent says the things he or she does. They then choose a particular response (out of the seemingly infinite options) to continue the jest; courtship becomes a theatrical game of knowing while not knowing.

It is here that teasing discourse becomes explicitly related to J. Huizinga's notion of play, Kay Young's ideas of partnered language, and J.L. Austin's theory of language performativity. For Huizinga, all human culture stems from a universal love of play, of fun (46). This play is not lessened by its inessential qualities, or its lack of pragmatic value; in fact, Huizinga sees it as the most prime and primal of all actions: "The rite produces the effect which is then not so much *shown figuratively* as *actually reproduced* in the action. The function of the rite, therefore, is far from being merely imitative; it causes the worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself" (15). All forms of play, including teasing discourse, are sacred, and can be played to serious ends. Young suggests that "[l]ove stories use conversations to embody the starred moments a plot traces through the life of a relationship" (63). Thus their talk performs the act of courting even in the relationship's very development. In this study, I similarly examine dialogue to show how antithetical exchanges can be performing the action of courting, even as they ostensibly preclude it from occurring. As Austin maintains, performative speech catalogues those instances "in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something" (12). Through engaging in playful, teasing speech, couples build their very own relationships.

However, this intermission focuses not on those immaculate successes, but the profound failures that riddle much of the literature from the eighteenth century. I synthesize the frameworks of Huizinga, Young, Chwe, and Austin to discern recurring patterns which apply to

play, game theory, and performativity. In doing so, I establish yardsticks by which we can then measure the "success" of speech exchanges among lovers. By way of negative example, this chapter looks at failed characters and plots in order to explain why this set of rules and procedures for the "play" of teasing are necessary, thereby paving the way for the final part of this study. This chapter closes with a case study of Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* (1725) as a romantic comedy gone awry.

In Act Two, or "Felicitous (Conjugal) Felicity," I play on J.L. Austin's notion of felicitous performativity to explore three "camps" of effective teasing: those instances of anti-sentiment or antagonism which result in a matrimonial bond. As stated prior, teasers are separated from coquettes primarily because they fixate on one other romantic interest. There lies a uniqueness in the shared dialogue which lets us know that "this is the one," even if the characters themselves affect otherwise.[7] Additionally, Georg Simmel's work on flirtation comes to be relevantly applied to the eighteenth century, as has been aptly demonstrated by Gill Perry's *Spectacular Flirtations* (2007). Simmel's concept is that flirtation occupies a rhetorical plane that lays "somewhere between the not-having and having" (qtd. in Perry, 11). I argue that teasing transcends this plane into the "not-*yet*-having," a veiled promise of future fidelity that is engendered by the very playful talk in which the couple engages. In his *An Intimate History of Humanity*, Theodore Zeldin observed that "[i]t may be that another word may replace flirtation, to indicate its expanded meaning as an adventure based on attraction but seeking to do much more than attract" (103). With its intentionality and exclusivity, I believe that teasing could be

[7] Dramatic irony plays a crucial role in the reader response to a romantic comedy- spectators always know before the couple does that they will end up together. This is a trope humorously lampooned by veteran romantic comedy hero Tom Hanks in regards to his performance in *Sleepless in Seattle*: "I hope you're invested in waiting for them to get together at the very end of the movie. *If* they get together at the very end of the movie. Ooh, will it happen? Will it happen?" ("Love in the Movies"). Tracing how exactly teasing discourse transforms into a signifier for predestined felicity is one of the primary objectives of this project.

this word. It remains a type of communication which is performative in both senses—innately theatrical, but also potentiated with the verbal power of felicitous discourse.

Chapter five, "Acting Out: Women Writers and Shakespearean Courtship," depicts the three kinds of "successful" relationships, and is united by various connections to both particular tenets of the masquerade and to popular works by Shakespeare. Each section begins with a brief exploration of how these specific texts were performed and received in the period, and each offers a close reading of its respective Shakespearean play, illustrating how different types of teasing talk serve to bring the couples together. "Masked Courtship and Revelatory Affection in the tradition of *As You Like It*" draws upon the liberating force of physical disguise within the masquerade and demonstrates how camouflaged suitors tease and woo under cloaks of artifice and pretense. As Castle observes, the freedom of verbal autonomy was precisely reflected in costume: "Masqueraders approached one another more closely and more intrusively than they would have in ordinary social settings… costume, with its estranging layers, permitted this: the presence of an encasing, impenetrable disguise caused the usual protective spatial bubble around individual bodies to shrink" (37). In much the same way that Rosalind courts Orlando as Ganymede, these teasing couples enjoy using the anonymity of dress to become ever closer to their intended mates. Though Castle explains that the eroticized mask was mostly used to denote "a kind of stylized evasion—a formal sign of resistance to full human exchange" (39), these couples use encasing disguises solely as a means of cementing affective bonds. Just as Orlando furiously exclaims to Rosalind/Ganymede that he can "live no longer by thinking" (V.ii.50), these pairs similarly find that costumes have certain statutes of limitations, and become unnecessary after the courting process is over.

"Antithetical Love and Vexatious Romance in the tradition of *Taming of the Shrew*" explores the prevalence of aggravation as a means to love. It requires the presence of adversarial opposition, which Castle describes as another permutation of the masquerade: "If one may speak of the rhetoric of masquerade, a tropology of costume, the controlling figure was antithesis: one was obliged to impersonate a being opposite, in some essential feature, to oneself" (5).[8] Like contrasting costumes, couples like Katharine and Petruchio are comprised of contrary personas which must learn to coexist. In this chapter I explore how the prevalence of *Taming of the Shrew* on the eighteenth-century stage (particularly its popular adaptation by David Garrick, *Catherine and Petruchio*) potentially ties to other incarnations of vexatious romance such as Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) and *The Sister* (1762), and Austen's *Emma* (1816). These pairs live and breathe by making each other's lives miserable, an endless combat which only achieves stasis when a rhetorical cease-fire ensues.

Lastly, "'I Know You, Do You Know Me?': Similar Humo(u)rs in the tradition of *Much Ado about Nothing*" studies those couples whose courtship metaphorically consists of that "sequence of set phrases" Castle references, those speeches which usually start with "'I know you' or 'Do you know me?'… to initiate conversations between masks." As she explains, "'Do you know me?' called teasing attention to the problem, and suggested at once smugly and flirtatiously one's pleasure in withholding identifying information" (35). Even as these couples may suppress information about their real emotions, their dialogues reveal similar humours. These similarities dovetail with the like-mindedness that Beatrice and Benedick demonstrate. Indeed, as Penny Gay notes, no other Shakespearean comedy was produced more often (79), imbued as it is with antagonistic—yet romantic—discourse. With this dominance, it also

[8] Erin Isikoff also find's Castle's notion useful in her examination of Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem*, which I have cited later in this study.

influenced other works like Behn's *The Rover* (1677) and even Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Although the similarities between Elizabeth and Darcy and Beatrice and Benedick have been a mainstay in critical discussion, this section elaborates on these similarities and illustrates how they develop in other works of drama and literature.

In Epilogue: From Aphra to Ephron, I briefly chronicle the afterlife of teasing, especially as compared to the aforementioned fate of the "flirt" in Victorian literature. Rather than experiencing a decline, teasing as a means to romantic bonding pervades later novels, and continues to do so in the romantic comedies of today. I aim to show that while teasing begins as isolated discursive events, its eventual repetition through the intervening centuries virtually revolutionizes the field of discourse, becoming the dominant mode through which literary and cinematic couples engender their relationships, even as they refuse them.

Chapter 2: Talking about Talk and Talking about Love

The eighteenth century is famously rife with contradictions, coexisting phenomena which are fundamentally oppositional. In order to partially resolve these variances, the central task of this first chapter is three-pronged. First, it identifies the multivalent impulses behind such cultural shifts as affective individualism, sentiment, and the growth of women writers. It then discusses and clarifies how such shifts relate to prevailing attitudes towards courtship, the persistence of satire, and increasing debates of women's roles in public discourse. I then argue that teasing discourse unites these discrete areas of focus, and posit that the chapter's chronicle of its persistence and development throughout the period helps to partially resolve such incongruities.

I begin first by addressing the seemingly bifurcated relationship between courtship and matrimony, as illustrated by contemporary prints and ephemera. Teasing speech is then introduced as a means of partially rectifying the divide between a sentimental wooing period and connubial misery. Supported by theoretical frameworks such as Michel Foucault's notion of discourse and J.L. Austin's theory of performativity, I show how vitriolic banter also unites the tension between sentiment and satire, as well as extant debates surrounding the conjugal state. As women's roles in procuring and cementing a romantic bond were increasingly coming into question, female writers (through the medium of the courtship novel) articulated their varying stances. This section delineates how their use of wit in such texts, present in teasing speech, becomes socially charged in light of the ongoing debates over amiable and satirical humor. Such deliberations have their root in the Elizabethan culture of jest, which is outlined at the conclusion of this chapter.

The Opposition of Love and Marriage in Contemporary Print Culture

The satirical prints and caricatures of the late eighteenth century often illustrate the disparity between life before and after marriage. In the engraving *A receipt for courtship* (fig. 1), a young couple engages in a derivative, perfunctory courtship—one which, according to the ditty that accompanies the image, is almost cloyingly sweet in its universality:

> Two or three dears and two or three sweets;
>
> Two or three balls and two or three treats; …
>
> Two or three tickets for two or three times;
>
> Two or three love letters writ all in rhyme;
>
> Two or three months keeping strict to these rules;
>
> Can never fail making a couple of fools.[9]

Figure 1. *A receipt for courtship.* 1805. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress*. Web. 3 January 2014.

[9] This short poem also appears in a 1732 edition of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, indicating that it was an established sentiment long before 1805, the date of the print's composition.

This love recipe is devoid of all conflict—much like the image itself, which tranquilly repeats symmetrical doubles throughout. There are two chairs, two plants, two flowers, and sheet music which can only be imagined as a duet. The image and its complementary poem portray the natural progression of wooing with decorum, and perhaps its natural conclusion: general idiocy.

Likewise, James Gillray's *Harmony before Matrimony* (fig. 2) shows an engaged couple gleefully singing together, the man sweetly offering to hold his lady's sheet music as she thrums a harp with all the grace of an angel:

Figure 2. Gillray, James. *Harmony before Matrimony*. 1805. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress*. Web. 8 November 2012.

Here the couple plays in an opulently decorated room, complete with a pastoral cherub depicted in a picture over their heads. There are again several twin-images: two vases of roses, two sconces, and two perfectly elegant goldfish. However, the inclusion of two warring cats ironically undermines the sentiment of the image, for they tumble over the very sheet music the couple has just used. Like the ditty of the previous engraving, their presence intimates future

disharmony, and their fighting underscores the importance of the preposition in the plate's title: this harmony comes *before* marriage. The feuding cats provide insight to what will come *after*.

The anonymous engraving *Courtship and marriage* (fig. 3) literalizes this flirtation between love and hate, idealized romance and brutal reality:

Figure 3. *Courtship and marriage*. 1770-1800. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress*. Web. 3 January 2014.

At first glance, it portrays a couple smiling at one another, the accompanying verse avows that

> When two fond Fools together meet
>
> Each look gives joy, each kiss so sweet
>
> Pleasures the burden of the Song
>
> Toying and playing, all day long.

However, urged by the poem to turn the image upside down, we soon discover that before long

That Frown once o'er with Angry Brow

The Married Pair both peevish grow

All night and day they scold and growl

She calls him Ass and he calls her Fool

This oft we see in real life

Love ends, once you're Man and Wife.

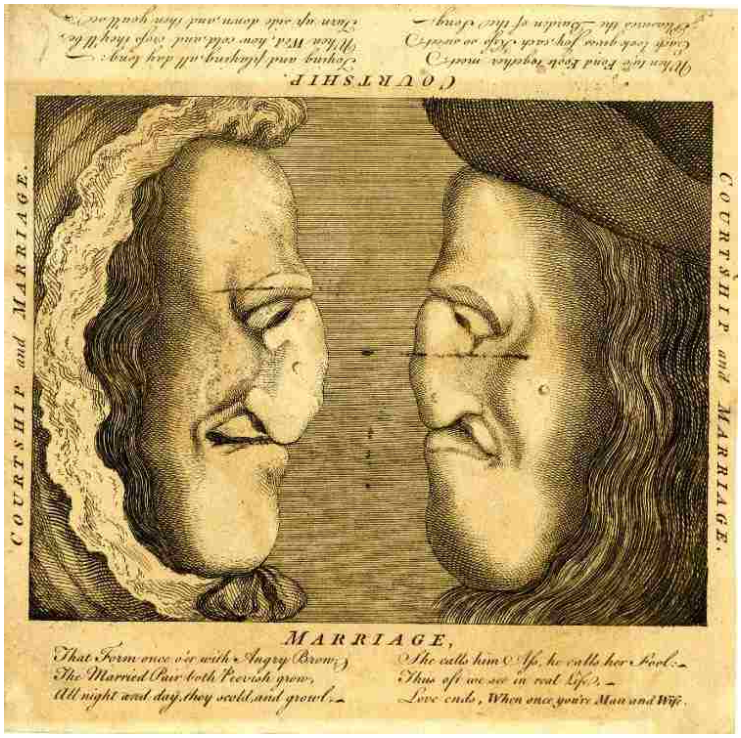

Figure 4. *Courtship and Marriage*, reversed.

Unfortunately, this second half of the image (fig. 4) remains the final one, as directed by the poetic guide. There are no more instructions to turn the image back, as the discord of the marriage knot is not one that can be untied.

That the course of true love would run invariably into matrimonial decay was obvious to eighteenth-century caricaturists. Casting a sardonic eye to the institution, they exposed it for its frailties and shortcomings, all of which became manifested in a predictable pattern. The following print corresponds with a larger genre of "phases of married life" sketches.[10] *Stages of Matrimony* (fig. 5) chronicles a couple in the throes of pre-nuptial bliss, eagerly embracing on a single sofa.

Fig.5. *Stages of Matrimony*. 1796. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 16 February 2015.

[10] See also Isaac Cruikshank's *Symptoms of Matrimony* (1796), William Humphrey's *Three Weeks After* (1783) and George Cruikshank's *Three Weeks after Marriage* (1814). All are available through the British Museum's online archives.

Several years pass, and the sofa morphs into two separate chairs, resentment—as well as space—separating the two lovers. Eventually this emotional antipathy boils over into physical violence, during which the wife gets in a solid punch and blood streams onto the floor. Years of hatred spent, the only recourse is to pray as the husband does in the last frame, for "The devil [to] take them that brought you and me together."

The 1747 "Marriage a-la-Mode: Or, The Two Sparrows, A Fable" illustrates the dichotomy between the freedom of courtship and the doomed conflict of marriage by using two sparrows as symbols of the typical lovers' experience. The couple become the "*Mars* and *Venus* of the Grove" and spend so much time "closely seated" that "Together you wou'd think they grew." In this idyllic Eden, "There, Side by Side, all Night they kept, / Together, wak'd together slept: / And, missing amorous Disport, / They made their Winter-Evenings short." Although given the freedom of the entire grove, the pair only chooses to spend time together. All goes well with the two literal love-birds until they unfortunately find themselves with "Snares beset" and are relegated to a cage. There, "One Perch is now too small to hold / The fiery Mate and chirping Scold: / They peck each other o'er their Food; / And thirst to drink each other's Blood." The fighting escalates until the only solution is to move the two birds into separate cages. The poem then breaks the fable and applies its moral to "The modern Husband, and the Wife." The speaker claims that regardless of the pleasant nature of courtship and the dreams that "'twill always last the same," the cage of marriage only results in mutual hatred. "The Honeymoon is scarce declin'd," he notes, "But all the Honey of their Mind / Is gone; and leaves the Sting behind." The once-happy pair, who now "pout, grow peevish, scold, and fight," have no current recourse but to the law in order to "end the Strife / With Separate-Maintenance for Life."[11]

[11] Other texts espouse a similar portrait of this dichotomy. A 1772 essay, "Courtship and Matrimony Contrasted," discusses that many of the problems in marriage stem from a distorted perspective of the innate change that comes

Just as courtship was a sentimentalized convention, so too were eighteenth and early nineteenth depictions of the domestic sphere. Rowlandson's *The Comforts of Matrimony: A Good Toast* (fig. 6) displays all the traditional hallmarks of a happy home. A husband toasts a slice of bread over a cozy fire, his wife languidly embracing him. A newborn sleeps peacefully, as its other two siblings quietly eat their meal. A kitten and cat doze near the hearth, as the family dog stands watch over the children. While it seems to be raining and dreary outside, nothing can compare to the snug atmosphere inside:

Fig. 6. Rowlandson, Thomas. *The Comforts of Matrimony*. 1809. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 8 January 2015.

Many satirists found this emotionalized portrait to be startlingly inaccurate. The following images, in response, form part of a sub-genre of sardonic "domestic comfort" prints. All overturn

from being wooed to being won: "do not we [women] expect flattery at the time [men]…commence lovers? And are we pleased, unless they address us in a language very different from truth and reason? What are all the fine speeches and letters on this subject, but a mere rhapsody of words, contrived to feed our vanity?" (82). A 1710 tract, *Man's Treachery to Woman* contrastingly inveighs against the male half of the courtship, accusing them of being "False to the Fair, and to their Vertues [sic] Blind, / Fond to Betray, and Fawning to Delude, / Humble in *Courtship*, but in *Wedlock* Proud" (1). Both pinpoint the need for courtship reform beyond the sentimental scripts of custom.

the traditional images of hearth and home to illustrate the apparently grim truths which occurred after "I do." Fig. 7, the anonymous *The comforts of matrimony—A Smoky House and Scolding Wife* (1790) depicts a beleaguered husband shooing away his scolding wife's harangues. The bare branches outside evokes the wintriness of the couple's love for each other, an ironic reflection of the tree in full bloom in the portrait which hangs above their roaring fire. Scalded by the overflowing tea-pot, their child falls off of his stool and nearly crushes the family cat. His bickering parents fail to notice. This chaotic scene functions as an obscene parody of the typical nuclear family surrounding a glowing hearth, the requisite feline companion cuddled under their feet. The ironic title calls into question marriage's ability to engender any state of happiness. If these are the comforts of matrimony, what then are its distresses?

Fig. 7. *The Comforts of Matrimony—A Smoky House & Scolding Wife*. 1790. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 8 January 2015.

Fig. 8, Frederick George Byron's *The Sweet Delights of Love* (1788-92) similarly features a brow-beaten man subjugated by a demanding wife. In addition to the "squaling brat" which the print addresses, this husband also faces "a failing trade," which precipitates a visit from a debt-collector. The billowing smoke from the fire-place makes this hearth appear a hell, with the wife as the Devil. Instead of a pitchfork, a fire-iron lies not too far away, a visual reminder of her potential violence. The husband looks out pleadingly, trapped as he is within a room which does not even afford a view out of the window. The "sweet delights of Love" are revealed to be anything but, and grim reality is all that awaits this man until the end of his days.

Fig. 8. Byron, Frederick George. *The Sweet Delights of Love*. 1788-1792. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress*. Web. 28 July 2014.

The final example of this set comes from James Gillray, and is titled *Les plaisir du menage* (fig. 9). The epigram at the top of the picture maintains that there lies a "catch" in the "sweet delight of love," in that there are consequences of life after courtship. Six children, all at varying stages of having a tantrum, surround the husband, as he stands sans breeches and one-

shoed. His wife raises a fist threateningly at him, seemingly indifferent to the crying and screaming of her children. Her bonnet and his pants hang on the wall, perhaps symbols of their bygone days of dressing up to woo. Disrepair plagues their house, with peeling wallpaper and an escaped finch. Love too seems to have flown the coop, and the pastoral paintings on the wall merely reflect an ironic inversion of idyllic bliss.

Fig. 9. Gillray, James. *Les Plaisir du Ménage*. (1781). Etching. The Huntington Library, Pasadena, California.

In all three of these images, the wife stands out as a threatening figure, and it is by no accident that *Sweet delights of love* refers to her as a "squalling jade." These images serve as a kind of visual jest, reversing the sentimental image of a loving, solicitous wife and proffering a hellish she-demon in her place:

Fig. 10. Details of *The Comforts of Matrimony*, *The Sweet Delights of Love*, and *Les Plaisir du Menage* (flipped horizontally for consistency).

Perhaps the most fruitful portrait of domestic unhappiness is fig. 11, Gillray's *Matrimonal-Harmonics* (1805). In it a woman plagues her husband, who attempts to read the newspaper (particularly the sports page), by playing loudly on the piano. He covers his ears and stuffs his mouth with breakfast pastry, as a dog and cat bark and hiss at one another:

Figure 11. Gillray, James. *Matrimonial-Harmonics*. 1805. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 8 January 2014.

The museum notes point out that his wife is playing "'Torture Fiery Rage \ Despair I cannot can not bear'. [and that] On the piano lies music: 'Separation a Finale for Two Voices with

Accompaniment'; on the floor is 'The Wedding Ring - a Dirge.'" Unlike the placid repetition of "two's" that occur in the previous prints, here the couple's isolation is disrupted by a wailing child and an incensed nurse. Two birds in a cage squawk at one another, forming the shape of a broken heart, and the god Hymen seems to have lost his nose. Though the room temperature seems to be quite cold, the blazing fire and bubbling cauldron indicate the threshold of the couple's tempers. What may have been initially a happy courtship has been consumed by years of petty annoyance into mere ashes.

Throughout the eighteenth century, expectations of an essentially paradisiac, idealized courtship were often juxtaposed with the harrowing realities of married life. However, these works do not address a particularly crucial aspect to eighteenth-century wooing, at least as portrayed extensively on stage and in print: teasing as a direct *means* to intimacy. In *Matrimonial-Harmonics*, the wife has just finished reading *The Art of Tormenting*, a version of Jane Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, a satirical handbook for making others' lives miserable:

Figure 12. Detail of James Gillray. *Matrimonial-Harmonics.* 1805. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library*. Web. 2 July 2014.

Popular in its day, Collier's work experienced a total of nine editions between 1753 and 1811 (Craik xv). The image of the woman's volume (fig. 12) is nearly identical in concept to the one

that prefaces Collier's work: that of a cat playing with a mouse (fig. 13). Collier's work also begins with the epigrammatic adage "the cat will play / and after slay" (Collier 2).

Though a satirical instruction manual which enables married women and men to make hellions of themselves, Collier's work nevertheless highlights the light-hearted buoyancy that courtship among young people must require (buoyancy that is notably missing from the above engravings). As Susan Allen Ford notes, while Collier's directives for spouses span several pages, her injunctions for lovers are confined to a mere passage: "very short will be this chapter; for does anyone want directions in which he is already perfect? ... Teasing and Tormenting is the sustenance, the breath, the very life, of most young women [and men] who are sure of the affections of their lovers" (qtd. in Ford). Though Collier suggests the importance of surety here in terms of attachment, play and jest can also serve as a means of *en*suring affection through affectation.

Figure 13. Frontispiece. *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*. *Jane Austen Society of North America*. Web. 11 January 2014.

A Paradoxical Era

While Tilney makes his foundational claim in the ironic discourse typical of his manifesto, he ultimately calls attention to the fluctuating cultural milieu of the eighteenth century and the subsequent development of intimate interpersonal communication. Critics have often portrayed the period as either comic or sentimental, oscillating back and forth depending upon the prevailing scholarly mode.[12] Simon Dickie, in his *Cruelty and Laughter*, has called attention to and cogently explored what he terms the "baffling coexistence of what to modern readers seem like inconsistent impulses," a world in which "[p]ity coexisted with indifference; sympathy was fleeting, unstable, and easily transformed into malice or delight" (3, 11). The eighteenth century here described is rife with contradictions, and belies any one particular stance in terms of the dialectical fight between coarse humor and genteel politesse. An examination of teasing rhetoric, however, both refines and partially resolves this apparent paradox. To talk in this way is to engage in a kind of anti-sentiment by throwing away typical, formulaic romantic language and instead needling, vexing, and/or tormenting an intended mate. While on its surface a combative, perhaps immature manner of dealing with emotion—just as a young child may tug on a crush's pigtails or hastily proclaim one infected with the dreaded cooties— we cannot forget that genuine feeling belies each instance of antagonism. Teasing simultaneously refuses and yet engenders romantic bonds. Ultimately, the nuances of this type of discourse are paradoxes which respond to and are contained by the even larger paradoxes which pervade the period.

Just as the eighteenth century gives rise to a nebulous mélange of contrasting artistic and social discourses, so too does it struggle to rectify an increasingly complex marriage market—one which continued traditional arrangements based on wealth and circumstance but also

[12] Simon Dickie chronicles what he sees as a faulty view of the "sentimental" eighteenth century informed by "a critical mass of scholars…[who] focused on this cluster of phenomena, just as a previous generation decided that Johnson was the defining or most interesting figure of his age" (3).

became increasingly concerned with achieving a companionate ideal centered on like-mindedness and affective bonds. In his *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present*, John R. Gillis describes the larger social effect wrought by economic change throughout the period: "For the greater part of the British people, work and leisure ceased to be so segregated by age and gender, and, when young women and men became more accustomed to one another's company, courtship became more precocious and less inhibited. Rituals that previously served to regulate sexual relations gave way to more direct, spontaneous forms of intimacy" (109). Teasing discourse fits this description; emerging as an innovative way to communicate, it is also innately more egalitarian in its scope (for example, the act is always accompanied by the desire for a reciprocal response). As men and women begin to relate to one another on the same social plane, so too does their dialogue continue to move from the traditional, semi-Petrarchan modes of courtship to a more witty, lively jest.

While Gillis' work depicts a change in interpersonal communication as a direct result of societal and economic change, Katherine Sobba Green's *The Courtship Novel, 1740-1820* portrays the eponymous genre as an instance of art imitating life, arriving onto the literary stage as an answer to the increasingly muddied expectations of marriage. These authors, "[w]riting at a time when the decorums of marriage were shifting, with emphasis increasingly falling on the affective relationship of wife and husband, …quietly championed women's rights to choose marriage partners for personal, relational reasons rather than for familial, economic ones" (161). For Green, the prevalence of affective individualism specifically enables the development of the female *bildungsroman*.[13] Novels essentially begin to behave as portraits of and guides to ideal romantic bonds.

[13] Sobba Green is not alone in her assertion, as Ian Watt similarly maintains in his paradigmatic *Rise of the Novel* that "[t]he values of courtly love could not be combined with those of marriage until marriage was the primary result

Although Gillis and Green both ground their works in a thorough analysis of the shifting economic and affective trends of the eighteenth century, to say that these factors alone allowed teasing banter to burst forth, fully formed, would imply a false teleology—one which runs counter to the aims of this project. The true history of teasing is one which begins much earlier than the period, and stretches far past its latest parameters. While its increased popularity during the era remains at least partially due to the factors mentioned above, a concept which I will develop further throughout this dissertation, a myriad of other societal and cultural swings also inform its development and growth. Ultimately, teasing discourse encompasses wide-ranging types of speech in a variety of genres, and can be as slippery to pin down as the paradoxical age in which it experiences the greatest change. Portraying the complexity of this evolution is one of the main aims of this dissertation.

Women Writers and the Humor Debates of the Eighteenth Century

Female authors of the period also faced a paradox of their own. Although "fiction by women during the eighteenth century [had]… in actual fact dominated the production of the early novel in Britain," the genre and its largely feminine writer remained in a tenuous state of open denigration and cautious acceptance on the literary field (Backsheider and Richetti 1). Even as late as the nineteenth century, women writers eagerly evade any association with the notoriously "debased form" (Kirkpatrick xi). In her prefatory advertisement to *Belinda* (1801), Maria Edgeworth stipulates:

> The following work is offered to the public as a moral tale—the author not wishing to acknowledge a novel. Were all novels like those of madame de

---

of a free choice by the individuals concerned…The rise of the novel, then, would seem to be connected with the much greater freedom of women in modern society, a freedom which, especially as regards marriage, was achieved earlier and more completely in England than elsewhere" (138).

> Crousaz, Mrs. Inchbald, Miss Burney, or Dr. Moore, she would adopt the name of novel with delight: But so much folly, error, and vice are disseminated in books classed under this denomination, that it is hoped the wish to assume another title will be attributed to feelings that are laudable, and not fastidious. (3)

In a similar vein, author Anne Ker, vexed by a string of particularly brutal reviews, includes a vitriolic diatribe in her public notice to *Emmeline; or, the Happy Discovery* (1801): "I hope and trust, that… those devouring watchmen will do me the justice to allow they [the lines of my pen] have been in the cause of virtue; devoid of those indelicate, and, in many instances, indecent descriptions, that fill the pages in the novels and romances of the present day, of which I should be ashamed to be the author" (qtd. in Kirkpatrick vi). It is no accident that critics are here typified as male guardians of the hallowed literary arts, ever-vigilant to raze any work deemed unseemly or inappropriate. Both Edgeworth and Ker remain cognizant of the fact that their work directly reflects their personal virtue, and both are eager to preserve it. Subsequently, each passionately avows her allegiance to the predominant moral code as exculpation for writing prose fiction, and more implicitly, for being a woman.

These preemptive apologias remain inextricably linked with what Jane Spencer views as the conditional acceptance of women writers in the eighteenth century. The advent of professional female authors, from Behn to Edgeworth, parallels the ideological development of the sentimental, domestic, and ideal helpmeet.[14] This fusion dictated largely the limits of women's participation in fiction, placing restrictions not only on their personal but professional lives; female authors were expected to manifest virtuous behavior (particularly sexually) both in their pages and in their everyday existence (Spencer 32). For those who still quested after the

[14] See Audrey Bilger's *Laughing Feminism* (1998), particularly her chapter "Women and Comedy" (15-36), for a delineation of this figure and its impact on women writers of the period.

"empire of wit," they eventually found it to be one "internally divided by the contradictory demands made by bourgeois society's ideas of femininity, and its attitude to [those] who had first won it was deeply ambivalent" (Spencer 33). Women writers' participation in this empire was fragile and continually fluctuating, and their rule over it only as extensive as the tyrants Custom and Society allowed it to be.

While examples of the limitations women faced are numerous, these links between female writing and the larger rights of women become especially prevalent in a review of Mrs. Bullock's work, *Dorothea, or a Ray of the New Light* (1801). First, the reviewer assumes the author to be male, partially because of the novel's "Anti-Godwinian" (*Monthly Review*) overtones. Because of this error, the rhetoric which follows remains stridently chauvinistic: "To take the needle and the rolling-pin out of the female hand, and to fill it with the fasces and the halbert [sic], would be ridiculous, unless they and the men changed vocations; for somebody must mend stockings, and somebody must make pie-crust. The rights of woman, therefore, have been deservedly laughed at" (*Critical Review*). Regardless of their amount or type of literary output, women's true place irrevocably rested within the domestic sphere. Although the fasces and the halberd are phallic symbols of a martial kind, such a review is not so many steps away from determining the pen an equally unsuitable weapon if wielded by female hands.

Working within the confines of personal and professional demands inspired many female writers to turn to comedy as both a liberating and transgressive force. Humor critic John Morreall writes much on the power of laughter to preserve intellectual autonomy in the face of marginalization: "A dictatorship requires simple blind obedience, preferably based on hero worship, but at least on fear, of the dictator. And the spirit of humor is incompatible with both hero worship and fear" (102). While declaring that the patriarchy exacted hegemony over all

women would be (a bit of) an overstatement, several men nonetheless believed that women's purpose lay principally in the service and support of the males in their lives. Audrey Bilger notes that this ideology spread through the nineteenth century, inciting one writer for the *Saturday Review* to maintain in 1871 that women simply lack an aptitude for humor, as "They are naturally hero-worshippers" (qtd. in Bilger, 25). For Bilger, there exists no doubt as to who they are supposedly worshiping; the masculine refusal of feminine humor comprises a fraction of the larger efforts to contain and censure women more generally (25).

The writers featured in this dissertation are all comediennes who appropriate comic tropes and tones as a means of furthering feminine agency, particularly in courtship. As humorists, they resist the dual impulses of fearing and worshipping the predominant social mores and instead learn to laugh about them.[15] Under the guise of normative courtship novels, they engineer via humorous speech a subtle transgression, a petit revolt. Bilger maintains that because of the primacy of the domestic sphere, any mirth could be perceived as disruptive to the status quo. As such, these authors and texts often engage in anti-sentiment in order to counter the prevailing pressures regarding the ideal woman and proffer instead an image of egalitarian romance. Couples who tease each other to the altar earn their marriage by verbally demonstrating like-mindedness and suitability; they have overcome the various differences which once separated them, not through maudlin speeches or sentimental tropes, but through the unifying effects that only comedy offers. As scholar Mary Douglas asserts, humor "consists of a victorious tilting of uncontrol against control, it is an image of the levelling of hierarchy, the

[15] Bilger further bolsters this point with her contention that "Feminist humor… encodes an important message about women's relation to the dominant ideology. Even if the rules for proper female behavior required a modest submission to masculine authority, women… might also learn to laugh as a group at the impositions of male power" (33).

triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones" (qtd. in Bilger 61). In their endorsing of laughter over mawkishness, and "By setting up marriages of mutual respect," these female authors "propose new possibilities for a society that values women as men's equals" (Bilger 53). In their texts, women no longer possess the mere right of refusal, but also the rights to pursue, jest, and woo.

While female writers used comedy to partially resolve the limitations placed upon them by an overweening patriarchy, its inclusion in their works also partially rectified an ongoing dialectical debate over what should count as funny: mean-spirited satire or the emergent "amiable humor." Though critics largely agree that humor remains an integral facet of the period, there seems to be a sharp divide as to which side of the comic see-saw is left hanging in the air.[16] David Nokes begins his *Raillery and Rage* (1987) with the categorical assertion that "The literature of the eighteenth century… is dominated by satire" (1). Simon Dickie similarly avows that "Eighteenth-century Britons... openly delighted in the miseries of others" (1) and that even in instances of sentimentality, "Pity mingled with heartlessness in every context" (2). On the other side of the spectrum lies Stuart M. Tave, who reflects in his *The Amiable Humorist* (1960) that the period began to dislike the acerbic social correctives that satire offered, and felt instead that "the function of comedy is not moral punishment but liberal love and joyous delight; its spirit is expressed not in a strict design but an unconstrained, fertile freedom" (138). Susan G. Auty corroborates this view in her *The Comic Spirit of Eighteenth Century Novels* (1975), viewing the tenor of the time as distinctly "antisplenetic" (5). For her, "satire in the early eighteenth century was gradually slipping into amiable comedy" (17). The aim of this new type

[16] Critic Richard Simon maintains that "during the eighteenth century, the comic came to be seen as 'a fundamental quality shared by everyone, an essential attribute of our consciousness, of the patterns of human thought'" (qtd. in Bilger 57).

of humor remains indicative of a "climate of toleration that pervaded the early eighteenth century" (Auty 9).

Teasing discourse synthesizes these two branches of humor. It features the trappings of satire through its pointed jabs and stichomythic banter, but its locus of intent lies in the most amiable of purposes: engineering a love match. Rather than choosing one side over the other, the women writers featured in this project fuse the two together, not unlike the incongruous fusion of the two unwilling lovers. Counter to contemporary attitudes which asserted that upstanding women were above low or uncharitable amusement, Simon Dickie maintains that "women [laugh] at the same comic objects as men… and write to their friends about it… Women send each other pitiless recollections of tedious social occasions and mock elegies for hated relatives; suddenly one finds them discussing the poor qualifications of various suitors and sending along caricatures or impromptu riddles" (6). Though traditionally branded as the "splenetic" brand of comedy, female writers found it equally diverting, and used it to great effect as they depicted women and men brandishing rhetorical swords at one another.[17]

Nevertheless, the endings of their works echo the rhetorical purpose of the new amiable humor. Auty observes that "laughter changes from being an expression of chastisement to being one of tolerance and acceptance. By mid-century the comic action no longer charged and sentenced; it cherished and rewarded by calling upon the audience to love the malefactor in spite of his refusal to fit into the orderly niches of approved patterns" (8). Teasing couples, for all of their diatribes and witty invectives, simply must learn to live with one another. By including this different kind of courtship, women writers stress tolerance in spite of opposition, yet still place their figures within the "orderly niches of approved patterns" by ending their tales in marriage.

[17]Keir Elam also depicts stichomythic banter as a kind of sword play, meant to be enjoyed by spectators (9).

However, and most importantly, these marriages are built according to the couple's own rhetorical blueprints.

Talking Power

Though teasing speech is often paradoxical, it is always concerned with the distribution of power. Throughout this dissertation I will argue that the couples who are the most successful teasers are always those who are equally matched.[18] That is not to say, though, that there stands a shortage of authoritative imbalance. Speech and power are one and the same, and this linkage becomes especially pertinent to the construction of romantic bonds. Sexuality is, for Foucault, one of the "danger spots" of societal discourse; he further argues that speech itself remains irrevocably linked with "desire and power… for psychoanalysis has already shown us that speech is not merely the medium which manifests—or dissembles—desire; it is also the object of desire" (216). Speech, then, is the most essential tool to analyzing erotic bonds.

Additionally, Foucault's larger notion of discourse, from his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), becomes particularly useful in examining the persistence of teasing talk in eighteenth century courtship. Both Gillis and Sobba Green have established that the discursive field (or the territory upon which societal rules and regulations are played out) remains in flux during the period, particularly because of the shifting demographics of the marriage market. It then comes as no surprise that conduct manuals virtually explode in the eighteenth century as an attempt to corral and contain transgressive behaviors. As "[d]iscourse … [is] the means through which the field 'speaks' of itself to itself" (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 33), these manuals reaffirm and reify standards of comportment. This is supported by Foucault's assertion that:

[18] In this point I echo J.H. Smith, who seems to use only one yardstick to gauge the success of couples in "sex-antagonism" comedies: that in them "the sexes are virtually on par…Love can now be played as a game, by two well-matched players—neither under a handicap, neither given a special advantage" (41).

> [t]he most superficial and obvious of these restrictive systems is constituted by what we collectively refer to as ritual; ritual defines the qualifications required of the speaker…; it lays down gestures to be made, behavior, circumstances and the whole range of signs that must accompany discourse; finally, it lays down the supposed, or imposed significance of the words used, their effect upon those to whom they are addressed, the limitations of their constraining validity. (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 225)

Ritual here becomes a script to be performed, a rigid code that must be adhered to in order to maintain social order.

The links between discourse, gender constructs, and conduct literature have often been explored by other scholars and help to clarify how teasing works in the eighteenth century and beyond. As Ann Weatherall notes in *Gender, Language and Discourse,* the way that men and women were defined at this historical moment underwent a radical shift: "It was not until the late eighteenth century/early nineteenth century that the one-sex model gave way to the two-sex view: women and men were of different kinds" (82). This transformative belief resulted in treatises which sought to instruct women how to be women. Although Katherine Sobba Green is hesitant to catalogue all conduct literature as inherently patriarchal, she does maintain that "[b]y and large, it was men rather than women themselves who advised, and, by extension, defined women, and no doubt male-authored conduct books for women were as suspiciously self-serving as many of those written for servants by their masters" (20). Thus conduct literature primarily, though not uniformly, functioned as a means to cope with both an emergent shift in affective individualism as well as a new way of thinking about gender. In a Foucauldian sense, these manuals are inextricable from theories of power, as Weatherall asserts: "Gender discourses,

beliefs and ways of talking about gender can be thought of as producing power relations between men and women" (80). This bifurcated approach to male and female discourse has raised a point of contention for Deborah Cameron, who maintains that male and female patterns of speech have been proven to be far more similar than different. She argues that the persistent endorsement of this myth has led to widespread and tenacious misperceptions about the sexes and their relationships to one another (80-81). Women writers of the eighteenth century similarly perceived these flaws, and sought to rectify them in the courtship narratives they wrote.

I argue that teasing (in its most successful iterations) amounts to both a rejection of the discourse of trite social custom and a reaffirmation of women as equal participants in verbal exchange. Rather than promoting a specifically female and male way of talking, it establishes a mutual mode of conversation in which both can participate. Often, teasers will attempt to position themselves outside the discursive field, hoping that the other conversant will accompany them thence. They occupy mocking, transgressive realms and—if joined by their love interest—embody a kind of "us/them" dynamic which separates their courtship pattern from that of other couples. It takes the Foucauldian discursive field and makes it into a playing field in Huizinga's terminology. As Huizinga notes, "play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life'" (28). Teasing couples mark out a new platform of speech which eschews the standards of "ordinary life" in order to allow them the joy of play.

This playing, teasing discourse is essentially performative, endowed with verbal agency. It is speech "in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something" (Austin 12). When couples talk to each other in this manner,

they are not just engaging in banter, but *performing* courtship through a neutral platform. In Kay Young's "Word-work, Word-play, and the Making of Intimacy in *Pride and Prejudice*" she argues that "conversations…function as their own performances" (69), and further that

> [d]ialogues are interactive, mutually made moments of a partnered story that function to mark off 'our story,' around which a 'we' works to build the daily life that constitutes that 'we.' The moments of collective making that mark the turns around which a partnership moves will come to constitute that couple's history, the remembered bits that will stand for what this couple means and the pleasures that can accompany coming to that knowledge. (63)

Thus, Henry's witty first dialogue with Catherine (in which he claims the primacy of teasing) is not only Austen's coy way of introducing the hero; it also begins to engineer the very relationship which will later culminate in their marriage. Young here illustrates the vital importance which speech bears in the construction of romantic bonds. It is interactive, providing ample avenues for a woman to contribute as equally as a man, and also exclusive, concerned as it is with not *them* but rather *us*.[19] Talk actively constructs identity, not only for an individual, but a couple as well; teasing discourse is ultimately where couples speak *of* themselves *to* themselves.

Teasing Out a History

Ultimately, the natural history of teasing may well begin with the natural history of man and his love of play. Huizinga asserts in *Homo Ludens* that "culture arises in the form of play… it is played from the very beginning…By this we do not mean that play turns into culture, rather that in its earliest phases culture has the play-character, that it proceeds in the shape and the mood of play" (46). Foundational to most traditions, practices, and routines—including those of

[19] Young's language parallels that of Huizinga as well, for he maintains that play demands the implicit promise that "This is for *us*, not for the 'others'. What the 'others' do 'outside' is no concern of ours…We are different and do things differently" (Huizinga 12).

courtship—lies a spirit of play, a delight in the "fun" (Huizinga 3). In his book *The Mating Mind*, Geoffrey Miller posits that the complexity of the human brain and its capacity for intricate speech arose out of evolutionary necessity—that beyond the usual erotic desire for the fittest, strongest, and fastest arose a longing for the most compatible, companionate, and humorous. Finally, "[o]ver many generations, those with quicker wits and more generous spirits may have attracted more sexual partners, or higher-quality partners. The result was that wits became quicker and spirits more generous" (10). Hence, flirtatious speech functions as a metonymic substitution for sexual compatibility. Like a peacock flashing his feathers or moose hooking antlers during mating season,[20] amorous talk exhibits a performative display which continually flaunts the goods and gauges the buyer. Though Miller concedes that this view is often denigrated as "the 'chat-up theory' of language evolution," he affirms the radical impact that conversation bears on courtship and love. From ancient caves to country dances to modern clubs and bars, "the more talking [people] did, the more of their minds they revealed. The more verbal courtship revealed, the greater effect sexual selection could have" (15). Eighteenth-century courtship narratives chronicle this verbal recital, likewise teaching readers how to best select a life mate in order to achieve a truly companionate marriage. In them, as well as in Miller's system, "[v]erbal courtship… becomes the bedrock of human intimacy and love" (356).

In her popular, albeit controversial, anthropological study, *Watching the English*, Kate Fox deems Miller's view "most appealing"; however, she contends that teasing and flirtatious discourse serve a more nationalistic than universally human role. Fox typifies English social mores as perennially, palpably unsentimental (especially when it comes to courting the opposite sex). Rather than purporting one's genuine emotion, "[t]he rules of flirtatious banter allow

[20] Miller maintains that the "human mind's most impressive abilities are like the peacock's tail: they are courtship tools, evolved to attract and entertain sexual partners" (4).

courting couples to communicate their feelings for each other without ever saying what they really mean, which would be embarrassing" (336). This resistance hearkens back to the concept of teasing as "not-*yet*-having," a verbal testing ground which paradoxically reveals as it veils and shuns as it invites. Couples may hint at genuine attachment, but if repudiated by their intended, can always fall back on the excuse that such sentiments were "only in jest." For Fox, this type of teasing is the fundamental mode of English flirtation:

> In most other cultures, flirtation and courtship involve exchange of compliments: among the English, you are more likely to hear exchange of insults…the key ingredients of flirtatious banter are all very English: humour, particularly irony; wordplay; argument; cynicism; mock-aggression; teasing; indirectness—all of our favourite things. And banter specifically excludes all the things we don't like and that make us uncomfortable: emotion, soppiness, earnestness and clarity. (466)

These rules of courtship describe a type of discourse innately theatrical, riddled with performative utterances which thrive on contrariety and skirt authenticity. Here, flirtation, which Adam Phillips has called "the… calculated production of uncertainty" (xvii), is comprised of indeterminacy, disingenuousness, and circularity.

Nevertheless, beneath this ambiguous, even combative exterior, prospective partners engage in an essentially English ritual, the success of which depends on how well the two participants will perform together: "[women] know that when a man persistently taunts and teases us, it usually means he likes us, and that if the sentiment is reciprocated, taunting and teasing back is the best way to express this" (Fox 339). Not only does teasing demand reciprocity, but it also endows female interlocutors with verbal agency that cements the romantic bond. This verbal agency, one which now is perhaps taken lightly in a post-millennial context,

transgressed eighteenth century propriety, at least as it was written on the pages of conduct manuals and pronounced from myriad pulpits—religious and otherwise. Fox's specifically-English banter, a veritable national pastime, was one which both the playwrights and early novel writers of the period still found particularly salient to the courtship narratives they created.

Jesting Courtship and the Origins of the Humor Debates

Much of the ebullience of the eighteenth century, however, stems and develops from an even earlier discursive revolution—that of the Elizabethan culture of jest. The promulgation of jest books soared throughout the age, driven by the multifaceted and complex use of language they proffered. In his *Mirth Making*, Chris Holcomb maintains that "Early modern rhetoric and courtesy manuals are obsessed with jesting," delighting in the "ambiguity, contradiction, duplicity, and other linguistic and rhetorical strategies that upset the conventions and proprieties normally governing serious, nonjesting communicative exchanges" (3). The style of the jest defined here forecasts the same kind of verbal tricks that teasing discourse engages in centuries later. Within it lie the amorphous natures of flirtation, affected dissatisfaction, and layered irony, all of which pervade the tease—and ultimately result in a performative show of linguistic prowess. Jesting, like teasing, additionally functions as a freely transgressive kind of talk, one which defined itself against the prevailing social order and continued to do so through the eighteenth century.

Catherine Bates similarly sees a contravening aspect to Early Modern courtship, particularly through the ways in which it, like the jest, embraced ambiguity: "the relation between courtship and marriage echoes the structural ambivalence that resides in courtship itself…courtship contrasts the otherwise mutually exclusive roles of male lover (adoring, submissive) and husband (domineering, authoritative) with those of the female mistress (defiant,

cruel) and wife (humble, obedient)" (19). Here the process of wooing takes on rules unto itself, yet "it takes its definition from that law, and becomes a kind of sanctioned lawlessness, a licensed mirth" (20). In the same way that jests derive humor from their opposition to "serious, nonjesting communicative exchanges," the language of courtship remains indebted to the social structures which engineer it. Simultaneously, it relishes the freedom it gains from those very structures. In the nebulous space before marriage, any kind of identity becomes possible (mistress or wife, lover or husband) and with it, any kind of speech.[21]

Both Holcomb and Bates illustrate the Foucauldian notion that modifications of discourse not only reflect social change, but also produce it. Teasing in the eighteenth century may credit its persistent influence to the ways in which societal mores shifted and continued to shift in the Elizabethan period. Holcomb describes the communal climate as one rife with change and upheaval, with upward mobility throwing disparate groups into daily contact. He asserts that "[j]ests of the period typically dramatize encounters between people of divergent social origins or occupations, and in doing so, they play on the tensions and anxieties that almost invariably occur when different kinds of people find themselves in one another's company" (5). While jests often arise from verbal contrasts and oppositions, the larger contrast remains a categorized, social one. Yet humor also serves as a great equalizer of sorts, bringing the high and low, the courtly and rude, together at once in the rhetorical space of the jest. A cycle of reciprocal feedback, jests depend upon the give and take between the teller and the recipient; it remains imperative for the listener to make the necessary connections in order for the jest to land

[21] While I seek to illustrate how teasing courtship helps invert traditional power structures prior to marriage, Ben Jonson's Epigram 42, "On Giles and Jone" (1640) also shows how the jesting spirit found humor in the antagonistic relationships between wedded couples. The poem chronicles the wedded life of a couple whose only consonance is their mutual disdain of one another. Inverting the traditional portrait of a "marriage of true minds," Giles and Jone beget sympathy through antipathy. The speaker observes that Giles does not desire his wife's company (5) and laments his return home (8). Both share doubts regarding the legitimacy of their children (would-be emblems of their conjugal state) and await the release from their bond that only death can promise. The ditty turns on the ironic pole that in spite of these conflicts, or even because of them, he "know[s] no couple better can agree!" (18).

