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The Female Gothic Connoisseur: Reading, Subjectivity, and the Feminist Uses  
of Gothic Fiction

By Monica Cristina Soare

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Ian Duncan, Chair

Professor Julia Bader

Professor Michael Iarocci

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## Abstract

The Female Gothic Connoisseur: Reading, Subjectivity, and the Feminist Uses  
of Gothic Fiction

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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Professor Ian Duncan, Chair

In my dissertation I argue for a new history of female Romanticism in which the romance – and particularly the Gothic romance – comes to represent the transformative power of the aesthetic for the female reader. The literary figure in which this formulation inheres is the Female Quixote – an eighteenth-century amalgamation of Cervantes's reading idealist and the satirized figure of the learned woman – who embodies both aesthetic enthusiasm and a feminist claim on the world of knowledge. While the Female Quixote has generally been understood as a satirical figure, I show that she is actually at the forefront of a development in British aesthetics in which art comes to be newly valued as a bulwark against worldliness. Such a development arises as part of mid-eighteenth-century sensibility culture and changes the meaning of an aesthetic practice that had been to that point criticized and satirized – that of over-investment in the arts, associated, as I show, with both the figure of the connoisseur and of the Female Quixote. Connoisseurship emerges in this period as a revolutionary aesthetic practice and has the most significant implications for its female representative, the Female Quixote, who mobilizes it against traditional femininity. I draw upon Matt Hills's theorization of connoisseurship, as a mode of aesthetic reception which is both passionately invested and sophisticatedly detached, to argue that this is why such a stance has historically been denied to women, rooted in the "real" and the domestic, and emerges as a feminist and idealist practice in Female Quixotism. The Gothic romance emerged as a vehicle for the new female connoisseur because of its generically conventional form, which enables connoisseurial mastery, and its anti-realist content, which renders it an emblem for the aesthetic more broadly and a counter to the domestic more particularly.

My introduction and my first chapter map out a new history of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Female Quixotism in conjunction with eighteenth-century theories of connoisseurship in order to trace the rise of a feminist investment in aesthetics and define what I call the female connoisseur. After this macro-reading, I focus in my second chapter on what I identify as a particularly radical and important manifestation of the female connoisseur: Germaine de Staël's Corinne, heroine of her 1807 eponymous novel. Staël develops the figure of the aesthetic woman to what she aspires to be in the British tradition: female artist and genius. In my third chapter, I look at an actual historical

instance of female connoisseurship: the female reader-writers of *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1832). The *Lady's* was the first periodical to publish tales and serialized novels in the newly invented mode of the Gothic romance, rendering their female readers the first experts in this new aesthetic mode. Further, the *Lady's* solicited Gothic romances from its female readers, encouraging them to become connoisseurs of the Gothic. The importance of the Gothic to the new female aestheticism I am tracing is rendered most powerfully in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), the focus of my fourth chapter. Brontë's novel instantiates the logic of female connoisseurship in that its reliance on romance conventions constitutes its female readers, who recognize these conventions, as aesthetic subjects. I close with a chapter that looks at the state of female connoisseurship today and its relationship to the Gothic. I posit that the horror film is the cultural site in which the feminist implications of connoisseurship are most salient. Like its Gothic novel predecessor, the woman's horror film relies on the Romantic formula in which the Gothic stands in for the aesthetic, a realm only partially open to women and so aspired to by a questing female figure; the Female Quixote has become Carol Clover's Final Girl.

For Dave

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii – vii
Introduction	1 – 30
Quixotic Connoisseurship	
Chapter One	31 – 93
Art and Artfulness: Theorizing the Female Connoisseur through Female Quixote Satires	
Chapter Two:	94 – 111
Quixotic Corinne: Staël, Sensibility, and the British Female Quixote Tradition	
Chapter Three:	112 – 183
<i>The Lady's Magazine</i> and the Reader-Writer: A Historical Case Study of Female Gothic Connoisseurship	
Chapter Four:	184 – 209
The 'Lurid Hieroglyphics' of Literary Conventions: Aestheticizing Conventionality in <i>Jane Eyre</i>	
Chapter Five:	210 – 229
The Final Girl as Female Quixote: The Career-Woman-in-Peril-Thriller and the Endurance of the Feminist Uses of the Gothic	
Bibliography and Filmography	230 – 240

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I finish this project not tired and ready to step away from the computer, but energized and eager to set out again – like the Female Quixote figure at the center of the project, I am ready to read and to create. For this I have to thank my brilliant, enthusiastic, and encouraging committee: Ian Duncan, Julia Bader, and Michael Iarocci.

