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Misrecognizing Women: Eighteenth-Century Female Bildungsromans and the Logic of Torture and Confession

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Misrecognizing Women:
Eighteenth-Century Female *Bildungsromans* and the Logic of Torture and Confession

by

Rita J. Kurtz

A Dissertation

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

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in

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Rita J. Kurtz

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Rita J. Kurtz
Misrecognizing Women:
Eighteenth-Century Female *Bildungsromans* and the Logic of Torture and Confession

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Dawn Keetley

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that certain eighteenth-century female *bildungsromans* reproduce the logic of the rituals of torture and confession that underwrote the seventeenth-century witch-hunts and witchcraft trials in the western world. However, these eighteenth-century novels and often the critics who have written about them misrecognize the torture and confession that their narratives reproduce. This misrecognition takes three forms: (1) female empowerment is misrecognized as female transgression (2) the heroine's "torture" is misrecognized as the obstacles she encounters during her maturation process, and (3) the heroine's "confession" is misrecognized as her achievement of enlightened self-awareness. The direction of these novels is that of regression. Each novel's logic, which I refer to as "the logic of torture and confession," tortures its initially empowered heroine through a repetition of violence, which escalates in intensity as the novel progresses until she "confesses" her defect. Moreover, the logic of torture and confession produces its heroine's female flaw as "inherent" even as it insists that this flaw has always been latently present. Consequently, the heroines in these novels do not become fully-realized and empowered women as the *bildungsroman* genre promises; instead they unwittingly follow a regressive course to collude in their own subjugation.

This dissertation draws on Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power to demonstrate how the seventeenth-century patriarchal discourse that produced the diabolical witch's inherently flawed hypersexual body transformed itself into an immaterial, diffused, less visible form of patriarchal power that I argue made use of the

eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* to continue its subjugation of women. The asymmetry of power that organizes these female *bildungsromans* is consistently one of masculine disembodied power that functions imperceptibly to embody women as inherently flawed. This dissertation aims to expose the several forms of misrecognition that occur in these novels so it will enable readers to more readily grasp how patriarchy must endlessly reaffirm and reinscribe its domination of women through insidious strategies that, I argue, are still evident in contemporary narratives.

INTRODUCTION

The Dark Shadow of Female Enlightenment: Torture, Confession, and the Production of Truth

“Since the Middle Ages, torture has accompanied [confession] like a shadow, and supported it when it could go no further: the dark twins.”

– Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*

“Torture is conquest through irresistible force. It is to destroy opposition through causing it to destroy itself: in despair, in self-hatred for its own vulnerability, impotence. It is to defile, degrade, overwhelm with shame, to ravage.”

– Kate Millett, *The Politics of Cruelty*

At a witchcraft trial in 1645 Suffolk County England, Elisabeth Warne “confessed that pride and lustfulness had brought her to this [point] and desired she might be walked apace for she had the devil within her” (qtd. in Jackson 80). A little over a century later, the eponymous heroine of Samuel Richardson’s novel *Clarissa* (1747-48) declares: “And now, being led to account for the cause of my temporary calamities, find I had a secret pride to be punished for, which I had not fathomed: and it was necessary perhaps that some sore and terrible misfortunes should befall me in order to mortify my pride and my vanity” (1375). History and context clearly distinguish Elisabeth Warne’s confession from *Clarissa*’s assertion of self realization. Warne’s confession, like the majority of confessions produced during the witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, was most likely coerced through torture¹ by Inquisitorial authorities. Consequently, her speech act is one of disempowerment. If she had any agency at all before her confession,

it is now attributed to the Devil. In contrast, Clarissa's statement is one of empowerment: the speaking subject offers a statement of self-knowledge brought about by self-reflection and only after enduring "terrible misfortunes." Indeed, life's challenges "led" Clarissa to reflect on her 'self' and "account" for her errors. Clarissa's statement is one of self-enlightenment.

There happens to be, however, striking similarities between these two women's speech acts. For example, both women view "pride" as the source of their present suffering; both feel that they deserve(d) punishment for it; and both have or had their bodies possessed by someone (Warne: "devil within") or something (Clarissa: "secret pride") that is outside their control and beyond their awareness. Also, being "walked apace" will exorcise Elisabeth of "the devil within her" while comparably, "sore" and "terrible misfortunes" have "mortif[ied]" Clarissa's "secret pride." Her use of words such as "sore," "terrible," and "mortify" connote bodily pain.² The phrase "terrible misfortunes" also suggests a series of pain-causing events that exceed the occasional setbacks that routine life presents; even more significantly, Clarissa implies that the repetition of pain was "necessary" in bringing her "secret pride" to her consciousness. However, while Clarissa sees her suffering as a consequence of her own "pride," it is Lovelace who orchestrates most of Clarissa's "misfortunes." Lovelace's manipulation of Clarissa's experiences begs the following question: Does masculine authority (via Lovelace) function similarly to the witch-hunt's Inquisitorial authority? To state the question more explicitly, has patriarchal power "tortured" Clarissa into "confessing" her

“secret pride” just as the Inquisitorial authorities coerced or tortured Warne into her confession?

One of this dissertation’s major premises is that the eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* misrecognizes the rituals of torture and confession that its narrative involves. Indeed, the three female *bildungsromans* that this dissertation examines, namely, Mary Davys’s *The Reform’d Coquet; or, The Memoirs of Amoranda* (1724), Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (published in 1813; written in 1797), and Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland, Or, the Transformation: An American Tale* (1798), only recognize their respective heroine’s alleged flaw and the subsequent “cure” of her flaw by the narrative’s end. This misrecognition takes three forms (1) female empowerment is misrecognized as female transgression, i.e. the heroine’s “flaw” (2) the heroine’s repeated and gradually intensified “torture” is misrecognized as the normal obstacles of the maturation process, and (3) the heroine’s “confession” is misrecognized as her achievement of enlightened self-awareness or self-knowledge . Not only do these novels participate in misrecognition, but I also argue that their respective authors, often the critics who have written about them, and sometimes even their readers misrecognize the torture and confession that their narratives communicate.

The torture and confession that organizes these three novels is a disturbing reproduction of the rituals of torture and confession that underwrote the seventeenth-century witchcraft accusations and trials of England, Europe, and America. Seventeenth century Catholic and Protestant religious discourse fostered the belief that women were more susceptible to the Devil’s temptations because of their naturally defective and

hyper-sexualized bodies. The authors of the infamous *Malleus Malificarum* (“The Hammer of Witches”) set a standard for misogyny in the late fifteenth century, for example, in their attempt to account for the greater number of female witches by referencing *Genesis*. As inheritors of Eve’s legacy, women are by their very nature “defective,” because they were formed from Adam’s “bent rib” (Institoris 44). Women’s “bent” nature makes them “more carnal”—“an imperfect animal” (Institoris 44). What these church sanctioned witch-hunts misrecognized, however, is that the accused woman, that is to say, the potentially threatening powerful female who practiced *maleficium* (traditional malevolent witchcraft in which women practiced mischief and magic that operated outside of Christianity and the belief in the Devil), was transformed through Inquisitorial torture into confessing herself a “diabolical witch.” Evident here is that judicial torture is not simply about acquiring evidence as stipulated by the Roman law of proof. As Brian P. Levack relates, what started out as accusations of *maleficium* culminated with a confession of diabolic witchcraft only *after* the use of torture techniques described above. Thus Levack asserts that “torture in a certain sense ‘created’ witchcraft, or at least created diabolical witchcraft” (13). Richard Godbeer supports Levack’s assertion, stating that “[t]he courts took suspects and witnesses who saw witchcraft in terms of maleficium rather than diabolical compact and then used torture to extract the kind of evidence that would justify conviction on theological terms” (156-7). Godbeer also points out that through both “coercive techniques and the public reading of forced confessions, the authorities disseminated their own [diabolical] view of witchcraft” (157). What should strike us here are the apparent connections between

torture, the body, and language (in the form of the confession and the public disclosure of it), and the masculine construction of a reality in which women are innately flawed.

These same relations are evident in the female coming-of-age novels I discuss in this dissertation.

Torture and confession, moreover, produced more than diabolical *witchcraft*: they also created the “diabolical *witch*.” Louise Jackson points out that “once a woman was labeled a ‘witch’, with her original experiences distorted and set within this context, this was what she became. Just as she had (with a strong input from others) constructed what became a written testimony, that text also constructed her, both in terms of her identity within the community and of self-identity” (70). Nicholas P. Spanos expands further on Jackson’s idea with the concept of “selective reconstruction.” He explains that the “confessing witch reviewed her past experiences for remembrances that converged with her new identity . . . [that she] reconstructed her biography to make it consistent with her self- perception of being a witch” (431). This concept of “selective reconstruction,” I argue, occurs most apparently in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Brown’s *Wieland*.

The accused woman’s confession also unwittingly acknowledged a particular type of flawed body—the witch’s hypersexualized body. While the “truth” of the witch’s body was actually *produced* through torture and confession, Church authorities mitigated their own cruelty and culpability by (dis)covering that the “witch’s body” was, in fact, already there—as an *always already* “diseased” female body, that is, as a less reasonable and inherently oversexed body—a body that is not only susceptible to entering into a pact

with the Devil but also one that cannot restrain its own sexuality and easily succumbs to the temptation of pursuing a sexual liaison with the Devil or His minions. Furthermore, the accused “witch’s” coerced confession suggests that she was not aware of her own flawed body until the moment of confession. If she was, in fact, a witch who practiced her craft outside of Christianity proper (traditional pagan *maleficium*), her forced “confession” suggests that she was not aware of the telltale satanic marks her body possessed, such as the presence of paps, located on the most inaccessible places of her body. Indeed, this same logic, in which the female does not know her own body until the point of confession and only after a lengthy ritual of coercion, reappears in the eighteenth-century novels that this dissertation examines.

Besides being burned or hanged, confessed witches also had their property confiscated—typical of the punishments for heresy as Henry Charles Lea details it in *A History of the Inquisition* (1922). More recently, however, certain witchcraft historians have argued that female economic independence was indeed the motive of many witchcraft accusations. And these women were not poor, old village “hags” who practiced pagan rites. In *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (1987), Carol F. Karlsen argues that “anxieties about [non-male] inheritance lay at the heart of most witchcraft accusations” in colonial New England (84). Karlsen further states that “women [heiresses] who stood to benefit economically also assumed a position of unusual vulnerability. They, and in many instances, their daughters, became prime targets for witchcraft accusations” (83-4). These “witches” were often completely “dispossessed” of their property by male authorities, as their financial security was a

direct threat to patriarchal inheritance customs (Karlsen 109). Indeed, the heroines Amoranda in *The Reform'd Coquet* and Clara in *Wieland* are both heiresses who, similar to these accused witches, are dispossessed of their property after they are coerced to “confess” their flaws.

Why is it that eighteenth-century and modern readers are unable to recognize that witch-hunt logic reproduces itself in *The Reform'd Coquet*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wieland*? How does the ritual of torture and confession alter so that we are unaware of its reproduction in these novels? Power’s diffusion through institutionalization during the course of the eighteenth century necessitated the transformation of the church’s centralized power. Indeed, power’s decentralization during this century renders the church’s production of the witch’s flawed body through torture and confession an unviable strategy. Thus, a new one is required.

Michel Foucault’s concepts of disciplinary power and confessional discourse form the overarching theoretical basis for my dissertation’s argument. Under the regime of disciplinary power, in which power is decentralized, Foucault claims that “we no longer perceive [confession] as the effect of power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, ‘demands’ only to surface” (*The History of Sexuality* 60). However, as Foucault makes very clear, “truth” is not liberating; “its production is thoroughly imbued with relations of power” (*The History of Sexuality* 60). Confession, as Foucault sees it, is “one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth” (*The History of Sexuality* 58). During the course of the eighteenth century, power’s gradual diffusion amongst emerging disciplinary institutions (schools,

prisons, hospitals, the insane asylum), also enables the “inducement to speak” to reinvent itself and reappear as the discourses of “the examination,” “the personal history,” “the interrogation,” “the exacting questionnaire,” etc. (Foucault *The History of Sexuality* 65). Foucault also claims that literature itself changes under disciplinary power; he claims it is now “ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself . . . a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage” (*The History of Sexuality* 59). The emerging genre of what would eventually be termed the *bildungsroman* during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century seems ideally suited to serve as one of the confessional discourses emerging under the evolving disciplinary regime. In other words, the female *bildungsroman* as a literary form was taking shape at the same point in history when disciplinary power itself was emerging.³ Moreover, as Foucault emphasizes, disciplinary power functions positively; it is not built on exclusion as in the case of the witch-hunts, but on inclusion. The basis of the eighteenth century female *bildungsroman* is positive individual development, in which literary authors experimented with the then emerging Lockean philosophy of self-formation; young women have an opportunity to shape their own lives. The form of disciplinary power that I claim insinuates itself into the then emerging eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* is one that reproduces the same masculine domination and misogynistic viewpoint of women that was evident in the seventeenth-century witch-hunts, except it much less visible to the point where it is misrecognized not only by the novels’ authors but also by their readers then and now. Its tactics of domination are diffused throughout each of the three novels I examine in this dissertation. The

patriarchal power that produced the diabolical, oversexed witch during the seventeenth century through the ritual of torture and confession did not somehow purge itself of its misogynistic viewpoint in its evolution into a much less visible and dispersed form of power. In this dissertation, then, I primarily use the term “patriarchal power” to specifically identify the type of disciplinary power I claim makes use of the female *bildungsromans* of *The Reform’d Coquet*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Wieland*.

Indeed, this dissertation’s primary argument is that the eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* sometimes discursively reproduces the rituals of torture and confession.⁴ What becomes evident is that an asymmetrical power relation organizes these novels, in which patriarchal power subjugates each heroine through a series of escalating and sometimes violent bodily disturbance (i.e. the logic of torture). The heroine’s body is repeatedly threatened, endangered, emotionally distressed, shocked, or made vulnerable until she confesses her inherent flaw—what I refer to in this dissertation as “the logic of torture and confession.” Because patriarchal power functions in each of these novels as a nameless and faceless immaterial form of power—“the silence of regulation” as Foucault terms it—their respective narratives present themselves only as a fulfillment of the expectations that the *bildungsroman* genre requires. Moreover, this subtle, immaterial form of power functions through the various characters (male and female), events, dialogue, and/or one or more traditional literary techniques. To clarify, I am *not* suggesting that patriarchal power consciously or deliberately “tortures” these heroines into confessing. And, I am *not* saying that only the male characters, because they are male, are necessarily the agents through which patriarchal power functions. Rather, to use

Foucault's terminology, this violence functions as a "strategy without a subject"—just one of an infinite number of "support mechanisms" that operates unobtrusively and imperceptibly (what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as "symbolic violence"), because it does its subjugating work (Foucault would also say its resisting work) at the "micro" level or at the level of the day to day habits and exchanges between ordinary people. Indeed, while the perpetrators of the violence in *The Reform'd Coquet* and *Wieland* are primarily male characters, this does not, in any way, suggest that women don't play a role in the heroines' domination or that men are not the victims of subjugation. As products of the same culture and the masculine ideology it espouses, both men and women collude in masculine domination. Both are continually subjected to the forces of power that enable them to reproduce or resist patriarchal culture. In *The Reform'd Coquet*, for example, Amoranda's childhood friend Arentia works alongside Biranthus to discipline Amoranda through violence. One may argue that Davys herself unwittingly colludes in Amoranda's subjugation, since it is she who draws on discourses of violence in her novel to subjugate its heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice*, I argue that Wickham resists Darcy's dominant worldview and that he, along with Elizabeth Bennet, is also a victim of patriarchal power's discipline. The matter, in other words, cannot be reduced to biological sexual categories in terms of how patriarchal power operates in these novels, since this strategy without a subject is about power acting through various discourses that may or may not have anything to do with the characters' gender.

Furthermore, this asymmetrical power relation, in which patriarchal power subjugates the heroine, is consistently one of immaterial power and embodied objectivity.

To bring this asymmetrical relation of power out of hiding for readers, I draw on Elaine Scarry's extraordinary and provocative book on political torture entitled, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1985); Doug Liman's insightful article on political shaming entitled, "The Shame of Abu Ghraib" (2008); and Foucault's *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973-1974* (2006), in which he elaborates on how disciplinary power operates in the asylum. Indeed, both Scarry's concept of political torture and Liman's theory of political shaming depict a dissymmetrical relationship between disembodied power (the torturer) and embodied victimization (the individual tortured/shamed) that reproduces what is at the basis of Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, which, he claims, acts invisibly (immaterially) on the bodies of an institution's individuals. Each of these works, therefore, makes an interconnection amongst the body, torture, confession, and truth-production by power.⁵ This dissertation makes visible this heretofore soft (because invisible) cruelty. And, as I argue in the Epilogue, this interconnection persists in contemporary narratives.

Moreover, while torture "induces [each heroine] to speak" or "confess" her peculiarly female flaw or flaws, it also serves to verify the "truth" her confession professes. Thus the "obstacles and resistances" (i.e., the "torture") that the heroine must face and overcome *before* she speaks her "truth" also function *after* her confession to validate it as "truth" (*The History of Sexuality* 62). Despite Clarissa's eventual death, for example, she has survived "terrible misfortunes," which she believes were "necessary" to at last speak the discovery of her "secret pride." Truth, as something produced, requires labor, and this labor bears witness to the "truth" that the individual seems to legitimize.

The alleged enlightenment that the heroine's confession seems to finally bring authorizes the necessity of the suffering that preceded it, obscuring the often violent coercion that produced the heroine's confessional moment.

Feminist criticism of both eighteenth and nineteenth century female *bildungsromans* attempts to recuperate this genre from earlier conservative scholarship by discovering, emphasizing, and celebrating moments of female empowerment. These critical views, moreover, interpret within the boundaries and limitations that the *bildungsroman* genre itself sets. Overall, this criticism positions coming-of-age heroines less as passive victims than as active participants in resistance to an oppressive patriarchy. One feminist recuperative approach, for example, draws on psychoanalytic theory to celebrate a "more conflicted" and "disruptive" female developmental process that differs from the orderly and smooth course of the paradigmatic male maturation experience. Feminists utilizing this theory tend to embrace texts that foreground an "independent feminine other" typically repressed by the novel's dominant masculine voice. They also privilege female intimacy, which originates in the "pre-Oedipal, mother-infant relationship" (9-11; 7) and which, according to them, often results in what is termed a "submerged plot, which encodes rebellion" to the text's heterosexist ideology (12). This psychoanalytic critical perspective even welcomes death in certain female coming-of-age novels, seeing it not as a mark of failure but rather as a refusal "to accept an adulthood that denies profound convictions and desires" (11).⁶ Another feminist recuperative approach enthusiastically traces the heroine's progressive and steady course to rational adulthood or what some critics call her "trajectory of ascent" from "nothing"

to “all”; it tends to highlight the heroine’s “development of feminine self-sufficiency” and her gradual education to wise decision-making about marriage and partner choice.⁷ Finally, similar to the psychoanalytic model and its rebellious “submerged plot,” other female *bildungsroman* critical models frequently discover a “sub-text,” a “subversive narrative middle,” a “double-sided” narrative, or a variety of “counternarratives” whose “oppositional impulses” reveal revolutionary and liberating possibilities that sometimes pleasurably exceed the conservative logic of the novel’s ending.⁸

My dissertation’s argument represents a significant departure from other studies and critical views of female coming-of-age novels. Its argument is not one whose intention is to foreground a resistance to generic expectations or reveals a “repressed” alternative reading; neither is it one that exposes a “subtext” that reads against the grain of progressive female development; it also does not argue that the novels in question amount to “anti-*bildungsromans*.” Indeed, neither do I claim that these novels enclose *within* their respective narratives the logic of torture and confession. What I do argue is that these three novels discursively reproduce the rituals of torture and confession and therefore constitute an entirely different discursive field that is misrecognized as a female *bildungsroman*. Moreover, this dissertation challenges feminist recuperative readings that claim to liberate or empower women. These critical views reify patriarchy’s power by actively and artificially transforming these novels into celebrations of female empowerment that ultimately obscure patriarchy’s oppressive strategies. Accordingly, this dissertation’s aim is the exposure of this discursive tactic that will enable readers to more readily grasp how patriarchy must endlessly reaffirm and reinscribe its power

through insidious strategies—strategies of violence against women—a “microphysics” of power, to use Foucault’s term— that exert themselves measurably (not excessively as in the case of the witch-hunts) and almost entirely on the symbolic level (in contrast to a public display of power) so they tend to escape the critical awareness of most readers. This dissertation treats the subject of torture seriously in its discussion of its functioning in eighteenth-century literature. It “place[s]” torture “in a conversation by the side of other subjects,” as Elaine Scarry justifies in *The Body in Pain*, since the risk of not doing so, as she also claims, “increases our vulnerability to power” (60).

Besides the three forms of misrecognition that I claim occur at the plot level, what all three novels further misrecognize is that power *produces* these heroines diseased female bodies through the logic of torture and confession, even as it insists it only *discovers* that these heroines’ flawed bodies are always already there. Each heroine’s “confession” inadvertently attests to this “truth.” Each heroine, it seems, like the seventeenth-century accused witches, does not know her own body until the instant of her confession (for example, Clarissa’s body contained a “secret pride . . . which [she] had not fathomed”). The logic of torture and confession states that her body contains the “truth,” but she does not have access to it prior to the program of “torture” that the novel’s logic initiates almost immediately in the plotline. Indeed, this logic resembles how Inquisitorial power produced the “diabolical” witch, even as it exposed the fact that the accused woman’s body was already flawed because of its hypersexuality. What this means is that the heroine’s sudden “discovery” of, or flash of insight about, her “flaw,” attested to by her “confession,” i.e., what the text wants us to read as her moment of self-

realization, totally obscures the fact that power produced her “flawed” body through a program of torture. This explains why readers believe Elizabeth Bennet when she declares, ““Till this moment, I never knew myself.”” We do not recognize that patriarchal power “tortured” her into this “confession.”

The Reform'd Coquet, Pride and Prejudice, and Wieland all function to preserve the unequal relation of power, in which patriarchal power in these novels is represented as free from embodiment while Amoranda, Elizabeth Bennet, and Clara Wieland are gradually “tortured” into helpless corporeality that occurs at the point of their respective “confessions.” Similar to Foucault’s “delinquent,” the female heroine has an “affinity” to her “crime” because, as these particular novels contend, she is biologically female and so susceptible to various traits—the criminal exists before the crime, as Foucault contends (*Discipline & Punish* 252). The genre of the female *bildungsroman* constitutes, similar to the life examination of Foucault’s delinquent or mad individual, the heroine’s “life history.” This genre provides each heroine’s “psychological causality” as it were, which has additional benefits for power, since it ensures the delinquent/heroine bears the sole responsibility for her punishment.

Disciplinary power also organizes time, which “assures its control and guarantees its use” (Foucault *Discipline & Punish* 160). This “segmentation” and “seriation” of an individual’s activities for the purposes of observation and quick intervention and correction by power makes the *female bildungsroman* genre ideal for the functioning of disciplinary power. It focuses on a particular unit of time in a young women’s life—what society deems the most precarious and unstable time in her life: the courtship phase—

and offers it up for intense scrutiny. The novel itself and the form of the *bildungsroman* (both also emerging at this time) provide a perfect “analytical space” for such scrutiny. The female *bildungsroman* generates the individual female (as inherently flawed as I argue) even as it has its readers (mis)recognize that the heroine has the agency to self-create, to improve, and to reform. Indeed, each female *bildungsroman* that this dissertation examines functions as a Panoptic “laboratory,” which, as Foucault claims, is a way for power to “test” what strategies work best for keeping women in, or getting women to take, their proper subjugated place (*Discipline & Punish* 203-4). Indeed, the three novels that this dissertation examines serve as “case studies.”

The female *bildungsroman* as a “case study” explains the “outbreak” of “diseased” heroines during the eighteenth century, including “the coquet,” the “jilt,” the “female quixote,” the “vain” woman, and the “prideful” woman, etc. These novels are, as Foucault explains, “part of [disciplinary power’s] very functioning” (*Discipline & Punish* 234). Indeed, these three novels are *not* about “curing” or eliminating these heroines’ offenses, but are instead about “distinguishing” their offenses; patriarchy profits by rendering these women’s “crimes” visible, and it uses them as a rationale to continue to subjugate and manage women. It epitomizes Foucault’s assertion that surveillance is the subjection of bodies through individualization and that “visibility is a trap” (*Discipline & Punish* 200). While some critics may view as empowering to women the fact that novels about women and even by women reached immense popularity in the eighteenth century, it is imperative we question whether or not this is authentic empowerment or if it simply reveals that patriarchy, under the newly evolving regime of disciplinary power, is

exerting itself to subjugate women through intensified scrutiny and has appropriated the *bildungsroman* genre in which to do its work.

Chapter 1 fully develops and discloses the logic of torture and confession in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet; or, The Memoirs of Amoranda* (1724). The analysis of this early eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* functions as a standard against which to compare the novels examined in the next two chapters, respectively, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (published in 1813; written in 1797) and Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland; or the Transformation* (1798). Indeed, these two late eighteenth-century novels contain the very same logic of torture and confession that Davys's earlier novel contains, even though they appear to offer readers more empowered heroines. Elizabeth Bennet and Clara Wieland are surprisingly more like Amoranda than readers might first perceive. In *The Reform'd Coquet*, the logic of torture insinuates itself into the improbable adventures and libertine cruelty that readers expect from the early eighteenth-century novel. Elaine Scarry's theory of political torture illuminates how the logic of torture gradually, violently, and permanently embodies Amoranda, stripping her of her original empowerment until she "confesses" her "Coquetry." This novel's logic does *not* ask its readers to remember Amoranda's "cure" or her reformation into rational womanhood as the novel's title promises; instead it functions to distinguish Amoranda's "Foible" or "Coquetry" by making it permanently visible.

Chapter 2 examines Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (published in 1813; written in 1797) and argues that Elizabeth Bennet's alleged *bildung* is not very different from the early eighteenth-century's Amoranda. The only difference, I argue, is that *Pride*

and Prejudice incorporates a more insidious logic of torture and confession than *The Reform'd Coquet*. Austen's novel presents itself as a humorous and lighthearted novel of manners—as a more realistic novel in terms of human interaction, and one that ostensibly offers up a revised, more empowered heroine—but I argue that Elizabeth is repeatedly shamed into embodiment and into adopting Darcy's worldview.

Chapter 3 crosses the Atlantic to examine a male-authored American gothic *bildungsroman*: Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland; or the Transformation* (1798). *Wieland*, also offers its readers a more finely attuned female subjectivity in that it employs a female first-person narrator; indeed, the entire narrative is authored by the speaking "I" of Clara Wieland, who seems at first to represent a more empowered female subjectivity than either Davys's *Amoranda* or Austen's Elizabeth Bennet. However, I argue that the logic of Brown's full length female-authored narrative functions to make its speaker "confess" her "self" as mad in order to oust her from her numerous empowered positions at the novel's start and to repeatedly showcase her failing rationalism—a flawed rationalism that patriarchal power produces by subjecting Clara to a repetition of horrific and mystifying events. Michel Foucault's logic of the insane asylum helps to explain how power in *Wieland* produces Clara's "madness" even as it points to her narrative as a "biographical history" that implicates Clara as an already latently "mad" body. In other words, the novel's logic ensures that Clara's entire narrative functions as the mandatory "confession" of the insane asylum. This novel's use of a female narrator epitomizes the disturbing discursive transformative abilities of disciplinary power.

The Epilogue briefly examines Robert Zemeckis's 1997 film *Contact* and Jonathan Demme's 1991 film *The Silence of the Lambs* to illustrate the disconcerting persistence of torture and confession to subjugate women. The logic of torture and confession in both of these films appropriates the discourse of feminism in which to reproduce its subjugation of women. I argue that the rational, brilliant, and atheistic Ellie Arroway is "tortured" into confessing her submission to the "Father," which is misrecognized as a profession of her new found faith in a higher power. What the film's logic sets out to accomplish is the feminization of Ellie, whose dedication to her career precluded the need for a heterosexual relationship. *The Silence of the Lambs* reveals striking similarities to Brown's novel *Wieland* in terms of the rationally irrational Hannibal Lecter who resembles Theodore Wieland and in terms of its sensationalism which functions to eclipse Clarice's "torture" by Lecter. This film also co-opts feminist discourse so that readers misrecognize how Clarice's ongoing "confession" reveals her inherent female vulnerability and the victimization that it always already represents.

Introduction Notes

¹ While physical torture was illegal in England, “first degree” methods were still used as well as such other “harsh procedures” endorsed and encouraged by the English Witchfinder General Mathew Hopkins. These procedures included “enforced sleeplessness and starvation combined with highly leading questions” (428). According to Louise Jackson, Hopkins also employed “watchers,” upstanding female members of the community whom he paid to keep constant watch of the suspected female in case her “familiar” appeared to suckle her supernumerary paps. Frequently these same female “watchers” would “walk” the suspect all night, so her activity would attract her familiars (69). Nicholas P. Spanos also describes “witch pricking,” in which the female “watchers” applied a needle to certain parts of the female’s body in order to test if the suspect was insensitive to pain or bleeding, a guaranteed sign that the suspect was a witch. Typically the best sites for witch-pricking were those that revealed the “Devil’s Mark,” which the watchers expected to find on either the female’s breasts or private parts; thus women’s bodies were first “completely shaved” and then “systematically pricked with needles” (431). The employment of female watchers by male officials reveals how easily male authority was able to pit female community members against each other. “Swimming” or “trial by water” was also frequently used to test a suspected witch, and was endorsed by James I in his treatise *Daemonologie*, in which he claims that the water rejected witches who have rejected their baptism (qtd. in Hopkins). The alleged witch was first stripped naked and then each thumb was tied to an opposing large toe. She was then cast into the water; if she floated she was deemed guilty. Ironically, sinking declared the suspect innocent but it cost the woman her life since she usually drowned. Frequently just the threat of torture or the sight of the weapons would garner a confession. If a suspect confessed after this first degree method, her/his confession would be documented as “elicited without torture” (Spanos 426). Another popular and effective method to extract a confession was the psychological pressure applied to suspects to confess by their families, friends, and the authorities (428). Numerous modern obedience experiments, as Spanos, points out, reveal that “relatively mild interpersonal pressure, in the absence of all of the other variables, have led to substantial degrees of conformity and obedience” (428). Actual physical torture supposedly only took place on the Continent. Spanos’ research reveals that this torture included such disturbingly violent acts as cutting off the female suspect’s breasts, whipping her with twisted wire, and breaking both of her arms (426).

² *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines “mortification” as “the action of mortifying the body, its appetites, etc. . . . by the self-infliction or voluntary toleration of bodily pain and discomfort.”

³ Thomas L. Jeffers *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (2005) claims that, while Thomas Carlyle’s translation of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* in the 1824 is frequently regarded as the official introduction of the *bildungsroman* genre into England, he points out that England’s political climate after its 1688 Glorious Revolution was conducive to the formation of the realist novel, including the “biographical novel” (he uses Bakhtin’s term), which represents the *bildungsroman* novel in its nascent and more limiting form in terms of self-cultivation. He cites Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* and Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa* as examples.

⁴ I am not arguing that every eighteenth-century female *bildungsroman* functions as the discourses of torture and confession. Indeed, this would be a weak strategy on the part of patriarchal power. I do, however, see the discourses of torture and confession organizing several other eighteenth and nineteenth-century British and American female *bildungsromans* that I have not covered in this dissertation, including Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa*, which this Introduction only briefly discusses, Francis Burney’s *Evelina* (1778), Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1814), Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), and Maria Susanna Cummins’ *The Lamplighter* (1854).

⁵ The relationship amongst the unknowing female body, truth, and torture originated in Greek mythology. Page duBois outlines the west’s philosophical assumptions about these concepts in her appropriately named *Torture and Truth*. duBois claims that the west has inherited its ideas about truth from the ancient Greeks and that the search for truth in the western philosophical tradition “is inextricably linked with torture” (7). The spatial model of truth-searching in pre-classical Greece is one of descent—a descent into darkness, hiddenness, interiority, oblivion and then back out into the light. Indeed, for the ancient Greeks, truth had a

locus. It was always conceived of as a metaphysical foreknowledge or a fixed idea that was already in existence; it was hidden and needed to be “un-covered.” The Greeks, in other words, conceived of truth as residing elsewhere, as always slipping from the seeker, as always just out of reach. Violence, labor, and pain might be necessary to wrench it from its dark and hidden place. Consequently, the worthy male seeker of Greek mythology discovers truth in “the mysterious cavities of the female body,” frequently represented as metaphors such as the earth into which, for instance, Odysseus travels, or the temple, in which truth passes through the body of the Pythia in its conveyance to the male seeker (duBois 82-91). Indeed, female bodies may house “truth,” but women themselves “cannot *know* truth” (duBois 82). Truth’s inaccessibility, especially for the average man, makes the Greek hero’s journey all the more “extraordinary” (87). The journey to “truth,” it seems, is always fraught with pain and even death. The later secularization of the Greece state, as duBois argues, incorporates into its legal system the idea that truth is located in the Other. Thus, for example, when the Athenian legal system requires “true” testimony about its citizen on trial, it searches for it inside the body of that citizen’s slave. Not only does truth “resid[e] in the body of the slave,” but the Greeks believed that the slave can only produce this truth under coercion” (duBois 68).

⁶ See Elizabeth Abel, et al.’s *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* and Leslie W. Rabine’s *Reading the Romantic Heroine: Text, History, Ideology*. See the “Works Cited” for the complete citations.

⁷ See Ros Ballaster’s “Women and the rise of the novel: sexual prescripts” in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800*, Paula R. Backscheider’s and John J. Richetti’s “Introduction” in *Popular Fiction by Women, 1660-1730: An Anthology*, Anne Williams’s *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of the Gothic*, Marilyn L. Williamson’s *Raising Their Voices, 1650-1750*, Nancy K. Miller’s *The Heroine’s Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722-1782*, and Nina Baym’s *Woman’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870*. See the “Works Cited” for the complete citations.

⁸ See Elizabeth Abel et al.’s *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, Leslie W. Rabine’s *Reading the Romantic Heroine: Text, History, Ideology*, Susan Fraiman’s *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development*, and Lorna Ellis’s *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750—1850*. See the “Works Cited” for the complete citations.

CHAPTER 1

Diseasing Amoranda's Body: The Logic of Torture and Confession in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet*

"The discovery of truth is a physical operation."

– from Lisa Silverman's *Tortured Subjects*

"[W]hat is essential in all power is that ultimately its point of application is always the body."

– from Michel Foucault's *Psychiatric Power*

Near the close of Mary Davys's female coming-of-age novel *The Reform'd Coquet; or, Memoirs of Amoranda* (1724), the heroine announces with conviction: "I have now brought myself to an utter Contempt for all that part of our Species and shall for the future, not only despise Flattery but abhor the mouth it comes from."¹ Amoranda is poised on the very threshold of self-transformation, when past, present, and future merge, and for a moment, the seemingly omniscient heroine knows who she is, who she has been, and who she shall become. The power inherent in such an epiphany irresistibly compels us to view it as an exemplary moment of female agency. Indeed, the agency inherent in the "I" that begins this declaration attests to the Enlightenment belief in the development of a fully realized self. It is a "self," moreover, that has acted on its self ("I have brought myself") and reaffirms the Age of Reason's ideal of willed self-transformation. Through a "self"-sustaining circular logic of individuation, Amoranda's words authenticate her being even as her being authenticates the words she speaks;

“truth” and the individual validate each other. Such a notion is still captivating today, because it validates our own democratic belief in humanity’s ability to reason, to learn from experience and error, and to fashion itself accordingly. *The Reform’d Coquet* is one of the earliest novels out of which this modern subject as we know it emerges.

Many critics’ interpretations of *The Reform’d Coquet* remain within the terms established by the female *bildungsroman* genre; thus their readings reproduce its expectations.² These critical evaluations adopt the novel’s own attitude that Amoranda is in need of reform—what Jane Spencer terms “the Reform’d coquette tradition”—and they routinely refer to this reform process as Amoranda’s “development,” “education,” “journey of self-identity,” “moral development,” or “moral education.” Further espousing the novel’s own stance, these readings regard Amoranda’s course of reform as one of gradual positive transformation, in which this heroine, with the aid and support of her guardian Formator, comes to realize a self that is “mature,” “wise,” and “rational.”

This chapter will challenge, however, a reading of *The Reform’d Coquet* that simply satisfies readerly expectations of the *bildungsroman* genre and the Enlightenment ideals of self-definition it upholds. It will argue that patriarchal power has insinuated itself into the empowering discourse of the *bildungsroman* as a strategy of female subjugation. It will also argue that Amoranda’s moment of self-realization is, in fact, her “confession” and that she has been strongly, if not violently, coerced into making this confession. Indeed, this novel is *not* about Amoranda’s reformation as the title promises; rather, it is about producing the “truth” of her bodily susceptibility to what Davys herself terms the “Disease” of coquetry. Amoranda’s diseased embodiment substantiates the

disembodied ideology of patriarchy. Simply stated, this novel's logic reproduces masculine domination through female embodiment.

The logic of *The Reform'd Coquet* both *produces* and *discovers* a diseased female body. In other words, the text violently and continually *acts upon* Amoranda's body until she exists only as a diseased body. However, the text insists that Amoranda's body is *a priori* susceptible to coquetry because it is biologically female. Furthermore, Amoranda's supposed moment of self-realization, or what I view as her coerced "confession," has readers believe that Amoranda herself did not 'realize' the "truth" of her own body until this point. Indeed, *The Reform'd Coquet* does *not* want its readers to remember its "Reform'd" or made-marriageable heroine; it wants us to remember her bodily susceptibility to coquetry. Indeed, this novel's logic reveals a asymmetrical power relation in which Amoranda must be 'made body' so that patriarchal power can dominate this body and appropriate it as a material referent for its own continued ideological existence; Amoranda's body becomes a tangible sign of the fiction of male superiority.