(Holcomb 122). When a jest becomes felicitous in J. L. Austin's terminology, it creates a temporary bond among the participants, regardless of the hierarchical stature of its listeners.[22]

Bates also reiterates the power of language to replicate and incite societal transformation. Chronicling the advent of the verb "to court," she notes that "once the donna-centered vocabulary became obsolete, wooing could no longer definitively be a thing that men did to women." Instead, "courtship began to be perceived as a shared activity…[s]trategies of persuasion, knowing, testing were designed to bridge an emotional, epistemological, and psychological gap…between two partners in love" (11). Just as the jest unites the social classes, the language of courtship crosses the (ostensibly) ultimate divide—that between men and women. In much the same way that jests depend on mutual understanding for effect, discourses of love become defined by how well men and women communicate with each other in a reciprocal fashion. This new way of speech empowers women to become active participants in their own courtship, provided as they are with a neutral playing field on which they can test their mates. Pamela Allen Brown corroborates this view in her contention that "[a] woman who controls laughter becomes an agent" (219). As Bates' cogent study illustrates, shifts in word usage can tell much about simultaneous and important shifts in culture, and indeed, may very well be the selfsame causes of those shifts.[23]

The changes in women's jesting agency within courtship also reflect the incipient fusion of both satire and amiable humor, a fusion which prefigures the comic debates of the eighteenth century. Humor critic Jay Morreall maintains that "The intellectual ferment of the fifteenth and

[22] Holcomb develops this notion in his assertion that "[w]hen an inferior speaker…derides his superior, jesting may have a leveling or inversionary effect… the social outsider or inferior may, with a well-placed jest, cause the insider or superior to laugh—that is, to share, if only temporarily, the same comic perspective" (7).

[23] Michael Stubbs corroborates this view in his *Text and Corpus Analysis* (1996) when he maintains that "It is not that society first exists and is then reflected passively by language. Language itself is a social practice, and language actively reproduces and transforms society" (qtd. in Levorato 2).

sixteenth centuries produced a heightened appreciation of the value of humor and silliness" (119), and specifically links Desiderius Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* (1509) to a growing contemporary spirit of tolerance, despite the work's sometimes-caustic irony. In the preface, Erasmus describes his textual endeavor in the following terms:

> Satire and panegyric, distant be,
> Yet jointly here they both in one agree.
> The whole's a sacrifice of salt and fire;
> So does the humour of the age require,
> To chafe the touch, and so foment desire. (xxiii)

Like so many jests of the period, the preface delights in uniting incongruities to achieve its desired effect; here the practice of comedy fuses both bitter wit and warm praise. By establishing the codependent nature of suffering and pleasure, Erasmus also hints at the ultimate function of Folly. Humanity depends upon her in order to cope with the worst life offers, the several daily chafes one must endure. In return, Folly makes that very life worth living.

Throughout her monologue, Folly both maintains that she has been repeatedly undervalued by an ignorant public and takes great pains to delineate her importance in mankind's relationships. She argues that it is folly alone that engineers and preserves bonds:

> to wink at a friend's faults; nay, to cry up some failings for virtuous and commendable, is not this the next door to the being a fool? When one looking stedfastly [*sic*] in his mistress's face, admires a mole as much as a beauty spot; when another swears his lady's stinking breath is a most redolent perfume; and … the fond parent hugs the squint-eyed child, and pretends it is rather a becoming

> glance … than any blemish of the eye-sight, what is all this but the very height of Folly? Folly (I say) that both makes friends and keeps them so. (Erasmus 31-32)

Here again, Folly (like humor itself) depends upon the fusion of opposites. To conflate flaws with virtues, ugliness with beauty, and reeking odor with enticing fragrance is not only ridiculous, but also illogical. However, the core value of Folly stems not from her overt obliviousness to the difficulties of life, but her power to consciously forgive their existence. This power is one that the titular goddess deems particularly important to conjugal life: "The same which has been said of friendship is much more applicable to a state of marriage… Good God! What frequent divorces, or worse mischief, would oft sadly happen, except man and wife, were so discreet as to pass over light occasions of quarrel with laughing, jesting, dissembling, and such like playing the fool?" (33-34). Thus, matrimonial happiness absolutely depends on frivolity and light-hearted fare. Teasing does not end with the marriage bed, but rather enables couples to return to that same bed night after night. Levity within the covenant of love acts as a panacea against the all-too-real worldly threats against its sanctity.[24]

Ultimately, humorous jest allows humanity to coexist, and so serves the most amiable of purposes. As Morreall observes, "It is folly, especially, that allows us to live together and even

[24] Two works of the long eighteenth century help to illustrate this tolerance, particularly in men's relationships with women. Edward Ward's "Moral Reflections on the foregoing dialogue. [As Wives Have Sundry Ways to Teaze]" (1723) illustrates the coexisting pros and cons which manifest themselves in a marriage. "As Wives have sundry Ways to teaze," the speaker posits, they also "have many Arts to please, / And win [husbands] to compliance" (1, 3-4). He continues to state that wives will, as all humans do, have various "Vice[s], / In publick or in private" (11-12). Since there is no escaping this flawed human nature, the speaker advocates tolerance: "if you thwart what they pursue, / They'll prove vexatious Creatures. / You, therefore, who have vicious Wives, / … / Please 'em, to ease your wretched Lives" (15-17, 19). Here pleasing and teasing go hand in hand; the only way to cope with folly is to counter it with good-humor. Similarly, "[There's Something in Women Their Lovers Engage] Ballad. In the Harvest Home" (1814), featured in *A Collection of Songs, Selected from the Works of Mr. Dibdin*, describes the counter-intuitive nature of love in the face of human frailty. "[S]he who would frighten a mere stander-by," the singer maintains, "Is a Venus herself in the fond lover's eye" (1.3-4). Throughout the song, various flaws, among them being "pale" or "tawny" in appearance, "scolding" or "meek" in personality, short or tall in height, and young or old in age, all are effaced by genuine love and attachment (1. 5, 6, 7, 8; 2. 1-4). In the concluding verse, the speaker asserts that though men are often tempted to "tease, / To perplex, to torment, and a thousand things more" their women, the truth still remains that the fairer sex are "the deities men were all born to adore" (2.6-7, 8). Love, even to the point of folly, makes the relationships between men and women worthwhile.

love one another. To have a friend or spouse we have to have a sense of humor and foolishly overlook that person's faults; a rational assessment of what a friendship or marriage was going to involve would keep us aloof from the rest of our species" (119). Especially pertinent to this project's investigation of Shakespeare's influence on eighteenth century courtship fiction is R. Chris Hassel, Jr.'s *Faith and Folly in Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies* (1980). In it, he asserts that such an embrace of folly firmly places Shakespeare's romantic comedies in the Erasmian and Pauline traditions. "Shakespeare's comic vision" partially amounted to the creation of a secular portrait of romantic faith earned through ubiquitous folly: "All true believers are, according to Folie, in a manner mad. But so are all true lovers… the greatest folly, the finest madness of all, is the analogous madness of romantic love and religious faith" (Hassel, Jr. 14). In what Hassel, Jr. maintains are idiosyncrasies "unique to Shakespeare," lovers throughout the comedies must learn to embrace their folly and accept the reality beneath the Petrarchan ideal (210). This includes enduring jests and taunts, learning to give up "considerable pride," and engaging in "[u]niversal rejoicing over the perception of human imperfection" (210-215). As I will argue in part two of this study, these qualities of Shakespeare's fiction enable vitriolic discourse to yet construct romantic and loving bonds; further, they allow women writers in the eighteenth century to portray egalitarian relationships between their male and female protagonists. Indeed, though the tide of sentiment began to swell throughout the eighteenth century, the Elizabethan culture of jest continued in its influence, particularly in the period's continual flirtation between human tolerance and satirical impulses.

This mélange can be seen in the period's fascination with the fable of how Folly blinded Cupid.[25] An 1807 engraving entitled *Love and Folly* (fig. 14) perhaps best illustrates how the two are necessary to a marriage and to human interaction more largely:

Fig. 14. *Love and Folly*. 1807. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 5 July 2015.

At first, the print appears to be a pure lampoon of the old man in its center. Undoubtedly the "Folly" of the title, he appears delightedly ignorant of the obvious May/December dynamic of his new marriage. The witnesses and the parson chortle amongst themselves as they look on at

[25] Examples of this interest abound. Anne Finch penned "Cupid and Folly" in 1713. Charlotte Smith Turned tried her hand at the tale with her "Love and Folly, from the Fables of La Fontaine" (1807). Another work from 1707 proclaims a similar affiliation with La Fontaine and is likewise entitled "Love and Folly." In 1745 another poem of nearly the same title appears in *The London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer* and in 1759 the poem "Cupid and Folly" appears in *The Scots Magazine*. A May 1778 issue of *The Westminster Magazine* includes the prose work, "The Contest between Love and Folly. A Fable," just as an 1817 edition of *The Monthly Magazine* includes the poem "Love and Folly." Folly was not only aligned with love, but also creative endeavor, as the 1793 "Ode to Folly" maintains: "So universal Folly reigns, / … / As all who live must know it ; / … / That Folly guides the poet" (18.1, 18.3, 18.6)

the spectacle, their knowing glances intimating the mercenary nature of the match (on both sides).

However, the repeated iconography of Folly's grin lends an air of levity and collusion to the print, and implies a tone of tolerance. The following details reveal a striking consonance among the different figures of the image (fig. 15):

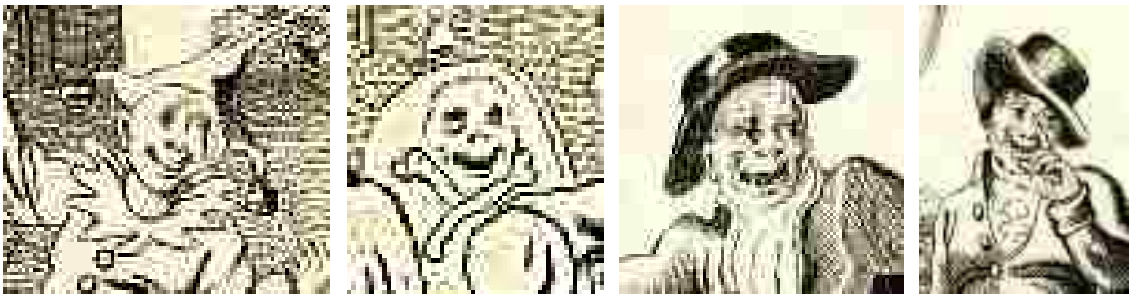

Fig. 15. Details of *Love and Folly*.

All four—Folly, a grinning skull on a tombstone, the groom, and the witness—share the same facial expression: a smile of great mirth. When looked at from this perspective, the print takes on a new, more charitable meaning. The old man is totally cognizant of his impending death (as he walks towards the headstone, he almost literally has "one foot in the grave"), but remains undisturbed, empowered by Folly to take pleasure in the moment. The placement of the man's hand, which gestures towards the bride's thighs, hints at the impending pleasures he will enjoy before he expires; there is, apparently, more than one way to get the last laugh. The triumph and utility of humor in old age is further endorsed by Erasmus' narrative; Folly proclaims that she "can restore the same numerical man to his pristine state of youth, health and strength; yea, what is more, if men would but so far consult their own interest, as to discard all thoughts of wisdom, and entirely resign themselves to my guidance and conduct, old age should be a paradox, and each man's years a perpetual spring" (20). The man of this image is about to enjoy a spring of a

different sort in his young, nubile bride (who also seems blissfully unconscious of their apparent disparity). The similarity in the guest's and the wizened groom's physiognomy suggests the inevitability of the former's future decline into old age. With this shared fate, the guest guffaws in an indulgent, rather than incisive, manner, and laughter subsequently becomes a unifying, rather than a divisive, force. The humor from the image stems not from a caustic portrait of humanity's depravity, but rather from a winking tolerance of mankind's foolishness.

The text beneath the illustration further supports this union between satire and amiable forbearance. It recounts the story of Love and Folly, and begins by relating a violent incident in which Love disagreed with the jovial god, who in response "beat the Urchin blind." An incensed Venus, in despair over the cherub's inability to shoot his arrows, then pleas with Jove to exact justice. He considers the case, and deems the following an appropriate penance:

> It is doomed that Folly never
> Shall in future quit his side,
> But from this instant & forever,
> Be to Love a constant guide.

This small allegory, when unpacked, reveals much about contemporary sensibilities regarding the dueling roles of romance and comedy. It is important that this "union" of sorts begins with a violent act. Folly, though normally sanguine, exhibits ferocious tendencies in his blinding of Cupid. Representative of acerbic satire which only points out human failures and never rectifies them, this kind of humor fails to unify mankind at all, instead leaving Love powerless and alone while humanity remains bereft of romance and companionship. Jove's punishment both rectifies the situation and clarifies the role of Folly. What began in division is then fused into eternal camaraderie; Folly now serves an integral role in engineering passionate bonds, as he must first

"find the mark" and guide Cupid in shooting his arrows. Subsequently, as the print argues, satire leads to amiable humor, just as folly leads to love, both mythically and in social practice.

This relationship between folly and love is echoed by the similar postures of the bride and her groom, as well as the bride's similarities with Cupid. It may at first seem rather unbelievable that the woman does not recoil from her obviously disparate life-mate. A more cynical viewer may argue that she fakes enthusiasm in order to cover her more mercenary endeavors; perhaps she counts the days until her wedding dress becomes widow's weeds, and anticipates finding truer love in a second attachment. However, such a reading would undermine the amiable message of the piece. Like the union between Folly and Love, this union is also meant to be long-lasting. The lesson, then, becomes one of inter-dependency. Like the blinded cherub, the woman also largely depends upon her husband for perhaps financial, but definitely societal, security. It is then, that the "and" of the title becomes more operative; instead of a simple one-to-one correspondence in which folly-signifies-groom and love-signifies-bride, the print implies that all unions (and people) must have a mixture of both. Folly allows the woman to overlook her husband's shortcomings, as he does hers. It is only with the existence of folly that romance can exist at all.

In the following pages, I will show that this codependence between folly and romance—which has its roots in Shakespeare's romantic comedies—manifests itself in the teasing, vexing, and riotous speech of couples in eighteenth-century courtship fiction. Through their shared partnerships and mutual, witty exchanges, these couples help to partially resolve a number of contemporary debates, including the role of humor in conversation (and fiction) as well as the growing tension between sentiment and sarcasm. These debates are the subject of the next chapter, which establishes the cultural climate in which these teasing texts were written.

Chapter 3: Sex and Language in the Eighteenth Century

In this chapter I show how perspectives towards women, language, and sexuality began to shift from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. This section will discuss how anxieties about women's speech begin to conflate with concern over female chastity, a concept literalized by the criminal conversation trials of the period. I then link this sexual alarm to the social tensions surrounding women's participation in the literary realm, as well as their use of comic modes of discourse. I show how female writers become involved with the contemporary debate between amiable humor and satire, and then posit that teasing speech helps to unite these two styles of comedy. By selecting five keywords from the period (tease, torment, vex, quiz, and rail) and surveying their iterations across the period, I show the continuing presence of impolite speech in spite of sentimental calls for feeling and amiability. I then analyze a sub-genre of satirical conduct manuals as a particular manifestation of that prevalence, in order to show how such earnest guides were lampooned with a hefty dose of vitriol. The section concludes by showing how the field of courtship was also changing, reflecting a distaste for sentiment and a penchant for wit and passion.

Changing Ideas of Speech and Sexuality

The seventeenth century remained largely at peace with the idea of female sexuality within the margins of a loving marriage, continuing the tenor of the Elizabethan period. While those in the upper classes remained restricted in personal choice, "the concept of romantic love as a basis for marriage was very much present in seventeenth-century humble society. This… was not a world in which people married for economic interest rather than inclination" (Spufford 157). Though this growing freedom was not yet seeping upwards into aristocratic society, affective bonds do start to become a more popular ideal. This ideal, according to Margaret

Spufford's *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (1982), was also linked with female carnal desire in contemporary chapbooks: "The tradition in the courtship chapbooks is also that sex is pleasurable, for women as well as for men…Courtship is, then… a process leading onto fulfilment for both partners" (158, 160). Of course, an analysis of a small subset of extant literature does not a comprehensive portrait of the period make, as Spufford is careful to point out (157). It is likely that many seventeenth century women instead experienced "conditions in which… sex was neither the incarnation of love nor an *ars erotica*…[such as] Dirt, disease, modesty, physical inhibitions and lack of privacy" (Porter 3). Nonetheless, it remains important to appreciate the stress given to female pleasure, and its explicit linkage with humor. While some select jest books and chapbooks condemn female sexuality, the vast majority depicts and to some degree celebrates women's extraordinary libido. Sex is seen not as a corrupting or embarrassing aspect of human life, but something to laugh about, both for men and women alike.[26] As Spufford theorized, these texts were indeed reflective of larger popular beliefs; A.D. Harvey maintains in his *Sex in Georgian England* (1994): "Until the first half of the eighteenth century it was generally assumed that sexual appetite was stronger in women than in men" (38). As I will discuss later, teasing speech perpetuates the idea of female pleasure in the face of sociological change; by requiring that a female is an equal participant in the dialogue and also metaphorically representing the physical compatibility of the couple, teasing comes to symbolize a verbal *jouissance* of desire and participation.[27]

However, popular beliefs regarding women's sexual appetites began to change in the eighteenth century, as a growing ambiguity in the treatment of—as well as an increasing anxiety

[26] As Spufford maintains, "There is evidence that even the most cultivated of early seventeenth-century ladies enjoyed dirty jokes" (62).

[27] Alice Chandler's 1975 essay, "'A Pair of Fine Eyes': Jane Austen's Treatment of Sex," ably develops this idea of verbal sublimation of physical desire in Austen's fiction.

towards—the depiction of women's sexual pleasure started to take hold. Harvey reports that "After about 1740 the only situation in which women were represented as enthusiastic about sex was in pornographic fiction…normal women did not enjoy sex [and]…women who enjoyed sex were not normal " (43, 44). What was so ubiquitous a century earlier becomes sublimated and shameful. And while not an exact and uniform parallel, this growing apprehension coincides with the development of what Audrey Bilger has described as the ideal image of woman as domestic helpmeet. Bilger maintains that in the creation of this image certain sacrifices had to be made, particularly in terms of female sensuality: "The fear of women's sexual powers was assuaged in the course of the eighteenth century by a reconstruction of femininity as virtually asexual" (24). Ultimately, it was only by effacing, or denying, feminine pleasure that femininity could be considered at all.

Anxieties about women's bodies led also to concerns regarding their speech; indeed, these concerns were often conflated as one and the same. The emergence of the two-sex model became especially pertinent to modes of discourse. As Patricia Howell Michaelson explains in her *Speaking Volumes* (2002), "By the end of the century… language theorists and causal commentators routinely envisioned a separate sociolinguistic category for women's speech… The bifurcation of gender roles in conversation meant that gender was performed ever more linguistically" (31, 36). At the same time that this construction was taking place, women also faced condemnation for the very speech they were taught; women's weaknesses in discussion merely reflected the larger weaknesses of their sex. Ultimately, "woman's language was associated with the undisciplined body" (Michaelson 38). A series of letters featured in a 1710 issue of *Athenian News* corroborates this view. Philaret, writing to Cleonta, describes his fascination with the talkative nature of woman in the following terms:

> when once they begin who should stop ‘em, any more than a Bowl rolling down a Hill, which is only set forwards by the Rubs it meets with… I have wonder’d how ‘tis possible for their Mind to keep Pace with their Tongue, believing they spoke rationally like other people, ‘till at last the thing was easy, since ‘tis plain their Speech is only a Sort of Mechanical Motion, and they can’t afford to think with it. (2)

Particularly central to this passage is its emphasis on female mindlessness, the complete lack of reason or order which pervades women’s speech. Both comparisons are inhuman, from the “ball rolling down a Hill,” only worked upon by forces of acceleration and gravity, to a “Mechanical Motion” devoid of all logic. This definition implicitly asserts that male speech is the opposite: logical, thought-out, and pithy.

Cleonta’s response to Philaret reveals the flaws in his chauvinist ideology, and uses this same creed against him to prove his false judgment. She writes, “if you [men] did not tell your Tale to your selves, how could you expect to gain belief when your malice is so ill contriv’d, and so unlikely? That ever a Creature made for Love, her Mind, and her Body, and even her Voice, so much more softly turn’d than Rough and Brutish Man, should yet be accus’d of those very Crimes, whereof our Accusers are so notoriously guilty!” (3). Cleonta illustrates that the existence of such stereotypes stem from a societal, male construction, and that the repetition of such stereotypes ensures their dominance in the field of discourse and in public perception. She reveals the double-logic of the ideal woman; if females commit the kind of verbal transgressions he speaks of (he names gossip and making fun of others, as well as endless talk of fashion), how could they simultaneously embody the perfect softness of one “made for Love?”

The answer usually was that they simply could not; a woman worth loving did not rock the rhetorical boat. As Bilger maintains, preserving the stability of society required a woman to harness both her lust and her laugh (24). Speech and sex continue to figure as one in the same, and both are suppressed in the quest for the ideal eighteenth-century woman.[28] Regardless of the potential accuracy of Cleonta's accusations, they often fell on willfully-deaf ears. Witty wives were generally considered undesirable, a notion already taking hold as early as 1708, as the ditty "To a Young Lady, Who Affected Much Satyr in Her Conversation" illustrates. It begins with a simple plea: "Prithee, mistaken Maid, forbear thy Jest / No Husband in a witty Wife is blest." The comic spirit so valued in the seventeenth century now becomes deemed a mere mistake, one categorically rejected by all men. Additionally, the maid is told to desist in her mirth for the sole satisfaction of the males around her; the poem makes no mention of her potential enjoyment in the jest. The sole goal of discourse, then, is the securing of a mate—a process in which "Satyr" plays no part:

> Thus for a while sharp Razors please
>
> But lose their brittle value by degrees
>
> ……
>
> Then, cheaply thrown aside, they gather dust
>
> Like thee neglected MAID, till eaten away by Rust.

The not-so-implicit threat here is that witty women are destined to remain single until their death. The second "MAID," writ all in capitals, alludes to the girl's ultimate fate if she does not rectify her methods: she will die an old virgin. The words "brittle" and "cheap" not only refer to the

[28] Bilger further states that "conduct writers condemn [laughter] as unfeminine… a sense of humor was denied the ideal domestic woman" (25).

apparently tendentious humor of the girl's jest, but also to the girl herself. If she continues to speak out of turn, she aligns herself with other cheap (and garrulous) figures.

The interrelationship between sex and speech reaches its zenith in the seduction narratives and adultery trials of the eighteenth century. As Harvey explains, "By 1767… it was already unusual to admit that a young woman had any sexual passions to arouse, and the emphasis was chiefly on *verbal* persuasion" (63-64). Thus, language provides the means by which adulterous sexual activity occurs; it also functions as a metaphor for the act itself. This concept becomes literalized in the "criminal conversation," or "crim-con" trials of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As the print below shows, it is conversation that potentially leads to physical transgression (fig. 16):

Fig. 16. Woodward, G.M. *The Dangers of Crim:Con*. 1797. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress*. Web. 3 March 2015.

In it, a married woman sidles up to a potential lover, cloyingly propositioning him with the line, "The good Man is gone a long Journey." He responds, "Would if I could—cant [*sic*] afford it." While the locus of humor seems to be placed on the monetary dangers of committing crim-con (after all, the tort appealed for financial restitution on the part of the husband), the joke only works if the audience is already aware of the greater danger behind the act (morally, spiritually, and nationally). The print reverses expectations, drawing upon the anxieties largely felt regarding women's sexual transgressions and generating humor as a result of the incongruity.

Nevertheless, these anxieties are still clearly present within the image; the subject of blame here solely lies with the wife's impropriety of speech as well as the greater physical improprieties this same speech offers, a visual and verbal pun on both meanings of "conversation." The use of "good" as a modifier of man does not merely indicate his married status; it implies his moral superiority and inherent integrity. The cartoon does not indemnify the lover for his willingness to commit adultery, but rather edifies him for his frugality and prudence. And so, the titular "danger of crim-con" is the woman who first initiates it; to speak licentiously is to act licentiously. Laura Hanft Korobkin illustrates this flirtation between verbal and physical debauchery in her *Criminal Conversations* (1998), arguing that

> In using the term 'criminal conversation' to characterize adultery, the law's phrase-making power links illicit sexual intercourse with… other kinds of stability-threatening verbal exchange, suggesting that adultery is criminal because it represents the 'utterance' of something dangerous. By recognizing extramarital 'conversations' as profound threats to the institution of marriage, the law may be said to impose on the wife an obligation not merely of chastity but of *muteness*, a duty not to 'speak' with anyone but her husband… (24)

Ultimately, to curb one's speech is to curb one's sexuality; a woman's words—as well as her body—remain the province of her husband and no one else. By maintaining this "*muteness*," eighteenth-century women helped preserve the domestic sphere to which they were fixed as emblems.

The term "criminal conversation" begins to take root in the 1720s, peaking in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. As Susannah Fullerton notes, the Georgian period became known as "The Age of Scandal," one in which "no citizen of the Regency age could have remained unaware of the adulterous relationships of the royals, the peers and peeresses of the realm, admirals as famous as Lord Nelson himself, society hostesses, and politicians" (143). The public, while outwardly despairing over the perceived decline in morality, voraciously read about the trials, which were frequently published and were even sold in compendium volumes. The following term frequency graph (fig. 17) illustrates this enthusiasm, with the largest spikes occurring from 1770-1800. At the end of the century, the short-hand form takes dominance as the primary phrasing:

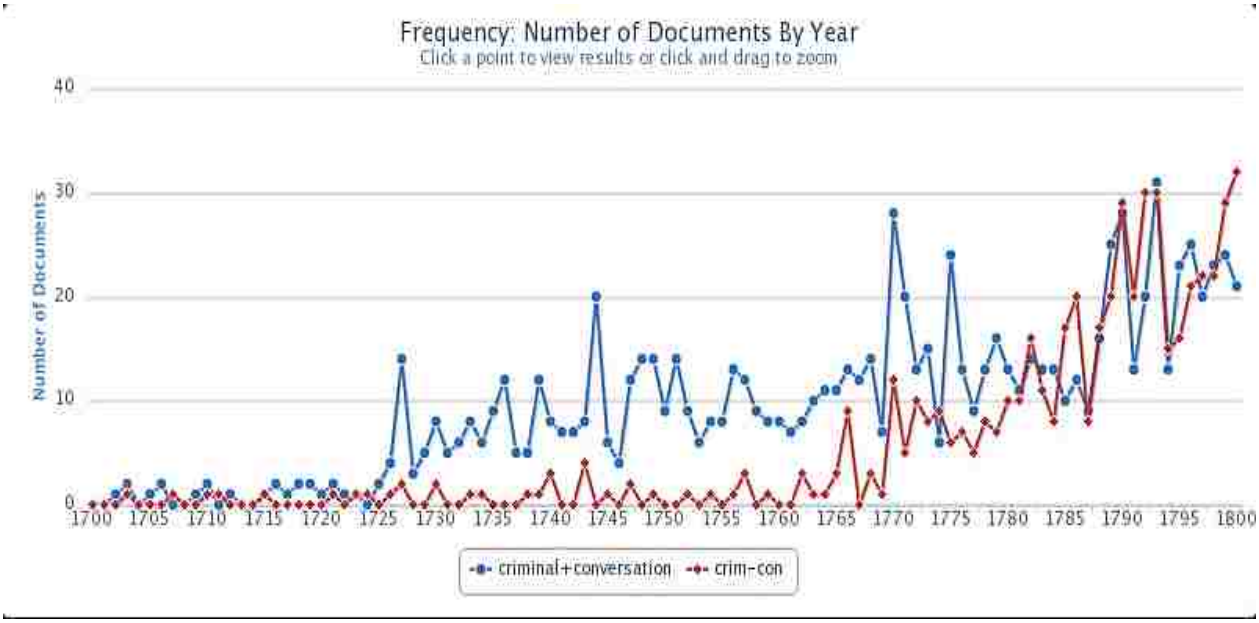

Fig. 17. Term Frequency Graph from 1700-1800. *Artemis Primary Sources*. Web. 3 July 2015.

Some of these compendium volumes drew such enthusiasm by overtly aligning their source material with the novel form.[29] One such work, *The Cuckold's Chronicle* (1793), decries that the trials had been hitherto reported in "The form of Deposition," a mode in which "The minutest occurrences, so circumstantially repeated, the same ground so frequently traversed, and the perpetual recurrence of the dull stile [*sic*] of legal procedure" (iii) rendered even the most salacious material unreadable. Instead, this volume seeks to "present to the Public… such mingled seriousness and absurdity, such criminal turpitude, and such ridiculous weakness, comprising scenes so wildly ridiculous, and so extravagantly absurd, as must arrest every attention… this we shall convey in the easy mode of *Narrative*, by which we shall simplify the most intricate occurrences, and obviate the complaint of dullness and languor" (iv). The text promises tales of intrigue which run the gamut of human emotion, a promise only achieved by fusing reality with novelistic discourse. This resulted in what might have been a perfect, if transgressive, fit. Mirroring its scandalous content, this novel form was itself often accused of engineering the "vulnerability of the novel-reading girl to seduction" (Pearson 196).

Surprisingly, *The Cuckold's Chronicle* still maintains that it serves an honorable purpose, ambiguous though this purpose may be. The preface brags about the information it will provide for the young people who read it: "To the youthful, the gay, and the fashionable, the scenes of frolic and amusement, of subterfuge and intrigue, of art and of temptation…will supply an inexhaustible fund of amusement… conveying more instruction for the use of domestic life, than the most austere dogma of morality can offer" (v). While at first the book calls attention to its transgressive content and easy mode of discourse to entice buyers, here it maintains that this very

[29] Please see too Peter Wagner's "The Pornographer in the Courtroom: Trial Reports about Cases of Sexual Crimes and Delinquencies as a Genre of Eighteenth-Century Erotica," which chronicles the larger tradition of these reports in great detail, far more than I do here. He also makes reference to *The Cuckold's Chronicle* on pages 131-132, and discusses its entertainment value, observing that the "editor cut out 'longueurs' in speeches and in parts dealing with moral issues" (131).

same content can be made morally edifying through the reader's delight and ridicule. It is important to note that the preface repeatedly brings up phrases like "ridiculous," "absurd," and "weakness," all of which promote the amusement of its reader. These gestures amount to what Morreall refers to as "The Superiority Theory" of humor, which defines "laughter…[as] an expression of a person's feelings of superiority over other people" (4). When executed, it can serve as a "social corrective to get wrongdoers back into line" (5). Thus, the text renders its audience above the content, serving as a preemptive strike against improper behavior.

Nevertheless, many still felt that the presence of immoderate conduct was a corrupting force, regardless of its treatment. In an essay entitled, "Against Immodesty" (1732), the author seems to bemoan the invention of the printing press, as all of the works that would have otherwise rotted in court annals or lay unopen in forgotten rooms are brought to the public eye: "The Proceedings of our Courts, in the Trial of Rapes, criminal Conversations…; at which Trials, the Late Lord Chief Justice Holt would give Notice to his Female Auditors; are now printed in Words at Length, or with such Marks and Breaks as are easily intelligible…publickly exposed to every common *English* Reader" (298). Three primary anxieties seem to emerge here: first, that women's sexual transgressions were out in the open; second, that the women who would have been discouraged from attending the trials could now read about them instead, out of public sight; and last, that the nation's moral fiber was being corrupted by both. Because of "the rise of the middle-class domestic woman as a repository for cultural values," any exposure to immoral literature could very seriously put the character of the country in danger (Bilger 27). Just as speech and sex were fused together in the new two-sex model, so too was the act of reading, as Jacqueline Pearson maintains in her *Women's Reading in Britain: 1750-1835* (1999):

"[Reading] was conceptualised differently according to gender. While men's reading was shown to facilitate intellectual development, women's tended to be located in the female body, represented as a physical not an intellectual act. Consequently it was believed to have a direct effect not only on female morals but also on the female body…" (4).With so much at stake, the seemingly best place for women lay within the home.

Ultimately, the female body served as the nexus for the disparate anxieties regarding the roles of humor, speech, sexuality, and reading. Though not indicative of a universal denigration of female agency, several texts seem nonetheless to imply that the safest way of dealing with these anxieties is to efface them altogether. By censuring female wit, society (especially men) "forestall[s] any criticism of the entire system" (Bilger 23); by proscribing feminine speech, it ensures their physical chastity; and by controlling what women read, it continues the perseverance of the ideal domestic helpmeet. The teasing speech explored later in this dissertation, however, turns all of these prohibitions on their heads. It first rejects the two-sex model, celebrates women who can bandy and banter with the most clever of men, and creates a discourse of equality. In doing so, it sublimates physical passion into impassioned words, thus creating a synecdoche whereby verbal compatibility comes to represent sexual compatibility as well. And perhaps most importantly, it figures in narratives recorded by female hands in pages meant for primarily female eyes, a narrative by which young women learn the importance of their own speech.

The Amiable Role of Conversation

The same anxieties regarding female talk also applied to the concept of talk altogether. The eighteenth century is positively fixated on the art of conversation. A proper conversationalist was the paragon of genteel accomplishment, appropriately attuned to the emotions of others, and

above all else, predisposed to give and receive amicable pleasure in company. Beyond one's personal accomplishments, the idea of proper verbal exchange also intersected with growing nationalistic identity; increasingly, "polite conversation" and "manners" came to be linked with conceptions of English freedom. As Lawrence E. Klein notes, "correct or virtuous manners are required for liberty to be sustained" (593). In the vigorous efforts to delineate what exactly these manners would be, "an idealized vision of human intercourse" emerged:

> That vision was peopled by gentlemen (and sometimes ladies) and situated wherever gentlemanly (or lady-like) society existed (the club, the drawing room, the coffeehouse, among others). In this vision, the characteristic activity was conversation, the substance of which was worldly, urbane things. The presiding spirit of this visionary scene was good taste. Because this vision of decorous, gentlemanly sociability was embedded in the language of politeness, the language acted as a master metaphor which brought to bear in different areas of discourse the expectations and standards of this vision. (593-594)

With the nation's identity hanging in the balance, conduct books and magazines burst with various means of accomplishing the impossible. Although myriad and often divergent, these guides tend to cluster around concerns of indecency, concerns which both clarify and complicate the role that teasing discourse plays in the following section.

In the attempt to truly capture the ultimate conversant, many essayists allowed the perfect to impede the proverbial good. A 1771 article entitled, "An Essay on Propriety," cautions, "There are so many ways of committing improprieties in conversation, that the number of them is almost out of the reach of arithmetic" (627). While such a statement validates the necessity of the guide, it also reveals the sheer self-consciousness of everyday speakers. This kind of self-flagellation

continues in "Thoughts on Conversation and Social Intercourse" (1772), which maintains that "If we were seriously to consider how uninteresting, frivolous, and puerile we generally are in ordinary conversation, we would be both ashamed to speak or to listen, and perhaps condemn ourselves to a perpetual silence" (43). The obsession with proper dialogue was present even forty years prior, and often had debilitating effects, as the satiric "On Discoursing by Signs" (1734) demonstrates. Frustrated by the failings of modern speech, the essay proposes to abandon words altogether, and instead use various signs and gestures. The advantages of such a shift would solve several conversational problems: "no idle Discourse would offend the modest Ear, no wrangling Dispute tire our Patience… [it] would keep at a Distance the noisy Fellow, stop the Mouth of a flattering Coxcomb, draw out the aukward [sic] Lover, and make the fine Gentleman appear in a better light, by every significant, unpremeditated Gesture." The tone and depth of the essay makes determining its irony difficult—until the final paragraph. In it, the speaker explains that the transition toward silence should be rendered particularly easy for Englishmen, since they are already "remarkable for their taciturnity" (6). Thus, the true problem lies not in their transgressions of speech, but their ability to speak at all.

This penchant for silence remained "a worrying national trait" (Langford 184), as it directly impacted Englishmen's ability to perform amiably among society, both among countrymen and foreign visitors. As Paul Langford describes in his *Englishness Identified* (2000), other countries similarly perceived the conversational weakness of the English; they became archetypal figures on the French and Italian stages, immediately identified by their complete lack of discursive grace. Guests from abroad marveled at the huge, silent gaps in evening conversation, which no one could fill but with a snort from a snuffbox (Langford 188). Introversion subsequently became diametrically opposed to core concerns over the dual notions

of complaisance and amiability: “Taciturnity virtually disabled the Englishman from participating in a modern culture…[yet] The eighteenth century’s faith in social progress depended on it” (184). Though seemingly an overstatement, in the eyes of many the rhetorical paradox had to be resolved in order for the country to continue.

In response, many magazines stressed the importance that conversation employed in uniting the people (and the nation) together. “An Essay on Conversation” (1731) maintains that “Certainly the great Design of Conversation, is, *to give and receive Pleasures; to promote Good Humour and Good Manners; to increase in Knowledge and Virtue; and to tie the Knot of Friendship closer and stronger*” (56). Ultimately, conversation serves a social purpose; to be truly “amiable,” the individual sublimated his or her desires and functioned for the good of the conversational team. Thirty-four years later, this disposition to please still pervades the “Essay on Good Manners” (1765): “Complaisance… carries in it a gentleness of nature, a disposition to please, and a reciprocal desire of being pleased; and is particularly careful to avoid every occasion of giving pain” (884). With such a stress placed on pleasing one another, verbal exchanges often morphed into veneers of politeness. Many perceived this façade, and contemporary diaries often attest that English conversation amounted to nothing more than trite pleasantries.

Underneath these pleasantries ran contradictory impulses; the ideal conversation was, predictably, more frequently chimerical than actual. The values of sincerity, openness, tolerance and substance wrestled with the persistence of wit, affectation, ridicule and light-hearted banter. Still, conduct literature largely sought to eradicate these less-agreeable compulsions. While some believed wit, as Matthew Lauzon states in his *Signs of Light* (2010), “played an important role in making people sociable…by introducing surprising resemblances between other similar ideas…

[and keeping] conversation from becoming too tedious and dull" (52), several moralists eschewed its potential ability to engineer social bonds and instead condemned its notorious double-speak in favor of transparent sincerity. A 1764 essay maintains that "nothing spoils conversation more than too Earnest an endeavor to be witty on all Occasions" (631), just as a 1734 tract advises citizens to "Speak as People do whom you think have no Wit, and we may grant you have some yourself" (311). Proper manners especially prohibited the use of wit to poke fun at one's fellows, as mean-spiritedness obviously ran counter to the maxim "to avoid every occasion of giving pain." A 1731 essay, "On Ridicule," asserts that "Private Irony and domestick Satire are to be regulated… as well as publick Sarcasms and popular Criticisms; and those who trespass on either… justly incur the very Condemnation they intended others" (40). Uncharitable jokes or unkind truths essentially defy the cult of amiability, and subsequently they must be controlled not only by the speakers themselves, but also their conversational companions.

However, wit and raillery were not always condemned, and remained staunch elements of public and private discourse. As Simon Dickie explains, the persistence of anti-sentiment becomes evident through the very existence of conduct literature: "the strident, reforming discourse of this age…surely attest[s] less to the triumph of sensibility than to its failures, to the endurance of older and less sympathetic pleasures" (8). People in all classes and stages of life still indulged in transgressive jokes and mercilessly excoriated one another's vices; to some, this sort of activity was necessary to survive the increasingly tepid social atmospheres stifled by the pressures of politesse. As the 1758 essay "The True Punch of Conversation" illustrates, it was actually the *mixture* of amiability and teasing that made up the truly ideal conversation. It provides its "recipe" for discourse as follows:

> PUNCH is a liquor compounded of spirits, sugar, and water. The spirit, volatile and fiery, is the proper emblem of vivacity and wit; the acidity of the lemon will very aptly figure pungency of raillery, and acrimony of censure; sugar is the natural representative of luscious adulation and gentle complaisance; and water is the proper hieroglyphic of easy prattle, innocent and tasteless. (438)

The essay evinces the interdependent nature of humor and sincerity, and argues that without the "less-sympathetic pleasures" referenced earlier, "meekness and courtesy…soon pall and nauseate" (438). The paradoxical solution to the contemporary language debates was to fuse the two branches of acrimony and sentiment together, creating a new mode of language in which to assault was to woo and to abjure was to beckon.

Stripping the Tease: A Lexical History

From the later decades of the seventeenth century to the close of Jane Austen's life in 1817, writers developed a vigorous and mutable lexicon filled with ways to make fun of people. One could tease (as well as "teaze" or "teize") but also vex, torment, quiz, rail, or scold. Teasing could refer to a behavior or a person, just as a "scold" could signify an act of speech or a termagant wife. Often used synonymously, these words yet held various connotations in societal usage, and corresponded to precise behaviors and character types. This section explores the background of teasing discourse as well as its various historical and cultural sources. Additionally, it describes the multivalent definitions and uses of these terms, and illustrates how they reflect and perpetuate the humorous spirit of the age. These words at the same time react against and lend support to predominant social theories regarding the roles of women, conversation, and nationhood—at once transgressing boundaries even as they set them. Their ambiguities and obscurities pave the way for performative courtship: teasing speeches which

serve as rhetorical testing zones, much like Early Modern jests and wooing practices did. In the end, these words function as anti-sentiment, masking through raillery genuine feeling and romantic attachment.

In the August 1807 issue of *La Belle Assemblée: Or Court and Fashionable Magazine*, there appears a short essay entitled "Definition of a Husband by His Wife," an essay that both aims to "express the character of a husband" and illustrate "how copious our language is on that article." The definition follows:

> He is… an abhorred, abominable, acrimonious, angry, arrogant, austere, awkward, barbarous, bitter, blustering, boisterous, boorish, brawling, brutal, bullying, capricious, captious, careless, choleric, churlish, clamorous, contumelious, crabbed, cross, currish, detestable, disagreeable, discontented, disgusting, dismal, dreadful, drowsy, dry, dull, envious, execrable, fastidious, fierce, fretful, froward, frumpish, furious, grating, gross, growling, gruff, grumbling, hard-hearted, hasty, hateful, hectoring, horrid, huffish, humoursome, illiberal, ill-natured, implacable, inattentive, incorrigible, inflexible, injurious, insolent, intractable, irascible, ireful, jealous, keen, loathsome, maggoty, malevolent, malicious, malignant, maundering, mischievous, morose, murmuring, nauseous, nefarious, negligent, noisy, obstinate, obstreperous, odious, offensive, opinionated, oppressive, outrageous, overbearing, passionate, peevish, pervicacious, perverse, perplexing, pettish, petulant, plaguy, quarrelsome, queasy, queer, raging, restless, rigid, rigorous, roaring, rough, rude, rugged, saucy, savage, severe, sharp, shocking, sluggish, snappish, snarling, sneaking, sour, spiteful, splenetic, squeamish, stern, stubborn, stupid, sulky, sullen, surly, suspicious,

> tantalizing, tart, teasing, terrible, testy, tiresome, tormenting, touchy, treacherous, troublesome, turbulent, tyrannical, uncomfortable, ungovernable, unpleasant, unsuitable, uppish, vexatious, violent, virulent, waspish, worrying, wrangling, wrathful, yarring, yelping dog in a manger, who neither eats himself nor will let others eat. (73)

In this thorough catalogue, 153 adjectives appear, classified in alphabetical order. At first glance, the meticulous nature of the passage seems to ironize the long eighteenth century's increasingly self-conscious views regarding language, what Patricia Howell Michaelson calls "an overall move toward the standardization of English, in which prescriptive grammarians became more attentive to 'correctness' than had been the case earlier" (31). She further describes the pervasive desire of figures like Samuel Johnson to "'fix' the English language... [only to discover that] not only was it impossible, but [that] its authoritarianism was an insult to English liberty" (39). Subsequently, the above excerpt rather exults in the vibrant, slippery lexicon which results. It delights in contrasts, as seemingly oppositional characteristics such as "inattentive/jealous," "passionate/sluggish" and "squeamish/violent" are all fused together into one treatise on contrariety. Though my word of interest—teasing—appears, so too do 152 potential synonyms, all of which portray different facets of a complex behavior. While this vast vocabulary wriggles free from any attempt to pin it down, the following section is devoted to parceling out its nuances and delineating some of its ambiguities.

To help refine clusters of investigation and shine a spotlight on those terms which bridge several disparate societal concerns, I have selected five "keywords" that aid in illustrating this type of discourse. Of obvious and particular import is the "teasing" which figures in this dissertation's title, as well as its intersections with "vexation," "torment," "quizzing," and

"raillery." As Raymond Williams aptly notes in his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1983), investigating the various permutations of word definition and usage amounts to an undertaking not unlike Alice's infamous descent down the rabbit hole:

> We find a history and complexity of meanings; conscious changes or consciously different uses; innovation, obsolescence, specialization, extension, overlap, transfer… changes which are masked by a nominal continuity so that words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express radically different or radically variable, yet sometimes hardly noticed, meanings and implications of meaning. (17)

Because of the vast and intricate nature of language, this section by no means captures an exhaustive catalogue of these metamorphoses; such an attempt would far outstrip the space available not merely here, but within the project overall. However, it does aim to 1) elucidate what behaviors these five words tend to connote, 2) illustrate how these behaviors are used to either support or counter the culture of amiability explored above, and 3) demonstrate how both the words themselves and the behaviors they reference impact the development of teasing courtship.

"Tease," the first and most important keyword, boasts a shifting and intricate etymological history, one that has only recently begun to hone in on precisely what this type of discourse means for the courtship narrative and for the period. Its initial introduction in c. 1000 had a sartorial association, literally meaning "To separate or pull asunder the fibres of; to comb or card (wool, flax, etc.) in preparation for spinning; to open out by pulling asunder; to shred," or "To comb the surface of cloth, after weaving, with teasels, which draw all the free hairs or fibres in one direction, so as to form a nap." Though applied to fabric, the word remains inherently a

violent one, a connotation which becomes important for analyzing teasing speech. The word later takes on an interpersonal meaning: "to worry or irritate by persistent action which vexes or annoys; now esp. in lighter sense, to disturb by persistent petty annoyance, out of mere mischief or sport; to bother or plague in a petty way." While much nearer to the way that teasing play functions in the eighteenth century, it lacks the sexual subtext characteristic of romantic tension.

The Oxford English Dictionary had a large vacuum for some time in this aspect of the word, skipping centuries ahead to the 1927 introduction of "strip-tease," an overtly sexualized act—surely not the stuff of Austen's literary heroines. It was not, in fact, until September 2013 that a new meaning was introduced, one which "excite[s] sexual desire, esp. without the intention of satisfying it." The first usage of this denotation occurs in 1694, squarely within the parameters of this study. It explicitly links sexual desire to chastity, a characteristic requisite for several courtship narratives of the period. It additionally promises no immediate satisfaction, instead deferring carnal consummation until after the curtain drops or the final page is turned. Phillips develops this type of continual deferral as representative of the flirtatious mode, and indicative of a type of torment: "[f]lirtation as sado-masochism with a light touch [reveals]… excitement as inextricable from tantalization; of desire as desire for a certain kind of torture, an enlivening torture, so to speak (in the original myth, Tantalus is named after his punishment; like Sisyphus, the other anti-hero of flirtation, he is taught the rigours of incompletion)" (xvii). Here Phillips uses the paradoxical imagery typical of teasing rhetoric—torture becomes "enlivening," and even desirable. Like romanticized versions of Tantalus, teasers engage in behavior in which being tantalized with potential amounts to experiencing a sweet kind of torment.

It may then come as no surprise that throughout the period the word "tease" (and its variants, "teize" and "teaze") became inextricably linked with the second keyword, "torment."[30] It is in this capacity that the originally violent, sartorial denotation becomes applicable to the emotional treatment of human beings, to either delightful or hurtful ends. In the 1727 edition of *Dictionaire Royal, françois-anglois, et anglois-françois*, "to teaze," or to "vex, or weary with a thing unpleasant," is precisely tied to the French *tourmenter*, to torment (617). *The Dictionary of Love* (1753), an often satirical piece, reserves special condemnation in its definition for "torment" for what it terms "the tribe of teazers," those women who "delight in thinking their lovers suffer a great deal of pain for them… [a]nd turn to torment what was meant a joy" (213-214). That these teazers comprise a tribe indicates that as early as the 1750s teasing was a socially recognizable and popular behavior, one that in this case related specifically to courtship ritual and practice. This definition positions women with a great deal of power, and establishes that the only torture which "enlivens" them is the one experienced by their prospective mates.[31]

However, the *Dictionary* reverts this stance in its next entry, "to toy." It maintains that "[l]ove-toying, with delicacy and refinement, is the science of very few. It is the very sauce to enjoyment, and of course more relishing than the meat itself. It is the very girdle of Venus, which wives should, like Juno when she visited Jupiter on Mount Ida, know how to put on, upon proper occasions" (215). Again, teasing discourse remains in the purview of women alone, here

[30] A fuzzy-search analysis of all sample texts available via *Early English Books Online* (EBBO), dating 1677-1818, reveals that the word "tease" (as well as its variant spellings and usages) was often placed in conjunction with another verb in order to refine its meaning. This linkage may also function as a performative feature, reflecting the repetitious nature of teasing behavior. Some popular usages inspire reactions, such as "chafe and tease," "prick and tease," "provoke, tease, and enflame;" others regard emotional despair or exhaustion, such as "tease and worry," "fret and tease," and "tease and fatigue;" and still others imply a sort of psychological befuddlement, as in "tease and perplex" and "tease and confound." Tease is most often conjoined with torment and vexation, however, particularly in "tease and torment/torment and tease" and "vex and tease." Lastly, some uses do imply a romantic/sexual connotation, such as "tease you, and kiss you" and "wheadle [*sic*], vex, delight, and tease."

[31] The second edition of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755-1756) similarly aligns teasing with torment; tease is defined as "to torment with importunity; to vex with assiduous impertinence" (871).

particularly wives, as a means of exhibiting control over men. The performative nature of toying with another is implied by the phrase "know how to put on," indicating a specific set of behaviors which have a predictable effect. While the inclusion of Juno's trickery of Jupiter alludes to the deceptive nature of this performance, the definition generally condones it. What makes this entry particularly pertinent to this study is its encouragement of teasing after marriage, which indicates its importance in generating and maintaining emotional bonds.