My warmest thank you and greatest gratitude is to my adviser, Ian Duncan, for believing in my project from the beginning and guiding me so that I could realize what I wanted to say and say it with true confidence. From the first class I took with Professor Duncan my first year in graduate school – when I thought I could figure out what Romanticism "was" by looking at the canonical figures and to renowned critics – his teaching opened up for me a complex and varied world of Romanticism, of novels, plays, fragments, tales, periodicals, that were entertaining and odd and uncategorizable. And from then I was off on the quest, investigating for myself, reading more widely and intensely than ever, guided by Professor Duncan's incredible knowledge, passion, and encouragement of rigorous intellectual dialogue. And I was discovering the great beauty and variety of the Romantic novel. (I remember particularly fondly sitting in a pizza place on Telegraph Avenue and being unable to tear myself away from Scott's *Redgauntlet*, a novel in Professor Duncan's seminar. I was part of the long tradition I document in this dissertation of readers who mark the pages of novels with food stains because they cannot tear themselves away.) I was at first unsure of myself, not ready to argue with other scholars, but, with Professor Duncan's training, I now feel brave enough to hold my own with any scholar in the field, which is the major gift an adviser can give a student. Professor Duncan is also a spellbinding teacher and thrilling interlocutor, and being able to work with him has been an honor and the highlight of my career. He has opened up to me the world of scholarship, and has lit in me an enthusiasm for the work that will stay with me forever. Professor Duncan knew what I was trying to articulate long before I did, and I am more grateful than he can know for helping me realize it.

I also cannot express enough how much Professor Julia Bader has influenced and encouraged me, from my days as an undergraduate at Berkeley and throughout my graduate career. The graduate class on the Gothic she allowed me to join in my last year as an undergraduate has formed the basis for so much of my work. Professor Bader, like Professor Duncan, elicits what is best from a student rather than imposing from without; when I speak with her, as with Professor Duncan, I feel more energized and creative myself. Professor Bader has also taught me how to analyze and speak about films so that criticism and teaching become forms of creative thinking. She has taught me how to harness enthusiasm for art into creation. Further, she has taught me feminist criticism – not just the major critics (though she has given me countless books), but its deeper and more powerful meaning. Finally, she has generously given me many guest teaching opportunities, letting me find my style as a discussion leader and class planner. A student once said something about my teaching bearing some similarity to Professor Bader's technique, and it was the best compliment she could have given me.



Michael Iarocci, aside from guiding me throughout with acute questions and suggestions, gave me one of the best pieces of advice at my prospectus conference (in the form of a question): he asked me what story I was telling in my dissertation. This push toward clarity and narrative has guided me ever since, making me realize that every argument is a kind of story and has as much power as the "stories" we study. (Professor Iarocci also recommended Matt Hills's work at a crucial point in my thinking, and it has become central to my dissertation, so I thank him for this kind of invaluable help at every turn.)

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have loved sharing everything with her. My mother is the strongest and most truly generous person I know and my heroine.

My brilliant father, I always tell him, should be the one writing a dissertation in British literature (or, indeed, on film). My dad was telling me about (and he has a true talent for storytelling) Dickens, Fitzgerald, Balzac, Twain, Dostoevsky, Hugo, Wells, Lem before I had any sense of a literary identity. He also gave me my great love of movies – and of endlessly analyzing them – which has sustained me through many a rough period. My dad has always treated me like an intellectual, encouraging me to think for myself, to value the thrilling complexity of the arts, and to be mentally courageous – which gave me a sense of internal independence and strength that nothing could diminish. When I began to truly love film even early on, he recommended and we watched everyone from Antonioni to Fellini to Hitchcock, to genre films that are now my passion, and he bought me books on the history of film and art. Most of all, he always believed in me and, along with my mom, gave me an innate sense of self worth and mental independence; this was the ultimate feminist gesture and gesture of love. I can't wait to share this dissertation – based on all the things he has taught me to love and to love to analyze – with him.