Furthermore, Davys's novel can be cited as an early novel that represents what Foucault refers to as the gradual emergence of "disciplinary power," since the power to punish already shows its diffusion from a single identifiable source (the monarch) into many alternative, unidentifiable, and seemingly benign discourses. Consequently, while Amoranda's "truth" or moment of self-realization may appear to be produced through the democratic way of coming to truth—i.e., a temporal process of self-discovery via experiential encounters with the world, dialogue with others (especially her mentor), due self-contemplation, calm reason, and individual will—I will show that this Enlightenment

philosophy, this new epistemology of truth-finding as Lisa Silverman describes it in *Tortured Subjects*,³ misrecognizes the logic of torture and the confession that it extracts. I will further demonstrate that this logic of torture and confession is consistent with the logic of political torture/confession as elaborated upon by Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1985).

As I stated above, while the novel ostensibly sets out to resolve the crisis of Amoranda's coquetry, the *The Reform'd Coquet's* legitimate crisis is the financial independence that Amoranda acquires at the age of fifteen. The novel actually begins its embodiment of Amoranda during her childhood by reducing her to a body through its physical description of her: "her Eyes were like Diamonds, her Cheeks roses, her Skin Alabaster, her Lips Coral, and her Hair *Cupid's Nets*" (12). This soft violence applied to Amoranda's body while she is still a child will be greatly and gradually intensified after Amoranda matures and receives her inheritance. During Amoranda's childhood, patriarchal power does not react with the same intensity of violence as it does later, most likely because it views the child as an already powerless body—a body under the control of its parents, and so it does not appear to be any immediate threat to power.⁴ Indeed, it is only after Amoranda is orphaned, inherits her fortune, and reaches marriageable age and delays marrying (enabling her disembodiment as will be seen) that patriarchal power is compelled to act with concentrated violence against her body in an attempt to embody, or, we might even say, *re-embodiment* her.

Amoranda's wealth challenges male inheritance practices, yes, but the issue goes much deeper. Amoranda's wealth provides her with the power of worldly self-extension

that is normally reserved for men. Financial independence enables Amoranda to move beyond the boundaries of her own body and exist as an empowering disembodied voice. As Elaine Scarry asserts in *The Body in Pain*: “It is only when the body is comfortable, when it has ceased to be an obsessive object of perception and concern, that consciousness develops other objects, that for any individual the external world comes into being and begins to grow” (39).⁵ Amoranda comes to exist as a disembodied voice once her financial independence brings her great potential for worldly self-extension.⁶ *The Reform’d Coquet* at this junction begins to draw our attention, *not to Amoranda’s body*, but to her voice; that is, we ‘hear’ her rather than ‘see’ her. Amoranda’s world is filled with objects that enable her body to be comfortable, pain free, and protected, so her body does not call attention to itself (or even to the reader). Indeed, Amoranda’s house is the primary object of her physical comfort, because it is *her* house—not her father’s, not her uncle’s, and most significantly, not her husband’s house. Of course, Amoranda’s inherited wealth offers many advantages—the worldly extension of which Elaine Scarry speaks. This heiress can employ a private maid (Jenny) who dresses and undresses her body and attends to every personal need. Jenny’s attendance to the demands of Amoranda’s body frees her mind to move beyond the body. She also employs a housekeeper and servants so she doesn’t have to experience the bodily labor and discomfort of cleaning, cooking, or procuring food but can instead experience the forgetfulness of a satiated and energized body—a body whose needs are fulfilled before the body even feels the discomfort of them. Amoranda also owns a carriage which enables her body to be present at distant locations (greater worldly extension) and even

more importantly, the carriage operates like a mobile shelter, protecting her body as her own home does while it also takes over the physical labor of walking to a destination.

Amoranda's wealth, moreover, has the added benefit of providing her with objects that not only preclude bodily discomfort by taking over the work of her body but with objects whose sole function is to bring pleasure, enabling an even greater forgetfulness of the body. Amoranda has a beautiful "Garden," which includes a roofed bench that blocks out the sun's heat, a "Summer-house," "Fish-Ponds," and a "Barge," all of which relax the body, relieving Amoranda from a sense of bodily weight and presence. Indeed, Amoranda's fortune enables a virtually complete forgetfulness of her body, ensuring what Scarry refers to as "larger mindfulness." No wonder that Lord Lofty describes Amoranda as "open and free as ever" (16). In the context of eighteenth-century society, moreover, we can now see that Amoranda's fortune challenges more than just male inheritance tradition; it challenges the very foundation of what it means to have power and a voice in the world.

Amoranda's "larger mindfulness" comes through to the reader primarily as an empowering bodiless voice in the novel's first half. Her language demonstrates her indomitable spirit, her quick wit, and her reasoning abilities. We first see evidence of her quick wit in her response to Lord Lofty's remark that her "Ponds" will be in a little time quite ruined" if she catches men like she does "Fish" (16). Lordy Lofty's amusing analogy and attempt to label Amoranda a "coquet" boomerangs when she objectifies men by referring to them as "Fish" and by claiming she has a "very good way of disposing of them"—"one I throw into the Water again, and the other may consume in his own

Flames” (16). Her final retort in this exchange of wit in which she clearly has the upper hand is that men (Fish) “should e’en keep out of harm’s way” (16). Amoranda clearly redirects the blame back onto men, implying that it is their own lust that ensnares men (“consume in his own Flames”) and draws them to her, since they can always choose to avoid her (“keep out of harm’s way”). Amoranda’s verbal power precludes her from incorporeality, since Lord Lofty’s attempt to embody her rebounds to him; consequently he becomes the “Fish” or vulnerable/disposable body. Helen Thompson’s assertion that Amoranda is unable “to arrest [her] body in the name of a less sensationally urgent good” (“urgent good” meaning marriage) is certainly much more applicable to Lord Lofty and other men, since it is they, and not she, who act on bodily impulses.

Amoranda again reveals the power of her voice when she cuts short Formator’s sermon on youth and the pitfalls of “Pleasure.” She exclaims, “O Lud! . . . I believe you are to be the Chaplain too, if you talk thus much longer, you’ll argue me out of my Senses; I told you I could not come into your grave Measures of a sudden” (25). Amoranda’s voice reveals a masculine assertiveness, since it is she who interrupts Formator and quickly establishes limits on his behavior. By interrupting him, Amoranda’s voice overrides and silences Formator’s. Amoranda’s language also demonstrates both reasoning power and worldly wisdom in another conversation with Lord Lofty and later, with Formator. After Lord Lofty implies that to marry a woman is “to have so little love” for her, Amoranda responds with the following:

[O]ne thing I have often observed, when once a Woman’s married, nobody cares for her but her Husband; and if your Lordship’s Remark’s be true, not he neither: so that, my Lord, I think we must live single in our own defence. (22)

Amoranda undoubtedly shows her ability to reason by deduction, and it further reveals her awareness of Lord Lofty's libertine "designs;" thus, she is able to match him at his own game. The heiress shows that she is far from being ensnared by Lord Lofty's wicked plans. Indeed, Amoranda's sharp reason exposes Formator's own flawed reasoning in response to his accusation that she is "engross[ing] the whole Male world to herself":

Nay, . . . there never was any such thing in nature, as one Woman engrossing the whole contrary Sex; believe me, sir, you all love Variety too well for that, and your Affections, like your Money, circulates all the Nation over; so that it is only who can keep their Lovers longest we strive for, not who can keep them always, for that we none of us expect. (26)

Amoranda's clever response again reveals not only her ability to discern between fact and exaggeration, but also her ability to reason that the very behavior of men precludes any woman from "engrossing the whole Male world to herself." Again, her words implicitly reject the label of herself as a "coquet," and the power of her words redirects the blame to where it belongs—on men's own coquettish behavior. In fact, her words also implicitly liken men to prostitutes whose "Affections" circulate like "Money." Amoranda's clever retort demonstrates her rational mind, while it simultaneously divulges Formator's unsound reasoning. Her language again imposes a body, if you will, on men (as coquets and prostitutes), while she remains exempt from one.

It is not only this "young Lady's" verbal perspicuity that displays her initial power and disembodied agency, but it is also manifested in her ability to design plans that ensure she does *not* become a vulnerable female body. Amoranda does not hesitate to orchestrate a "Counter-Plot" against Froth and Callid, after being informed by the housekeeper of their plot to kidnap her (an act that will take and so make her a body).

Even Formator defers to Amoranda's plan, asking her permission to pose as the disguised Amoranda: "Madam, said he, give me leave to personate you in the Summer-house tomorrow night" (27). She even goes so far as to suggest that they "invert" conventional gender customs by offering to "come and rescue" Formator if he "happen[s] to be worsted" by participating in her revenge plot (27). Amoranda does not, in this scene, exist as the vulnerable female body; instead she is the creator—the unalterable, bodiless voice behind the scene—and Formator finds himself in the role of the vulnerable female body. Moreover, Amoranda transforms both Callid and Froth from powerful plotters into disempowered 'bodies' by offering them up as "Slaves" in service of her Uncle's merchandizing company in the Indies (33). If death itself is the ultimate embodiment—the absolute loss of worldly self-extension—as Scarry claims, then Callid's and Froth's eventual slaying of each other in their subsequent duel (33) posits their absolute embodiment against Amoranda's empowering and "designing" (creating) voice.

Amoranda's assertive and resolute spirit presents itself again after Lord Lofty's duplicity (his intentions to marry another woman) is partially revealed. Upon discovering Lord Lofty's incriminating silver box, Amoranda's first instinct is to take the matter into her own hands. Again she reveals her independent spirit when she declares to her maid Jenny: "Give me my Clothes . . . I'll be revenged of him or lose my Life in the Attempt" (27). Amoranda refuses to be outmaneuvered by any man and always opts instead to take a course of action rather than find herself in the position as the passive, silenced and manipulated body. Later in the story, Amoranda positions herself in the role as the father of the bride, who arranges Altemira's marriage to Lord Lofty. Once again, Amoranda

operates behind the scene as a disembodied voice that plans but is not and does not have to be present amongst the bodies (both Altemira's and Lord Lofty's) that act on each other and surrender themselves in the scene. Evidence of Amoranda's initial agency as I have just offered exposes the erroneousness of reading this novel as a female *bildungsroman*. Indeed, Amoranda is neither "heedless" nor "thoughtless" as Marilyn L. Williamson and Paula R. Backscheider respectively describe her. And, whereas Mary Anne Schofield views Amoranda as an "asexual maid" (85), the evidence reveals that she is simply exercising the privileges of male power, which were inadvertently enabled by her financial independence. Moreover, the logic of these other readings must necessarily equate heterosexual marriage with cautious rationalism and 'authentic' female sexuality, since marriage is posited as the alleged cure for Amoranda's "heedless," "thoughtless," and "asexual" behavior.

Another way of viewing Amoranda's disembodied voice is in terms of what Scarry refers to as a "withholding of the body" (203). Amoranda resembles Scarry's religious non-believer or doubter, whose move toward disembodiment (pure voice) is regarded by God as disobedience, because it is a move that approaches God's own disembodied power; the non-believer, therefore, is viewed as withholding his or her body from God (202-3). The Old Testament represents the non-believer's body as having a hardened or rigid bodily surface that will inevitably be "violently entered" by God (unless voluntarily surrendered to God) in order to re-establish the categories of voice and body that distinguish God from humans; the subject's own pained body will verify (for him or herself and others) God's intangible existence (*Scarry* 203). Similarly,

Amoranda's empowered voice can be viewed as a withholding of her body from patriarchal belief by her refusal to marry, forfeit her fortune to her husband, and perpetuate male inheritance through sexual reproduction. Indeed, as a disembodied voice, Amoranda has no body to sexually reproduce; the "surface" of her body, we might say, is closed to sexual penetration. Belief, Scarry asserts, requires full surrender of the body and its interior, which not only represents the most intimate and private aspect of one's body, but is also the locus of one's sentience or bodily sensations, including pain. Surrender of one's "bodily interior . . . does not simply accompany belief" or is "required" by it, "[it] is itself belief"; the private body in pain stands as the public, tangible, material referent for an idea (belief) that has no material substantiation (Scarry 204). Thus Amoranda, like the *non*-believer who requires violent conversion through power's (God's) infliction of bodily pain, blurs the categories of voice and body that distinguish those who have power and voice from those who are powerless bodies.

To re-establish these categories the novel acts to generate Amoranda *as body*—to not only dis-ease and make her body a latent coquet body that only a husband can restrain, but to also force open her heretofore closed body and make her *an open, penetrable, body* that will serve the ends of patriarchal ideology. The wounded body, the suffering body, the body made open and aware of its own vulnerability will either surrender itself or be "violently penetrated" to "*analogical[ly] substantiate*" the reality (which is really a fiction) of patriarchal ideology (Scarry 14). As Scarry explains, "the sheer material factualness of the human body will be borrowed to lend that cultural construct the aura of 'realness' and 'certainty'" (14). Because power, Scarry argues, is

always in a “crisis of substantiation,” it will co-opt another’s body, violently if necessary, to substantiate itself, even as power simultaneously, legitimate or not, is “always based on distance from the body” (46). Pain’s inexpressibility makes this co-optation possible, because pain has no referent—“it is not *of* or *for* anything” as with other states of consciousness (Scarry 5). Thus the deeply private and purely subjective and inexpressible experience of pain enables the torturer to easily objectify this pain and transform it into a fiction of his power. Power takes the intensely pained body for its own referent. It is the overall goal of this novel, therefore, to take Amoranda down, to produce the “truth” of her coquet body by dis-easing her body and thus silencing her voice, which is so voluble and strong at the novel’s beginning. This logic—the logic of producing a body and silencing a voice, while simultaneously reasserting the fictive and disembodied voice of power—comprises the very logic of torture and confession as theorized by Elaine Scarry.⁷ Thus the “Project” of this novel is not Amoranda’s “reform” from her coquettish behavior; the “Project” is to dis-ease or to “torture” Amoranda into becoming a diseased female (and sexually reproducible) body and to distinguish this flawed female body by making it permanently visible.

But, exactly how does this gradual embodiment occur in the novel? As I have stated, while the novel recognizes her evolution as leading to her moment of self-realization, I argue that the novel’s logic coerces Amoranda into confessing her flawed body. Indeed, the novel would have us believe that Amoranda’s alleged self-reformation is facilitated by Formator’s guidance and advice. But where is the evidence for this? What exactly does Formator do to “reform” Amoranda of her coquetry? Natasha Saje

insightfully observes that Amoranda's reform occurs as soon as he arrives—"not much of a process" (168). Given Amoranda's alleged empowering epiphany (what I view as her confession) near the end of the novel, we are compelled to ask what or whom is the catalyst for her change? It is my belief that we are looking in the wrong places to account for Amoranda's transformation. This is not to say that Formator plays no role in her change, because he does, but not in the way that the novel's plot claims—as her advisor or guardian.

I propose, therefore, that we take a closer look at the violent acts attempted on Amoranda's body. The novel's own rationalization for these violent acts is that this heiress's fondness for "Adoration" makes her "a prey to every designing Rascal" (264). The *bildungsroman* tradition would have us believe that she is to learn wisdom and reason from these encounters with, or experiences in, the 'real' world. To explain them, as Saje does, as Davys's implicit "critique" of the political corruption "under the administration of Robert Walpole" (174), or to not even take notice of these acts at all like Helen Thompson, only contributes to our further misrecognition of Amoranda's transformation from a voice of power into a subjugated and latently diseased body.

Early eighteenth-century readers most likely took these violent acts for granted, attributing them to the conventions of what is now referred to as "amatory fiction," which incorporated the romantic or adventure plots from its Italian and French literary predecessors. *The Reform'd Coquet's* inclusion of violent episodes, in other words, fulfills reader's expectations in several ways. Toni O'Shaughnessy Bowers claims that amatory fiction not only provided women with information about "dangerous male

ways,” but it also fulfilled women’s need for sensuality, “a sense of involvement in the outside world,” and an empowering sense of rebelliousness in reading such literature (52; 62). Patricia Meyer Spacks explains that the emphasis in early eighteenth-century adventure novels is “on happening rather than character, on diverse rather than detailed evidence” (32). She states that the “early fiction of the eighteenth-century resolutely declares the excitement, for readers and potentially for those who undergo comparable fates in actuality, of many kinds of life happening” (34). The adventure novel thus explores life’s possibilities, even dangerous ones. On the surface, it all sounds so empowering. According to Spacks, the reader need not suspend disbelief, since readerly pleasure has everything to do with the implausibility of the heroine’s adventures, which are further “heightened by the speed of narration” (34). Because readers expect and even desire dangerous and adventurous episodes in *The Reform’d Coquet*, these episodes consequently go unscrutinized and unquestioned by readers (then and now) and so enable patriarchal power to exploit this violence for its own purposes.

What may also authorize and so cause readers to overlook these violent episodes is eighteenth-century libertine philosophy. Marilyn L. Williamson claims that Davys draws on the “libertine paradigm,” but she does not allow its “immorality to prosper.” Indeed Davys’s very management of her rakish characters by either reforming them as she does Lord Lofty or making them fail at their designs, as in the case of Callid and Froth, and Biranthus, who actually comes very close to succeeding, enables modern readers to see only Davys’s moral agenda and thus overlook the possibility that libertine violence in this novel might actually be ‘prospering,’ although not in the ways normally

expected by readers. Tiffany Potter, for example, argues that the early eighteenth century's "prominent cultural discourse of libertinism" contributed to the early formation of the English novel by bringing to it the "disruptive and creative impulses" that characterize libertinism (171; 175). Potter views the libertine discourse in *The Reform'd Coquet* as a paradoxical component, since Davys's critique of it is also what enables the individualism of her characters, especially Amoranda. Prominent as this discourse was, early eighteenth century readers probably didn't question its presence in novels, especially since it lent the story excitement while it simultaneously instructed the naïve female reader on how to recognize a male libertine. In my view, however, both Williamson's conservative and Potter's more progressive reading of this novel overlook how libertine discourse, like the discourse of adventure and romance, might be used as a strategy for producing the truth of the flawed female body.

Unlike the failed kidnapping plot of Callid and Froth, the next several acts of violence directed against Amoranda begin the world contracting work of transforming her into a silenced, powerless, and open body. First, masked-men attempt to kidnap Amoranda on her ride home from Lord Lofty's. Gunfire is exchanged, one man is killed, the Coachman is shot, and Formator is wounded. Amoranda, the narrator relates, "fell into a swoon, and continued in it" after seeing her Coachman shot (51). The narrator then tells us that it "was some days before she recovered her Fright" (51). Indeed the violence in this scene rapidly shrinks Amoranda's worldly self-extension: she doesn't speak, she doesn't act; for all intents and purposes, *Amoranda is body*. Having fainted, there is clearly no self-extension beyond her body. Also, the carriage that usually protects her

traveling body is threatened by violent penetration from the outside. At this point, the novel starts to assert a strategy that men alone (not her fortune) can protect Amoranda's body and enable her to forget bodily discomfort and vulnerability. Her post-traumatic bodily discomfort in the form of a "Fright" lasts for weeks.

As Amoranda becomes more body after this event, patriarchy correspondingly becomes more voice. Torture's logic rests on the voice/body asymmetrical power relation and accounts for why torture is comprised of both the interrogation and the infliction of bodily pain. Patriarchy's expanding voice is represented in the novel by the character of Formator. Indeed, Formator's role in Amoranda's violent embodiment challenges Thompson's and Barney's construction of him as the "gentle" post-patriarch and the "gentle" pedagogue, respectively. During the "Three Weeks" of her recovery, Formator's (*lit.* one who forms) "daily application to form Amoranda's mind to his own liking" strongly implies that Amoranda was the passive listener (body) to Formator's empowered and proselytizing voice (51). Later in the novel Amoranda will refer to these "daily applications" as his "Lectures" (64, 79). Furthermore, just as interrogation (voice) is the necessary and concomitant partner to the physical (body) aspect of torture, Formator also 'interrogates,' if you will, Amoranda during this recovery period by 'putting her to the question' as the Inquisition once termed it: "Why, lovely Amoranda, must all these fine accomplishments be eclipsed, by that Foible of your Sex, Vanity? Why have you such a greedy thirst after Praise, which every Man that has his eyes and ears, must give you of course?" (52). Similar to the logic of interrogation as outlined by Scarry, Formator's questions sound more like declaratives that function to impose her "Foible" even as they

convey sincerity in desiring a real answer. His interrogation also functions to absolve him (as patriarchy's mouthpiece) of responsibility by providing him with a morally superior "motive" that justifies torture or the forced embodiment of Amoranda. His questioning is also logically similar to interrogation techniques in that they imply Amoranda is the real agent of the violence being enacted against her—yes, this logic says, she is the cause of her own suffering because she chooses to act as a coquet, even as she is being denied any agency by these very same acts of violence against her body. Indeed one can see here why the confession when it finally comes is so powerful a statement, as it functions to fully justify the use of torture in the first place, absolving the torturer as it simultaneously confers total responsibility on the victim, especially since the victim's voice at the point of confession is in reality silenced, because, as Scarry explains, it mimes, doubles, and so enlarges the torturer's, essentially authenticating the torturer's world view (36).

Because Amoranda does not make a legitimate confession after this particular round of body-making (she only resolves to stop finding Flattery pleasing), the novel tries again *to make her a disempowered body*, and, in keeping with the logic of torture, the novel quickly and several times intensifies its violence against her. First the disguised Biranthus and Amoranda's childhood friend Arentia successfully kidnap her. Because Biranthus disguises himself as a woman and is carrying a weapon, it precludes his need to exert his own male body (i.e. become embodied) to carry out the violence he does to Amoranda's body. But, she withholds her body through her strong voice by refusing to

marry Biranthus. Consequently, power must retaliate with an intensified attempt at embodiment; hence Biranthus threatens to rape (take and make) her body by force:

[T]he Devils that carried her off had conveyed her into the most unfrequented part of the Wood and laid her on the Grass to recover herself; but who can express the Rage, Despair, and Grief, which appeared in her lovely Eyes, when they opened to such a Scene of Sorrow, when she saw herself in the full power of a threatening Ravisher, her own Servants aiding and assisting him, in the midst of a wild Desert, where nothing but Air and Beasts could receive her Cries? (58)

Yet, even as the threatening Biranthus stands over her body with a “Pistol” in his pocket, Amoranda again draws on her vocal power to refuse to surrender her body to Biranthus for marriage and sexual reproduction. As a result, Biranthus retaliates even more with the threat of an intensified violence against her body; he threatens double rape or what today we would call “gang rape”: “Then hear . . . and tremble at thy approaching Fate. This minute, by the help of thy own Servant, I will enjoy thee; and then, by the assistance of my Arm, he shall do so too” (59). His imperative “hear and tremble” reveals that Biranthus seeks a bodily response. What’s most significant in this scene, however, is that Amoranda’s threatened rape is really about forcing her to surrender the interior of her body, which, as I have stated above, is what Scarry argues is the essence of belief; Amoranda must submit her body as the validating sign of the coquet body. Either she willingly surrenders or she will be “violently entered” (Scarry 204). Indeed Amoranda’s victimized position makes her feel the full gravity of bodily presence, the physical feeling of being a vulnerable and weak body, exemplified in her eventual cry, “Why has Nature denied us Strength to revenge our own Wrongs?” (59). Similar to the tortured victim’s body, *her own body* acts against her, which, again, exempts the torturer—in Amoranda’s

case, Biranthus—from any responsibility and thus contributes to his disembodied power. Amoranda’s world has collapsed down to a space the size of her own body—her body is all that she experiences; her body is all that matters now. The narrator describes her in terms of vulnerable embodiment: she is “half-drown’d in her own Tears, pulling off her Hair, and wringing her lovely Hands” (60). In a very real sense, the Amoranda we knew at the novel’s beginning is now overcome by her own body. Amoranda’s tears resemble the tears of accused witches, which were read by the Inquisitors as “a mark of sincerity” and demonstrated a “posture of openheartedness toward God,” since “weeping was destroyed by the Devil, who was known literally to harden the hearts and to dry up the tears of his minions” (Silverman 102-3). Likewise, as Elaine Scarry tells us, the hardened heart describes the problem of the non-believer or the individual who refuses to surrender the interior of his body to the bodiless Hebrew God, revealing a similar logic to the hardened heart of the diabolic witch, who withholds her body from the bodiless Christian God. Indeed, Amoranda’s own tears strongly imply she is beginning to surrender her body to masculine power.⁸

Moreover, all those artifacts that previously enabled Amoranda’s self-extension into the world, all those objects that enabled her to act in the world as a disembodied voice, have been transformed into weapons to be used against her body. Through torture, as Scarry claims, the domestic—all those things that take over the work of the body, that deconstruct pain—is unmade through its inverted use—“the artifact is deconstructed to produce pain” (145). Amoranda’s barge, which previously offered bodily forgetfulness, relaxation, and pleasure, facilitates her kidnapping by Birtanthus: rather than protecting

her body on the water, it exposes her body to his designs. Her servant, who previously served her, is now about to violate her body. Amoranda's house, the main source of bodily protection, has been 'violently entered' by kidnappers and rapists, including her childhood friend. That which enabled forgetfulness of the body now operates to make her think only of her body, to the point where she exists only as one.

Indeed Amoranda's situation follows the logic that Scarry so astutely describes in the unmaking of the word "host" in torture's deconstruction of civilization. Torture unmakes the word "host" (Amoranda is a "host" to Biranthus and Arentia) by bringing it back to its main root of "hos" and then forward again to a reformation of new meanings in the words "hostage" (which Amoranda is to both Biranthus and Arentia) and to "host" again—but, as Scarry explains, "not the host that willfully abandons the ground of his power in acts of reciprocity and equality [as Amoranda does while Biranthus and Arentia are guests in her house] but the "host" deprived of all ground, the host of the eucharist, the sacrificial victim" (45), which Amoranda becomes by the end of this violent scene. If Amoranda is "Reform'd" at all it is in this sense—she is Reform'd from the host of her guests into the bodily host of the sacrifice—the bodily sacrifice (whether animal or human) that reaffirms God's (patriarchy's) power. Scarry's concept of torture or unmaking and remaking evokes Pierre Bourdieu's concept in which a "new man" is produced through a process of "deculturation" and "reculturation" of the body—"the *made* body" or "transubstantiation"⁹ via a "hidden persuasion" (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* 94).

After bringing its readers to the brink of a pleasurable tension, the novel suddenly interrupts this scene of violence against Amoranda with the arrival of Alanthus (the disguised Formator), but rather than immediately rescuing Amoranda, he ‘interrogates’ her:

I presume, Madam, you are some self-willed, head-strong Lady, who, resolved to follow your own Inventions, have left the Care of a tender Father to ramble with you know not who. Oh Sir! *said she*, some part of your guess is true; but Father I have none. Nor Mother? *said the Stranger*; nor Guardian? Nor Mother, *said she*, but a Guardian, a good one too, I have; and were I but once again in his possession, I would never leave him while I live. (60)

The novel once again manifests the logic of torture with its two-part physical and verbal, body and voice, power relation. The interrogation functions to impart responsibility to Amoranda while it simultaneously excuses and redirects our attention away from the violence being enacted against her. Our attention is called to the choices Amoranda made that brought her to this dangerous situation. Formator’s language again reveals the conflation of speech modes that Scarry argues are evident in the interrogation. His sentences demonstrate the uncertainty of the interrogatory, but they also reveal the dominance of the imperative (his questions already contain the answers he wants her to admit to). In the Althusserian sense, Formator’s words interpellate Amoranda; they “hail” a subject that won’t make the reader doubt for a second Amoranda’s approaching empowering moment of willed self-transformation, since she is, as Formator tells her, “self-will’d,” “head-strong,” and someone who’s determined to abide by her “own Inventions.”

Indeed, this near-rape scene is pivotal in the novel's project because we see a definite shifting in the voice/body relation in comparison to the earlier scenes of violence in the story. Amoranda loses voice and becomes a "colossal body" (to use Scarry's term) while Alanthus / Formator loses body and functions as the powerful disembodied voice that hovers God-like over the scene of action. In fact, Amoranda even refers to him on her return home from the woods as "too God-like to be an inhabitant of this world" (301). Power keeps (must keep) its distance from the body, since "to have no body is to have no limits on one's extension out into the world"; bodilessness exempts one from being wounded or altered (Scarry 206-7). Formator, in essence, is several times removed from the scene of embodiment, since he is obviously not the recipient of the violence, nor is he the literal agent of the violence against Amoranda in any given scene. Furthermore, he is always in disguise—he is either Alanthus disguised as Formator and, in the rape scene, he is Formator disguised as Alanthus (since Formator at this point has not yet revealed his true identity to Amoranda). In contrast to Saje, I do not view the disguised Formator as Davy's employment of an implausible plot device to undermine the novel's surface plot of patriarchal domination.¹⁰ Instead, I argue that the disguised Formator functions as one of patriarchal power's most formidable strategies in its domination of Amoranda. Whereas in the novel's beginning, Amoranda is the designer, the bodiless God behind the scenes, in the latter half of the novel it is the disguised Formator who operates behind the scenes, manipulating the novel's action. By the end of the narrative, we wonder what the "true" identity of Formator is or will be—and this because he exists as the unanchored or disembodied voice of patriarchy; indeed, he keeps his distance from powerless

embodiment. The character of Formator/Alanthus epitomizes Scarry's assertion that power, even when represented, is "represented in its unrepresentability" (211). Whereas only one curtain divides Dorothy from the true identity of the powerful Wizard of Oz, it seems a myriad of curtains divide Amoranda and the reader from the true identity of Formator/Alanthus. We draw aside one curtain only to discover another.

Through the character of Formator, patriarchal power also draws on another strategy to exempt itself from any culpability in its subjugation of Amoranda. In a disturbingly classic move that torturers draw on time and time again,¹¹ Formator redirects vulnerability and sympathy away from Amoranda and toward himself. After Amoranda's kidnapping attempt by the masked-men (one of whom was Biranthus, which we only find out later), the text directs our attention to Formator's possible concussion (he was struck on the head by one of the masked-men): Amoranda asks after she recovers from fainting, "Do you live, *Formator*" and Formator responds with "I have no Wounds, but what the fear of losing you gave me; the dreadful apprehension of such a misfortune, stab'd me in a thousand places" (51). Of course, being "stab'd" in "a thousand places" certainly trumps what Amoranda herself has just experienced (after all she fainted and didn't risk her life fighting the masked men like Formator). But—this is exactly what the novel wants us to perceive; it wants us to forget or overlook Amoranda's vulnerable or made vulnerable body in this scene. Furthermore, just a few pages later, Formator once more directs attention to his own suffering, when he begins to suspect Biranthus at dinner. The narrator relates that Formator's "Soul was rack'd and tortur'd" (53)—an interesting choice of words—words that invoke literal torture. His use of this particular language is

even more effective at distracting our attention from the violence against Amoranda's body, since it operates as a kind of 'decoy' laid before the reader prior to the upcoming violent rape scene. It ensures that the reader (either consciously or unconsciously) recognizes torture as literary hyperbole. Lastly, Formator refers to Amoranda as "the Enchantress, who, by a natural Magick, has kept me all this while in Chains of Love" (83), which is disturbing on several levels: it camouflages his domination of her with the discourse of "Love," it yet again places all responsibility on Amoranda for all that has happened (it assigns agency even as it takes it away), it constructs Formator as a prisoner (as if he's the one experiencing the bodily discomfort), and it comes uncannily close to constructing—or, better yet, let's say "reforming"—Amoranda as a witch who practices *maleficium*. In all these instances, patriarchal power through the character of Formator sets out to incarnate Amoranda through violence, but that very violence always finds a way to circle back to Formator, ensuring we overlook the suffering Amoranda. Let me immediately clarify, however, that this does *not* in any way make Formator a disempowered body as the text sets out to make Amoranda, since, as Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out, masculine power is always strategizing, controlling and determining others' perception of it as either a subject or object, depending on which position strategically better serves its ends at the time (*Masculine Domination* 68 Footnote 19).

As I have maintained, the entire novel is driven by its goal of dis-easing Amoranda's body so that she finally confesses to her diseased female body. Indeed, immediately following Amoranda's near-rape scene, everything that patriarchy has

worked for throughout the novel culminates in what I view as the novel's pivotal point:
Amoranda's moment of self-realization:

I have now brought myself to an utter Contempt for all that part of our Species and shall for the future, not only despise Flattery but abhor the mouth it comes from. I own, *Formator*, the groundwork of this Reformation in me, came from those wholesome Lectures you have so often read to me; but the finishing stroke is given by my own inclination.
(63-4)

The impact of Amoranda's words comes from its use of first person, which clearly works to emphasize the discrete reality of a thinking and reflecting modern subject—a subject who has the ability to reinvent herself as her words “I have now brought myself” and “shall for the future” indicate. As Foucault claims, the modern individual is “authenticated by the discourse of truth he [is] able or obliged to pronounce concerning himself” (*The History of Sexuality* 58). How can any individual, past or present, resist such a validation of his or her own empowerment?

The Reform'd Coquet's use of the first person “I” departs from earlier texts, since alleged epiphanies in past literary texts about “Reform'd” young women are neither expressed in the first person nor do they convey the profound sense of self-discovery evident in Amoranda's words. Aphra Behn's *The Fair Jilt* (1668) and Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1717), to name just two examples, do not provide their respective heroines with this empowering self-affirmation. Similar to how *The Reform'd Coquet* constructs Amoranda, both Miranda and Belinda are constructed as vain coquettes who postpone marrying because their inherited wealth precludes this social obligation. Also following the logic of *The Reform'd Coquet*, both are punished (tortured) for their vanity and independence, although like *The Reform'd Coquet*, these texts lead their readers to

believe they are being punished for some other crime. Returning to my original point, however, their confessional speech act is *not* proffered as self-discovery as it is in *The Reform'd Coquet*. *The Fair Jilt*, for example, does not try to pretend that Miranda's confession is anything but a confession:

[Miranda] at last confessed all her life, all the lewdness of her practices with several princes and great men, besides her lusts with people that served her, and others in mean capacity; and lastly, the whole truth of the young friar; and how she had drawn the page, and the prince, her husband, to this designed murder of her sister. (Behn 66)

Indeed, unlike Amoranda's first person statement, Miranda's third-person confession lacks the therapeutic and truth-affirming power that comes from the speaking subject's use of the first person to make its confession. Moreover, the punishing techniques in this novella are not passed off as life experiences that enable self-growth and transformation. Miranda confesses to both clerical and secular authorities—*identifiable* and *tangible* sources of patriarchal power within the text—thus power in this text looks backward to the centralized power of the monarchy. Patriarchal power in *The Reform'd Coquet* operates in and through the very fabric of the scenes and so anticipates Foucault's description of the evolution of disciplinary power from a centralized and identifiable source of power.

As in *The Fair Jilt*, patriarchal power in *The Rape of the Lock* is also identifiable. Belinda's "torture" is quite public, clearly corporal, and even quite theatrical. What can be more spectacular than the Baron cutting off her lock in public (at "Court") and the lock itself being eternally displayed in the night sky? Belinda's "public torture" and "public death"¹² (torture and death in a single blow by the executioner Foucault terms

“zero-degree torture”) also seems to look to the past for the traditional penal ceremony or what Foucault refers to as the “spectacle of the scaffold.” In the case of Belinda, the combination of spectacle and her marked body produces “the truth” of Belinda’s “crime” and is “legible for all” (including the reader). As Foucault claims, spectacle and the “excess of violence” guarantee the triumph of “truth” and consequently reinscribe the unquestioned power of the monarch (*Discipline & Punish* 34). This unassailable power is represented by the Baron, whose position makes him an extension of the King’s power. The rape of Belinda’s lock is also a form of what Foucault terms “symbolic torture,” in that the form of the “execution” directly implies the nature of the crime. In other words, Belinda’s vanity can only be punished by castrating the physical part of the body that is responsible for that vanity. Moreover, just as the King’s power follows the criminal even after his death in the form of “corpses burnt, ashes thrown to the wind, bodies dragged on hurdles and exhibited on the roadside” (Foucault *Discipline & Punish* 34), it would seem the Baron’s power also pursues Belinda to the “Cave of Spleen,” where “She sighs for ever on her pensive Bed, / *Pain* at her Side, and *Megrim* at her Head” (Pope Canto IV, 23-4).

The closest we get to a confession from Belinda is what can be more accurately termed “regret”:

For ever curs’d be this detested Day,
Which snatch’d my best, my fav’rite Curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy, had I been,
If *Hampton-Court* these Eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid,
By Love of *Courts* to num’rous Ills betray’d.
Oh had I rather un-admir’d remain’d
In some lone Isle, or distant *Northern* Land;

Where the gilt *Chariot* never marks the Way,
Where none learn *Ombre*, none e'er taste *Bohea*!
There kept my Charms conceal'd from mortal Eye,
Like Roses that in Desarts bloom and die.
What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to rome?
O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home! (Pope Canto IV, lines 147-160)

Unlike Amoranda's statement which looks to the future and promises an altered and transformed self, Belinda only looks to the past with regret ("had I been" and "had never seen"). Also, Belinda even mitigates her crime, or one might say she even excuses herself from her crime, by acknowledging her own inexperience: "Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid." While Belinda does speak in the first person, this equivocal "confession" lacks the self-inventing, self-affirming, and self-realizing potent power of Amoranda's speech act. *The Reform'd Coquet* stands indeed as an early example of the powerful authority of the first person "I" to 'sell' the authenticity of what it speaks.