Several conduct books nonetheless malign teasing as a negative behavior in young and single women, advocating instead a more pious, authentic character. *Advice to a Female Friend* (1750) enjoins girls who experience distemper to do the following: "[w]hen… your Humour inclines you to Melancholy… lock yourself up, or receive none but such intimate Friends, as will pass by your unevenness of temper… [h]ow often do we see those Women, whose only Joy seems to be to teaze and torment their friends with their Strange caprices; and who think their Lovers are in Duty bound to bear with them all?" (95). Here all the hallmarks of teasing behavior collide to create a gorgon worthy of being ostracized. Riddled with mercurial impulses and changeable characters, these girls derive mirth from others' misery, and as such can only be tolerated by other "intimate Friends" who likely exhibit similar conduct. Teasing and tormenting are inextricably linked, becoming activities which are one and the same.

Likewise, in *The Polite Lady* (1769) young women are advised to maintain a cool and collected exterior in order to guard against the machinations of others: "[f]or every person, who has a mind to teaze and torment you, will take advantage of your hot and fiery disposition, to inflame your anger, and put you in a passion; and when they have done so, they will stand by, laughing at your folly and enjoying the fiend-like pleasure of seeing a fellow-creature miserable" (240). Teasing and tormenting go hand-in-hand once more; those who are "hot and fiery" had

better avoid persons with similar constitutions. Here pleasure in laughing at others' follies is termed "fiend-like," an invective against teasers' emotional insensitivities. Both of these moral tracts suggest that the surest way to deal with teasing is to utterly efface oneself, locked in either a bedroom or an imperturbable façade. Teasing exhibits power, and the only method for self-preservation against it is a defensive one. Similarly, a selection in *Angelica's Ladies Library* (1794) cautions females to abjure themselves of this rhetorical control once they have secured a life mate:

> Contemn the girlish arts to teaze,
> Nor use your pow'r, unless to please;
> For fools alone with rigour sway,
> When, soon or late, they must obey. (268)

Teasing subsequently functions as a temporary respite from the inevitable patriarchal power structures inherent in the marriage pact. A particularly "girlish" art, teasing must be laid by the wayside once courting is finished. As explored earlier, words represent the means by which women please their men; yet it was the very absence of such words which often pleased the most. However, through their injunctions against teasing, conduct manuals ultimately testify that this rhetorical and romantic power bid was a prevalent social practice throughout the period.

Although words such as "teaze and torment" could be and were thrown together, there coexists an impulse to differentiate between discrete behaviors; such a differentiation occurs particularly with vexation (the third keyword) and teasing. In John Trusler's *The Distinction between Words Esteemed Synonymous in the English language, Pointed Out, and the Proper Choice of them Determined*, he defines the difference between the two: "*Vex* implies slight trouble, or uneasiness. *Tease*, a continuation of that trouble. Disagreeable circumstances shall *vex*

us; but it requires many, in quick succession, to *tease* us. To *vex*, always puts out of humour; but a person may be sometimes *teased* into good humour" (91-92). The difference lies in both duration and repetition. Vexation may stem from a singular event, but a tease continues to bring up and address that same event. The potential beneficial effects of teasing in engendering bonds are developed further in the following: "*Vex* a child, and leave it, it will dwell on the *vexation* till it cries; but *tease* it immediately after, by tickling it, or rousing it, and it will soon return to its original temper" (92). Teasing here serves a restorative purpose, able to undo any temporary vexation through good humor and lightheartedness.

However, and tellingly, Trusler's definition becomes more tenuous and obscure, exemplifying the difficulty in separating the gradations of teasing discourse. Although he initially sets up a paradigm in which vexation is bad and teasing good, he asserts that there are apparent limits to playful behavior: "By *vexing* a person, we may sour the best of tempers for the moment; but by a continual *teasing*, we may totally change it from good to bad" (92). Here the definition becomes less clear; teasing ambiguously serves both advantageous and destructive ends, but Trusler does not elaborate on precisely how. His definition illustrates the great difficulty in refining just what these seemingly synonymous words and phrases mean.

Others attempt to define vexation as a direct result of teasing, or an especially distressing event. James Burgh's *The Art of Speaking* identifies vexation based on the external harbingers it occasions: brought about "by some real, or imaginary misfortune, [vexation] *agitates* the *whole frame*, and, besides expressing itself with the looks of *looks*, *gestures*, *restlessness*, and *tone* of *perplexity*, it adds *complaint*, *fretting*, and *lamenting*" (18). While those who tease may delight in the misery of others' displeasure, as was illustrated prior with the "tribe of teazers," the actual emotional experience of being vexed remains violent and despairing. The "*tone* of *perplexity*"

here related also ties to yet another facet of the tease—uncertainty. *The New Royal and Universal English Dictionary* (1763), defines "to perplex" as "to disturb with doubtful notions… to teaze with suspense or ambiguity ; … to plague ; to torment ; to vex" (115). As both Holcomb and Bates note above, humorous courtship relies on the state of abstruseness, or tension, to achieve its effects. Lovers know, but also do not know, the true feelings of one another, and vexation becomes a natural (and paradoxically often desirable) response to the linguistic limbo created by vague and cryptic discourse.

The desirable effects of vexatious teasing are echoed in the 1776 song, "Pleasing and Teasing," written for *The Westminster Magazine*. It chronicles the love affair between "Fair Rosamond" and "young Palemon," who heartily enjoy one another's pleasurable company "in bed, and…at board" (I.1, 2). However, their "Pleasures of Pleasing" soon "give way to—the Transports of Teasing" (I.3, 4). In a tempestuous romance, Rosamond and Palemon spend their nights pleasing, but their days tormenting:

> All mild as she came from the bosom of blisses,
>
> Yet thrilling with passion, yet softened by kisses,
>
> The signs that broke from her were tenderly pleasing;
>
> And yet they resign'd to the Transport of Teasing (III.1-4)

One day the couple's teasing leads to conflict; Rosamond, "in a rage," tells Palemon that she no longer finds him physically or intellectually attractive, nor does she enjoy his companionship in the sheets. She resolves to leave him to his "Transport of Teasing," and seek pleasure elsewhere (V.4). Palemon summons a hackney and "away the Fair drove / From all the delights of Palemon and love" (VII.1-2).

Rosamond quickly laments her decision; despite her long journey, she finds "none for the Pleasures of Pleasing, / Tho' hundred appear'd for the Transport of Teasing" (VII. 3-4). Believing herself "condemn'd like a Stoic to sit, / Neither touch'd by soft passion, nor tickled by wit," she begs the gods for sweet delivery and a swift return to Palemon's arms (IX. 1-2). Distraught and alone, she cries:

> I plainly perceive, in the cup that's most Pleasing
> Ye have generously squeez'd the acid of Teasing,
> 'Tis the Punch of Existence, and drink it we must,
> To give both the lemon and sugar was just;
> If at night we may quaff the full goblet of Pleasing,
> Let us patiently swallow the bumper of Teasing. (X.3-4, XI.1-4)

Rosamond's sentiments evoke the earlier "The True Punch," and illustrate the same truths about romance and courtship. Like the tincture of discourse explored previously, Rosamund's recipe for romance includes both pleasure and pain. The singularity of the teasing couple is further emphasized by the fact that Rosamund cannot find another "pleasing" lover, though she becomes surrounded by appropriate teasers in her new environs. Palemon alone united both. Thus, a successful teasing courtship cannot exist without true emotion and true passion underpinning acerbic invectives. The two are as inextricably linked, dissolved into one just as lemon and sugar dissolve into the goblet. The moral of the story remains that the tartness of teasing does not merely off-set, but enhance, the true pleasures of physical desire.

Though teasing in this case served to cement emotional bonds, another permutation served only to embarrass others in public. The late eighteenth century witnessed the boon of a

new, catch-all phrase which described the wide-ranging art of making fun: quizzing.[32] *The Oxford English Dictionary* cites this fourth keyword as a noun: "An odd or eccentric person; a person whose appearance is vulgar or ridiculous." Francis Grove's *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), defines it similarly, as "a strange looking fellow, an odd dog" (167). A quiz is then an object of scorn, usually gendered male, to be looked at with mocking intent. The 1807 engraving, *Retort Courteous* (fig. 18), reflects this usage through its depiction of two young men (dressed *à la mode*) who confront a middle-class figure emerging from a wholesale store:

Fig. 18. *Retort Courteous*, 1807. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 5 July 2015.

The print proclaims that the man at left recently purchased his attire in order to pass for a member of the upper class; however, "Though improv'd in his dress, his gait still the same, / Hodge was known as a bumpkin wherever he came." Undoubtedly, Hodge serves as the quiz of

[32] I am indebted to Dr. Timothy Erwin of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas for first introducing me to this term, as well as its importance to the time period, through contemporary print culture and its application to *Northanger Abbey*. It was in his class that I first saw *College Fun, Or Quizzing the Proctor* (Fig. 15). Dr. Erwin's address of this print, and of quizzing more largely, can be found on pages 190-191 of his *Textual Vision* (2015).

this print. Playing on contemporary anxieties regarding the lower-classes learning to ape the manners of the upper-crust, the print assuages such fears through its portrait of Hodge's ridiculousness; the new clothes are as ill-fitting and incongruous as his bumbling carriage.

Nevertheless, the presence of the two young men introduces several new connotations of quiz, primarily "the action of mocking someone or something…a person who ridicules or who engages in banter; a wit; a mocker." When one of the men proclaims, "I'll quiz yonder clown," he not only commits the action of quizzing, but also becomes a quiz himself by deriding Hodge (who also is still a quiz). The other man, shown in the detail below (Fig. 19), holds in his hand a "quizzing glass," a popular device which Hanneke Grootenboer maintains "precludes the surreptitious glance…[as] Lifting the glass to the eye was a performative gesture, equivalent to stating, 'I look,' or even 'I spy'" (501). His obvious gesture illustrates that quizzing was not merely a verbal act, but also a visual one which announced the mockery to all who could see it. Another definition reflects this optical dynamic: "(a) To regard with amusement or scorn; to appraise mockingly; (b) to peer inquisitively at; to watch or examine closely, to interrogate with the eyes, study." Part of what rendered quizzing an anti-social rather than an amiable act was that power rested in the eye of the beholder; a dehumanizing gesture, quizzing condensed a man into a mere object:[33]

[33] Although I focus here primarily on the ways in which quizzing figures in print culture, due to its visual nature, it should be noted that the new trend also pervaded the written word. The pseudonym "Quiz" becomes a catch-all for satirical writers in magazines; several short sketches are composed by "Quiz," "Old Quiz," "Little Quiz," "Quiz Bobius," "Quiz Caxen," "Quiz-Quoz-Quorum," "Ali-Quiz," and "Adam Quiz."

Fig. 19. Detail of *Retort Courteous.*

Though Hodge suffers from the men's wit, the resolution of the poem reverts the print's humorous stance and emphasizes the necessity of amiable humor. Hodge turns the rhetorical tables and reminds "Measter Coxcomb" that though city "folk often try / To make honesty blush, by hoisting Wit's banners, / …my *boots* are more *polish'd* by far than your Manners." True amiability, that which transcends fashion and dissimulation, ultimately belongs to the lower echelons of society when the upper-class fails to abide by its own amicable standards. The true quizzes of the piece are then revealed to be not only the two high-fashion quizzers, but also the viewers who mocked Hodge at first viewing.

Quizzing could also refer to "a practical joke [or] a hoax," or the act of "[playing] with a quiz," as the 1796 etching *Quizzing the Proctor* (fig. 20) illustrates. In it three students heckle a rotund proctor as he reads a "Proclamation for a General Fast." One student pins a note to his back which exclaims "From all Vain Glory and Hypocracy [*sic*] Good Lord deliver us." Because the two men point at their mischievous friend rather than the proctor, the humorous focus of the print centers first on the act of quizzing instead of the quiz himself:

Fig. 20. *College Fun, Or Quizzing the Proctor*. 1796. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 8 July 2015.

But in pinning the paper to the proctor's back, the print also calls attention to the cause of this so-called "Hypocracy." The proctor uses his own quizzing glass to scrutinize the proclamation, an act which would be rendered unnecessary if his stomach were lean enough to allow him a closer view.

While the prints above show only men performing the deed of quizzing, it was by no means a wholly gendered activity. Women could quiz each other as well as men; they could also "make fun of, mock, or tease (a person); [or] satirize (a thing)." The 1804 engraving, *A Friend In-Kneed is a Friend Indeed* (fig. 21), depicts a knock-kneed man standing in isolation as two young ladies eye him derisively. The two gentlemen to the right hold a conversation, which the text below the picture illuminates. One asks the other why he has "cut your friend Jack to day?" and receives the following in response: "I dislike walking with him; the girls quiz him so, on account of his knees." The title of the print then becomes the punchline of the joke, advocating amiability even in the face of female scorn:

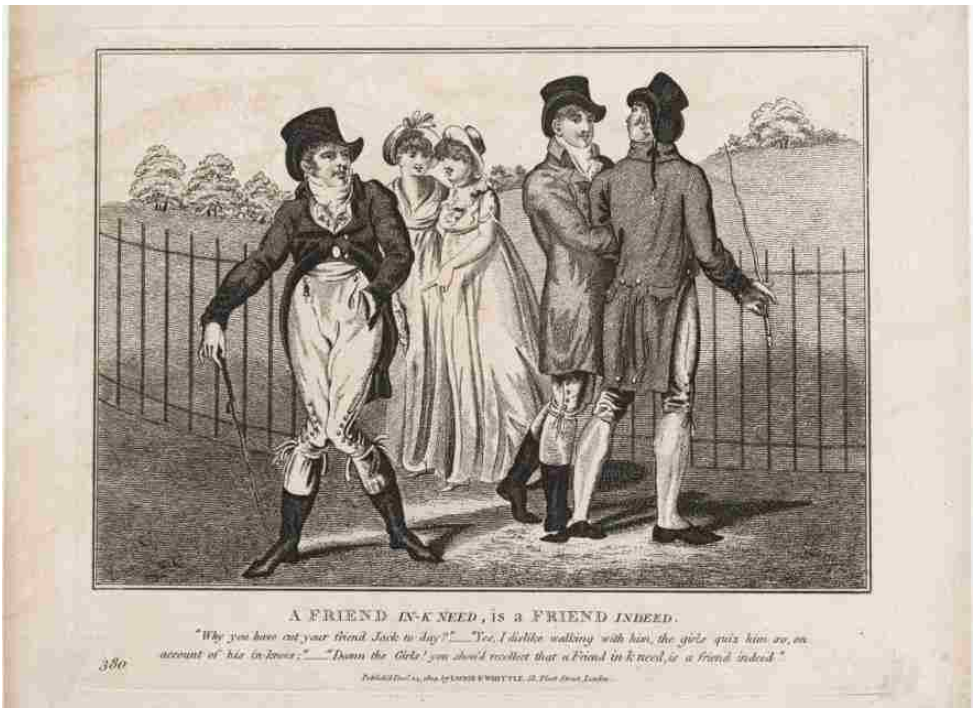

Fig. 21. *A Friend In-Kneed, Is a Friend Indeed*. 1804. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library*. Web. 1 July 2015.

The true quizzes of the piece are not only the girls who lack empathy and congeniality, but also the fair-weather friend who would choose to shun a companion because of the opinions of others. By using satirical strategies, the print implicitly advocates proper conduct.

Just as "quiz" could function in a variety of grammatical postures, lighthearted badinage, or raillery, functions as both socially desirable and boorish speech, depending upon the context and the equality of the partners involved. Though examples of this final keyword occur with a variety of connotations, *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation* (1736) serves as a good microcosm of these larger verbal debates. Written as a mock-dialogue among friends, *The Art* offers disparate perspectives, and in doing so attempts to navigate the hitherto ambiguous waters of societal interactions. Dorantes, the advocate for raillery, maintains that "rallery [sic]…has ever been lookt upon as the salt of conversation… A discourse which is not enliven'd with it, will

appear no less flat and insipid, than meat without salt." Here levity adds an additional—and more desirable—aspect to conversation than serious, morose discourse. Humor acts as a flavor enhancer in order to make socializing a more palatable occasion. However, this panegyric in favor of raillery is not without its limits, as Belisa (Dorantes' interlocutor) suggests: "[raillery] introduces division, and breaks those friendships which appear to be the most firmly established" (335) Arguing that people may laugh at first, but will always remember a jest done at their expense, Belisa initially opposes banter for its deleterious effect on social bonds. While jesting discourse bridges divides not only among the different classes, but also men and women, Belisa here maintains that it, like a too-rich ragout, often ruins the taste of conversation.

The pamphlet ultimately comes out in favor of raillery, by advocating for equality among discussants, defining its proper performance, and engaging in the very kind of ambiguity it seems to condemn. Dorantes maintains that true banter happens amongst equals, implying that jests made otherwise may take unfair advantage of intellectual or societal imbalances. This relates to courtship as well, as truly reciprocal badinage requires the pair to function as equals in order for teasing conversation to work. Eventually wooed to the other side by Dorantes' and others' logic, Belisa later elaborates on how to issue a "good" rail, and likens it to a theatrical performance: "rallery [sic] should be natural, easy, pertinent, and rightly timed ; and the air of the face, the tone of the voice, and the whole mien of him who rallies, should be accommodated to the subject of the rallery, and conformable to the quality of his hearers" (403-404). This description seems more worthy of contemporary actor David Garrick than an average man at a dinner party, but nevertheless addresses the performative nature of lighthearted banter. Not only tone, but also physical comportment and timing, all combine to achieve a desired theatrical effect. The locus of the jest lies within the audience itself; Belisa implies that good teasers, like good lovers, need to

demonstrate an awareness of their spectators, and specifically craft the jest with them in mind. Lastly, the pamphlet paradoxically contributes to the kind of abstruseness which it first seemed to abjure. After listing several pages' worth of evidence as to why raillery is injurious to society and unjust to those weaker than oneself, the tract diverges into a litany of people who may be made fun of with impunity, including, but no limited to, braggarts, gallants, hypochondriacs, coquettes, jealous husbands, and covetous men. Though ostensibly a social guide to right behavior, the pamphlet violates its injunctions even as it proffers them.

Paradoxical Conduct and Satirical Injunctions

While the ambiguity in *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation* stems more from the contradictory impulses of the eighteenth century than from a conscious rhetorical choice, a string of texts emerge throughout the period that turn the conduct genre on its head. Anti-etiquette texts revel in their uncertain tones and their even more uncertain moral messages. Often featuring a narrator who gleefully advocates hellish behavior (sometimes literally), these books directly position themselves against the "flavor of earnestness" that permeated courtesy texts. Narrators of ordinary moral literature were often, as Penelope Joan Fritzer maintains, "terribly concerned that their readers do the right thing, not as dictated by fashion, but as dictated by goodness" (Fritzer 4). In stark contrast, anti-etiquette texts seem to hold no stock in human righteousness; instead of supporting the cult of amiability, the mocking authors illustrate the full purview of man's iniquity and stress the importance of the individual's needs over those of the collective. They emphasize a strict adherence to the cult of fashion over an appropriate use of reason, and claim to depict *haute couture* rather than middle class morality. In doing so, these works testify to the power of satire over sentiment, particularly as it relates to correcting human behavior. As

the following section will show, each essay implicitly suggests the flaws of immoral conduct (and with that, the virtues of more "amiable" behavior) by way of insistent, acerbic mockery.

The various strategies of humor which the texts employ each hearken back to the Elizabethan culture of jest. As Holcomb states, Early Modern jokes depended upon "ambiguity, contradiction, duplicity, and other linguistic and rhetorical strategies that upset the conventions and proprieties normally governing serious, nonjesting communicative exchanges" (3). All of these anti-conduct texts similarly generate comedy by first adopting the most conventional form of administering propriety (the conduct book) and then opposing it with incongruous behavior. In a time period in which personal desires were sublimated for the greater good, the texts illustrate what indulging in one's every whim would look like. However, these portraits are not always condemnatory and instead resist a straight-forward reading. Though they at first appear to be simple parodies of overwrought sentiment, each text paradoxically models the very behavior it seeks to modify. The brazen nature of the tone shocks the reader, and provokes laughter as a response. While the surprise of incongruity calls smiling attention to the problem, the writers desire that their readers continue thinking about the texts' central questions long after the final giggle dissipates. Their selection of a satiric form is a purposeful one, as "the humorous introduction of a taboo topic can readily lead to its serious inclusion on an agenda" (Palmer 61).[34] The texts featured in this section all humorously engage with a number of the contemporary debates enumerated thus far, particularly the role of amiability in conversation and the ambiguous position of women in the public sphere. Their goal in doing so is not merely to incite mirth, but reform.

[34] In this section of his book, *Taking Laughter Seriously* (1994), Palmer paraphrases the arguments of J.P. Emerson's "Negotiating the Serious Import of Humor" (1969).

All of the works here investigated bolster their authorial ethos through an ironic parroting of conduct manual narration, a process akin to what Mikhail Bakhtin terms "stylized parodization" and "double-directed" discourse.[35] They then undermine this very ethos by issuing bizarre and contradictory advice. To achieve humor, the anti-etiquette book first "sets up the text to be parodied (by imitation… or by way of other such devices) so that the reader will expect it, and then produces another version of it which the reader does not expect and which sets up some incongruous contrast or comparison with the original work" (Rose 171). By playing on expectations, these writers engineer laughter through generic surprise, immediately announcing that these are not "your mother's conduct books." Again, mere laughter is not their only objective. Such writers use the readers' reactions to "reword those discourses whose weight has become tyrannical… It is a dialogic, parodic reappropriation of the past" (Hutcheon 72).[36] In their adoption of the conduct manual form, the narrators lull their readers into collusion and riotously throw off the confining chains of propriety.

Perhaps the most absurd construction of ethos comes from Benjamin Bourn's *A Sure Guide to Hell* (1750), which is related by none other than Satan himself. Far from the pitch-fork carrying, snarling devil figure popularly espoused, this Lucifer embodies elegant, amiable discourse. The guide begins, "I will detain you no longer to the following Manual, to which I earnestly desire your whole attention… advising you to scorn Self-denial, to gratify every Inclination, and revel in all sensual Delights, till you arrive at the infernal Regions, where you may shout and roar forever, with the Angels of your assured, etc. Belzebub" (vi). Though

[35] Bakhtin's theories become crucially important to an interpretation of this type of discourse. Audrey Bilger links Bakhtin's concept of "parodic stylization" to Mary Wollstonecraft's humorous appropriation of male conduct writers, arguing that she "brings antifeminist voices into her text in order to expose their self-interest and to drown their authoritative pronouncements in female laughter" (44).

[36] Here Linda Hutcheon refers to Laurent Jenny's "La Stratégie de la forme" (1976).

reported in the knowledgeable tone of the conduct writer, the Devil's advice runs counter to prevailing social views which stressed the needs of the many over those of the few and moral restraint over hedonistic indulgence. In this text, carnal lust and selfish behavior must be gratified in order to achieve eternal reward. Such is Bourn's parody of religious rhetoric, with the ultimate incongruity coming from the Prince of Darkness. In his title, Bourn plays off of similar contemporary works, particularly *A Sure Guide to Heaven* (1702, 1705), *A Sure Way to Orthodoxy in All Sorts of Controversies* (1718), and *A Guide to Eternal Glory* (1739), all of which promised infallible directions to everlasting joy and happiness. Bourn's satiric text questions the credulity granted to such works in exchange for individual free will and rational thought in spiritual matters. Masked behind the satirical comedy is a deeper suspicion that many other conduct books are written by similar serpents in disguise.

Several other parodic works similarly rely on the double motifs of "surety" and tutelage to poke fun at the self-promotional nature of self-help literature. *Chesterfield Travestie; Or, School for Modern Manners* (1808) assures readers that by following certain parameters they "will be sure to succeed."[37] A short text, the handbook mentions the word "sure" a total of 32 times, at an average of once every 3.25 pages. By appropriating the hyperbolic discourse of the typical conduct essay (which also includes categorical generalizations such as "always" and "never"), the book implicitly questions the absolute authority of such works, especially when it then proffers counterintuitive advice. In addition to building up authorial credibility, these texts also operate by reasserting the neophyte status of their readers. The narrator of Jane Collier's *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753) repeatedly refers to "my good pupils" to evoke a sense of authorial knowledge in all things teasing. The speaker of Maria Edgeworth's *An Essay on the Noble Art of Self-Justification* (1795)—a text which teaches women to deny

[37] This text parodies Lord Chesterfield's popular guide, *The Accomplished Gentleman* (1782).

culpability and assert blamelessness—likewise refers to her "dear pupils," but she does not stop there. Also addressed are her "candid pupils," "fair pupils," "reasonable pupils," "sentimental pupils," and "happy pupils." Such a repetition performs the construction of ethos by inculcating a pattern of inferiority within the acolyte readers. The paradox then follows that if these novices will only follow this narrator's advice, then they "can do no wrong."

The advice actually put forth thrives on contrariety and opposition, often figuring readers as combatants against the fellow humans in their lives; as such, they counter the prevailing discourses of gentility and affability by proffering conflict instead. Jonathan Swift's *Directions to Servants* (1745) reminds domestics that they "may quarrel with each other as much as you please, only bear in Mind that you have a common Enemy, which is your Master and Lady, and you have a common Cause to defend" (10). Importantly, the narrator only cautions against an excess of discord; he does not advise effacing it among the lower echelons, but rather emphasizes the larger economic battle which always rages. By situating his discourse in the terminology of warfare, Swift the satirist also implies the greater class and commercial strains which surround the arrangement. Similarly, *A Sure Guide to Hell* founds its treatise on the basic hostility between the Devil and God. Satan counsels his followers to "shut your Eyes and Ears against, to dispise [*sic*] and reject, the Cautions and Counsels of GOD and CONSCIENCE; those irreconcilable Enemies to my Cause, my Views, my Interests" (v). This passage (as well as the entire work) functions on a diametric opposition between good and evil, proper and improper behavior. The emphasis on "my" also stresses the individualistic tenor of the piece, as it fails to consider the needs of the larger collective. The most basic antipathy of all, however, may well exist beneath the same roof, and go back nearly as far as that between God and the Devil. *An Essay on the Noble Art of Self-Justification* advises its female readers that once "prepared for an

engagement, you will next, if you have not already done it, study the weak part of the character of your enemy – your husband I mean... and break the spirit of your opponent" (8). Locked in a conjugal conflict, wives must abjure any sentimental attachment to their husbands in order to gain true victory. Noticeably, there remains no room in the most affectionate of relationships for the slightest good-nature.

With enmity established between individuals and their fellows, the stage is then set to enact complete societal chaos by following indecorous advice. Several of these texts illustrate vexation through antagonism, counseling readers to ascertain the needs of others solely in order to thwart them. Collier asserts in *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* that the best way of toying with a female subordinate stems from oppositional treatment: "for whatever she does to divert, to please, or to serve you, be sure, in the first place, to be neither diverted nor pleased with it" (67). For spouses as well, the sole aim of contrary behavior remains sheer irritation: "Carefully study your husband's temper, and find out what he likes, in order never to do any one thing that will please him" (55). The humor of Collier's text depends first upon describing amiable skills, like gauging how others feel and discerning their desires, and then using those same skills to torture others for personal gratification. *Directions to Servants* similarly advises such incongruous behavior, even when one is guilty: "When you have done a Fault, be always pert and insolent, and behave your self as if you were the injured Person; this will immediately put your Master or Lady off their Mettle" (1). In confidently assuming illogical or perplexing verbiage, inferiors confute their opponent and gain the rhetorical upper-hand. While the sentimental course of action would be to tearfully admit to blame and so preserve the moral integrity of the hearth and nation, contrary conduct builds a carnival world in which all justice goes by the wayside. Edgeworth likewise advocates double-speak as a means to linguistic triumph, particularly when arguing with

one's husband: "In stating matters on opinion, produce the words of the very same person which passed days, months, years before, in contradiction to what he is then saying. By displacing, disjointing words and sentences, by misunderstanding the whole, or quoting only a part of what has been said, you may convict any man of inconsistency, particularly if he be a man of genius and feeling" (27). In selectively presenting truth, and playing interminable mind-games, women become active storytellers who control both plot and character. Even the most intelligent and amiable men cannot fight against such contradiction.

Both Collier's and Edgeworth's texts emphasize that sentimental people serve as the best marks for emotional torture, particularly because they are so easily hurt. For the tormentor, nothing is more enjoyable than watching a victim squirm; as Collier maintains, "all the pleasure of Tormenting is lost, as soon as your subject is become insensible of your strokes" (Collier 20). Thus, pleasure stems not from the act itself, but rather the target's reactions. As in teasing courtship, a performative bond cannot take place unless both parties play by the rules. A victim ceases to be a victim if he or she grows a thicker emotional skin. And so, the perfect quarry is the highly emotional man or woman of sentiment: "There is one mistake which people have often run into, in their choice of a dupe; namely, in thinking that the principal [*sic*] qualification to be insisted on is his having a soft place in his head; whereas the chief thing to seek after is the man who has a soft place in his heart" (61). Teasing and tormenting, though often manifesting themselves in verbal behavior, use words as a signifier for deeper emotions. While in a teasing courtship these emotions are ultimately romantic, here vituperative discourse functions as a means of taking advantage of one's fellows and torturing their feelings rather than their intellects.

Sentimental "dupes" are also ripe for deception because their emotions are so easily mimicked; as Collier's work continues, it becomes apparent that the superficial manners of hypocritical gentry are also one of her satirical targets. In describing the perfect victim, the narrator cautions that if the intended "talks in company greatly in praise of benevolence, good-nature, generosity, charity, &c. hold yourself in some doubt of him… However, don't thoroughly trust him (for all his fine talking), till you can catch him doing such actions himself…without ostentation. Then mark him down as your own" (61). Within this description lies an implicit critique of ostentatious virtue; those who talk a big game are hardly the most amiable. The truest sentimentalist is one who hides his or her sentiments. But this is not a truth easily acknowledged by popular society, and so the speaker advocates pretense under the guise of sincerity as the most effective means of ensuring the tease: "As I have the highest regard for the reputation of my pupils… I have endeavoured… to follow the exemplars they are taken from; who are not the openly cruel and hard-hearted, but rather the specious pretenders to goodness, who, under an outcry about benevolence, hide the most malevolent hearts" (63). The duplicity of the outwardly benign remains Collier's largest concern here. Truly amiable people become swayed by pretense, while those who present a sentimental veneer are free to sow animosity and discord. Another implicit downside to the emerging spirit of tolerance stems from the fact that sincerely amicable individuals might hesitate to poke underneath a charitable façade, for fear of being considered "impolite" by society's ever more stringent standards.

Just as they critique feigning hypocrites, these texts inveigh against superficial conversation as well, pointing out that increasingly policed conversational standards do nothing more than spread superficiality and pedestrianism. "The Art of Modern Conversation" (1734) portrays the standard subjects of discourse as ones which "neither require much *Knowledge* nor

much *Truth*," but rather hinge on either the local entertainments or the local gossip. The guides also advise the use of physical props to enhance one's verbal performance. For men, a "*Diamond Ring*... adds irresistible Force to whatever [they] deliver, [and] gives it the *Stamp* of *Sterling Wit*," a "*Ruffle*... express[es] *Joy, Anger,* or several other Passions," and "50 or 100 Guineas…[will] by a *judicious Chink* confound…an Opponent who may not have above as many Shillings" (575). Here the possession of a few material items easily masks any deficiencies in speech—particularly wit, emotion, or logic. The best indicator of the state of conversation, however, becomes evident when the narrator recommends a man carry a sword for the express purpose of "convin[cing] his opponent of his Error, by running him through the Guts" (576).

In a companion piece, "The Art of Female Conversation" (1734), ladies hoping to "pass for a Woman of a *fine Understanding*" need only master the various uses of the fan, which has "more *Eloquence* than the finest Thing that can be *spoke*" (650, 649). In order to fit in with the upper-crust, women "need not speak a Word, but observe only to join in with them at the *first Tittering*, and continue as *loud* and as long a *Laugh* as any in company" (650). These counsels sound rather like stage directions than genuine advice, a rhetorical choice which reveals the performative nature of high-class sociability as it prizes the appearance of verbal prowess over authenticity and the use of manipulative gestures over rhetorical candor. These essays' ironic discourse testifies more to the general lack of refined conversation than the effectiveness of genuine conduct books such as *The Art of Conversation* (1738). This pervasive penchant for trite repartee is also implicitly critiqued within *Chesterfield Travestie; Or, the School of Modern Manners* (1808). In it, the narrator advocates bravado in public exchanges as a cover for actual material: "This sort of conversation, larded with well-selected oaths, and knowing observations, will pass current, when a sensible modest orator will be no more attended to than a snuffling

clergyman, preaching to a drowsy congregation on a frosty morning" (34). The oratorical status quo remains one that ignores substance and instead pursues triviality, a trend which the author seems to believe reflects a similar spiritual disregard as well. In the quest for decorum, conversation ceases to be conversation at all, but a mere parade of bombast and frippery.

In addition to shedding light on the state of contemporary conversation, the satirical manuals also comment on the increasingly sentimentalized vision of womanhood. In *A Sure Guide to Hell*, one of Satan's minions declares that in order to guarantee young women's entrance into the netherworld, parents should

> Suffer not your Daughter to do any Work, for fear of spoiling the Whiteness of her Hands. Humour her in her Desire after fine Cloaths, and spare not any Expence you are able in dressing her out as fine as, or finer than her Superiors: Thus you will make her an Idol and she will, according to my Desire, be a meer [*sic*] Insignificant in whatever future Station she is in, fit for nothing else but to flutter about, raise false Stories and spread Scandal… (Bourn 21-22)

Here the devil advocates the building up of a domestic icon, one who becomes dolled-up in her clothing, but not her intellect. The passage speaks to the idolatrous nature of the image, as functional femininity is disdained in favor of a frivolous womanhood fixated on vanity and gossip. The satirical intent of the passage becomes clear when one considers the essay's title; treating women in this way results only in eternal damnation, not just for the individual, but also the society which must deal with a glut of ill-formed minds. Female objectification, especially mercenary marriage in which a young girl functions as conjugal chattel, also comes under attack in Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*. To truly torture a young woman, parents should counter her personal feelings in the choice of groom: "When your daughter comes to be old

enough to marry, if she should happen to fix her attentions on a real deserving young man… you should be bent upon giving her hand to one whose only merit is his riches" (40). In her otherwise acerbic essay, here Collier obliquely critiques those guardians who ignore affective inclination and pursue material wealth instead. While disregarding every other emotion, the satiric narrator calls attention to genuine feeling. She asserts that there remains no greater torment than being eternally bonded to an unpleasant spouse. Collier continues her censure of such avaricious parenting in her paradoxical suggestion that if parents should happen to "see a rising genius in any child (especially if it be a girl), unless you can in some way turn it to your own profit, give that child no assistance nor encouragement; browbeat all endeavours towards striking out of the common road" (Collier 39). Thus young women in particular are precluded from participating in social discourse, a reality which Collier believes occurs before society even reads her sardonic treatise. The only talents worth nurturing are those which result in increased wealth; with the marriage market privileging the type of domesticized goddess espoused in guide books, the only suitable course is, according to the narrator, staying on "the common road."

Several of these satirical tracts portray women as either termagants or coquettes in order to achieve comedic effect; however, even as they portray monstrous femininity they critique the diminished social role of women. Bilger sees Edgeworth's *The Noble Art of Self-Justification* as a way of taking "an essentially passive trait of the ideal woman in a chivalrous relationship and [turning] it into an active force to be reckoned with in the details of everyday life…Edgeworth counsels the female reader to compensate for social liabilities by establishing herself, verbally and physically, as a powerful arbiter in her own right" (92). Hence the real subject of the satire is not women who abuse their power, but a society which gives them no power at all. As much as the essay comically exaggerates stubborn behavior, there yet remains a part which quietly

celebrates the rebellion. Similarly, as Katharine A. Craik maintains in her critical introduction to *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, Collier's main task remains two-fold. First, Collier achieves comic effect as she "replaces the familiar set of feminine charms with an equally familiar set of feminine faults, cleverly retaining the hyperbole of sentimental femininity whilst unpicking its basic assumptions" (Craik xix). In doing so, she becomes able to create a new form of womanhood: "Her tough reasoning assumes that women are capable of moral intelligence and are therefore responsible for altering society's opinion of them, and allows her to retain the meaningful aspects of feminine sentiment—goodwill, sympathy, tolerance—while dispensing with those she considered narrow-minded and outmoded" (xxi-xxii). Thus Collier's comedic strategies paradoxically engineer the very virtues she attacks. Only truly amiable people perceive the irony beneath her evil advice, just as only an unsympathetic or malevolent being would view it as a genuine handbook. Enjoying the humor depends upon the presence of moral integrity. Though the essay does not advocate tyrannical rule, it also does not promote a subservient womanhood. The ironic bent of the treatise condemns those who lack empathy as well as those who promote empty-headed frivolities.

While these ironic texts may vary in their targets of mockery, all are united in their belief that satire proves a more effective moral tool than somber treatises on propriety and virtue; the best way of promoting amiability, they aver, is to portray humanity at its lowest. *A Sure Guide to Hell* begins with the Devil's anticipation that many of his readers may wonder "What need was there of SATAN'S writing a Directory to Hell; since the road is so plain… and seeing, moreover, the Bulk of Mankind have, as it were, various Instincts naturally pointing that way, and impelling 'em thither" (iii-iv). A belief in man's inner depravity becomes manifest in this passage, a tenet which aligns itself easily with satire, as the genre thrives in poking fun at human failures. Maria

Edgeworth echoes this sentiment when she maintains that women are "Possessed, as are all the fair daughters of Eve, of an hereditary propensity, transmitted to them undiminished through succeeding generations, to be 'soon moved with the slightest touch of blame'" and expresses doubt that any neophytes in the art exist at all (1). The Daughters of Eve inherit her folly by virtue of their sex. Collier's narrator expresses her feelings towards sentimental conduct literature with the following:

> I know that many learned and good men have taken great pains to undermine this our noble art, by laying down rules, and giving exemplars, in order to teach mankind to give no offence to anyone, and, instead of being a torment, to be… a help and comfort to their friends… But with infinite pleasure do I perceive, either that they are not much read, or, at least, that they have not the power of rooting from the human breast that growing sprig of mischief there implanted with our birth… (98)

Altogether, these satirists espouse a disbelief in not only the innate goodness of mankind but also the moralizing effects of sentimental discourse; only ridicule can foster a desire for virtue. Amiability will fail to grow when only nurtured by weepy treatises or preaching sermons—but it may be cultivated with the thunderclaps and lightning bolts of acerbic derision. These texts all confront temporary anxieties and address taboo topics. Ultimately, their humorous treatment of difficult subjects diffuses apprehension and encourages thoughtful appreciation, for "By inciting uncomfortable laughter, violent comedy enlists the reader in the process of reform" (Bilger 196). This same fusion of satire and feeling comes to apply to the courtship plots of the period, as it enables couples to find and traverse the circuitous roads to matrimony.

Against Sentiment: The Courtship of Love and Humor

The ambiguous relationship of satirical rhetoric to social mores parallels that of the eighteenth century romance narrative, rife as it is with sardonic, humorous banter even as it promotes amiable ends. As Bates asserts, "all [love stories] are versions of the same fundamental conflict between individual sexuality and a perceived authority" (15). Not only does courtship define itself against marriage as a free-zone of sorts, one without the stringent social rules expected post-wedding, but teasing discourse also takes this definition one step further, placing itself outside of the realm of sentimentalism, and squarely within the domains of satire. It is for this reason that "courtship is a staple of comedy—not because the relations between men and women are intrinsically humorous, but because comedy explores the relation of rule to misrule. Comedy presents a carnival world in which the impossible is allowed to happen, and in which rules are deliberately bent, injunctions disobeyed" (Bates 20). When couples tease each other, they reject the expected standards as defined by conduct literature, and instead engage in a dynamic repartee in which the aim of the game is to catch the other unguarded and unawares. Faults are lampooned and true feelings veiled, all in a whirligig of verbal performance.

Despite the impact that sentimentalism bore on the eighteenth century, the tastes of the day remained strongly ironic and staunchly unemotional. As Simon Dickie notes in his *Cruelty and Laughter*, "sentimental ideals were far from dominant in literature or any other area of cultural production" (4). Ultimately, the period offers a wash of competing impulses, attracted by tradition and at the same time transgressing that very same custom. As sentiment gained popularity, ironic lampoons rose in tandem. Particularly when it came to love, several writers had had enough of the flowery prose and lofty language—and rather preferred their romance with a stiff shot of irony. *The Dictionary of Love* defines verses as follows: "[t]hey were

formerly in great vogue in Love: at present they are generally exploded. It is enough that a lover vents his nonsense in poetical prose" (219). This declaration firmly juxtaposes the emotional and nonsensical, calling for a new means of courtship. It is perhaps with this same idea in mind that Elizabeth Bennet derides syrupy verses in *Pride and Prejudice*, exclaiming, "I wonder who first discovered the efficacy of poetry in driving away love!" (31). If poetry is what drives love away, it is then teasing discourse which must bring it back.

Many of the satirical treatments of sentimental marriage illustrate the necessity of banter within a match, and derive their humor from its noticeable absence. In one 1763 letter to the editor, a despondent groom laments, "I married, Sir, a very amiable woman about a twelvemonth ago, of whom, in reality, I am passionately fond; --but be-ing possessed of her person, and secure of her heart, I am sunk into an insipid sort of tranquility and experience none of those delightful little anxieties that kept the mind all alive during my solicitation for both" (28). His plea centers on the security of his match; because of their marriage, there remains no delightful torment of ambiguity or uncertainty. The teasing which engineered the partnership must also occur within the confines of marriage in order to keep it secure. Instead, the couple indulges in maudlin tropes. The writer admits that most of their days are spent as follows: "My wife all the time sits stroking a picture of mine… [I] spend a couple of hours…toying with every little article of her dress, and breaking out into the childish accent of *I does love oo, I do so*; to which I am asked in the same accent, *Does oo?* and then follows an idiotical stare of fondness on both sides, which ends in a mutual drawling of the breath into the interjection, *ah!*" (28). Within this passage, the couple commits a romantic sin by worshiping one another in sentimental idolatry. Both use tokens as placeholders for the physical person; the wife with the picture frame, and the husband with her dress. The "dialogue" they share amounts to nothing more than nauseating baby-talk

which devolves into illogical syllables. Nothing of substance is communicated, which, as the letter goes on, seems to comprise the major problem: "we are so perfectly aware of each other's sentiments of things, and so often discussed every topic of conversation, that we are generally silent together from the want of something to say" (28). The ideal process of discovery made delightful by witty banter dissolves into complaisance; the groom's allusion to sentiment and pre-approved "topics of conversation" imply that their dialogues follow the rules for amiable speech, and subsequently lack the passion necessary for teasing courtship. It is the tranquility which prompts the groom to write, as speech remains the greatest indicator of a relationship's health.

Most of the pieces proposing "a new kind of courtship" invert typical romantic motifs and instead advocate humorous courtship rooted in the pleasurable torture of teasing. In response to the popularity of such mawkish tropes as despondent young men killing themselves in response to unrequited affection, a 1737 ditty, "The Despairing Lover," puts these myths to rest. Depicting the fate of "Poor *Damon*, the Lover," the poem chronicles the scorn of "*Phyllis* the Fair" and the eponymous protagonist's resolution to kill himself.[38] At first, it appears that this tale will have the conventional ending (one which is hinted at by the couples' archetypal names). Upon reaching the heights of a cliff, however, he becomes afraid of his impending mortality, and resolves,

> That a Lover forsaken
>
> A new Love might get.
>
> But a Neck when once broken
>
> Can never be set…

[38] This work appears in answer to a young lady (Charlotte "Languish"), who fearfully wrote that one of her servants "tells me, if I am in the least cruel, he will before my eyes stab himself immediately."

Here Damon rejects the singular nature of True Love, and instead avows that he will find someone who reciprocates his romantic ardor. Reason triumphs over sentiment, and an ironic affirmation of human dignity ensues. In his rejection of the *donna*-centric script handed to him by sentiment, Damon paves the way for a new type of courtship.

This desire for "new" is also reflected in a companion piece within the same issue of *The Universal Spectator*. Entitled "To a young Lady who affects Cruelty and the Love of a long Courtship," it cautions the titular lady, who eternally puts off her lovers with "scornful Eyes," that she "will not even conquer Fools; / For now we are all grown to wise, / To follow dull romantick Rules." Rather:

> When first the blooming Charms unfold,
> 'Tis then the proper time for Courting;
> Who'd take a fond Coquette, when old,
> When girls are now so fond at fourteen.

While the poem seems to suggest a kind of *carpe diem* mentality (seizing young women when they are just ripe for courtship rather than continually deferring pleasure), it is important to note that the speaker does not condemn the art of coquetry in and of itself. Instead, the true crime lies in the coquette's not knowing when to quit the game and pledge consent—essentially, she fails to perceive the difference between a true teaser and a merciless flirt. This *faux pas* is a deadly one, as the period at the end of the poem implies; no one would take an old Coquette, and the question posed remains a declarative statement instead. The "dull romantick Rules" cited allude more to the folly of eternally waiting with no promise of security rather than an eschewal of teasing courtship.

Indeed, the idea of toying with a lover was viewed as quintessential to the courting process, as espoused in a 1736 issue of *The Gentlemen's Magazine*. In it, a query entitled "Proposal for a New Method of Courtship" stems from a young lover's despair that he "cannot speak to a *Woman* of any Reputation for *Wit* or *Beauty* without faltering in my Speech." He posits that such qualms would be put to rest if only it were "the *Custom* for the *Women* to *court* the *Men*, instead of the *Men courting the Women*," a sentiment likely shared by many a man in the intervening centuries. The young lover states that the proposed scheme would prove most advantageous, as couples, in adopting it, "should not lose so many *Weeks*, *Months*, and *Tears*" by guessing at one another's intentions (247). No longer would men spend so much energy courting disinterested women, and no longer would women be swayed by the disingenuous, romantic speeches of licentious men (247). The result would be a speedy courtship with clear intentions—a triumph of reason and of progress.

The response to his proposal amounts to an absolute rejection, one which maintains that a romance imbued with clinical efficiency is not a romance at all. The columnist, "Mr. Stonecastle," inquires:

> What then wou'd become of all the solicitous Endeavours of Pleasing? Where wou'd be the officious Ardour in seeking the happy Moment? By so easy a Joy we shou'd lose half its blessings, since it is our *Expectation* makes the blessing dear : We shou'd be depriv'd of all that agreeable Intercourse and Mixture of *Pleasure* and *Pain* which makes the soul of an *Amour* : a sudden immediate *Love for Love* must consequently be a very *insipid Thing*. 'Tis the duty of a *Woman* not to be so *weak* as to surrender at first Sight, and not to be so *obstinate* as not to surrender at all… (248)

Here Stonecastle emphasizes the maxim that the journey matters more than the proverbial destination. His treatise acclaims all that teasing discourse has to offer: the unsure nature of reciprocal affection, the paradoxical delight of "*Pleasure* and *Pain*" in its pursuit, and the "*Expectation*" which sweetens the reward. Stonecastle rejects such sentimental notions of love at first sight, and instead claims that similar behavior renders courtship "insipid." Within this type of courtship, women also play a key role in knowing when to give in to love, not indulging in true coquettish deferral, but eventually uniting with their lovers. By implying that what is hard-won is also long-valued, he asserts that this tempestuous courtship is what makes marriage worthwhile. He cautions the young lover that in his seeking to change custom, or "offering to refine and improve it, we shou'd destroy it utterly" (248).

It is worth noting that the inquiry arises from the inquirer's inability to "speak to a *Woman* of any Reputation for *Wit* or *Beauty*." As Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* maintains, however, young people had only to "read over most of our comedies since the Restoration… and make the favorite characters of such comedies their exemplars" to become experts in teasing courtship (48). It was there that women could learn the true art of coquetry, and that men could witness the witty banter of rakish heroes. Teasing courtship owes its existence to the stichomythic repartee featured on prosceniums across the country; it was during performances that performative courtship debuted. As Pamela Allen Brown asserts, "The strong resemblances between making fun and making theatre suggest further connections between jest and drama. Like a stage play, jest is also 'gest,' created at the moment it is enacted, *rendering the jest more an event than an utterance*. Like plays, jests are intended to be heard, not read; and both fail or succeed because of the somatic reactions of an audience" (Brown 26-27, emphasis

mine).[39] These jesting events, empowered by performative rhetoric, engineered not only a love match on stage, but also helped revolutionize the discursive field of courting and wooing.

This penchant for teasing romance in eighteenth-century playhouses will be explored later in this study. Despite critical assertions to the contrary, "sentimental drama never accounted for more than 10 percent of performances, and usually much less than that" (Dickie 4). Popular interest in Shakespeare's comedies, particularly *As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Taming of the Shrew*, abounds throughout the eighteenth century. Indeed, in *Modern Courtship* (1768), a man insults the other's prowess at wooing with the following: "you stand an excellent chance at wooing with that Tragedy face of yours----- You will I suppose address her in the language of the tragedians, and expect to win her affections with scraps from *Romeo and Juliet*. 'Can I go forward when my love is here?' [*mimicking*] 'See how she leans her cheek upon her arm. 'O that I was a glove…'" (16). Here what was once romantic is disdained by its fusion with a stunted lover. No longer does the "language of the tragedians" suffice to secure the love and affection of a lady. With this same belief, Goldsmith asserts that on the eighteenth-century stage, "[t]he pompous train, the swelling phrase, and the unnatural rant, are displaced for that natural portrait of human folly and frailty, of which all are judges, because all have sat for the picture." Though Goldsmith is here concerned for this natural portrait's future, the theatres yet featured several comic couples throughout the period, whose folly and frailty are the subjects of act two of this project.

While Goldsmith positioned himself in some ways as the champion of British theatrical comedy, the eighteenth century already had a dramatic deliverer in the form of Shakespeare. This

[39] Arthur Gerstner-Hirzel echoes this performative aspect to language in his *The Economy of Action and Word in Shakespeare's Plays* (1972). In it, he suggests that "[t]o act—in the double sense of doing a deed or performing a theatrical part—is to make visible an idea which is hidden in the person who acts. To act is to utter, to carry out…to make visible" (9).

next chapter delves into the ascent of Bardolatry and explores how his celebrity dovetails with both the comic tone of the era as well as the growth of women writers. It also chronicles how literary ladies used Shakespeare and his comedies as vehicles to create their own courtship narratives, imbued with female agency and humor.