However, it is vital that we put aside all our assumptions concerning Amoranda's self-willed new identity and the agency inherent in its first person usage; otherwise we will overlook, as I mentioned earlier, how power can insinuate itself even into moments of alleged agency. First, her declaration "I have brought myself" may sound like the power of self-willed transformation, but it also indicates she accepts total responsibility for all that has occurred to her prior to this moment. That is, the novel recognizes that it wasn't male violence or the logic of torture that brought her to this point; it was her own coquettish behavior. Second, her assertion—"the finishing stroke is given by my own inclination"—strongly implies that she not only accepts the violence that has been done to her, but it suggests that she is acting or about to act violently against herself—is her

own “torturer” as it were. As Scarry claims, the logic of confession serves to turn the tables and “the one annihilated shifts to being the agent of his own annihilation” (47). Her use of the phrase “finishing stroke,” moreover, disturbingly invokes the French term “*coup de grace*,” which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as: “[*lit.* stroke of grace]: a blow by which one condemned or mortally wounded is ‘put out of his misery’ or dispatched quickly; hence *fig.* a *finishing stroke*, one that settles or puts an end to something” (emphasis mine). Just as the suffering torture victim confesses (willingly annihilates himself) to put himself out of his own misery—to finally end his intense bodily pain, Amoranda also confesses to end the repeated violence against her body. Amoranda does indeed “put an end” or applies the “finishing stroke”¹³ to the novel’s project of making her a silenced body not only by confessing but also by marrying Formator / Alanthus, since, as the novel wants her and us to think, he will allegedly ‘protect’ her vulnerable female body. But by now we know that her actual “self” annihilation is that she will forfeit to him all her property and the verbal power and worldly self-extension it enabled. If in the novel’s beginning Amoranda stood at one end of the spectrum of the voice/body power relation as the powerful disembodied voice in contrast to Callid’s and Froth’s total embodiment through their deaths, then it is now Amoranda who stands at the extreme of absolute disempowered embodiment via her confession and subsequent marriage, i.e. the “finishing stroke,” to Alanthus / Formator.

Amoranda’s confession raises one more crucial issue. The novel appears to commit an error in logic referred to as *non causa pro causa* (no cause for a cause), also known as the fallacy of the false cause. Amoranda’s moment of self-realization, in which

she recognizes herself as a coquet, immediately follows the violent scene in the woods. If we read this novel as it wants us to—as a narrative about Amoranda’s *bildung*—this cause/effect relationship begs the question: what is the connection between violence and this moment of seeming self-awareness? How can the one prompt the other? Indeed the plot would be logically sound if Amoranda’s insight followed one of Formator’s “Lectures.” But, as Natasha Saje astutely points out, the reader doesn’t get to see or hear about Formator’s process of reforming Amoranda—it’s only generally and briefly alluded to (his “daily application” and “Lectures”). The novel’s skewed logic epitomizes its total misrecognition of the real anxiety driving this text. Does Amoranda’s coquettish behavior bring on Biranthus’s brutality? The novel would have us believe so. Recall, however, that Biranthus never even met Amoranda. He saw her a year ago at “the Bath” and developed a “Passion” for her (57). A closer look reveals that the real cause is to be found with Biranthus—not Amoranda. In the end, Amoranda’s fortune and the independence and the worldly self-extension it brings her are the source of patriarchy’s retaliatory and aggressive strategy of domination. Indeed, cause-effect in this novel works this way: Amoranda’s coquetry does *not* cause the violence against her; the violence against her—because of her economic independence—causes or produces the truth of her coquetry.

This said, I want once again to reiterate what I have been arguing throughout this chapter: the goal of this novel is *not* to reform Amoranda of her coquetry or to have her gradually learn and shed her naiveté from her encounters with harsh reality; the goal is to make Amoranda a body and a latently diseased one at that—the coquet body, in other

words. As I have shown, following Scarry's logic of torture, the repeated violence enacted against her body leaves Amoranda no choice but to give full attention to her suffering, vulnerable body until she exists only as a body and confesses herself as such. Amoranda's confession ironically acts to silence her, since her confession doubles or ventriloquizes and so enlarges and empowers the disembodied voice of patriarchy. At the site of confession, Amoranda's absolute incorporeality attests to the "truth" of patriarchy's belief in the always already flawed female. Her body, in other words, functions as a material referent for patriarchy's belief in female inferiority. If we look closely at what the narrative wants us to see as Amoranda's alleged moment of self-realization, it becomes evident that she cannot be "Reform'd" of her coquetry in the literal sense of the word "to form again" (this time without the coquettish behavior). Simply stated, there is no "post-coquette" version of Amoranda as Tiffany Potter contends (65), because her own words convey that coquetry is always already intrinsically and inherently "that Part of our [female] Species." Amoranda's change, therefore, is not that she is no longer a coquet—because as a biological female this is not possible—but that she will "Despise" those who "Flatter" her. Indeed, her only option is to scorn those who flatter her. She is still the "Coquet," only now this "Disease" is latent—a disease in remission one might say, ready to surface if not restrained by Formator, who, as her guardian, educator, doctor, and now husband, will help to keep this female latent disease in check.

And herein lies the novel's curious contradiction—patriarchal power *produces* Amoranda's coquet body through the logic of torture that forces a confession even as it

insists that it *discovers* Amoranda's coquet body in the past—it was there all along. The narrator points out her susceptibility to it as a child:

If we trace Human Nature through all the Stages of Life, we shall find those Dawnings of the Passions in Children, which riper Years bring to the highest perfection; and a Child, rightly considered, may give us a very great guess at his Temper, when he comes to be a Man. An Instance of this we have in the young Creature already named [Amoranda], who had, 'tis true, all the Beauties of her Sex, but then she had the Seeds of their Pride and Vanity too. (12)

Our attention should be drawn to the word “Seeds” in this passage, which strongly suggests that “Pride and Vanity” are already an interior, organic, bodily presence in Amoranda. The narrator also relates at this time that “the whole Woman gather'd in [Amoranda's] Soul,” again strongly suggesting that femaleness is already an inherent problem inside Amoranda's body (13). This search into the heroine's past and the “Seeds” of “Pride and Vanity” it discovers is strikingly similar to Foucault's definition of the “delinquent” whose past, discovered through “biographical investigation,” reveals his “affinity with his crime”—certain “instincts, drives, tendencies, character” (*Discipline & Punish* 253). Foucault explains how the “delinquent” differs from “offender”: “[b]ehind the offender,” Foucault claims, “to whom the investigation of the facts may attribute responsibility for an offence, stands the delinquent whose slow formation is shown in a biographical investigation” (*Discipline & Punish* 252). In contrast to the old punitive system, the modern penal system doesn't assess its punishment based solely on the “act” or offense; it further pursues a “biographical investigation”—it requires a life story to account for the offense. This logic, says Foucault, “establishes the criminal before the crime” (*Discipline & Punish* 252). According to Foucault, the prison's function is *not* “to

eliminate offences”; rather it is to “distinguish them” and use them in a tactics of subjection” (*Discipline & Punish* 272). Thus, with the delinquent, “truth” appears to be produced through the democratic process of the criminal investigation and the court trial—a truth that is produced in the present through sound reasoning, but the “truth” is actually found in the past—in the delinquent’s propensity for crime. The delinquent’s “crime” is, in other words, found in his body—his “instincts” and “drives.”

The Reform’d Coquet produces its truth of Amoranda’s coquetry in the present by coercing Amoranda’s confession through physical violence, even as it masquerades as a “truth” produced in the present by the means of Enlightenment self-discovery. But, her very confession reveals that the “truth” of her coquetry is to be *discovered* in the past—in her already diseased female body. The plotline of *The Reform’d Coquet* is *not* about curing or eliminating Amoranda’s coquetry, any more than the discourse of delinquency is about rehabilitating the offender. “Reform,” as the title promises, is not what this novel sets out to do. It’s about distinguishing Amoranda’s coquetry as an inherently female disease that requires surveillance and management by male power. In *The Reform’d Coquet*, the truth produced in the present, or what the novel constructs as Enlightenment self-discovery, functions to obscure the fact that truth is discovered in the past—in the always already diseased body of Amoranda.

Davys’s *The Reform’d Coquet* manifests power’s dispersion into other discourses, including her female *bildungsroman* with its individual affirming rhetoric. Strategy-wise this makes total sense, since power, according to Foucault, readily appropriates resisting strategies for itself, and the self-defining female promised by Enlightenment philosophy

is one such resisting strategy. Davys's own dedication includes a very troubling yet telling statement that captures the essence of Foucault's concept of institutional power. Davys writes, "But who can forsake a Fault, till they are convinc'd they are guilty? Vanity is a lurking subtle Thief that works itself insensibly into our Bosoms, and while we declare our dislike to it, know not 'tis so near us" (3). In these two seemingly innocent sentences, which on the surface appear to be an attempt on the part of Davys to create female community, she captures disciplinary power's mechanisms for producing truth: first, the production of truth / power / knowledge through institutional torture-punishment or the incitement to confess ("till they are convinc'd they are guilty), and second, knowledge must be extracted (via torture and confession) from the unknowing subject ("know not 'tis so near us") from the hidden depths of the subject's body ("works itself insensibly into our Bosoms"). Amoranda is surely "convinced" of her "Vanity," but alas the novel implies that it is not simply a "Fault" she can "forsake"; rather it is and has always been a part of her female "Bosom"—what Davys also refers to in her novels as a "stamp[ed] Deformity" and a "Disease"; the only things Amoranda will "forsake" are her fortune, her "Fire and Spirit," and the disembodied power that both guaranteed her.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ Mary Davys, *The Reform'd Coquet; or, Memoirs of Amoranda*. Ed. Martha F. Bowden (Lexington: The UP of Kentucky, 1999), 64. All citations of the novel refer to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

² See, for example, Spencer, Jane. *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986 (p. 147); Shofield, Mary Anne. *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind: Disguising Romances in Feminine Fiction, 1713-1799*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1990 (p. 85); Williamson, Marilyn L. *Raising Their Voices, 1650-1750*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990 (p. 242); Backscheider, Paula R. and John J. Richetti. eds. "Introduction." *Popular Fiction by Women, 1660-1730: An Anthology*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996 (p. xxii-xxiii); Donovan, Josephine. *Women and the Rise of the Novel, 1405-1726*. New York: St. Martin's, 1999 (p. 94); Backscheider, Paula R. "The Rise of Gender as a Political Category." *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement*. Ed. Paula R. Backscheider. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP, 2000 (p. 45); Ballaster, Ros. "Women and the rise of the novel: sexual prescripts." *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800*. Ed. Vivien Jones. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000 (p. 203-05); Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2006 (p. 52).

³ Silverman, Lisa. *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001. See especially Chapter 6.

⁴ Later in this chapter, I will discuss the significance of Amoranda's childhood and its relationship to her embodied coquetry in more detail.

⁵ Scarry offers several illuminating examples of how objects facilitate disembodiment, but the most important, according to her, is that of the room or "the simplest form of shelter," which is "the ground of all making" and "expresses the most benign potential of human life" (38). The room with its walls and windows realizes the human desire to both protect and extend itself into the world. Acting on behalf of the body, the walls stabilize body temperature and release the body from the incessant gaze of others. As a created object, the room also evinces the human "impulse to project [one]self out into a space beyond the boundaries of the body" (39). Shelter, in other words, is both "an image of the body" and "an instance of civilization" (39). By taking over the body's work, created artifacts enable an individual to pay less attention to his or her body and so exist more as a voice in the sharable world of objects (i.e. civilization). Scarry succinctly sums up the process of "making" by stating that "pain is deconstructed and displaced by an artifact" (145). Thus the more disembodied one becomes through self-extension into the world of objects, the more power one has to be heard and represented in the world. Ironic as it may sound because a material body seems to have clear presence, Scarry claims embodiment ensures that an individual or group will either be under-represented or not represented at all. Indeed, Scarry's insights about creation reveal a power relation based on those who have a voice and those who have a body. Material-making has ethical repercussions that, as Scarry observes, are typically overlooked.

⁶ While I am well aware of how Scarry's concept of material-making exposes class division in this novel, it is not my present intention to explore this issue and the role the body might play in it.

⁷ Scarry does, however, make a distinction between the practice of torture and the non-believer's conversion. For example, God's practice of wounding the non-believer in the Old Testament she refers to as "comparatively benign" in relation to torture, since the body of the non-believing Hebrew used to confirm God's disembodied reality belongs to the believer himself (148). The Hebrew convert's advantage is the realization of his God. In the case of torture, however, one person's pain or body is used to confirm another person's ideology. In *The Reform'd Coquet*, Amoranda is not only 'tortured' into a body that materially verifies the patriarchal belief in female inferiority, but her alleged moment of self-realization (i.e. her confession as I view it) also confirms her own (clearly disadvantaged) belief in her inferior and diseased female body.

⁸ Interestingly, in *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement*, Paula R. Backscheider views the problem that early eighteenth-century novels set out to resolve, including *The Reform'd Coquet*, was not the heroine's "intelligence" but her "heart, her inability to love" (45). If this is the case, then I would still argue that the novel sets out to embody Amoranda, and for the same reasons, by

giving her a heart—prior to getting her heart, Amoranda exists as pure mind or disembodied voice. Amoranda is an early form of the “tin (wo)man” and the Wizard of Oz (Formator) must give her a heart if he is to appear powerful.

⁹ I find Bourdieu’s choice of the word “transubstantiation” noteworthy, because it is the name given to the part of the Catholic Mass, in which the Eucharistic “host” is believed to be literally transformed into the body of Christ and nicely parallels Scarry’s definition of the unmade “host” as the remade “host” or “sacrificial victim.”

¹⁰ Saje, Natasha. ““The Assurance to Write, The Vanity of Expecting to be Read””: Deception and Reform in Mary Davys’s *The Reform’d Coquet*.” p. 169.

¹¹ To explain her assertion, Scarry refers to Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, in which she quotes Himmler’s assertions during his trial: “What horrible things I had to watch in the pursuance of my duties, how heavily the task weighed upon my shoulders!” This redirection of vulnerability to the torturer ensures the torturer’s solipsism, enabling a “closed loop of attention that ensures the exclusion of the prisoner’s human claim” (58-9).

¹² Because she is no longer marriageable after the rape as a ruined woman.

¹³ “Stroke” can also allude to a specific Inquisitorial technique of torture—the whipping of an accused witch with wire—and also the fatal stroke of the beheading executioner.

CHAPTER 2

“‘Till this moment, I never knew myself’”:
The Production of Elizabeth Bennet’s Vanity in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*

*Girls blush sometimes because they are alive,
Half wishing they were dead to save the shame.
The sudden blush devours them, neck and brow;
They have drawn too near the fire of life, like gnats,
And flare up bodily, wings and all. What then?
Who’s sorry for a gnat . . . or girl?*

– from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*

Perhaps no two female *bildungsromans* can seem less similar than Mary Davys’s *The Reform’d Coquet* (1724) and Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). So much history divides them, including the history of the novel itself. Anyone who has read eighteenth-century novels immediately notices the difference upon reading an Austen novel. Indeed, scholarly consensus views Austen as one of the first authors to set a new standard of representation and realism in fiction. One of the earliest scholars to acknowledge Austen’s contribution is Ian Watt, who notes that Austen’s novels embody the culmination of the novelistic form in her skilled integration of Richardsonian domestic concerns and her more comprehensive use of Fielding’s less intrusive narrator (now termed “free indirect discourse”).¹

Upholding the scholarship of Watt, Margaret Doody credits Austen (and other women writers of the later eighteenth century) as developing the “ur-model” of a new kind of novel, primarily because of their use of free indirect discourse, since this enables the reader to sympathize with the individual voices of history while simultaneously

viewing characters' actions through the single, authoritative lens of the narrator/author². John Bender also mentions Austen's novels as one of the first to fully exploit the use of free indirect discourse. Bender views this then-emerging narrative convention, perfected by Austen, as a sign of an emerging consciousness that he then relates to the rise of the modern prison and of penitentiary authority.³ Mary Poovey views Austen's use of free and indirect discourse as a "doubling" strategy that obligates the reader to actively participate in the role of the characters, compelling them to negotiate the oftentimes ironic gap between the narrator's comments and the action of the plot.⁴ Moreover, Poovey and other scholars such as Mary Waldron, view Austen's lack of authorial intrusion as well as her genius with comedy and irony as contributing to her texts' moral ambiguity, in which readers are unable to locate a fixed moral center in any one character and consequently are able to freely choose their own interpretation.⁵ In this sense, Austen's novels are fundamentally different from eighteenth-century novels whose didactic purpose was made all too apparent by the frequent use of an intrusive narrator, jealously guiding readers' interpretations.

Also acknowledging Austen's originality in the area of language are George Butte, who sees Austen as one of the first authors to offer readers a "newly framed intersubjectivity," made possible by her use of free and indirect discourse.⁶ Christine Ross claims Austen recognized language's ability to construct identity,⁷ Patricia Howell Michaelson views "Austen's preference for female voices" as her greatest innovation and examines the relationship of women's conversational voices to that of authorized

rhetoric.⁸ Barbara Laughlin Adler examines Austen's use of interpersonal rhetorical styles based on gender.⁹

Readings from a wider philosophical or political perspective, contributed by such scholars as Mary Poovey, Jane Spencer, Anne K. Mellor, Janet Todd, and Kathryn Sutherland¹⁰ recognize her works as products (whether viewed as deliberately political or not) of a post-French Revolution paradigm shift in their promotion of liberal, egalitarian, individualist and feminist ideals. Her novels are more or less seen by these scholars as a dramatic departure from the emotional extremes of Richardsonian-style realism and the sensational, popular novels of the early eighteenth century. Austen's more modernist heroines, they more or less claim, have active, rational minds in contrast to the passive, irrational, and embodied heroines of the previous century. Indeed, gone from Austen's art are the formulaic seduction, rape, and courtship plots of earlier fiction, whose heroines are one dimensional, caricature-like and whose bodies are frequently put through violent and implausible events, and in their place appear refreshingly witty, intelligent, and self reflective heroines for whom ordinary if not mundane events are the source of their maturation and whose marriages are entered into with a heretofore unheard of cool rationalism, free will, and equality with their partners.

Yet, notwithstanding all of Austen's genius and her remarkable effect on the development of the novel, I will argue that *Pride and Prejudice's* logic is, in the end, very similar to that of Davys's popular and sensationalist novel *The Reform'd Coquet*. Indeed, just as *The Reformed Coquet* functions to embody Amoranda while it pretends to reform her of her coquetry and vanity, *Pride and Prejudice* also operates to embody its

heroine Elizabeth Bennet. The text's logic, as I will show, tortures Elizabeth into a confession of her vanity, and it misrecognizes her confession as a moment of self-willed transformation.

Similar to scholars' readings of *The Reform'd Coquet*, earlier and more recent scholars of *Pride and Prejudice* tend to read it as a *bildungsroman*. Note how they draw on language that situates the novel within the genre by employing words and phrases that suggest Elizabeth's (and sometimes Darcy's) maturation process: "development," "progress," "civility" "a new level," "makes her way toward," "romantic bildung," "learns," "education," "dispels . . . illusions," and "realizes."¹¹ As I found in the case of *The Reform'd Coquet*, these scholars' interpretations are limited by what constitutes the genre of a female *bildungsroman*; their readings reproduce its paradigms. Because of the constraints set by what defines this genre, we must inevitably view Elizabeth Bennet as having poor judgment and a bruised ego and as having learned (either through her own agency or Darcy's) that her pride (some argue her prejudice) made her blind to Wickham's charms and Darcy's true gentlemanly nature. Some of us may also see evidence to claim that the novel is about Darcy's *bildung* as well.

But more is at stake here than just constrained or limited interpretations. Because scholars allow the expectations of the *bildungsroman* genre to influence if not to fully control their interpretations, they inadvertently participate with Elizabeth in what I will demonstrate is her selective reconstruction¹² of the past as she forfeits her own worldview to Darcy's masculine dominant worldview. In other words, because scholars and readers recognize Elizabeth as undergoing a legitimate self-willed reformation during

the pivotal letter scene (in accordance with the expectations of the *bildungsroman*), they are now logically compelled by the genre to view her past perceptions as false and to view Wickham as the villain, even though upon a first reading they may have viewed Elizabeth as having sound judgment and accurate perceptions and believed Wickham's story along with Elizabeth.¹³ To place the novel in the *bildungsroman* genre, in other words, the reader must necessarily embrace Darcy's letter to Elizabeth as a revelation of the "truth" about Wickham's villainous character, since Darcy relates in the letter that Wickham nearly seduced his sister. The letter also compels the reader, along with Elizabeth, to revise his/her view of Darcy's character, because the letter reveals him as a protector of his sister, not only because he rescues her from Wickham's alleged plans, but because his prior silence on the matter shows that he cares about protecting his sister's reputation. Furthermore, the letter itself indirectly suggests that Darcy truly cares about what Elizabeth thinks of him, enough to spend time composing it and then in revealing private family matters to her. Clearly the letter scene is essential to interpreting the novel as a *bildungsroman*, because it requires that Elizabeth and the reader revise Elizabeth's now-known-to-be false version of reality. But if as readers we resist our overwhelming desire for a romance between Darcy and Elizabeth, we can ask some crucial questions: Why does Darcy's letter have so much weight with Elizabeth and readers? Does he really describe the "truth" or is he producing it? Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), *Masculine Domination* (2001), and *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), I will argue that Darcy's letter constitutes a performative utterance that because of his gender and social position magically brings about the reality it describes.

Moreover, his words act as a prophecy of the future, reaffirming the continued legitimacy of his power. I will further show, following John Bender's *Imagining the Penitentiary* (1987), that Darcy's letter represents the new demands of juridical evidence at the time, which began to take a narrative form that included details of time and space that produce a more "truthful" version of reality. I will also show that the letter represents what Bender views as the new penitentiary narrative, imposing a reformed identity on the prisoner through daily routine.

Indeed, it will become clear that, after reading Darcy's letter, Elizabeth is *not* suddenly viewing reality as it is and always was, and she is also *not* willingly choosing which version of reality (Darcy's or Wickham's) to believe—all of which would imply agency. Rather, I will argue that through the logic of torture, the novel forces Elizabeth (and by extension the reader) to adopt Darcy's or masculine power's version of reality. As I will show, the novel is much less about two competing narratives (Darcy's and Wickham's) than it is about two alternative perceptions of reality (Elizabeth's and Darcy's), and Elizabeth's "foible" is that she is a woman who presumes to create reality through her perceptions. While the novel would like us to view Elizabeth as undergoing a powerfully subjective moment of self-willed transformation, I will demonstrate that Elizabeth's moment is really a forced confession and that Darcy is just one (perhaps the most important) of the novel's patriarchal spokespersons whose version of reality is, as I said, ultimately endorsed by the novel's logic. Similar to Amoranda's subjecting experience in *The Reform'd Coquet*, Elizabeth is both produced as, and discovered to have always been, a diseased female body. The novel's logic tortures Elizabeth not only

through repeatedly shaming her but also by repeatedly ousting her from her subjective all-knowing position and repositioning her in the powerless object position. The novel also tortures her through the rhetorical devices of Darcy's letter. Darcy, I will show, is exempt from the vulnerable body and operates primarily as the bodiless, all-knowing and all-seeing authority from the novel's very beginning, coming to occupy this position completely by the novel's end. Finally, I will show that Wickham is not so much the story's villain as he is another victim of masculine power.

Just as *The Reform'd Coquet* represented Amoranda, *Pride and Prejudice* represents Elizabeth Bennet as primarily bodiless in the first part of the novel (prior to reading Darcy's letter). Indeed, Kay Young captures the reader's experience of Elizabeth's character when she says, "We don't experience her body's contours pressing upon us as her readers" (80). She further describes Elizabeth as "formless" and "unbounded," but Young also adds that "we do feel her thinking presence" (80). At the novel's beginning, Elizabeth's noncorporeality implies her power and agency since, as explained in the previous chapter, objects in the world act as extensions of one's body and enable one to exist primarily as a voice or disembodied power. Unlike Amoranda, however, the reader experiences Elizabeth not so much as a voice but as the perceiver/creator of the novel's reality. In other words, we don't *hear* her like we did Amoranda so much as we get to *see* or *perceive through her* other characters and the world in which she lives. Austen's skilled management of free indirect discourse somewhat accounts for our experience as Margaret Doody explains: "[o]nce we accept a narrating author as a surrogate 'I,' the interfused character hidden in the narrative

becomes also a form of 'I' before the reader is aware" (290). As the "interfused character," Elizabeth Bennet is the authoritative voice in the novel's beginning whether we are aware of it or not.

Also unlike *Amoranda* is that Elizabeth's alleged "crime" of reading and knowing the world appears more offensive. After all, Elizabeth is not an heiress; she, if anything is in a much more financially vulnerable position than *Amoranda*, because of the entail on her father's estate. But Elizabeth is of the leisured, gentry class, and while she can exist secure and bodiless, because of her father's present ownership of property (enabling his own and his family's worldly extension via the ownership of objects), her liminal position between belonging to her father and her future husband tends to make her presumption to knowledge of reality a greater social transgression.

It is through Elizabeth that we perceive and believe in the world that she creates; it is through her viewpoint that we come to know and either like (trust) or dislike (distrust) other characters. Elizabeth's 'reading' of her world becomes our reading. Why does the reader have such faith in her perceptions up to the point at which she reads Darcy's letter? Can Austen's skilled use of free indirect discourse fully account for it? I would like to offer other reasons: first, she asserts herself with confidence, which encourages our acceptance of the version of reality she offers. When Jane, for example, refuses to choose between Wickham's story and Bingley's good judgment, Jane frustratingly says, "One does not know what to think," Elizabeth immediately counters with, "I beg your pardon;—one knows exactly what to think" (65). Elizabeth's assertive

style and total confidence do not allow for doubt in her version of reality. In this respect, she is very much like Amoranda of *The Reform'd Coquet*.

Also, Elizabeth's judgment of others seems impartial, even about those closest to her. When Jane tries to defend Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins, Elizabeth responds with, "You shall not, for the sake of one individual, change the meaning of principle and integrity, nor endeavour to persuade yourself or me, that selfishness is prudence, and insensibility of danger, security of happiness" (105). Here we cannot help but be persuaded by Elizabeth, since she assesses her own close friend's behavior so impartially; she demonstrates that emotional attachments do not cloud her judgment.

Elizabeth yet again demonstrates rational and unbiased thinking (even when her own interests are concerned) when her aunt suggests Wickham's motivations are "mercenary" in nature because of his pursuit of the monied Miss King. She points out her aunt's gender and class biases by reminding her that she herself had just recently advised Elizabeth not to be imprudent by considering a possible match with the penniless Wickham, whereas now she finds fault with him because he is pursuing someone with money. Here Elizabeth suggests that "prudence" seems to be a euphemism for "avarice" but only for the person (male or female) in a position of power: "Where does discretion end and avarice begin?" she asks her aunt (118).

Later, Elizabeth shows she is far from naïve or gullible when she tells Jane that "the more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense" (104). Elizabeth's comment

sounds like the accumulated wisdom garnered from worldly experience; we also learn from this dialogue that Elizabeth is quite aware that appearances cannot be trusted. This reaffirms our trust in Elizabeth's perceptions and our confidence in her previous forthright assessments of other characters, especially with regard to her reading of Wickham.

Elizabeth does not readily embrace Wickham's story as the "truth" as many scholars argue. Contrary to their readings,¹⁴ I do not see her as blinded by Wickham's charms or as motivated to believe Wickham because of Darcy's personal insult. Indeed, Elizabeth shows good judgment by not accepting either Bingley's or his sister's partial, second-hand knowledge of the issue (from Darcy himself no less), especially since she is quite aware (from her long stay at Netherfield) of Caroline's attraction to Darcy and Bingley's deference to his opinions. At Netherfield, Elizabeth also observes Caroline's blatant hypocrisy. Consequently, neither Bingley nor Caroline is a reliable source for information on either Wickham (whom neither has met) or Darcy as far as Elizabeth is concerned. Elizabeth is left only with what little information she has at the present time (their manners) in order to make any judgment about their character.

Indeed, to claim in hindsight—after the reader and Elizabeth read Darcy's letter, in which he constructs Wickham as the equivalent of the villainous eighteenth-century "rake"—that Elizabeth is blinded by Wickham's charms or is motivated by hurt pride is an interpretation that can only be applied *after* the reader herself *accepts* Darcy's letter as the "true" version, and it is a reading that seems inconsistent with Elizabeth's character as we have known it so far. Her general reasonableness at this time weakens the stance that

claims Elizabeth's only recourse to Darcy's insult is for her to believe in his despicable nature and to grasp onto anything, including Wickham's story, which either supports this view or flatters her. This latter interpretation inadvertently reproduces the weak and powerless position of women whose only recourse to injustice is to what Pierre Bourdieu terms "gray power" ("*eminence grise*"), which describes the means of the weak, since they are denied access to legitimate power and only have access to underhanded, sneaky, unofficial methods (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* 41). Prior to the letter scene and in the context of the majority of Elizabeth's accurate perceptions, we cannot help but see her as acting rationally with regard to the Wickham versus Darcy issue.

Another reason we believe in Elizabeth's perceptions is because she knows things or comes to know things, making her the center point from which information either flows or is received. She has access to "inside" information in other words, and it is why readers align themselves with her view. We are placed in the omniscient position with her. For example, Elizabeth is in the right place at the right time to overhear the conversation between Bingley and Darcy at the dance and learns of Darcy's feelings about the dance itself and toward the people attending it (including herself). Here we come to know Darcy's classism and sexism and Bingley's inability to influence his friend. Elizabeth also seems to know others better than they know themselves. Elizabeth tells Charlotte, for example, that, with regard to Jane's attraction to Bingley, Jane "is not acting by design. As yet, she cannot even be certain of the degree of her own regard, nor its reasonableness," even though Jane had earlier confessed to Elizabeth (again, she is recipient of privileged information) "how very much she admired" Bingley without any

equivocation (9). The reader does not doubt her assessment of Jane. She also becomes privy to how Bingley, Darcy, Bingley's sister, and Mrs. Hurst interact, since she socializes with them frequently while at Netherfield. Because of this, we learn of Caroline Bingley's attraction to Darcy and Bingley's deference to Darcy's judgment. It's as if Austen knew she needed to find a reason to bring Elizabeth to Netherfield because we wouldn't learn anything about the characters there if we were to see them through Jane's eyes.

Indeed, without Elizabeth's perceptions, the reader would have no reference point for reality; we wouldn't know which characters to like or dislike or which characters to trust or distrust. Is the novel setting up Elizabeth for her later fall, so it can deliver on its title's *hubris* of "pride and prejudice" just as the reader expects Amoranda to be reformed of her coquetry in *The Reform'd Coquet*? Is the novel only fully exploiting the possibilities of free indirect discourse, in which, as Margaret Doody contends, we must experience the faults of certain characters, because it is necessary in order "to reach the other side, the comprehensive shore of the author's moral view" (290)? Perhaps. But there is one very important condition necessary for either of these readings: the reader must interpret the character of Elizabeth in accordance with the logic of the *bildungsroman* and is consequently constrained to see Elizabeth as having successfully "reach[ed] the other side" (from pride to humility, from prejudice to tolerance, from naïveté to wisdom, from childhood to womanhood, etc.) and to see Darcy's letter as the final corrective of Elizabeth's false perceptions, which, needless to say, the reader is now required to believe have been heretofore skewed by her "pride and prejudice."

Instead of a *bildungsroman* genre-controlled interpretation, I propose that Elizabeth's actual 'female flaw' or *hubris* is her occupation of a masculine epistemological position. Moreover, the text misrecognizes this as Elizabeth's vanity—yes, her vanity—not either her “pride” or “prejudice,” which is the way in which most readers misrecognize her flaw. Indeed, the novel's title itself (just like *The Reform'd Coquet*) ensures we misrecognize the heroine's actual foible. Elizabeth holds the position of the powerful patriarch, in other words, of what Bourdieu in *Masculine Domination* terms “paternal prophecy,” in which the father's words function as “verdicts” (either as “orders, blessings, or curses”) as well as a “prediction of wisdom,” which “magically bring about what he states”; he is a “quasi-divine visionary” whose wisdom and experience can read signs that are unintelligible to others and can send the future into the past and give sanction to the yet unknown future (70). It is accurate to say that Elizabeth's assertiveness frequently comes across as her giving “orders” (“One knows exactly what to think”) that compel us and Jane to accept her version of reality. Also, Elizabeth's expressed dissatisfaction with the world can be read as the “kill-joy realism” that Bourdieu attributes to the patriarch, whose words align with the “order of things,” while Jane's views reflect the “maternal comprehension” that responds to “the paternal verdict with a questioning of necessity and an affirmation of contingency based on a pure act of faith” (71). Jane's repeated refusals to believe (to take any unequivocal position) that either Wickham or Darcy is guilty or that Caroline Bingley has ulterior motives reveal this “faith” that resists the masculine and reality-creating viewpoint (via Elizabeth).

In terms of Bourdieu's concept of "paternal prophecy," we can see that, at least in the beginning, the novel not only constructs Elizabeth as an accurate observer of reality but that her words are sometimes *performances that create reality*. This helps to explain why we have such confidence in her viewpoint. For instance, Elizabeth says to Jane "He [Bingley] could not help seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room. No thanks to his gallantry for that" (9). She then gives Jane her patriarchal "blessing" to like Bingley: "I give you leave to like him," suggesting that Elizabeth *foresees* a successful relationship and that Bingley will not eventually disappoint her sister like the "stupider" men of the past that Jane liked (9). Also, Elizabeth gives her "verdict" (and her father agrees) that Mr. Collins is not a "sensible" man, and later she and her father exchange knowing glances when Mr. Collins fulfills her paternal prediction of his personality (48-51). Also, it is Elizabeth who must validate the truth (reality) of Sir William Lucas's announcement of Charlotte's engagement, when no one in the Bennet family believes him (96-7). Stated another way, Charlotte's engagement does not exist until Elizabeth says it does. Most significantly, the novel immediately follows Elizabeth's first assessment of Darcy—"I think him very disagreeable" (58)—with Wickham's story about Darcy's shameful behavior (58-64), and, of course, Darcy's subsequent rude and mean behavior at the Netherfield ball and his removal of Bingley from Netherfield. Her words seem to call into being the very thing she utters. The entire town of Longbourn comes to dislike Darcy (107), and it is as if Elizabeth's perception of him becomes the town's, the novel's, and the reader's reality. Let me repeat, however, that Elizabeth occupies this powerful god-like masculine

position only in the first part of the novel, for the novel's logic gradually tortures and coerces her into a blind, unknowing, passive, embodied object position.

The novel begins its coercion of Elizabeth almost immediately, producing her specifically female "vanity" even as it will purport to have just discovered this "vanity" in Elizabeth's past. The novel plays out this logic in three ways: 1) it repeatedly places her in the female "body-for-others" or object position, eventually overthrowing her from her original powerful male position of bodiless subjective perceiver, 2) it repeatedly shames Elizabeth until she confesses herself a diseased female body, and 3) it interrogates and tortures her through the rhetorical devices of Darcy's letter. This repetition of violence both on and within three fronts, moreover, enacts torture's depraved logic, in which the torturer repeatedly and with increasing intensity continues to interrogate and/or torment his victim until he confesses.

Unlike *The Reform'd Coquet*, which is overtly physical and even literal in its escalating application of violence to Amoranda's body, *Pride and Prejudice* deploys its increasing violence very subtly. We could say that the novel more resourcefully uses what Bourdieu refers to as "symbolic violence," that is, the "gentle, hidden violence" that has been "euphemized," or is "socially recognized violence" (191-2). In other words, the logic of torture has become extremely proficient at insinuating itself into a variety of benign and current discourses. While comparable to *The Reform'd Coquet*, in that violence against Elizabeth is still misrecognized as either *bildung* or romance, *Pride and Prejudice* departs from the *The Reform'd Coquet* in that we further misrecognize the violence because it has been euphemized into what constitutes the discourse of proper

social behavior (i.e. manners) and into what scholars have recognized as Austen's ironic comedy. Whereas in *The Reform'd Coquet*, in which a popular discourse of violence (i.e. rakish cruelty) barely concealed the violence of masculine power, *Pride and Prejudice's* attention to what constitutes proper and improper manners and its "light and bright and sparkling" comedy makes the violence in Austen's novel much more soft, silent, and barely able to register even on the close reader's radar. Violence and comedy are not mutually exclusive, however. Recall that in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses the theatricality of execution in the Middle Ages and the sense of Saturnalian festival¹⁵ that accompanied these violent displays of the king's power. The logic of torture that I find present in *Pride and Prejudice* clearly contains traces of these Saturnalian celebrations that attended public torture as we find ourselves laughing and even taking pleasure in Elizabeth's many humiliations.¹⁶

As just stated above, one way that the novel tortures Elizabeth into a body is by repetitively repositioning her from the perceiver to the one perceived. Indeed, the first time we get any sense at all of Elizabeth's physical body is when Darcy makes his comments to Bingley at the dance about Elizabeth's looks: "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me" (7). Elizabeth occupies the *perceived* or object position rather than her usual privileged disembodied masculine position as perceiver or subject position. Significantly, this sudden view of Elizabeth is based on Darcy's perception, and here we see that Darcy's view of reality begins slowly to insinuate itself into the novel. Darcy is the primary spokesperson of patriarchal power, and his subjective position in

this scene places him in the very powerful position of the male gazer. As such, his gaze begins to create Elizabeth's embodiment.

The novel again deploys this subject/object positional switch against Elizabeth when Darcy begins to notice his attraction to her: "But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes" (16). There are two things we must notice here—first, Elizabeth is again the object of Darcy's or patriarchal power's gaze; however, this time he finds her attractive. Darcy is, in a very real and disturbing sense, *creating Elizabeth's body*; the scene comes across as if, on a godlike whim, he decided to give her beautiful eyes and has the power to indulge such a whim. Furthermore, Darcy's view manages our (the reader's) view of Elizabeth. His earlier assessment of her ("tolerable"; "not handsome enough") forced us to alter any previous images we might have had of her, and now his reassessment of her forces us to reconceive her eyes as beautiful. Moreover, it is interesting that Elizabeth's eyes are what the novel focuses on in terms of her beauty, since I cannot help but think that Darcy here, as representative of masculine power, has objectified the very bodily feature that enables Elizabeth to perceive and interpret the world around her. In essence, he turns Elizabeth's powerful Medusian reality-creating eyes into passive objects. Symbolically speaking, Elizabeth's eyes can no longer embody others (turn others to stone); rather, Darcy's male gaze turns her eyes into stone, embodying them and stripping them of their power. Peculiar as it may sound, the male gaze both objectifies and blinds Elizabeth, which leads me to my second point: that Elizabeth is totally unaware of (blind to) Darcy's sudden

attraction to her. It is the beginning of the novel's attempt to strip Elizabeth of her virtual omniscience (unlimited vision) that dominates the beginning of the novel.

Yet another instance of this kind of symbolic violence enacted against Elizabeth is when she decides to walk to Netherfield to attend Jane during her illness. At first it seems we can view Elizabeth's walk with its consequent "weary ankles," "dirty stockings," and flushed face (24-5) in terms of Bourdieu's idea of "a body for oneself," in which the "active and acting" female takes back her body or removes it from the male gaze; "it is no longer merely a thing that is made to be looked at or which one has to look at in order to prepare it to be looked at" (*Masculine Domination* 67). However, Elizabeth is immediately denied this "body for oneself" position and is relegated to being a "body for others" when Darcy notices "the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion" (24). His gaze immediately places her body in the object position. Later, the novel again places Elizabeth in the object position when she joins Caroline Bingley in walking about the room (41). Most readers infer, as Rachel M. Brownstein points out, that Caroline does this purposely to provide Darcy with the opportunity of comparing their beauty (52). However, the novel still places Elizabeth in the object position and grants Darcy leave for gazing at both of them (since he actually says this is what he is going to do and even changes chairs). And, despite the fact that Elizabeth just a few pages earlier had finally become aware of Darcy's gaze and refuses to be the object of it ("she liked him too little to care for his approbation" [38]), we still start to suspect that the novel's logic has Elizabeth willingly give up her body to Darcy's gaze. It is a subtle but significant sign that the novel's coercions are having an effect on Elizabeth.

There is only once instance when we see Elizabeth resist the novel's pressure to embody her, and it is when Mr. Collins proposes marriage. In this scene we see what George Butte refers to as a "struggle for control of interpretations of perception" (111), in which Elizabeth ultimately "defuses Collins' narrative and gaze" (112).¹⁷ Indeed, Elizabeth refuses to occupy the object position, in which Collins (masculine power's spokesperson) attempts to place her. We can read this scene as masculine power's failed attempt to embody Elizabeth by pressuring her, or, more accurately, interrogating her into a confession of coquetry. Similar to what we saw in *The Reform'd Coquet*, Collins's language reveals the conflation of speech modes that Elaine Scarry argues are evident in the torturer's interrogation: the torturer's sentences demonstrate the uncertainty of the interrogatory even as they also reveal the dominance of the imperative. If a marriage proposal is, in essence, a question, and the proposer is uncertain of the answer, then Collins's alleged "proposal" (question) assumes Elizabeth has already accepted his proposal: "On that head [referring to her lack of fortune], therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married" (82). Although very subtle, his technique resembles the interrogator's whose alleged questions are really demonstrative. We can also look at this scene another way: after each of her refusals (akin to her not confessing), he attempts to interrogate her by repeatedly imposing the label of "coquet" until he gets the answer he wants (her confession of coquetry): "You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness" (80); "your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble" (80); "it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom

they secretly mean to accept” (82); “I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character” (83). Similar to the accused but non-confessing witches, Elizabeth’s refusals to confess are viewed as further evidence of why she needs to confess. The Inquisitorial torturers frequently claimed that non-confessing witches used witchcraft to sustain themselves through torture (Institoris 227-30). In other words, an accused woman’s refusal to confess was rationalized as further proof of her guilt of witchcraft and justified more torture. The logic of the scene also parallels the logic of torture in which the torturer/interrogator offers his own reasons for the victim’s refusal to confess as he continues to apply his violence to the victim’s body after each refusal to confess. And while the scene may be quite comical (Elizabeth herself can barely keep from laughing), it is important that we recognize its violence, especially since, with each of his attempts after her refusals, he becomes increasingly “more hostile” as Butte also interprets this scene (111). Collins’s comments seem preposterous at first glance as he attempts to impose the coquet body of the eighteenth-century heroine on Elizabeth. This scene exemplifies Austen’s sense of ironic comedy, because the reader knows that Elizabeth is simply incomparable to early eighteenth-century heroines like Amoranda. But, the novel’s logic, as I am arguing, is indeed disturbingly similar (which will become more evident below), because it will eventually succeed when wielded by Darcy. This scene also works to deflect from the novel’s project of embodying Elizabeth: in showing her as refusing Collins’s version of

reality, it ensures the reader believes that Elizabeth's later acceptance of Darcy and his perception of what constitutes reality is both rational and an act of free will.

One of the novel's other effective means of torturing Elizabeth is through repeated humiliation, culminating in the humiliation and shame that Darcy's letter brings. In the multiple scenes where this torture occurs, the novel would have us understand these scenes as follows: first, that Elizabeth's family's vulgar and uncouth manners are the sources of her repeated shame;¹⁸ and two, that Elizabeth is very concerned about Darcy's reactions to her family's behavior, suggesting she may be more attracted to him than she knows herself to be. I ask the reader, however, to consider this alternative reading: that masculine power actively shames Elizabeth in each of these scenes. As I explained in the previous chapter, masculine power may or may not operate through biologically male characters; its diffusion throughout the novel enables it to deploy any and many strategies to embody Elizabeth. Rather than reading Elizabeth's humiliations in the very comical if not much less serious context of literal and straightforward social embarrassments,¹⁹ whose misrepresentations and miscommunications may pleasurably thwart the inevitable heterosexual attraction between the hero and heroine, I view these moments as epitomizing Foucault's concept of a "strategy without a subject," and I ask readers to see the violence, despite power's diffusion and deflection of it through these other readily available and even expected discourses.

In all of these scenes then, masculine power attempts to incarnate Elizabeth, working through the amusing and seemingly escalating social transgressions of her family members. She feels naked, exposed, and vulnerable (the passive object position of

being female), and her body registers her “ontological shame” as John Liman terms the shame of being female. Indeed, power produces through a strategically insinuated logic of torture Elizabeth’s disturbed, agitated, and blushing body, which now comes to the foreground more frequently than we have yet seen; note how the language used either explicitly or implicitly conveys bodily disturbance: “Elizabeth, blushing for her mother” (32); “the general pause which ensued made Elizabeth tremble” (33); “they were dances of mortification . . . [that] gave her all the shame and misery which a disagreeable partner for a couple of dances can give” (68); “It vexed her to see him expose himself to such a man” (75); “deeply was she vexed to find that her mother was talking to that one person” (75); “Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation” (76); and “Elizabeth’s eyes were fixed on [Mary] with most painful sensations” (77); “Elizabeth was in agonies” (77). Power shames, vexes, pains, agonizes, mortifies, and physiologically alters the blood flow of Elizabeth’s body. Interestingly, Elizabeth’s use of the words “vexed” and “mortification” contain traces of torture in their meanings. *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* gives us the obsolete meaning of “vexation” as “the action of subjecting to violence or force,” and it defines “mortification” as “the action of mortifying the body, its appetites, etc. . . . by the self-infliction or voluntary toleration of bodily pain and discomfort.” Mortification’s “self-infliction” of pain constructs Elizabeth as the agent of her own suffering, which deflects responsibility for her suffering from masculine power. Also, rather than viewing mortification of the body as a ritual that has denial of the body as its goal, so that it brings the individual closer to God or spirit, we can instead view it as Elaine Scarry does suffering in the Old Testament—as a means for

total embodiment. The religious believer's tangible and pained body validates the intangible, noncorporeality of God just as Elizabeth's diseased female body will validate the abstract and arbitrary concept of masculine domination.

In addition to paternal power operating to embody Elizabeth through the discourses of what constitutes proper and improper social conduct and the comedy that such conduct may produce, it also manifests itself through Darcy, who plays an important role in each of these scenes. He is, as I said, power's primary agent in the novel, and it is his presence that is the deciding factor as to whether or not Elizabeth feels shame (even though her family is the cause). Notice that Elizabeth repeatedly looks at him for his responses,²⁰ and it may seem at first glance that Elizabeth is responsible for her own shameful feelings, that she is, in fact, the one bringing Darcy's reactions to bear on her physically. What's more, her bodily suffering appears to stem from a paranoid and compulsive masochism, in which she constantly glances at Darcy to gauge his reactions. Her bodily responses in this context seem to have less to do with her family's behavior than they do with his presence and judgment of her. It is within this framework that I see Darcy as the origin of Elizabeth's repeated shame, and consequently my reading departs from the sociological or critical perspectives that other scholars have applied to these scenes.²¹

To more easily see the relation of power operating in these scenes between Elizabeth and Darcy, in other words, we must reexamine the concept of shame in its more political context, especially when it is used as a tool or method of torture. Darcy in this new context represents what Liman's politics of shame refer to as the *lie of power* and its

concomitant *evasion of shame*, in which power projects what should be its own shame onto the Other's body (566). Darcy, in other words, represents the "active" and "veiled" behavior that attends power's lies and misrepresentations and its subsequent evasion of its own shameful behavior (563). If we re-examine Elizabeth's mortifications, we see that the normally perceptive Elizabeth has a difficult time reading Darcy; he either walks away, or he simply cannot be read by her.²² First let me point out that there is a direct correlation here between Elizabeth's embodiment in these scenes and her inability to perceive or read Darcy. In effect, the novel is now actively removing her from her godlike virtually omniscient position and enabling Darcy to assume that position to some extent. Embodiment and blindness go hand in hand, since in this novel power is represented by their opposite: disembodiment and omniscience—about reading others and constructing the novel's reality. In terms of shame in its political context, we can also say that *Darcy appears shameless*; as power's representative, he evades the shame that should be his. As I said, he either walks away (i.e. evasion) or his face is totally illegible—impenetrable. It does not bear the usual marks of shame and exposure (blushing). He appears, if anything, totally disinterested. The novel's construction of Darcy in these scenes protects him from any accountability for Elizabeth's suffering. While Elizabeth bears his (power's) shame as female disempowered embodiment, Darcy remains *shameless* and *bodiless* because he projected his shame onto Elizabeth. Indeed male shame or what Liman terms "ethical shame" is about the cover-up, but, unlike female shame, its body plays no part. Masculine shame is *not* about passivity, exposure, and embodiment; this is why Elizabeth cannot perceive or read him; for, symbolically

speaking, there is no body to be read. Masculine shame is “active” in the sense that it controls perception of itself and others through misrepresentation or through whatever capacity it wants to be represented. Power itself enables this shameful act (viewed by others as shamelessness) even as the shameful act further enables power. While it may appear that the feeling of shame in these scenes originates with Elizabeth, the political reality is that shame begins with the shameful lie of power and its cover-up of its shame (also a lie and shameful) as Liman contends. Thus the shameful lie in this novel begins with masculine power’s project of embodying Elizabeth and its cover up of that shameful act through its misrepresentation of *itself and Elizabeth*, since power’s lie of evasion (misrepresentation of itself) also includes the misrepresentation of femaleness as powerlessness and vulnerability, which is a purely political move disguised as an inherent quality of femaleness.

Despite masculine power’s many attempts to embody Elizabeth in Volume I, at the beginning of Volume II, Elizabeth still occupies the powerful all-knowing, reality-creating position. Elizabeth confidently asserts that Caroline Bingley is primarily responsible for her brother’s sudden removal from Netherfield (and we believe her), and it is through Elizabeth’s perceptions that we come to know (and dislike) Lady Catherine and her daughter. We also see that Elizabeth’s negative verdict pertaining to Charlotte’s marriage to Mr. Collins is carried out, since Elizabeth observes that Charlotte purposely sits in the drawing room to avoid conversations with her own husband (129).

Consequently, the novel must deploy yet another and more vigorous method of torture to produce Elizabeth’s confession. Masculine coercion, unexpectedly, reaches its most

intense application of torture in the form of a seemingly innocuous letter that finally extorts Elizabeth's confession. Why do Elizabeth and readers come to accept Darcy's letter as "truth"? Moreover, doesn't the letter constitute what might actually be Darcy's confession? Isn't this his vulnerable, self-exposing moment? What exactly is it about this letter that transforms Elizabeth's reading of it into a tortuous experience?

The novel certainly wants us to accept Darcy's letter as "truth" and as an example of his feminine vulnerability. Indeed Fiona Stafford views it as a "window into the very heart of the man" (xxv). Lloyd W. Brown sees the letter as revealing the real Darcy, as if we finally get to see the human side to the heretofore aloof and illegible Darcy (132). It is my position, however, that this letter only *pretends* to a disclosure of the alleged "truth." Power, in other words, retreats behind a *performance of honesty and full disclosure*. Darcy is not finally disclosing a "truth" that has existed all along; he, as patriarchal power's spokesperson, *manufactures* a "truth" to impose on Elizabeth through the logic of torture. Darcy's version of reality conveyed through the letter ultimately renders the reality created by Elizabeth up until this point as distortion and misrepresentation. How does this happen? First, Darcy (power) uses the generative force (to use Bourdieu's term) of two discourses in this letter: classical argument and law. Indeed, the letter is framed by the concept of "justice" and, in fact, it reads more like a lawyer's persuasive argument or a legal deposition. It is loaded with such legal jargon as "justice," "two offences," "investigations," "decisions," "testimony," "appeal," "acquit," and the summoning of "witnesses." The opening even "demands" that Elizabeth read the letter—not because it is important to Darcy that Elizabeth really know him and the so-called truth, but because

he says it is a matter of “justice.” Also, Barbara Laughlin Adler points out that Darcy’s letter employs “classical rhetoric,” the principles of which were included as part of men’s education in Austen’s time (166). Following classical form, the letter’s opening properly restates Elizabeth’s position and then moves into providing evidence for his opposing position (Adler 171). In contrast to the emotion that Stafford seems to see in the letter, I read the letter as relying heavily on ethos, ostensibly providing “objective information” and “expert testimony” that Adler claims Darcy skillfully employs in the letter (171). By drawing on the discourses of law and classical argument, Darcy comes to represent what Bourdieu calls the “legitimate speaker” whose “formally correct” utterance not only utters “what is right” but “what ought to be” (*Language & Symbolic Power* 41-42). Consequently, both Elizabeth and readers tend to unquestioningly embrace Darcy’s letter as the “truth,” because both already recognize Darcy as a “legitimate speaker” authorized by his gender, aristocratic class position, and education.

Moreover, legal rhetoric had acquired even greater meaning and legitimization at this time. The legal discourse of Darcy’s letter represent what John Bender in *Imagining the Penitentiary* sees as constituting the new laws of proof that emerged in the eighteenth century. The courtroom became a site of competing narratives, and the narrative that a lawyer most effectively and efficiently argues in terms of the particulars, facts, and proper sequence of events in terms of time and space is the narrative that the jury embraced as “truth.” As Bender makes clear, this narration of evidence obeyed the same rules of that constituted formal realism in fiction-writing at the time, so the jury, like novel readers, adopted the story as an authentic representation of reality. The concept of

justice, as Bender explains, is a “representational system of assent” that “constitutes and validates” the lawyer’s authority and his assumed “judicial objectivity” (177). Situating Darcy’s letter in this context, my argument is that the letter does *not* speak on behalf of a man who is privately and vulnerably revealing himself to Elizabeth; rather, the letter is the disembodied representation of justice that offers binding juridical proof or a narrative that expertly follows the rules of what came to constitute valid evidence in eighteenth-century law. Consequently, Darcy’s authoritatively uttered truth-producing masculine Enlightenment rhetoric now renders Elizabeth’s heretofore construction of reality, especially in regard to Wickham, as distortion and misrepresentation.

Furthermore, the letter’s narrative discredits Wickham’s earlier narrative (that both Elizabeth and readers embrace as truth until Darcy’s letter), making it, for all intents and purposes, perjury in the context of legal discourse. It also does something more: by default, the letter’s official rhetoric renders Wickham’s narrative as the impotent and unofficial language of female backstabbing gossip. Masculine power in this scene removes itself twofold from our recognition of it: it evades its responsibility for the embodiment of Elizabeth through what may appear to be Darcy’s only vulnerable moment in the novel, and if one happens to look at little too closely at his rhetoric, power further retreats into the guise of the genderless, classless, abstract and allegedly politically neutral concept of justice. It is not without reason that the novel has Darcy’s letter utilize the power of legal discourse, since, as Bourdieu points out, legal discourse is the *par excellence* of all patriarchal performative utterances, because it has the power of

“the divine word” and can produce the very reality that will legitimize its own power (42).

Moreover, Darcy (power) also *performs* an apology to Elizabeth: “I am under the necessity of relating feelings which may be offensive to your’s [*sic*], I can only say that I am sorry.—the necessity must be obeyed” (151); “Pardon me.—It pains me to offend you” (152); and “Here again I shall give you pain—to what degree you only can tell” (153). Darcy’s words are semantically empty, because they are similar in logic to the torturer who ‘apologizes’ to his victim before he sadistically turns the thumbscrews and who justifies his own behavior by recourse to the official languages of law or religion. Darcy must give Elizabeth pain (torture her) because “justice” demands it. Formal correctness can perform its social magic, as Bourdieu points out, while still being semantically empty (41). Darcy also constructs himself as the victim in the first two apologies: “I am under the necessity” and “It pains me,” which enables him to further evade responsibility and maintain power *by constructing himself as the suffering victim*. Recall that Formator does the same thing in *The Reform’d Coquet*.

What we also need to notice about this letter is that Elizabeth reads and rereads the letter in isolation. Rather than viewing this as an element of romanticism as Janet Todd does (28), in which the heroine, “like any Romantic poet,” has an opportunity for deep reflection and transformation, or even as affording time for Elizabeth’s multiple rereadings that enable “rational deliberation” as Lloyd W. Brown argues (132-33), I see it as another part of power’s strategy to torture Elizabeth and impose on her the narrative (the letter) that it wants her to adopt. This logic Bender also describes in *Imagining the*

Penitentiary, in which he claims that identity formation in the eighteenth-century came to be thought of as fictionally constructed and that penitentiary reform at the time capitalized on this idea. In short, “character and conscience were believed to be fictions capable of alteration” (203). The penitentiary imposed a new narrative, if you will, on the prisoner that he lived out on a day-to-day routine basis. Moreover, his isolation from the rest of society ensured that no competing narratives interfered or were able to compete with the penitentiary’s own narrative. The penitentiary experience was a “direct, sensory rehearsal of reality” capable of “improv[ing] [the prisoner’s] capacity for rational thought” (201). Similar to the penitentiary’s invisible authority and its imposition of a new narrative onto the prisoner, Darcy or invisible masculine power acts on Elizabeth through the letter as a new narrative that can alter her identity, and it also works through the isolation she experiences at this time. Her isolation consists not only of her solitary walks in the park and her room in Charlotte’s house, to which she retreats to think about and re-read the letter, but the novel also strategically removes her from her family and psychologically (if not physically) from her best friend (Charlotte), in whom she can no longer confide. Like the prisoner, Elizabeth is removed from what constitutes her normal and regular society and consequently, she is removed from any competing narratives. The letter, therefore, has the force of impressing a new reality onto Elizabeth, especially since she repeatedly reads the letter, which parallels the prisoner’s repetition of a daily routine that actually constitutes the new narrative that will reform him.

Besides the reality and identity producing forces of the letter, the letter also contains the logic of torture in both *the repetition of pain* that it gives Elizabeth (“Here

again I shall give you pain”) and in *the repetition* of Elizabeth’s compulsive re-reading of the letter. Why does Elizabeth re-read his letter so many times? Why doesn’t she trust her first assessment of it, in which she dismisses it as “the grossest falsehood” and recognizes it as “all pride and insolence” (156)? In attempting to answer these questions, I first want to point out that this repetition (in the form of Elizabeth’s many re-readings of the letter) would be impossible without the medium of the letter. If Darcy explained himself to Elizabeth in person, which he chooses *not* to do, obviously he would not offer a verbal explanation over and over again, and consequently Elizabeth’s first impression of it would hold (“the grossest falsehood”). Thus it is very conceivable that the novel strategically uses the letter to impose a logic of torture that utilizes repetition of language (interrogation technique) combined with the repetition of pain to elicit confessions. The letter’s logic, to be more specific, disturbingly follows the Inquisitorial logic of repeated questioning accompanied by the infliction of pain, which wears down its victim physically and psychologically and compels her through repetition to confess as truth the narrative that the leading questions contain. The letter in this scene therefore acts as the torturer and interrogator; it repeatedly acts on Elizabeth and inflicts its pain until she ventriloquizes its world view through a confession. The seventeenth-century Inquisitors used this same technique on the accused witches—they were not so much *asking* these arrested women if they practiced *maleficium* or had sexual relations with the Devil or if they allowed his familiars to suckle at their paps; they were instead *telling* these women the narrative (the evidence) that they wanted them to confess as “truth.” It is how interrogation technique still works today. Repetition of the narrative (really a series of

linguistic imperatives disguised as an interrogatories) accompanied by pain results in a confession to the torturer's worldview.

What also becomes evident if we again examine Elizabeth's tortuous re-reading of Darcy's letter is that Elizabeth (and by extension, the reader) participates in "selective reconstruction." Nicholas Spanos argues that the accused witches of the seventeenth century "consolidated their identities as witches by selectively interpreting and reconstructing their past experience to make it consistent with their current identities" (431). The arrested, accused, and imprisoned witch, in other words, reconstructs "her biography to make it consistent with her [new] self-perception as a witch" (431). In the same way, Elizabeth begins to reconstruct her past in order to make it consistent with Darcy's (power's) worldview and what her confession will finally expose—her female vanity (I discuss her confessional moment more completely below). Her own perception of Wickham's honesty and forthrightness she now attributes to his "social powers" and "the general approbation of the neighborhood." With regard to Wickham's alleged seduction of Darcy's sister, Elizabeth recalls her brief conversation with Colonel Fitzwilliam for "some confirmation" of this part of Darcy's story. At first she doesn't accept Colonel Fitzwilliam as an authoritative witness to Darcy's version of events, because, as a friend and relative, he would be expected to be biased, but now she revises her view of Colonel Fitzwilliam to accommodate Darcy's "truth"—Fitzwilliam, a man she hardly knows, is now suddenly of unquestionable character. Another way to look at this is to say that Elizabeth decides not to call Darcy on his potential "lawyer's bluff" (he tells her in the letter that Fitzwilliam will confirm his story, knowing she most likely

won't confront him). She also revises her previous assessment of Wickham as a courteous and eloquent gentleman to a new view in which his behavior is labeled "improper" and even suspect. Previously she believed Wickham's friend when he told her that Wickham did not attend the Netherfield ball because he had other obligations. Now, to accommodate Darcy's version of reality, she overlooks his friend's comment and believes Wickham didn't attend because he was trying to avoid Darcy, who may expose his alleged lie. To further accommodate Darcy's version of events, Elizabeth now refuses to believe Wickham's assertion that he would never badmouth Darcy, because he respected Darcy's father. Elizabeth is suddenly certain that it was Wickham who spread the story of Darcy's injustice to him throughout Longbourn. Yet again, Darcy's letter feminizes Wickham and makes him a gossip-monger. After thinking along these lines for quite some time, Elizabeth suddenly reflects on Darcy's character, whom she now reconstructs as proud but not "unprincipled or unjust" and that if his behavior was as bad as Wickham claimed it to be, it could not possibly "be concealed from the world." And this she now believes despite the fact that Elizabeth herself finds Darcy "impenetrable" and unknowable and actually tells Darcy that she cannot make out his character. While scholars such as Janet Todd and Fiona Stafford may see Elizabeth's memories of the past as unstable or as an education in the "limitations of first impressions," respectively (27; x), I see her review of the past as a process of selective reconstruction, in which Elizabeth, like the accused and tortured witches, gradually relinquishes the reality she created in order to adopt as her own the one that Darcy is now imposing on her.

While Elizabeth is power's primary target in this novel, we can also view Wickham as the other victim of masculine power. When he and Darcy unexpectedly encounter each other earlier in the novel, I interpret Darcy's white face and Wickham's blush as representing Darcy's/power's transference of what should be his/its own shame onto the Other—in this case, a man of lower birth and class. In other words, Darcy's face drains its shame (why it goes white), and symbolically speaking, shame's descent to a lower class causes it to pool or puddle in Wickham's body (why he blushes). Darcy's letter as I already mentioned above feminizes Wickham as a gossip but also as a man—Wickham did not make the most of the opportunity, or, what more accurately should be called the benevolent paternalism that Darcy's power and money offered him. Consequently, the novel positions Wickham as a vulnerable woman who must prostitute himself (use his charms) in order to marry up the social ladder for survival reasons. Rather than viewing Wickham as the villain as many scholars do, I instead read him and his situation as the only potentially subversive feature of this novel, since he refuses to accommodate Darcy's (power's) lie by not becoming the “man” that Darcy (power) wants to make him. Wickham's situation should also enable us to see that the issue is *not* about what the novel wants us to see: a steward's son being ungrateful for the charity given him, but is instead about the very fact that the naturalization of such wide class divisions and unevenly distributed resources puts someone like Wickham in such a position in the first place. I would even go so far as identifying Wickham and Lydia as the novel's true heroes, since we could say that they take back from Darcy's unearned and socially constructed aristocracy a portion, albeit a small one, of his wealth. It is no

wonder they do not feel any shame, i.e. embodiment, when they revisit Longbourn after their marriage.

What follows the letter scene with its reality and identity producing effects is Elizabeth's confession and *not* what the novel wants us to see as her climactic moment of self realization or her "sudden flash of insight" as Patricia Meyers Spacks claims about Austen's heroines' unique *bildungs* (279). I quote her confession in its entirety:

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself.—Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd.

‘How despicably have I acted!’ she cried.—‘I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blameable distrust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation!—Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly.—Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. ’Till this moment, I never knew myself.’ (159).

What first strikes me about her confession is that Elizabeth applies to herself the two terms of the novel's title "pride and prejudice." This is the moment when readers have the pleasure and satisfaction of being able to make the connection between the novel's plot and its title, even though we are taken by surprise, because prior to this moment, we believed that Darcy would be the one to have to claim the title's terms. However, just as we are trying to assimilate the reality that Elizabeth is guilty of pride and prejudice, her confession immediately converts into a confession of her *female vanity*. How and why does this happen? If we look closely at what she says here, we see she does, in fact, first confess her pride in her powers of discernment ("I, who have prided myself on my

discernment!”). This suggests that maybe her powers aren’t as good as she and readers believed. This doesn’t necessarily mean she no longer has those powers. She then goes on to redefine Jane’s refusal to risk reading others and the world as her “generous candour,” demonstrating that Elizabeth is now ventriloquizing the male viewpoint. But then Elizabeth suddenly qualifies her “pride” *into a specifically sexed or female offense that has everything to do with how men respond to her*: “pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other.” Elizabeth is suddenly denied the “pride” to which the novel’s title alludes. The novel makes clear that that pride is the kind that only powerful men can own, namely, men such as Darcy. This shift from “pride” to “vanity” happens so abruptly, so subtly, that the reader barely has time to perceive it and its significance. Recall also that much earlier in the novel, Charlotte tells the gathered company that “[Darcy’s] pride . . . does not offend me so much as pride often does, because there is an excuse for it. One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family, fortune, every thing in his favour, should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a *right* to be proud’ ” (13). Charlotte’s view of Darcy’s righteous masculine pride captures Adam Smith’s definition of healthy pride in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which the impartial spectator’s view of the individual’s merits should correspond with the individual’s own view of his merits. The pedantic Mary also contributes to this discussion and indirectly supports Charlotte’s assessment of Darcy by distinguishing between pride and vanity: “Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think

of us” (14). Because Darcy does “think highly of himself” as Charlotte contends, he also has “pride” in the sense that Mary defines here. From the beginning, the novel wants to make the distinction between pride and vanity so we can better understand Elizabeth’s flaw as specifically female when she finally makes her confession. The text, in other words, ensures we will understand the distinction between Darcy’s healthy masculine pride²³ and Elizabeth’s female vanity. Elizabeth doesn’t just care about, and consequently responds to, what Wickham and Darcy think of her *character*; she is responding to how they reacted to her *physical appearance*. Darcy’s insult was about her physical appearance but Wickham’s attentions restore her confidence. Elizabeth’s confession, therefore, is about recognizing and accepting her “self” as a diseased female body, which patriarchy terms “vanity” in order to hide its own participation in the domination of women, in which women can only perceive themselves through the male dominant viewpoint. Elizabeth (and readers) do not recognize (i.e. misrecognize) that her occupation of a man’s position as a self-authorized, reality-producing perceiver is her actual foible; she (and readers) instead see that her own female vanity is the source of her heretofore distorted view of reality.

The letter’s logic of torture, moreover, shames Elizabeth absolutely, and in the political context of shame, she fully becomes the embodied, exposed, passive female. Elizabeth bears the shame of Eve, in other words, which Liman views as ontological shame or the shame of being female that really originates in the shame of power. Interestingly, Elaine Scarry claims that Eve and Adam’s attempt to “cover” their bodies after eating from the tree of knowledge signifies their knowledge of their own

embodiment and God's disembodiment (209-10). Their covering is a step closer to God's power, in other words. The logic of their transgression and God's punishment of them for this transgression—he ousts them from Paradise and fully embodies them (Eve through childbearing and Adam through labor)—aligns with the logic of *Pride and Prejudice*: patriarchal power casts out Elizabeth for her transgression—from her powerful position of bodiless omniscience to the exposure of her as a female body who will, in fact, occupy her proper position as the future mother of Darcy's children. She tried to cover up her femaleness, metaphorically speaking, by, co-opting masculine power or noncorporeality for herself. Power, however, has exposed her for what she really is.

Lastly, Darcy's presence through the medium of the letter, i.e. his absence, is indicative of a noncorporeality that cannot experience shame or punishment. Power maintains its invisible and blameless role by projecting its shame onto Elizabeth, even as it subjects Elizabeth's body to intense scrutiny by it (power), by Elizabeth herself, and by the reader. Darcy's shame, according to Liman, is the shame of Adam, whose shame is not that of his body, or exposure, but is the shame of rage stemming from misrepresentation and lies— either his own to God or Eve's to him (567). It is the type of shame that can be foisted: “lying is both its source and relief. If you are a liar, lie your way out of it” (Liman 567).

In the post-letter-world-according-to-Darcy, Darcy alone constructs the reality of the remainder of the book; he now fully manages Elizabeth's perceptions even as he remains the shameless disembodied omnipresent and omniscient godlike being who operates primarily behind the curtain—the novel's unexposed Wizard of Oz. There is

one significant scene however that intervenes before Elizabeth receives the news of Lydia's elopement and before Darcy is able to begin his production of reality. It is the scene in which Elizabeth tours Darcy's Pemberley mansion. What is so disturbingly remarkable about this scene is that Elizabeth believes she comes to know Darcy through the objects in his home. But I would say that this scenario, if anything, further establishes Darcy's unknowability. Just like Formator/Alanthus in *The Reform'd Coquet*, who at one point wore a disguise to mask his first disguise, Darcy is also represented in this scene by his unrepresentability. Furthermore, we might say that Elizabeth is not so much in his mansion as she is in the temple of her new "God." Indeed, Elizabeth can be likened to the embodied religious believer who can only come to know her "God" through the representation of him in objects. In this context, Darcy's servant Mrs. Reynolds, who speaks only of his benevolence, enacts the more experienced religious "convert" who is partial to her own "God." One of the most telling and disturbing thoughts that Elizabeth has while touring his home is when she ponders the extent of Darcy's power:

What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people's happiness were in his guardianship!—How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow! How much of good or evil must be done by him! (189)

Rather than viewing Darcy's "authority and influence" as "sexy" as Dara Rossman Regaignon does (453), I see Elizabeth's words as affirming Darcy's arbitrary godlike power to embody others, and her rhetoric sounds like the overzealous recent religious convert. This scene also reinforces Elizabeth's recent total embodiment even as it reaffirms Darcy's disembodied status; it reveals the unequal relationship that Elaine Scarry describes between the suffering bodies of the Old Testament Hebrews and their

bodiless all powerful and sometimes severely punishing God. As I mentioned before, their own tortured and pained bodies are material proof of, or tangible referents for, their intangible, bodiless, powerful God. Is it any wonder, then, that Elizabeth's primary feeling for Darcy is "gratitude" when she realizes he still loves her despite her family's and her own failings (201)? Rather than viewing Elizabeth's gratitude for Darcy as evidence of Austen's innovative portrayal of a romance based on "rational love," we can alternatively view Elizabeth's gratitude in terms of the fully embodied religious believer or devotee who is grateful his/her God still loves her despite his severe punishments or despite her own weaknesses. Their asymmetrical relationship also corresponds to Bourdieu's view of social exchanges between the dominant and the dominated, which, for the dominated, become "moral," "affective," or "economic" obligations; in other words, exchanges are a strategy by which power maintains "a lasting hold over someone" (191). In this light we can now see that Elizabeth's and Darcy's relationship is similar to the relationship between Darcy and Wickham in that both are relationships based on the asymmetry of power and exchange. However, Wickham resists (at least for a time) becoming the "man" or object of Darcy's (power's) creation, and he shows ingratitude for Darcy's (power's) generosity as I mentioned earlier.

I argued above that Elizabeth had, before her confession, the masculine power of paternal prophecy—that her words created the now-known-to-be-false reality of the first part of the novel. In the last part of the novel (after Elizabeth's confession), however, Darcy now occupies the position of the prophesying patriarch. Whereas readers typically see Lydia's and Wickham's elopement as confirming the "truth" of Darcy's letter, I see

their elopement as well as Wickham's villainy as a fulfillment of Darcy's prophetic letter. Although Elizabeth and readers unquestionably accept Darcy's letter as "truth," it really only offers an alternative version of events that we accept as "truth" for the reasons I mentioned above. What strikes me as inconsistent with our easy acceptance of Wickham's villainous behavior is that Wickham himself never changes his original story when he talks to Elizabeth again *after* his marriage to Lydia. He maintains his original version of events, and willingly and sincerely discusses them with Elizabeth as if she still shared and understood his viewpoint; he seems oblivious to her new derision and disrespect for him—why? because *he has not changed* so neither does his story, but *Elizabeth has changed*: she now perceives Wickham through the eyes of Darcy (power's worldview); she is now blind to his genuineness and sincerity in the conversation. We also tend to forget that Lydia is someone who can manipulate anyone and certainly enough hints are directed to Elizabeth and the reader that Lydia intended to be the first married Bennet girl although one of the youngest. It is not a stretch to believe that the loud and pushy Lydia seduced or simply overwhelmed the already powerless and feminized Wickham. Also, neither the reader nor Elizabeth is privy to what actually happens between either Lydia and Wickham or Darcy and Wickham with regard to the elopement and marriage. All accounts of what happens come second or third hand and in a modern court of law, would be rendered mere hearsay. This is why I think our conclusions about Wickham are clearly preconditioned by Darcy's prophetic letter. In other words, Darcy (as power's representative) gets to have one of those "I told you so" moments of which Bourdieu speaks and terms the "killjoy realism" of the father, whose

“prophylactic prediction” is “complicit with the order of things” and whose words, which operate as divine verdicts, have the power to “redouble the force of the laws of natural or social nature by converting them into laws of reason and experience” (70-1). It’s as if Darcy’s letter collapses time and space, and Wickham’s alleged seduction of Darcy’s sister is now Wickham’s alleged seduction of Lydia, reaffirming not only the latent evil of the lower classes or the low borne, but also that only the aristocracy can save society, restore harmony, and even overcome class division if necessary to preserve community. The fact that Darcy hunts down Wickham and Lydia allegedly to make Wickham marry Lydia can be viewed as Darcy’s successful attempt at making Wickham into the “man” he always wanted him to be.²⁴ Indeed, Darcy does restore harmony between Jane and Bingley. Remember earlier in the novel when Elizabeth gave sanction to their relationship, when she, in other words, occupied the role of the father who either gave his curse or blessing? Now it is Darcy who gives his consent and allows Bingley to return to Netherfield to pursue his relationship with Jane. Both the sudden appearance of Bingley at Netherfield and Lydia’s rescue come across as magical and fairytale-like, because Elizabeth and readers only see *the effects* of Darcy’s paternal social magic, while he produces this reality entirely behind the scenes. It is as if the action or momentum of the entire novel was blocked, because Darcy did not fully occupy his rightful position of power. Once Elizabeth confesses and power successfully removes her from what it sees as Darcy’s rightful position, the novel’s action gains an enchanting momentum and all conflicts are quickly resolved. The novel acts as if the reality Elizabeth constructed simply couldn’t bring about social harmony at the end.