Chapter 4: Courting Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Women Writers

The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of Shakespeare as both a literary celebrity and cultural commodity, so much so that by 1748 Ursula Fielding could maintain in her correspondence with Mrs. John Barker that "a letter without a scrap of Shakespeare would be shocking. Why, ma'am he is all the mode" (241). This chapter explores how the advent of Bardolatry corresponds with the dual foci of the previous section, namely the continuance of the Elizabethan culture of jest and the growth of women writers. It begins with an overview of Shakespeare's ascent as a national icon and describes how female authors and performers in particular both perpetuated and benefitted from his celebrity. At the same time, it chronicles the growing number of contemporary lampoons (in drama, prose, and caricature) of not only this emergent cult of literary worship but also of Shakespeare's tragedies. Such ironic representations ridicule the often-mercenary appropriations of Shakespeare's cultural capital and undermine the playwright's reputed gravitas, helping to augment the period's increasing fondness for his comedies. Lastly, this chapter discusses how comedic theatrical tastes begin to inform the development of the early novel in the face of melodrama, particularly through the verbal performances of teasing couples. It finally illustrates the interrelations of female authorial agency within the cult of Shakespeare, the perpetuation of the Elizabethan jesting spirit, and the theatrical nature of the early novel.

Visions of Shakespearean Celebrity

As Robert Shaughnessy maintains in his "Shakespeare and the London Stage," though David Garrick is often credited with singlehandedly bringing Shakespeare into the artistic and national spotlight (and indeed proffered the same belief himself), a number of factors influenced this cultural shift before and after Garrick's appearance on the eighteenth-century stage (163).

For the theatres, Shakespeare's plays primarily offered several opportunities for profit. Tiffany Stern credits the Licensing Act of 1737 as an indirect endorsement of the Shakespearean canon, as it encouraged theatre managers to gravitate toward the '"old' pre-approved plays" which did not require extensive editing (144). These texts often derived from pre-existing Restoration adaptations, as the original Elizabethan/Jacobean scripts were not widely accessible until the 1730's (Stern 143). Such revisions radically altered Shakespeare's plays, and largely contributed to freer attitudes concerning the appropriation of his original material. Additionally, these looser mindsets allowed managers like Garrick to infuse Shakespeare's works with the "popular light theatrical forms he otherwise lacked—burlesques, drolls, farces, operas," thus accruing the cultural capital Shakespeare provided while simultaneously taking economic advantage of current theatrical fashions (Stern 145). Revenues also soared through the sexualization of the eighteenth-century actress' body. As both Fiona Ritchie and Robert Shaughnessy note, the breeches revival of the early 1740s derives from the continued (and popular) spectacle of female performers; debuts of *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Merchant of Venice* all appear within nearly a year of one another, and met with much financial success.[40] As Ritchie maintains, and as will be explored later in this chapter, the figure of the breeches-wearing, eighteenth-century actress fundamentally influences Shakespeare's burgeoning popularity on the contemporary stage.

The popularity of Shakespeare dominated not only the theatrical, but also the national stage, eventually serving as cultural shorthand for English identity and poetic prowess. Kathryn Prince describes this process in her essay, "Shakespeare and English Nationalism," outlining the ways in which Shakespeare's personage was utilized as a counterpoint to French encroachment

[40] For a further exploration of the breeches revival, see Fiona Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014), pages 29-31, and Robert Shaughnessy's "Shakespeare and the London Stage" in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2012), pages 181-182.

on English customs and character: "Shakespeare's critical reception…became integrated into a cultural nationalism that… envisioned him… no longer as simply a great thinker among an international list… but more specifically as an ideal Englishman… Shakespeare became one of the key figures in the emerging genre of national biography, in which he is described almost invariably as the 'glory of the nation'" (281). The mythologizing of Shakespeare subsequently redefined English character against that of the French; the playwright's iconic status encapsulates and distills the essence of English virtue. Prince maintains that Voltaire's incendiary comments regarding the Bard's authorial weaknesses played a large part in causing the English to rally around their national hero (281-285). Thus, the playwright's growing celebrity played a political, as well as a literary, role. Fiona Ritchie corroborates this view in her appraisal of Elizabeth Montagu's 1769 exegesis on Shakespeare; the treatise, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, both celebrates the playwright's reputed untutored virtuosity and at the same time portrays "English national identity…as natural, honest and unaffected" (68). Subsequently, the artless style of Shakespeare serves as a metonymic surrogate for valued characteristics of a true Englishman. With so much at stake in terms of protecting English culture from French infringement, events such as the establishment of Shakespeare's bust in Westminster Abbey in 1741 and Garrick's Stratford Jubilee in 1769 take on additional cultural meanings and reflect an active construction of national identity.

While the topic of Shakespeare's celebrity has recently received such critical treatment, the plethora of satiric parodies that rose in response can still bear additional study.[41] These

[41] Some notable exceptions are Jonathan Bate's 1985 study, "Parodies of Shakespeare," and his 1986 "Shakespearean Allusion in English Caricature in the Age of Gillray," which I have cited and footnoted extensively here. Though both of these texts center largely on how Shakespeare's celebrity was used to support particularly political and radical ends, he does provide ample background and an excellently comprehensive survey that includes far more than the texts and prints featured here. While his two works separate visual satire from the textual, I have sought to place them into conversation in this section in order to provide a brief background to the historical moment. Where I have a text that is also covered in his work, I have denoted it by either a direct quotation or a

lampoons center on several main themes. They first decry the beatification of Shakespeare and expose the often acquisitive motivations which ran underneath it. At the same time, these texts tend to expose the trivialization of Shakespeare's language, ridiculing the contemporary trend of excising random passages and using them in inappropriate contexts.[42] Additionally, they ironically invert the playwright's tragedies by juxtaposing them with absurd subjects, creating a send-up of the often sentimentalized texts and endorsing caustic comedy instead. Finally, they caricature the very English realm Shakespeare supposedly represents, revealing the inadequacies of the national character as it pokes fun at an idealized vision.[43] In doing so, these works seek to authenticate bardolatrous tendencies and rectify national vice, participating in the cult of Shakespeare even as they critique it.

Featured at the Shakespeare Gallery, *The Infant Shakespeare* (fig. 22) serves as a fruitful example of this cult as it deifies the bard by using biblical iconography.[44] In it, Nature beatifically gazes upon her child and functions as a literary Madonna. Incarnations of the passions surround the infant, embodying allegorical magi in their offering of a flute and a vase. All of their gazes fixate on the eponymous child, as though the entirety of human emotion become distilled within his infant form. The baby possesses an almost preternatural sensibility as

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footnote. Regula Hohl Trillini's "Hamlet's Soliloquy: An Eighteenth-Century Genre" (2012) is a fascinating piece of digital scholarship which uses the *HyperHamlet* database to evaluate these texts as a genre in their own right. She pays especial attention to the proliferation of the soliloquys based on marriage and bachelorhood, which dovetails well with this study more largely. This subset is linked to the proliferation of the courtship narrative by Trillini.

[42] Bate briefly mentions this "habit of quoting odd lines" on page 76 of his "Parodies of Shakespeare." See also Thomas Keymer's "Shakespeare in the Novel" in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, pages 118-140.

[43] Here I align with Bate, who maintains that the "less high-brow forms of Bardolatry" were "rarely designed as attacks on Shakespeare" but rather that "his language—which has the authority of genius—is used as a weapon, turned against the follies of a later age" ("Parodies of Shakespeare" 75).

[44] This engraving is not the only piece to use this motif. Other nativity sketches abound, including Benjamin Smith's engraving of George Romney's other work, *Shakespeare Nursed by Comedy and Tragedy* (1803) and Edward Francis Burney's *Infant Vision of Shakespeare* (1796), which figures the baby bard floating on a cloud with who appears to be the Virgin Mary, holding the globe in his hands.

it gazes directly at the viewer, grasping the flute in hand. Symbolizing his future poetic compositions, this instrument is interestingly proffered to him by Joy, perhaps alluding to the primacy of the bard's comedic, rather than tragic works. Shakespeare's name descends from the clouds on high, surrounded by a trio of angels. The visual patterns of the engraving perfectly parallel the Nativity, and position Shakespeare as the Messiah of a quintessentially British theatre:[45]

Fig. 22. Smith, Benjamin. *The Infant Shakespeare*. 1799. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library* . Web. 1 October 2015.

Although hyperbolic, the print does not seem to question the authority of its grandiose claims; in fact, many of the prints which bolster the Cult of Shakespeare depend upon audience

[45] Portraying Shakespeare as an infant savior to poesy is also the subtext of Anthony Harrison's *The Infant Vision of Shakespeare; With an Apostrophe to the Immortal Bard, and Other Poems* (1794). It proclaims that in his nativity "His eye, at one excursive glance, / Takes in each clime, from pole to pole; / He breathes! The seas their waves advance, / Or back their world of waters roll" (9-12). In his "Apostrophe to Shakespeare," he deems him "Prime Poet of the World" (28), endowing him with supernatural qualities. Such hero-worship prompted Anna Letitia Barbauld to posit in 1776 that "we idolize Shakespeare rather too much for a Christian country" (339). Lastly, in the fanciful "Dialogue betwixt Shakespeare and Mr. Garrick" (1779), the ghost of Shakespeare communes with his biggest fan, castigating him that his "celebrated Jubilee… approached so near to superstition and blasphemy, as to become highly disagreeable" to him (201).

familiarity with both the playwright himself and his cultural importance. An example of this trend is fig. 23, Isaac Cruikshank's *A Fancy Sketch to the Memory of Shakespeare* (1797), which features several Shakespearean characters honoring a bust of their creator. The print works as a visual enthymeme, as audiences must demonstrate their own recognition of these figures in order to "get the print."[46] A sprite, likely Ariel, looks archly back at Falstaff, whose voluminous form dominates the center of the print. Also present are Prospero and Caliban in the rear. Two angelic figures, possible incarnations of comedy and tragedy, strew roses into a stream. A Jonsonian Swan of Avon figures in the bottom right, perpetuating traditional Shakespearean imagery. Implicit in the adoration of these fictional forms, however, is the adoration of the viewer. The print implies that without the brain behind the bust, humanity would be bereft of such exquisite figures. Ultimately, the "fancy sketch" memorializes the imaginative fancy of the Bard himself.

Fig. 23. Cruikshank, Isaac. *A Fancy Sketch to the Memory of Shakespeare*. 1797. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library*. Web. 1 October 2015.

[46] Here I concur with Bate, who observes that Gillray is able to achieve artistic effect because he has an "expectation of an audience's thorough knowledge of a Shakespearean text" in order to take quotations "back in its context" to figure out the underlying meaning of the work ("Shakespearean Allusion in Caricature" 210).

Not only is Shakespeare the Poet deified through contemporary print culture, but allusions to his works or personage also function as ploys of public relations, heightening martial battles with an added layer of cultural importance. In an *Anti-Gallican* tract entitled "Shakespeare's Ghost!" (1804), the writer summons Shakespeare from the grave to "address his COUNTRYMEN" with a "breast [which glows] as much with Enthusiastic LOVE OF HIS COUNTRY, as his Fancy with Poetic Fire" (48). What follows is essentially a cobbled-together motivational speech comprised of lines from both 5.1 and 5.7 of *The Life and Death of King John* and 3.1 of *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, all purportedly from the shade of Shakespeare. Implicit in this speech is the alignment of Shakespeare with national pride, a pervasive concept throughout the period; Bate references this same piece, and this larger trend in his scholarship, and calls it "a favorite device" of the time ("Parodies of Shakespeare" 80). What remains unique, however, is its use of Shakespeare as a living entity who watches over his Isle of Britain and ensures its defeat of French forces. The article does not rely simply on quoting inspirational lines; it invents the playwright as a character and speaking figure in order to mobilize a prototypically English spirit. A similar spirit is evoked in the 1798 print *Prospero on the Enchanted Island*, which according to the museum notes, positions King George III as having magicked a victory over the French in the Battle of the Nile (fig. 24).[47] In it, the sun shines brightly in benediction over George, who cites triumphant lines of Shakespeare's verse. British ships tote captured vessels away from French shores, as a Caliban-esque figure shouts that the Paris on which he stands is "[his] by Sycorax [his] mother." The demon's celestial orb is diminutive by comparison, especially compared with the plumes of smoke which bellow forth

[47] Please note that Bate makes a passing reference to this print in his "Shakespeare Allusion in Caricature" (208) and places it into conversation with other prints that share a resemblance to *The Tempest*. He notes that in these texts, caricaturists "make their own sceptered isle into an enchanted…kingdom" ("Shakespearean Allusion in Caricature" 208).

from the battle site. The print indicates that the true tempest remains the paramilitary prowess of Albion's armed forces, which has incited a maelstrom of chaos in its wake:

Fig. 24. G.L. *Prospero on the Enchanted Island*. 1798. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 28 May 2016.

The nation has lived up to the barometer set by the Bard, and can receive no higher compliment than to be visually aligned with one of his famous texts.

This print is an anomaly, however, as far more prints use the dramatist's pieces as ironic viewfinders, focusing the audience's perspective on the discrepancy between the current state of "Albion" and the ideals represented by either the personage or works of Shakespeare himself. As McPhee and Orenstein point out in their *Infinite Jest* (2011), the eighteenth century saw a proliferation of "artists [who] enlivened the vocabulary of political satire by introducing facial and physical caricature and using objects as well as animal forms to convey a range of humorous critical messages. Their prints ranged from simple, direct images to complex productions containing multilayered references to literature, art, and mythology" (154). Capitalizing on the

recognition audiences would have had for Shakespeare due to his immense popularity, satirists reveled in the vast array of plots and characters at their disposal.[48]

As an understanding of Shakespeare became a marker of genteel sophistication, swarms of consumers sought ways of appearing to belong to the cultural elite; several letters, novels, and plays begins to feature clippings—apropos and otherwise.[49] This penchant is satirized by contemporary caricaturists, who saw through the superficial appropriations of Shakespeare's texts. As Thomas Keymer outlines in "Shakespeare in the Novel," one particular line drew immense popularity; Viola's speech from *Twelfth Night*, with its simile to comparing a woman in love to "Patience on a monument," "had been devalued into a standing joke…[it] may have been, indeed, the single most hackneyed Shakespeare tag in currency by the end of the century" (119). Gillray's 1791 print, *"Patience on a monument" : engraved from a modern antique in the possession of the General* (fig. 25), capitalizes on this trend, depicting Patience sitting on a golden toilet, the skull and cross-bones at her feet indicating that she has been apparently sitting for an extremely long time. Cupid cowers from behind the commode, pinching his nose from the smell and attempting to purify the putrid air with burning coals. The inscription states that the print was made in commemoration of St. Cecilia's Day, and the ditty which accompanies the

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[48] See Issac Cruikshank's *The Ghost or the Closet Scene in Hamlet* (1799), which satirizes the Prince of Wales' reticence to speak with the Duke of Cumberland; Charles Williams' *The spirit of the book- or anticipation of the year 1813* (1813), which takes as its subject the controversy surrounding the Regent and his Princess (in it, the stunned Regent exclaims, "'Angels and Ministers of Grace,' but alas I have no Angels but fallen ones, and my Ministers are not Ministers of Grace," a parody of *Hamlet*); Williams' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1812), which depicts the Regent haunted by ephemeral allegories of the betrayed nations of England and Ireland and reminders of his several transgressions; or Thomas Cornell's *Mr Burke's Pair of Spectacles for Short Sighted Politicians* (1791), which has as its foreboding epigram a quote from *King John*: "nought shall make us rue / If England to itself do rest but true" (5.7.117-18), among others, for some examples of this larger trend. See also Bate, "Shakespearean Allusion in Caricature" (205-210) and "Parodies of Shakespeare" (80-88).

[49] See Thomas Keymer's "Shakespeare in the Novel" in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, pages 118-140, as well as Janine Barchas' *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (2003) for discussion of both the penchant for quoting Shakespeare and the early novel's dependence upon the epigraph.

image parodies Pope's "Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day" (1708), replacing Patience for "Music" and husband for "Maker."[50] In doing so, the poem declares that woman has been able to outlast her husband by using the tract on "Tranquility" that she holds in her hand. The subject of the satire is Lady Cecilia Johnston, one of the women Gillray traditionally used to "symbolize the degeneracy of the aristocracy," often by juxtaposing a comic figure in "classical pose[s]" (McCreery 237):

Fig. 25. Gillray, James. *"Patience on a monument" : Engraved from a Modern Antique in the Possession of the General*. 1791. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library*. Web. 1 October 2015.

[50] The original lines read, "By Music minds an equal temper know, / Nor swell too high, nor sink too low." (2.22-23), followed by:

> Music the fiercest grief can charm,
> And Fate's severest rage disarm:
> Music can soften pain to ease,
> And make despair and madness please:
> Our joys below it can improve,
> And antedate the bliss above.
> This the divine Cecilia found,
> And to her Maker's praise confin'd the sound. (7.118-125)

Other prints pointed out the negative effects of a culture bent on misappropriating Shakespeare. One example, *Lady P aragraph Championizing. - Vide Letters* (1814), depicts the controversy and trial surrounding John Mitford, whom Lady Perceval had used as a scapegoat for her forged support of Princess Charlotte.[51] In it, Perceval consults a variety of sources for her false creations, including "Select Scraps of Shakespeare"; such quotations from the playwright legitimized her travesties. Potentially nefarious uses of the Bard's words are similarly echoed in fig. 26, *Old Nick's Pastime* (1808). Though the museum notes indicate that the print is mainly a satire on Edward DuBois, a contemporary author, it yet reveals contemporary habits of publishers who shamelessly sliced and diced whole works for profit. In it, the devil carves selections from texts, and throws the rest into the fires of hell. The front door proclaims that "Mangling [is] Done Here" as several customers file in. On the table is "Complete Cutter" and "Quoting Made Easy / Hamlet…," indicating that smatterings of the plays would be more likely consumed than the whole work:

Fig. 26. *Old Nick's Pastime*. 1808. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 5 August 2015.

[51] The curator's notes chronicle this ruse in great detail and are available via the British Museum's online page.

While literally demonizing such a practice may seem extreme, such an approach makes sense when paired with the degree of hero-worship the Bard and his works received. Marcus Walsh, in his *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing*, recounts the tensions between William Warburton and Thomas Edwards, the latter depicting the former "as a Satan figure who attacks Shakespeare's 'godlike page' … [and] takes authority from the 'sacred Dead' and appropriates it for the commentator himself" (117).

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would continue to see such debates as the playwright served as the fulcrum of an editorial see-saw that swayed from abject fidelity to the original text to nearly unrecognizable adaptations.[52] Contemporary satire, as much as it lampooned the society which deified Shakespeare, tended to side with the first. The phantasmagoric "Return of Old Times and the Resurrection of Shakespeare" (1814) features a speaker who mysteriously travels back in time to Elizabethan England. There, he finds the playwright and is stunned to find that "Some of his plays were so different from what I have read in books called his works, that could he have seen them as represented in the nineteenth century, he would never have suspected that he had been concerned in writing them" (414-15). A similar piece, entitled "Shakespeare in the Shades" (1773) sets the eponymous figure in the netherworld, steadily greeting each editor as he arrives from the temporal plane. The first, Nicholas Rowe, he chides for spending too much time on terrible comedies, such as *The Biter* (1704). Shakespeare then excoriates Pope for wielding the "murderous knife which my plays has destroyed / by lopping full many a scene" (17-18); in response, Pope shuffles off, shamefaced. Thomas Hanmer is critiqued for not editing more: "With gloves on, my Beauties you felt," Shakespeare

[52] See Walsh, pages 111-198; Jean I. Marsden's *The Re-imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (1995); and Joanna Gondris' thorough anthology, *Reading Readings: Essays on Shakespeare Editing in the Eighteenth Century* (1998).

admonishes (24). Lewis Theobald perhaps receives the most crushing blow to his ego; although self-reported to have read eight hundred plays, Theobald is debased, for Shakespeare sees "traces… of not many more than a dozen" (35-36). The poem ends with the Bard requesting to be notified when Johnson and Capel join the afterlife; the first he "must love" but the second he dismisses, as he is a "Comrade for Dullness" (45, 48). Perpetuating the figure of Shakespeare the not-so-friendly ghost is the 1750 poem "Shakespeare's Ghost." It similarly inveighs against contemporary editors, and instead importunes readers to patronize the theatre, which alone preserves his language from "a dire impending fate / [of being yielded] up to Cibber and to Tate." He bemoans the "scenes already snatched away," but hopes that the theatre will truthfully restore him to his former glory (279).

Although these texts aim to rescue the Bard from the clutches of overweening editors, claiming fidelity to Shakespeare's true desires, several other satires freely poke fun at the playwright's tragedies. They did so not necessarily with the intent to lampoon the figure of Shakespeare, but rather to highlight the vices present in the very society that worshiped him and to call attention to his hyperbolic popularity. A particularly fruitful subject was from Hamlet's "to be or not to be" speech, as a vast array of parodies emerges in eighteenth-century magazines in the second half of the period.[53] One 1760 piece "By an Attorney" poses the quandary "To cheat or not to cheat," ruminating "Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer / The stings and gnawings of a troubled conscience, / Or bravely spurn corruption's gilded baits, / And, by rejecting, 'scape 'em?" (1, 2-5). Another 1759 parody proffers the query, "To hunt, or not to hunt?" as a 1798 text similarly cogitates on the essential question: "To box, or not to box?" Rather than the high-minded seriousness of a moody and suicidal prince, these instances all

[53] Please note that Bate and Trillini both include comprehensive lists of these soliloquys in their excellent treatments of this genre. I have included a truncated rendering of them here to illustrate the wide-ranging variety of their subjects.

sound like the first-world anxieties of a burgeoning middle class, antecedents of a Prufrock-ian nervosa. Still another example from 1797 accordingly wonders about the benefits of shaving, positing that though a fresh face is "a consummation / Sincerely to be wish'd," the act may yet bring a risk: "To scrape, --/ To scrape!—perchance to cut; --ay, there's the rub. / For, as we scrape the soap, what cuts may come" (6-9). Much of the humor in this example stems from its misappropriation of the "bare bodkin" Hamlet makes reference to; this speaker risks death by fashion. The 1809 "Soliloquy of an Old Bachelor" ponders if a December marriage may bring "a scold… / For in the married state what broils may come, / When with our freedom we have parted" (10-11). Two samples, while separated by nearly fifty years, both center upon the writer's hesitance to compose and publish. One, from 1747, ponders "who would bear the sneers and scorns of wit, / The critic's laugh, the learned pedant's railing, / … / When he himself might his quietus make / With mere blank paper?" (15-16, 20-21). The other, from 1793, seeks the "hope of praise in the Reviews, -- / Those undiscover'd censors, from whose ken / No title-page escapes" (23-25). The vast degree of the samples here chronicled illustrates the universality of Shakespeare's appeal, as well as how an elementary recognition of his material would have been standard across social divides.[54]

Some satirists turn Hamlet's existential quandary into an epicurean one, ironically subverting the spiritual nature of his inquest to critique a modern public fixated on their very

[54] While the bulk of the texts here described are parodies of *Hamlet* (which Bate maintains is the "most popular"), several other Shakespearean histories and tragedies were also burlesqued. As Bate also notes, Romeo's meeting with the apothecary is often a ripe opportunity for social satire. A partial list includes Romeo's meeting with an impoverished publisher, a fortune teller, a poet, a village barber, a crooked attorney or Welsh curate (one even features Romeo seeking a Jewish shop owner on the Sabbath). Please see Bate for a longer treatment of "I do remember a poor Negro" ("Parodies of Shakespeare" 83-84). Othello's murderous ruminations become twisted into a speaker's paean to the card game Whist. Several takes on Jacques' Seven Ages of Man speech abound, with parsons, women, and clerks their varying subjects. *Macbeth*'s three witches are transformed into a satire of high society women, while a crooked contemporary politician is haunted by his misdeeds in the style of *Richard III*. As Bate points out, "The tragedies provide more material than the comedies" ("Parodies of Shakespeare" 79). Very rarely will a comedy such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It* appear, and if they do, the satirized lines are usually pastoral in their original nature. Bate describes readership on pages 78-79 of this same text.

mundane needs.[55] The first, from 1747, wonders if it would be best "to embark upon a sea of liquor, / And so by drinking end" the harsh realities of an average day (4-5). Another from 1780 complains that his drinking is precluded by a lack of funds, a kind of "penury [which] dead sober makes us all. / And thus the native hue of good old claret, / Which once was wont to brighten up the face, / Is slicklied o'er with the pale cast of water" (28-31). The 1816 "Parody on a Beautiful Speech in Shakespeare's Play of *Hamlet*" chronicles the ratiocinations of a gastronome who desires "to eat;—to stuff; / to gorge" himself on delicacies, until his fear of indigestion gives him pause. What was once "Beautiful" according to the title is transformed into the dull musings of a hungry man. These three parodies all derive humor from the reminder that even the highly cerebral Hamlet lived in a "mortal coil" that demanded food and drink. This same comic dimension is featured in fig. 22, Gillray's *Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt* (1791). A corpulent man falls to his knees at the feet of an equally corpulent woman, striking a pose worthy of a stage tragedian:

Fig. 27. Gillray, James. *"Oh That This Too Too Solid Flesh Would Melt."* 1791. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum.* Web. 8 September 2015.

[55] Trillini also takes brief note of the popularity of this topic of food and drink.

Prevented from fully embracing one another due to their mutual rotundity, the two lovers signify a culture of physical excess, an ironic pole to Hamlet's inner psychological turmoil.

As Bate points out in his "Parody of Shakespeare," one particular series, by "Master Shallow," ran as a popular piece in *The Gentleman's Magazine* during the final decade or so of the eighteenth century, finding popularity via its use of well-known Shakespearean speeches to inveigh against social ills (75). In one satire of Gertrude's relation of Ophelia's drowning, a brother is informed that his "sister's burnt," having accidentally caught "her white muslin, and long-flowing train" on fire while reaching for a volume of the typical "romances, novels, [or] tales of spectres" normally read by "fond young misses sentimental." In stark contrast to Ophelia's passive surrender to water, the sister's pyrotechnic death is punctuated by her screams as "the thin-spun clothes spread wide" and catch fire. "Frantic, subdu'd, writhing with agony," she finally dies as the conflagration consumes her "with unabating fury / To fiery death." The parody ends with a moralizing warning to those women who still prefer "silks, and stuffs, sattins [sic], and rich brocades," intimating that the illogical fashion and trite reading selections popular among young women amounts to modern insanity. Similarly, a parody of Edmund's speech from *King Lear* begins, "Thou, Fashion, art my goddess—to thy caprice / Be all my dress conform'd" (1-2). The speaker refuses the logic of sober-minded moderation, and resolves to "sport in dashing style; and… / …wear the newest and most shewy things" in spite of their expense (16-17). Behind the voice of a Regency fashionista, the piece decries the frippery of fashion, citing especially its ability to distract from more mundane and pragmatic tasks. While the series does not always satirize women—politicians, cheating husbands, and duelists all receive Shallow's vitriol—several do isolate particularly feminine offences. One take on Mercutio's famous speech

portrays "dame Blab," or "Detraction's midwife" who traduces reputations from dawn until dusk with "Her whip of critic's spleen" (1-2, 11). An inversion of *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth* likewise describes a "gadding, babbling, and remorseless gossip" who "Amuse[s] the eager jades" she plays with at quadrille "with foul contagious scandal" (1, 4, 6). Regardless of the subject presented, all of these parodies derive their humor by juxtaposing the lofty language of a national hero with examples of how contemporary Britons fail such high standards. Although a December 1803 issue of *The Lady's Monthly Museum* maintains that parodies of the Bard have "lost the charm of novelty" (427), they remained popular through the early part of the nineteenth century.

Satirists also burlesqued those who stood to make the most profit off of Shakespeare's celebrity, namely David Garrick and Alderman Boydell. *Behold the muses Roscius sue in vain, taylor and carpenters usurp their reign* (1772) depicts a haughty Garrick stepping on ripped sheets of paper bearing the names of Shakespeare, Rowe, and Ben Jonson.[56] An investor stands by, with a letter to "Mr. Messiah, Drury Lane Mechanist." The print implies that the actor/manager used the works of famous writers as a mere stepping stone to his success as a self-proclaimed theatrical savior, only to abandon them later in favor of what the curator's notes call "spectacles and processions." Fig. 30, James Gillray's *Shakespeare-Sacrificed;--or—The Offering to Avarice* (1789) similarly depicts Boydell using Shakespeare's plays as tinder for a holocaust to mercenary self-indulgence. Shearer West describes the print as a "savage assault on the greed of Boydell and the pretensions of his artists. This laughing at, rather than with, was part of the instability of the Shakespeare Gallery's reception: while purporting to consolidate a British school of art, the Gallery artists were becoming objects of laughter and thereby alienating

[56] Bate references a different print, Williams's *The Extinguisher* (1804), which also makes reference to the actor known as "Roscius" ("Shakespeare Allusion in Caricature" 198).

themselves from the uniformly serious realm that surrounded the project" (247).[57] Indeed, the print almost seems to align Boydell with the Devil himself, as demons encircle him. The titular Avarice sits on a book of subscribers, eagerly clutching bags of money as he watches the texts burn in glee. A small sprite sits upon his shoulders, a word bubble proclaiming "Immortality" rising above his head. The print highlights the venal underbelly of the Shakespeare industry, which sought celebrity and renown off the coattails of Shakespeare's texts:

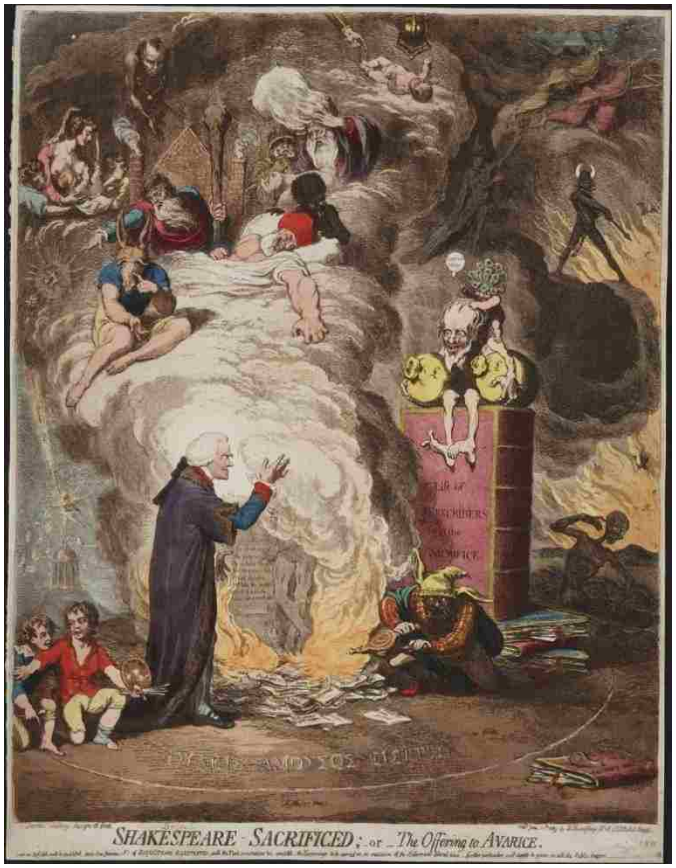

Fig. 28. Gillray, James. *Shakespeare-Sacrificed;--or—The Offering to Avarice*. 1789. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 18 May 2016.

[57] Bate coincides with West on this point. He claims that the print is "a two-pronged attack," first on the "exploitation of Shakespeare for commercial ends" and second to "critique… some major paintings in the collection" (200). See his "Shakespeare Allusion in Caricature" for a very thorough investigation of the print itself and its sources (200-204).

With the advent of melodrama in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, many decried the apparent obsolescence of Shakespeare's texts, as theatres sucked the teats of an apparently multi-pronged monstrosity. This concept is literalized in fig. 31, De Wilde's *The Monster Melo-Drama* (1807).[58] A companion piece to the 1808 "The Monster Melo-Drame" from *The Satirist,*[59] the print depicts an "anomalous quadruped" with "four heads; one resembling… a favourite tragedian; another, a no less valuable… polished author and brilliant wit; another was a striking likeness of… Grimaldi… The fourth head sprung from the middle of its back and was in every respect a Harlequin" (339):

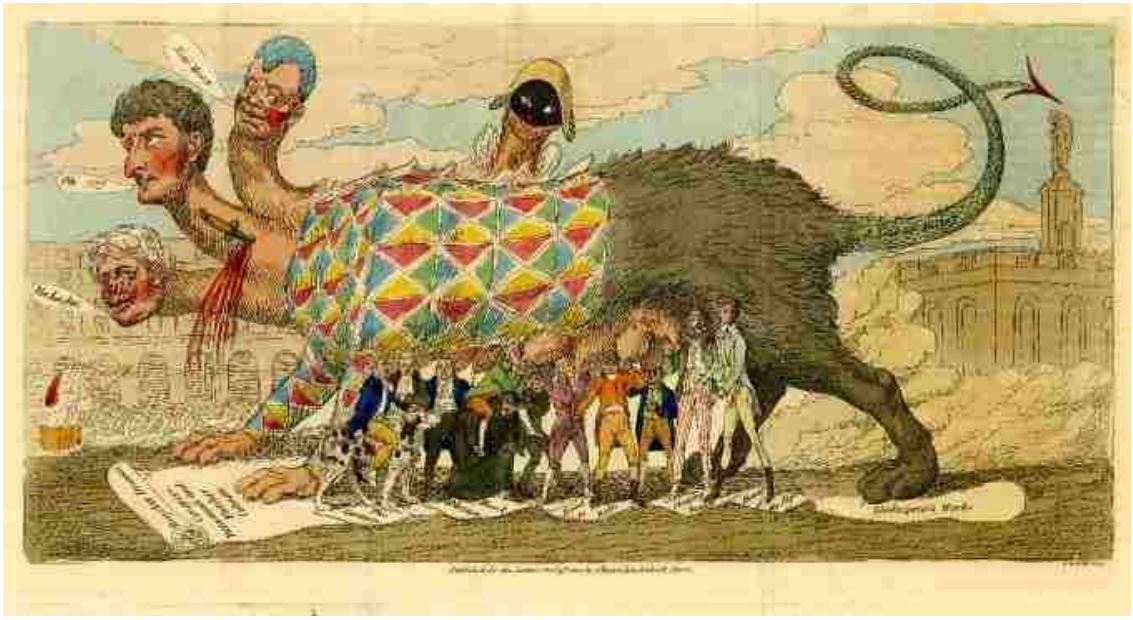

Fig. 29. De Wilde, Samuel. *The Monster Melo-Drama*. 1807. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum.* Web. 18 May 2016.

[58] Please note that Jonathan Bate makes a brief and passing reference to this print's existence in his "Shakespearean Allusion in Caricature" (197) as an example of the "neglect of the classics." Here I feature this print in concert with its prose companion piece.

[59] I am indebted to M. Dorothy George's curator notes from The British Museum for pointing out this connection.

The British Museum's description notes that Kemble is the middle head, crying "Oh!!!!!" after being stabbed in the neck. Sheridan, with Kemble's blood all over his face, does nothing more than laugh "Ha ha ha" in response. In the ekphrastic narration, the speaker (who is recounting a recent nightmare) then declares that he saw "a number of little gentlemen, resembling in shape and form many of our modern dramatists" racing towards the creature's "lacteal vessels" in order to gain nourishment. Underneath the monster's feet, as the print depicts, are the "*legitimate* Tragedy and Comedy" as well as the entirety of Shakespeare's works. When asked by the speaker what she is, the creature replies, "I am… a MELO-DRAME, naturally inoffensive, and much caressed of late by… the British people… I partake, as you see, of the combined natures of Tragedy, Comedy, and pantomime, without possessing the sublimity, sentiment, or humour of either… I cannot say myself that my creation has in the smallest degree contributed…to the adornment, advancement, or utility of the stage" (340). As she has her milk sucked, the monster laments that she has attempted to warn her followers "to avoid such a prostitution of genuine intellect ; but they have retorted that dramatic pieces, now-a-days, are like… ephemeral productions ; which fully answer their creation, when they have reimbursed the managers and afforded immediate pecuniary aid" (341). The monster's own acknowledgement of her uselessness highlights the general idiocy of the theatrical figures that drink from her, deriving the same instant gratification that they receive in the tokes at each evening's performance. The avaricious underbelly of the scheme hurts the hitherto famous names who are very literally under her belly, those "Authors [whose] posthumous fame must be sacrificed for present emolument" (341). That is where the nightmare ends, without a resolution to the present quandary of the theatrical environment of the late eighteenth century.

A decade later, satirists would portray the stage as a nearly unrecognizable place, one in which even the spirits of Shakespeare and other playwrights both could not abide and were not welcome. The 1818 *Spirits of the British Drama* (fig. 32) depict the ghostly figures of the Bard and who the curator's notes believe to be Rowe screaming "Murder, Murder" as they are pushed off-stage by a motley group of boxers, fairies, dragons, gargoyles, a tightrope-walking monkey, an elephant and camel, a donkey, and other animals.[60] A monkey in a red coat studies a pamphlet with the words "All the World's a Stage" inscribed upon it, as jesters and clowns contend with courting animals dressed like an ingénue and leading man. Shakespeare clutches at his breast as he gazes at the melee, as though unable to believe the state of his British theatre. Unlike the earlier prints and essays which invoked Shakespeare's spirit as a rallying cry to national virtue and poetic enterprise, this one seems to indicate that England's creative faculties died when their Bard did.

Fig. 30. *Spirits of the British Drama*. 1818. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 8 January 2014.

[60] Please note that Bate also makes reference to this print on page 197 of his "Shakespearean Allusion in Caricature."

One of the major criticisms leveled against melodrama was its stupefying effect on its audience members. An 1818 article in the *Theatrical Inquistor* maintains that the growth in its popularity must stem "from an inertness in the minds of the spectators, and a wish to be amused without the slightest exertion from their own parts, or any exercise whatever of their intellectual powers" (160). Even critics from the modern era use similar rhetoric to describe the genre; Matthew S. Buckley deems it "a sort of spectacular narrative drug…an industrially-produced, commercially distributed intoxicant" (468). But while melodrama was gaining ascendency on the stage and clouding Shakespeare's hitherto atmospheric climb, another form of fiction would grow to be indebted to the Bard, written by female skeptics and devotees alike. And if melodrama was a sleepy narcotic, the witty badinage featured in their courtship fiction would work as a triple-shot of caffeine, sharpening reader and viewer attention and demanding an engaged witness to the wordplay at hand.

Comedic Women, Shakespeare, and the Early Novel

The cult of a male playwright paradoxically enabled many women to gain further performative and literary agency; through extolling the veritable patriarch of English art, these myriad actresses, writers, and spectators found avenues for their own expression and development. Recent scholarship has ably addressed this phenomenon, most particularly Fiona Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014), which comprehensively discusses the various ways in which creative and professional developments were initiated solely because of the Bardolatry present in the period. Both Ritchie and Robert Shaughnessy describe how performers throughout the century, among them Peg Woffington, Hannah Pritchard, Catherine Clive, Susannah Cibber, Dorothy Jordan and Sarah Siddons, used their Shakespearean

personas as cultural and economic capital.[61] The Shakespeare's Ladies Club, a group of aristocratic theatre-goers, was largely responsible for the revival of three hitherto abandoned plays. Writers such as Charlotte Lennox and Elizabeth Montagu wrote critical tracts on the playwright, participating in a critical discourse that was otherwise obscured by Samuel Johnson (Ritchie 54-80). Actresses-turned-critics like Elizabeth Griffith and Elizabeth Inchbald used their theatrical experience to "develop a new type of criticism that united print and performance to offer a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's works" (Ritchie 81). Lastly, Ritchie illustrates how sentimentalized tragedies positioned women as active participants in the cult of sensibility. They served the most amiable of societal purposes by allowing their emotions to enact "sociability…with fellow spectators and with one's friends and correspondents" (174).

While Ritchie's text ably explores how women related to Shakespeare's tragedy (both as actresses and as spectators), it yet leaves room for an investigation of how eighteenth-century women saw and utilized the Bard's comedy. The near-absence of scholarship and even primary texts in this vein may largely stem from comedy's demeaned reputation among the literati. As late as 1816, Mary Russell Mitford confesses to William Elford her secret penchant for light-hearted fare:

> I have a strong preference to comedy, and the fact, ignoble as it is, must be avowed. I even go so far as to think his comedies, and those parts of his tragedies which resemble comedy, the great and unrivalled distinction of Shakespeare. Many of his immediate successors approach him very nearly in tragic powers; Massinger equals him in declamation; Ford in sublimity; Fletcher in pathos: but no one comes near him in wit. Ben Jonson's best play is at a thousand leagues' distance. (339)

[61] See Shaughnessy's "Shakespeare and the London Stage" in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2012), pages 180-182, and Fiona Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014), pages 26-80 and 110-140.

That Mitford deems her liking "ignoble" reveals the low distinction contemporaneously granted comedy despite its contemporary popularity; nevertheless, she maintains that Shakespeare's wit renders him a national poet more than any other quality. All other English authors remain wanting in this regard.

The following section examines the various ways in which eighteenth-century women writers engaged (or did not) with Shakespeare's comedy and—more specifically—how they viewed his courtship narratives. It paves the way for the following chapters by arguing that female authors, in their appropriation of Shakespearean modes of wooing discourse into their own writing, engaged in a more sustained creative exchange than the derivative quotations so in vogue throughout the century. Through these narratives, women writers bolster the feminine agency of their heroines, and perpetuate the spirit of jest in the face of sentimentalism.

The comic spirit of the theatrical scene runs counter to the moralizing pressures women faced, particularly in their interactions with Shakespeare and his texts. Despite contemporary anxieties that the humorous spirit of the theatre belonged to a bygone age, "the main stream of comedy in the theatre resolutely turned its face away from sentimentality, and about 80% of the plays performed remained robustly within… [the] definition of comedy" (Dromgoole 146).[62] Among these works were, invariably, those of Shakespeare. Misty G. Anderson notes that "The ascendancy of Shakespeare's romantic comedies, particularly *As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *The Tempest*, over Jonson's comedies in the Restoration and eighteenth-century repertoire gestures to the appeal of romantic comedies concerned specifically with marriage" (35). In spite of the period's comic tenor, both Elizabeth Griffith's

[62] Dromgoole's 2007 study goes further to mention that in addition to Goldsmith and Sheridan, "Among those playwrights keeping comedy on the boil were Fielding, Macklin, Garrick himself, Foote, Colman the Elder and Arthur Murphy" (146). He mentions no female playwrights in this section.

The Morality of Shakespeare's Drama Illustrated (1775) and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear* (1807) focus particularly on the suitability of the playwright's texts in terms of their ennobling virtue. Women writers, unless making private confessions like Mitford's above, do not tend to make a discussion of humor their top priority in such criticism. On an obvious note, such a rhetorical gesture may have been conducive to portray Shakespeare as a great moralist in order to secure his works for female consumption, as Richie implies (100).[63] Lamb mentions that one of the aims of her project is to secure the bulk of Shakespeare's texts so that young girls may receive a commensurate education to their brothers (Wolfson 16). Contemporary anxieties about female laughter, as covered earlier in this project, may also have circumscribed writers' comfort in engaging with comedy.

But women authors did employ Shakespeare's other plots. Marianne Novy recounts Sarah Fielding's engagement with *Antony and Cleopatra* in her *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757), as well as how Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796) "makes more complex use of a play within a novel" in its appropriation of *Othello* (*Engaging with Shakespeare* 11). Francesca Saggini's *Backstage in the Novel* (2012) is a thorough investigation of the theatre's influence (and vice versa) on the novels of Frances Burney. However, there has yet, to my knowledge, to be a sustained investigation of Shakespeare's courtship plots influencing the literary output of the eighteenth century. Robert Gale Noyes' seminal *The Thespian Mirror* (1953) asserts that "a significant aspect of the age's curious criticisms of Shakespeare was the conviction that nothing much could be said for his comedies of love" (58), and that the novels of the period tend to feature his tragedies far more as a consequence (57).[64]

[63] Ritchie also cites Anne K. Mellor's "A Criticism of Their Own" at this juncture of her argument.
[64] The one exception to this rule seems to be Jane Austen, whose alignment with Shakespeare has received generous scholarly treatment. Wiltshire ably recounts this tradition in his chapter, "An Englishwoman's Constitution: Jane Austen and Shakespeare" (58-76), discussing how both Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies come to be

However, as Misty G. Anderson's *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy* (2002) has ably discussed, women writers beyond Austen still enjoyed humor; they themselves were also funny, and they additionally wrote comedy. It stands to reason that women writers would be equally aware of and influenced by the comedies of Shakespeare, particularly if we consider that several were explicitly linked to the theatre at distinct points in their careers (Mary Pix, Frances Sheridan, Elizabeth Inchbald, Elizabeth Griffith, and Hannah Cowley among them).[65] Emily Hodgson Anderson also points out that women writers were sometimes "especially devoted to both literary forms… [and] repositioned elements—characters, plots—from one genre into another: they often recast characters from their plays into their novels, rewrite their plays as novels, or… rewrite their novels as plays… they use these re-written scenes and characters to investigate the paradoxical, self-expressive potential of theatrical performance" (3). The fluidity of genre throughout the period would also enable writers to not only appropriate and repurpose their own work, but also those of others. In such a symbiotic environment, it is entirely possible (and I posit, probable) that the cult of Shakespeare would influence the plot structures of one of the most popular types of fiction in the era, the courtship narrative.

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appropriated in Austen's novels. Most central to this study perhaps are his descriptions of Jocelyn Harris' argument that *Emma* is heavily influenced by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as Wiltshire's portrait of *Twelfth Night*'s impact on *Pride and Prejudice* (61, 71). He also points out an earlier critique by Richard Simpson in 1870, in which *Persuasion* is explicitly aligned with *Twelfth Night*, "Anne Elliot … [being] Shakespeare's Viola translated into an English girl of the nineteenth century" (qtd. in Wiltshire 59). Penny Gay, in her "Women and Eloquence in Shakespeare and Austen," traces the importance that the effervescent women of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Taming of the Shrew* play in the creation of Austen's female protagonists. Her main thesis aligns with the aim of this project: "Austen, an avid reader, knew her Shakespeare well, and was moreover the beneficiary of the 'Shakespeare revival' of the mid-eighteenth century, in particular as it was a golden age for the witty actress. Arguably, she re-invented in her comic heroines many of the major heroines of Shakespeare—characters whose complex speech is their principal weapon" (463). I endeavor to support and broaden the scope of Gay's argument in this project more largely, connecting these sociological and cultural trends to other women writers of the period.

[65] Ritchie notes that actress Hannah Prichard's benefit nights were responsible for the premieres of "*As You Like It* in 1741 and *Much Ado about Nothing* in 1746, as well as [the] first performance of Garrick's afterpiece adaptation of *The Taming of the* Shrew, entitled *Catharine and Petruchio*, in which Pritchard played the lead, in 1754" (42). Here she cites Matthew J. Kinservik's 1996 study of benefit play selection.

While the next chapter delineates how game theory and Huizinga's notion of play both come to be applied to teasing speech and the performance of courtship, I would like to take a moment in this section to analyze how these same forces of strategy and play might be at work for women writers at this particular historical juncture, impacting their appropriations of Shakespeare. As Marianne Novy has pointed out, female scholars ranging from Margaret Cavendish to Elizabeth Montagu and Virginia Woolf have praised Shakespeare for his "protean flexibility of identity… the great artist's androgynous mind" (4, 5). Implicit in this compliment, however, is a testimony to Shakespeare's theory of mind, his capacity to place himself into the characters he creates and develop them as authentic "mirrors up to Nature." Novy additionally maintains that "descriptions of his power of self-transformation… echo language used from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century to describe successful actors" (*Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* 5-6).[66] These imaginative qualities are also typical of the ideal reader; one 1811 submission to *Theatralia* bemoans the practice of watching Shakespeare being performed instead of reading it in solitude, as it proscribes an individual's capacity to imagine and anchors them to the interpretation of the actors and director. The theatre distracts with costume and setting design, "while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character" (312). This novelistic approach to Shakespeare's texts allows all readers to become actors, if only by using their human capacity to sympathize, to use their theory of mind.[67]

[66] This point is also made in *Engaging with Shakespeare*, 8.

[67] This reader's capacity for sympathy was also largely aligned with the feminine, as Povy recounts in her *Engaging with Shakespeare*, 12-18. She proposes that "the sympathy associated with Shakespeare" is possibly linked "with women" and "thereby give[s] women novelists more recognition" (13).

These three prongs of drama (author, actor, and spectator) are united in Huizinga's notion of play, and are fundamental in introducing how teasing speech helps to satisfy and partially resolve the competition between novel and theatre, and the relationship between writer, actor, and audience. First, "*Poiesis*, in fact, is a play-function. It proceeds within the play-ground of the mind, in a world of its own which the mind creates for it" (Huizinga 119), thus requiring the human capacity of fancy. Huizinga further claims that this playful poetic impulse then seeks to touch others: "Underlying all creative writing is some human or emotional situation potent enough to convey this tension to others… Broadly speaking, such situations rise either from conflict, or love, or both together" (132-33). For my purposes, courtship narratives become a suitable mode to express such "situations," and the teasing discourse of such narratives unites both the "conflict" and "love" necessary to play. This exchange takes on and becomes endowed with performative properties, engaging the spectator in a far more active role: "The rite produces the effect which is then not so much *shown figuratively* as *actually reproduced* in the action. The function of the rite, therefore, is far from being merely imitative; it causes the worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself" (15).[68] The playful impulse inherent in teasing speech not only brings the couple together, but actively woos the reader as well.[69]

This lively spirit also applies to the period itself, as discussed in the first two chapters of this study, and partially counters the overt earnestness of sentimentalism. Three tongue-in-cheek responses to the sentimental novel, all by women authors, help portray this comic play, a self-conscious mocking of creative endeavors that are no longer very creative. They also help to

[68] Robert E. Foust's "The Rules of the Game: A Para-Theory of Literary Theories" (1986) also synthesizes game theory and Huizinga's idea of play. His article proposes too that such an approach to literature similarly renders the reader's role a more active one (12-13).