While Darcy plays God in the last part of the novel, Elizabeth has come to exist primarily as a disturbed, crying, and blind body. Indeed, for the first time we see Elizabeth in the passive role. Elizabeth is no longer the author of her own or our reality. As Fraiman asserts, “her eye is less bold, her tongue less sharp, the angularity . . . less acute” (81). She is “blind” to or denied full knowledge of events. She actually takes Jane’s advice to not mention what she heard about Wickham in Darcy’s letter. In other words, she is now denied the role of the paternal visionary or prophetic father. Her helplessness and crying body authorizes Darcy (power) to come to her rescue and create Elizabeth’s reality for her. From the romantic point of view, he saves Lydia out of his love for Elizabeth, but we can see also that power now has an even greater hold on Elizabeth in this particular exchange. We now see Elizabeth as positioned outside the man’s game, so to speak, with the rest of the women, in a state of anxious passivity in which she and they passively wait for dribs and drabs of already censured information to come from the men, primarily Darcy, who are the active players. Even though she seems to be her assertive self when conversing with the arrogant Lady Catherine, she remains in a state of mystery, doubt, and conjecture, because she can’t fully explain Lady Catherine’s unexpected visit, and she is only vaguely aware that there must have been an incident between Darcy and Lady Catherine. Further knowledge of the issue, however, is outside of her now darkened realm of perception. Later, near the novel’s end, when Darcy finally revisits her home, Elizabeth is again kept in mystery and doubt because Darcy is once more “silent, grave, and indifferent” (258), revealing not only that Elizabeth is being kept in the dark, but also that Darcy has not changed at all as some

scholars contend.²⁵ Indeed, just as *The Reform'd Coquet* silences the voice of Amoranda, *Pride and Prejudice* blinds Elizabeth, and she can no longer read, perceive, or create the world.

While it may appear that Elizabeth has much to gain by her marriage to Darcy practically speaking—she will be financially secure, which is ideal for a non-heiress with an entail on her father's estate, and it is what we all have been hoping for to alleviate our anxiety on her behalf—their marriage, I argue, is really about Elizabeth fulfilling her “obligation” to Darcy in terms of his bail-out of Lydia and Wickham and rescue of the Bennet family reputation. Darcy, in essence, paid for Elizabeth, however indirectly. Yet again, however, masculine power has an “out”: the novel constructs Elizabeth as having witchcraftian powers and represents Darcy as the victim of Elizabeth's charms. Recall that *The Reform'd Coquet* deploys this same strategy. When Darcy observes Elizabeth and Caroline walking around the library, he “*unconsciously* close[s] his book” (emphasis mine), and when Jane and Elizabeth finally leave Netherfield, Darcy says that “[s]he attracted him more than he liked” (44). The grammatical construction of this latter sentence positions Elizabeth (not him) as the agent of his attraction. Later, Darcy claims that he “had never been so *bewitched* by any woman as he was by her” and that “were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger” (38; emphasis mine). Later another male will confirm Elizabeth's witchcraftian power—Mr. Lucas says to Darcy “you will not thank me for detaining you from the *bewitching* converse of [Elizabeth]” (70; emphasis mine). No other woman in the novel is referred to as “bewitching,” including the beautiful Jane. Recall also that he proposes to her despite his

“scruples” as he calls them—all those just reasons why he shouldn’t marry her: “his sense of her inferiority—of it being a degradation—of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination” (145). “In vain,” he tells Elizabeth, “have I struggled” (145). Thus the novel not only reasserts Darcy’s or masculine power’s shameless evasiveness that camouflages the operations of masculine power in this novel all the more, but it also strongly hints towards Elizabeth’s innate female maleficence or what Bourdieu terms the unofficial power of women that serves only to reaffirm and perpetuate their negative identity (32).²⁶ The violence done against Elizabeth always seems to find its way back to Darcy, constantly constructing him as the victim, just as Formator’s violence against Amoranda boomeranged to Formator in *The Reform’d Coquet*.

But what is also very disquieting about the heterosexual romance in *Pride and Prejudice* is that the marriage itself is, for the most part, initiated by the heroine and not only in terms of her bewitching charms. The burden is on Elizabeth to get Darcy to propose to her a second time (279). One wonders if she didn’t again flatter his generosity and assure him of her gratitude in/for rescuing Lydia if they would marry at all. I cannot help but think that this also allows power its plausible deniability. The text, in other words, gives Elizabeth the “unofficial” power to attract and keep a man as compensation for being denied the official masculine power she originally had in the beginning of the novel. And it does this while simultaneously enabling patriarchy to deny its domination of women. Indeed, I find it impossible to view Austen’s fiction as Susan Morgan does—as “leav[ing] out the whole politics of domination and submission that we have been so

carefully taught to confuse with natural passion” (39). In the end, both Elizabeth and Amoranda marry masculine power’s representatives, and, rather than seeing Elizabeth and Darcy’s relationship as “sexy,” as “natural passion,” or as Elizabeth’s deserved reward for learning about the dangers of first impressions, i.e. the traditional ending of the female *bildungsroman*, we must view their relationship in terms of asymmetrical power. Through this lens, their relationship is very unhealthy, because it eroticizes Darcy’s power. Moreover, if the novel eroticizes his power, then it consequently eroticizes his power and domination of Elizabeth. Because Elizabeth is clearly attracted to his power (she even tells Jane she fell in love with him after touring his mansion), the novel constructs her as masochistic. In this sense, Darcy’s gaze or “the gaze of the powerful,” as Bourdieu points out, “carries authority” and can reassure the physically inadequate woman (68). Darcy at first rejected Elizabeth’s body and later he found it pleasing. This troubling aspect of their relationship, however, is misrecognized by Elizabeth (and readers) as what Bourdieu identifies as *amor fati* or “love of destiny” or “to find lovable and to love the man whom social destiny assigned to them” (109). In fact, the plot of the female *bildungsroman* depends upon such an idea. Readers desire that the sexy, powerful, and wealthy Darcy will rescue the somewhat less than beautiful Elizabeth from the anxiety caused by the entail on her father’s estate. We want our heroine to out-marry the beautiful Jane or the spoiled Lydia. This “Cinderella” story is one of the hidden constants of this genre that astute readers need to recognize in order to see the more subtle operations of power at work in the story.

Now we finally return to the beginning of this chapter where I mentioned that no two female *bildungsromans* could seem less alike than *The Reform'd Coquet* and *Pride and Prejudice*. But, as I have demonstrated, they are, if anything, disturbingly similar. Masculine power's strategy of embodying its heroine is more difficult to see in *Pride and Prejudice*, because it has widely dispersed its presence by insinuating itself through and amongst so many different discourses, including and most importantly, the female *bildungsroman* itself. It is hard for us to resist the seduction of such Enlightenment discourses as self-transformation, justice, and social etiquette, which represent some of our most cherished beliefs of what it means to be a civilized society and to be an individual with free will. Masculine power also hides its strategies through its lies and its misrepresentation of itself: as the rescuer, the truth-sayer, the representative of justice, the suffering victim, the penitent lover—and its misrepresentation of others: the vanity of Elizabeth and the villainy of Wickham. As I have also argued, this power pretends to *discover* Elizabeth's diseased female body (i.e. her vanity and even her witchcraftian charms) in the past, even as it tortures her throughout the novel to *produce* this body. Elizabeth's Foucauldian-style confession, in other words, acknowledges a latent vanity that was always there but unknowable to her until the moment she makes her confession. While we laugh as Mr. Collins tries to force the term of "coquet" onto Elizabeth, we later become very troubled to see that Elizabeth confesses to essentially the same flaw as Amoranda, especially since *The Reform'd Coquet* uses the terms "coquet" and "vanity" interchangeably. In contrast, however, we see that Darcy is a bodiless floating signifier of masculine power who in Volume III magically makes everything right behind the scenes,

bringing about social harmony and peace through three Bennet marriages: Lydia and Wickham's, Jane and Bingley's, and his own and Elizabeth's. What he has really done, however, amounts to a "transaction"—an exchange—so that Elizabeth, Wickham, and her family are under the obligation and debt of power, and Elizabeth submits her body to Darcy as payment. Through marriage, she fully enters the reality of Darcy's (patriarchal power's) world. Moreover, while it can appear at first that the novel wants to make Elizabeth marriageable by first reforming her of her pride and prejudice, we now know that this novel is really about highlighting what it sees as the inherently and incurably diseased nature of women. Elizabeth, and Amoranda before her, pay the price for "draw[ing] too near the fire of life" as Browning's speaker relates in the lines from *Aurora Leigh*. Is masculine power's logic of torture as successful in *Pride and Prejudice* as it is in *The Reform'd Coquet*? In fact, it is more successful, because it is more difficult to detect and because readers must now overcome the enormously appealing force of more modern discourses that appear to promote feminist and democratic ideals. Our one consolation, however, is this: we now know better.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1957. pp. 296-7. Print.

² Doody, Margaret. "George Eliot and the Eighteenth-Century Novel." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35.3 (1980) 260-91. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 April 2011.

³ Bender, John. *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1987. Print.

⁴ Poovey, Mary. *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly, and Jane Austen*. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1984. Print.

⁵ Poovey does, however, view the novel's overall action as ultimately endorsing a particular value system. Waldron, Mary. Introduction. *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.

⁶ Butte, George. *I Know That You Know That I Know: Narrating Subjects from Moll Flanders to Marnie*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2004. Print.

⁷ Ross, Christine. "Logic, Rhetoric, and Discourse in the Literary Texts of Nineteenth-Century Women." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32.2 (2002): 85-109. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Oct. 2010.

⁸ Michaelson, Patricia Howell. *Speaking Volumes: Women, Reading, and Speech in the Age of Austen*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002. Print.

⁹ Adler, Barbara Laughlin. "A disagreement between us": Gendered Argument in Austen's Novels." *Persuasions* 24 (2002): 164-176. Print.

¹⁰ Poovey, Mary. *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly, and Jane Austen*. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1984. Print. Spencer, Jane. *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986. Print. Mellor, Anne K. "A Novel of Their Own: Romantic Women's Fiction, 1790-1830." *The Columbia History of the British Novel*. Ed. John Richetti. New York: Columbia U P, 1994. Print. Todd, Janet. *The Cambridge Introduction to Jane Austen*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Sutherland, Kathryn. "Jane Austen and the Invention of the Serious Modern Novel." *Cambridge Companions Online*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Web. 9 April 2009.

¹¹ "Darcy acts as a facilitator for Elizabeth's character development" (Wooton 39); "Elizabeth Bennet is forced to acknowledge how wrong she has been about Darcy" (Spacks 279); "it [*Pride and Prejudice*] is . . . a progress toward civility" (Todd 61); "Elizabeth begins to understand the extent to which her character and her actions are a function of her relation to her neighbours" (Brownstein 54); "Darcy's letter helps the heroine to a new level of knowledge" (Stafford xxiii); "Lizzy makes her way toward what Austen will define as 'rational happiness' by the end of *Pride and Prejudice*" (Young 80); "only over the course of the novel does she [Elizabeth] learn not to confuse ethos and charm" (Michaelson 184); "Elizabeth and Darcy's stormy, romantic bildung" (Ross 102); "Elizabeth Bennet learn[s] to distrust superficial, unexamined attractiveness." (Regaignon 439); "Two other characters who develop humility during the course of their story are Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy" (Fritzer 83). "And at least one charm . . . of both heroines [Elizabeth and Isabel] and both novels is that their education does not mean learning to choose their hearts over their brains" (Morgan 197); "Darcy is a truth-teller, who dispels the heroine's illusions" (Spencer 169); "she [Elizabeth] realizes that true power belongs not to the imagination but to love." (Poovey 199).

¹² In discussing the witchcraft trials of the seventeenth-century, in which the Inquisitors used torture to produce a confession, Nicholas Spanos assigns the term "selective reconstruction" to when the "confessing witch reviewed her past experiences for remembrances that converged with her new identity . . . [that she] reconstructed her biography to make it consistent with her self-perception of being a witch" (431).

¹³ While scholars don't actually use the term, their claims about Elizabeth's inaccurate perceptions of reality prior to Darcy's corrective of them through his letter categorize *Pride and Prejudice* as a "quixote" narrative in the vein of Austen's *Emma*; however, in addition to the *bildungsroman* genre, my argument also departs from readings of the novel that fulfill the expectations that a quixote narrative requires, even in its most conservative form, because like the *bildungsroman*, it requires readers' acceptance of Darcy's letter as constituting "truth" (and therefore reality) and to view Elizabeth's prior perceptions as false and as

a consequence of her overactive imagination or unconscious defense against her own self image. For both an in-depth and insightful study of the female quixote narrative, see Scott Paul Gordon's *The Practice of Quixotism: Postmodern Theory and Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

¹⁴ To cite just a few examples: Charles H. Hinnant uses the term "blind" to describe Elizabeth's "passion" for Wickham (303). Dara Rossman Regaignon states that Elizabeth too readily trusts his "superficial" good looks and manners (439; 451). Janet Todd claims Elizabeth as seeing "truth in his looks" (62). Susan Morgan claims that "Elizabeth . . . was intent on being blind" to Wickham's character (45). Mary Poovey claims that Elizabeth "allow[s] herself to be used by Wickham to reinforce her own false position" (196). Poovey also claims that Elizabeth's perceptions are just her "overactive imagination or her "psychological defense" against intimacy because of her vulnerable position (196). But this view categorizes women like Elizabeth as psychologically damaged, because they do not need men to feel alive, healthy, and fulfilled. It also takes for granted the "truth" of Darcy's letter and which consequently requires a rewriting of Elizabeth's perceptions at the novel's beginning in which reasons are assigned for their falseness. Stuart M. Tave claims that because Elizabeth "has been pleased by [Wickham's] preference and offended by Darcy's neglect . . . [she] courted prepossession and ignorance and driven reason away" (128-9).

¹⁵ I am indebted for this astute observation to George Butte's chapter 3 "Comedy, Film, and Film Comedy" in his book *I Know that You Know that I Know: Narrating Subjects from Moll Flanders to Marnie*.

¹⁶ I also think comedy and irony contributes to Austen's innovative postmodern style in the sense that the novel is similar to today's reality television shows that depend upon this same dark pleasure (i.e. *schadenfreude*) for their success. Also similar to Austen's innovative use of the commonplace is the postmodern *Seinfeld* series, a proto-reality television show that claimed to be "a show about nothing" and viewers tuned in each week to watch the characters humiliate themselves through seemingly ordinary daily circumstances.

¹⁷ George Butte's chapter also examines the gendering of the subtle power relations operating in Austen's works, but his argument differs from mine in that he focuses on the extent subjectivity is scripted in Austen's *Emma*, which he sees as both "traced and resisted." His discussion of *Pride and Prejudice* is limited to this one scene, and he views Elizabeth's reading of Collins's subjectivity as both exposing her "vulnerability" as well as "her power of resistance" (111-12).

¹⁸ Elizabeth feels shame when her mother unskillfully and inappropriately argues with Darcy about the merits of the town versus the city (31-2). Elizabeth then longs to fill in the pause in conversation, because her mother may take the opportunity to speak again and shame her (33). Later, she feels shame when Mr. Collins inappropriately introduces himself to Darcy (74), when her mother loudly and tastelessly discusses Jane's impending marriage to Bingley with Mrs. Lucas at the supper table (75), when, after supper, her less than talented sister Mary spends too much time playing the piano (76), and when the absurd Mr. Collins shadows her at the dance, preventing her from dancing with anybody else.

¹⁹ Mary Ann O'Farrell explains that blushing in Austen's texts has the force of social law—if those who should blush do not, then someone else must take responsibility and blush on their behalf (129). In this context, Elizabeth is being responsible and blushing on behalf of her family's social transgressions.

²⁰ Elizabeth observes that "Darcy, after looking at [her mother] for a moment, turned silently away" (32); Elizabeth watches Collins introduce himself to Darcy and notices that "[Darcy] only made him a slight bow, and moved another way"; Elizabeth again observes Darcy and notices that "[t]he expression on his face changed . . . to a composed and steady gravity" (76); "She looked at . . . Darcy, who continued impenetrably grave" (77);

²¹ For example, Stuart M. Tave views Elizabeth's and Darcy's mortifying moments as "carry[ing] a moral, renovative force" that "cuts into the understanding and evaluation of one's self" (147; 142) Susan Fraiman views Elizabeth's repeated humiliations as collectively representing an empowering "counternarrative" or "anti-romantic narrative" that challenges the female *bildungsroman* that the novel foregrounds. In David Southward's discussion of Austen's use of embarrassment, he views Elizabeth's moment of self-realization as her most embarrassing moment, because it challenges a concept of her 'self' that she believed "consisted of cool, reasoned detachment" (772). Similar to Southward's argument, Mary Ann O'Farrell sees the mortifying moments in Austen's works as "moments at which [characters] are forced to recognized

themselves in re-tellings of themselves” (134). But in the “Introduction” to her book, O’Farrell more fully explains that she reads Austen’s use of repeated mortifications as a type of Foucauldian “local resistance”, in which the body involuntarily confesses its interior desires, while the individual still maintains the proper outward decorum required in a novel of manners. Consequently, O’Farrell views these embarrassing moments as “signs of love” and as the most erotic moments in Austen’s novels (6-7). More recently, Kay Young interprets shame in Austen’s writing, including *Pride and Prejudice*, “as the first feeling on the way to an expanded consciousness begun from the demand for the separation from others” (Endnote 4). Anita G. Gorman states that Austen uses “blushing and turning pale” in *Pride and Prejudice* “both to pique the reader’s curiosity and to guide the reader’s emotional response” (146).

²² “Darcy, after looking at [Mrs. Bennet] for a moment, turned silently away” (32); “at the end of [Mr. Collins’s speech], [Darcy] only made him a slight bow, and moved another way” (75); “The expression on his face changed . . . to a composed and steady gravity” (76); “She looked at . . . Darcy, who continued . . . impenetrably grave” (77).

²³ Interestingly, Liman claims that masculine shame also evades its shame through shame’s opposite: pride.

²⁴ I resist this possible reading, however, because (as I mentioned earlier) we can also see Wickham and Lydia as taking from Darcy (his power/wealth) what was never rightfully or naturally his to begin with.

²⁵ Darcy himself admits that he was an unprincipled and selfish child, which negates the benevolent image that his servant communicated to Elizabeth at Pemberley: “I was spoilt by my parents, who though good themselves, allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world” (282). Darcy claims he would still be this way if it weren’t for Elizabeth, but his behavior upon his revisit the Bennet house shows he has not changed at all.

²⁶ A note of interest: the Matrimonial Act of 1770, “prosecuted as witches ‘all women . . . that shall . . . impose upon, seduce, and betray into matrimony any of His Majesty’s subjects by means of scent, paints, . . . false hair, . . . high-heeled shoes, or bolstered hips’” (qtd. in Poovey x). Elizabeth is indeed like the accused witches of the seventeenth century who were stripped of their power either by recognizing their power in the context of witchcraft or by claiming that their power’s source was Satan. While one would think that the logic of the witch trials of the seventeenth-century is only history to an enlightened novel like *Pride and Prejudice*, it is clear that this logic persisted well into the eighteenth century and in Austen’s novel as well although well veiled.

CHAPTER 3

From the “[I]nviolable [A]sylum” of Mettingen to the Logic of the Insane Asylum:
The Production of Clara Wieland’s Madness in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*

“It is true that I am now changed.”

– Clara Wieland

“The visibility of the body and the permanence of writing go together.”

– Michel Foucault, *Psychiatric Power*

“Women have often felt insane when cleaving to the truth of our experience.”

– Adrienne Rich

“Confessed madwoman,” “hysterical,” “unstable,” “deluded,” “perverse,” “insane,” and “idiot”—these are just a small sampling of the reproachful words and phrases some commentators use to describe Clara Wieland, the heroine of Charles Brockden Brown’s American Gothic novel *Wieland; or the Transformation* (1798). These descriptors, to a great extent, re-enact the novel’s own condemnation of Clara. Clara’s madness, it seems, is a given. There is no need to question it. The exigency lies in determining its cause in the context of the newly formed United States. Is it hereditary predisposition, a shortsighted education, the absence of authority, isolation from community, religious enthusiasm, or over-confidence in Lockean epistemology? Indeed, this approach to *Wieland*’s exploration of insanity results in a cause/effect inversion: the effect (Clara’s madness) *produces* the reasons for her madness. Those reasons, moreover, will validate her madness. Thus, in a very real sense, Clara’s madness precedes its own genesis. What’s troubling about this inverted logic is that it reproduces the way in which

power functions in the insane asylum—it produces the madness it claims to discover in the patient’s confession or what the asylum calls a “biographical corpus” through which the patient owns his/her madness (Foucault *Psychiatric Power* 158). Indeed, this chapter will argue that the logic of *Wieland* resembles asylum logic. The novel produces Clara’s “madness” even as it professes to discover it as always already latently present in her “confession” and biographical history. This chapter will also challenge claims that Clara Wieland has been, or will become, “mad.” It will finally release this American heroine from the above undeserved labels. In fact, what will become apparent to readers is that Clara may very well be one of the most empowered heroines in British or American eighteenth-century literature—at least, that is, until masculine power strategically “tortures” her out of this position, just as it did Amoranda and Elizabeth Bennet. As it did with these heroines, patriarchal power intervenes just as Clara reaches the age about which it is most anxious—when she is expected to make the move from her father’s house to her husband’s. What is different, however, is that Clara has many more reasons than her British counterparts *not* to marry; consequently, patriarchy’s intervention in Clara’s case is aggressive at its most benign and brutally cruel at its worst. It will repeatedly torment her until she admits her body has the unavoidable taint of Eve and requires management by the rational Pleyel.

At the time Brown published *Wieland*, post-revolutionary America was still deeply engaged in British and European social influence and politics. It is generally known that Brown was a reader of British literature and that his writing was greatly influenced by the works of Britain’s William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. Brown

wrote at a time when America had mixed feelings with regard to England and Europe— influenced by their latest social fads, such as the “culture of sensibility”¹, yet anxious about their turbulent politics. Indeed in 1798, the year Brown published *Wieland*, the United States Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts in order to protect the new and fragile republic from the threat of foreign enemies. The Acts were “a means of ‘quarantining’ America from the ‘vile and loathsome embrace’ of the French (Samuels 51), revealing the early republic’s paranoia about French revolutionary radicalism. Regardless of Brown’s progressive, if not radical politics, and despite his published feminist piece *Alcuin*, inspired by Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Brown’s Gothic novel still reveals the intractable persistence of patriarchy in subjugating (or attempting to subjugate) women, especially given the fact that he wrote *Wieland* at an historical turning point when female equality had one of its best opportunities for actualization.

Indeed, the newly formed American nation seems to offer Clara potentially liberatory practices that heretofore existed for women only as an abstract possibility, a ‘theory’ of liberty based on eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideals. In the beginning of her full-length, first-person narrative, Clara exists as a rational and abstract thinker, a “self”-directed, male-oriented educated woman, and most surprisingly, a property-owning, head-of-her-own household, self-managing individualist. In other words, she lives the “self” shaping life that Lockean sensorial epistemology promises. Like *Amoranda*, Clara’s situation precludes the need for a husband (manager); she manages her “self.” Moreover, the community to which she belongs at Mettingen represents an

asylum of Enlightenment ideals in which there is the free and equal exchange of ideas between rational thinking and creative men and women. Because of Clara's rationalism, "manly" education, and disciplined sensibility, she personifies Mary Wollstonecraft's paradigm of the mentally sound woman. However, pervading this idealized community are patriarchal power's tactics of domination (which previous chapters uncovered). These tactics will gradually and violently destroy Clara and with her, any possibility of the real-world tangible practice of female equality and liberty.

In contrast to the brief confessional moments of Amoranda and Elizabeth Bennet, Clara's coerced "confession" will comprise something more than a first-person statement or two, in which the heroine pronounces a new version of her 'self' near or at the novel's end. Indeed, the *entire narrative* of *Wieland* will constitute her "confession," or what the asylum terms a "biographical" narrative that is required of all "mad" patients—a speech act, in other words, that constitutes the patient's ownership of his/her madness. Thus, while Clara's confessional statement (at the story's end) and her biography (the entire novel) may represent tangible expressions of the speaking subject, both disempower her by making visible (individuating) her body as diseased. I will show that Brown's full length female-authored first-person narrative deceptively functions to make its speaker seemingly willingly construct her "self" as mad, even though she is repeatedly tortured into confessing her "madness." *Wieland's* sophisticated use not only of a first-person female narrator but of what the novel's logic goes out of its way to stage as an unreliable female narrator epitomizes the disturbing discursive transformative abilities of disciplinary power functioning as patriarchal power. What seems particularly insidious

about this strategy is that, if Brown is showcasing the failure of Lockean epistemology as some scholars contend, then it is a female's mind and body that he co-opts to bear the violence of making his point. Because we have full access to her consciousness, Clara's reasoning errors appear habitual and thus demand judgment by readers. If the novel is in fact 'testing' the limits of its characters' rationalism, then the novel's logic of torture and confession ensures that the men's failure of the tests does not bear on them to the same degree or with the same consequences that Clara's failure demands. Clara is the only one subjected to the repetition and intensification of horrors and, as narrator, it is her failure of reason that is permanently recorded and made visible.

Also similar to the British novels is the early part of *Wieland*, which presents readers with an already empowered heroine. Indeed, Clara's narrative begins with her transgressive adoption of several traditionally masculine pleasures and practices. Furthermore, while readers of *The Reform'd Coquet* and *Pride and Prejudice* misrecognize their respective heroines as vain, *Wieland's* readers misrecognize Clara's transgressive use of masculine pleasures and discourses as "madness."

American scholars are inclined to read the novel as Brown's critique or complication of Enlightenment ideals, especially Lockean sensorial epistemology, on which the newly formed republic had been founded.² Generally speaking, these ideals are shown to fall short or utterly fail when Theodore's latent religious mania compels him to commit familicide and/or Clara's latent "madness" surfaces under the slightest provocation. While their scholarship highlights Brown's awareness of the new republic's foundational shortcomings, I believe that these readings greatly underestimate the degree

to which Clara's gender plays a role in her experience, her writing, and her alleged madness.³ Indeed, it is because of her many gendered transgressions that the novel's logic will oust Clara from her home, her masculine rationalism, and her subversive appropriation of masculine pleasures through a consistent project of violent coercion. It will also "torture" her out of these traditionally male domains by producing her purported madness as a peculiarly female one—a "madness" that it will expose as originating in her alleged excessive (albeit latent) sensibility as well as a "madness" that suggests her uncontained female sexual desire. The text's logic goes so far as to exile Clara and all the female transgression she represents from the young America, suggesting that the novel's vision of the newly formed republic did not include women in its promise of Enlightenment ideals.

Indeed, the issue of madness is one of scholars', if not *Wieland's*, central concerns. Are Clara and Theodore both mad or is it just Theodore? What is the nature of their "madness"? When, how, and why does their madness manifest itself? Do the mysterious voices simply expose an already present madness? Critics seem to agree that brother and sister are already predisposed to insanity and are insane by the novel's end, although each character may develop his/her mental illness differently. I will argue, however, that the novel is concerned with generating Clara's "madness" only to turn around and disclose that it was always already latent in her female body. Strategies of power will *produce* Clara's "madness" by violently and repeatedly subjecting her to situations that produce intense and extreme emotion. Simply stated, masculine power will *horrify* Clara into "madness." Indeed, eighteenth-century aesthetic theories define

“horror” in terms of emotional affect taken to its extreme. Edmund Burke describes it as the most powerful of the emotions, since it is the response of self-preservation manifested as the fear of “*pain, sickness, and death*” (36). “Horror,” as Gothic writer Ann Radcliffe conceptualizes it, “contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates [the mental] faculties” in the face of “dreaded evil” (*On the Supernatural in Poetry*). Most significantly, however, *Wieland’s* oppressive logic will have readers and Clara herself believe that her “madness” is the result of her own excessive sensibility and uncontained sexual instincts rather than a consequence of its own campaign of horror. In short, the “inviolable asylum” that Mettingen represents for Clara will transform into her insane asylum. Moreover, the novel’s logic will legitimize Clara’s “madness,” ironically enough, by mitigating if not totally excusing Theodore’s insanity, constructing it as rational—yes, rational—and even heroic. Just as it did in the British novels, masculine power will employ numerous and diffuse strategies to evade responsibility for its campaign of violence against Clara.

Unlike the logic of torture and confession in *The Reform’d Coquet* and *Pride and Prejudice*, whose subtle forces of immaterial power and embodied victimization were made apparent through Elaine Scarry’s model of political torture and Doug Liman’s conception of political shaming, respectively, the logic of torture and confession in *Wieland* can best be illuminated through Michel Foucault’s elaboration of the mechanism of power that functions in the insane asylum (herein referred to as “asylum logic,” “psychiatric power,” or “asylum power”). Asylum logic will expose how the widely distributed and immaterial forces of power in *Wieland* utilize “continuous punitive pressure” to generate Clara’s “mad” embodiment. Drawing primarily on Foucault’s

Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1964), *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France, 1974-1975* (2004), and *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973—1974* (2008), I will show that *Wieland's* “torture” of Clara, which produces both her “confession” of “madness” as well as her biographical narrative, is analogous to the logic of the insane asylum and to the concept of madness that Foucault claims emerged throughout the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, the eighteenth century’s concept of madness is rooted in emotional excess or nervous system overload. The possibility of madness, according to Foucault, is an innate feature of eighteenth century sensibility. The finely attuned nervous system that enables sensibility in the first place can turn against itself and manifest as delirium, mania, melancholia, etc. Foucault describes this nervous system assault as a “multiplicity of excitations constantly accumulated, prolonged, and echoed without being attenuated” (*Madness and Civilization* 90-1). Moreover, sustained “violent” “movement of the “nerves and muscles” can suddenly intensify into “convulsions” or “frenzy,” i.e., “mania,” or total “pacification,” i.e. “melancholia” (*Madness and Civilization* 91-2). As we shall see, the repetition of masculine violence that assaults Clara’s “neurological body” (to use Foucault’s term) will produce these very same symptoms (*Psychiatric Power* 323).

By reading *Wieland* through the lens of asylum logic, it will become apparent that masculine power functions very similarly to what Foucault calls “psychiatric power.” It will invest in Clara’s body to control it and to individuate it as a visible sign of female “madness.” Furthermore, psychiatric power will expose Clara’s “madness” *not* as an

“illness,” but as a “fault”—a specifically female fault, i.e. uncontained sexual desire (Foucault *Psychiatric Power* 176). Moreover, the novel wants readers to see that Clara’s narrative—in asylum logic’s terms, her “biographical corpus” or the fulfillment of her “obligation of anamnesis”—exposes her “madness” *as always already constituted*—as *inherently* part of her biological female body. The biographical history that Clara recovers from memory, in other words, constitutes a confessional ritual in which she owns her madness and accepts the reality that asylum power imposed on her. Indeed, her first-person “biography” functions as a history of the body—not a history of events. Undoubtedly the novel wants readers (and Clara herself) to view her narrative in the end as one written by a female who is “mad” *prior* to writing it. In fact, *Wieland* functions both as a novel *and* as a “mad” person’s biographical history. Consequently, *Wieland*’s double role—we might even say its biloquism—contributes to our misrecognition not only of Clara’s many gender transgressions but also of the way in which the novel’s logic ensures she is disciplined for them. In other words, Clara’s biographical history by definition validates her madness—only a “mad” individual writes one. *Wieland*’s structure, by its very nature, quickly closes down alternative readings of Clara; indeed, how can a history of someone’s madness be anything but incontestable evidence of that person’s “madness”?

Consequently, any hindsight interpretation of *Wieland* seems more likely than not to result in either a conscious or unconscious evidence-hunt for indicators of Clara’s “madness.” In fact, several critical views inadvertently reproduce asylum logic by viewing Clara either as a victim of hyper-sensibility⁴ or of her uncontained and even

aberrant sexual desires (or both). Indeed, these critics conduct what Foucault terms an “anatomy of [Clara’s] pleasures of the flesh” (*Abnormal* 186). Some readings see her “brooding” over Carwin’s portrait and read her response to his voice as sexual attraction.⁵ One interpretation implies that Clara’s solitary contemplation is “autoerotic” in nature⁶. Other readings regard Clara’s insistence on Carwin’s guilt as a persistent and worsening sign of her growing hysteria or madness.⁷ Overlooking the alarming level of misogynist violence in key scenes, certain articles claim that Carwin and his threats of violence are a figment of Clara’s over-active or diseased imagination.⁸ Indeed, some even view Carwin as a projection of Clara’s own “raw” sexuality or as a sign of her subconscious sexual desires.⁹ These understandings deflect masculine violence back onto Clara in the form of her uncontrollable sexuality. Moreover, a few of the readings see Clara as either experiencing a “sexual awakening” or as experiencing a sexual awakening that she subconsciously attempts to deny (an early sign of her impending madness).¹⁰ Still other analyses suggest that Clara’s dream of her brother and her subsequent suspicion that he is in the closet indicates her sexual desire for her brother, and through him, her father.¹¹ One article even implies that Clara is “possessed” when she suspects an evil being in her closet, in that her closet represents herself (15).¹² Such an interpretation reproduces the nature of possession that Foucault claims started to replace the traditional concept of the witch (*Abnormal* 207-212). The reinvented witch emerges as the possessed (mad) female, whose body is divided into multiple sites of pleasure that she at once desires and rejects (*Abnormal* 207-212).

These interpretations reproduce asylum logic by assigning the eighteenth-century's "mad" body of hyper-sensibility to Clara precisely because she does not, in fact, have one. They transform, moreover, Clara's neurologically mad body into her "mad" sexualized body, infused with aberrant sexual instinct. According to Foucault, aberrant sexual instinct was believed to originate in human imagination, because the imagination "opens up to [sexual instinct] the space in which it will be able to develop its abnormal nature (*Abnormal* 280). Also of crucial significance is that these readings posit Clara as the agent or originator of the violence that assaults her. As a result, they lessen, if not totally obscure, the misogynist violence directed at her. Overall, these observations of Clara (re)produce her "madness" by reading her alleged "hyper-sensibility" or over-active imagination as latent, aberrant sexual desire and instinct.

The novel's logic, like these critical readings, also collapses Clara's assumed excessive sensibility into her alleged latent sexual desires. Clara's "confession" of hyper-sensibility at the novel's end will have become synonymous with the taint of female sexual deviance. In fact, Clara is in a lose-lose situation. At the novel's beginning, her masculine practices and pleasures (discussed in more detail below) negatively position her as one of the late eighteenth-century's "unsexed" women. Claudia Johnson explains that men's appropriation or "masculinization" of the "feminine attributes" of sentimentalism at this time left women with only "two [gender-site] choices: either the equivocal or hyperfeminine" (12-14). Clara's masculine practices and pleasures make her one of Johnson's "equivocal" beings. Clara's "manly" pursuits, in other words, "unsex" her—"she is a female mutation of a *male* hero" (12). Moreover, Claudia Johnson argues

that patriarchy ironically viewed the late eighteenth-century “unsexed” woman as “oversexed” (9). Her masculine disposition, in other words, means that she must also have masculine sexual desires (Johnson 9). However, what will become clear is that Clara’s movement from her empowered “unsexed/oversexed” position at the novel’s start to her confession of “hyperfemininity” (i.e. hyper-sensibility) by the novel’s end does not free her from the taint of sexual aberration. As G.J. Barker-Benfield explains, the concept of female sensibility (excessive or not) already semantically contains within itself the idea of female promiscuity; society viewed women’s pursuit of aesthetic pleasures as concomitant with the pursuit of sexual pleasures (xxvii). Barker-Benfield further states that sexualizing sensibility resulted in the dangerous trope of female virtue in distress and the “associat[ion] [of] desire with the rake/victim dyad” (xxvii). Indeed, psychiatric power, working through Carwin, will “author” Clara as a “virtue in distress” character—as the “victim” of Carwin as “rake.” In other words, Carwin will “write” Clara into art as the heroine of a formulaic seduction novel.

If we resist experiencing or interpreting *Wieland* as a mad woman’s “biographical history,” it becomes apparent that Clara represents one of the most empowered heroines of the eighteenth century. At the start of the novel, in fact, Clara occupies several eighteenth-century masculine ideological positions. Clara essentially lives a “man’s” life with all of its privileges: she is economically independent, and significantly, she is the head of her own household.¹³ Despite the fact that the orphaned Clara has an older brother nearby, whose household she could have joined after receiving her inheritance, Clara flouts this traditional practice and deliberately opts to live alone. This is a radically

modern concept for its time, especially when the maiden Clara hosts the bachelor Pleyel as an overnight guest. Moreover, as was the situation with Amoranda, Clara's house contributes to her non-corporeal existence. Her house acts as a body substitute and enables her to live free of bodily concerns and discomforts. In short, when one's house substitutes for one's body, it leaves that individual free to pursue the higher and pleasurable activities of the mind. In contrast to Amoranda's house (as well as her financial independence), which enabled her to live more like a marriage-avoiding bachelor than like a chaste maiden searching for a husband (the reason why I argued that the novel tortured her out of this position), Clara's house, servant, and financial independence enable her to pursue the bodiless and masculine occupations of abstract intellectualism and aesthetic pleasures.

Clara is also a practiced rational thinker in the Lockean sense at the novel's start, since she is a woman who reasons by carefully weighing the limited amount of sensorial evidence she has at hand and drawing what conclusions she can from that evidence. In this sense, she is like Elizabeth Bennet at the start of *Pride and Prejudice*. Clara is not impulsive and restrains her own sensibilities through cool reasoning and deliberation, frequently playing devil's advocate to her own ideas. Indeed, Clara epitomizes Wollstonecraft's mentally healthy female¹⁴. Moreover, Clara's rationalism, unlike Pleyel's, is not uncompromising. She doesn't dismiss an idea just because it is unusual or can't be rationally explained right away. In short, Clara has a healthy and balanced worldview, and her narrative implies that this has been her state of mind for the past "[s]ix years."¹⁵ For example, in reflecting on her father's mysterious death, she

demonstrates this balance when she relates that “I could not deny that the event was miraculous, and yet I was invincibly averse to that method of solution” (39). Clara finds the event to be extraordinary, even supernatural, but she immediately neutralizes this unscientific explanation, knowing that it is not a sound method from which to draw conclusions. And she does this, even though the limited facts she has available through her uncle’s story do not offer her any natural or rational explanation. Moreover, Clara and her small intellectual group do not allow the subject of mysterious voices to give free reign to their fancies, licensing incessant speculation, despite the confirmation of the second voice’s prophecy (55). They are intrigued by the idea, yes, but as a topic of conversation, it does not consume them. The conversation of her little circle of intellectuals discusses a variety of topics despite the fact of the curious mystery that has entered their lives.

Clara’s ability to deliberate rationally before drawing conclusions also manifests itself after she hears mysterious voices in her bedroom closet. She hypothetically considers the possibility that Judith (her servant) may need her help or may even be ill, and in trying to wake her, courteously whispered in her ear in an attempt not to alarm her (64). Then, after spending several minutes mentally exploring her bedroom and house, reasoning out the possibilities or impossibilities of someone actually entering either, she concludes that no one could have entered and that the voice must have been her “imagination” or “some casual noise” that she has mistaken for a “human creature” (65). Clearly, Clara does not underestimate the power of imagination to offer the human mind alternatives to more rational explanations. In fact, when she again hears the voices, she

does not startle (“I was so much mistress of my own feelings”). Instead she intently listens to the voices’ conversation to see if she could gain more information about their source (66).

Besides Clara’s healthy rationalism in the novel’s beginning, Clara possesses a “sixth sense” or a powerful intuition that constitutes her “esemplastic power,” which the novel’s logic would rather readers see as her delusions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who coined the term “esemplastic power” defines it as an innate feature of humanity (“primary imagination”) that mirrors the infinite and omniscient perception of God and which reproduces itself as the “secondary imagination” in the poet (272). Esemplastic perception supplements limited sensorial perception. Although Coleridge suggests that only male poetic genius is able to fully exploit its latent potential. Clara’s apparently transgressive artistic intuition reveals that her epistemological position is not one-dimensional; her sensory knowledge is enhanced by this innate or intuitive perception of reality that grants her a creative and Godlike omniscience. Clara’s esemplastic imagination, in fact, corresponds to Elizabeth Bennet’s paternal prophesying in the early pages of *Pride and Prejudice*. While Elizabeth’s words create the reality they speak, Clara ‘imagines’ futures that later events confirm. Several of Clara’s experiences of foreboding exemplify her intuitive omniscience. Clara’s aesthetic contemplation of the storm in tandem with Carwin’s portrait, for example, enables her intuitive eye to sense her own impending “ruin” as well as her family’s death (62).¹⁶ Her next experience suggests to her the destruction of her little community’s “happiness” (62). In yet another episode, Clara’s intuition manifests as a dream-vision that places a “beckoning”

Theodore “on the opposite edge of [a] gulph”—one that Clara will fall into if she obeys her brother’s request (71). Clara catches a glimpse of the impending masculine violence that future events will confirm. Clearly, Clara has a special knowledge that is usually reserved for males. Indeed, her “esemplastic power” situates her in the company of celebrated male Romantic poets such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats. The long period of “happiness” that Clara describes (before Carwin’s arrival) seems directly related to her ability to make use of her intellectual and intuitive abilities. She makes it clear that this is how she has spent and spends most of her time, which is quite atypical of most eighteenth-century women, who are confined to their husbands’ houses, caring for their husband’s children and needs. Unlike these women, Clara’s house is not a prison; in fact, she refers to it as her “asylum.” She embodies not only Wollstonecraft’s mentally balanced woman, but she also personifies the Enlightenment’s rational “man” *and* Romanticism’s second-sighted male poet. Not surprisingly, Clara’s mentally balanced state becomes a source of patriarchal anxiety.

Clara violates proper eighteenth-century gender roles when she indulges in several practices and pleasures reserved for men. One of these roles, in fact, is writing. Although we do not know exactly what Clara records in her secret journal, we can safely assume that it contains her uncensored thoughts, ideas, and desires, and, as Andrew J. Scheiber suggests, Clara’s journal represents “an alternative channel of expression . . . through which she might subvert or resist . . . [patriarchal] conventions” (188). While journal writing is not unusual for women of the period, what strongly implies that Clara’s journal writing most likely represents something transgressive is that, at the novel’s

conclusion, masculine violence ultimately destroys her journal (in the fire), but only *after* both Pleyel (143) and Carwin (235) know its contents. In other words, patriarchal power censors Clara's potentially subversive writing. In this context, it is not unreasonable to believe that the very different culture of independence and freedom in which Clara lives (and has lived) relative to other women, has most likely affected the nature of her writing. Indeed, her writing, which we will never know, represents in a sense the lost potential of women in the new America.

This American heroine continues to violate proper eighteenth-century gender roles when she (ironically) acts the part of Foucault's asylum psychiatrist. Indeed she assumes psychiatric power for herself and exposes what is hidden in Theodore's behavior, his looks, his words, and then predicts future behavior based on these outward 'signs' of latent madness. Clara states that she "could not bear to think that his senses should be the victims of such delusion. It argued a diseased condition of his frame, which might show itself hereafter in more dangerous symptoms" (39). Positioned as the powerful "psychiatrist" with Theodore as her "patient," she "investigat[es] the state of his thoughts" (40). He "confesses" his thoughts to her, she assesses them, and then forecasts a future based on her findings. Of particular note, Clara's assessment of Theodore results in her assigning a "diseased" mind/body to the *paternal* side of the family, and thus she deliberately exempts herself from any influence by the family bloodline.

Clara also transgressively appropriates for herself two of the period's masculine aesthetic pleasures: "masculine sublimity" and "man of feeling" sensibility. It is because of these two activities that Clara's female "foibles" seem much more transgressive than

either Amoranda's or Elizabeth Bennet's; her mental activities involve more than just the ability to reason—they involve pleasures—*masculine pleasures*. In fact, we are made to feel that Clara spends most of her time in pleasure-producing mental states. Clara's pleasurable aesthetic musings reproduce the English Romanticism form of the "masculine sublime" that Anne K. Mellor describes in *Romanticism and Gender* (1993). Mellor describes this experience as one in which the self or "ego" transcends the body, or what patriarchy traditionally views as the feminine realm of materiality (88). This mental transcendence, as Mellor explains it, has its own language, which she refers to as "linguistic omnipotence" (89). The participant speaks from his/her "mental power" in lieu of the "absent presence" of the material body while engaged in the sublime experience (Mellor 89). The sense of non-corporeality suggested here should sound familiar—both Amoranda and Elizabeth Bennet started off in such a purely mental, non-corporeal state. Clara engages in masculine transcendence and linguistic omnipotence several times during the beginning of the novel. We can, in fact, view Clara's responses to the stories about her father's mysterious death and Theodore's experience of the mysterious voice, as those of masculine sublimity: "My wonder was excited by the inscrutableness of the cause . . . [it] begat in me a thrilling, and not unpleasing solemnity" (39). Then, after hearing Theodore's and Pleyel's story about another instance of the inexplicable voice, she describes her reaction as: "An awe, the sweetest and most solemn that imagination can conceive, pervaded my whole frame" (52). Clara's transcendental experience is one in which her mental experience of "awe" substitutes for her physical body. She participates in the absent presence of the body that Mellor describes.

War is the object that inspires Clara's second transcendental experience.¹⁷ As with the male romanticists, Clara's mental response is immediate awe, joy, or ecstasy.¹⁸ Clara begins Chapter IV of her narrative by describing her and her family's and friends' "uninterrupted happiness" in the context of ongoing war (29). She then relates that [t]he sound of war had been heard, but it was at such a distance as to enhance our enjoyment by affording objects of comparison . . . [r]evolutions and battles contributed in some sort to our happiness, by agitating our minds with curiosity, and furnishing causes of patriotic exultation" (29). Despite its violence, war stimulates their minds to ecstasy. Clara's reflections here align even more specifically with the Kantian sublime as Mellor describes it, in which the sublime experience models the warrior's own "capacity to withstand fear and danger" (88-9). In other words, Clara's transcendental pleasure is one in which she experiences the same "patriotic exultation" of the warrior about to do battle—they (she and the warriors) are, in essence, of one mind. What makes her sublime experience even more transgressive is that Clara does, indeed, recognize the toll war takes on male bodies ("however calamitous to those who occupied the scene"); she nonetheless continues to exploit war in order to experience a sublime mental state. What's more, Clara's experience inverts the gendered logic of the sublime as Mellor outlines it, in which the male poet "speaks of, for, and in place of nature originally gendered as female" (90). In contrast, Clara-the-poet's sublime experience "speaks of, for, and in place of" the warrior originally gendered as male (e.g. Mars, the God of War). Her elevated mind, we might say, is made possible by vulnerable and silenced male

bodies.¹⁹ Clara's sublime reflections indicate her bodiless or mind-only existence at this point in the text.

A little later, Clara occupies yet another traditionally masculine position when a "wanderer" (later discovered to be Carwin) becomes the object of her contemplations:

I continued in the same spot for half an hour, vaguely, and by fits, contemplating the image of this wanderer, and drawing, from outward appearances, those inferences with respect to the intellectual history of this person, which experience affords us. I reflected on the alliance which commonly subsists between ignorance and the practice of agriculture, and indulged myself in airy speculations as to the influence of progressive knowledge in dissolving this alliance, and embodying the dreams of the poets. I asked why the plough and the hoe might not become the trade of every human being, and how this trade might be made conducive to, or at least, consistent with the acquisition of wisdom and eloquence. (58)

Note that Clara's mind assigns a more specific identity to the wanderer, making him a farmer, and then her mind "speaks" on behalf of the farmer, for whom she substitutes the "dreams of the poets." Her notion of poets' dreams, in fact, reflects her own present mental state: she *is* the "poet" whose "linguistic omnipotence" transforms the farmer into a wise and eloquent ideal—in other words, she mentally transforms Carwin into an *objet d'art*. Similar to her sublime experience of war and the gendered inversion evident there, the female poet (Clara) silences the manual laborer (male body) by first joining and then speaking for him with her mind.

Besides appropriating the mental pleasures of the "masculine sublime," Clara also transgressively participates in and speaks as the eighteenth-century's "man of feeling." She responds to Carwin's voice with "overflow[ing] sympathy" and "unbidden tears" (59). Clara's aesthetic pleasures entail her transgressive occupation of late eighteenth-century male sensibility. She responds to Carwin like a Harley²⁰ or a Harrington²¹ when

her gender requires her to be the suffering, indeed, *mad* female who “solicit[s] male tears” (Johnson 15). Again, however, Clara substitutes the mental image of a tragic male in lieu of the usual female as the *object* of her pleasurable sentimentalism. Indeed, she once more mentally transforms Carwin into an *objet d’art*. His request for water ““for charity’s sweet sake”” triggers her emotional response (59). Clearly, Clara’s response to Carwin’s voice is *not* sexual attraction as some scholars misread it; neither should it be read a symptom of her hyper-sensibility; indeed, *it is total aesthetic pleasure*—more significantly, *it is male aesthetic pleasure*. Clara’s emotion is generated by the artistic incongruity of the previous mental image of the wise and eloquent farmer and present close proximity of the pathetic farmer’s voice. Clara’s “mental portrait,” as it were, juxtaposes his beautiful and elevated voice with his low station, his poverty with his asking for so little, and his courage (to make the request) with his shy reserve. It is her own poetic imagination, not Carwin, which brings Clara her pleasure in this scene.

Reproducing insane asylum logic, the novel will violently impose its version of reality (male superiority and female subjugation) onto Clara, i.e. the “mad” patient, primarily working through what Foucault call “psychiatric power.” In *Wieland*, it is the male characters, especially Carwin, who function as power’s relays of asylum psychiatrists. Foucault explains that the psychiatrist uses “direction” to make his version of reality an inevitability through a very regimented and closely controlled asylum routine of daily praise, reward, reprimand, constraint, threat, etc. (*Psychiatric Power* 174). The irony of this special, isolated “treatment” of the mad, as Foucault points out, is that the asylum’s reality *is* reality—it functions as power (*Psychiatric Power* 175). The

only difference is that the invisible forces that make “normal” behavior compulsory outside of the asylum are greatly intensified within the hyper-reality of the asylum. Sooner or later, the patient must, of necessity, resign his/her own will and succumb to this hyper-reality’s unremitting pressure and accept power’s reality as his/her own. How, then, does Foucault’s concept of “direction” (a.k.a. “management” or “moral treatment”) manifest itself in *Wieland*? What are the forces at work? What is the routine or regimen that will act on Clara’s body, break her will, and “cure” her”?

Psychiatric power uses four major forms of “direction” that coerce Clara into her “confession” and “cure,” i.e. her subjugated role. First, asylum power subjects Clara to escalating violence that produces increasingly intensified states of horror that function to take their toll not only on her body but also on her mind. Second, asylum power employs “recognition by mirror” to make Clara see her own madness through her family’s and Theodore’s madness. Third, asylum power repositions Clara from active and creative writer/poet/artist into a passive *objet d’art*. And fourth, it constructs the ideal environment in which Clara’s rationalism will be used against her.

What better way can patriarchal power “direct” Clara into submission than to separate her from her family as well as threaten her and hold her body hostage? Indeed, these strategies re-enact the asylum’s own strategy of isolating the patient from his/her family (Foucault terms it “seizing the body”) and controlling the patient’s body through “orthopedic” (literally means “child straightening”) devices. Power’s strategy of horror-producing violence makes Clara go ‘out of her mind’ and into her body. Moreover, each act of masculine violence against her elicits a greater response of horror than the previous

act: sorricide incites even greater horror than familicide; familicide provokes more horror than the threats of incest and rape; and the threats of incest and rape elicit more horror than murder threats. This effect of escalating violence is what asylum power refers to as the “law of intensification”; the retaliative effect of greater violence when Clara resists submitting is what Foucault refers to as “the system of the straightjacket”—“the more one tries to escape [it], the more one suffers” (*Psychiatric Power* 105-106)—indeed, it seems that with each effort Clara makes to end her suffering, the more power retaliates with increased violence.

Carwin’s (the voices) and Theodore’s repeated threats of murder and rape/incest produce Clara’s heightened awareness of her body-as-female; in other words, she becomes anxious about her body and its vulnerability to male violence.²² These violent acts, moreover, occur in two key places: Clara’s bedroom and summerhouse—places that represent her body and mind, respectively.²³ Masculine violence replaces Clara’s earlier responses of the pleasurable masculine sublime with its aesthetic opposite: responses of increasing horror. Clara’s mind-contracting response of horror is evident in the “fit” into which she “s[i]nk[s]” after hearing the threatening voices in her closet (66). In this state—unconscious, silenced, and positioned low to the female-gendered, material earth—Clara is anything but an elevated or speaking “mind.” The murderous and incestuous threats at the summerhouse are accompanied literally and figuratively by absolute darkness, one of aesthetic theory’s key conditions for producing horror. After awakening from her dream-vision, she finds it impossible to move; any step may literally plunge her into the Schuylkill River. Moreover, Clara’s intuitive dream-vision, which

includes a threatening “abyss,” a landscape feature of gothic fiction that produces horror and is usually a punishment reserved for transgressive characters, stands in direct contrast to the image of the mind-elevating, sublimity producing Alpine cliffs. The image of the abyss in gothic fiction generates a response of absolute horror manifested as acrophobia, impending danger, a violent, painful death after falling, and total oblivion, whereas the height of the Alpine cliffs produces the mind-expanding experience of the profundity of nature and spiritual renewal. In effect, Clara’s horrifying experiences render her mind-*less* and sight-*less*. Indeed, the total darkness that envelopes her after her dream-vision represents her loss of a poet’s second sight—her esemplastic power. The “visions” of her later and prolonged delirium are comprised only of the realization of the fall in the abyss (269). Horror takes Clara’s previous pleasures of sublimity, heightened awareness and omniscience and contracts them down to what amounts to total blindness in the absolute and utter darkness of the abyss.

Carwin’s threat of murder and rape play themselves out on the architecture of Clara’s two houses. Not only does Carwin steal into Clara’s bedroom and hide in her closet *twice* without her consent, he also reads her private journal. Conceptually, Carwin rapes Clara *twice*. If Clara’s journal is her mind and her house is her body, with her bedroom representing her sexual body, then Carwin penetrates the deepest recesses of her mind and body. Because Clara’s empowerment is mostly mind generated (her pleasures and rationalism), masculine violence, in effect, “rapes” her mind, leaving her with a body that it will disclose as the site of her “madness.” Also, Carwin’s threat of murderous violence if she returns to her summerhouse (72-3) is the equivalent of forbidding her to

return to her mental pleasures, since her summerhouse is her place of quiet repose and scenic inspiration and contemplation. Furthermore, the continually escalating threats and violence directed at Clara force her to seek male protection. She relates that the “solitude, formerly so dear to [her], could no longer be endured” (69). At first it is a short stay at her brother’s, but the subsequent return to her own house necessitates Pleyel’s occupation of Clara’s spare bedroom—a quasi-marriage that starts to resemble the reality that asylum power wants Clara to adopt (69). Later, Carwin’s rape threat forces Clara to take permanent residence in her brother’s house (115). However, when his house is no longer an option after it becomes a crime scene, she has no choice but to remain permanently in her uncle’s “protection,” and not just in another town or state, but in another country. Power doesn’t just oust Clara from her heretofore “manly” life; it violently banishes her from the land of (female) opportunity.

Clara’s nerve-shocking responses of horror register time and again on her body as “trembling” (110), “shuddering” (73, 75, 97, 218), “phrenzy” (101, 265), and “convulsion” (258), with the chronology of the words connoting rising tension and intensifying vibration. The escalating violence and the abject horror to which she has been a witness and of which she has been a victim eventually take their toll on her nervous system; Clara relates that the horrors “acted on [her] nerves like an edge of steel. It appeared to cut asunder the fibres of [her] brain, and rack every joint with agony” (97); she even alludes here to the Inquisitorial “rack” of torture that stretched victims’ joints to and beyond the breaking point. She again relates that “[Her] frame shook, and the vital current was congealed” (98). Once these repetitive jolts to her system pass the tipping

point, Clara finds herself experiencing a short period of “delirium” (179), and then finally, her long episode of delirium and melancholia (268-271). If horror tenses or tightens Clara’s nervous system to the breaking point, it also contracts the space around her. In addition to the absolute darkness that encloses Clara at the summerhouse, the sight of Catharine’s corpse renders Clara immovable—“for more than an hour” her “faculties and limbs [are] deprived of all activity” (173). Indeed, Clara resembles Catharine’s unmoving corpse. Her reality is temporarily contracted to a single point in space.

The constantly shrinking space around Clara reaches its nadir when she encounters Theodore in the final scene of horror. Theodore—epitomizing the masculine violence that threatens Clara—approaches his sister and closes the space between them so he can strangle her. He plans to cut off the blood supply to her brain, metaphorically making her mind-*less*, but his murderous intentions and approach produce Clara’s strongest sense of self-preservation yet. She is forced to the point at which she will have to kill her brother or be killed. Indeed, it is horror at its extreme in the form of *preservation of life*—her own life—that finally takes Clara over the edge. Her sense of self-preservation is so strong that she first disobeys her uncle and tells Theodore that Carwin is behind the voices so her brother might quit the spiritual mandate he believes himself to be carrying out. She then picks the ideal time to drop the weapon she is holding, letting it fall at the very moment she sees his expression change—when he realizes the true extent and nature of his crime. She knows he will pick up the penknife and use it on himself. Indeed, Clara’s subsequent prolonged state of delirium is less a response to her brother’s desire to kill her, or because he nearly did kill her, than it is her

realization that she has the capability of facilitating the death not only of another human being but of her own brother. Yet, it is masculine violence that has brought Clara to this claustrophobic, confession-producing space of horror—a place in which she had to choose. But masculine violence will have us see Clara’s subsequent delirium as madness produced by her own hyper-sensibilities.

Clara’s loss of mind and space, which culminates in the final scene and subsequently produces her confession (passed off as a cure), parallels asylum logic’s technique of producing a crisis in which the patient is gradually constrained into confessing his/her madness (Foucault *Psychiatric Power* 274). To describe this process, Foucault even draws on the metaphor of space contraction: “the subject must be forced into a sort of tight corner, a point of extreme contraction at which he is constrained to say ‘I am mad’” (*Psychiatric Power* 274). Internally, the space of Clara’s mind contracts—her omniscience telescopes into total blindness. Externally, the space around her shrinks; she is gradually cornered. What she is left with is an immovable, rigid body—in other words, her body resembles that of a corpse. Where can she go if she has no family and no friends? Where can she go if she can’t go to her own home, her brother’s home, her summerhouse, or even to Pleyel’s? Besides the crisis-producing technique of the asylum, Clara’s loss of all her options closely models the asylum’s “maneuvers” of “deprivation,” in which the mad patient is denied certain needs until he/she is willing to “pay” for his/her “cure” with the “currency” of obedience (Foucault *Psychiatric Power* 156). Either way, these techniques ultimately “corner” Clara’s body into her uncle’s management that is euphemized as paternal protection.

Another strategy that the novel employs that parallels asylum logic is what Foucault calls “recognition by mirror” (*Madness and Civilization* 262). Foucault explains that the asylum’s isolated containment of mad individuals provides the ideal circumstances in which “madness would see itself, would be seen by itself” (*Madness and Civilization* 262). According to Foucault, this mirroring is necessary because one’s madness can “be recognized only in the object” (Foucault *Madness and Civilization* 262-3). This strategy, in conjunction with the horror of the novel’s final scenes of violence, requires Clara to acknowledge her own madness in her family history and in Theodore. The first instance of “recognition by mirror” that occurs in *Wieland* is when Clara’s uncle tells her about the madness on her *mother’s* side of the family (203). Clara’s uncle represents another of the novel’s “psychiatrist” figures, especially since he steps in as the “voice of reason” and “master of reality.” Notable here is that her uncle relates this maternal history of madness only *after* Clara informs him that she strongly suspects Carwin is behind the voice that Theodore believes he heard. Up until this point, Clara only had knowledge of madness on the *paternal* side. Indeed, it seems that Clara’s rationalism, i.e., her search for a reason outside of madness, necessitates the inclusion of a history of madness on the *maternal* side, so that Clara will finally recognize her own possibility for madness. In effect, the uncle’s narrative nullifies the exemption from madness Clara allowed herself at the novel’s beginning where she transgressively wielded psychiatric power and assigned madness to Theodore, i.e., the *paternal* side of the family. Most significantly, because Clara resists embodiment, the narrative’s logic provides her with a “mad” family body, in which she must of necessity see her own

madness or at least its possibility. In fact the first thing Clara does after her uncle leaves is ask herself, ““What was my security against influences equally terrific and equally irresistible? . . . Was I not likewise transformed from rational and human into a creature of nameless and fearful attributes?” (204-5). To further ensure Clara’s “madness,” her uncle also informs her that Theodore, despite his imprisonment, is determined to kill Clara and has already escaped from prison twice (215). Living under the constant threat of Theodore’s violence positions Clara as the mirrored mad victim to Theodore’s mad purpose. Clara even states, “The phrenzy which is charged upon my brother, must belong to myself” (217). The uncle’s narrative provides Clara with the body and the “mirror” (via Theodore) she needs to recognize her own mad self.

The final, climactic scene between Clara and Theodore also resembles the asylum logic of “recognition by mirror.” Several scholars comment on the scene’s doubling or twinning effect.²⁴ Theodore’s madness will again function as a mirror for Clara. Clara stands facing him (mirror-like) with the penknife in her hand ready to defend herself if necessary. The knife, in fact, passes back and forth between the two of them, suggesting a confusion of the mad victim/mad murderer dynamic²⁵. Most significantly, Clara seems to share in Theodore’s delusion. Even though Clara knows that Carwin is most likely the source of the disembodied voice that is speaking, she relates that she “partook of [Theodore’s] credulity, shook with his amazement, and panted with his awe” (262). Scholars also point out that the voice’s message of ““Man of errors! cease to cherish thy delusion”” (262) can be directed at either Theodore or Clara or both²⁶. The voice’s use of the phrase “Man of errors” to refer to Clara is semantically loaded, and points to Clara’s

gender transgressions (“errors”) in leading a “manly” life. In the context of the asylum, this scenario plays out the two-part “recognition by mirror” logic in a single step: Clara’s objective observation of her mad brother (part 1) compels a subjective recognition of her own madness (part 2); for the instant she recognizes his madness, she acts (is herself) mad. What the “recognition by mirror” that occurs in this scene further suggests is that Theodore’s suicide signifies Clara’s suicide of her former empowered “self.” In fact, what follows this scene is Clara’s long period of delirium and melancholia. Clara’s “madness” represents a rebirth into “true” femaleness.

The third way that asylum power “directs” Clara into submission is by repositioning her into objects of art. Carwin (as power’s agent) essentially removes Clara from her subjective positions of female-empowered writing and masculine sublimity/sensibility by “authoring” her as a “ruined” literary heroine in a clichéd novel of seduction²⁷ and as a male’s inspirational muse, respectively. Indeed, this form of “direction” ensures that Clara will never again mentally transform men into art through her poetic imagination. In “writing” Clara into a literary heroine, she becomes his property. As Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar claim, because Carwin “defines” Clara “in language,” he now “owns [her], controls [her], and encloses [her] on the printed page” (12). This act of masculine violence makes real Carwin’s earlier threats of murder and rape, since he uses, as Gilbert and Gubar put it, his “pen” to kill her into art and “authors” her ruination. He also ensures Pleyel completes the clichéd love triangle by writing him into the jilted lover. Using a combination of his ventriloquism and mimicking skills (to mimic Clara’s voice), he ensures that the duped Pleyel overhears a

sensationalized lovers' intimate dialogue between Clara (seduced heroine) and himself (rake). Clara resists this literary role by confronting first her brother then Pleyel. However, she finds herself helplessly engaged in a scene with Pleyel that mimics seduction novel melodrama. She must bear his accusations and moralistic monologue, and, despite herself, she ends up fainting like the typical heroine of that genre. Adding greater distress to Clara is that her exit from this scene does not end her literary role as the seduced heroine. She receives what is tantamount to the seduction genre's conventional "seducer's billet" from Carwin asking her for a "clandestine meeting" (156). Carwin's authored revision of Clara also turns her into an art form that was considered "low" at the time (not the least of the reasons being because these novels were primarily written by women).

Authoring Clara into a higher art form is Pleyel. However, Pleyel's "pen" revises both Clara's past and her future. He "writes" Clara into the passive object of male inspiration (what she once was), even as he simultaneously helps Carwin author her into the "ruined" woman (she is now). Referring to Clara, Pleyel exclaims, "Here . . . is a being, after whom sages may model their transcendent intelligence, and painters, their ideal beauty. Here is exemplified, that union between intellect and form, which has hitherto existed only in the conceptions of the poet" (139). As Andrew T. Scheiber observes, Pleyel sees Clara not as "a participant in the life of the mind and the imagination" but rather "as an exemplar which stimulates it . . . an earthly muse" (179). Pleyel's words here revise Clara's empowerment of the past. She is no longer the imagining poet, but what the poet himself imagines. Furthermore, in the context of

masculine aesthetic theory, Pleyel repositions Clara at the opposite side of the aesthetic spectrum, moving her from the active, mind-speaking poet to a position of passive and silent beauty. Scheiber further observes of this scene that Pleyel imposes the stereotypical and “self-contradictory Eve/angel symbology” onto Clara that all women represent in a patriarchy (180). In effect, Pleyel “writes” Clara into two *objets d’art* that correspond to the Eve/angel dichotomy—the literary ruined heroine and the muse, respectively.

The final strategy that psychiatric power employs to “direct” Clara into admitting her “madness” is by contriving the means in which Clara’s reasoning abilities are used against her. Indeed, added to the repetition of horrors that function to discipline Clara’s body are the mysterious voices that Clara cannot readily explain using her reasoning abilities. Further adding to the horror and the mystery of the voices is the inscrutability of the relationship, if any, amongst the voices, Carwin’s appearance, and the murder of her family. Such a concurrence of extraordinary events in such a short period of time cannot fail to confound Clara’s thinking, especially since she relies on her rationalism to form the basis of her reality. Jane Tompkins also observes that Clara “strives continually to find some concrete, rational basis for understanding” of the mysterious events that plague her (50). Indeed, asylum power in this sense repeatedly bewilders and overwhelms Clara with what can be viewed as its tactic of Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt (generally known by its acronym FUD) to coerce her into a loss of confidence not only in her ability to reason but in the reality that Lockean rationalism had heretofore constructed for her. While her exposure to a repetition of horrors transforms her from a self-reliant and confident woman into a woman who lives in constant fear, her “uncertainty” and “doubt”

transforms her into a woman who no longer sees herself as rational. Clara's uncertainty and doubt are more evident at the novel's beginning, *before* Clara is subjected to the greater horrors produced by facing Catharine's corpse and Theodore's attempt on her life and his suicide. Note the language that she uses to describe her struggle to explain events around her without success:

The most careful observation . . . produced no discovery. (78)

I compared the cause with the effect, and they seemed disproportioned to each other. All unaware, and in a manner which I had no power to explain. (79-80)

[D]id not my senses assure me that a plot was laid against my life? (75)

Before Carwin's threat of rape:

[I was] wholly uncertain, whether he were an object to be dreaded or adored. (81)

He afforded us no ground on which to build even a plausible conjecture. (82)

After Carwin's threat of rape:

I studied to discover the true inference deducible from his deportment and words with regard to his former adventures and actual views . . . No new ideas suggested themselves in the course of this review. (109)

How was I to interpret this circumstance? (113)

Because Clara's reasoning abilities fail to demystify events—indeed, now Clara faces greater horrors and a deepening sense of mystery—her prolonged uncertainty and doubt become the very instruments of her torture: “but now my bosom was corroded by anxiety” (79); “Tortured with suspense” (92); “I strove to give a slower motion to my thoughts, and to regulate a confusion which became painful” (106); “a new train of apprehensions . . . merely added to the turbulence and agony of my reflections” (113); “I

was tormented with fears” (131). ““The story of the grounds of my suspicions would be painful and too long”” (182); “When thought becomes merely a vehicle of pain, its progress must be stopped” (205). What becomes evident is that Clara’s initial agency in rational deliberation is brought to the point where she would rather not think at all (i.e., the woman patriarchy desires). However, what she and readers recognize instead are that her “opinions [are] the sport of eternal change”—the very symptom that Wollstonecraft derides in women.

Clara’s narrative, moreover, can be construed as an anti-detective novel as it were. Instead of the usual plot trajectory in which mystery decreases as the reasoning investigator’s knowledge increases, for Clara, it is mystery that increases as her relative knowledge about it decreases.²⁸ Significant, however, is that Clara’s narrative takes on this anti-mystery form because she is denied access to all the facts required to make correct judgments. The novel’s logic compels her to draw associations amongst events—associations that it will foreground as erroneous, even though they are actually reasonable in the context of what facts are available to her at the time. For example, Clara incorrectly concludes that Carwin may be Catharine’s and her family’s murderer. She asks her uncle, “Is it not . . . an unavoidable inference?” (183). Clara is right; it is “unavoidable.” Returning to the scene that produces her ‘inaccurate’ although reasonable “inference,” we see that Clara decides to meet Carwin at her house—a decision she did not come to lightly and only after lengthy deliberation. She plans to meet him at the appointed time to gain knowledge, to clarify the mystery of events that have besieged her up and until this point and to restore her reputation (that Carwin’s ventriloquism and mimicking abilities

have ruined); however, what she discovers instead is Catharine's dead body in her bed. Mr. Haller further confuses the situation when he uses the pronoun "he" to inform Clara that "he spared not one!" (179), referring to Theodore, when Clara only knows that it was Carwin who was supposed to meet her at her house; she concludes that Catharine's fate was meant for her. What facts are not present in this scene but bear on it nonetheless are that Carwin had just recently threatened to rape Clara. Pleyel also recently informed her that Carwin was wanted for murder and robbery as advertised in a British newspaper. Is it not reasonable that Clara would suspect Carwin as Catharine's murderer and that it was she who was actually Carwin's intended victim?

Even more significant is that Clara suspects Carwin because her uncle denies her the knowledge that Theodore is behind the murders. While it can be argued that her uncle is protecting her from knowledge that could hurt her, the asymmetrical relationship that constitutes relations of power is based on the one who has power/knowledge (silent) and the other who confesses (speaks). Bourdieu also points out that the manipulation of time is itself a strategy in social relations (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* 6-9). Her uncle's delay (his silence) in providing Clara with the necessary information—with Theodore's courtroom confession—provides psychiatric power with an advantage: the opportunity to display an instance of Clara's (speaking) 'irrationalism.'

To cite one more example, after Clara discovers Carwin in her bedroom closet and he relates that he had intended to rape her, she later mistakenly assumes it is Carwin whose footsteps she hears approaching her bedroom door (112). The next morning Clara discovers it was actually Pleyel. Clara's hypothesis is not that unreasonable in the context

of Carwin's very recent threat of rape, in which he left open the possibility that he may still rape her. Furthermore, Pleyel at that time was unaccounted for—he uncharacteristically did not show up for their planned rehearsal of a German play. Moreover, fear itself overwhelms and dulls memory functions and explains why Clara forgets that Pleyel is staying with her as a form of protection. Clara, however, readily “confesses” herself as irrational when she declares upon her discovery it was Pleyel, “he [Pleyel] whose footsteps had been listened to with such inquietude! What is man, that knowledge is so sparingly conferred upon him! that his heart should be wrung with distress, and his frame be exanimated with fear, though safety be encompassed with impregnable walls!” (116). While Clara's language here positions herself within the larger context of “man,” its disclosure nonetheless still bears on her as a woman; the cumulative effect of these multiple instances of drawing the ‘wrong’ conclusion (that the novel's logic repeatedly showcases) suggests that Clara is a victim of her own over-active imagination—the latent hyper-sensibility just waiting for the right moment to surface.

Making Clara appear most irrational, however, to the point at which it appears as “madness” resulting from an overactive imagination, is her lack of knowledge about ventriloquism. Indeed, the novel's delay in delivering this knowledge to Clara (she finds out near the novel's end) is one of asylum power's primary strategies (along with its campaign of horror) in producing Clara's “madness.” It coerces her into accounting for the mysterious voice that protects her as a supernatural guide. After the first two instances of the mysterious voices (which Theodore and Pleyel also hear), Clara rejects the supernatural as an explanation, because it is a conclusion based on unsound

reasoning. The third instance, however, which she alone experiences, forces Clara's mind into the realm of fancy, to draw what seems to be the only available conclusion, in which she informs the reader, "I was no longer at liberty to question the reality of those accents" (68). By the end of Chapter XX, long after the novel's logic maintains Clara in a continual state of fear, confusion, doubt, and uncertainty, while it yet denies her the facts about ventriloquism's existence and functioning, asylum power finally "corners" her into concluding that Carwin must be a supernatural evil entity (206). In the very next chapter, Clara's mind takes its ultimate imaginary leap when she embraces the idea that Carwin is the "grand deceiver," confirming, if it didn't already, readers' view of her as having crossed the line into "madness" (217). Note, however, that it is only *after* the novel's logic at last elicits this spectacle of Clara's madness that she and readers finally get Carwin's confession in the very next chapter.

Carwin's ventriloquism is behind the violence that threatens her (voices in the closet threatening murder), even as he is also the voice that produces Clara's belief in a disembodied spiritual guardian. While the novel may be trying to suggest that any person who relies solely on their senses (sensual evidence) to account for these mysterious voices will ultimately be compelled to draw the same conclusions as Clara—that reasoning is itself flawed and forces people to draw not just incorrect conclusions but irrational ones—it is Clara's mental instability that asylum power repeatedly makes visible, foregrounding it as a sign of her latent madness surfacing.

Moreover, when Carwin's "confession" of his ventriloquism finally comes (Chapter 22 in a 27 chapter novel), it functions to further confirm Clara's irrationalism,

since he informs her that the murderous voices in her closet were *not* discussing her murder (she misheard) and, even more significantly, he informs her that he really didn't intend to "injure her" (rape her) but found himself "desperate" to come up with a reason for being in her closet that would coincide with the rest of his schemes (238). What his confession essentially does is imply that Clara's fears were unfounded all along. The novel's manipulation of time in terms of delay of certain information, especially in its use of postponing Carwin's confession, functions to foreground Clara as an irrational female.

Perhaps readers at the time, who were also uninformed (like Clara) of ventriloquistic abilities, were also fooled (but fooled only in the privacy of their reading) along with Clara (whose irrationalism is publicly recorded) until Carwin's "confession," in which he explains to Clara his ventriloquism abilities near the novel's end and sets Clara and ignorant readers straight (as Darcy does Elizabeth Bennet with his letter). This suggests a narrative pattern that, similar to others of the period, constitutes the quixote narrative, in which the novel cures²⁹ the female quixote (and readers) of her (their) delusion.³⁰ In other words, Clara may be termed the "quixotic female" just as Amoranda is termed the "coquet." Modern readers, however, have the advantage of knowing about ventriloquism, and consequently, they do not have to wait until Carwin's disclosure to view Clara as the irrational fool, in which her reasoning abilities ironically compel her to draw the 'crazy' conclusion that the mysterious voice that protects her is supernatural in origin. Power's strategy of delay—delay of vital information—ensures that Clara and readers (then and now) see Clara as a victim of her own overactive imagination—one that was just lurking beneath the surface waiting for the right conditions to surface.