[69] Kay Young describes the experience of reading the conversation of courtship in terms analogous to Chwe and Huizinga. These texts rely on a "closeness of mingling our imaginations with the unembodied couple, as we 'lend ourselves' … to perform their words" (12). A reader subsequently must play along in the love-game, utilizing his or her theory of mind to read the true meaning beneath the letters on the page.

situate how some women writers may have come to view Shakespeare's texts. Mary Alcock's "A Receipt for Writing a Novel" (1799), Elizabeth Inchbald's *On Novel Writing* (1807), and Jane Austen's "Plan of a Novel" (1816) represent a critique of the maudlin and lachrymose through caustic irony, particularly in their appraisal of the heroine's limited agency, the contrived events of a sensationalist plot, and the sentimentalized virtue of its characters. Alcock maintains that a heroine's "fine blue eyes were made to weep, / Nor should she every taste of sleep," beset as she is by "some wicked lord, / Who with three ruffians snaps his prey, And to a castle speeds away" or kidnapped by "a cruel father [who] some prepare / To drag her by her flaxen hair" (26-27, 34-36, 49-50). For Austen, the ideal sentimental protagonist is "a faultless Character" who is "perfectly good, with much tenderness and sentiment, and not the least Wit" (230). This lady, too, unfortunately falls victim to a "totally unprincipled and heart-less young Man" (231). Both Alcock and Austen portray young women with no power to save themselves; in chronicling their misery, they also expose the almost sadistic pleasure readers may gain from observing such an impeccable personage undergo so many trials in so little time. Inchbald's text, by contrast, serves more as a guide of what not to do. The work's humorous irony stems not from an authoritative speaker, but rather its portrait of the predictability of the genre. "When you are contriving that incident where your heroine is in danger of being drowned, burnt, or her neck broken by the breaking of an axel-tree," she cautions novice writers, "…it might be advisable to suffer her to be rescued form impeding death by the sagacity of a dog, a fox, a monkey, or a hawk; any one to whom she cannot give her hand in marriage" (95). As all heroines in the tradition lack the intellectual or physical wherewithal to extricate themselves, most authors devolved to a male authority, thereby effacing any hope of mutual equality between the two lovers.[70]

[70] Austen similarly reports that heroines should be "rescued either by her Father or the Hero" (232).

Playwright Joanna Baillie had maintained in her 1798 *Introductory Discourse* that it was the role of comedy to give readers "men as we find them in the ordinary intercourse of the world, with all the weaknesses, follies, caprice, prejudices, and absurdities which a near and familiar view of them discovers. It is her task to exhibit them engaged in the busy turmoil of ordinary life, harassing and perplexing themselves with the endless pursuits of avarice, vanity, and pleasure" (43-44). Sentimental fiction, by contrast, featured both unrealistic plots and one-dimensional characters, traits which comic writers such as Alcock, Austen, and Inchbald obliquely objected to in their treatises. Alcock mentions that to manipulate readers' emotions, "Some raise a storm, and some a ghost, / Take either, which may please you most" (51-52); she also maintains that every good sentimental novel possesses "Some grand event to give surprise--- / Suppose your hero knows no mother--- / Suppose he proves the heroine's brother---" (74-76). While Alcock ironizes the tropes of Gothic romances, Austen calls for the heroine to be "reduced to support herself and her Father by her Talents, and work for her Bread;--continually cheated and defrauded of her hire, worn down to a Skeleton, and now and then starved to Death" until she is "compelled to retreat into Kamschatka," as those plots prove to be most affecting (232). Inchbald warns writers that "The lavish use of 'tears,' both in 'showers' and 'floods,' should next be scrupulously avoided; though many a gentle reader will weep on being told that others are weeping, and require no greater cause to excite their compassion" (95). The overuse of emotion, as well as the lack of fidelity to everyday life, renders not only the sentimental mode subject to ridicule but also its readers.

I use these writings as microcosmic reminders of the larger cultural *zeitgeist* which embraced satire and acerbic wit and felt comfortable playing with convention. As Robert Folkenflik points out in his fittingly-named "'Homo Alludens' in the Eighteenth Century," "the

root meaning of allusion" is "play," and so the practice came to serve a crucial role in much of the comic fiction of the period, namely through Pope, Swift, Fielding, and Stern (223). I propose that women writers in the period also were content to engage in such play with Shakespeare's comedies of courtship, capitalizing on their covalent impulses of anti-sentiment and love. For example, Marianne Novy maintains that Jane Austen is "also employing a technique rather like [Shakespeare's]: both of them include and parody ideas of love associated with literary convention. Shakespeare does so most obviously in the comedies, and this may be one reason allusions to the comedies are particularly important in her novels" (26). Austen, I argue, is not the only female writer to use the cult of Bardolatry in such a manner. Allusions to Shakespeare and his plots of courtship allow women authors to express thoughts on gender relationships that ran counter to the prevailing attitudes found in sentimental fiction and conduct manuals. Hidden behind the guise of comedic structures which were both familiar and sanctioned by the cultural capital Shakespeare provided, women could play with a "traditional" narrative mode and inscribe their heroines with greater agency and greater wit. In doing so, they contribute to a larger appreciation of Shakespeare's comedy and also poke fun at the often hyperbolic visions of the playwright's celebrity. As Novy points out, "what Austen is censuring ironically includes her contemporaries' romantic readings of Shakespeare" (26). Teasing courtships, found on both the stage and the page, amounted to both a nod to an earlier tradition but also a rejection of the trite customs of sentiment.

The interrelation of eighteenth-century theatre and early prose fiction is not a new topic, particularly on the level of female authorship and the construction of authorial personas.[71] Emily

[71] See especially Nora Nachumi's *Acting Like a Lady* (AMS Press, 2008) and Emily Hodgson Anderson's *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction* (Routledge, 2009). J.H. Smith also maintains that "it was developments in comedy which prepared the way for much that appears in the novel when it emerges in the 1740's" (ix).

Hodgson Anderson contends that for women writers such as Haywood, Burney, Inchbald, and Edgeworth, "[t]he fictional frame of the novel…comes to duplicate the frame of the playhouse: it signals that everything contained therein is artifice," but at the same time also "enable[s] the articulation of truths and passions that may, under alternate conditions, be otherwise inexpressible" (4, 1). As such, theatrical prose engendered a great degree of literary freedom that surpassed even that of the stage, giving license to voice potentially transgressive ideas. The mélange between what is real and what is illusory (and the liberties it subsequently allows), represents a literary kind of flirtation, one which was equally shared, as Gill Perry develops, by the "flirtatious" actress of the eighteenth-century stage. Perry asserts that "although the actress was continually struggling with public perceptions of her ambiguous sexuality, there were forms of flirtatious behavior which, when refined and developed through dramatic and artistic conventions, could enable the female performer to achieve social mobility, artistic status and symbolic potential" (16). A literal embodiment of this ambiguity for Perry was the rise of breeches roles for actresses throughout the period (see fig. 33), which made their figures both exotic and accessible (90-1, 97-100).[72] Such roles also were incredibly lucrative, as Ritchie and others have well established.[73] Thus flirtation, artifice, and illusion offer a kind of perplexing sincerity for all participants of a fictive charade—performers as well as writers.

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[72] Perry's text also "cautious[ly]" links this flirtation with Castle's study of the masquerade, a connection I find particularly fruitful for this study as well. She observes that like the masquerade, breeches roles allowed "both aggressive and flirtatious forms of expression" (128).

[73] See especially Diana Solomon's *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (2013) and Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2014).

Fig. 31. Bowles, Carington after John Collet. *The Actress at her Toilet, or Miss Brazen Just Breecht*.1779. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum.* Web. 18 May 2016.

The teasing discourse featured in several of these courtship narratives not only serves these same purposes, but also becomes an essential part of the theatrical atmosphere of the eighteenth century. Teasing is ultimately a site of examination and of performance: a flyting of words rather than swords, as Keir Elam puts it. Verbal repartee becomes "a worthy spectacle" befitting both stage and page (Elam 9). When couples banter with one another, the viewer/reader is meant to be entertained and captivated by their wordplay. It unites at once what Anderson terms the dueling personas of "theatrical performance and fiction… the one public, the other private" (3). It is very public, meant to be consumed by an eager audience; at the same time, it aims towards the most private of purposes, the love-game between two individuals. One of the contradictions of teasing discourse stems from the fact that it embodies these two types of speech at once. It simultaneously figures as an encapsulated, almost (pre)scripted performance and also

as an instance of improvisation—of surveying a potential partner's suitability and using speech as a metonymic substitution for physical chemistry.

A short ditty entitled "Courtship Inverted" (1797) serves as a good portrait of the woman writer's competing impulses between decorum and agency. It depicts both a young woman's frustrations with the status quo of wooing and her only release: the imagination, in the form of a dream. She opens by appealing to her lover, Damon, explaining that she must say "Farewell to custom's cue: / For how shall Delia find her mate / Unless she may pursue?" (2-4). Delia's verbiage reverses the traditional mode of courtship by ascribing responsibility for finding a companion to herself alone. Considering its cultural framework in which a woman's only right was that of refusal, the poem professes a radical ideology. Unfortunately, this paradigm is one that remains possible only in the fantasy realm: "Alone, through custom's shackles, I / In dreams oft burst my way" (5-6). Here Delia's imagery implies both confinement and liberty; solitary in her bedroom, she no longer is subject to the fetters of propriety, but is instead released to pursue her own inclinations. It is important that she uses the pronoun "my" to define her path, for it is hers alone. That she bursts forth implies a pressurized state, not unlike the cork which flies from the mouth of a bottle. Delia then recounts her nighttime reverie with Damon, as they enjoy the pastoral realm of Elysian fields and begin also to enjoy each other. She claims that the environment empowers her, as "Unblushing as the new form'd pair, / 'Ere fig-leaf dress began ; / I lost my wonted female air; / And grew as bold as man" (29-32). The paradisiac environment becomes reemphasized through her allusion to Eden; importantly, she refers to a time when gender was not marked. Only then is she able to be as forward as her male counterpart. She does not pine to be bolder than he, simply *as* bold, but that capacity too is as transient as her dream state. Bitten by a flea, Delia awakes to find herself "There all alone in chamber dark" (41). Still

lulled by the image, she feels around her bed only to find "no spark, / But all the vision fled" (43-44).

It does not require an oneiromancer to determine the meaning behind Delia's dream. Like many women of the period, unfulfilled by the stilted rules of proper courtship, she desires an alternative. But unlike in the poem, women writers of the eighteenth century captured the vision and wrote it down, making it plainly visible for their female readers and empowering them to see a similar vision. In so doing, they perpetuated the model which had been set before them in the works of Shakespeare. More than mere propagation, however, their contributions built upon and advocated a female voice in the courtship process. As Ritchie illustrates, "Shakespeare's influence on women's lives was pervasive: they read his dramas, engaged with criticism of the works, saw the plays staged and acted in them themselves. By the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare had also come to represent a way in which women could express their own identities" (179). These various identities are the subjects of act two of this project. Its sole purpose is to explore the myriad ways in which women writers "put on the breeches" (fig. 34), taking control of the Shakespearean courtship narrative and using it as a vehicle towards self-expression and advocacy within the framework of marriage.

Fig. 32. Newton, Richard. *Wearing the Breeches*. 1794. The Whitworth, Manchester, UK. *The Whitworth*. Web. 18 May 2016.

Chapter 5: Comedies of Error: Game Theory, Play, and Establishing the "Raillery Rules"

Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* gives its name to this chapter more sardonically than substantially. However, with tropes of mistaken identity, twinning, and a multitude of miscalculations, it aptly describes the phenomena covered in this "Intermission." Though on the surface near-twins of the narratives featured later in the project, the core subjects examined herein engage in infelicitous performances of teasing discourse, those instances, as J.L. Austin describes, in which "something *goes wrong* and the act—marrying, betting, bequeathing, christening, or what not—is therefore at least to some extent a failure" (14). In these texts, the performative "I court you" is disallowed due to a variety of social factors, character flaws, or inappropriate contexts.

In addition to charting out Austin's rules of infelicitous discourse, I also apply Huizinga's theory of play, as outlined in his monograph *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1949). As Huizinga asserts, "The great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start" (4), courtship included. Teasing pairs create their bonds through verbal play, a concept shown by Kay Young's study of couples' discourse, *Ordinary Pleasures* (2001). While the twosomes in Young's text gain intimacy by "turning that process of mutual knowing into play" (4), the would-be lovers featured in this chapter fail to truly communicate with one another. Lastly, I outline how game theory may be applied to these works of drama and prose fiction, using Chwe's *Jane Austen, Game Theorist* (2013) as a model for applying principles from the social sciences to literature, an emergent methodology.[74]

Synthesizing these four theories allows a thorough investigation of why and how certain courtships end in marriage while others end in embarrassment, shame, or—in the case of

[74] As Chwe outlines in his chapter, "Game Theory in Context," "Scholarly interactions between game theory and the humanities have been tentative at best" despite their natural compatibility (30).

Fantomina—childbirth. Casualties on the battlefield of love, these couples model what not to do, and provide distinct yardsticks against which the later texts can be measured. By noting convergences among performative discourse, play, and game theory, a set of what I have alliteratively termed Raillery Rules emerges. For each tenet, I use contemporary examples to illustrate how the rule works and what rhetorical infelicities can result from its violation.

Raillery Rule 1: The Importance of Choice and Playing Along

With the growth of affective individualism throughout the period, the matter of choice became ever more critical to the courtship narrative, which had as its focus not only a woman's quest to find a mate, but also a depiction of how that quest paralleled her development as a human being. All four theorists agree that the choice is an essential element to human relationships. Chwe asserts that game theory, which "considers interactions among two or more people," has its foundations in "rational choice theory, which looks at the choice of a single individual." He argues that Austen, and implicitly other writers of the courtship narrative, embrace the necessity of such choice and thereby "[insist] upon the right to choose according to one's own preferences (over whom to marry, for example)" (Chwe 9). Huizinga similarly asserts that "all play is a voluntary activity. Play to order is no longer play: it could be but a forcible imitation of it…play… is free, is in fact freedom" (Huizinga 7). In her paraphrase of George Meredith's "Essay on Comedy," Young maintains that "comedy depends upon the freedom and equality of the woman in relation to the man" (163). Teasing courtship then provides a liberating space free from the traditional rules of decorum, a place where individuals do not need to think about the appropriateness of their behavior to rules and procedures outside the game. J.L. Austin maintains that felicitous discourse simply cannot happen when individuals' performative utterances are "done under duress, or by accident, or owing to this or that variety of mistake…or

other unintentionally" (Austin 21). It is the will, the consent of the individual, which allows teasing speech to occur and thereby form romantic bonds between two consenting players. Without this intentionality, such conversations will always amount to what Austin terms an infelicity (15).

The primacy of one's free will, one's choice, goes hand-in-hand with choosing to "join the game" and knowing how to play along. As Huizinga pointed out earlier, any play which is forced no longer is play, but rather a simulated sham. J.L. Austin asserts that performative speech simply cannot occur without the equal participation of both parties: "If somebody issues a performative utterance, and the utterance is classed as a misfire because the procedure invoked is *not accepted,* it is presumably persons other than the speaker who do not accept it" (Austin 27). Ultimately, it does take two to tango, both physically and verbally.

This concept helps to explain the overt similarity between disparate figures such as Sir Clement Willoughby from Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and Henry Tilney from Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Both characters invite their respective heroines to join them in teasing speech, but to very different ends. The foppish Sir Clement Willoughby, though denigrated by the eponymous heroine for his impertinence, initially appears in many respects like Henry Tilney's literary ancestor. Like Tilney, who Penny Gay describes as "by nature an actor [who] has a fondness for writing his own scenarios and directing them, controlling the performances of others" (Gay 66), Sir Clement engages in theatrical behavior to comic effect. Evelina recounts his behavior after she entreats him to leave: "I am gone, Madam, I am gone!' with a most tragical air; and he marched away, a quick pace, out of sight in a moment; but before I had time to congratulate myself, he was again at my elbow" (44). Assuming the role of jilted

lover, Sir Clement ironically lampoons sentimentality through his re-entrance on the stage of his own making.

Tilney engages in similar behavior when he first meets Catherine Morland. Ostensibly alarmed because he has neglected "the proper attentions of a partner" (14), Tilney appropriately begins the "scene," as it were, by "forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice" (14). Here Tilney embodies an actor preparing to perform an established script written by custom.[75] While asking Catherine a series of hackneyed questions, he explains his behavior with the deterministic rhetoric, noting that "some emotion *must* appear to be raised by [Catherine's] reply" and that he "*must* give one smirk [before]… we may be rational again" (14, emphasis added). Tilney's imperative *musts* contribute to his theatrical parody, and he here succeeds in making generally accepted social norms appear ridiculous, thereby paving the way for a more intimate, humorous connection with Catherine.

Both characters similarly use their female counterparts for dramatic inspiration, continuing the tease in as many directions as she provides. When needled by Sir Clement for the identity of her secret dance partner, Evelina exasperatedly exclaims that it's "Nothing—nobody—I don't know" (47). Sir Clement responds in a caricature of a moral concern: "He assumed a most important solemnity; 'How!—not know?—Give me leave, my dear madam, to recommend this caution to you; never dance in public with a stranger, –with one whose name you are unacquainted with, –who may be a mere adventurer, –a man of no character, –consider to what impertinence you may expose yourself'" (47). The irony behind this tease is, of course, the fact that Evelina has danced with him under these same conditions; his rhetoric forces her to

[75] In her dissertation on the social routines of Bath, "The Watering Space in Jane Austen's Novels: Space, Language, Consumerism" (2008), Sheila Minn Hwang also describes this scene as a "scripted" one, which amounts to "a parody of polite discourse" and similarly describes it in theatrical terms, referring to Austen's narrative asides as "stage directions" and discussing Tilney as reading a script (46-52).

acknowledge their collusion. Likewise, when Catherine jokingly mentions that she might not "keep [a] journal," Tilney exclaims, "Not keep a journal! How are your absent cousins to understand the tenour of your life in Bath without one? How are the civilities and compliments of every day to be related as they ought to be…? How are your various dresses to be remembered, and the particular state of your complexion, and curl of your hair to be described in all their diversities?" (15). Though on the surface he appears to wax poetic on the niceties of all that is particularly feminine, his speech is undermined by the fact that he has brought up all of these topics to her already, having lampooned the "civilities and compliments" of every day, and having already demonstrated an incredibly detailed understanding of her "sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings—plain black shoes—[and her] appear[ing] to much advantage." Through his jest Tilney actually reveals the great deal of attention he has already given to Catherine.

These performances have a great deal of effect on the two ladies, who while at first jarred by their exposure to the tease, later cannot help but laugh. Evelina mentions that she was "unused…to [Sir Clement's] language and … manners" and soon "began to apprehend he was a madman" (43), as she "stare[s] at [his] strange behaviour" (45). So too does Catherine at first "turn away her head [from Henry], not knowing whether she might venture to laugh" (14). Despite Evelina's fervent avowal that she "hoped to be relieved from his teizing" (47), she maintains that she "really could not help laughing, which I fear, encouraged him, for he went on" (43) and again later "could not help laughing, in spite of my vexation" (47). For Catherine, Henry's eccentricities are directly tied to his ability to make her laugh: "'How can you,' said Catherine, laughing, 'be so---' she had almost said, strange" (16).

Despite these similarities in character, Sir Clement fails to be Evelina's hero, which is partially unfortunate since he inspires in her the same sparkling, stichomythic banter that is seen

later in such literary heroines as Elizabeth Bennet. Contrastingly, Evelina is hardly as communicative in her initial conversations with her future lover, Lord Orville. Cowed as she is by his imposing gentlemanliness, remarks such as "What he first said, I know not; for indeed, I seemed to have neither ears nor understanding; but I recollect that I only courtsied in silence" are not at all uncommon.[76] This kind of stiffness did not appeal to Austen herself, as she illustrates in her letters to her niece and aspiring author Anna: "I do not like a lover speaking in the 3rd person; it is too much like the formal part of Lord Orville, and I think it not natural." She does, however, enjoy her niece's heroine, whose "playfulness of fancy is very delightful." It will be left to Austen to draw such "playful" courtships in the second part of this study.

Yet, the main difference between Willoughby and Tilney is not between each other, but between their heroines. Ultimately, it is Catherine Morland's acceptance of the game, her conscious act of playing along, that secures them the "intimacy" that teasing is supposed to afford. As Young maintains, "If the language game of joking between two people necessarily places one in the position of laying the groundwork for the context and topic of the joke, and the other in the position of making the joke out of these elements, then the joke must work as a shared production, like a conversation" (172). Evelina, much like her other literary sisters in the Burney canon, cannot uphold her half of the joke (and with it, the production of a romantic bond). Unable to play along due to societal constraints and personal inhibition, she stultifies the jest and thus the game is over before it can even begin. She is not solely at fault, however, as it is

[76] This is a pattern which imbues nearly all of Burney's fiction, as Juliet McMaster's excellent essay, "The Silent Angel: Impediments to Female Expression in Frances Burney's Novels" (1989), outlines. In what she fittingly describes as a "kind of *coitus interruptus* of discourse" throughout the oeuvre, this silence prevents heroines from being able to say what they truly feel (243). Although a major writer of the period, Burney's prose fiction mostly appears in this chapter, as several of her heroines are so taciturn that they do not engage in teasing speech at all. Susan Staves similarly records in her *Women's Writing in Britain, 1660-1789* that "one of the main themes of Burney's writing is the tension between an acute and observant intelligence, capable of being amused at the follies of the world, and the decorums of femininity, which appear to her to require prodigious degrees of female silence and a female consciousness incapable of harboring critical thought" (401).

Willoughby's inability to accept Evelina's prerogative of choice ultimately turns him into a villain rather than a witty hero.

Raillery Rule 2: Reading the Room and Reading the Mind

All four theorists place an emphasis on discernment, but stress this concept through different avenues. For Huizinga, the best players have the best imaginations; they are those humans who can fancy a world apart from current reality: "Play only becomes possible, thinkable and understandable when an influx of *mind* breaks down the absolute determinism of the cosmos" (Huizinga 3). Chwe maintains that one's theory of mind and his or her talents for strategic thinking, or essentially their ability to "[discern] another's preferences and… also strategically make those preferences reveal themselves" is crucial for human relationships, romantic and otherwise. In describing the connection between Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr in *An Affair to Remember* (1957),[77] Young describes their bond as "a shared talent for knowing how to read each other's spoken and unspoken languages," a talent which means "[t]he search is over. Intimacy is under way" (3). Taken altogether, teasing couples are so talented in their banter because they a) have the ability to entertain riddles, paradoxes, and hypothetical situations; b) can anticipate how their lover will respond; and c) know just what to say in order to make that response happen. Teasers thus delight in the discursive realm of wordplay, an improvisational paradise where dialogue is mutually created by two extremely witty people. Huizinga maintains that in the creation of language, "the spirit is continually 'sparking' between matter and mind…Behind every abstract expression there lie the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature" (Huizinga 4). Bantering lovers thereby create their own language

[77] I use the actors' names here to maintain consistency with Young, who "identif[ies]…words with the actors who speak them… [since] a film is one performance" unable to be "reperformed" (6-7).

together; it is fitting that the translation of the original Dutch text uses the word "sparking" to denote this communicative process, since such a procedure also sparks the relationship between two lovers.

Bad teasers, or ineffective lovers, usually fail because of a lack of these skill sets. Stupid, mundane, or "clueless" in Chwe's terminology, all are unfit to deserve the love of their intended. As Austin points out, "the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked" (15). The term "appropriate" is key here; the person attempting to perform the action must be chosen, and thereby endowed with the authority to execute the action.[78] This links back to the rule of choice, as it is up to the courted to decide to accept his or her courter. Only then will an instance of performative discourse occur. Additionally, "The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and…completely" (Austin 15). No matter how many times Mr. Collins may propose to Elizabeth Bennet, for example, he will never succeed for the following reasons: a) he has not been appointed with the appropriate authority to do so by the person whom he courts and b) Elizabeth has not consented to his amorous assails.

This idea of not being able to "read the room" or to "read" the desires of one's intended also connect to Chwe's concept of "cluelessness." He outlines five major ways in which Austen developed characters who may be "clueless" due to a "conspicuous absence" of strategic thinking, an inability to "understand that other people make their own decisions according to their own preferences" (188). These characteristics prevent them from appropriately interacting with others and engaging in performative discourse. The complete list is as follows: a "[1] lack of natural ability… [2] social distance… [3] excessive self-reference… [4] status maintenance…

[78] Austin's example of christening a boat is illustrative of this principle: "Suppose… I see a vessel on the stocks, walk up and smash the bottle hung at the stem, proclaim 'I name this ship the *Mr. Stalin*' and for good measure kick away the chocks: but the trouble is, I was not the person chosen to name it" (23).

[and 5] [a] presumption… that one can directly manipulate another's preferences" (188). He additionally maintains that such errors can result in "blunders" (205), those rhetorical mistakes which bear a good deal of resemblance to Austin's notion of infelicities. Indeed, much of the comedy in the romantic comedy stems from the inappropriateness of the exchanges between people who are either not intended to be with the hero/heroine or are not intended to *be* the hero/heroine. Since audiences know who is supposed to end up together, they are free to laugh at the preposterous nature of rival characters: the Miss Bingleys, the Mr. Collinses, or anyone-not-Tom-Hanks, for that matter. Such are the characters included in this section; those individuals who either lack romantic promise, have poor social impulses, or both.

An prime example of such a clueless figure (and a possible antecedent to Mr. Collins) is Sir Anthony Branville of Frances Sheridan's *The Discovery* (1763). The role was originally portrayed by David Garrick, who according to John O'Keeffe (a contemporary actor) incited audience laughter by "speaking the most impassioned speeches with a calm voice and placid face" (qtd. in Hogan and Beasley 22). A character who takes himself and his obeisance to propriety to the extreme, he possesses "notions of love so extravagant… address so romantic, nothing but flames and rapture in his mouth… [but] no more real warmth than a marble statue" (15). Deemed Uncle Parenthesis by his family for his undue loquacity in expressing even the pithiest of comments, Sir Anthony fails to realize that he is the butt of an ever-constant joke. Consumed with an over-inflated notion of his own importance, he imputes harmless social interactions with the opposite sex with airs of grave importance: "I must tell you a secret," he conspiratorially confesses to the father of his intended, "I have more than once pressed [a lady's] hand with these lips" (92). Unsurprisingly, audiences are later told that Sir Anthony has attempted the hearts of no less than nine women, but to no avail. Though he cannot "positively

affirm… that [he] was rejected by them *all*," he does seem to imply that each has laughed at his advances, for he "never could get any of them to be serious" (91). It would indeed be difficult to maintain an air of seriousness when confronted with his methods of wooing, which include lines such as, "Madam, I am transported to hear you say so! I am at this minute in an absolute extacy [sic]! Will you permit me, dear madam, the ravishing satisfaction of throwing myself at your feet? … I [will] prostrate myself in imagination, I assure you madam" (95). Burdened with a misconstrued notion of what women want and an excessive attention to himself, Sir Anthony's dearth of theory of mind makes him an easily-manipulated and ridiculous character, to audiences' glee.

Raillery Rule 3: Love is an Exclusive and Intentional Battlefield

In order for teasing courtship to work, it must be both a) exclusive and b) intentional. All four theorists align on this main point. Huizinga asserts that "All play moves and has its being within a playground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course…All [playgrounds] are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart" (10). For teasing couples, this playground is their field of discourse, upon which they act out their romantic bonds.[79] Huizinga's rhetoric is again performative, hearkening back to Austin's theory regarding language exchanges. Because these dialogues often function as courtship, it therefore becomes impossible to have such an exchange with more than one person. There is an exclusivity demanded, a promise implied: "This is for *us*, not for the 'others'. What the 'others' do 'outside' is no concern of ours…We are different and do things differently" (Huizinga 12). This notion helps to clarify how teasing couples are different from the coquettes of the period, and indeed, how coquetry is anathema to true

[79] Kay Young similarly contends that "[d]ialogues are interactive, mutually made moments of a partnered story that function to mark off 'our story,' around which a 'we' works to build the daily life that constitutes that 'we'" (63).

courtship. Chwe believes that "Austen consistently decries" the "inability to make choices" since that same inability can "stem from a lack of resolution" (100).

Elizabeth Thomas' "Cupid's Revenge" (1726) and Charlotte Lennox's "The Art of Coquetry" (1750) illustrate that a coquette's true power stems from her refusal to choose; however, both texts maintain that this same power will prevent her from experiencing mutual love. Thomas' poem depicts a "Scornful Nymph, who Love defy'd" and subsequently "liv'd free as Air" for "Full many a happy Year" (1.1, 2.4, 2.2). Such liberty is echoed in Lennox's text, which promises to instruct young women in the fine arts of "teach[ing] the lordly tyrant to obey" in order to preserve their "empire" and "coutroul [sic] the world by love" (106, 107). By misleading men with their coy behavior, the coquettes manage to build an army of adorers without ever humbling themselves to feel emotionally involved (they play the Huizingian game by their own rules, but do not share it). Lennox's speaker is careful to warn readers to beware true affection: "Each soft intruding wish in time reprove, / And guard against the sweet invader love" (96-97). The Nymph of Thomas' rhyme learns this lesson the hard way; having offended Cupid with her haughty pride, the god vows that he will "force [her] to obey; Yet [she] in Love no Joy shall know, / But sigh [her] Life away" (7.3-4). In a swift blow of cherubic justice, he infects her with a passion for a "favour'd Swain" and strikes him with "A leaden Dart" which turns his heart "to Ice" (9.3, 4). Doomed forever to be "scorn'd," yet in irrevocable love, the Nymph "Woo's [sic], alas in vain!" (10.3-4). The Nymph has made a strategic thinking error, one which is typical of many a former-coquette: in as much as she had a choice whether to love or not, so too do others (Chwe 69).

A lack of intentionality thus prohibits coquettes from attaining real love, unless they modify their passions into a single object who returns their affections (a process that Paula R.

Braunschneider calls the "reorientation of desire" (102)). In *Our Coquettes* (2009), Braunschneider illustrates how this process works to convert Haywood's the eponymous heroine of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) from a flirt into a lover. In the novel, the appropriately named, "clueless" girl misses the opportunity to settle down with her suitor, Trueworth, because of her dedication to coquetry. After a series of unhappy marriages and deaths, the two are reunited at the text's end, when "love…becomes [Betsy's] motivation for marrying…[which] highlights the narrative requirement that the heroine's sincere desire for a particular man dictate the match that provides closure to the plot" (Braunschneider 126). Thus any courtship, but particularly any true teasing courtship, must be purposeful in order to be effective. It is important to note that play can be the height of seriousness, as Huizinga posits, for "In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something" (1). In much the same way, all teasing conversation means something, regardless of how frothy, light-hearted, or illogical it may be. Implicit in the acceptance of a mutual tête-à-tête are the rules to an unspoken contract, the idea that "we should not speak this way with anyone else." These are the procedures of discursive play, the rules of the rhetorical game. As such, "a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and participants must intend so to conduct themselves" (Austin 15). Disingenuous speech, on one side or the other, does not a relationship make. Chwe also illustrates how, for Austen, choosing to take part in any situation carries with it a kind of moral responsibility: "choices bind. You can't have it both ways. Once you make a choice, you cannot pretend you did not make it" (99). Additionally, those that go back on their words, or speak them dishonestly in the first place, also demonstrate a stunted

strategic thinking ability, for only those lovers with a carefully developed theory of mind and mental acumen are the most constant (Chwe 168).

Raillery Rule 4: Playing Should Be Fun, Beautiful and Sexy

The fourth rule of raillery is oriented around audience and reader enjoyment. Essentially, all teasing discourses should be a) fun, b) beautiful, and c) sexy. Primarily, teasing couples contribute to the comic nature of the text in which they appear. Contrarian, illogical and sassy, they engage in riotous badinage to the audience's delight. They encapsulate what Huizinga calls "the *fun* of playing, [which] resists all analysis, all logical interpretation… it is precisely this fun-element that characterizes the essence of play…play is irrational" (3-4). The best teasers, the ones who are the most fun to watch, are also those with the most developed theory of mind. It is perhaps no coincidence that the characters Chwe describes as strategically impaired are also the most boring, the most literal minded, as they lack a creative imagination (191-95). Fun, in terms of play, is ultimately the opposite of logical. Despite this seeming chaos, play is also quite beautiful: "The words we use to denote the elements of play belong for the most part to aesthetics, terms…which … describe the effects of beauty: tension, poise, balance, contrast, variation, solution, resolution, etc. Play casts a spell over us; it is 'enchanting,' 'captivating'. It is invested with the noble qualities we are capable of perceiving in things: rhythm and harmony" (Huizinga 10). Because play is both an enactment and a performance, it is enjoyed not only by the participants but also the audience. There is a spectatorship involved in romantic comedy that is driven not by suspense (who will the lovers choose?), but rather procedure (how will these lovers unite?). Young describes this audience emotion the "pleasure of a performed union" (4). Viewers and readers will revisit *Pride and Prejudice* not to find out if Darcy and Elizabeth will

eventually marry, but to observe the passionate repartee that will get them to the altar, their verbal demonstration of an intellectually compatible theory of mind.[80]

This cerebral connection, however, also denotes a physical one, for teasing speech also serves as a metonymic code for sexual harmony. As such, play also must be sexy; it needs "a sense of passion, of chance, of daring… to take risks, to bear uncertainty, to endure tension—these are the essence of the play spirit. Tension adds to the importance of the game and, as it increases, enables the player to forget that he is only playing" (Huizinga 51). Some of the best examples of teasing debates feature this dynamic.[81] Even when couples argue or disagree, it is the way in which they do so that sends a verbal cue to spectators that all will be well in the end. Because of their assured romantic connection, the players themselves may "forget that [they are] only playing," but audiences will not, thereby preserving their enjoyment of the repartee at hand.

A common trope of eighteenth century drama and fiction is the "boring" couple who play opposite the teasers.[82] Marianne Novy maintains that both Shakespeare and Jane Austen "contrast their central couples with others in which the women are more passive and conventional" (28). The very banality of *Pride and Prejudice*'s Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley, for example, is nearly their own undoing, as spectators are unable to tell if she has true feelings for him. Other eighteenth-century examples abound. Frederick M. Link similarly maintains that "The difficulty with [Hannah Cowley's] *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* is that the main action is not nearly as much fun as the Olivia-Julio one" (xxxi), while her earlier *The Belle's Stratagem*

[80] Misty G. Anderson similarly observes that "Comedies, like contracts, usually have a clear end in sight; the interesting part is the negotiation" (3).

[81] Though Young states the following in the context of the "screwball comedy" of the 1930's, it bears particular relevance to the couples featured in this study: "conversations work as performances of vibrant, uncontrolled, interactive, sublimated sexuality" (165).

[82] G.K. Hunter echoes this idea in his contention that "Shakespeare recurrently writes comedies which express the doubleness of the female position by showing us two heroines, one a passive and conventional maiden, the other a more active performer willing to break the conventions, to 'answer back', to take charge of her own scenario" (398).

portrays a husband so jealous of the affections of his new wife that he releases her pet bird into the wild in a passionate rage. Behn's *The Rover* features the ever-faithful Belvile and his Florinda, the woman who "cost [him] so many sighs at the siege of Pamplona" (I.ii.15). These second-rate pairs become tainted by sentiment, rendered bland by the lack of peppery, antithetical discourse. Decorous, mawkish, and sometimes just plain boring, these couples help to highlight the entrancing nature of the witty couple, a couple that Young describes as "a comedy team, where the story told—the joke—requires both partners to construct it, where the ability of one to create depends on the creativity of the other" (4). Delighting in shared play, teasing couples demonstrate an egalitarian bond forged in good humor and parity.

Raillery Rule 5: Don't "Pass Go" and Don't Collect $200

The fifth rule of raillery demands that couples do not literalize the sexual nature of conversation until after the play or novel has closed. While this rule may initially appear as no more than a bow to contemporary mores, it has its roots in the very nature of play. Huizinga asserts that very few of "the formal and functional characteristics of play… are really illustrative of the sexual act. It is not the act as such that the spirit of language tends to conceive as play; rather the road thereto, to the preparation for and introduction to 'love', which is often made enticing by all sorts of playing" (Huizinga 43). Couples like Lydia and Wickham from *Pride and Prejudice,* or Henry Crawford and Maria Bertram from *Mansfield Park* exemplify what not to do from a standard of play, not merely a standard of morality. Lydia makes the choice to abscond with Wickham with little to no strategic thinking whatsoever.[83] Their eventual marriage, made possible by Mr. Darcy, is an unhappy one, riddled with financial woes and little to no passion

[83] Chwe grants Lydia an almost preternatural gift of strategic thinking, maintaining that she is "perfectly aware of her own family's meager wealth" and as such "knows that her best shot at marrying with any money at all is to create a crisis situation" (53). However, this portrait contradicts Austen's later claim that she and Wickham are "heedless of the future" (253).

between the couple. Wickham's "affection for [Lydia] soon sunk into indifference" and the couple's "manner of living" was "unsettled in the extreme" (253). Because they had no foundational discourse, nor any love for the true rules of play, their marriage is doomed to fail. As they are both selfish creatures, they lack the theory of mind necessary to relate to one another and so remain stuck living through the consequences of their hasty decision. For Maria Bertram, her existing marriage to Mr. Rushworth precludes her from making another romantic bond with the teasing Mr. Crawford. She is ultimately not "appropriate for the involation of the particular procedure invoked," since such an act would be violating the exclusivity inherent in teasing couples (Austin 15). Her sexual congress with Crawford ends the "uncertainty, chanciness; [the] striving to decide the issue and so end it" so typical of play (Huizinga 10). This act, however, has no long-lasting effect in terms of an actual relationship. As Chwe points out, their malfeasance stems from an inability to choose (99) and so both are "punished" at the novel's end, Maria being sent off with the crotchety Mrs. Norris and Crawford denied the courtship of Fanny.

Fantomina: *A Case Study*

With these rules established, I would like to turn to Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* (1725) as a more sustained example of teasing discourse gone awry. The text itself has all the hallmarks of a traditional romantic comedy. It tells the story of a beautiful girl fresh from the country who goes to the proverbial Big City for the first time. There, she meets an equally beautiful young man, the aptly-named Beauplaisir. They meet and she falls in love. However, his interest fades and she spends the rest of the novel engaging in a series of elaborate hijinks and wardrobe montages in order to get him back. But Fantomina does not receive the expected comedic ending; her story concludes with an illegitimate child and an expulsion to a nunnery. So, what went wrong? This section uses the aforementioned rules of teasing courtship to answer that

question via a sort of courtship autopsy, outlining the various violations of the "Raillery Rules" and helping to isolate those points of success for the couples who are discussed later in this study.

The opening of the text presents readers with a noxious combination: a "clueless" young ingénue with an immense propensity for strategic thinking, a sincere love of play, and no guardian. Though the audience never learns the protagonist's true name, they are told that she "had been bred for the most Part in the Country... was young, a Stranger to the World, and consequently to the Dangers of it" (257). Haywood uses a popular binary in her opposition of country/city, and it is this "social distance" in Chwe's terminology that in part contributes to Fantomina's downfall before her plan even begins. While choice is an essential element to play, along with executing one's free will, she will be acting from a space of ignorance. Nevertheless, with "no Body in Town, at that Time, to whom she was oblig'd to be accountable for her Actions," Fantomina is at liberty to do what she pleases (258). Attracted by the male attention a bevy of prostitutes receive while at a play, Fantomina resolves to take a hand at acting herself and subsequently engages in a scheme: "She no sooner design'd this Frolick, than she put it in Execution; and muffling her Hoods over her Face, went the next Night into the Gallery-Box, and practising as much as she had observ'd, at that Distance, the Behaviour of that Woman, was not long before she found her Disguise had answer'd the Ends she wore it for" (258). Fantomina here demonstrates, like any good actress, a developed theory of mind, which allows her to take as her own the comportment of another. Her strategic thinking is also present in her secrecy, as she knows she cannot be seen, otherwise her social stature will become diminished. Huizinga also notes that the "charm of play is enhanced by making a 'secret' out of it" (12).

In her new disguise as Fantomina, a high-class mistress, she encounters Beauplaisir, whom she selects out of the host of interested men; their initial conversation is additionally marked by the verbal freedom typical of teasing couples. Although initially pleased by the amount of attention she receives from prospective customers (a coquettish impulse), she eventually isolates her interests on Beauplaisir, whom she attracts via her "Turn of Wit, and… genteel Manner in her Raillery" (259). As the narrator succinctly phrases it, "In fine, they were infinitely charm'd with each other: He was transported to find so much Beauty and Wit in a Woman, who he doubted not but on very easy Terms he might enjoy; and she found a vast deal of Pleasure in conversing with him in this free and unrestrain'd Manner" (259). While their repartee bespeaks a mutual theory of mind in terms of their ability to engage in verbal play, the scene is tainted by Austin's notion of appropriateness and its violation of some of the cardinal rules of Huizinga's notion of play. Beauplaisir is enabled to engage in such speech because of what he deems the suitability of the power dynamic; he is a young, "accomplish'd" man and she is a prostitute. His speech performs the buying of her person in exchange for wealth, whereas Fantomina has "no other Aim, than the Gratification of an innocent Curiosity" (258). Because "the play spirit" requires its participants "To dare, to take risks, to bear uncertainty, to endure tension" (Huizinga 51), it also becomes doubtful if their exchange is true play, since Beauplaisir "doubted not but on very easy Terms he might enjoy" her (259). The determinate nature of their power dynamic, as perpetrated through her disguise, prohibits true performative courtship from taking place.

Fantomina and Beauplaisir both become confused in their first sexual encounter because of competing models of what Austin terms "accepted conventional procedures" (26). Beauplaisir finds he has technically done nothing wrong, strictly speaking in terms of the acknowledged

protocol associated with engaging ladies of the evening. Fantomina, as a woman of high social standing, was "not in a position to do the act" (16) as a prostitute. Acting from a place of ignorance, Fantomina additionally had no frame of reference from which to extrapolate guidelines of any kind. She went into the field of play without any boundaries or guidelines in place, which therefore disallowed play from happening at all, for Huizinga maintains that play "proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules" (13). It is after this scene that Fantomina becomes increasingly consumed with procedures as she takes ownership of the contest. Once these rules are in place, the game can resume, along with the comic tone of the story.

It should be noted, though, that every encounter after that first physical one is contaminated, not from a moral standpoint but instead from a sense of foregone decline. Rather than teasing play which makes interactions all the more enticing through deferred pleasure, Fantomina and Beauplaisir are doomed to continually tire of each other, lacking the foundational performative bond that most teasing couples engender through a series of dialogues. Though Fantomina enjoys a tousle or two with Beauplaisir, the narrator soon relates that he "varied not so much from his Sex as to be able to prolong Desire, to any great Length after Possession: The rifled Charms of *Fantomina* soon lost their Poinancy, and grew tastless and insipid" (267). Later in the text, Fantomina similarly "began to grow as weary of receiving his now insipid Caresses as he was of offering them" (286). Having sated their physical lust, both lovers experience diminishing returns on their desire. Soon Beauplaisir begins to show signs of wanting to leave. Perceiving this and missing "the strenuous Pressures of his eager Arms," Fantomina uses strategic thinking to outsmart him and yet retain his interest (268). She anticipates that the aim of

the game must change to keeping a man interested sexually, rather than creating an actual relationship.

Fantomina then assumes a series of disguises which gradually ascend the social ladder: a young maid named Celia, a mourning widow, and finally an always-masked lady named Incognita. By assuming a new persona, Fantomina guarantees Beauplaisir's interest and also guarantees herself that "Height of Transport she enjoyed when the agreeable *Beauplaisir* kneel'd at her Feet" (268). In each of these contrivances, Fantomina's strategic thinking abilities are consistently emphasized; indeed, the book becomes more about Fantomina's imaginative skill sets than it does about the courtship plot itself. Chwe maintains that Jane Austen uses "specific terms to refer to strategic thinking," among them "'penetration,' 'foresight,' and 'sagacity'" (107). He also mentions other popular Austen euphemisms such as "schemes," "contrive," "cunning," "calculate" (107-109). Haywood's work, though written some seventy years prior, includes similar phrases to indicate keen perception and cleverness, mainly having to do with Fantomina (though some regard other characters as well). Most recurrent by far is the notion of "designing" as both a mental process and also a "design" as in a plan, which occurs twelves times throughout the text. Her "perception" or ability to "perceive" run a close second, which eight repetitions within the story. Other synonyms for Fantomina's various ruses are "intreague" [sic], "art," "stratagem," "plot," "scheme," and "project." In terms of her own mental acuity, the heroine is said to possess "prudence," "oeconomy," "management," "invention," and "discernment." Such a variety and frequency of terms place emphasis not only on Fantomina's imaginative creativity, that key component of play as a "*stepping out of* common reality into a higher order" (Huizinga 13), but also her ability to put such inventive subterfuges into motion.

Paramount to the success of Fantomina's ruse are her various disguises, all of which amount to an elaborate masquerade, a seemingly endless playtime of dress-up that allows her to manipulate Beauplaisir's desire. Huizinga asserts that "The 'differentness' and secrecy of play are most vividly expressed in 'dressing up'. Here the 'extra-ordinary' nature of play reaches perfection. The disguised or masked individual 'plays' another part, another being. He *is* another being" (13). Notably, the masquerade is here endowed with a performative quality. No longer merely pretending, the player becomes the very entity he or she impersonates. This impersonation (which is another performative concept—to assume another's character) remains inextricably linked to the theatre. It is no accident then that Fantomina is later described as an actress, taking the masquerade beyond the level of mere costume: "she was so admirably skill'd in the Art of feigning, that she had the Power of putting on almost what Face she pleas'd, and knew so exactly how to form her Behaviour to the Character she represented, that all the Comedians at both Playhouses are infinitely short of her Performances: She, could vary her very Glances, tune her Voice to Accents the most different imaginable from those in which she spoke when she appear'd herself" (274). Her role-playing is so effective that Beauplaisir, despite the suspension of disbelief required of the average reader, never once recognizes her in all of her charades. The true performative act has been achieved in her putting one over on an unsuspecting dupe. As Fantomina explains, "I have outwitted even the most Subtle of the deceiving Kind, and while he thinks to fool me, is himself the only beguiled Person" (277).

Fundamental to Fantomina's beguiling of Beauplaisir is her highly-developed theory of mind; not only does she successfully predict his motivations, but also the actions they will

cause.[84] In doing so, she puts herself into his shoes as well as into his bed. Prior to his imminent abandonment, Fantomina perceives "that Complaints, Tears, Swoonings, and all the Extravagancies … have little Prevailance over a Heart inclin'd to rove, and only serve to render those who practise them more contemptible, by robbing them of that Beauty which alone can bring back the fugitive Lover, [so] she resolved to take another Course" (267-268). In this scene Fantomina does not give in to her emotions, nor does she think like a woman. Instead, she places herself into the mind of her lover, considering the situation from his perspective. Only then can she think strategically and engineer a counterplot. Although readers may be tempted to assume dullness on the part of Beauplaisir, the narrator warns that "he was really the contrary" of stupid. Often he too employs a theory of mind. When confronted with Fantomina as the mourning widow, he wonders if "she who seem'd equally susceptible of *Sorrow,* might not also be so too of *Love*… [he] resolv'd to put it to the Proof, if this would have no more Effect to rouze her sleeping Spirits" (272). This of course is efficacious and results in his amour with the apparently sorrowful widow. It just so happens that his instincts were already created by the machinations of Fantomina, who did his thinking on his behalf.

Her final incarnation, as Incognita, represents the apotheosis of Fantomina's love of play, as defined by her use of the masquerade, her control of the game, and her strategic thinking. What separates this disguise from the others is the amount of agency she has in it. Her guise as a prostitute was sexually available by virtue of her *lack* of virtue, Celia was of a low-enough class structure to willingly receive Beauplaisir's payment, and the widow was in a state of grief that required male comfort. In the first three personae, Fantomina was the one courted by her lover; in this last guise, she does the wooing. Sending Beauplaisir an anonymous note, she promises

[84] Chwe calls this "Perhaps the most advanced skill involved in strategic thinking," the idea of "coming up with manipulations and plans, creating situations in which people act in such a way as to produce the desired outcome" (19).

great intrigue (and great lovemaking) on the dual conditions that he not ask for her true identity, nor take off her mask. Fantomina also controls the field of play, as he must come visit her on her turf. In a swift reversal of their initial lawless union, this one is heavily enclosed by a strict series of rules. As "Play demands order absolute and supreme" (Huizinga 10), this particular tryst is depicted by the narrator as the most pleasurable yet: "if there be any true Felicity in an Amour such as theirs, both here enjoy'd it to the full" (284). Nevertheless, despite Beauplaisir's entreaties, Incognita refuses to reveal her face. In order to ensure that he does not sneak a peek overnight, she orders her servants to put up blackout curtains (thereby controlling also Beauplaisir's concepts of both time and space). When Beauplaisir becomes enraged at such treatment and threatens to never again return, Fantomina consoles herself with the knowledge that he "would recede from it, when he reflected on the happy Moments they had pass'd together; but if he did not, she comforted herself with the Design of forming some other Stratagem, with which to impose on him a fourth Time" (286).