Indeed, patriarchal power functioning through the logic of asylum power employs a strenuous campaign of repetitive misdirection and delayed information that, when added to the strategy of repetition and intensification of horror, converge so that neither Clara nor readers can easily distinguish them from one another. In other words, Clara's failed reason becomes one and the same with her gradual nervous breakdown caused by her repeated exposure to horror. Asylum power stages horrific scenes for Clara to encounter while it ostensibly attempts to 'protect' her from these encounters through a ventriloquized voice that reason itself leads her to believe is supernatural: "I had no grounds on which to build a disbelief" (205). Moreover, while the mysterious voice seems benign, it still contributes to the mystery and confusion that already accompanies the events that horrify Clara. Thus each encounter with horror, which takes a further toll on Clara's nerves, contributes to her greater emotional investment in a benign protector, even as Clara's reasoning leaves her with no natural explanation for the mysterious voice—a "ground" for her "disbelief."

Time is a crucial feature in this novel since patriarchal power utilizes the tactic of delay to deny Clara pertinent knowledge and to repeatedly showcase her irrational belief in a supernatural protector and her series of erroneous conclusions. Indeed, patriarchal power's concurrent violence against, and protection of, Clara represents the way patriarchy actually operates—it offers women 'protection' from its own violence against women, thus mitigating its own culpability (more about this later). What's more, Clara is placed in situations in which no matter what angle it is viewed from it appears her latent madness is beginning to surface. Her belief in the protection of a supernatural guardian

makes her look irrational, while her disregard for its cautions also makes her appear irrational. Her previous encounters with horror, moreover, activate her imagination at the next encounter, making reasoning more difficult. Indeed, the fact that Clara's fear is sometimes warranted (e.g. Carwin is in her closet and he threatens rape) and sometimes not (e.g., it was Pleyel outside her door not Carwin), contributes to the construction of her as irrational if not outright mad. Yet, the reasoning she uses to draw certain assumptions is actually reasonable in the context in which it occurs. Reason fails her but it appears to be Clara's surfacing madness. If we view Clara's story as her biographical history as required of each "mad" patient in an asylum—a reading that my argument constantly resists—then we can see how Clara's self-condemnation becomes the readers' own, since she starts to view herself in terms of "madness." Note that what was previously doubt and uncertainty, which produced "anxiety," "suspense," and "confusion," now transforms into a certainty of her "madness": "Surely it was phrenzy that dictated my deed" (100); "My reason had forborne, for a time" (101); "Surely I was utterly bereft of understanding" (101). Clara makes these assessments of her "self" from a point in the future, *after* she confesses to her "madness."

Before I discuss in detail what constitutes Clara's "cure," which we see at the novel's end and in which she comes to recognize or "confess" her "madness," I want to first examine how the novel's logic represents masculine violence in such a way as to mitigate it, exonerate it, or obscure it entirely. Whereas in the two British novels masculine power worked its strategies through both male and female characters, power in *Wieland* operates only through the male characters. One of the main ways that power

operates so subtly is by suggesting that each character is somehow a victim of the mysterious voices. However, if we look a little closer, it becomes apparent that these voices only affect the *senses* of the male characters, meaning that for them, it is simply a sensorial experience that has no repercussions. In contrast, women's bodies bear the fallout for this insult (at most) on male senses. After Theodore hears the first voice, he immediately suspects his wife (Catharine) is deceiving him. Even after she assures him she did not follow him, he looks to Pleyel and Clara to confirm the truth of her story; in other words, just as Pleyel transformed Clara from an angel into a fallen Eve, Theodore remakes the saint-like Catharine into a duplicitous "Eve." Even more significantly, Catharine's body ultimately bears the brutal consequences of Theodore's "Godly" message to murder her. Likewise, after Pleyel hears the mysterious voice, his betrothed's body bears the violence—she is confirmed dead (as far as we know at the time). And, after Pleyel hears the "voices" of Clara and Carwin, it is Clara's body (as the "ruined" woman) that bears the repercussions.

Pleyel's mind, it should be emphasized, remains intact; he maintains his reputation for a rational mind despite the fact that his senses have been tricked. His reputed rationalism also overshadows his own attraction to Clara, which his own emotional investment in her honor as well as her present "ruin" strongly suggests. Most importantly, it obscures the fact that his judgment of Clara is in error. Despite this, however, readers tend to overlook Pleyel's emotionally committed, sexist, and flawed perception of her. Indeed, while Clara's "madness" may precede her, Pleyel's reputation for cool-headed reasoning precedes him in a very real way, since he effortlessly revises

readers' perception of Clara. In this way he is also very much like Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice* whose letter revised our perception of Elizabeth. Pleyel's words have the same reality-producing effect when he "rewrites" what was Clara's previous aesthetic interest in Carwin (and his portrait) into sexual attraction for Carwin (141).³¹ He effectively revises Clara's perception of herself as well as readers' previous perception of Clara. We are made to suddenly suspect that Clara's prior aesthetic pleasures were sexual pleasures. In the context of Clara's biographical history, Clara (again like Elizabeth Bennet) also revises her perception of herself based on Pleyel's alleged "objective" perception of her. When she discusses her aesthetic contemplation of Carwin's portrait (62), she addresses readers, saying that they might suspect her lengthy observation of the portrait as "a passion incident to every female heart" (62); however this comment she is writing in hindsight, and so this moment in the text not only provides us with her own perception at the time (the one that I see as legitimate), but she also provides an editorial that ventriloquizes Pleyel's own perceptions—the hindsight reading that makes Clara's story the biographical corpus required by asylum power (what I view as the logic of torture at work in the text). Pleyel revises Clara's pleasures of the mind into pleasures of her female body. The men may hear mysterious voices, but their minds and bodies suffer no real consequences.

Indeed, the novel's logic exempts and we might even say elevates Theodore's character not in spite of, but because of, his "madness." It achieves this in three different ways: it constructs his "madness" as inaccessible to the reader, as ironically rational, and as a sublime experience. The reader's lack of access to Theodore's consciousness

positions him more as a passive mirror—or more accurately, a literary technique—for producing Clara’s “madness” through recognition (as I argued earlier). Moreover, our inaccessibility to Theodore’s mind stands in direct contrast to our unlimited access to Clara’s consciousness. Clara’s vulnerable exposure works against her (I discuss this in more detail later in this chapter). Readers cannot help but read the novel as the asylum’s “biographical corpus.” Her story bears the burden of absolute visibility; i.e., her “madness” already precedes her.

Our very limited view of Theodore’s mind also contributes to our perception of his madness as both rational and sublime. Indeed, Theodore represents an early archetype of the admirable masculine rational irrationalism we see in contemporary iconic male characters such as Hannibal Lector, Fox Mulder, and Batman. One of the defining characteristics of the rationally irrational man is that he acts on his beliefs. The power of conviction is very attractive and very American, and Theodore embodies the spirit of the early republic in that he acts on his beliefs. His “madness” represents his individualism. In contrast, as Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds phrases it, Clara “is acted upon” (120). Also, there is no denying that the reasoning of Theodore’s courtroom “confession” is sound and persuasive. In fact, Norman S. Grabo describes the “logic” of Theodore’s confession as “impeccable” (9). Grabo also adds that “his entire defense or justification rings with moral necessity” (9). Shirley Samuels claims Theodore’s “confession” demonstrates “his belief in the value of family” despite the evident contradiction (57). Furthermore, Theodore’s rhetoric positions the spectators (including readers) as ignorant, silly, mindless children who couldn’t possibly understand the trying task he had to undertake at

the command of God. Theodore's rhetoric implies that, for the spectators, the voice out of the sky is just an idea—a biblical myth; but Theodore lives it. Our condemnation of Theodore's actions, in fact, backfires, because it works to further validate his spiritual quest. It presents another obstacle for him to surmount. Theodore's courtroom speech, in other words, represents the 'manifest destiny' of the spiritual realm. But even later, when Clara informs him that Carwin is behind the voices, Theodore's reaction is not what we would expect. He does not break down, become emotional, or turn his rage onto Carwin; instead he slowly, methodically, and deliberately, as if reasoning out the best course of action to take, reaches for the penknife and plunges it into his neck. In other words, Theodore rationally judges himself, delivers his own verdict of guilty, and then sentences himself to death. Like Pleyel, Theodore gets to keep his rational mind even when he loses it. The novel's logic writes Theodore into this role of "rational" madness to the point where it actually inverts itself into American greatness, even martyrdom. As Wayne Franklin so fittingly puts it, Theodore's "madness" is "grand" and "tragic" like a Greek tragic hero (156). Moreover, the sensationalism of Theodore's madness alone is enough to obscure Clara's own status as a victim. Notable, however, is that the novel's sensationalism revolves around his victims rather than himself. Clara and readers see Catharine's body and hear the description of Louisa's brutalized body. We never see Theodore commit the violence he is responsible for. The novel's logic is complicit with asylum logic. Theodore represents power's prerogative of how it wants others to see it—he is rational and irrational, visible and invisible, active and passive, a murderer and a martyr. Like Carwin, he changes his identity depending on the tactics needed at the time.

Besides constructing Theodore's insanity as an heroic spiritual quest, the novel also constructs it as a sublime experience. In terms of masculine aesthetic theory, Edmund Burke claims that "power" is the true source of the sublime, and, because God represents the "highest" form of power, God's disembodied voice produces the bar-none sublime experience (64-5). Burke even cites several Old Testament examples to explain his point. Theodore's face registers his sublime experience in the form of "exultation" as he plays out the role of Abraham to his family's Isaac. What also contributes to establishing Theodore's madness as a sublime experience is that Clara's uncle protects Theodore from the knowledge that Carwin is the real source of "God's" voice. He forbids Clara from telling Theodore the truth and consequently, Theodore's "sublime" experience can be maintained (213-14). While the uncle's request seems charitable, it traps Clara in a position of extreme danger, since Theodore is intent on killing her in order to fulfill God's commands. Thus, while the uncle's request may seem like a minor detail in the novel, in the context of all the other ways the novel protects Theodore's "madness" from the actual taint of madness, it does have significance; it enables the violence of threat and murder to continue against Clara.

What also relegates male violence and madness to the shadows is that the novel constructs the elder Wieland's death as a sign of masculine power. His prophesy of his own destruction represents another instance of Bourdieu's concept of the self-fulfilling language of the father. His words act as "verdicts," and he has a special kind of "quasi-visionary" knowledge of the world; he can "redouble the force of the laws of natural and social nature by converting them into laws of reason and experience" (Bourdieu

Masculine Domination 70). In the context of what the novel itself is defining as madness for Clara—an overactive imagination—her father’s imagined impending doom should be a legitimate sign of his madness—especially since Clara’s sense of doom³² is read as such; yet, the mystery and terror that he creates around his own predicted death, not to mention the strange manner of his death, renders his death sublime. Even though the sublime and terrible power of a Zeus-like God may have struck the elder Wieland dead with his thunderbolt, his prediction of it reveals that he is in control of his own destiny (like Theodore’s suicide). Thus the elder Wieland is excluded from the madness that is used as evidence of Clara’s predisposition to madness because of her family history (along with the maternal family side).

To some extent, I have already shown Carwin’s role in Clara’s subjugation through the tactic of delay in the disclosure of his ventriloquism skill and his actual intentions toward Clara. He is one of the primary ways in which Clara is subjected to fear and misdirection. Indeed Carwin is the behind-the-scenes director of events just like Formator and Darcy; Clara and readers alike only get to experience/see the effects of his “panoptic drama.” Indeed, several scholars view Carwin as blameless, as a victim, or not even as an integral part of the storyline much less the cause of its tragedy.³³ Carwin, like Darcy and Formator, however, is represented through his unrepresentability. His low profile and bodily absence are exactly what makes him function like power the most—“the force of immateriality” as Foucault calls it (*Psychiatric Power* 74). Carwin occupies the God-like position of omniscience, omnipresence, mystery, and shifting disguise. And, Carwin’s non-corporeality is literally represented as a disembodied voice. He is a puppet

master working mostly behind the scenes, pulling the strings of Clara's perception just as Darcy and Formator created 'realities' for Elizabeth and Amoranda, respectively. Carwin is both elusive and illusive; we hear his voice, but he is not there; he may be behind a closet door, in the cliffs above the river, or in the temple. Is he American, English, Spanish, Protestant, Catholic, a farmer, a wanderer? Like Formator, he is a man of many disguises. No one can contain his identity, because he is everywhere and he is nowhere, just as power is itself diffused and works throughout the various interactions and relational forces in the novel.

One of the other ways Carwin escapes any culpability is by manipulating our perceptions of him through his dialogue (as opposed to his ventriloquism). His manipulation of language is most apparent in the second closet scene and in his "confession." In the second closet scene, he ensures readers view Clara as a victim of her own hyper-sensibility, since he discredits her response of horror by claiming that there is no reason for her to be afraid. He even transfers blame for his violent intentions onto Clara. In other words, his emergence from her closet does not result in his own exposure as a villain as much as it exposes Clara as a victim of her vulnerable female body. He offhandedly informs her that he had planned to sexually violate her, but her mysterious "guardian" (also a product of Carwin's manipulative ventriloquism) intervened and ruined his "best concerted schemes" to commit rape (102-3). In an attempt to expose Carwin as a real villain as well as a character through which patriarchal power is working, it is important to take a closer look at his dialogue; it is most disturbing and is itself an act of violence against Clara:

“What is it you fear? Have I not told you, you are safe? Has not one in whom you more reasonably place trust assured you of it? Even if I execute my purpose, what injury is done? Your prejudices will call it by that name, but it merits it not.

“I was impelled by a sentiment that does you honor; a sentiment, that would sanctify my deed; but, whatever it be, you are safe.” (103)

In breaking down his language, we can more clearly see its unsettling semantics: we should note that he first upbraids her for still fearing him after he lets her know of his intentions to rape her—as if she is being irrational for being afraid. He then implies that the possibility of raping her still exists (“Even if I execute my purpose”). Note that he does *not* say “Even if I *would/could* execute” (conditional) nor does he say “Even if I *executed*” (conditional), certainly leaving open the very real possibility that he may yet rape her (two pages later he still describes her fears as “groundless”) (105). Next he states that even if he does rape her, no “injury is done”—that the issue is really only one about language and social prejudice (“Your prejudices will call it by that name”)—“that name” most likely meaning “ruined woman.” His words suggest that Clara’s material body and mind will not be directly affected. Indeed, for women living in a patriarchy, in which paternal words are “verdicts,” language has the force of material reality. As I mentioned earlier, Carwin attempts to subjugate Clara by authoring her into art as a “ruined” woman, and his paternal words will have their effects by the novel’s end.

In the second paragraph quoted above, he utters one of the most misogynist, sexist statements in the novel (I am tempted to say, all of eighteenth-century literature): he claims that his motivations for sexually violating her do *her* an “honor” and that his allegedly pure motivations would excuse the rape, if not actually make it a *spiritual* act (connotative meaning of the word “sanctify”). This scene is disturbing on so many levels,

and it re-enacts patriarchy's own hypocritical ventriloquism: Carwin's biloquism enables him to simultaneously assure Clara of her safety through one of his projected voices as Clara's mysterious guardian, while another of his projected voices threatens to violate her. Patriarchy constructs itself as the benevolent guardian of women, while obscuring the fact that the real source of danger for women is patriarchy itself. For Carwin (as power's strategy), language may be the primary instrument of domination, but it is simultaneously the means by which power escapes responsibility for that domination.

Carwin also avoids guilt through his "confession" of guilt, because it allegedly discloses "truth" and resolves the mystery of his character. In all three novels, we see the disembodied "Gods" of Formator, Darcy, and Carwin suddenly become imperfect, ostensibly embodied humans that have been victimized. He relates that he "felt the deepest regret" (231) and that "Seldom [has he] felt deeper mortification" (238). He even asserts that the use of his ventriloquism skills at the summerhouse (where he threatens Clara with her father's "doom" if she ever returns to the spot again) "partly removed" the "evil" from his "former act," that is, his threat of rape. Once again, masculine power presents itself as subject or object according to tactical necessity. The logic of what can be called 'revelation-as-truth,' moreover, has the force of truth, for it seems that drawn out mystery and hiding followed by sudden disclosure amounts to truth-telling. Somehow "honesty" about villainy amounts to innocence. The microphysics of power at work here are that listeners are eager to embrace "truth" in gratitude for resolution of the mystery. What this all leads to is that Carwin's "confession" is no more a revelation of "truth" than Darcy's. It is a performance—empty words, but words nonetheless that have reality-

creating power. Like Darcy, Carwin also draws on legal discourse to explain himself: “It is you whom I have injured, and at your bar am I willing to appear, and confess and expiate my crimes” (225). He positions Clara as the confessor or judge, and even though he positions himself as the criminal, he ultimately turns his criminality into victimization. He tells Clara that his “life has been a life of hardship and exposure” (231). Korobkin points out that Carwin “is clever enough to adopt a sympathetic stance of grief and contrition, and to admit to a range of lesser crimes such as seduction, in order to establish a level of credibility,” ensuring Clara’s and the reader’s belief (732). If we use the language of law to describe his confession, it constitutes a defendant’s “plea bargain”—he is willing to accept guilt for a lesser crime in order to avoid the possibility of a guilty verdict for a greater crime. Carwin’s frankness and willingness to disclose his personal struggles function to humanize and temper his crimes. But what is at work here is the rhetorical power of disclosure that follows mystery. This same maneuver worked for Darcy. Remarkably, and without us even realizing it, Carwin’s rhetoric also compels us to view his violence against Clara as “lesser” in comparison to Theodore’s violent acts. Familicide renders seduction crimeless. And, to further displace blame and responsibility, Carwin reveals that it was Clara’s courage and rationalism that provoked him to test her (230).³⁴ Power ensures that we see Clara herself as responsible for Carwin’s violence. Her rationalism and courage, in other words, are the causes of his violence against her, implying that if she were a “normal” woman, there would be nothing to test her in the first place. Carwin further euphemizes his violence by referring to his crime as simple “curiosity,” as if he were a child whose joke inadvertently got out of hand (235). Finally,

Carwin attempts to exonerate himself by referring to himself as a victim of his own powers and short-sightedness: “having gone thus far, my progress seemed to be irrevocable” and “how many evils were produced by it which I had not foreseen,” respectively (239-40). Carwin’s reasons we have heard before and still hear. His words anticipate Victor Frankenstein’s evasion of responsibility.

What I will examine now is Clara’s official “confessional” statement or what we are supposed to recognize as evidence of her “cure.” It is the statement that identifies the “foible” or “foibles” that the novel wants us to view as identical with her “madness.” It is the statement, moreover, that the novel’s logic knows we will view as Clara’s realization of her own “madness,” even though, as I have shown, patriarchal power *produced* her “madness.” Clara utters her “confession” as an exiled woman whom masculine power has transformed into an object of art. She has forsaken *her* own writing and all other masculine aesthetic pleasures and practices. Thus her “confession” is spoken as a “ruined” or fallen literary heroine from inside the trite plot of the Stuart-Maxwell-Conway “seduction novel.” Her confession spoken from this position as “art” accounts for what commentators notice as the strange and abrupt transition into the “Stuart-Maxwell-Conway” plot at the novel’s end. However, as I have shown, the transition is not as abrupt as it may seem; it is a continuation of the “plot” Carwin began earlier in which he authors Clara into a literary character. Clara’s confession, in fact, provides the “moral” of the “seduction novel” into which she has been written:

that the evils of which Carwin and Maxwell were the authors, owed their existence to the errors of the sufferers. All efforts would have been ineffectual . . . if their own frailty had not seconded these efforts. If the lady [Mrs. Stuart] had crushed her disastrous passion in the bud, and

driven the seducer from her presence, when the tendency of his artifices was seen . . . If Wieland had framed juster notions of moral duty, and of the divine attributes; or if I had been gifted with ordinary equanimity or foresight, the double-tongued deceiver would have been baffled and repelled. (278)

Yes, Clara's "confession" reads like a clichéd moral of a seduction novel, but its formulaic simplicity hides much more than it reveals. First, Clara aligns herself with Mrs. Stuart just as she aligns Carwin with Maxwell. Thus, we are compelled to view Mrs. Stuart's "disastrous passion" for Maxwell as one and the same with Clara's "disastrous passion" for Carwin. In other words, Clara confesses to an excess of sensibility and an attraction that I have demonstrated the text's logic has worked to produce. This logic has transformed what was initially only an aesthetic interest into her sexual interest. Moreover, like the heroines Amoranda and Elizabeth Bennet, Clara accepts responsibility on her own and Mrs. Stuart's account for the disasters that befell them and their families ("errors of the sufferers"). Also, she refers to their own "frailty" as a contributing factor ("if their own frailty had not seconded these efforts"). Clara implies that female weakness was at fault. What should also strike the reader is that Clara sees herself as lacking "ordinary equanimity." Exactly what does she mean by this? Revising her phrase to shed more light on its meaning, we can say she believes she lacked what society deems normal ("ordinary") mental or emotional stability ("equanimity"). What it reveals is that Clara herself misrecognizes that patriarchal power horrified her into subjugation. Clara's horror, as I have shown, was not a product of her overactive imagination. Blindness is also suggested—Mrs. Stuart apparently didn't initially see Maxwell's "artifices." Clara also claims she lacks "foresight." Here she forgets her own intuitive eye and her ability to

deliberate rationally. Clara, notably, doesn't attempt to puzzle out the flaws of either Carwin or Maxwell; their "evils" are a given that amounts to a kind of "boys-will-be-boys" exoneration. Her use of the comparative "juster" in referring to Wieland (Theodore) implies that his "notion" of "moral duty" was "just" to begin with—more male exoneration.

Looking closer at Clara's alleged lack of normal "equanimity" we can restate the idea for further clarity as follows: Clara *lacks* "emotional stability," suggesting she has a *surplus* of emotion; in other words, Clara's emotional excess implies that her responses to stimuli are disproportionate. Her coerced "confession" requires that we now see all of her heretofore responses to horror, her erroneously drawn conclusions from lack of information, as well as her masculine aesthetic pleasures as signs and symptoms of her hyper-sensibility. Moreover, Clara's confessed excessive emotionalism calls to mind Claudia Johnson's concept of the "hyperfeminine" or "over-sensitivity" that I referred to at the beginning of this chapter. It is one of women's two lose-lose options during this period in history. Clara's "confession," then, amounts to an admission of her "hyperfemininity"—what she herself calls "a defect of sensibility" (269). More significantly, Clara's transition from her "unsexed" position at the novel's beginning to her present confession of hyper-sensibility retains the taint of uncontainable sexuality. Women's sensibility (excessive or not) already implies desire for sexual pleasure. Consequently, her "passion" for Carwin, which her confession suggests, reveals more than just hyper-sensibility; it indicates a concomitant surplus of sexual desire. What's also suggested is that Clara's surplus sexual desire moves outside of and beyond the

boundaries of what constitutes “normal” sexuality. In other words, her sexual instinct, as Foucault would say, “overflows its natural end” of a strictly procreative purpose (*Abnormal* 280). Consequently, not only is masculine violence’s production of Clara’s “madness” misrecognized as her excessive sexual desire (as scholars’ readings have attested to), it is further misrecognized as Clara’s uncontainable masochistic and aberrant sexual desires. Indeed, Clara’s aberrant desires suggest (and as some critical views have recognized) that Clara longs for seduction by Carwin and an incestual tryst with her brother; also, her fantasy of desirability transforms her contemplative solitude into masturbation and Pleyel’s regard for her into one in which she imagines he desires her. What it also indicates is that it is her over-active imagination that provides what Foucault calls “the relay” or “intermediary” for these aberrant desires to realize themselves (*Abnormal* 280). Lastly, Clara’s “confession,” which is essentially a confession to unrestrained sexual desire, should remind us of the seventeenth century’s accused diabolical witches, which I discussed in this dissertation’s introduction. Their hypersexuality, as the reader may remember, was viewed by the patriarchal church as just another sign of their “defective” bodies, explaining why they were so easily tempted into making a compact with the Devil.

Clara’s confession or “cure” is less the statement of a self-aware individual who comes to realize her “self” and her own weaknesses than it is an affirmation that women are solely responsible for male violence *and* that this violence is due in most part to uncontainable female sexuality. It further suggests that men are innately bad (boys will be boys)—no need to try to explain or excuse this—and if destruction and violence occur,

then it is women who are to blame because of their “frailty”—i.e. women’s inherent weakness—a weakness that always indicates the disease of unmanaged sexuality—the weakness, in other words, that always already implies the taint of Eve and the guilt for “the fall.” Patriarchal power through Carwin and the other forces of patriarchy at work in the novel re-enact the power of God to expel Clara/Eve from her Eden-like Mettingen.³⁵ Even her delirium nightmares reveal the repetition of *falling* into the abyss—the doom usually reserved for transgressive gothic characters. In the final scene between Clara and Theodore, we already know that we are no longer hearing the voice of an empowered Clara when she ventriloquizes patriarchy’s viewpoint of women as “Eve’s”: “Yes, I acknowledge that my guilt surpasses that of all mankind: I confess that the curses of the world, and the frowns of a deity, are inadequate to my demerits. Is there a thing in the world worthy of infinite abhorrence? It is I.” (254). However, Clara still has one last spark of female agency that asylum power must snuff out and that is her insistence on remaining in her house during her prolonged delirium. She states, “my soul prizes too dearly this little roof to endure to be bereaved of it” (265). Asylum power’s burning down of Clara’s house is sometimes misrecognized as Clara’s “spontaneous combustion” into sanity; however, while it may be accurate to view her father’s death as spontaneous combustion—a metaphor for masculine sublime dissolution—Clara’s “death” into subjugation is neither spectacular nor “spontaneous.” It is the consequence of repetitive and prolonged violence—an unremitting friction that gradually and inexorably razes Clara’s nervous system until it ignites and burns out entirely. Indeed, Clara’s world ends with a whimper—not with a bang.³⁶

Clara's subsequent exile to Europe ensures that there is no opportunity for Clara to again capitalize on America's Enlightenment promises. Indeed, she must return to the side of the Atlantic where some of the first heroines of eighteenth-century seduction novels were created (including Amoranda). She is no longer allowed to participate in what the period views as the discourses or activities of men. Clara's multiple transgressive behaviors require the authoritative power and the entrenched paternal history of the *ancien regime* and the inflexible rationalism of Pleyel (as her husband) to incessantly bear on her and keep her in check.

I have shown that Clara's alleged "madness" is a result of her repeated exposure to increasing degrees of horror, especially the horror of the final scene that elicited Clara's greatest response of self-preservation. It is also the result of the extraordinary convergence of events that functioned as a tactic of misdirection that at once horrified her and confounded and confused her rational capabilities, forcing her mind to trespass into the realm of imagination. Her "madness" was also produced by denying her certain knowledges, especially the phenomenon of ventriloquism that ensured repetitive exhibition of her 'irrational' belief in a supernatural being. Yet, the novel's logic would have us view Clara's reactions to this violence and smear campaign as signs of her *a priori* "madness"—that she is, and always already was, a victim of her own hyper-sensibility and that this "defect" is what drove her into her final prolonged delirium. Clara's "madness," the novel's logic has ensured, is about her female flaw.

What I would ask the reader to recognize instead, however, is that Clara's prolonged bed-ridden delirium is *a patriarchal-induced illness*. Moreover, Clara's male

violence-induced illness is produced not only from the horrors she has been subjected to but from the sense of criminality she feels as a woman who chose life, who dared to assert her “self”; in patriarchal society female self-preservation amounts to selfishness, and as a female, Clara is supposed to be self-less. Indeed, Clara’s illness originates in patriarchal oppression, the logic of which has insinuated itself throughout the entire textual matrix of *Wieland* and reproduces the logic of the asylum. It has repeatedly and violently horrified her into forfeiting her rationalism, her aesthetic pleasures, her writing, her poet’s intuition, her desire for knowledge, her desire for life, and finally, her home. Clara’s “illness,” as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain it, is the cumulative effect on all women living in a patriarchal society. It amounts to “train[ing] in renunciation,” which, as Gilbert and Gubar state, “is almost necessarily to be trained to ill health” (54). Clara’s “training,” while the novel itself does not recognize this, began at the age of marriage, when her empowerment inadvertently suggested that she just might avoid management by a husband. We must also recognize that Clara’s sudden entry into the discourse of the seduction novel—her forgetting, in other words, of her masculine pleasures and discourses, as well as her confessed lack of “foresight”—exemplifies the “aphasia and amnesia” as well as the “[b]lindness” that “symbolically represents” the “intellectual incapacity patriarchal culture has traditionally required of women” (Gilbert and Gubar 58).

Clara’s forgetfulness, moreover, explains the peculiar moments evident in her narrative or what Scheiber refers to as Clara’s “problematic identity,” in which Clara’s “struggle for inner coherence” originates her “precarious status with respect to

[patriarchal] institutions” (174). I read Clara’s “problematic identity” as a consequence of asylum logic, which requires the “mad” patient’s “anamnesis” of the past or his/her biographical history. In this context, what becomes evident is Clara’s “problematic identity” in her attempt to recall a forgotten past in which she once lived as woman with agency. In other words, Clara writes/speaks her history from a position that Gilbert and Gubar refer to as “anomie” or “alienation” (59). Having been “cured,” Clara is now alienated from the empowered woman she once was, yet she is required to write her history. To read her story as a “mad” patient’s confessional narrative enables us to account for those places in the text in which Clara refers to herself as mad, apologizes for her own empowerment, or underplays the agency she had by parroting patriarchy’s view of it. Gilbert and Gubar aptly refer to these odd moments as “infected” sentences. While I would argue that Clara’s entire narrative is “infected,” I want to now cite just a few of the places in which these infected moments clearly stand out. One of the first occurs when the now “cured” Clara tells readers that they may suspect her aesthetic contemplation of Carwin’s portrait hints of sexual attraction (62). The subjugated Clara, like Elizabeth Bennet, revises her own past in accordance with the patriarchal worldview. Other more apparent “infected” sentences reveal themselves when the “cured” Clara commiserates with the reader’s own disbelief because she opts to confront danger rather than retreat; she qualifies her own courage and reasoning as a symptom of insanity (100). It is also the “cured” Clara who discredits her own narrative by calling attention to its “ambiguities, abruptnesses and dark transitions” (167). Paradoxically, Clara’s attempt to recall her past from a position of subjugation and alienation inadvertently functions as

more evidence of her “madness.” Clara’s narrative epitomizes what Adrienne Rich describes as the female experience of “insanity” when holding on to the “truth of our experience” (190). Indeed, James R. Russo’s viewpoint, which sees Clara’s experiences as so “absurd” that it seems he has no choice but to treat them as Clara’s dreams or delusions,³⁷ as well as Wayne Franklin’s comment that Clara “is a narrator who doesn’t understand her tale”—a “tale,” he adds, “told by an idiot” (153)—reproduce the view of Clara that the novel’s logic wants its readers to recognize, but the hyperbolic language they draw on to describe Clara’s experience also epitomizes the response of a patriarchal worldview that cannot ever fully comprehend female *lived* experience in a patriarchy. It represents the viewpoint that produces the “anxiety of authorship” that is apparent in Clara’s narrative.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ In *The Culture of Sensibility*, G. J. Barker-Benfield relates that Tocqueville observes the eighteenth-century “culture of sensibility” in *Democracy of America* (Note 66, page 402).

² Larzer Ziff argues that *Wieland* exposes that “the promises of modern enlightenment . . . are siren songs” since the “rigorous Protestant doctrines and aristocratic social formulas” still haunt America’s present (56). William A. Manly claims that *Wieland* exemplifies Brown’s “two preoccupations”: “his avowed interest in rationalism, truth and purpose; and his equal fascination with the disruption of these qualities” (312). Although Michael Davitt Bell discusses the “irrational forces” of “literary imagination” in *Wieland*, he also states that the novel “portrays the contest between Lockean rationalism and the power of the irrational” (144). Michael T. Gilmore writes that “the promise of America . . . is the ‘paradise lost’ in *Wieland*” (117). James R. Russo claims that *Wieland* “deals with the complex issue of epistemology . . . for the novel’s major tenet seems to be that Man is incapable of obtaining true knowledge since he is incapable of perceiving things correctly” (86). Toni O’Shaughnessy claims that “[t]he matter of interpretive accountability is as pressing a concern in . . . Brown’s *Wieland* . . . as it is in Locke’s essay. But Brown’s novel explodes Locke’s vulnerable categories of responsibility and exploits the fearful possibilities implied in the mirrored relationship Locke posits between author and reader and in his recognition of the instability of language itself” (42). Jay Fliegelman states that “Brown’s novel of authority misrepresented and authority imagined is a terrifying post-French Revolutionary account of the fallibility of the human mind and, by extension, of democracy itself” (x-xi). Steven Watts claims *Wieland* represents a “devastating critique of eighteenth-century rationalism based on sensory impressions” (82). Peter Kafer claims that Brown “turn[s] the philosopher John Locke and the Enlightenment itself, on their side by highlighting the disturbing implications of the optimistic epistemology that had influenced so many of the Revolutionaries” (125).

³ Andrew T. Scheiber also explores the issue of gender in *Wieland*; however, his argument attempts to account for Clara’s “superstitious, even ridiculous, interpretations of events” (173). He views Clara’s narrative primarily as a “struggle” to “reconcile herself” to the demands of the new nation’s “glorification of the intellect” to her own cultural assigned position as a “less ‘rational’ female” (176). Where our respective arguments radically diverge is in Scheiber’s view that Carwin represents Clara’s “liberator” from gendered norms. Moreover, he claims Clara’s journal represents her “suppressed sexual awareness” and that Carwin’s knowledge of what her journal contains is what enables him to be her liberator. Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds’s gendered reading examines Clara in terms of economic class and views her as a leisured class heiress/homeowner whose absence of labor positions her outside of what constitutes American female virtue at the time—“a hard working, saving, and essentially conservative personality” (100). Hinds, moreover, views Clara as a passive and will-less heroine throughout the novel, discounting Clara’s mental activities revealed in her ongoing desire for knowledge, her ability to rationally deliberate and interpret evidence, as well as her other masculine pleasures.

⁴ William A. Manly views Clara as eventually lost to the “melodramatic world of haunting speculation” (313). He also claims that Clara inherits her “emotionalism” from her mother (314). Michael Davitt Bell claims that the destruction of Mettingen is due to “the force of imagination, of voices heard and visions seen in dreams” (144). James R. Russo exonerates Brown for the novel’s “incoheren[ce]” and “inconsistencies” and claims they can be accounted for by the fact that the story is told by “a confessed madwoman” who constantly “flits back and forth between imagination and reality” (60). He relates Clara’s “insanity” to her “inability to see reality” (62). Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds claims Clara spends most of her time “creating bizarre fantasies to explain events around her” (126).

⁵ Michael Davitt Bell claims that “Clara has an almost sexual reaction to the power of his voice” (147). Steven Watts mentions the “sexual dynamic” apparent in Clara’s lingering gaze at his portrait (87).

⁶ Frank Shuttleton writes that the “autoerotic suggestions of their preferred sites of solitary contemplation [suggest] there is more going on here than Clara can tell us” (104).

⁷ Wayne Franklin claims that Clara’s “accusations” of Carwin’s guilt are “hysterical” (155). Norman S. Grabo writes that “[u]p until the end of chapter 26, we have witnessed Clara’s progressive involvement in her brother’s and her family’s madness and her deepening and unshakable conviction of Carwin’s

responsibility, until she cracks under stress.” He further states that “to account for her complicity in madness, . . . [she] persuade[s] us that whatever horrors have occurred are the fault of another, Carwin” (23).

⁸ Franklin sees Clara’s responses as “feigned extremity,” and he refers to her narrative as “much ado about nothing” (153). Russo argues that the closet scenes are Clara’s dreams or delusions.

⁹ Larzer Ziff describes Clara as “perilously ripe for seduction” (51), because of her “frustrating desire for love” (52). Grabo says of Clara budding sexuality, “[She] is not only able and willing; she’s ready! And it’s into that readiness that Carwin strolls” (12). Later Grabo claims that “Carwin is [Clara’s] own self-generated sexuality—raw, irrational, irresponsible, violent, and even criminal” (27). Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds mentions Clara’s “sexually charged state during the two closet scenes” (104).

¹⁰ Grabo claims Clara “links” her “habitual fantasizing . . . with her sexual awakening” (14). Russo argues that the closet scenes represent Clara’s subconscious mind or what happens to Clara when she is “confronted with her own sexuality” (63).

¹¹ During the second closet incident, Grabo characterizes Clara as “[s]exually charged, hyperimaginative, [and] deeply frustrated” (15). Then, after Carwin emerges (not Theodore) from the closet, Grabo writes, “The great irony of the scene is that he does not satisfy Clara’s barely suppressed sexual desires. Not only does he not rape her, he is not even her brother!” (16). Shuffleton claims that there are “hints of incestuous attraction between Clara and Theodore” (104).

¹² When Clara suspects “that some being was concealed within [her closet],” Grabo calls attention to the sentence’s “ambiguity” that he claims “makes it possible [that] the evil being is within her own mind” (15).

¹³ Recall from Chapter 1 that Amoranda is also an heiress and head of her own household in the beginning of Davys’s novel, but she had no older brothers who could have assumed the fatherly role, and her uncle was unavailable because he was abroad. In contrast to Clara, Amoranda became the head of her own household by chance.