This moment of sheer confidence, however, precipitates her undoing; at the end of the novel it is revealed that her greatest strengths have also blinded her from her greatest weaknesses. Fittingly, it is at the moment that she is "beginning to think in what Manner she should drop these two Characters [Fantomina and the Widow]" that her mother returns from the country (286-87). Ironically, Fantomina's consideration of her various personas consistently leaves one out: that of herself, whoever that may be. Chwe calls this "Strategizing about Yourself," maintaining that "an individual is often understood as a confederation of different parts or 'selves'" (153). For all of her strategic thinking prowess, Fantomina never turns this critical eye on herself, a critical error. She also forgets that all games have "limitedness… [they are] 'played out' within… limits of time and place…at a certain moment it is 'over'. It plays

itself to an end" (Huizinga 9). In other words, there cannot always be "some other Stratagem." This becomes particularly true when she discovers that she is pregnant. In the cultivation of her theory of mind in terms of Beauplaisir's perspective, she failed to consider that she was *not* a man, and that she was playing by the rules of a much larger game of life.

The denouement of the story essentially reverts Fantomina back to the person she was when she first began her adventures: someone with little to no choice. She ruminates that "she would easily have found Means to have skreen'd even this from the Knowledge of the World, had she been at liberty to have acted with the same unquestionable Authority over herself," but cannot act since her mother has even more "Penetration" than she does (287). Despite attempting to starve herself and pull her corset tight, she finds that she cannot hide her pregnancy forever, for it—like games of play—must also end. At a gala, "she was seiz'd with those Pangs, which none in her Condition are exempt from:----She could not conceal the sudden Rack which all at once invaded her; or had her Tongue been mute, her wildly rolling Eyes, the Distortion of her Features, and the Convulsions which shook her whole Frame, in spite of her, would have reveal'd she labour'd under some terrible Shock of Nature" (287-288). The use of passive voice in this passage highlights the fact that Fantomina is no longer her own agent. The narrator mentions that she drew the stares of all who surrounded her, an ironic parody of the opening scene when she attracted several male onlookers. Importantly her moment of despair occurs at someone else's playground; no longer does she control the field of play. She proceeds to give birth, and when wheedled by her mother to name the infant girl's father, Fantomina names her dupe. Beauplaisir denies ever having slept with her, but after hearing her confession, "took his Leave, full of Cogitations, more confus'd than ever he had known in his whole Life" (290).

The game has officially ended, for as Huizinga maintains, "At any moment 'ordinary life' may reassert its rights either by an impact from without, which interrupts the game, or by an offence against the rules, or else from within, by a collapse of the play spirit, a sobering, a disenchantment" (21). For Fantomina, it is all three. The external arrival of her mother reorients her choice, her internal pregnancy disrupts the pattern of her liaisons with Beauplaisir (assuredly even Fantomina is not a good enough actress to hide her burgeoning belly in the boudoir), and her "play spirit" fades as soon as she confesses the ruse to Beauplaisir in her birthing room. Though Fantomina displayed several of the key facets of the ideal teaser, particularly in the exclusivity of her bond with Beauplaisir, her quick wit, and her willingness to play games, she fails to effect a lasting bond with her lover. Despite her perspicacity and strategic thinking, Fantomina must realize that she has acted presumptively, "chang[ing] another person's preferences at [her] will" (Chwe 205). By precluding Beauplaisir's choice (even though he notably consents to all of their sexual encounters), no performative exchange can take place. He has not once, throughout the entire narrative, treated Fantomina with the exclusivity necessary of teasing couples, nor has he explicitly or implicitly promised marriage. And so, he is free to leave the game, having never known that he was playing one in the first place. Thus ends, too, Fantomina's intrigue, sent off as she is to a nunnery.

Raillery Rule 6: The Best Games Are Ones in which Everyone Wins

By way of negative example, *Fantomina* illustrates the final rule of all teasing couples (and perhaps for the romantic comedy at large): witty courtships should lead to lasting love. All four theorists discuss a kind of permanence at work, even in spite of and conceivably because of the transience of these social interactions. Young describes the inherent paradox of teasing speech when she observes that "narrative couples tirelessly explore… how to acknowledge what

makes the other always other and partner in the creation of a third being called 'the couple.' That acknowledgment happens… in their moments of play… (…banter, dancing, fighting, singing, screaming) …the outbreaks of self-toward-other expression that being together demands" (11). Beneath the fierce activity of their interaction lies an intentional creation of their romantic bond. Huizinga states that play is "an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it" (13), with one of its defining features being "*disinterestedness*… it stands outside the immediate satisfaction of wants and appetites" (8). While disinterestedness was often paired with sentiment throughout the eighteenth century in an attempt to reclaim moral virtue,[85] teasing play could also serve as an edifying ethical force within society. Austin similarly notes that performative speech needs to end in mutual participation in order to truly be performative: "a person participating in and so invoking the procedure…must actually so conduct themselves subsequently" (Austin 15). Chwe asserts that "strategic partnership is the truest foundation for marriage and intimacy" (141); couples must work through their problems with one another, using both theory of mind and their strategic thinking abilities, in order to cement a lasting bond.

While courtship narratives have been traditionally thought of as reaffirming social order by creating meaning out of chaos, it is important to note the key role that play bears in the creation of such order, and the primacy of its continuance after the game of wooing is done. Huizinga observes that "A play-community generally tends to become permanent even after the game is over… the feeling of being 'apart together'… of sharing something important, of mutually withdrawing from the rest of the world and rejecting the usual norms, retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game" (12). Here Huizinga reaffirms the essential performative aspect of play, that it engenders permanently the very bonds spoken about. It is only through the engagement of anti-sentiment that the truest of sentimental ties are forged,

[85] See Scott Paul Gordon's *The Power of the Passive Self in English Literature, 1640-1770*.

through the refutation of traditional courtship methodologies. All of the couples featured in part two of this study affirm the importance of play through their marriage at the text's conclusion, retaining a kind of stage "magic" that lasts far beyond when the final curtain falls or the final page is turned.

Chapter 6: Acting Out: Women Writers and Shakespearean Courtship

In this chapter I explore how women writers interact with Shakespearean courtship narratives to portray couples who form loving bonds through teasing speech. As Novy points out, authorial engagement with source texts can manifest itself in modes of "contestation as well as involvement" and on both an "obvious and small scale" (*Engaging with Shakespeare* 2). Some of the novels and plays referenced in this chapter make explicit reference to Shakespeare, while others retain more amorphous and slippery connections. All are woven together, however, by their fidelity to the spirit of play and their promotion of a mutual affective bond between lovers. Each section includes a close reading of Shakespeare's play and includes a brief history of its performance in the eighteenth century. I then examine limited works from the period in order to illustrate their connections to the source text on the levels of performative wooing and rhetorical freedom. My aim in this portion of the project is not to include a wholesale catalogue of every reference, but rather to initiate an investigation into how Shakespeare influenced the evolution of the courtship narrative within the long eighteenth century by looking at a few representative cases.

Masked Courtship and Revelatory Affection in the Tradition of As You Like It

As You Like It revolves around sparring, both physical and verbal, and suggestively conflates the two into not only a match of wits, but a match of affection as well.[86] At Rosalind's first appearance, she proposes to "devise sports" in order to detract from her growing melancholy; her first and only proposal centers on "falling in love" (1.2.20-21). Her claim foreshadows the eventual "good sport" Le Beau invites them to, namely the crucial grappling

[86] See Cynthia Marshall's "Wrestling as Play and Game in *As You Like It*" (1993) for a discussion on how the wrestling match "functions variously as mimetic violence, as game, as spectacle, and, eventually, as metaphor" (279).

match between the heroic Orlando and the well-renowned wrestler, Charles.[87] The play's foundational courtship plot begins as Rosalind, watching from afar, proclaims that this corporeal display has caused Orlando to have "overthrown / More than [his] enemies" (1.2.214-215). Though Rosalind has thus lost her heart, Orlando troublingly loses his tongue, finding that his "better parts / Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up / Is but a…mere lifeless block," since he cannot find words to communicate with that incomparable lady (1.2.209-211). Passion impedes their ability to communicate; the play's main duty, then, is to resolve the colloquial quandary in order to allow for their physical union—a task Rosalind accomplishes through the game of the masquerade.

From the outset of the text, words are synonymous with sex, highlighting the crux of Rosalind's main conflict: how to get her prospective lover to speak to her. The heroine's dialogue with Celia both showcases the latter's linguistic prowess and introduces teasing discourse as a platform for broaching the topic of female sexuality. Celia's humorous speech, often imbued with double entendre, functions as a spotlight on the very physical question that underlies Rosalind's attraction to Orlando. After cautioning Rosalind to "wrestle with her affections," she puns the hero's talents in the center ring with an intimation of his talents elsewhere, predicting that she "will try in time, in despite of a fall" (1.3.19-20). Wheedling her cousin out of the sentimental mode, Celia often maintains the comic spirit of the play by calling bawdy attention to the lovers' ultimate physical connection, perpetuating the link between verbal exchanges and erotic ones. Rosalind later pleas with Celia, asking her to reveal the mystery man who inscribes love poetry on each tree: "pour this concealed man out of thy mouth as wine

[87] D. J. Palmer's essay, "'As You Like It' and the Idea of Play" (1971) similarly aligns the text with Huizingian notions of play, and also argues that the "certain combative quality" of the lovers' conversation in the play "recalls the wrestling" at its inception. He further claims that "Orlando and Rosalind fall in love in wrestling terms" (239) as I do here as well.

comes out a narrow-mouthed bottle… take the cork out … that I may drink thy tidings" (3.2.181-184). Celia's pithy reply, "So that you may put a man in your belly," turns Rosalind's simile around and saucily infers the sexual connotation beneath her cousin's rhetoric. Her revelation, that "It is young Orlando, that tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart both in an instant," employs a zeugma which highlights the larger thematic yoking between combative and romantic grappling (3.2.192-193). The main dramatic problem which remains is finding a means for Rosalind to engage in such banter with her hitherto mute paramour.[88]

In solving this conundrum, the play itself works by way of a structural chiasmus, morphing the two lovers into unrecognizable forms of their courtly selves; in using traditional quest-romance framework, *As You Like It* is unified by the double masquerades of Rosalind's cross-dressing and the environmental cover of the Forest of Arden. Though Rosalind begins her journey in the patriarchal framework of her uncle's purview, she gains agency through her transformation into Ganymede as well as her journey into the lawless woods, a place of "liberty, and not… banishment" (1.3.136). Freed from the confines of propriety, it is there that she both comes to know of and cultivates Orlando's rhetorical capacities by way of a linguistic boot camp, a playing field with rules of her own making. As "Jove's own page," she performs and engineers their courtship even as she advises him how to woo his Rosalind (1.3.122). R. Chris Hassel, Jr. describes this liberation in Huizingian terms: "Their gamelike, ritualized behavior in Arden… frees Orlando and Rosalind from the stumbling, tongue-tied attempts at communication… from embarrassing frankness, from the 'base truth' of their physical impulses, and from the threat of its direct, nonfigurative, sexual gratification" (133). Like the "pretend" quality of jests, games feature set parameters which paradoxically engender great freedom.

[88] See Palmer as well, who maintains that "the bawdiness of the comedy confronts aspects of sexuality denied by romantic or Petrarchan attitudes" (240).

Through the platform of teasing speech, Rosalind and Orlando can articulate their physical attraction through their words, bridging the divide between their former muteness. It is only after Orlando has completed his course of study that the play succeeds in turning itself about, concluding with lovers whose marriage unites the controlling trope of talk and tussling introduced at its inception.

The text consistently engages in anti-sentiment, emphasizing the necessity of witty wordplay rather than Petrarchan modes of discourse to effect romantic bonds. Prior to their first encounter, Orlando has inscribed trite rhymes onto the trunks of several trees. Touchstone, the tagalong jester, finds these to be "the very false gallop of verses" (3.2.101). Rosalind likewise proclaims that some of these lines "had in them more feet than the verses would bear" and that further "the feet were lame and could not bear themselves without the verse" (3.2.150-51, 153-54). Though Orlando has seemingly found in the woods the wooing words he lacked prior, he yet remains confined to the stilted, sentimentalized rhetoric of a lover, a "tedious homily of love" (3.2.142). Not even his physical proficiency can save Orlando from such a literary gaffe. Accordingly, Rosalind's first observance of Orlando's banter with Jacques remains crucial to the creation of her game (3.2.230-267). Through it she learns that Orlando possesses a similar capacity for strategic thinking, as he exchanges enough barbs to earn him the panegyric of being "a nimble wit" whose faculties were "made of Atalanta's heels," according to Jacques (3.2.252-53). Without this scene, the match between Rosalind and Orlando would have as much likelihood of success as Charles did in the original wrestling contest. Because Rosalind receives validation here that Orlando is her equal in wit and that he too has strategic potential, both she and the audience can then endorse their eventual union. All that remains is getting Orlando to engage in such discourse with *her*, a task Rosalind resolves to achieve by "speak[ing] to him like

a saucy lackey, and under that habit play the knave with him" (3.2.268-69). This "playing the knave" results in what Palmer describes as the play's "treatment of love as a contest between adversaries… a means of using play to explore the cruelties and antagonisms inherent in sexual relationships" (239-40). By teasing Orlando, Rosalind can incite his interest; because the ruse amounts to play, her banter enables their bond to grow. Rosalind and Orlando may be adversaries in Palmer's view, but they are equally matched, sporting their way to matrimony.

The play's primary paradox stems from the fact that Rosalind enhances Orlando's fervor for her through contrary behavior, even as she ostensibly attempts to cure his "love-shaked" condition (3.2.329). Utilizing the same rhetorical devices which would become so pervasive two centuries later, Rosalind woos her lover through antithetical opposition and chimerical inconstancy and proves herself a master teaser. When describing her future behavior, should she be hired as Orlando's tutor, she promises that she will

> grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something, and for no passion truly anything… would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him (3.2.364-371).

Within this catalogue lies Rosalind's seemingly infinite array of behaviors, all of which belie a propensity towards improvisation that any actress would envy. The contrariety she assumes, rather than drive away love, seems to forecast the comportment of the average wife.[89] Indeed, for

[89] Rosalind maintains that "Maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more newfangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing… and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyena, and that when thou art inclined to sleep" (4.1.129-135). Such rhetoric remains strongly reminiscent of the much later *Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753), which similarly advocates such antithetical behavior within a marriage.

Rosalind, "The wiser [a woman], the waywarder" (4.1.139-40). In a celebration of female wit, the teacher informs her student that teasing speech is not only the best way of obtaining a husband, but keeping him as well. Using her man's attire as a means to celebrate her femininity, Rosalind revels in the verbal and behavioral freedom that only costume can allow.

In a steady reversal of the traditional catechism, Rosalind's answers to Orlando's incessant queries gradually refine his learning rather than demonstrate her own; fittingly, it is only by Orlando's declarative statement that the masquerade concludes, thus terminating his schooling. After some close encounters of the feline kind, the nearly-mauled Orlando exclaims that he "can live no longer by thinking" and must desist with his game of pretend with Ganymede (5.2.45). Rosalind's oft-cited response, that she "will weary [Orlando] no longer with idle talking," ironically undercuts the crucial importance that speech has played heretofore (5.2.46). Though she claims to have been trained since the age of three to "do strange things" by a magician, the true magical trick she has performed is not only her transformation into Ganymede, but her use of language to cast a spell onto an untutored lover and metamorphose him into a true suitor (5.2.53).

Though the play concludes with no less than four courtship plots, the true relationship of the work remains between Rosalind and Orlando, validating the importance of not only the masquerade, but the verbal freedom it allows. The bond between Touchstone and Audrey, for example, remains intellectually unequal as Touchstone avers that he wishes "the gods had made [Audrey] poetical" (3.3.12). Their conversations are likely to amount to nothing more than a one-man show to an unwitting audience. Likewise, Silvius' devotion to Phoebe, according to Kent Talbot van den Berg, "exemplifies the Petrarchan lover's excessive humility and his deification of his mistress" (890), and subsequently engages in the kind of sentiment which the play readily

disavows. However, perhaps the most unexpected union is that between Aliena/Celia and Orlando's once-nefarious brother, Oliver. As Rosalind relates, the two "no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage" (5.2.30-35). Deemed the "climbing figure" by George Puttenham, this rhetorical device seemingly depicts a positive portrait of love at first sight, escalating its way to matrimony (qtd. in van den Berg 89). Nathaniel Strout maintains that this moment highlights the "mutuality in the relationship between Celia and Oliver that… is still missing from her relationship with Orlando" (287). Van Den Berg sees it similarly as embodying a kind of "real energy of… incremental repetitions…an impression of irresistible energy" (891). Yet the rhetorical scheme more readily indicative of the true meaning of this passage is anadiplosis, in its repetition of each ending clause at the beginning of the next. Shakespeare—through Rosalind's speech—pokes fun at a cookie-cutter love story that does not even merit on-stage development. Forming a chain rather than a ladder, these actions are as inevitable and linear as each individual link progressing to the next. Though anadiplosis is related to chiasmus, the significant difference between the two is that the latter engages in a foundational switch, a crisscross, while the former remains in a steady progression. Here, Oliver and Aliena/Celia engage in a slippery slope that consists of eye contact to marriage in zero to sixty words. The courtship lacks all of the mystery or banter that imbues that of Orlando and Rosalind, and subsequently all of their inherently comic nature.

The play itself celebrates the multitudinous, the illogical, and the comic. It revels in the potential rather than the actual; Touchstone's famous line, "Your 'if' is the only peacemaker: much virtue in 'if,'" actualizes this larger motif (5.4.94-95). Maura Slattery Kuhn develops this

idea in her essay, "Much Virtue in If," asserting that the word's abundant usage in the text amounts to "a deft sleight-of-hand, sleight-of-word that pleases as it teases… *If* is like an elastic: it creates and eases the strain on logic, poetry, and truth. The happy result of the release of strain, of course, is the audience's laughter" (43). That Kuhn uses the word "tease" in conjunction with "please" is not mere coincidence. Here the overarching "if" of the play refers to the "if" of courtship, the potential for love that always exists when two individuals encounter each other on the discursive field of teasing speech. For *As You Like It* in particular, this "if" is allowed by the greater conditionals engineered by Rosalind's disguise and her verbal masquerades. "If" equals chaos, a seemingly-endless array of possibilities, all highlighted by the play's dependence on rhetorical schema such as antithesis and paradox. It is a feeling-out, a testing ground upon which couples can demonstrate their varying capacities to understand and interact with one another. Although the generic tropes of the romance normally function to corral chaos and end in correct order, the ultimate contradiction of teasing courtship is that chaos *is* the ordering principle behind wayward emotions, the rule which permits and constructs the comic ending.[90]

Ultimately, the chaos of love is the stuff of which comedy is made; in Shakespeare's plays and in the works which spring from them, no emotion is more paradoxical, for it attempts to resolve the foundational incongruity: that between men and women. As David Frail maintains, "It is the fusion into diffusive paradox, then, our resolution of one contradiction into another and yet another, that is the comic… Thus the play, as if it were a Fool, concludes balanced on the point of possibility, the point at which desire takes the form of marriage" (702, 715). It is only through the antithetical costume that Rosalind assumes, as well as her transgressive speech ("one

[90] Kuhn explicitly links *As You Like It* with Huizinga's theory of play: "*As You Like It* begins in one kind of seriousness, passes through a magic circle of Huizingian play, and ends in an advanced kind of seriousness. The circle of play has been constantly characterized by the conditional. If saves the game, for it defines the condition and shapes the consequence. In saving the game it makes the play. To employ a musical metaphor, *As You Like It* is a series of inspired improvisations in the key of If" (50).

contradiction into another"), that the possibility of her union with Orlando even comes to exist—not through the neat courtship of love at first sight, but through a verbal wrestling match whose resolution will result in a physical union. Fittingly, Rosalind attributes her lovesick condition to "that same wicked bastard of Venus that was begot of thought, conceived of spleen, and born of madness, that blind rascally boy" (4.1.184-186). Hearkening back to the engraving *Love and Folly* (1807) discussed earlier in this project, romantic affection and jest were made to go together. Splenetic, illogical, and contradictory, the "if" of love is made possible through the blindness offered within the disguise of the masquerade.

Eighteenth-century audiences gravitated to Shakespeare's play, as it united both contemporary tastes for breeches roles and for its motif of disguise and masquerade. *As You Like It* was revived in 1740 and encountered immediate dramatic success in large part because it showcased the bodies of young actresses; Ritchie notes that the play was performed "an incredible twenty-eight times that season" and continued to be a mainstay well through the century (31). Its critics, though, were not solely distracted by actresses' physical prowess, but their verbal dexterity as well. A March 1815 review of the play commended the actress for portraying almost impeccably "The archness, playfulness, and *naiveté*, so requisite to the due performance of the character… [to] a most bewitching effect" (156). A January 1817 issue of *The New Annual Register* cites selections from William Hazlitt's critiques of Shakespeare, in which he writes a similar summation of the heroine's persona:

> Rosalind's character is made up of sportive gaiety and natural tenderness: her tongue runs the faster to conceal the pressure at her heart. She talks herself out of breath, only to get deeper in love. The coquetry with which she plays with her lover… is managed with the nicest address. How full of voluble, laughing grace is

> all her conversation with Orlando… How full of real fondness and pretended cruelty." (228)

Hazlitt notably aligns Rosalind's speech with her depth of affection; it is by "talk[ing] herself out of breath" that the love bond is itself formed and achieved only through her love of play.

As has been ably outlined by previous scholarship, physical disguise pervades much of the drama and prose of the period.[91] However, as G.K. Hunter illustrates, the trope of female masquerades was one which originated with Shakespeare: "It is obvious that the disguising of girls as boys is one of the principal devices of Shakespeare's comic dramaturgy…It is a device that very clearly differentiates his comedies with those of his contemporaries" (392).[92] When Shakespeare's carefully cultivated celebrity fused with both the popularity of breeches roles and masquerade revelries, the *As You Like It* plot became a particularly salient one for women writers and the courtship narrative. In their texts, physical disguise comes to serve as a visual tease. It also provides through costume the verbal freedom necessary to perform specific speech patterns which under other circumstances may not be allowed. Castle maintains that "the masked assembly functioned as a paradoxical safe zone, a locale in which impulses suppressed or veiled in everyday life could be acted on" (41). Teasing conversation, therefore, serves the same function. It is a linguistic platform to work out less socially-acceptable instincts, much like the fictive frames of both the stage and the early novel. The teasing courtships featured in the following section—from Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem* (1780) to Susanna Centlivre's *The Gamester* (1705) and Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet* (1724)—revel in this safe space and use it as a rehearsal for matrimonial felicity.

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[91] See Terry Castle's *Masquerade and Civilization* (1986), Mary Anne Schofield's *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind* (1990), and Catherine Craft-Fairchild's *Masquerade and Gender* (1993).

[92] Hunter asserts too that "out of the thirty-five surviving adult comedies between 1594 and 1606… only two non-Shakespearean page-boy disguises [appear], though there are fifteen plays with male disguise" (392).

Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem* centers on Letitia Hardy's paradoxical quest to court that which she already possesses. Intended to marry the dashing Doricourt from the cradle, Letitia finds her romantic fantasies dashed when he finds her to be "only a fine girl, complexion, shape, and features---nothing more" (9). She takes it upon herself to convince him that English girls can also have his desired "spirit, fire… the resistless charms of France and Italy," by strategically executing a master plot through the playful tropology of the masquerade.

From the outset of the play, audiences realize that Letitia and Doricourt already share the mutuality, a common theory of mind, necessary for a functioning relationship, since they both possess the same preferences and desires. Just as Doricourt laments that Letitia's modesty amounts to "insipidity" and fails to incite within him "a violent passion" (9, 10), Letitia wants him to feel as "breathless, speechless" as she (15). Both use phrases which are indubitably sexual in tone, a verbal similarity which intimates physical compatibility as well; the only barrier between them thus far is that Letitia's proper, decorous reticence has precluded her from expressing such emotions to the man who will imminently be her husband. The heroine decides that she "will touch his heart or never be his wife" (16), and soon undertakes a plot to woo him in a manner which "may seem a little paradoxical." She declares, "as he does not like me enough, I want him to like me still less, and will, at our next interview, endeavor to heighten his indifference into dislike." Her reasoning for this seemingly illogical choice is that "it is much easier to convert a sentiment into its opposite, than to transform indifference into a tender passion" (18).[93] In her plan to tease Doricourt, Letitia (like Rosalind) instinctively demonstrates

[93] Erin Isikoff links Letitia's notions of paradox and antithesis to Castle's study on the masquerade: "Letitia's strategy of inversion (turning indifference into passion) and varied disguises is a distillation of the properties of the masquerade and a concise manifestation of it… to find paradoxes within paradoxes, just as Letitia personifies the rebellious perversions of the masquerade… she also thereby personifies the mystery and diversity of the woman who Doricourt imagines as ideal" (107-108).

knowledge of the close relationship between love and hate, the delightful mélange which results from mixing sadistic toying with a love game. Letitia's usage of theory of mind is facilitated by the fact that she too wants a marriage filled with "spirit" and "fire," and she demonstrates strategic thinking in her plan of action.

Beyond the stratagem of the title, the play itself orbits around words which parallel the foundational tenets of game theory. Several of its characters, including Doricourt, demonstrate the ability to use their mental acumen to read the desires of other characters and manipulate their possible actions. The words "plot," "scheme," "contrive" and "plan" occur five times each within the text, all with the immediate connotation of influencing the behavioral decisions of various individuals. By far the most frequent word used, though, is "foresee" and its variants, which appear eighteen times in relation to Letitia's father, Mr. Hardy. A "clueless" man whose excessive self-confidence in his own perspicacity directly opposes his often bumbling nature, Hardy yet retains an enthusiasm for play which positively aligns him with the machinations of his daughter.

Thankfully, Letitia's intellectual agility seems to surpass her father's and also helps her to craft her own playing field. This field is her very body and the various speech freedoms each physical disguise allows. She decides that she will don two costumes: the first, a country bumpkin, and the second, an enigmatic *Incognita* at a masquerade.[94] By opposing these two personas, Letitia can succeed in turning Doricourt's stomach in the first and enticing his desire in the second. This fun game of dress-up is not without risk, however. Importantly, her situation is referred to as a gamble on two occasions, one by a minor character and the other by Letitia herself. One woman mentions that "Miss Hardy's fate is at a crisis; she plays a hazardous game"

[94] See Tassie Gwilliam's essay "Disguise, Fantasy, and Misrecognition in *The Belle's Stratagem* and *Fantomina*" (2010) for an able portrait of the similarities and points of contrast between these two works.

(72), while Letitia freely declares, "on this hazard [I] willingly stake my chance for happiness" (18). Though her playing will be comical and entertaining, it will also proceed with the knowledge that she will die an old maid should she fail.

Firmly placing the drama in the realm of comedy, despite the gravity of Letitia's endeavor, the masquerade begins with what appears to be a parody of Romeo and Juliet's initial meeting.[95] An unknown mask comes up to the heroine, begging, "Charity, fair lady! charity for a poor pilgrim!" (48), in an echo of Romeo's claim that his "lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand" to kiss Juliet (1.5.95). Just as Juliet counters that saints and pilgrims have lips "that they must use in pray'r," Letitia begins to rejoin, "Charity! if you mean my prayers, heaven grant the lost pilgrim---" until she is cut off by her suitor. He, like Romeo, wants more than intercessions; he desires "such charities as beauty should bestow, soft looks, sweet words, and kind wishes" (48-49). Here, though, is where the narratives diverge. While Romeo and Juliet's discourse initiates a fated romance, all Letitia grants the mask is one favor: "I'll make you my partner, not for life, but thro' the soft mazes of a minuet." The mask declines and the scene is seemingly nothing more than a lighthearted exchange. However, in overhearing Letitia's viviacious banter, Doricourt notes that there is "Some spirit in" her conversation worth investigating (49).

Despite admiring her enthusiasm, Doricourt continues to woo Letitia in the Petrarchan mode of discourse, which she ably counters, revealing instead her witty, Rosalind-esque persona.[96] He claims, "By heaven I never was charm'd till now" (56), a mirror of Romeo's "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!" (1.5.52). Begging to see her face so that he may "fall

[95] Erin Isikoff discusses how this scene uses "courtly-genteel" language in her essay, "Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem*" (*Look Who's Laughing*, 108-110). However, she does not link it with Shakespeare or *Romeo and Juliet*.

[96] See Penny Gay's treatment of Letitia as a comic heroine in her chapter on *Pride and Prejudice* in *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (73-97). She maintains that the witty heroine "model began with Shakespeare: *As You Like It*'s Rosalind, for example…educates the heroic but naive Orlando" (79).

in love with it," Doricourt attempts to sway Letitia from her position of power by gaining knowledge about her. She pushes the proverbial moment to its crisis and asks, "And what then," testing Doricourt's fidelity to her "other" self but also strategically reminding him of her unseemly doppelgänger, which thereby heightens her own allure. Knowing he is currently engaged to a country bumpkin, Doricourt begins to mix his Shakespeare allusions up and cries, "Ay… there's the rub" (54). In a playful nod to Juliet's "what's in a name" speech, Letitia toys with him, maintaining that her "name has a spell in it… But if… revealed, the charm is broken." Doricourt promises to bear the brunt of the curse until she subsequently teases that it may be "Harriot, or Charlotte, or Maria!" (56). Letitia's raillery highlights both the irrelevance of a name and the degree of anonymity her costume allows, while the satire of *Romeo and Juliet* emphasizes the text's larger free spirit of play and also the efficacy of lighthearted banter over sentimental modes of discourse. Freed by anonymity to say anything she desires, Letitia then engages in a debate with Doricourt about the merits of matrimony and implicitly describes the kind of wife she will be, just as Rosalind does with Orlando:

> if my husband should be a curl, a fool, or a tyrant, I'd break his heart, ruin his fortune, elope with the first pretty fellow that ask'd me… [if he were worthy,] I'd be any thing and all; grave, gay capricious; the soul of whim, the spirit of variety; live with him in the eye of fashion, or in the shade of retirement; change my country, my sex; … cheat him of wishes, and overturn the empire to restore the husband of my heart to the blessings of liberty and love. (56-57)

Such a speech convinces Doricourt of their innate compatibility, as he states with profound confidence, "'Tis in vain to assume airs of coldness; fate has ordain'd you mine… I feel it here; I never met with a woman so perfectly to my taste; and I don't believe it form'd you on purpose to

Tantalize" (57). Doricourt perceives their suitability, their common theory of mind. What he does not understand is that tantalizing is Letitia's express purpose. Like Rosalind's love-games with Orlando, Letitia is merely toying with him until he can learn to love her.

Cowley's play continues satirizing Shakespeare's tragedies in the next few scenes to comedic effect. After Letitia vanishes from the masquerade, Doricourt asks the inaccurate gossip, Flutter, if he knows the identity of his mystery woman. In a lampoon of the Nurse's revelation that Juliet is a Capulet, Flutter informs him that she is "kept by lord George Jennet" as a high society mistress after "colonel Gorget had her first." Doricourt immediately morphs into the tragic mode, exclaiming, "Kept! ... I'll murder Gorget, poison lord George, and stab myself!" (58). But unlike Romeo, who actually does stab his rival and poisons himself, Doricourt's tragic impulses do not last for long. Another example of Shakespearean parody occurs in his plan to put on an antic disposition worthy of a Hamlet in order to evade his commitment to Letitia (whom he still believes to be a low-class idiot). This scheme lasts for all of a page, as all of the other characters laugh at his performance. Nonetheless, his desire to play, to metamorphose and assume another persona, indicates that he could be taught to act just as he could be taught to love. Like Letitia, he too has a playful mind.

After Letitia and her family delude Doricourt into believing her father to be deathly ill, they appropriately get "Married in jest" (64), with the groom still under the assumption that Letitia will be a harrowing wife. Letitia later reveals herself as the mysterious masquerade woman, and the audience becomes privy to their real vows. Letitia informs him that she "can be any thing" and that he need only "chuse [her] character" according to his preferences. Doricourt, illustrating the primacy of choice in all game scenarios, gives the power back to her in his declaration, "You shall be nothing but yourself…you… have now my whole soul" (79). Through

the motif of masquerade, Letitia (like Rosalind) undergoes a "witty transformation [which] ensures her own active participation in the disposal of her body and her property" (Isikoff 102). Through raillery and play, Letitia's gamble finally pays off.

Susanna Centlivre's *The Gamester* (1705) literalizes Letitia's game of "hazard" and chronicles the sartorial schemes of a female protagonist named Angelica as she attempts to reclaim her lover from his other mistress: gambling. The crux of the text is its synthesis of these two realms of play in a decisive scene of masquerade, uniting the two lovers not only in their passion for one another, but in their passion for games of both love and dice. At the play's inception, the eponymous Valere seems to break every rule of the faithful teaser, torn as he is between two loves. He makes frequent vows to his intended to give up gaming, but breaks each one, thereby invalidating the performativity of his rhetorical gestures since he does not truly intend to ever reform. He refuses to consider joining Angelica seriously in her game of love, claiming he is "not resolved if [he] shall Marry or not" (35). The realm he does display fidelity to, however, is the casino, which in many ways serves as an ironic parody of love itself. There, all his performative utterances ("I bet") have concrete results. He even speaks of his obsession as other lovers would a mistress. He claims he "can no sooner shut [his] Eyes," but the image of his "Evil Genius flings Amm's Ace before" him. Like a hapless romantic, he "know[s he has] no luck, yet can't forbear playing" (4). When asked by his serving man why he cannot commit wholeheartedly, he responds, "If I Marry her, I must forsake my dear diversion…which to me is the very Soul of Living;---'tis the genteelst way of passing ones time, every day produces something new…" (36). Addicted to what Huizinga labels as the "fun" of play, with its "sense of

passion, of chance, of daring" (51), Valere cannot help but see marriage, with its emphasis on constancy, security, and predictability, as antithetical to all that he enjoys.[97]

Frustrated by her lover's refusal to forgo gambling in order to preserve a relationship with herself, Angelica proffers one final "Tryal" of Valere in order to guarantee his exclusive devotion. "Banish [his] Love for Play," she promises, and he will "rest secur'd of [hers]." She then gives him a miniature portrait of herself, bedecked with diamonds. Valere hastily avows his eternal devotion to both Angelica and the picture, claiming as proof the "anxious pains" and "Jealous racking Cares that prey'd upon [his] Soul" at the prospect of losing her. Angelica warns him that such an apparent promise holds larger implications; "whilst you keep safe this Picture," she informs him, "my Heart is yours—but if thro' Avarice, Carelesness, or Falshood [sic], you ever part with it, you lose me from that moment" (25). Valere nonetheless vows that he will not divest himself of her image unless it is to Angelica herself.

With the rules of the deal clearly established, the text then combines the two realms of play, Angelica's bond and Valere's betting, into one scene. Upon finding out that Valere has gone to the gambling hall again, Angelica resolves to disguise herself as a man in order to teach him the error of his ways; instead of venturing into the Forest of Arden, this Rosalind will join Valere in the den of gaming. In making this decision, Angelica displays the humility necessary to exercise her theory of mind, placing herself in Valere's position. By using the liberating device of cross-dressing, Angelica illustrates the performative nature of costume. She not only "'plays' another part," she "*is* another being" (Huizinga 13). It is also important to note that Angelica is the only character in the work that actually joins Valere on his playing field and learns the language of the gamester. She humbles herself in order to actually be able to understand why he

[97] Notably, Huizinga also maintains that the delightful tension typical of play is "at its height" in gambling (13).

enjoys the thrill of betting so much.[98] Using her strategic thinking, as well as some emergency training from a self-proclaimed "Master of all sorts of Games" who plays with false dice, Angelica challenges Valere to a game. In what amounts to the first authentic conversation they have ever had, or at least the most performative, they bet each other in multiple rounds, Angelica winning each hand and consistently raising the stakes. After she takes all of Valere's funds, she asks, "have you nothing else?" (55). Most predictably, Valere gambles her portrait in a hopeless plea for his luck to change and Angelica takes it in a swift defeat. Having broken both his vow and the rules of the bargain, Valere loses out on both.

Realizing that the titular gamester has been out-gamed, Valere descends into a vortex of self-loathing, finding himself disinherited by his frustrated father and potentially losing Angelica to his scheming uncle. At the nadir of his life, Valere has no way out and simply begs for Angelica "not to hate [his] Memory" (66). Having revealed that she is once more in possession of the portrait, Angelica extends one final act of forgiveness, on the condition that it should "oblige [him] to a sober Life" and lead him to "forsake that Vice that brought [him] to this low Ebb of Fortune." Rushing to embrace her, Valere vows as much, and it is then that Angelica reveals that she "was the Youth that Won the Picture" (67). At that moment, the tenor of the scene changes, and Valere cheekily responds, "Then I did not break my Oath entirely, [since] you were excepted, Madam" (68). With this revelation comes the discovery that Valere kept at least one vow to Angelica, though on a technicality; however, he also perceives that he does not need to choose between love and play, for both are united in his lover. Arguably, it was in his match with her that the tension of the game reached its apex, and so Valere learns that "The joy

[98] In this act of self-effacement, Angelica exhibits the tolerance typical of the Shakespearean courtship narrative, endeavoring to "lead…inevitably flawed characters through exposure and humiliation to a humble awareness and acknowledgement of their common folly" (Hassel, Jr. 3). Angelica teases Valere in her disguise only to redeem him through humorous courtship.

inextricably bound up with playing can turn not only into tension, but into elation" (Huizinga 21). Initially hesitant to "bind" himself in the bonds of matrimony, Valere comes to the realization that it is not such a bad game if one has a good partner. Through her strategic thinking, Angelica engineers her own happy ending, defeating the mistress of gaming by becoming it. It is then that audiences may wonder to whom the gamester of the title truly refers.

Mary Davys's novella, *The Reform'd Coquet* (1724), is also a story of reclamation from vice, as it chronicles the development of the beautiful and extremely flirty Amoranda, a young girl for whom marriage is repugnant and flattery desirable. Through the tutelage of Formator, a young Marquis (by the name of Alanthus) disguised as an old man, she soon learns the error of her ways and becomes more inured to the patriarchal notion of connubial bliss. Read in this way, the narrative has proved a troublesome text for critics hoping to find within it a validation for feminine agency. In her introduction to the 1999 critical edition of Davys's fiction, editor Martha F. Bowden maintains that the work's "happy ending is itself problematic" since "her 'reform'… should involve silencing and fear and be observable in her growing suspicion of other people" (xxxi). She further asserts that "all Amoranda's sparkle has disappeared… In the final happy scene she is utterly silent" (xxxii). Natasha Sajé similarly posits that the book "represents reform as requiring the silence and disappearance of women" (167). Yet looking at the novel as an appropriation of *As You Like It* helps to partially resolve some of these concerns.[99] While I do not pretend that there are not some troubling facets of the novel (most of which have been ably addressed by the scholars above and others), I posit that the work both retains Amoranda's love

[99] I have not found a sustained treatment of Davys's text as a Shakespearean adaptation of *As You Like It*. The closest is Jan M. Stahl's observation in a footnote to her "Violence, Female Friendship, and the Education of the Heroine in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet*" (2014). She writes, "Davys's use of disguise in *The Reform'd Coquet* is reminiscent of Shakespeare's romantic comedies in which a complex web of disguise, cross-dressing, and confusion is unraveled prior to the characters marrying their ideal mates" (37, ft 6). Natasha Sajé also finds a similarity to *All's Well That Ends Well* in the motif of the bed-trick (172-173).

of play and reaffirms her prerogative of choice. This aspect may be overlooked, however, as it is Alanthus/Formator who takes on the role of love-tutor, rather than Amoranda. Nonetheless, looked at as a pair, their relationship follows many of the tenets of other teasing lovers, and reaffirms their mutual compatibility at the text's end.

It is first important to establish that it is not Amoranda's wit which needs improving, but rather her extreme vanity, as manifested in her coquetry. For all teasing couples, one of the defining features is their exclusivity. Thus, it is not until Amoranda ceases to engage in flirtatious discourse with other men that a performative courtship can take place. As Theresa Braunschneider maintains, "By…transforming a coquettishly radical eroticism into a heterosexually focused trajectory pointing toward a single man, these narratives represent [the coquette's] ultimate embrace of marriage not as acquiescence to the realities of male power but as an ongoing expression of her own power and desire" (102). Indeed, Amoranda's choice remains a top priority to Alanthus/Formator; one of his first addresses to her as her tutor maintains that he will be "very cautious how [he] presume[s] to advise" (25), and throughout the text he leaves Amoranda to her own devices. While she does seek his counsel and advice, he never explicitly orders her to obey him. It falls to Alanthus/Formator to teach Amoranda, but like any good instructor he empowers her to take ownership of her learning.

The couple's suitability is further emphasized by each individual's demonstrated theory of mind. At the outset of the novel, Amoranda receives an anonymous letter which proclaims its purpose is not to "increase the surfeit… [of] so many hundred Declarations" but rather to inform her that she is "neither Angel, nor Goddess, but a Woman, a fine Woman, and there are in this Nation ten thousand such" (22-23). It is later revealed that the note came from none other than Alanthus/Formator (of course), and as such demonstrates his ultimate perspicacity. Knowing that

Amoranda already receives the fawning praise of the seemingly innumerable fops who bedeck her home, the hero goes about distinguishing himself by repudiating the discourse of mawkishness and cutting Amoranda down a proverbial peg or two. Though the heroine's first reaction to such a note is indignation, it is an indignation which later leads to self-inquiry and piqued curiosity. When she later confronts Alanthus about his authorship of the note, issuing the similarity of its handwriting as proof, he cheekily responds, "I did not think, Madam, you would have thought this Letter worth keeping so long" (71). In the paradoxical spirit of teasing couples, his irony belies the larger truth that it was through anti-sentiment that he began to woo Amoranda. His disguise as Formator simply allowed him to continue to do so.

Amoranda's strategic thinking, a characteristic she shares with her future lover, is often demonstrated in her scheme-making, which also highlights her love of play; importantly, it is Altheaus/Formator who consistently joins her in these intrigues throughout the text. When she first finds out that two of her suitors plan to kidnap her in order to either marry or rape her, she plans on disguising two of her servants as herself and her maid. Alanthus/Formator immediately professes his desire "to personate [her]" in the plot, so that he has the pleasure of physically attacking them. Later, when a bedraggled woman comes to her house, revealing that she had been persuaded out of her virginity by an unscrupulous Lord, Amoranda resolves upon wreaking vengeance through an elaborate ruse. Using her knowledge of the Lord's lust against him, she lures him to her home under the pretense that she is left without a guardian. Once more, Alanthus/Formator joins her in this game, avowing, "I applaud your just and generous Design, and am so far from desiring to hinder it, that I will be your Assistant to the utmost of my power" (44). What follows is an elaborate bed-trick, in which Amoranda traps the miscreant Lord into both marrying and sleeping with his abandoned conquest, disguised as she is in the heroine's

own clothing. Amoranda and her tutor serve as silent witnesses, hidden out of sight, and later—according to contemporary custom—open the door on the copulating couple , "each of them a light in their hand, to wish the Bride and Bridegroom Joy" (49). These instances stand out as formative moments in the relationship between Amoranda and Alanthus/Formator, for as Chwe outlines, "almost always [in courtship fiction] a couple's relationship is prefaced by working together to strategically manage, or at least monitor, other people" (141). Through their mutual enjoyment of disguise and play, the two lovers come to know each other to a far more intimate level than would normally be allowed within the traditional courtship pattern.

The end of the novel arrives in a literal conflagration, as the house catches fire one evening, leading Alanthus to rush towards Amoranda sans his Formator disguise. From there he confesses the whole charade, including how he has spent the last few months courting her as himself in order to hear Amoranda confess her affections unwittingly to his elderly alter ego. Amoranda's only quandary is the apparent loss of Formator; she even asks Alanthus to don the beard one final time. If there were any doubt of the validity of her affection, it is in the fact that she has learned to appreciate the elderly man, with whom she was "not very well pleased" at the story's inception (25). It is here that Bowden sees the precipitous decline in Amoranda's agency.[100] However, many scholars overlook a crucial component to the final scene: Amoranda's continued love of play, and Alanthus' willingness to play along. When her hero's sister arrives at the estate, still apparently in the aftermath of the fire, Amoranda begs Alanthus to "put on [his] disguise once more, that [she] may have the pleasure of seeing [his] own Sister as much deceiv'd

[100] Bowden sees Amoranda's parting words to Alanthus' sister (who has also shown up at the estate) as a way of leaving "her story in the male hands of her lover and guardian" (xxxii). Nevertheless, the line she cites as evidence for this is missing a crucial component. Lady Betty "wants an explanation of her brother's white beard," to which Amoranda replies, "for the Scheme of the Beard, since I had no hand in it, I leave it to be explain'd by those that had" (83). It is really not her story to tell at all, and readers may infer that Lady Betty and Amoranda will have several other opportunities to speak to each other, as Amoranda promises her enduring friendship (83).

as I have been." Alanthus immediately "clap'd on the Beard" and the two proceed to pull a trick on the unsuspecting sibling, convincing her that she has arrived at a magic castle, and that Formator is "skill'd in the occult Sciences" (82). Playing games until nearly the penultimate page, Amoranda is as vivacious as ever. Bowden also takes issue with the final line, in which the heroine's reply to Alanthus' proposal "is not recorded" (xxxii). However, Amoranda has already given her consent pages earlier, when she rejoiced over the revelation that her uncle had selected Alanthus to be her spouse (73). At the end of the novel, her lover states that as that the masquerade is finished, they "are now bare-faced, and know one another, as we have determin'd to make each other happy" (84). Having built a relationship over the course of the novel through their love of play, the couple's mutual compatibility is assured. For the first time, words are no longer necessary.

The couples presented in this section each engage with the masquerade in order to secure their love bonds, and participate in an earlier tradition begun by Shakespeare. As Geoffrey Hutchings suggests in his "Disguise as Motif in Romantic Comedy," the playwright's heroines must "paradoxically…discover themselves by disguising themselves" (72). However, this discovery is not one-sided. In each of these texts couples discover each other through the façade of costume. By assuming new personas, they become endowed with a verbal freedom normally disallowed by either gender or social norms. It is in this rhetorical Forest of Arden that performative courtship takes place through the spirit of play, creating play communities last far longer than the games in which they engage.

Antithetical Love and Vexatious Romance in the Tradition of The Taming of the Shrew

If the love stories in the previous section are engineered by duplicity and disguise, the romantic bonds featured here are forged in the fires of open contempt. Each member of these antithetical couples derives caustic pleasure from opposing his or her mate, an opposition which

G. K. Hunter sees as an essential facet of Shakespearean comedy. He writes, "The creation of meaning by antithetical structuring is a technique found everywhere in Shakespeare's romantic comedies and is used everywhere to give shape and continuity to the process of perpetual change that a comic plot demands" (392). Like Katharina's and Petruchio's hostile relationship, these eighteenth-century derivations similarly begin their courtship diametrically opposed but later learn to overcome their divide by performing their like-mindedness through verbal sparring. These couples engage in caustic anti-sentiment in order to form the most sentimental of bonds with one another; thus the "perpetual change" to which Hunter refers manifests itself in the gradual progress of their courtship. By being exposed to characters which are just as contrary as they, shrews can ultimately metamorphose into a suitable mate. While the character of the scolding woman has often been endowed with negative connotations and used as a misogynistic weapon, in the hands of eighteenth-century women writers shrews are loved and desired. In this section, I will first examine *The Taming of the Shrew* and its depiction of antithetical courtship, and then analyze how the scold figure comes to impact Charlotte Lennox's *The Sister* (1762) and *The Female Quixote* (1769), Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816), Hannah Cowley's *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* (1783) and *More Ways Than One* (1784), and Frances Sheridan's *The Discovery* (1763).

In Shakespeare's play, similar (yet adversarial) dispositions reach discursive fruition through the rhetorical device of stichomythic jest, which performatively constructs their romantic bonds by highlighting the equal verbal prowess of each character. Fittingly, Katharina's and Petruchio's relationship begins as a joke: Hortensio confesses that he initially "broach'd in jest" the idea of Petruchio's wooing her (1.2.78). Nevertheless, upon hearing of Katharina's "virtues" Petruchio proclaims, "Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench; / I love her ten times more than e'er

I did: / O, how I long to have some chat with her!" (2.1.156-58). While ten times nothing is still nothing, it is worth noting, as Shirley Nelson Garner does, that at the outset "Kate and Petruchio are both strong-willed and high spirited, and one of Petruchio's admirable qualities that he has the good sense to see Kate's passion and energy as attractive" (112). Petruchio makes the choice to pursue her (and her money), indicating his revealed preferences and perhaps hinting that he and Katharine may share a similar love for rhetorical play (Chwe 105).

From this position of admiration, Petruchio engages Katharina in antithetical repartee that spans nearly one hundred lines (2.1.178-273). The verbal balance required by such a stichomythic exchange evokes the humoral balance of their characters as well, a shared propensity towards strategic thinking. Puns and wordplay punctuate their speech often, permutations of language wrought by their innate ability to be creative, to play. Petruchio mentions that he is "mov'd to woo" Katharine, to which she counters that he should be "remove[d]" from her presence (2.1.194, 196). She proceeds to call him a moveable, or "join'd stool," effectively morphing parts of speech and the meaning of individual words in order to land another rhetorical punch (2.1.198). Their verbal performances evoke Huizinga's discussion of the child-like nature of play, the idea of "making an image of something different, something more beautiful, or more sublime, or more dangerous than what [the child] usually is" (14). Audiences watching the two become enchanted by the "fun" at hand, vitriolic though it may be.[101]

As stated above, performative discourse requires two equally capable rhetoricians who are just as good at listening as they are at speaking; Kate has to listen in order to improvise her

[101] The protean banter between Katharina and Petruchio echoes another aspect of couples' conversation, according to Young: "In conversation, language is traded: voices are brought side by side, respond to each other, play together. Conversations between lovers insist on the ongoing, mutual adjustments of style and word choice, on working to be understood and trying to understand. The moments…are about the relinquishing of individual control and the possibility of shaping an interactional account of a couple's selves and their word" (7).

rejoinders, just as Petruchio must. According to Garner, the banter of these two future lovers forms a battlefield, a field apart from normal discourse: "In Padua, the pair fights mainly through language, a weapon that Kate can wield as well as Petruchio" (114). Keir Elam similarly describes this kind of rhetoric as displaying "[t]he decisive characteristics of… flyting—sustained vituperation, direct statement on the part of the man, sarcastic insinuation on the part of the woman …[what] makes the contest a worthy spectacle, is that the insults should be wittily and inventively varied. It is this witty inventiveness…that is on show" (9). Thus this "witty inventiveness" also amounts to verbal peacocking on the part of Katharina and Petruchio; both are on rhetorical display for the other, and both enjoy the game (even if they are too busy insulting one another to notice). Acerbic discourse functions throughout the text as discursive foreplay. Viewing Katharina's and Petruchio's dialogue in this manner highlights the way in which their speech is performative—it constructs the romantic bond between them even as they superficially fight. In this manner, "language may figure as a dramatic-theatrical 'event' at levels altogether different from that of a directly 'pragmatic' interaction" (Elam 10).

Despite their continual antagonism throughout the play, Katharina and Petruchio appear to share the same temperament, a common theory of mind which enables them to better work together. Petruchio assures Katharina's father, Baptista, that he is

> as peremptory as she proud-minded;
> And where two raging fires meet together
> They do consume the thing that feeds their fury:
> ….……
> So I to her and so she yields to me;
> For I am rough and woo not like a babe. (2.1.127-29, 132-33)

Here Petruchio delineates his similarity to Katharina rather than his difference. Just as she is "proud-minded," he is equally "peremptory." Both are "raging fires" that quell their fury by meeting in strife. His parallel sentence structure emphasizes their dual natures syntactically: "So I to her" and "so she…to me." This rhetorical choice is a surprising one since contemporaneous thought predicated humoral resolution on difference rather than correspondence: "physicians regarded disease as the result of a humoral imbalance, and … healing (and therefore of treatment) as the restoration of balance... Balance was also achieved by … remedies that would counter the qualitative nature of disease, so a hot remedy would cure a cold disease" ("Galen in the Renaissance"). However, just as diamond is the sole substance which can cut another diamond, it is through a paradoxical surfeit of spleen that moderation is achieved and that love bonds are formed.

The play represents an innovative romantic ideal based on resemblance rather than dissonance, even as it features a combatant couple. Petruchio contends that both he and Katharina "are choleric" (4.1.143), just as Peter notes that Petruchio "kills her in her own humour" (4.1.149), becoming "more shrew than she" (4.1.61). Gremio and Tranio depict the couple's union in a parallel couplet, "Why he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend. / Why she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam" (3.2.145-46), illustrating through their discourse their well-suited natures. Bianca paradoxically asserts that her sister, "being mad herself, [is] madly mated" (4.1.233), and Gremio declares that subsequently, "Petruchio is Kated" (4.1.234). Thus the scorching imagery Petruchio initially establishes comes to its fruition here; through their marriage, all discord is resolved.

Nonetheless, a long tradition of scholarship has taken umbrage at the intensity of Katharina's swift about-face at the play's end, and for valid reason. Kate's hitherto salacious

speech is tamed and she is subsequently transformed into the ideal helpmeet so typical of the domestic sphere. She abjures her former attempt to "seek for rule, supremacy, and sway," acknowledging her duty to rather "serve, love, and obey" (5.2.163, 164). Yet other scholars have posited that it is still possible to see this final dialogue as yet another game, another act.[102] For example, in his *Shakespeare's Comedies of Play*, J. Dennis Huston maintains that "the very nature of Kate's performance *as* performance suggests that she is offering herself to Petruchio not as his servant, as she claims, but as his equal in a select society which includes themselves, the playwright, and perhaps a few members of his audience" (64). In a Huizingian sense, the final speech is one last rhetorical romp before Petruchio and Kate go to bed for the evening to consummate physically what they have already constructed in their verbal conversations. It may be the larger, more global jest which puts the punchline on the jest initiated by Hortensio at the play's inception.

Eighteenth-century audiences would have known the story of Katharine and Petruchio through David Garrick's adaptation, which ran throughout the period beginning in 1754.[103] For Susan J. Wolfson, this particular rendition "give[s] unquestioned credit to Petruchio's judgment," as it also gives some of Katharina's final speech to Petruchio (25-26). Contemporary Elizabeth Griffith similarly found the portrayal of Katherina a troubling one, even in Shakespeare's original text: "'the doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance* in the state of marriage' is 'carried, perhaps, rather a little too far'" (qtd. in Novy 7). Such anxieties may stem as well from an abjuration of the shrew figure, which contemporary print culture reflects. In written satire,

[102] See Susan J. Wolfson's thorough account of this vein of scholarship (fn. 25, "Explaining to Her Sisters" in *Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare*).

[103] Charles Allen Conaway's 2004 dissertation, *The Making of the Shrew* traces some of the pre-history to this adaptation (particularly John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* (1668) and Charles Johnson's *The Cobler of Preston* (1716)), and helps to illustrate how the shrew plot would have been in the popular imagination well before Garrick issued his version.

popular euphemisms for shrew include “termagant,” “scold” and “jade,” with behavioral phrases such as “impudent,” “impertinent” and “saucy” serving as variegated shorthand for transgressive behavior.

As in Shakespeare’s play, shrews were specifically aligned with rebellious or over-the-top female speech; particularly because women’s oratory was a topic which encountered perennial debate, lampoons became a simple way of effacing the issue through demonization. Stephen H. Browne, in his “Satirizing Women’s Speech in Eighteenth Century England,” corroborates this stance in his analysis of contemporary caricatures of the speaking woman. In these, female speech became affiliated with “images of perversion, violence, inferiority and absurdity” (29). Fig. 35, *The Coblers Cure for a Scolding Wife* (1813) depicts such an image; in it, a man feverishly sews his wife’s mouth shut as a young woman grins in collusion behind him:

Fig. 33. Rowlandson, Thomas. *The Coblers Cure for a Scolding Wife*. 1813. Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco. *Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*. Web.9 June 2016.

The woman's hands, shaped in a vice-like grip, indicate her former power, despite her current subjugated position. The husband perverts the tools of his trade to exhibit dominance and mastery in the domestic sphere, a trope which is echoed in fig. 36, an anonymously etched work entitled, "The Benefit of a Plaster, or a Cure for a Scold!!!" (1820). In this piece, a husband proffers a plaster mold to cover his wife's ever-running mouth, asserting that by doing so he will "show… [he] is master." His posture remains cool and collected, as his wife's contorts into a railing figure, knocking over teacups and boiling water. The primacy of the husband is accentuated by the approving gaze of the male servant in the window, who looks in on the ensuing battle with a smile. On the wall hangs a notice for a Shakespearean revival of both *The Tempest* and *Taming of the Shrew*, ironic nods to the wife's comportment and personality, respectively.

Fig. 34. *The Benefit of Plaster, or a Cure for a Scold!!!*. 1820. The Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Connecticut. *The Lewis Walpole Library*. Web. 16 January 2015.

Fig. 37, *Tameing a Shrew, or Petruchio's Patent Family Bedstead* (1815), also makes explicit reference to shrew-taming. In it, a sadistic husband threatens his bound wife, whip in hand. Above the bed sits a reminder to "Love Honor and Obey," with the last word written in a much larger font than the rest. The print's title is an ironic one, hearkening to an inherited tradition of patriarchal rule and undermining the sentiment normally attached to the notion of family. The wife's face is contorted with pain and frustration, as the Petruchio of the image lords over her, grinning. Vic Gatrell sees the possibility that the print may be a "brutal satire on the sheer excess of the man's effort at domination" but also acknowledges that "the male gaze upon the female body was layered and complex rather than single… What was seen in such satires would depend upon the beholder's eye" (385-86):

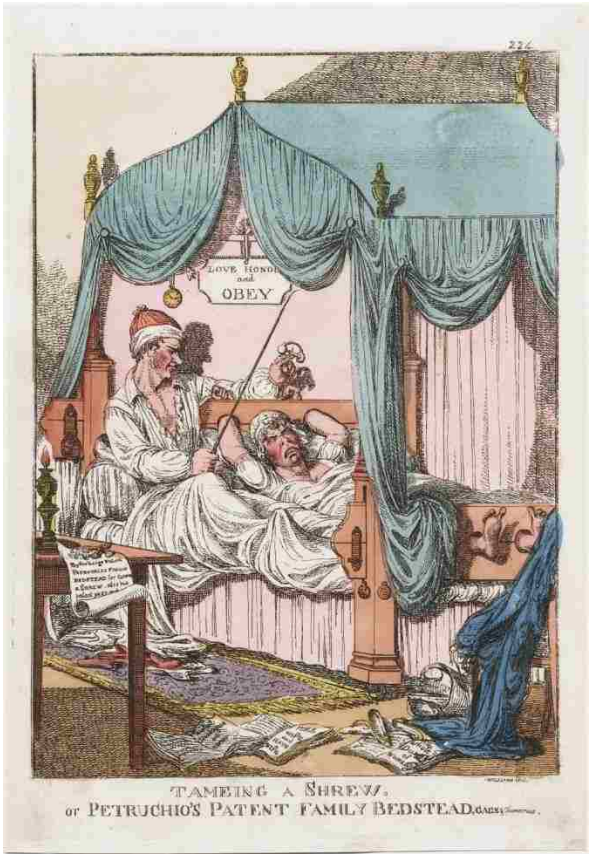

Fig. 35. *Tameing a Shrew, or Petruchio's Patent Family Bedstead*. 1815. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *The Library of Congress.* Web. 3 January 2014.

Women writers were some of these very beholders and while some, like Griffith, were cautious in their reading of feminine agency, others saw the comic potential within Shakespeare's Katharina. The texts featured in this section all include scolds and termagants who use their speech to secure a mate. While some works are subject to the same problems of resituating their heroine in a patriarchal framework, all feature men who abjure the traditional staid woman of quality for a woman of wit and fire. These works celebrate freedom of female speech, rejoicing in the pleasurable and comic vexation such conflicts between the sexes produce.

Charlotte Lennox's *The Sister* and *The Female Quixote*, as well as Jane Austen's *Emma*, rely on another ruling motif of the masquerade: antithesis and paradox. As Castle maintains, "If one may speak of the rhetoric of masquerade, a tropology of costume, the controlling figure was antithesis: one was obliged to impersonate a being opposite, in some essential feature, to oneself" (5). Teasing couples often take part in antithetical discourse which both belies and obscures their mutual complementarity. This tension produces vexation within the teasing couple, or a frustration between what is and what should be, as a result. In *The Sister*, for example, both Miss Autumn and her eventual husband, Mr. Courteney, affect a disdain towards love and romance. Miss Autumn speaks of coquetry in terms akin to Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, indicating that her eyes "are well-disciplined troops; they know how to attack, conquer, pursue, retreat, beg quarter" (8). In order to maintain the martial advantage in any relationship, however, Miss Autumn emphasizes the importance of "throw[ing] a garrison into [a secured lover], and march[ing] off to new conquests." Only then can a true coquette preserve herself from the ultimate "great disgrace…upon [one's] generalship," falling in love (9). Similarly, Mr. Courteney derides sentiment, particularly when confronted with the maudlin discourse of his friend, Clairville, who

declares the object of his affection "an angel." Courteney sardonically observes that "Lovers have a fine creative fancy! It costs them little to make angels, goddesses, nymphs" (3). Rejecting the hyperbolic romanticism of his friend, Courteney inures himself against affection. Mocking his friend's devotion to a "Pastorella… [a] blushing Dryad… with all her innocence and simplicity," he implies as well such a demure temperament would not attract his romantic ardor. Though both Courteney and Miss Autumn indicate their superiority over romantic entanglements, their similar rhetoric espouses a similar language, a common penchant for the sarcastic over the lachrymose.

Both lovers continually affect a disdain not only for affection but more specifically for one another, highlighting through ironic opposition their innate compatibility. Miss Autumn claims that she "despise[s] the rebel" but does not "think him despicable," necessarily. When needled by her bosom friend as to the reason for her sudden about-face, she responds, "is he not handsome? has he not wit, learning, elegance?" Though the readiness of her reply seems to indicate that Miss Autumn has more affection for Courteney than disdain, she immediately retracts her statement, saying, "Despise him—why yes—and yet I do not despise him neither.—I only mean that I do not like him" (10). Masked by the rhetoric of indifference and superiority, Miss Autumn's declaration nonetheless betrays her true romantic feelings. Mr. Courteney likewise disguises his interest with airs of disdain. Though his male companion suggests it is "sight of Miss Autumn [that] has brought" him to a certain walking path, Courteney dismisses his comment and scoffs, "sure, my Lord, you do not imagine I would neglect any serious business for the conversation of a vain coquet?" Courteney uses such a label as a distancing mechanism to detract from his genuine interest in Miss Autumn; he fails to realize that such vain conversation is his serious business, for through it they will mutually build an affective bond.

When his friend counters, "Not unless you were in love," Courteney earnestly avows that he feels nothing for Miss Autumn. He condescends to meet the women as they walk towards them, "since it must be so" (7), still masking his underlying interest.

Their first onstage meeting then functions as a performance of these contradictory impulses, as both would-be lovers assume antithetical positions to one another. Miss Autumn declares to her friend, "to convince you that I do not like [Mr. Courteney], observe how ill I will treat him the next time we meet." Her companion, employing the theory of mind typical of the wry-best-friend archetype, responds enigmatically, "[t]hat will be the way to convince me that you *do* like him." Miss Autumn offers one more observation, one which proves true for the rest of the play: "You have a mind to maintain paradoxes, I perceive." She remains unaware of the truly paradoxical nature of her behavior, for it is in her ostensible repudiation of Mr. Courteney that she actively selects him as her target, demonstrating the exclusivity necessary of the teasing couple. As soon as she sees Mr. Courteney in her line of vision, she states that she "can… not for [her] life resist [her] inclination to teaze him a little" (13). A nearly automatic response to his presence, Miss Autumn's irresistible inclination makes manifest the underlying affection she bears Courteney, and also illustrates her love of play.

Miss Autumn then affects a spirited contrariety to Mr. Courteney in an attempt to draw him into a rhetorical game. "Well, does not this prove what I have often told you," she proffers brightly, "there is not the least sympathy in our minds; you are always sad when I am gay; but I have a mind to be complaisant for once, and will permit you to chuse the humour [sic] I shall be of during the next half hour" (13). Miss Autumn emphasizes their dissonance, particularly in their personalities ("sad" / "gay"), as a source of comedy, deriving teasing pleasure from their mutual contrariety. That she has "often" shared this truth with him implies that such a mode of

speech is typical for the pair; banter is how they speak to each other.[104] Her gift of choice to Mr. Courteney—that he may choose her humor—also echoes Letitia Hardy's speech to Doricourt. Like Cowley's heroine, Miss Autumn too can "be any thing." Mr. Courteney does not wish to join Miss Autumn on their playing field this time, however, choosing to use her own contrary nature against her by affecting disinterest: "you must chuse for yourself… Your smiles and frowns become you… so equally, that I am charmed alike whether you smile or frown." Though Mr. Courteney returns the privilege of choice to Miss Autumn in a similar manner to Doricourt, he does not do so out of genuine love or affection, but affected indifference. His refusal to play along jostles Miss Autumn out of her coquettish security and renders her "disconcerted" by his unresponsiveness. She responds with outright brusqueness when he offers to escort her back to the estate, declaring, "No ceremony, Sir; I can walk without assistance" (14). Sallying a tit for the proverbial tat, Miss Autumn refuses to play by convention since Courteney denied her the joy of her initial game. This kind of outcome is exactly what Mr. Courteney intended, what he predicted based on his strategic thinking: "Piqued by heaven!" he exclaims, "this is better than I expected" (15).

Miss Autumn's discontent continues for the duration of the play as she experiences firsthand the kind of jealousy she once inflicted on so many. Such a reversal reorients the playing field between her and Courteney, redistributing their power dynamics to an eventual equilibrium. When informed (mistakenly) that Mr. Courteney intends to marry another, she cries, "Discomposed! –yes, I feel it but too sensibly… Have I not always affected to despise this man? laughed at, and raillied him continually?" The usually self-possessed aura of the coquette disintegrates here, as Miss Autumn discovers her true feelings. Once the all-conquering general of Cupid's affairs, she now becomes the cherub's prisoner of war. Integral to her discovery,

[104] As Young maintains, "[t]he talk of a couple (what distinguishes their particular talk) is the couple" (7-8).

though, is Miss Autumn's revelation that she has fallen in love *through* laughter and raillery. Though she had often adopted lighthearted banter with other men, Courteney remains the sole lover to actively counter her manipulations with a taste of her own disinterest. Unable to yet process her newfound emotions, Miss Autumn vows to "laugh and railly still" in order to "conceal [her] weakness." She fails to execute this plan when Courteney comes to call her to quadrille, though, and manages only a swift exit after a saucy exchange with him. Courteney revels in her change: "That was spoke in a peevish tone… and her eyes seemed full of tears too. Can that impenetrable heart have feelings! Charming creature! She only wants a little sensibility to make her irresistible" (37). Like Petruchio's antithetical treatment of Katharina, Courteney's affected disregard tempers her "impenetrable" pride and enables her to gain the humility necessary to enter into a mutual partnership. In turning the game against her, Courteney utilizes strategic thinking to manipulate Miss Autumn into realizing what their teasing discourse had already indicated—that their temperaments were actually more alike than different. At the play's end, the two come together, Mr. Courteney and his "dear, saucy, tormenting, lovely" Miss Autumn (57). Ever contrary to the last, she offers him her consent with an air of indifference: "Here is my hand, since it must be so" (73). Importantly, she echoes exactly in her conclusion to the text her lover's opening words, highlighting as well the foundational predestination of all teasing couples: "it must be so."

In Lennox's novel, *The Female Quixote*, the inveterate romance reader Arabella contradicts everything that her fiancé, Mr. Glanville, says, assuming the antithetical disposition of the heroines in her favorite books. Their oppositional banter, usually initiated by Arabella, indicates a mutual inclination beneath their tension. At their first meeting, Arabella "could not help betraying some Surprize at the Gracefulness of [Glanville's] Figure" even though she was

"prepossessed… against any favourable Thoughts" of him (37). When Glanville attempts to kiss her in greeting, she becomes overwhelmed with disgust at his familiarity and "expressed her Indignation by Frowns, but gave him to understand he had mortally offended her." Arabella gives him "a Smile full of Contempt," and repeatedly engages in adversarial behavior. Her attraction to Glanville undercuts her ostensibly shrewish behavior, however, both in this opening scene and throughout the text; beneath her scolding and brusque exterior, Arabella actively engages Glanville in a series of tests which push his affections to their limits. In response to her rudeness, Glanville instead displays the good-humor of a teaser, "endeavour[ing] to railly her out of her ill Humour" and speaking "gaily" to her (38). Though Arabella realizes he possesses "a great deal of merit" (30), she remains "insensible" to his charms, and persists in antagonizing him. "It is not at all surprising," she says, "that you and I should differ in Opinion…I don't remember that ever we agreed in any thing; and, I am apt to believe, we never shall" (31). Arabella's talk hinges on difference rather than similarity, not realizing that in her very repudiation of Glanville she succeeds in wooing him instead. Despite her continual torment of Glanville, Arabella ultimately comes to find that his feelings for her are in fact limitless.

Before the two can achieve their requisite happily ever after, they must overcome the foundational barriers to their relationship. These are first, Arabella's dedication to romance novels, and second, Glanville's initial inability to understand her language. These two obstacles intersect more often than not, and Glanville subsequently resolves to remedy the first by overcoming the second. Regina Barreca notes that Arabella's obsession with romance novels (as well as her delusional application of them to contemporary life) render her "doomed to be separated from the common discourse, the everyday idiom and expression, acceptable to her society. She often speaks a different language from the rest of the people around her, and Lennox

constantly emphasizes Arabella's inability to make herself understood" (36). Like Katharina's unbridled rage, Arabella's devotion to fiction precludes her from participating in reality, from ever truly connecting with another person. Essentially, they render her clueless in Chwe's terminology. Glanville remains the sole person who actually attempts to understand Arabella; he displays his humble theory of mind from his first meeting with her: "tell me, I beseech you, how I must behave to please you; for I should be extremely glad to be honoured with your good Opinion…only let me know how you would be approached for the future" (38). Instead of balking at her irrational behavior or demanding that she immediately change, Glanville continually demonstrates an almost preternatural patience with Arabella as he strives to comprehend her illogicality. Willing to play by her rules, he merely asks to be informed as to what they are. Glanville's willingness to see from Arabella's perspective also enables his strategic thinking: "He found her Usage of him was grounded upon Examples she thought it her Duty to follow; and, strange as her Notions of Life appeared, yet they were supported with so much Wit and Delicacy, that he could not help admiring her, while he foresaw, the Oddity of her Humour would throw innumerable Difficulties in his Way, before he should be able to obtain her" (64-65). Glanville here demonstrates both his appreciation for Arabella's flawed perception and her natural intelligence. The word "foresaw," a synonym for his perception, indicates that Glanville can use his knowledge of Arabella's preferences in order to achieve his desired union with her. Though Arabella's erratic behavior often functions as a source of humor throughout the novel, it also forces Glanville to both consciously come to know the woman he will marry as an individual and work to earn her regard.

While Glanville derives a comic delight from Arabella's contradictory behavior, and even engages in it with her, his repeatedly futile attempts to bridge the societal and rhetorical gap

between them invariably produce emotional effects, usually on the level of vexation. Glanville is "almost mad with Vexation" (44), Arabella "coloured with Vexation" (73), Glanville is "ready to die with Vexation" (147) at one point, then becomes "excessively Vexed at [Arabella's] persisting in error" (171) since he is "exposed to perpetual vexations" (175). And yet in direct juxtaposition to this vexation is a propensity towards shared laughter. Glanville "endeavour[s] to stifle a laugh" (63), "could hardly forbear laughing" (182) and "could hardly help smiling" (171-72). The incongruous tensions between Glanville's game of love and Arabella's persistent allegiance to the laws of romance generate the comedy of the book itself. These instances of laughter and smiles betray a loving mutuality beneath the chafing dissonance between the two characters. Despite their sex-antagonism, indeed because of it, their romantic bond is effected. While Arabella regains her sanity at the novel's close, her quixotic behavior results in the ultimate paradox: it is the very *un*sentimental discourse she shares with Glanville that proves their ultimate compatibility through incompatibility.

The ending of *The Female Quixote* has often met with critical disapprobation. After believing herself in danger of being attacked by potential rapists, Arabella jumps into the Thames and contracts a nearly fatal illness as a result. Entreated on her would-be deathbed by a minister to desist in her folly, Arabella comes to realize the error of her ways and vows to remedy her behavior. She declares to Glanville, "I am so happy as to be desired for a Partner for Life by a Man of your Sense and Honour, I will endeavour to make myself as worthy as I am able of such a favourable Distinction" (324), and the two finally come together in marriage. Braunschneider writes in response that "just about no one actually buys that Arabella's is an uncoerced choice or a truly happy ending" (134). In like manner, Barreca deems Arabella's "last speech… reminiscent of, and as unsatisfying as, Kate's last speech in *The Taming of the Shrew*"

(43). However, Arabella's swift reversal merely reflects the ephemeral nature of play: "Play begins and then at a certain moment it is 'over'. It plays itself to an end" (Huizinga 9). After a series of episodes, several placing both herself and Glanville in serious risk, her schemes are merely played out to make way for a new game with her lover. Though it may be tempting to "read the move from courtship to marriage as an inversion in which the commander becomes obeyer and vice versa" (Braunschneider 137), Arabella's degree of obeisance to Glanville simply parallels the subjugation he has had to her romantic whims for the entirety of the novel. When examined in this way, their relationship arrives at a kind of narrative equilibrium, as each mutually subsumes his or her desires to the pleasures of their intended. Importantly, Glanville responds to Arabella's final speech by "kiss[ing] the Hand she gave him with an emphatic Silence" (324). After two volumes' worth of frustrated vexation, the two no longer need to debate and argue, but simply coexist. Though Arabella affects the contradictory, shrewish behavior typical of a romance heroine, Glanville finally succeeds in taming her through patience and love.

Jane Spencer corroborates this stance by highlighting the meta-textual incongruity that derives from the interactions between the heroine and her suitor: "Glanville's endeavors to guide Arabella towards truth lead him deeper into romantic fiction…Arabella relinquishes her role as heroine, but not until she is sure of love from a man who offers all the devotion of a hero" (191).[105] Although the novel in many ways erases Arabella's love of and dependence on romance fiction, it performs the very same conventions it seems to condemn. In doing so, the book itself embodies a kind of teasing titillation for its readers, a granting of and playing with convention

[105] Theresa Braunschneider similarly asserts that though Glanville "hasn't fulfilled the romance requirements of slaying dragons or living in a cave on Arabella's behalf, [he] *has* fulfilled the eighteenth-century reform plot's requirement of combining the roles of guide and protector to prove himself worthy of the heroine's reoriented desire" (133).

even as it resists it. As Barreca notes, the novel's conclusion retains romantic language, a sign that "Perhaps Lennox cannot happily abandon such a free-spirited, independently-minded young woman to 'solid satisfaction' of the kind she seemed to despise" (44). Importantly, Lennox takes care to point out that "Mr. *Glanville* and *Arabella* were united… in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind" (383). Although initially masked by their frustrating interaction with one another, the couple shares the intellectual and emotional capacity necessary to create a lasting relationship.

The links between *The Female Quixote* and Jane Austen's *Emma* are, as Elaine M. Kauvar has discussed, pervasive. "[B]oth grow up without a mother," she writes, "…both are egotistical and are misled by their delusions. Broadly speaking, they resemble each other in their imaginative fabrication of incidents" (218). Beyond these similarities, however, the two novels also share portraits of teasing, oppositional courtship. From his first appearance, Mr. Knightley is defined as a character that refuses to validate the eponymous heroine's vanity: he is "one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them." This freedom of speech is what contributes to their romantic suitability, even as they spar with barbed words and antithetical dispositions. The fact that he is "the only one" who can be honest with Emma corroborates both his exclusivity as a suitor and the special nature of their dialogue, their shared notion of rhetorical play. Emma defines their relationship in one of her few moments of genuine clarity: "Mr. Knightley loves to find fault with me you know—in a joke—it is all a joke. We always say what we like to one another" (5). Speaking in derisive jest, Emma and Knightley also actively perform a courtship with one another, enlivened by their verbal freedom.

While this liberty is appropriate in the context of Emma and Knightley's teasing, which stems from their equality in both wit and societal stature, Emma's misappropriation of her love of play creates many—if not all—of the conflicts within the text. With the arrogance and pride of a game master, Emma wreaks havoc in the lives around her, rendering her slightly shrewish and in need of remedy (or taming). She begins by giving delusions of grandeur to Harriet Smith, the "natural daughter of somebody" (13). Playing with the conventions and rules of her regulated society, Emma encourages Harriet to aim for a higher match than the lowly farmer, Mr. Martin, who seeks her hand. This manipulation results in broken hearts all around Highbury, including Emma's own. Emma's most scolding moment, however, happens during an excursion to Box Hill, wherein the titular heroine breaks all rules of common propriety. Playing a game in which each person must submit "one thing very clever, be it prose or verse, original or repeated—or two things moderately clever—or three things very dull indeed" to Emma for judgment, an impoverished chatterbox named Miss Bates "good naturedly" attests, "I shall be sure to say three dull things as soon as ever I open my mouth, shan't I?" (242). Emma corrects her, saying, ""Ah! ma'am, but there may be a difficulty. Pardon me—but you will be limited as to number—only three at once" (243). In her reassertion of the rules of the game, Emma ironically violates every statute of polite society. Becoming a Huizingian "spoil-sport," she has "shatter[ed] the play-world itself," by drawing the curtain to reveal "the relativity and fragility of the play-world… and [robbing] play of its *illusion*—a pregnant word which means literally 'in-play'" (Huizinga 11). Emma has committed not only a societal sin, but one of proper gamesmanship. Importantly, it is fellow teaser Knightley who reminds Emma of her error in applying their freedom to one who is not her "equal in situation" (246). Displaying the theory of mind necessary to place

himself in Miss Bates' position, Knightley feelingly communicates the severity of Emma's misstep.

It is only after Emma repairs her blunder that she and Knightley can resume their normal play. His words "most forcibly struck" at Emma's conscience and in penance she visits Miss Bates the following day (246). Seeing Knightley upon her return home, Emma believes that "he had not forgiven her" (252). This conception quickly changes when Knightley finds out her whereabouts from her father: "It seemed as if there were an instantaneous impression in her favour, as if his eyes received the truth from hers, and all that had passed of good in her feelings were at once caught and honoured." Seemingly able to read each other's thoughts through their shared gaze, Knightley and Emma display Chwe's relation of *nunchi*, the Korean word for "eye-reading." As Chwe points out, "much research on understanding the minds of others is about how people see each other's eyes" (17). When Emma and Knightley look at each other, their ability to mutually understand one another is "instantaneous." Moments later, Knightley makes a motion to kiss Emma's hand, but draws it back. Although Emma perceives that "He would have judged better… if he had not stopped," she nonetheless values this moment of peace, of "perfect amity" (253). Out of one of their most contentious conflicts comes a semblance of their future compatibility, highlighting the importance of their tempestuous speech in creating their romantic bond.

Like the antithetical courtship of Arabella and Glanville, that of Emma and Knightley is defined by its vexatious characteristics which nonetheless belie genuine attachment. Although the text begins with Emma's utopian existence, informing readers that she "had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her," her relationship with Knightley hinges on this state of emotional unrest (1). After Emma's interference in Harriet's

engagement to Mr. Martin, Knightley is "very much vexed" and "provoked…exceedingly." Likewise, "Emma remained in a state of vexation" (42). Later in the novel, Mr. Knightley responds to Emma's interest in his rival, Frank Churchill, "with a degree of vexation" (92). Even when the two are not explicitly in conflict, Emma resorts to exasperating behavior. Though all is well in planning her ball, Emma "began to adopt as the next vexation Mr. Knightley's provoking indifference about it" (146). At the aforementioned Box Hill episode, Emma is "vexed beyond what could have been expressed" after receiving Knightley's castigation (246). Much of this frustration stems from the chasm between the depth of their feelings and their mutual blindness to them. While audiences may detect the irony behind Emma's curiosity towards Knightley's anger about Frank Churchill, both lovers remain clueless to the true state of affairs. In the usual course of teasing courtship, it is not until both discover their mutual inclinations that these tensions are resolved.

Despite being the two most gifted strategic thinkers in the text, both Emma and Knightley display an ignorance of the true aim of the rhetorical game they have been playing for years. Chwe describes this tension in the vocabulary of play: "what flusters Emma and Mr. Knightley most is the possibility of being kicked off the team and replaced by another" (142). Their exclusivity threatened by outsiders, both Emma and Knightley are finally forced to confront their own blindness to their bond, their inability to strategize about themselves. However, this bond is one that readers have been privy to since their first conversation. Penny Gay describes Emma and Mr. Knightley's "bantering affectionate conversation [as that of] two who will obviously become lovers," since it is an "unconscious demonstration of their compatibility and mutual attraction" (*Jane Austen and the Theatre* 133, 81). In her "Women and Eloquence in Shakespeare and Austen," Gay similarly maintains that Emma's "banter with Mr. Knightley

earlier in the novel demonstrates their Shakespearean compatibility" (470).[106] Through their shared conversations, both characters perform their courtship for not only themselves, but for the spectators of their verbal play. Although Mr. Knightley famously contends, "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more" (282), he does not perceive the fundamental paradox which is present for all teasing couples: it is through their talk that their love is engendered and through theatrical artifice that their true feelings are revealed.

Hannah Cowley's *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* (1783) similarly features a female protagonist with verbal acuity and saucy archness. In it, Olivia takes on the persona of a shrew in order to protect her independence and secure her right to choose a mate. Throughout the text, she is called a scold, termagant, and even a Xantippe, a term which the 1737 *Bacchus and Venus* notes is not merely "the Name of *Socrates*'s scolding Wife : who never could move his Patience, tho' by premeditated and repeated Injuries" but also a term for "a Scold [or] any Shrew" (274). The term stayed in usage throughout the period and also makes its appearance in contemporary print culture, as fig. 38 illustrates. In it, Xantippe, her face contorted in a rage, pours from her balcony a bedpan onto the unsuspecting Socrates below. A soldier, mother, and child look on in glee. Throughout the play, Olivia derives a similar joy in creating havoc and vexation in the lives of those closest to her. When confronted by her father with the ultimatum that she either marry or be placed in a convent unless she change her froward ways, she claims a familial tie to the infamous wife: "tho' [she]… was a Grecian, I have some reason to believe her descendants match'd into our family; and never shall my tame submission disgrace my ancestry" (12). She

[106] Gay also says that the Box Hill episode leads Knightley to "tame" Emma, but maintains that since he does so "in private, like a true (indeed ''knightly'') gentleman," he does not exactly align with the "sixteenth-century swaggerer Petruchio" (470).

then proceeds to treat two would-be suitors with every air of disdain, cementing her persona and ensuring her continued liberty.[107]

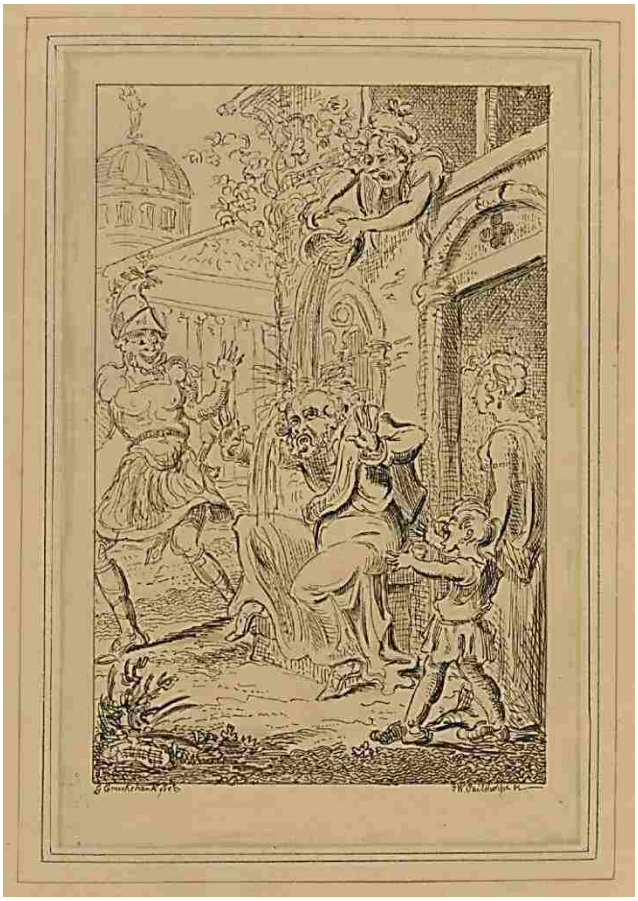

Fig. 36. Pailthorpe, Frederick William, after George Cruikshank. *Untitled*. 1820. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 16 January 2015.

Her relationship to another unruly ancestor, namely Katharina, becomes literalized when she turns away Don Garcia, her first onstage suitor. After experiencing her unbridled rage and questioning her father as to why he has "never curb'd this intemperate spirit," Garcia offers

[107] Olivia's strategies for turning away lovers nearly always stem from opposition. She relates one close call with a man whom she may have had to marry had she "not luckily discovered his antipathy to cats, and so scar'd the hero, by pretending an immoderate passion for young kittens" (15). Another claims to adore her independence and free thinking, until she proclaims that real "taste and singularity" comes from doing what no one else would dare to do: "On the leafless trees I wou'd hang green branches—the labour of silk worms, and therefore *natural*; whilst my rose shrubs and myrtles shou'd be scented by the first perfumers in Italy—*Unnatural* indeed, but therefore singular and striking" (30).

Olivia the parting salvo, "perhaps you may meet a Petruchio, gentle Catherine, yet." Offended by the comparison, Olivia offers one better: "But no gentle Catherine will he find me, believe it.—Catherine! why she had not the spirit of a roasted chestnut—a few big words, an empty oath, and a scanty dinner, made her as submissive as a spaniel. My fire will not be so soon extinguished" (13). Garcia listens to this harangue but has no intention of being her Petruchio; he leaves with the typical politesse of an eighteenth-century gentleman. By owning the title of scold, and acting accordingly, Olivia succeeds in winnowing out ineffective suitors with the fire of her discourse. Determined to out-shrew a shrew, she proclaims that she "long[s] to set a pattern to those milky wives, whose mean compliances degrade the sex" (12).

Throughout the play, witty speech is used as a thematic device to both further women's agency and also illustrate mutual compatibility. One of Olivia's primary complaints about her suitors is the difficulty she feels in conversing with them; one had "a very pretty kind of conversation," the audience learns, "like a parenthesis… it may be all left out, and never miss'd" (14). Obviously, the key lover (especially if audiences consider the play's alignment with *The Taming of the Shrew*) must be blessed with gifts of banter. It is here that the audience enjoys the foreknowledge typical of the teasing relationship, and can easily identify the hero, Don Julio, based on his meeting of essential criteria. When warned by his friend of Olivia's smart language, he responds, "Heav'n be prais'd! I love female prattle. A woman's tongue can never scare me" (41). Don Julio establishes his penchant for sharp speech when he meets Don Carlos, a man who has run away from his wife because she fainted too often and cried all of the time, leaving him nothing but "hysterics for twenty-four honeymoons more" (4).[108] Don Julio abhors such

[108] This sentimental wife later redeems herself in the tradition of Viola from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Frustrated by her husband's wandering ways, she resolves to disguise herself as a man in order to woo her husband's mistress. When asked how she secured the love of another woman, she advises the use of contrariety: "I was now attentive—now gay—then tender—then careless. I strove rather to convince her that I was charming, than that I myself was

sentiment and declares that "so much sweetness in a wife, wou'd be downright maukish [sic]—I like the little acerbities which flow from quick spirits, and a consciousness of power.—One may as well marry a looking-glass as a woman who constantly reflects back one's own sentiments, and one's own whims" (74). Audiences know he will receive just such a woman in Olivia.

After a series of comic mishaps and no less than four sets of disguised identities, Olivia and Don Julio finally receive their happy ending. Olivia promises her father that she has no concern over marrying Don Julio, and that it is, in fact, her choice: "Command me to sacrifice my *petulance*, my *liberty* to him, and Iphigenia herself, could not be more obedient" (26). Here Olivia reveals her essential strategy all along; it has been through her petulance that she has gained her liberty, and through it also that she has secured her love. When her past behavior of "break[ing] out like a tigress" has been revealed to Don Julio (who has known her only as a witty maid), she confesses that she truly is a shrew "to all mankind—but one" (82). Forgoing all of his prior hesitance towards the conjugal state, Don Julio cries, "But one! Oh, might that excepted one, be me!" (82). Here the two lovers illustrate the exclusive nature of play, and of the bond they have created through their banter with one another. Jeffrey N. Cox suggests that such verbal compatibility yet belies a physical suitability: "As throughout comedy… the ability to engage in witty sexual banter is a sign of more immediately sexual abilities… finding a mate who can make bold strokes in conversation, Olivia and Julio can be confident of bold strokes in bed" (369). Only by performing their courtship by teasing speech can they then literalize the sexual undertones of their repartee.

Cowley's *More Ways Than One* (1784) chronicles the courtship of Miss Archer, a "not so extremely handsome" coquette who delights in using her wit and wordplay to amuse not only

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charm'd; and when I saw love's arrow quivering in her heart, instead of falling at her feet, sung a triumphant air, and remember'd a sudden engagement" (21).

others, but herself (4). Faced with the ultimatum of an older guardian who will marry if she does not (thus forcing her to lose her home and status), Miss Archer resolutely chooses to remain single, even giving her caretaker a "fool's cap with bells" to celebrate his upcoming nuptials (4). When questioned about her obstinacy, she merely responds that she is not ready to "give up the right of making conquests yet; --when my time comes to retire from the scene of action, I'll pick out the most constant of my adorers, go gravely with him to church, drive soberly to the seat of his ancestors, grow a dutiful [wife], study family receipts and made wines" (6). Archer's use of phrases like "gravely" and "soberly" contradict her naturally ebullient character, and portray the connubial state as tedious and dull. Despite the impending monotony, Archer importantly does not refuse to marry; she rather demonstrates her personal choice in terms of when she will wed and her prerogative of selection in terms of to whom.

The male protagonist of the play, Carlton, has already made his selection: the "*captivating*" Miss Archer, whose "voice is melody; and there is elegant mind in every motion" (29). Conversing with his friend, Bellair, who has been feigning mortal illness in order to receive the caresses of his doctor's ward,[109] Carlton confides that his ideal wife would be one "alive to every enjoyment of taste and feeling! … [she] should join in conversation with grace, than shrink from it, overpowered by her blushes; and that she should make the men afraid of her wit, rather than allure them by her simplicity" (15). Audiences easily perceive his suitability to Miss Archer, especially when Bellair attempts to dissuade his comrade of his suit: "*Elegant* mind, do you call it? I am sure her's [sic] is a most insolent one. –I knew her abroad; and this woman, who in your

[109] This sentimental sub-plot derives its humor from its very pathos. When Bellair reveals to Carlton that his "nurse" is largely untutored and wholly ignorant of the world, the latter asks, "Is it so very charming to be a school-master?" (15). Bellair's response, "To unite the characters of lover an instructor, seems to me the most interesting of human situations," might ironically allude to Rousseau's *Emile* (1762). Indeed, her innocence largely drives the humor at several junctures in the play. At one point the simple girl, despairing that her "sick" lover may die, earnestly attempts to teach herself how to sketch so that she might retain his portrait. When her guardian comes in and catches her drawing, he asks, "what's this? a flower pot?" (18).

opinion is made up of melody, sweetness, and witchery, is the most perverse, the most capricious, the most proud… there is hardly a man of your acquaintance who will not subscribe to my opinion of her" (29). Here Bellair's parallel syntax introduces the overarching motif of antithesis and contrariety; for every positive Carlton perceives, there is an apparent counter-balance of shrewishness. However, Carlton's untraditional preference, as echoed in his earlier beliefs on women's participation in conversation, finds its additional outlet in his penchant for the unpredictable. Bellair gives up his attempt, and permits Carlton to "kneel, sigh, weep, and—be despised!" (29).

Carlton's reply not only relates his innate theory of mind and strategic thinking skill sets; it also ties the play to its Shakspearean antecedent. He scoffs, noting that "with a woman of *her* character, I should [not] pursue so *beaten* a track. No, no; I have resolv'd to woo her, but it shall be by an appearance of indifference. I'll set her heart in a blaze by my coldness, and conquer her with slights" (29). Knowing that other men have tried and failed to woo Archer in the conventional means, he infers that she might favor a different track. Already, Carlton displays his romantic suitability for her in his ability to acknowledge and anticipate her preferences. His speech remains riddled with paradox and opposition, by affecting an unresponsive nature and using similar hot and cold imagery that Petruchio did before him. In a happy accident, Carlton runs across the perfect scheme by speaking to an aspiring satirist by the name of Sir Marvel, who has just published a scathing ditty about Archer in the newspaper which "tears her like a bramble bush" (32). The lover begs him to "do me the favour to give *me* for the author," and sets about meeting Archer for their very first conversation (32).

What then follows is a tumultuous courtship built around stichomythic banter and saucy asides. Informed that she will meet her satirist, Miss Archer declares, "I should like it above all

things. I have spent a life in hearing flatteries and falsehoods—let me for once see a man who has the courage to speak what he thinks" (37). While she speaks this speech in the heat of embarrassment, having recently read the scathing satire, it also reveals that Carlton's foresight was both trenchant and accurate. Carlton then comes on to the scene, hardly acknowledging Archer's presence. After boisterous exchange, those observing their verbal performance acknowledge that the usually in-control Archer "is finely nettled" (37).

Fittingly, Archer and Carlton's first declarations of love are laced with not a little verbal arsenic. She proclaims that "I would have you love me, I would have you adore me—that your punishment may be severe; for if I could think on you with any sentiments but those of contempt, I should despise myself" (81), while he responds, "I'll have thee—Yes, by Heaven! Thou dear, proud, bewitching slut, I'll have thee, spite of every artifice that coquetry and female *sweetness* can devise" (82). Though rife with conflict, their banter highlights their innate compatibility, a fact which Archer similarly perceives, but remains hesitant to reveal. Behind closed doors she muses, "What a peculiar fate is mine! to receive a declaration of love from the only man whose lips I ever wish'd to hear it from, and yet, to be convey'd in such a way, as to give me more pain than pleasure" (87). The irony for Archer, and indeed for all teasing couples, is that pain and pleasure become ineluctably related in such verbal play.

Their conversations have nonetheless cemented the bonds between the two, and as the final scene illustrates, antithetical behavior is what will not only bring them together, but keep them so. After a final argument which has Archer "seeming to bite her tongue with vexation" (88), Carlton reveals his true intentions to wed her: "why [I mean] to marry you, Petulance! to give you a right to plague me for ever. What an acquisition, for a woman of spirit! Oh, I feel already the horrors of my future fate, but I am resolv'd to go through it" (89). Carlton's speech

though laden with traditional shrew-vocabulary like "Petulance," "plague" and "horrors," nonetheless betrays his emotional attachment through verbal irony. His panegyric, that she is "a woman of spirit," also implies that he does not expect her to change her behavior post-marriage, despite what their closing speeches may imply. Carlton declares that she feels he has "a kind of resistless impudence about" him which she "love[s] for its novelty" (90), and Archer agrees. She avows that she will consent to marry so long as he will allow her to "be a tyrant for two whole years," and serve as "the most humble and devoted of [her] slaves." Carlton cheekily agrees, "For two months…but not one hour longer," but neither he nor Archer (nor the audience) really believes it (93).

Frances Sheridan's *The Discovery* (1762) similarly highlights the almost indiscernible difference between teasing and pleasing. Though a sub-plot to the main action of the play, the newly-wedded couple (Sir Harry Flutter and his wife) act as a major source of comedy and also serve as the foremost depiction of courtship, as they must learn to live and love one another. It takes the sagacity of Lady Medway to perceive that the two are meant to be, for their splenetic fighting need only be resituated in the context of play. When the work begins, Lady Medway declares the young couple "as wretched a pair as ever met in wedlock, perpetually quarrelling" (5). However, their verbal pugilism displays their mutual theory of mind, as well as their capacity for wit. Typical exchanges between the two feature balanced phrases of combat. Lady Flutter informs her spouse that "A battledore and shuttlecock would be fitter for you than a wife," to which he counters, "let me tell your pertness, a doll would be properer for you than a husband." She rejoins that he "will be a boy" all of his life, even as he maintains that she will "be a fool" all of hers (31). When sitting with their mutual friend, the two become so enraptured in their own argument that it provokes the acquaintance to cry, "Pray, pray good people, am I to be

left out of the conversation?" Their only response is further fighting; Sir Harry asserts that "Lady Flutter is so extremely quick in her repartees, that it [is] very hard to put in a word," just as his wife counters that "Sir Harry is so immoderately fond of hearing himself talk, that he does not desire either of us to give him any interruption" (59). While their badinage is amusing to audiences, and never so serious as to damage the comedic nature of the play, it does impede the progression of their relationship, as well as lead Lady Flutter into a near affair with Lord Medway.

It is soon discovered that Sir Harry has been going to Lord Medway for instruction on how to best vex his wife. Lord Medway, seeking any way of gaining Lady Flutter as a mistress, has been only too happy to tutor him as to how real men tame their women. Sir Harry thus learns the "sort of sneering, ironical treatment, that…never …fail of nettling a woman to the quick…the true art of tormenting" (10). Lady Medway learns of her husband's intended affair and immediately sets about correcting the couple's relationship. Realizing that their teasing is merely foreplay without the play, she begins an almost Huizingian boot camp to salvage their marriage. Using strategic thinking to bring them back together, Lady Medway also succeeds in outsmarting her husband out of an affair.

Lady Medway begins by establishing clear rules so that the playing field can become redefined, and with it the game more largely. She proposes to Lady Flutter that if she "will be ruled by [her] for one week, nay but for three days, Sir Harry and [she] shall be as happy a couple as any in England" (80). Having secured her consent and rule of choice, Lady Medway then outlines her plan, which is based on slightly modifying their already-compatible humours. She claims that both have "good nature" and that if Lady Flutter takes the lead, he will undoubtedly follow. Lady Flutter is skeptical, but gives in "only for once, just for a trial" (82).

The game goes off without a hitch, and the dialogue in the next scene reads only slightly different in its syntax. Sir Flutter, astonished by the change in his once-shrewish wife, observes that "There is something devilish pleasant in hearing her talk so, if the humour would but last." Lady Flutter retorts, "Sir Harry, it will be your own fault if it does not." The two unite forces and despite their mutual affection persist in engaging in teasing discourse. Sir Harry calls her a "Sweet Rogue" and "hussy" and scene directions give a clear indication of their childlike playing: "*they go out romping together*" (89), "*Enter Sir HARRY and Lady FLUTTER, arm in arm*" (99), *"Sir Harry and Lady Flutter burst out a-laughing*" (101). Even Lord Medway, the once-designing philanderer, notes that the two appear "so much of one mind."

It is important that the healing of their marriage stems not from overtly maudlin or sentimental discourse, but rather a reevaluation of the ironic and teasing modes in which Sir Harry and Lady Flutter were already proficient. Lady Medway perceived their similar humour, and it only took the two to realize that their teasing could be just as pleasing as it was vexatious. At the end of the play they have a near regression to their old modes of speech, but even that hiccup further illustrates the slippery relationship between wooing and warring discourse. The final lines reaffirm their active choice to be "happy if [they] are inclined to continue so," if only they make their relationship a mutually-beneficial game (139).