¹⁴ In the *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft describes the problem of women who are susceptible to excessive sensibility and mentions, by comparison, how they should respond: “All their thoughts turn on things calculated to excite emotion; and feeling, *when they should reason*, their conduct is unstable, and their opinions are wavering—not *the wavering produced by deliberation or progressive views*, but by contradictory emotions. By fits and starts they are warm in many pursuits; yet this warmth, *never concentrated into perseverance*, soon exhausts itself; exhaled by its own heat, or meeting with some other fleeting passion, to which reason has never given any specific gravity, neutrality ensues” (italics mine 130). Unlike the women that Wollstonecraft describes are susceptible to easily excited emotions, Clara exemplifies “perseverance” in rational “deliberation” throughout *Wieland* (which I discuss in more detail later in the chapter). Clara also shows the “wavering produced by . . . progressive views” when she maintains an open mind about the mysterious voices until she has more evidence. Indeed, Clara gives “reason” the “gravity” that Wollstonecraft calls for in this passage. Later in her treatise, Wollstonecraft calls for “sensibility . . . moderated by reason (183), the comparison of ideas (291), and “sensibility . . . tempered by reflection (296), all of which characterize Clara’s responses to the events at Mettingen.

¹⁵ Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; and Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*. (New York: Penguin Group, 1991), 29. All citations of the novel refer to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

¹⁶ In fact, Clara’s contemplation of Carwin’s portrait ultimately leads to her first experience of “horror.” Her reading of a war ballad “suggest[ed] to [her] thoughts . . . the horrors of war” (63). Her experience of war as horror is in contrast to her earlier experience of war as an inspiration for the sublime (discussed in more detail below).

¹⁷ Anthony Galluzzo claims that Carwin “represents an aesthetic education of sorts for the Wieland family” (257). The focus of Galluzzo’s argument, however, is on Brown’s political use of Burke’s sublime in transatlantic debates about the revolution. The Wieland family, in his view, represents the transplantation of the ancient regime to America that Carwin, as a revolutionary, must overturn.

¹⁸ As opposed to the eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, in which Edmund Burke describes the sublime experience as beginning with terror and subsiding into “awe.”

¹⁹ Recall that Amoranda inverted Lord Lofty’s insinuation that she is a prostitute by turning him and men in general into female (embodied) prostitutes.

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- ²⁰ Protagonist of British sentimental writer Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771).
- ²¹ Protagonist of American sentimental writer William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789).
- ²² Recall that both British novels worked to embody their heroines.
- ²³ According to Mellor, male threats of incest that elicit the heroine's response of horror are the way in which some female gothic novels represent "patriarchal tyranny" (91).
- ²⁴ Norman S. Grabo sees her entire narrative as a "movement toward a kind of identity with Theodore" (27). Toni O'Shaughnessy observes of this scene that "Clara experiences such strong sympathy with Theodore that she almost becomes him; the two are strangely indistinguishable" (46). Lisa Westwood Norwood claims that Theodore "functions more as an intimate double" than as "her brother" (91).
- ²⁵ Norman S. Grabo suggests that Clara's convenient dropping of the penknife at the key moment as akin to murder (22).
- ²⁶ James R. Russo claims the voice's message is entirely for Clara's benefit and represents another instance of the "voice function[ing] . . . as Clara's conscience" (82).
- ²⁷ Larzer Ziff also notices the novel's shift in genre to a "novel of sentiment and seduction"; however, he views the entire scene between Clara and Pleyel as evidence for Brown's "greatest condemnation of [the] tradition of the seduction/sentimental novel" (52, 53). Moreover, rather than see Clara's silence in this scene as a form of resistance, which I discuss in more detail below, Ziff views it as Clara's "whole-hearted endorsement to the ideal of the palpitating and defenseless female" (52). Standing in ironic juxtaposition to my argument, in which I see the novel's logic as turning Clara into an object of art, Ziff claims that Clara's maturity lies in her realization that "life . . . is not an imitation of art" (52). Michael Davitt Bell also sees Carwin as a "literary artist" whose "duplicity" is in constant "contest" with Clara's "sincerity," which battle takes on a "literary dimension" that Clara ultimately loses (147). His overall argument is that Brown's novel "made the conventional fear of fiction a central preoccupation of *works of fiction*" (151). Wayne Franklin blames the novel's plot inconsistencies on Clara's "insanity" (154). Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds view the shifts in narrative structure as Clara's inability "to control events or narrative" (128).
- ²⁸ Unlike Sherlock Holmes or Edgar Allen Poe's Dupine, whose pursuit of information is met with an almost effortless and steady unfolding of "truth," Clara's pursuit results in deeper concealment and violent retaliation; for as a woman, Clara's attempts at rationalism are transgressive; she is operating outside of her proper domain. Revealing the extent to which only men are authorized to employ reason to solve crimes is the unquestioning acceptance of the outrageous conclusion that Dupine draws after his investigation of the murders in the Rue Morgue: the evidence leads him to conclude that an orangutan committed the murders.
- ²⁹ To read *Wieland* as a quixote narrative is to also read it according to the logic that the novel desires, since to do so misrecognizes the narrative's actual crisis, which is Clara's multiple female transgressions. Furthermore, it requires that readers and Clara recognize her "cure" or her moment of self-realization at the novel's end, which, as I argue, is her coerced "confession" and the epitome of her disempowerment. For both an in-depth and insightful study of the female quixote narrative, see Scott Paul Gordon's *The Practice of Quixotism: Postmodern Theory and Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- ³⁰ Interestingly, Laura Korobkin claims that Clara's belief in Carwin's guilt "is reasonable and legally defensible" in an American eighteenth-century courtroom" (722). Korobkin asserts that "If, as the novel strongly implies, Carwin did exploit Wieland's propensity toward religious mania, if he 'urged him to fury and guided him to murder' in a spirit of curiosity [as Clara claims], then he is as guilty of the murders as if he had performed them himself" (722). She later writes "the law will not permit us to escape responsibility for the damage we do by letting us use the limits of our conscious mental states to deny the link between our acts and their consequences. The legal definition of malice will effect the linkage that the individual disavows" (733).
- ³¹ Clara also revises her own perception of herself based on Pleyel's alleged "objective" perception of her. When she discusses her aesthetic contemplation of Carwin's portrait (62), she addresses readers, saying that they might suspect her lengthy observation of the portrait as "a passion incident to every female heart" (62); however this comment she is writing in hindsight, and so this moment in the text not only provides us with her own perception at the time (the one that I see as legitimate), but she also provides an editorial that ventriloquizes Pleyel's own perceptions (what I view as the logic of torture at work in the text).

³² Recall that I read Clara's sense of doom as evidence for her poetic esemplastic power.

³³ Manly calls Carwin "a shadowy background figure whose final confessions reveal him to be more of a pathetic bumbler than a figure of soaring sexual passion" (319). Norman S. Grabo describes Carwin as "a second-rate seducer and trickster" and "a most shabby villain" (10). He further claims that Carwin "set in motion a series of actions over which he has not control, and, in sense, no responsibility" (10). James R. Russo views Carwin as "little more than Clara's scapegoat in *Wieland*" and that "the picture that we get of him has been shrouded in the 'chimeras' of the narrator's brain. He is guilty of none of these things he allegedly confesses to in this scene; however, he is guilty of the one thing that his 'confession' denies: he has seduced Clara" (79). Toni O'Shaughnessy writes that "[w]hat seems to Clara to be a clear confession of guilt [by Carwin] may as easily be read as a defense of victimized innocence" (45). O'Shaughnessy further states that "Carwin's narrative becomes less the confession of a malevolent criminal than the testimony of a bewildered junkie unable to control a habit" (45). Shirley Samuels even calls Carwin a "champion or hero," because "[h]is voice forces a questioning of perceived realities and underscores the abnormalities already present within the *Wieland* family" (55). Andrew T. Scheiber views Carwin as the novel's "trickster/harlequin figure" in that "he eagerly plays the deconstructor of . . . hidden cultural norms" (190). As such Scheiber sees Carwin as Clara's "liberat[or]" from the "ideology" of "the unnatural ideal of womanhood" (190). Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds writes that "the destruction of [the *Wieland*] family results not so much from Carwin . . . he has merely set the action in motion" (110).

³⁴ Lovelace makes the same claim about Clarissa in Richardson's *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* (1748).

³⁵ Gilmore also views Clara as an "Eve" in his reading of *Wieland*, which he sees as a reworking of Milton's *Paradise Lost*; however, his reading reproduces the female *bildungsroman* genre, because he views Clara as a redeemed Eve at the novel's end when she becomes aware of "and finally accept[s] the fact of human corruption" (116).

³⁶ We should, moreover, recognize this narrative pattern in which female obedience seems like an overnight transformation. It is still used today in films or stories such as *The Stepford Wives*, in which husbands seem to magically replace their independent wives overnight with zombie-like obedient ones. By the film's end, however, we learn that the masculine scheming was long in the making.

³⁷ Russo writes "the utter absurdity of Clara's untruths is the best evidence we have for believing that an unstable, deluded woman is telling them" (72).

EPILOGUE

From Clarissa to Clara to Clarice: The Constant of Misrecognition, Torture, and Confession

“Revolutionary moments tend to be co-opted—swallowed up by the mainstream and turned into pop culture. It’s a way of neutralizing it, when you think about it.”

– qtd. in Ariel Levy’s *Female Chauvinist Pigs* 1996

“It is a consequence of the ease with which power can be mixed with almost any other subject that it can be endlessly unfolded, exfoliated, in strategies and theories that . . . in their very form, in the very fact of occurring in human speech, increase the claim of power, its representation in the world.”

– Elaine Scarry’s *The Body in Pain* 1985

The disturbing logic of torture and confession that I have uncovered in the three novels that comprise this dissertation may seem to be confined to a particular time in history, when certain events during the eighteenth century converged and necessitated the self-reinvention of the discourses of torture and confession. However, the logic of misrecognition, torture, and confession persists even today.¹ The two films that I examine in this Epilogue, namely, *Contact*, and more briefly, *The Silence of the Lambs*, only diverge from the eighteenth-century novels in terms of the function of misrecognition. Whereas in the novels female agency is misrecognized as female transgression, in these two films female disempowerment is misrecognized as female agency. What we should understand from this inverted form of misrecognition is the ability of the disciplinary discourse of patriarchy to effectively and efficiently transform itself by appropriating any current cultural discourses that represent the possibility or

actuality female agency. As I argued in the previous three chapters, the discourses of torture and confession co-opted the female *bildungsroman*. Presently, however, and most disturbingly, they co-opt feminism itself. Although generically speaking, these two films are categorized as science fiction and thriller/horror respectively, both can also be regarded as narratives of female ‘becoming’ (*bildung*), since both feature a young woman who is transitioning from school into the real-world application of her chosen career. These two heroines, notably, are entering career fields that are traditionally dominated by men. I think it should trouble readers to see how similar Ellie’s and Clarice’s experiences are to the eighteenth-century heroines’ experiences.

Robert Zemeckis’s 1997 film *Contact*, based on Carl Sagan’s novel of the same name, was critically well-received and is still a much-watched film. *Contact* follows Isaac Asimov’s tradition, in which the fiction of science remains within the field’s currently theoretical and known limits. The film, in other words, treats its topic of alien contact and space travel within the boundaries of scientific possibility. Furthermore, *Contact* treats the fiction of science seriously, making suspension of disbelief effortless for its viewers.

This film’s narrative reveals that masculine power coerces the brilliant, rational, and, most significantly, atheistic female heroine Eleanor Arroway (played by Jodie Foster) into “confessing” that science fails in the face of a spiritually transforming experience that cannot rationally be explained. By the film’s end, Ellie adopts Palmer Joss’s (a theologian and her love interest) worldview that faith in a supreme being is necessary for a cohesive identity and a fulfilling life. However, Ellie’s newfound

spiritualism and belief in a supreme being have deeper significance than what the film itself recognizes. What the film, in fact, misrecognizes is its feminization of Ellie. Indeed, the film's logic "tortures" Ellie out of what it views as her overly 'masculine' lifestyle and into a "normal" feminine role. Her newly found femininity by the film's end entails her concomitant submission to the "Father" of all humankind and to a "normal" heterosexual relationship. Stated another way, Ellie's masculine rationalism, emotional control, and lack of desire for heterosexual intimacy are misrecognized as an unfulfilling and unbalanced life, one that excludes an intimate heterosexual relationship and the capacity for feeling emotion, most fully represented by an individual's belief in the irrational idea that a God exists.

Unlike the eighteenth-century novels, the film recognizes Ellie's agency. In fact, it ensures viewers see Ellie as a brilliant scientist. We are made aware that she graduated from MIT and was offered a teaching position at Harvard. The film also makes sure we recognize Ellie as a self-assured and confident individual in her refusal of Harvard's offer in order to pursue her primary interest which is discovering intelligent life on other planets. According to the film's logic, Ellie's irrationalism in her desire to search for life on other planets is misplaced, since it manifests itself scientifically and not spiritually (with a spiritual search for a higher power). As a highly intelligent and empowered woman, Ellie asserts the legitimacy of her research, telling Drumlin (played by Tom Skerritt) "It's my life!" when he tells her that she is wasting her career looking for little green men on Mars and that she won't be published. Repeated scenes in which Ellie uses sophisticated technology to monitor and analyze radio emissions, including her control of

the massively sized, sublime, and Godlike series of radar dishes that comprise the array, earns her the viewer's respect for her knowledge and intelligence. Not only is she the only woman working with men in what is traditionally a man's domain, she is her research team's leader. Indeed, her interest in the SETI project legitimizes its value despite Drumlin's claims for its irrelevancy.

Ellie's character also reverses the typical gender roles of film couples who sleep together, by telling Palmer Joss (played by Matthew McConaughey) the next morning to stay in bed and make himself at home while she goes off to search for signs of extra-terrestrials. She is also the one to teach him the names of star configurations when they search the night sky together. All he has to offer her is his 'irrational' belief in God for whose existence he has no support except his own personal experiences. Ellie also has knowledge that Palmer lacks in terms of Drumlin, who is the president of the National Science Foundation. She cautions Palmer about Drumlin's arrogance and self-conceit when Palmer tells her he's been trying to get an interview with him. The film undoubtedly constructs Ellie as an empowered woman. She does not need Palmer's approval or love to make her feel complete; she even tosses his phone number in the garbage before setting out on her quest for private funding to continue her research. She manages Drumlin's ego, and she has the 'inside' knowledge, so to speak, on space-science and appears fulfilled by her career.

The film also acknowledges the fact that it is a challenge for a woman to work in a field that has been traditionally dominated by men—representing Ellie's constant need to manage male egos. The film asks us to sympathize with Ellie's struggles and seems to

go out of its way to ensure we find Drumlin and Kitz (played by James Woods) sexist and offensive. To cite just a few instances of this overt hostility and sexism, Drumlin shuts down Ellie's SETI project by withdrawing the necessary financing for it. Then the government itself refuses to continue to rent its array to the "high priestess." Later, upon Ellie's discovery of a legitimate alien radio signal, the heretofore skeptical and judgmental Drumlin quickly and easily assumes the lead of the research team, which should be Ellie's, since she is the one who made the discovery of intelligent life in the Vega system. The film shows him repeatedly and rudely cutting off Ellie's comments to the President's advisory team; the film constructs him, in contrast to Ellie, as more willing to work with, rather than against, the government. Indeed, Ellie's less than diplomatic comments about Kitz's paranoid and militaristic attitude toward the aliens actually function to offer the voice of an alternative or less patriarchal way of viewing reality. Her voice is repeatedly silenced, however, by Drumlin's and Kitz's allegedly more "rational" point of view. Viewers are supposed to find Kitz offensive and overreacting when he wants to militarize her project and claims that Ellie compromised national security (she asked scientists from other countries to confirm the signal). Ellie, however, resists this representation by reasonably asserting that no one country can own the signal and that the other civilization's communication is not intended as a person-to-person call to the United States.

To reiterate, the film *wants* its viewers to recognize Drumlin's and Kitz's sexism. The film, in other words, recognizes that it is providing its viewers with a feminist narrative. However, the film's accommodation and recognition of the feminist viewpoint

is, in fact, why the film and viewers ultimately misrecognize Ellie's eventual disempowerment. Something very subtle is at work in this film. The means of patriarchal power's operations are, in fact, conducted through its feminist men—the characters who embrace Ellie's agency and, significantly, who don't receive as much screen time as Drumlin and Kitz. In other words, they are the men who don't register on viewers' radar as "sexist," and they don't call attention to themselves like Drumlin and Kitz do. Bryant Gumbel, for example, makes a cameo appearance and interviews Ellie, who is one of the top candidates competing to 'man' the spacecraft (referred to in the film as the "machine"). When he asks her about the risk involved, she hesitates in her response, providing him with an opportunity to respond on her behalf. He mistakenly assumes she is about to say that "faith" is required with such a risky enterprise. However, Ellie immediately corrects him by asserting, "I was going to say a sense of adventure." This scene represents a subtle attempt and failure of patriarchal power to feminize Ellie through a confession of "faith."

Another feminist character that the film provides—but who is actually an instrument of patriarchal power—is the wealthy, powerful, brilliant, and eccentric man Hadden (played by Michael Chaban), who finances Ellie's research project when no one else will. Indeed, part of Ellie's disempowerment comes from the way in which the film's logic coerces her into becoming Hadden's 'prostitute,' since he pays her to be the means of fulfilling his own fantasies about space travel (or as viewers discover later, to be the "unwitting star" of his "elaborate hoax"); however, the film misrecognizes this as Hadden's mentorship of Ellie. In this sense, Hadden is similar to Formator in that they

are both mentors to the texts' heroines—they allegedly have their best interests in mind. Hadden's 'mentoring' ensures Ellie is not "handed her hat" as the project's leader, and it is his subsidiary companies that are contracted to build the second machine—the one that Ellie will 'man.' Hadden plays a vital role in power's coercion of Ellie's confession—ensuring Ellie has her 'spiritual' experience. He provides the 'backup' machine and ensures that Ellie pilots his craft—he *is* the selection committee this time when the first committee does not choose Ellie. And, like Formator, Darcy, and Carwin, Hadden constructs Ellie's reality primarily behind the scenes like a disembodied God. He is even symbolically represented this way—he lives above the earth in his private jet and later, he rents space on the Russian's space station Mir. Indeed, his voice literally always comes from the sky. Hadden also has Godlike omniscience in that he knows every detail of Ellie's past and present life, including the death of her father at the age of ten. Indeed, we could say that Hadden, operating as Foucault's asylum "psychiatrist," draws on Ellie's past (her trauma of losing her father at an early age), and exploits this knowledge to make her the "star" of his hoax—the experience of which produces Ellie's confession or submission to a paternal higher power. Sound familiar? That's because Hadden is *Wieland's* Carwin—he essentially does the same thing to Clara Wieland.

Palmer Joss (Ellie's love interest) is the other instrument of power in the film and, like Hadden, appears to have a feminist viewpoint. He supports Ellie's ambition about manning the machine to Vega, and he is not intimidated by her intelligence. Not being able to convince Ellie that belief in God can bring meaning to her life, he takes advantage of privately shared information between them and uses it against Ellie during the

selection committee's formal proceedings (in deciding who will man the first machine). As a member of the selection committee, Palmer takes the opportunity to "interrogate" Ellie in an attempt to trap her into confessing a belief in God. When Ellie asks about the question's relevance, another male selection committee member asserts that the question is relevant given ninety-five percent of the world's population believes in God, and, if chosen, she will represent them. However, this tactic fails to elicit Ellie's confession. Indeed, the film recognizes Ellie's atheism as her *hubris*, as what is preventing her from having a fulfilling life and as what could heal her from the pain of her father's death. Now that her lack of belief has eliminated her from the competition it also prevents her from making the most important contribution to the history of humankind.

The film's second interrogation of Ellie takes place after she returns from her trip to the Vega system in Hadden's second machine. Ellie's empirically measured experience of an eighteen hour trip conflicts with what viewers witnessed from the control center: her spacecraft fell straight to the earth in a matter of seconds. As far as Ellie is concerned, she did make a trip that lasted approximately 18 hours; she experienced travel through a wormhole and interacted with an alien in the Vega system. The government forms another panel, this time to get to the "truth" of what happened. The "truth" that will be produced, however, is Ellie's newly feminized subjectivity. Ellie is brought before the Senate and "interrogated" about her experience. Kitz reappears as the Senate committee's chair, asking Ellie leading questions (as we saw in *The Reform'd Coquet*). Indeed, he draws on Ellie's rationalism, using it against her (as we saw done to Clara Wieland), asking her which is more plausible—her trip to another star system or some wealthy

brilliant eccentric's concept of playing a joke on humanity. Consequently, Ellie must "concede as a scientist" that it is possible her trip didn't happen. When Ellie is asked for her "proof" of her experience and why the aliens didn't provide her with any, she states, "They told me this is the way it has been done for millions of years." Kitz takes this opportunity to point out that Ellie's "explanation is a phenomenon known in psychiatric circles as a self-reinforcing delusion." As a scientist, Ellie is forced to also concede the possibility that her experience may have been a "delusion." Kitz ensures that his questions (which elicit the answers he already knows) not only discredit Ellie's rationalism, but also make her appear mentally unstable. Ellie's "confession," in other words, indirectly admits to a form of latent irrationalism that fully surfaced when she got in the driver's seat of Hadden's machine. What gets misrecognized in this part of Ellie's coerced "confession" is that it implies female scientists are susceptible not only to a full expression of their latent irrationalism (regardless of how rational they may appear to be), but also that, like Eve, they are predisposed to temptation and seduction. Ellie, it could be argued, was tempted and seduced by Hadden's wealth, knowledge, and power. Her own desire for scientific knowledge led to the world's current situation. Like Eve, Ellie is responsible for humanity's "fall," in the sense that she first compromised national security and then subjected the world to an expensive hoax. Drumlin's earlier implication—his paternal prediction, in other words—that choosing Ellie to 'man' the spacecraft would be a mistake comes to fruition. The ironic way in which Ellie's rationalism is used to prove her specifically flawed female rationalism reveals our

culture's deep-seated anxiety about what it means to allow women to occupy positions of power.

Despite Ellie's concession ("confession") that her trip to Vega may not have occurred at all, she stands by her experience of traveling to the Vega system as 'real.' While this may appear to be a sign of her empowerment, in that she both resists and "confesses" to Kitz's assumptions, it ultimately represents what patriarchal power wants from Ellie, what the film's logic has been coercing her into, and what the film and viewers misrecognize. Ellie's "confession" that science fails to account for her experience but that she still, in fact, had that experience is equivalent to confessing that she may not only be Hadden's dupe, but that she now, however indirectly, has faith in and submits to a paternal God. She now believes in a power that is greater than herself to which she must submit: "I [had] [a] vision that tells us that we belong to something that is greater than ourselves, that we are not — that none of us — are alone! I wish I could share that. I wish, that everyone, if only for one moment, could feel that awe, and humility, and hope!" Indeed, the fact that the alien she claims she encountered took the form of her dead father is used to both discount and credit her experience. It either renders her 'vision' a delusion (it confirms her predisposition to irrationalism), or it suggests her subconscious desire for a spiritual Father. In fact, no matter which way her story is viewed, Ellie has assumed her "normal" feminine role by submitting to some "Father"—a "voice from the sky"—in the form of 1) an alien disguised as her dead Father; 2) her dead Father, which means it is a delusion; 3) Hadden the father figure who gave Ellie his protection; 4) Hadden the 'pimp' who financed his and her fantasy; 5)

Palmer (the theologian) who represents the spiritual Father and who offers his paternal protection of Ellie after the hearing is over. Indeed, Ellie's spiritual rebirth is really about her "conversion" into the proper inferior role of women. Ironically speaking, she has joined the "cult" of "true" womanhood.

But it doesn't end here. Ellie's confessional moment further functions to 'feminize' her when her controlled masculine rationalism cracks while delivering her "confession." Indeed, she cries and continues to cry on her way out of the session while Palmer physically supports her body. Moreover, it is only *after* Palmer publicly sanctions Ellie's "born again" experience (when pressed for an answer, he says, "I for one believe her") that the public is more willing to embrace Ellie's experience as "real." Palmer's authoritative words, like the heroes in the eighteenth-century novels, effect reality. The film mitigates if not totally obscures his role in Ellie's subjugation by constructing it as romantic self interest. Like the pseudo-confessions we have seen from other representatives of power (especially Formator and Darcy), Palmer "confesses" that he did not vote for Ellie to man the first space trip, because he didn't want to lose her. In other words, he constructs himself as the sufferer. Palmer's sudden disclosure of the "truth" doesn't discredit him, but rather the opposite. His unexpected vulnerability compels us to accept as "truth" that he loves her and has (and had) her best interests at heart. The film's logic coerces us along with Ellie into adopting Palmer's view of reality. It suggests that Ellie's 'mannish' rational worldview, which is epitomized most in her atheism, is holding her back from the complete human (really, female) experience. The logic of torture and confession seems to say that there must be a feminine soul somewhere inside of Ellie,

since she is, after all, biologically female—thus she must be suppressing it (since her father’s death) and it just needs to be coaxed out.

Absurd as it may sound in the context of such a scientifically based film, which features such an empowered woman, the film misrecognizes that its actual crisis is that Ellie doesn’t have a boyfriend. The film’s logic of torture and confession operates through Palmer as both her spiritual counselor and her lover. As her ‘counselor,’ he represents psychiatric power in that his “treatment” of Ellie is really coercion. Ellie’s soul, however, which she did not know she even possessed until her confession, is exposed to be a female one. Not only is it suggested that it is flawed like Eve’s, but it is now “cured” and will remain so by Palmer’s management, since he will now be her “Father” who is also her lover. Further supporting this is that the closing scene leaves us with a more ‘feminized’ Ellie who is surrounded by children and who speaks to them with a newly inflected voice that is maternal. The *mise-en-scene* shows the large array (representing her science career) that is literally and figuratively *behind* her, since she is now less the female scientist in this scene than she is the maternal teacher.

Another film that misrecognizes its disempowerment of its heroine is in Jonathan Demme’s *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), in which Jodie Foster again plays the female lead. This popular film generated a cult-like following devoted to the entire series of films that feature the character Hannibal Lecter. Film critic Roger Ebert claims that “[t]he popularity of Jonathan Demme’s movie is likely to last as long as there is a market for being scared. Like ‘Nosferatu,’ ‘Psycho’ and ‘Halloween,’ it illustrates that the best thrillers don’t age.” While Ebert comments on his website that Clarice and Hannibal

Lecter (played by Anthony Hopkins) are very much alike, I believe that their difference, in terms of a power relation, overshadows any similarities they may share. Comparable to *Contact*, this film also coerces its female heroine into confessing. The question is, exactly what does she confess and when does she confess it? Indeed, this film's logic of torture and confession functions differently than any of the eighteenth-century novels or the film *Contact*.

The famous scene, in which Lecter offers to give Clarice advice on her case in exchange for her answering his questions (the *quid pro quo* scene), may appear to be an equal exchange; it may even appear that Clarice occupies the position of power, since she is clearly not the one who is the maximum security asylum inmate and, more significantly, since she volunteers to "confess" her childhood trauma to Lecter in order to get information from him. In other words, it seems like she is manipulating him; she does what is necessary to get her job done, refusing to allow what can be viewed as female weakness to stop her from confronting the terrifying Lecter. My argument, however, is that Clarice's "confession" is coerced by patriarchal power in order to expose her female vulnerability. Jack Crawford (Clarice's boss), it could be argued, actually sends Clarice to Lecter because she is a woman and her inherent female vulnerability would most likely garner the information the FBI desires. Crawford's role in Clarice's disempowerment is misrecognized, however, as a sign of Crawford's feminism—he gives Clarice the opportunity to prove herself in a man's domain. Indeed, no other male is willing to play this *quid pro quo* game with Lecter—not in this film and not in its forerunner in terms of plotline. In fact, the criminal profiler Will Graham featured in the films *Manhunter*

(1986) and its remake *Red Dragon* (2002) refuses to share any personal information with Lecter no matter how many times he probes him for it. Moreover, the mental sickness that Will suffers from after solving serial killer murders (including the murders that Lecter himself committed) is more than just a sign of his vulnerability—a sign that marks him as a sensitive man even as he is a ruthless manhunter. These films make it clear that his illness also originates in his ability to think too similarly to Lecter and other serial killers. Indeed, in constructing Will as psychologically similar if not identical to Lecter, the film implies that Will is as brilliant and as rational as Lecter despite his mental sickness. In direct contrast to Will, Clarice readily confesses her trauma to Lecter. The actual exchange that occurs in the *quid pro quo* scene is one in which Clarice is coerced into exposing herself as vulnerable in return for the opportunity that Crawford provides for her.

The film's logic, as in *Contact*, ensures that viewers see a feminist film and why not? Clarice appears to handle Lecter and eventually catches the serial killer. The opening scene, in fact, attests to Clarice's commitment to her job. It shows her running the FBI's obstacle course, designed to accommodate a man's body. Clarice's endurance comes from the motivational sign posted on a tree half way through the course: "Hurt Pain Agony Love It." The film's logic ensures viewers see that Clarice is willing to "torture" herself—i.e., do what it takes—to complete her assignment. What gets misrecognized, however, is that the film's logic coerces Clarice into confessing her past traumatic experience in order to cast doubt on Clarice's abilities, implying that her abilities may be compromised by an innate flaw. In other words, while this female flaw can be used to

patriarchal power's advantage (not in the sense that she has access to Lecter, but that he has access to her), it also suggests that Clarice's latent vulnerability can, if not now then at some future point, cause her to make a fatal mistake. Thus Clarice, while a 'manhunter' or criminal profiler/investigator, is always already a victim because she is female. Indeed, she becomes the serial killer's victim when her body is exposed to the killer's gaze as he watches (through nightvision lenses) her vulnerable and hyperventilating body trip and stumble as she pathetically gropes her way around his house in absolute darkness. Clarice in this scene is the silent and panicked lamb about to be slaughtered. She shoots and kills the serial killer, but the film's logic taints her achievement, because she seems more the victim than FBI agent. Crawford and his men are on their way, it seems, less as backup than as her rescuers.

Similar to Hadden (and the male heroes of the novels), Lecter has godlike omniscience and can manipulate events outside of his asylum cell. He is also portrayed as rational despite his insanity, and in this sense, points back to the rational irrationalism of Theodore Wieland. Like Clara Wieland, Clarice's own disempowerment through Lecter is misrecognized not only because the film foregrounds what it recognizes as a feminist film (at least as far as Clarice's character is concerned) but also because of the sensational violence that the serial killer and his female victims provide. Indeed, Clara does not appear to be a victim in comparison to the horrific victimization these women are made to endure.

Clara's graduation from FBI training school at the end of the film suggests that the suffering she endured to solve the murders made her worthy to enter this man's

domain. And indeed, her body does suffer, for she exposes it to Lecter's gaze who delves deeply into it (and who forces her to lewdly comment on it), to the gaze of the insane men whose cells she must pass on her way to Lecter's, and to the serial killer's gaze as a victim in his sights. Even when the crime is solved, Clarice remains the object of the escaped Lecter's constant and omniscient gaze, confirmed by his phone call to her on her graduation. The film appears to end differently than the endings we have encountered thus far in the texts of this dissertation. Clarice is sworn in as an FBI agent. As a woman she has succeeded in what is traditionally a man's field; she doesn't marry, and she doesn't become someone's girlfriend or does she? Indeed, Lecter himself says of their relationship "People will say we are in love." This film's logic repeatedly coerces Clarice into displaying her vulnerability. Her "confession" to Lecter exposes an innate vulnerability that the rest of the film validates even as the film itself believes it is presenting viewers with a strong and competent woman.

This dissertation's introduction claimed that its subsequent chapters would demonstrate how the institution of patriarchy functions as disciplinary power in three eighteenth-century female *bildungsromans*. It said patriarchal power would draw on the logic of torture and confession to subtly and gradually coerce each heroine into confessing her inherent flaw. Amoranda of Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquet* is this dissertation's standard for what constitutes an early form of disciplinary power's generation of a female subject that it foregrounds as always inherently flawed. Now that we have reached the point in this dissertation in which our perspective has greatly

widened, we can clearly see how both Elizabeth Bennet and Clara Wieland are much more similar to the heroine Amoranda than readers may have first suspected. Indeed, it seems as if two periods in history coalesce as Amoranda and Elizabeth Bennet confess their pride and vanity. The late eighteenth-century's ostensibly revised and updated heroine is the same dominated female as her early eighteenth-century counterpart. Clara, given the loudest voice of all the heroines to speak her evolving 'self,' is also surprisingly comparable to Amoranda. Clara, as we have seen, was violently coerced by the forces of patriarchal power into confessing her hyper-sensibility, and she was also authored into a heroine (an object of art) of what is now termed "amatory fiction" by the end of *Wieland*—a genre, moreover, to which Amoranda herself belongs and which was ridiculed by late eighteenth-century culture. Most unexpected, as well as most disquieting, is that the contemporary heroines are more like the eighteenth-century heroines than anyone could have foreseen, since they are also coerced into disclosing their inherent flaws. As a viewer, I walk away from these two films *not* thinking about Ellie's scientific genius or about Clarice's courage and skills as an FBI agent. Indeed, I find myself thinking about Ellie's "confession" that she may have hallucinated her entire experience (just as I think about Clara Wieland), and my mind's eye always returns to Clarice's attempt and failure to rescue the lambs as well as her groping around in the dark as the serial killer has her in his sights. Her absolute vulnerability reminds me of Clara Wieland and Amoranda. To distinguish their flaws (not their "cures" or self-realization) is what I have claimed is the goal of these films' and the novels' logic.

What also becomes apparent from our broader perspective is that each of these heroines (old and new) occupies a liminal place—a place of transition in which they are not in their fathers' keeping nor are they in their husbands' charge. *Contact* and *Silence of the Lambs* hide this fact better than any of the eighteenth-century novels, but it is remarkably still there. It is evident our patriarchal culture has a deep-seated and durable anxiety about women who postpone—seemingly lacking desire for—a heterosexual relationship. There is also something more that we saw: each of these heroines was an exceptional woman for her time—each was independent, intelligent, rational and resisted gendered norms by adopting or practicing what were/are traditionally masculine activities. The eighteenth-century heroines were empowered women, embodying female possibility during watershed moments in history. The contemporary heroines represent the feminist advances made by our culture. These heroines' agency, combined with the transitional phase in which they resided, constituted a force of female power that our patriarchal culture apparently found very uncomfortable. Consequently, it ousted them from their empowered positions through a regime of “torture” until they confessed their inherent female flaws. This “torture” amounted to a program of corporeality, in which power repeatedly disturbed, threatened, shamed, or dis-eased their bodies until they “confessed” the flaws that power itself produced through its coercive tactics. Also unsettling is the fact that the agency I claimed these heroines had (at each novel's/film's beginning) suggests that their respective authors recognized how their cultural system operates and perhaps believed they were resisting patriarchal culture through their texts.

Yet, they misrecognized how this new form of power strategically co-opted their texts to serve its own purposes—to individuate these women as *a priori* flawed women.

The issue, to which I now return as I bring this dissertation to its close, is that of the feminist project of recuperation and its foregrounding of female agency in these narratives. I hope the argument that this dissertation presented has also made readers recognize that our celebration of female agency in these texts may reproduce masculine domination. Indeed, my dissertation project has changed my own viewpoint. I now believe that critical works that celebrate any kind of female agency in these texts—whether through a subtext, a subversive middle, a repressed text, or one that fulfills the expectations of the genre itself—function to obscure the continued masculine domination of women that these texts very subtly reproduce. When I noticed the discourse of torture and confession’s appearance in eighteenth-century novels, it distressed me. But, when I noticed its appearance in contemporary films (and still continue to), it unsettled me to the point where I knew I had to make it the subject of my dissertation. I felt the exigency of informing other feminist scholars who care about social justice. Indeed, over two centuries have passed since the novels that this dissertation examines have been written, and I am still waiting for a legitimate instance of a female heroine’s self-defining moment.²

Notes to Epilogue

¹ A twenty-first century film that I recently viewed on DVD and whose discourse is that of torture and confession is Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan* (2010). Similar to the way in which Clara Wieland is tortured into madness and an *objet d'art*, this film also "tortures" its female heroine Nina (played by Natalie Portman) into madness and pure aestheticism. While the film's logic points to Nina's mother and Nina's childhood as the source of her growing madness (it assigns a mad "family body" to Nina using her biographical history), I would argue that the origin of Nina's progressive insanity and transformation into art is the ballet company's director and choreographer Thomas Leroy (played by Vincent Cassel). He functions as the coercive force of patriarchy in this film, and his constant and omniscient gaze of Nina—particularly of her body—is ultimately what produces her madness and death—a death that renders her pure art.

² One film seems promising in delivering the moment I've been waiting for. Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) comes very close to providing a truly self-defining moment for its heroine. By the end of the film, Alice chooses *not* to marry and to run her father's company instead. Indeed, her experience in Wonderland I view as a lesbian fantasy, in which Alice fights heroically on behalf of the White Queen. Her transformation in Wonderland is what enables her to assert herself upon her return to the 'real' world. However, the film has several problems. The first is that Alice is subjected to a repetition of violence in Wonderland itself. It's as if the film is torturing her into what it sees as her new masculine lesbian role. Then, upon Alice's return to the 'real' world, the film dresses her in man's attire, when she takes official charge of her father's company. The film seems to push a view that says if a woman deliberately chooses a career over heterosexual marriage, then the decision she makes is by nature a 'masculine' decision – something out of the ordinary for women, and so it requires the attire of men. But it also suggests that a woman who opts out of a heterosexual marriage must be a lesbian. Lastly, the film implies that a woman has to choose between marriage and a career – that they are mutually exclusive decisions. Honestly, it always surprises me when I hear young women claim we live in a post-feminist world.

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