In their appropriations of the shrewish figure, women writers transformed the misogynist potential of the narrative by pairing their protagonists with men who value their spirit and verbal acuity. Although the antithetical opposition of temperaments may create emotions of vexation and chaos, these same feelings remain part and parcel of the playful climate of the period. Through their fighting and testing, couples overcome their differences and work towards a rhetorical truce (albeit a temporary one).

"I Know You, Do You Know Me?": Similar Humo(u)rs in the tradition of Much Ado about Nothing

Language figures as an active construction of love in *Much Ado about Nothing*, creating the romantic bond between Beatrice and Benedick despite their apparent aggression towards one another.[110] From the outset, the audience discovers that "there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signor Benedick and [Beatrice]. They never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them" (1.1.57-60). This skirmish of wit functions in much the same way as Katharina's and Petruchio's repartee does, despite the play's repeated critique of their verbal jousting. Benedick, faced with the prospect of meeting Beatrice, protests, "O God, sir, here's a dish I love not: I cannot endure my Lady Tongue" (2.1.251-52) He is ironically blind to the fact that "Tongue" will be what binds them. Leonato contends that Beatrice "mocks all her wooers out of suit" (2.1.322-23), again ignorant of the ways in which Beatrice mocks her wooers *into* suit. This equation of words with love continues with Don Pedro's assertion that Claudio "wilt be like a lover presently / and tire the hearer with a book of words" (1.1.287-88). Beatrice likewise makes a comparison between Benedick and "my lady's eldest son, [who is] evermore tattling" (2.1.9). Finally, Leonato, additionally proving his unawareness, contends that if Beatrice and Benedick "were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad" (2.1.325-26).

However, madness and love are not mutually exclusive. The aggressive repartee of Beatrice and Benedick mirrors their romantic ties much like that of Katharina and Petruchio. Just as the latter pair displayed equivalent rhetorical dexterity, so too do the former. This can especially be seen in their first scene together (1.1.110-139), an observation that Thomas J. Scheff corroborates in his "Gender Wars: Emotions in *Much Ado about Nothing*," with his

[110] Young suggests this pattern in her reading of the play, arguing that "Benedick and Beatrice must continuously take into account the other's words, and speak words back, a process that ongoingly revises their understandings of themselves and each other. There's no plot to be made here, just the repetition of their routines into marriage" (106).

contention that "Since both of the contenders are present, and each seems capable of defending his/herself, the skirmishes themselves can be considered to be fair fights between equals" (153). This "fair fight" features the same kinds of verbal perambulations found in the wordplay between Katharina and Petruchio, discursive gymnastics in which "[a] single initial proposition may spawn an indefinitely protractable series of 'parasitic' returns and variations: this is the generative principle behind the close-knit interweaving of move and countermove in the flyting" (Elam 81). Interestingly, here flyting takes on certain procreative characteristics: a kind of "generative principle" which simultaneously engenders the couples' romantic bonds. Likewise, the verbal fruitfulness of the lovers' discursive quarrels may in fact mirror their potential fertility as a united couple.

What some critics see as the triumph of *Much Ado about Nothing* lies in its portrait of a mutually-supportive, loving relationship, one that is yet founded upon verbal repartees. Through Shakespeare's achievement in Beatrice, "Language, like action… no longer falls exclusively within the male purview; eloquence no longer is merely a weapon in the assault upon female chastity…[Shakespeare's] females poke fun at male discursive practices: whether adored or despised, they comment on men's idolatry from the margins" (Gajowski 21). Beatrice's agency stems largely from her ability to speak, to play with language in a game of her own "merry" design. Beatrice's adroit wit endows her with the natural propensities necessary to woo such an avowedly unromantic man as Benedick; indeed, in their first onstage combat she proves the superior: "Beatrice gets not only the first word, but also the last" (Scheff 157). As Anthony J. Lewis maintains in his *The Love Story in Shakespearean Comedy*, "there is little wonder at the end concerning the marriage of Beatrice and Benedick, not so much because they have been more realistically handled as because Beatrice has all along been an integrated personality, a

woman unique in Shakespeare for not having had to disguise herself, to create a fictitious persona in order to help a man and revive a relationship" (Lewis 180). Beatrice, rather than relying on the artificial conventions of the genre in which she lives, relies solely on her own intellect to effect the bonds between her and her mate (a mate even she failed to realize was her own). The means to these bonds are located entirely on the level of their belligerent discourse, for it is only there that both partners have an opportunity to speak for themselves.

Unlike the potentially troubling ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*, where it remains in partial doubt whether Katharina participates in the ultimate prank, *Much Ado about Nothing* situates both lovers within a jest that functions both on the level of the play's plot structure and the level of the audience's awareness of its inevitable conclusion. Through the employment of dramatic irony, the play allows the viewers to share in the delight of Don Pedro's aspiration "to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th'one with th'other" (2.1.338-39). While much of this enlightened position is due to the fact that audiences are "in" on the charade, what also contributes to the dramatic irony is the degree to which audiences "know" that the lovers are "meant to be," perceiving that "they never become merely dupes since…Beatrice and Benedick are in love already" (Blake 58).[111] As Karen Newman observes in her *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character*, the lovers' speech ironically belies their own initial avowals of bachelor and spinsterhood, respectively. For Benedick, "The modal verbs he uses are *shall* and *will*, not *should* and *would*, future rather than subjunctive; his language betrays his openness to loving Beatrice" (Newman 116). The only way that the jest can work is if the two lovers already bear some degree of affection towards one another and choose to play along. The verbal badinage between Beatrice and Benedick, as well as their well-suited temperaments,

[111] Hassel, Jr. corroborates this stance, positing that Beatrice and Benedick learn "benevolent lessons in faith and humility [which] will make of them the almost perfect match they have always been for each other" (80).

validate this pre-existing fondness. Thus "[t]he ease with which Benedick is 'converted'… makes it clear how close to the surface his love has been…What was once judged quarrelsome is now thought loving" (Newman 116-17). Beatrice undergoes a similar process, and indeed even her mode of speech changes: "Beatrice speaks in verse, and the shift to poetry, the first she uses in the play, marks the liberation of her desire" (Newman 118). Accordingly, a new form of speech is needed to contain these "newfound" emotions. In a play that invests so much time in discussing the importance of words, the ways in which language changes becomes all the more significant.

However, what is perhaps most interesting about the ending of *Much Ado about Nothing* is the fact that wordplay is ostensibly relegated to the dramatic background. After the persecution of Hero, Benedick desists acting "all mirth" (3.2.9), and instead "jest[s] not" (5.1.143). An astonished Don Pedro remarks "he is in earnest" (5.1.189), to which Claudio responds "I'll warrant… [it's] for the love of Beatrice" (5.1.190-91). Having cemented their affection for one another, the time for jesting concludes; as Benedick avers, "Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably" (5.2.67)—but not too wise to love peaceably. The beck and call established at the end of *Taming* becomes reiterated in Benedick's query, "Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?" (5.2.41) and Beatrice's peaceful avowal, "Yea, signor, and depart when you bid me" (5.2.42). Likewise, Beatrice declares, "I will requite [Benedick]… / Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand" (3.1.111-12). Despite the thematic parallels with its predecessor, *Much Ado* avoids some of the potentially disturbing elements of *Taming* by endowing Beatrice with the agency to make these decisions. Benedick does not order Beatrice's coming; he requests it. Benedick does not actively tame Beatrice; she tames herself. And though Benedick threatens to "stop [Beatrice's] mouth" (5.4.97), he does it solely to kiss her. Scheff's speculation that

"Perhaps it will be necessary for the friends to attend the honeymoon as well as the wedding" because "[Beatrice's and Benedick's] quarrel… is likely to continue" (161) may be not a bad thing after all.

The 1793 "A Love Song to a Laughing Fair" portrays a similar penchant for laughing and teasing courtship, aligning with both contemporary tastes for both the sparking wit of Beatrice and the rejection of the maudlin modes of sentimental wooing. The speaker decries those lovers "Who no occupation can find / But to wander to sigh, and to weep;" and rejects their lachrymose approach to the arts of amour by calling, "A plague on your sighing and whining, / …for I've nothing to do but to Laugh" (3-5, 8). The ditty continues, praising that necessary element of play within a lasting courtship: "To Venus more pleasing is mine; / She loves, Homer tells us, to laugh" (15-16). The speaker then begins to equate laughter with a deeper kind of intimacy: "You languish a year for a smile, / For a simper a year and a half; / If I walk with my Jenny a mile, / I'm frequently bless'd with a laugh" (21-24). While the other beaus attempt to gain one small gesture of acknowledgement, the companion of the eponymous fair one gets to be actively near her.

The speaker then offers a series of foregone conclusions, forcing any reasonable person to agree that his situation is superior: "If Laughing is better than crying, / If joy more than sorrow allures; / If living is better than dying, / My passion is better than yours" (25-28). The poem then switches its address to the eponymous Laughing Fair: "Then come thou best humour'd of creatures, / The nectar of mirth let us quaff, / Bid defiance to funeral features, / And publish our joy by a laugh" (25-32). In a final dig to old-fashioned lovers, the speaker walks away with his mate while they still swoon in hopes of being noticed.

Much Ado about Nothing embodied this adoration of the merry woman for the audiences of the eighteenth-century, and as such was "a popular play of the Garrick era: the actor appeared in the part of Benedick more frequently than any other Shakespearean character over the course of his career" (Ritchie 89). Its success stemmed in large part from the ebullience of Beatrice, however. In a letter to William Elford in 1816, Mary Russel Mitford maintained that "Beatrice…is indeed my standard of female wit and almost of female character; nothing so lively, so clever, so unaffected, and so warmhearted, ever trode this work-a-day world. Benedick is not quite equal to her; but this in female eyes is no great sin. Shakespeare saw through nature, and knew which sex to make the cleverest" (344). Mitford was not alone in this assertion, and several women writers, from Behn to Austen, appropriated the glittering figure of Beatrice in their courtship narratives. In these texts, lovers display a commonality of humour, and subsequently also share in a mutually affecting, egalitarian bond.

While it may be logical to place Behn's *The Rover* in the tradition of *As You Like It*, considering its reliance on the masquerade, the play remains far more concerned with Willmore's and Hellena's mutual humour, especially as manifested in their love of play. The word "humour" appears a total of twenty-seven times in the 1677 edition, and almost always connotes a like-mindedness among characters. When Hellena and Willmore first meet, she immediately zeroes in on his "country and humour" as well as his secret desires, demonstrating not only her theory of mind, but her verbal acuity (I.ii.133-155). The two continue on the subject of her chimerical identity, which is at first a gypsy (stemming from her literal disguise), then a witch, a nun, and a saint. At the same time, Willmore becomes Father Captain, and their scandalous discourse reads as a playful parody of Romeo and Juliet's first introduction, much like the courtship scene between Letitia and Doricourt in *The Belle's Stratagem*. When Hellena informs Willmore that

she would ordinarily accept the notion of sexual intercourse "but for a foolish vow [she is going] to make to die a maid," he responds that as "a good Christian [he] ought in charity to divert so wicked a design" (1.2.159-161). Their discourse ironically undercuts Romeo's portrait of Juliet as a "holy shrine" (1.5.94) and "dear saint" (1.5.103). The rakish Willmore/Father Captain, by contrast, exults that "There's no sinner like a young saint" (1.2.176). Like Juliet, Hellena also plays along with Willmore's rhetorical scheme; she grants that his speech is "a very good text" and "perceive[s that he]… design[s] only to make [her] fit for heaven" (1.2.180, 190). Later, she makes Willmore swear his allegiance and then "Kiss the book," (3.1.275), a parallel to Juliet's biblical pun that Romeo "kiss[es] by th' book" (1.5.110). Instead of desiring a chaste kiss, however, Willmore cries, "Thy lodging, sweet-heart, thy lodging, or I'm a dead man!" at the end of their first conversation (1.2.200). Hellena calls Willmore out on his false dichotomy, wondering, "is there no difference between leave to love me, and leave to lie with me?" Willmore's response proves to be as prescient as it is paradoxical: "Faith, child, they were made to go together" (I.ii.199-204).

Much like loving and lying, their discourse implies a "made-to-go-togetherness" between Willmore and Hellena, a common theory of mind. In repudiating the syrupy discourse of Petrarchan modes of courtship, the cavalier couple declare themselves firmly on the side of anti-sentiment through their burlesque of Romeo and Juliet. Willmore attests that his "business is to laugh and love" and that he "hate[s]… [a] sullen lover" (4.2.168-69). More suitable for Willmore, then, is the playful nature of Hellena than the earnest (and sometimes murderous) devotion of Angellica, Hellena's rival. Hellena, referred to as a "wildcat" by her brother (1.1.153), is more than a match for the "rampant lion of the forest" that Willmore thinks himself to be (1.2.106-107); the two share a connection in speech which far outweighs that between

anybody else. Hellena maintains that she loved Willmore "at first sight" but "adore[d] him when she heard him speak" since he had "charms in every word" (4.2. 236, 237, 238). Willmore, likewise, admires Hellena not only for her sparkling dialogue, but her strategic thinking in assuming a disguise to court him: "If it were possible I should ever be inclined to marry, it should be… one that has wit enough to manage an intrigue of love" (4.2.374, 377-78). For both, love is the ultimate intrigue, and the ultimate game.

Their back-and-forth badinage depends upon their mutual participation, as well as their mutual suitability. Steven Szilagyi terms their shared speech as "extremely significant in their courtship because the heroic [mode] is wildly verbal, spontaneous, and competitive. It is wit, and it is phallic, and it is love at first sight, at first verbal encounter" (441). He further describes their relationship as a "strife between worthy opponents," with Hellena finding Willmore's sexuality "arousing to contest, not to tame" (Szilagyi 441, 443). Hellena, not subsumed under Willmore's masculinity, instead becomes empowered by a typically male genre of speech. However, their conversations remain ungendered, for their talk is that of the teasing couple, wherein power is distributed equally and pleasure is found in play. This theme of complementariness, or of being similarly-humoured, continues throughout the remainder of the text: Willmore exclaims, "A pox on't, I cannot get her out of my head," (II.i.7-8) just as Hellena complains that "this small acquaintance, o' my conscience, will never out my head" (III.i.16-17). Hellena stoutly avows that marriage is their "destiny, because we are both of one humour" (III.i.184-85), just as Willmore readily accepts her hand at the play's end, declaring, "I adore thy humor and will marry thee, and we are so of one humor it must be a bargain" (V.469-70). Their jesting spirit continues even after their betrothal, when each assumes a false persona, thus continuing their teasing masquerade. Impressed by Hellena's capacity for play and wooed by her performative

speech, Willmore eventually rescinds his rakish ways in order to devote himself exclusively to one woman, in marriage.

Although not as immediately sexualized as that between Hellena and Willmore, Austen's most famous example of a tempestuous, teasing courtship is that between the playful Elizabeth and taciturn Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. In critical discourse it has been seen as a direct descendent of *Much Ado about Nothing*, particularly because of its dialogue. Paula Byrne asserts that "The quality of the wit-combats was what inspired Austen's first critics to see shades of Shakespeare's Beatrice in Elizabeth…the development of the courtship proceeds through razor-sharp dialogue in the exact manner of that tradition of witty stage comedy which runs from *Much Ado about Nothing* through the Restoration to Hannah Cowley" (146).[112] Elizabeth's vibrancy, her Beatrice-ness, is directly illustrated by her perennial archness, an adjective tied exclusively to her throughout the novel. Elizabeth looks "archly" when she walks away from Darcy and Sir Lucas (19), she replies "archly" to Darcy when chronicling the "great similarity in the turn of [their] minds" (68) and later turns to him at Rosings with "an arch smile" as she plays the piano (115). Readers are explicitly told that it is this archness, the "Slyly saucy, pleasantly mischievous"[113] quality, which attracts Darcy to her: "there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody; and Darcy had never

[112] See also Marianne Novy, *Engaging with Shakespeare*, pages 28-29. J.M. Harris also contends in her article, "Jane Austen and Celebrity Culture: Shakespeare, Dorothy Jordan and Elizabeth Bennet," that "Austen seems to refract in Elizabeth Bennet a recognizably 'Shakespearean' configuration of desirable femininity through the life, roles, performance idiom, personality and appearance of the celebrated Dorothy Jordan" (412). Jocelyn Harris reads Darcy as an amalgam of Don John (in his denigration of Jane) and Benedick (in his saving Lydia), asserting that "Shakespeare was a part of Jane Austen's mental furniture too" (109-110).

[113] "arch, adj. and n.2". *OED Online*. Web. March 2014.

been so bewitched" (35).[114] It is a kind of teasing persona which both reflects Elizabeth's love of play, and creates a romantic bond through lively discourse.

Like Henry Tilney, Elizabeth Bennet similarly appreciates the role that teasing discourse plays in engendering intimacy. When strolling around the room with Miss Bingley, her rival for Darcy's affection, Elizabeth maintains that the best way of needling someone is to "plague and punish one another." She urges Miss Bingley to "Tease [Darcy]—laugh at him. Intimate as you are, you must know how it is to be done." Here the ability to tease is directly linked to the degree of closeness which exists between two people. Miss Bingley's reply, "I do assure you that my intimacy has not yet taught me *that*" (39) ironically reveals that she possesses none of the intimacy which Elizabeth already shares with Darcy, despite the length of their acquaintance (Bilger 73). Audrey Bilger sees this scene as a manifestation of "Austen's view of laughter," on which functions as a "necessary correlative of sexual equality" (72). When Darcy and Elizabeth banter with one another, they demonstrate their intellectual (and physical) compatibility as well.

Darcy's and Elizabeth's suitability, their sameness, is established long before the final pages of the novel. Darcy delivers an apt description of her character: "I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance long enough to know that you find great enjoyment in occasionally professing opinions which in fact are not your own." Highlighting her penchant for sardonicism and contrariety, Darcy betrays genuine insight into her personality as well as her revealed preferences. Elizabeth lightly responds, "I am particularly unlucky in meeting with a person so able to expose my real character, in a part of the world where I had hoped to pass myself off with some degree of credit" (Austen 116). Here they each seem to imply a paradox; though the entire

[114] Jocelyn Harris also calls attention to the use of this word in *Pride and Prejudice*, and links it directly to contemporary accounts of Dorothy Jordan's performances, which were also said to contain a certain "combination of playfulness, sweetness and witchery that admirers commonly called 'arch'" ("Jane Austen and Celebrity Culture" 415).

novel is about the mistakes of judging on first appearances, both Elizabeth and Darcy's playing language displays a deeper, more intuitive understanding of their ultimate compatibility, a common theory of mind. As Kay Young asserts, the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth becomes entirely defined by their shared talk, as they "spend much of their time together in conversations that do not always advance the plot, but which do always stage what it means for each to try to know and be known by the other. These are their moments of making word-play" (64). The performativity of their speech engenders their emotional ties, making theirs a relationship which, by "rejecting the usual norms" of polite society, "retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game" (Huizinga 12). Darcy has been famously bewitched, not merely by Elizabeth's "fine eyes," but by her speech as well.

Theirs is a playfulness that continues long after their marriage, as Elizabeth endures in her "lively and sportive" manner of discourse, engaging in "open pleasantry" with her intended husband (Austen 253).[115] Jocelyn Harris reads the final conversation between Darcy and Elizabeth as holding strong resonance with that of Benedick and Beatrice, particularly in their heroines' playful discourse. She pairs Beatrice's inquiry, "For which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?" (5.2.59-61), with Elizabeth's "asking Darcy to account for his having fallen in love with her" (*Jane Austen's Art of Memory* 110). Like Shakespeare's antecedent, Austen's couple has nothing left to do but play after surviving the tempestuous events of their courtship. The denouement of the novel engages in what Chwe terms the "post-game recap, in which a couple reviews the choices and motivations of others and themselves." He continues to assert that these moments are "often… [those] of greatest intimacy" (149). Importantly, it is in this conversation that Elizabeth entreats Darcy to "learn some of [her] philosophy. Think only of

[115] See also Penny Gay's excellent treatment of theatricality and *Pride and Prejudice* in her *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (73-97).

the past as its remembrance gives…pleasure" (Austen 240). Teasing and light until the final page, Austen presents a new beginning for the couple, one in which miscommunication or tension plays no part. Pleasure alone rules the day, and the intimacy which began in Elizabeth's teasing of Darcy only persists in bringing the two closer together after their marriage.

Joanna Baillie's *The Tryal* (1798) tells the story of an ugly heiress named Agatha who possesses all of the wit and merriment of a Beatrice or Elizabeth Bennet. In a reversal of the love-trick engineered in Shakespeare's original, Agnes uses her lovely cousin and curmudgeonly uncle to pull no less than four ruses ("trials") on her intended lover, Harwood: first, she disguises herself as an impoverished relative; second, she sends her beautiful cousin to try and woo him; third, she affects the personality of a shrew; and fourth, she writes a false confession to an ignoble act. By employing strategic thinking in each stratagem, Agnes secures herself with a happy ending and a fiancé who shares her love of wordplay.

From the start, Agnes is affiliated with a variety of playfully offensive epithets which nonetheless boost the anti-sentiment of the play's comedy. Her uncle calls her "baggage" (200, 229), an "impudent hussy" (197), an "impudentest [sic] little jade" (199) and even "the wildest little witch in the world" (201). Agnes never seems to mind, as she indicates that such insults from him are tantamount invitations to "perk [her]self up by [his] elbow" (229). Her ebullient manner infects all of those around her with joy; her cousin notes that she used to believe her uncle to be "severe and unreasonable, with his fiddle faddle fancies about delicacy and decorum" but since Agnes' arrival she has "so coaxed him, and laughed at him, and played with him, that he has become almost as frolicksome as" they (202).

These charms have also attracted the attention of Harwood, a caustic wit who has little to no patience for the fops and money-grubbers which surround him. Believing Agnes to be a

penniless companion to her beautiful and rich cousin, he is nonetheless shocked that no other bachelors seem to share his opinion of the very plain Agnes. After working up the nerve to finally speak with her, he exults, "I knew she would please, it is impossible she should not! There is something so delightful in the play of her countenance, it would even make a plain woman beautiful" (207). His enchantment only grows the more he becomes acquainted with her; echoing Darcy, he frequently calls her "witch" and "sorceress," bewitched as he is by her charms.[116]

Throughout the play, Agnes and Harwood share the kind of exclusivity demanded by the teasing couple, both in their devotion to each other and in their manner of speech. Just as other men fail to see Agnes' merit (one fop even forgets that he spoke to her that day), Agnes' pretty cousin cannot perceive Harwood's magnetism. After following Agnes' second plot and attempting to snag him, her cousin bemoans her lack of success: "O! he does not know whether I am tall or short, brown or fair, foolish or sensible, after all the pains I have taken with him: he has eyes, ears, and understanding, for nobody but you, Agnes, and I will attempt him no more... I dont [sic] know how it is, he seemed to me at first a pleasanter man than he proves to be" (237). While underneath her rhetoric might run the hurt feelings of a veteran coquette, this speech proves the limited nature of Harwood's affection and the uniqueness of their bond with each other.

Their mutual suitability is also reflected in their love of playful banter. Because they share a highly developed theory of mind, both prize a capacity for imaginative discourse on the level of the tease. During their first on-stage conversation, Harwood begs her, "chide me well: I dearly love to be chidden." His speech betrays the pleasure-pain principle typical of bantering lovers. Agnes responds, "Do not invite me to it. I am said to have a very good gift that way, and

[116] Varieties of "witch," "bewitched," etc. occur nine times throughout the play and always refer to Agnes.

you would soon have too much of it, I believe" (230). Testing the limits of his devotion, Agnes ups the rhetorical ante, raising his oxymoron with a paradox of her own: she will give too much of a good gift. Harwood parries her rejoinder, promising that he would never tire of her vitriol. Concerned that this may seem one-sided, Agnes inquires if he "would take it meekly too," to which he avows, "Nay, I would have my revenge: I should call you scolding Agnes, and little Agnes, and my little Agnes" (237). Each descriptor increasingly becomes more romantic, thereby revealing that their way of talking equates reproach with ardor.

Similar repartee occurs in their next scene together, which opens as a sentimental tableau of a young man watching his mistress embroider. It soon descends into a playful fight in which Harwood cries, "Why, Agnes, you little witch! you're doing that leaf wrong." She counters, "You may pick it out then, and do it better for me. I'm sure you have been idle enough all the morning, it is time you were employed about something" (261). As he awkwardly threads her needle in a complete rejection of typical gender roles, she sarcastically wishes he would leave and return to his law career. He pretends to scratch her hand with the needle he wields, yet confesses that he will never leave her side. In this motion, Harwood physicalizes their verbal banter. As Gerstner-Hirzel suggests, sometimes "a mere gesture can be of greater strength than a word" (17). The threat of injuring Agnes with the needle echoes their antithetical repartee, but the genuine affection which underlies it (and which intimates that he makes the motion only in jest) contributes to their mutual love of play. Fittingly, their conversation ends with a series of insults. Agnes calls Harwood a madman, to which he replies that she is a sorceress; she rejoins with the insinuation that he is an idler, to which he retorts that she is "a little mouse" (264). Underneath her droll exterior, Harwood knows that Agnes is just as much his as he is hers.

The couple's compatibility is foreshadowed by the play's larger motif of "humour," a word which appears a total of eighteen times throughout the text. Harwood first becomes attracted to Agnes after watching her walk "arm in arm with [her] uncle, in [their] usual good humoured way." She learns of his affection at the same moment, having caught "the look of pleasant approbation with which he followed" them (205). Harwood later exclaims that "every body is good humoured, every thing is happy that is near her" (247). Such a categorical claim is tinged with idealized sentiment, and so Agnes adopts as her next scheme a veneer of obstinate behavior "for the sole purpose of discerning how well Harwood can tolerate a woman who expresses herself passionately" (Burroughs 273). She bets her uncle two hundred pounds that Harwood "shall think [her] a vixen and be pleased with [her]" (246). Even in these moments, however, Harwood displays a likeminded character and is more than willing to fight her (and others) back. After hearing two servants complain about Agnes' (pretend) ill-usage, he flies into a rage, kicking one in the rear and calling another "a stupid Jade" (251). After overhearing this conflict, Agnes greets him with the following: "So you are angry too? O! well done! we are fit company for one another" (251). Agnes means this, of course, in more ways than one, and her scheme eventually proves successful. Her uncle soon informs her that Harwood has asked for her hand in marriage:

> he confesses thou art ill-tempered, that thou art freakish, that thou art extravagant; and that of all the friends he has spoken with upon the subject, there is not one who will allow thee beauty enough to make a good looking pot-girl…Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is something about thee so unaccountably delightful to him, that, poor as thou art, he will give up the fair hopes of opulence, and the pleasures of freedom, to watch for thee, drudge for thee, pinch himself for thee, if

thou wilt have the condescension, in return, to plague and torment him for life. (275-76)

Herein lie all of the contrarieties typical of the teasing courtship, as well as the fundamentally illogical nature of play. The paradoxical nature of Harwood's declaration also evokes the paradoxical character of love itself.

One of the play's primary innovations upon *Much Ado about Nothing* is its positioning Agnes as a strategic mastermind; instead of a pawn in the games of others, she remains the sole orchestrator.[117] Because she is "but an ordinary looking girl" (222), such skills act as an obvious defense mechanism for the mercenary suitors which otherwise surround her, and so throughout the play she engages in "secrets," "plots," and "projects" to both amuse herself and to reveal the iniquities of others. It is by inviting others to join her schemes that she develops strategic partnerships with her family members and, ultimately, with Harwood. The final test of Harwood's affection is determining whether his love for morality surpasses his infatuation with Agnes. Because she wants a mutual partner, and not an idolater, Agnes declares that he must renounce her after a supposedly indecorous act. Terrified that he might fail, she nonetheless crafts a plan of "How to set about this business" (278), using her enthusiasm for imaginative play for serious ends.[118] After creating a false confession and having Harwood address it in his own hand, nothing else remains but for the entire family to hide behind a screen and watch the lover's reaction to the discovery. Harwood proves his worth by rejecting Agnes, only to be told that it was all a ruse. The play ends happily, with one last intrigue on a foppish beau that the entire

[117] It is perhaps this aspect of her character that prompts Burroughs' observation of the play's innate meta-theatricality. Agnes "take[s] charge of her destiny by creating, performing in, and directing an improvisational theatrical in the privacy of her uncle's home" (272).

[118] Agnes stresses her single-minded devotion to Harwood, declaring that "If Harwood endures not the test" she will "renounce him, but no other man shall ever fill his place" (277).

family takes part in together, thus cementing the performative bond between Agnes and Harwood.

Elizabeth Inchbald's *To Marry or Not to Marry* (1805) may have as its title the more immediate Shakespeare allusion. However, in its chronicling of the relationship between two people who resist marriage enough to realize they can only marry each other, it has all the hallmarks of a humourous courtship in the tradition of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Sir Oswin begins the play as a cantankerous scholar who spends more time with his books than with other human beings. Though only thirty to forty years of age, he acts much more like an older bachelor than a potential lover. Begged by his uncle to marry and so protect the estate, Oswin counters, "I never thought of becoming a husband. I never intended to be a husband. Marriage will interfere with my pursuits, my studies… I do, with certainty, expect that it will progressively destroy every comfort of my life; and I shall fortify myself against their total extinction" (10-11). Though his ill-humour is a large focus of the play, mentioned four times (as is his temper, mentioned five), Oswin frequently demonstrates the wit necessary to secure a teasing mate. It is not until his spinster sister informs him of a young orphan in need of shelter that he finds his first opportunity to engage in such debate.

Audiences soon discover that the female guest, named Hester, has run away from no less than four lovers, one of whom she was scheduled to marry that day. When the offended man comes to Oswin seeking vengeance, the master of the estate reels against his houseguest and proclaims that she must return with her fiancé. Hester then begins to scream uncontrollably until Oswin, shocked by a display of any human emotion, inquires what could possibly be the matter. She tearfully responds, "Oh, sir! did you know what it was to have a horror of being married!" (28). Forced to admit that he does, since moments before he was similarly coerced by his uncle,

Oswin realizes that "The poor girl has a repugnance to marriage, and I compassionate her" (29). Hester continues, vowing that she "should like to chuse [her] own husband" (33). When Oswin counters that she lacks that prerogative as a female, Hester retaliates with an irrefutable logic. Thus begins the first step of their courtship; Oswin must acknowledge her equality in her very human right to choose. Only then—with their mutuality established—can their rhetorical game begin, which it soon does. That very evening, Oswin finds himself both unable to read and unable to understand why he can only think of Hester.

After Oswin discovers the other abandoned lover (whom Hester convinced to be her getaway coach when she ran away from her first), he confronts her about her apparent deception. She maintains that she she did make "fools of two lovers. But [she] had a right to do so---for they wanted to make a fool of [her]." Upending the double-standard for women in a passive courtship structure, she maintains that all of the elderly women used to caution her about men's infidelity and dishonesty, so she "put no trust in them" (54). By responding in a contrary manner to what decorum normally dictates, Hester's unadulterated honesty puts the usually erudite Oswin at a loss for words. Hester offers at two separate points to be the interpreter for his feelings, illustrating her ability to "read" his "mind and discover their sameness… of mind" but he declines (Young 3). Later, Oswin proclaims to his sister that his reflections amount to "A confused mass!" as he is "living in this old world, and yet a new one seems to have broken upon [him], to make [him] as a stranger to all around." His knowing sibling informs him that he is in love, demonstrating a theory of mind she possessed earlier in the play as well. Without consciously choosing to, Oswin and Hester have built a Huizingian play community, set apart from the rest of the world. When Oswin earlier confesses, "This is a very singular girl you have introduced to me," she readily responds, "And I have introduced as singular a man to her ---

therefore, I trust, you will understand one another" (30). Now that the love has taken root, the sister credits it to their "self-same antipathy" regarding marriage, their commonality of humour (64).

After a series of hijinks (which include formerly-banished fathers, gunshot wounds, and healed grudges), Hester and Oswin are finally ready to marry. Hester avows that this time she is ready to go back to the church, "and shall remember, with more joy than ever,---that [she] once ran away from it" (84). Oswin, as well, realizes the irony in his situation: "the passion I once derided, now repays itself for my scorn, and forces me thus openly to declare---That there certainly is such a tender power, such a rapturous influence, as ---Love---And, that every man, who feels, like me, its genuine force, should---marry" (85). Like Benedick and Beatrice, who each abjured marriage until they fell in love, Hester and Oswin find that the fetters of fidelity are no so imprisoning, so long as one has the prerogative of choice in a partner.

In this chapter, I have traced the permutations of Shakespearean courtship narratives in representative texts from the long eighteenth century. Like the playwright's romantic comedies, these stories also celebrate irrationality over reason, teasing play over sentiment, and folly over prudence. As do Rosalind and Orlando, Katharina and Petruchio, and Beatrice and Benedick, the lovers featured here "finally learn… to welcome a love they neither deserve nor understand. This coming to accept love as a gift of grace transcending all understanding or merit is a Shakespearean theme closely related to the humble, communal acknowledgment of folly as a prerequisite to comic festivity" (Hassel, Jr. 211). By advocating the universality of human error, and promoting a tolerant forgiveness of faults, these literary women and men overcome the hierarchy imposed by both a patriarchal society and a potentially patriarchal narrative in order to

construct egalitarian bonds of amity and devotion. Such couples may all be equally foolish, but they are all foolish in love.

Ultimately, by appropriating these three major plot structures from Shakespeare, women writers of the eighteenth century were able to endow their heroines with more license and agency than existing strictures would have otherwise allowed. Whether by literal disguise, as in *As You Like It*; raw verbal clout, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*; or an affirmation of affective individualism, as in *Much Ado about Nothing*, these female characters are placed in control of their own courtships and their own sexual choices. Through comedy, women gain a rhetorical authority which not only demonstrates their intellect, but also attracts their worthy mates. These texts play an important role in the development of the courtship narrative and also illustrate that women writers were engaging with Shakespeare's plays not only from a moral, but a creative standpoint, with an eye toward rectifying and reorienting the power structure of contemporary romance.

Aligning these women writers with Shakespeare by no means debases their creative endeavors to mere parroting, a repeating of male voices in authorial ventriloquism. Instead, I posit that the interrelationship between the playwright and the female authors featured here permitted creative license through plot structures that appeared familiar to a less discerning eye, but nonetheless cloaked transgressive ideology of affective individualism and gender equality. While some of these texts bear an exact affinity to their literary ancestors, others exhibit a more slippery relationship. As Wiltshire points out, a "successful adaptation will manifest itself as much in treating the source 'cavalierly'… as in fidelity or obedience to the earlier text's internal image. The end result will not be imitation or mimicking of the original, but a new independent work of art that can stand in comparison" (70). These works of art, composed by women ranging

from Aphra Behn at the close of the seventeenth century to Austen at the inception of the nineteenth, are situated in an older tradition. However, they also pave the way for the countless tales of literary heroines that come after, depicting sarcastic, witty, and fiery women who woo through obstinacy and tease their way to a happily ever after forged on a playing field of their own design.

Chapter 7: Epilogue: From Aphra to Ephron

Aphra Behn's 1688 poem "On Desire: A Pindaric" describes erotic love as a mélange between the pleasurable and the agonizing. Apostrophizing the titular emotion, the speaker terms Desire a "new-found pain" and "enchanting thing," a paradoxically "Charming disturber of [her] ease" (1.1, 3; 2.3). The feeling haunts and consumes her, for neither "The business of the day, nor silence of the night / … / Can bid defiances to [its] conquering powers" (3.2, 4). The rest of the poem describes the contrary and incongruous behavior of Desire; the speaker confesses that several times "shining honour did invite" her attentions, but it could never secure them. Possessed of not even "one tender thought," she disregarded the "Princes [who] at [her] feet did lie" until she was unwittingly attacked by love (5.5, 6). Suddenly she feels a "nimble fire… dilate / [Its] mighty force through every part," a "welcome plague" diseasing her mind and body (9.1-2, 5). Delighted with this emotion, and yet unsure of what to do with it, she fights her "tormentor" as she "die[s] with pleasing pain" (10. 1, 7). All of her efforts come to no avail, however, as "in vain [she] strive[s] / With errors, which [her] soul do please and vex" (10.15-16).

In another poem of the same year, "When You Love, Or Speak of It," Behn's speaker cautions overeager lovers, ones who feel the type of sincere desire mentioned above, to curb their sentiments and "Make no serious matter on't," lest their affections "make but subject for her wit / And gain her scorn in lieu of Grant" (2, 3-4). The only way to truly woo a witty woman, she argues, is to capture her in her own humour and sublimate all apparent emotion. "Sneeking, whining, dull Grimasses," she cautions, only "Pale the Appetite, they'd move" (5-6). Advocating a more unceremonious type of courtship, the poem proposes the advantages of anti-sentiment rather than the abject devotion which makes "Boys and formal Asses / … Ridicul'd by Love" (7-8). The mark of a mature and attractive lover is one whose advances are "Always brisk," a man

who “gayly court[s] / [And] Make[s] Love [his] pleasure not [his] pain” (13-14). Only by treating love lightly, “by wanton play and sport,” can a lover’s suit meet with success.

Taken together, these two poems portray in microcosm the environment of a teasing courtship. Contradictory, incongruous, and funny, such lovers woo without appearing to do so. Yet these pairs are still as devoted as their more sentimental foils, imbued though they are in the spirit of play. Feigned disinterest nevertheless masks genuine emotion, just as open vexation serves only as a vehicle to love. Behn’s two speakers betray a counterbalance to the Petrarchan modes of earlier discourse or the emergent, staid wooing practices of rigid decorum. Both poems depict female carnal desire and female intellectual wit, respectively; both also engage in the nascent deliberations of the period in terms of wooing and a woman’s role within it.

In this dissertation I have sketched out how disparate debates of the long eighteenth century coalesce to enable the appropriation of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies in women’s courtship fiction. Among these debates are the contemporary tensions between sentiment and satire, the role of female speech in public and private arenas, and the advent of affective individualism over pre-arranged matches. In my address of these contrary impulses, I have tried especially to chronicle how anti-sentiment can serve the most amiable of ends: companionate marriage. I have also charted how the works of this era exhibit a dual pull towards the maudlin and the satiric, a tension which is also reflected in the various appropriations of Shakespeare’s celebrity. Women writers were able to capitalize on this tension through both their ironic treatment of Shakespeare’s sentiment and the innovative use of his comedy. In doing so, they cultivated narratives in which females could be the rhetorical equals of the males they courted. By utilizing teasing speech as a means to courtship, women writers were able to position their

female protagonists as agents in their own romances, active wooers in an exchange which otherwise allowed the mere prerogative of refusal.

While it may have begun as a niche archetype, the teasing couple gained prominence in the literature of the nineteenth century and the novels and films of the twentieth. Huizinga notes that "It sometimes happens, however, that the spoil-sports in their turn make a new community with rules of its own" (12). As "spoil-sports" of mawkish courtship, breakers of propriety and politesse, teasers nevertheless began to gain a foothold on the discursive field as these narratives were repeated across the intervening centuries.[119] For example, shades of teasing couples can be found in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855). Jane "knew the pleasure of vexing and soothing [Rochester] by turns; it was one [she] chiefly delighted in, and a sure instinct always prevented [her] from going too far: beyond the verge of provocation [she] never ventured; on the extreme brink [she] liked well to try [her] skill" (233). Throughout the text, Jane and Rochester's game of love is one which is centered on antithesis, the "extreme brink" of love and hate, pleasing and teasing. Her "sure instinct" is her innate theory of mind, her ability to understand the mercurial and rough-edged man who will become her husband. The text itself features the word "tease" or "teaze" six times, while "vex" or "vexation" occur another six times in explicit reference to Jane and Rochester. Despite the seriousness of their bond (so profound that it enables them to commune with one another across so many moors and vales), Kay Young posits that it is "Rochester's sense of play which invites Jane's earliest response that ignites one of their many conversations on what it means to explore the identity" of one another (70). Though he may initiate the game, both end up playing for a lifetime.

[119] See Nalini Natarajan's 1983 dissertation, *The Witty Woman in Nineteenth Century English Comic Fiction*.

The tempestuous play of Margaret Hale and Mr. Thorton of Gaskell's *North and South* has spurned a connection to Austen's Elizabeth and Darcy in critical discussion.[120] The eponymous "North," Mr. Thorton, is an industrialist while the nominal "South," Miss Hale, fights for the oppressed worker. In Chwe's terminology, the "social distance" the two share exacerbates conditions of cluelessness, as it obfuscates any attempt to truly communicate (198-199). Despite the societal and economic barriers which separate them, the two engage in several bouts of antithetical, vexatious sparring throughout the text. After debating with Margaret about an impending strike, Thornton "was vexed at the state of feeling between himself and her" (184) and later "did not speak again for a minute, [for] he was too much vexed" (191). Margaret, too, has an inability to control her emotions around Thornton: "Margaret, [sat] in burning silence, vexed and ashamed of her difficulty in keeping her right place, and her calm unconsciousness of heart, when Mr. Thornton was by" (51). Once they broach their social distance (after several misunderstandings, a riot, and deaths), their dialogue transforms from verbal vitriol to playful banter. Marveling over their newfound love, Margaret wonders how she will ever tell her aunt of the match, worrying about her reaction. Thornton replies, "I can guess [at her reaction]. Her first exclamation will be, 'That man!'" Quick to counter, Margaret rejoins, "Hush!...or I shall try and show you your mother's indignant tones as she says, 'That woman!'" (361). Their parallel sentence structure evokes a larger harmony, the once discordant tones of jarring difference subsumed into a game of play, a performance of mutual understanding.

With the advent of "talking pictures" and the proliferation of paperback romance novels, teasing courtship found new audiences and gained additional popularity. Young outlines the development of the male/female comedy team in film from the 1930s onward. She writes, "With

[120] See Janine Barchas' "Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South*: Austen's Early Legacy" (2008) in *Persuasions*, pgs. 53-66.

restrictions placed on the explicit expression of desire, desire reinscribed its presence… through allusion or sublimation. If sex was to become aggression, then the sexual partners would become physical and verbal combatants; and if sex was to be couched in metaphor and humor, then it required a partnership where the joke could be shared" (161). Much like eighteenth century theatre, the cinema was also subject to morality codes. Humor (especially that between a courting pair) then served as aural shorthand for physical compatibility, a way of performing foreplay without any breach of propriety. This "combative" mode of courtship pervades the genre of popular romance as well.[121] Linda Barlow and Jayne Ann Krentz maintain that "verbal sparring is rarely declined by the heroines of romance since it is far more likely to be her words than her beauty that win her the love she most desires. Romances are full of heroes who eschew the company of beautiful but insipid women who would rather fawn than fight… heroes of romance *enjoy* the duel of wits" (23). Intelligence, not beauty, becomes the currency of conversation as couples seek to know each other on a more profound level. Notably, it is not only the heroes who "enjoy the duel of wits," but also romance writers and readers. Though antithetical in its structure, the elemental clash between lovers manifests the physical chemistry between the male and female protagonists and engineers a spectacle of courtship.

Nora Ephron, writer of *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), and *You've Got Mail* (1998), also perpetuates the comic structure inherent in all teasing couples, abiding by an adversarial standard. In a seminar with Ann Roth at the American Film Institute, Ephron maintained that in romantic comedies, "math applies…if he's gloomy, she must be cheerful… you're already halfway somewhere. So if he's kind of a mess, it makes her kind of

[121] In Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984), her Table 4.2, *Narrative Logic of the Romance*, outlines the entire structure of a typical romance as rooted in antithesis, of misunderstandings corrected and wounds healed. One of the source events of a romance narrative is "The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male," an act of antagonism that begets additional instances of antithetical behavior from the hero. The structure then becomes wholly geared toward remedying the divide and bringing the two lovers together (150).

neat. This is a romantic comedy where certain rules—that probably began in *Taming of the Shrew*—apply" (172). Within the contrasts of opposites, there yet lies a balance between the couple as they moderate each other's extremities and reach equilibrium in spite of their excoriating discourse. Ephron addresses the comic potential of incongruity, and the more obvious incongruity between men and women. When referring to her decision to replace a prop in *You've Got Mail* with a work by Jane Austen, she observes, "It was such a perfect thing because it was about two people who don't like each other… it's one of the great root things of romantic comedies: *Taming of the Shrew* & *Pride & Prejudice*" ("A Conversation with Nora Ephron").[122] Teasing speech paradoxically initiates the progress from division to wholeness, from chaos to order. It is both the madness and the proverbial method to engineering a lasting bond.

While I have given here a reduced and loose catalogue of vexing and antithetical discourse after Austen, the true history of teasing is much more complex and wide-ranging. In this project, I have sought to broaden the critical willingness of aligning Shakespeare with Austen into a larger readiness to see his influence in other courtship narratives. I have tried to refocus and redirect what have been a series of excellent—yet discrete—observances by scholars into a holistic discussion of how Shakespeare's narratives may have been used by women writers in the eighteenth century. Using the playwright's works as guiding principles then allows us to resituate contemporary debates in the context of the courtship narrative's growth.

Of all the images featured in this study, fig. 39, *Cupid Disarm'd* (1744-1783), perhaps encapsulates the fusion of these contemporary debates best. It depicts the goddess of love taunting her son, keeping his weaponry out of reach. According to the accompanying poem, "Venus her roguish Son to Vex / Teazes him with her wanton Tricks / His Bow and Arrow she

[122] In the original film, *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), the novel was Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina.*

with holds, / While he scrambles Cries and scolds." In spite of the emotional tenor of the rhyme, this teasing scene also appears to be one of maternal love, comingled with vexation. Venus' gaze is solely fixed on her cherubic child, and while Cupid reaches for his belongings, he also looks as though he will embrace his mother. The rest of the poem begs Venus "Never to return those arms again" so that love will be "From Sting and Poison ever free," but that entreaty counters the intent behind the goddess' task. In this case, Venus seems to know best. Teaching Cupid the very actions which will engender lasting passion, vexing and teasing, she withholds only to give the weapons back, not just to her son, but to her many literary daughters.

Fig. 37. Bryer, Henry. *Cupid Disarm'd*. 1744-1783. The British Museum, London. *The British Museum*. Web. 16 May 2016.

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-English 4 Advanced Placement: a survey of British literature through the twentieth century in preparation for the AP exam.

- Department of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

-English 449A: British Literature Survey I (Summer 2014, Summer 2013) - This course encompasses British literature from its origins through the mid-eighteenth century.

-English 232: World Literature II—Themed Course: Business Perspectives (Spring 2014)

-English 298: Writing about Literature (Fall 2013, Spring 2012) - This course introduces English majors to the fundamentals of poetry, drama, and prose fiction.

-English 232: World Literature II—Themed Course: Morality and Ethics (Fall 2013)

-English 232: World Literature II (Fall 2011)

-English 101: First Year Composition I (Summer 2012, Summer 2011, Fall 2010)

- UNLV Summer Advanced Gifted Education (SAGE) Academy—The SAGE Academy was a program dedicated to the instruction of highly gifted junior/senior high school students for college credit (2005-2012).

-Honors 103H: Shakespeare: On the Page and on the Stage (Summer 2012)

-Honors 103H: Manners, Marriage, and Madness: The Literature of Jane Austen (Summer 2011)

-Honors 103H: Love & Courtship According to Jane Austen (Summer 2010)

-Honors 103H: Crafting the Actor (Summer 2009)

Conference Presentations and Panels

Panel Organizer, "Can You Keep a Secret?: Loose Lips and Sunken Ships on Stage and in Print." American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Los Angeles, California, March 19-21, 2015.

"Crimes of the Heart in Eighteenth-Century Courtship Fiction." Pacific Coast Conference in British Studies, Las Vegas, Nevada, March 6-8, 2015.

"From Wooing to Wedlock: Satiric Images of Conjugal 'Felicity.'" Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association, Riverside, California, October 31-November 2, 2014.

"Teasing from the Stage to the Page." American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Williamsburg, Virginia, March 20-22, 2014.

"Affecting Affection: Teasing Romance in Women's Courtship Fiction." Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Davis, California, February 14-16, 2014.

"Exhibit A: Macaroons (*A Doll's House*, Mock Trials, and Justice in the Classroom)." World Literature Pedagogy Series, Las Vegas, Nevada, November 1, 2013.

"It's Kind of a Funny (Love) Story: Nora Ephron & the Meta-Romantic Comedy." Far West Popular & American Culture Association, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 24-26, 2012.

"Fashioning the Mask of Tragedy: Isabella Thorpe's So-Called (Gothic) Life." English Graduate Student Association 2011 Colloquium, Las Vegas, Nevada, May 6, 2011.

Invited Presentations

"Everything in Moderation: The Canonical Significance of *Northanger Abbey*." Invited Speaker, English 443C: Later 18th Century class (Dr. Timothy Erwin) April 12, 2010.

Professional Memberships

2015: Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies (PCCBS)

2014: Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association (PAMLA)
Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA)

2013-2015: American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS)

2009-2012: Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association (RMMLA)

Departmental Service

Faculty Representative for Bishop Gorman, University of San Diego Career Fair (March 19, 2015)

Reader for Departmental Assessment of 400-level Student Writing (March 28, 2014, February 22, 2013)

Leader of an Instructional Training Workshop for New Graduate Teaching Assistants—"Dealing with Difficult Students and Creating a Dynamic Classroom" (August 20, 2013)

Reader for Departmental Assessment of World Literature Student Writing (March 8, 2013)

Reviewer for English 102 Textbook Adoption (Spring 2011)

Administrative Experience

May, 2016- present: Chair, Department of English, Bishop Gorman Catholic High School

Summer, 2012: Assistant Director, UNLV SAGE Academy

Spring, 2011: Administrative Assistant, UNLV English Department, Composition

2009- Spring 2012: Recruitment and Alumni Coordinator, UNLV SAGE Academy

2005-2009: Program Assistant, UNLV SAGE Academy