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## Introduction

### Quixotic Connoisseurship

The "Female Quixote," a figure whose most famous iteration is Charlotte Lennox's in the eponymous 1752 novel, is designated by her very name as a figure lost in her books, bound to a form of reading invested in wish fulfillment. It may be surprising, then, to find Lennox's Female Quixote lecturing others about the highly artificial conventions that govern her beloved French romances, arguing for a sophisticated, reflective distance from the text. When a cynic comments wryly on the typical romance hero's plight of endless wandering and fasting, Arabella explains patiently that this is simply a romance convention, which any experienced reader would recognize:

It is not to be imagined, said she, that . . . Prince Viridomer, lived ten months without eating anything to support nature; but such trifling circumstances are always left out, in the relation of histories; and truly an audience must be very dull and unapprehensive, that cannot conceive, without being told, that a man must necessarily eat in the space of ten months.<sup>1</sup>

She turns around his attempt at mocking her favorite genre by exposing his reading as "dull" literal-mindedness. Arabella's sophistication is a result of her intense, if overly-focused, reading in a particular genre – in her case, French heroic romances; having immersed herself so long and so passionately in these books, she has become a genre connoisseur.

A Quixote, as the above suggests, is generally a connoisseur: the original Don Quixote may be mistaken about how his favorite chivalric romances relate to the larger world, but he is well versed in their own logic. (Lennox actually renders Arabella more knowing than the original Quixote: in Cervantes, it is the innkeeper who tells the Don that romances only omit mentioning banal facts as a matter of genre and that knights do in fact carry such ordinary things as money and extra clothes in their quests. This suggests that Lennox wants to stress Arabella's literary sophistication about genre, limited as it is by her deep rather than wide reading.)<sup>2</sup> Conversely, and perhaps more strikingly, the connoisseur, a developing seventeenth- and early-eighteenth century type, is also a kind of Quixote. The connoisseur emerges in this period not only as a figure who comes to signify an exaggerated minuteness in artistic investigation – or, in the virtuoso

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<sup>1</sup> *The Female Quixote*, edited by Margaret Dalziel, 239; all citations will be from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> The exchange between Quixote and the innkeeper is as follows: "[The innkeeper] then asked if he carried any money about with him, and the knight replied, that he had not a cent: for he had never read in any history of knights-errant, that they had ever troubled themselves with any such encumbrance. The innkeeper assured him that he was very much mistaken; for, that though no such circumstance was to be found in those histories, the authors having thought it superfluous to mention things that were so plainly necessary as money and clean shirts, it was not to be supposed that their heroes travelled without supplies of both" (*Don Quixote*, translated by Tobias Smollett. 1755. Revision, Notes, and Intro by Carole Slade. Barnes & Noble Classics, New York, 2004.)

variation, in scientific investigation – but also a more positive figure of aesthetic engagement who harnesses the Quixote's particular kind of artistic wisdom.<sup>3</sup> He comes to embody, by virtue of his investment in the ideal world of knowledge for its own sake, a mode of artistic and intellectual engagement opposed to questions of practical application and real world constraints. Gimcrack, the title character of Thomas Shadwell's 1676 play *The Virtuoso*, explains this idealist philosophy: "I content my self with the Speculative . . . I care not for the Practick. I seldom bring any thing to use, 'tis not my way. Knowledge is my ultimate end."<sup>4</sup> Gimcrack's idealism is quite literal: the abstract idea, rather than its actual manifestation or real-world application, is key. As an absurd instance of this philosophy, he attaches his limbs to a frog in his laboratory so as to understand its motion rather than observing it swimming in nature.

The connoisseur thus coheres as a cultural type as both a ridiculously oblivious character and, simultaneously, a kind of whimsical visionary. Attesting to the connection between the connoisseur and the Quixote are the numbers of satires on the connoisseur figure which closely resemble the simultaneously growing Quixote satires. Both express the traditional critique of these figures' idealism, but also a budding, if reluctant, admiration for their particular kind of wisdom. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, there arise explicitly Quixotic connoisseurs, such as the protagonist of *The Philosophical Quixote*, an apothecary bent on visionary scientific schemes.<sup>5</sup> Even earlier, in Mark Akenside's "The Virtuoso," a poem first published in the 1737 *Gentleman's Magazine*, the title figure – obsessed with natural philosophy, art, curiosities, and ancient history, and thus encompassing all the variations on the figure – is explicitly compared to Don Quixote, in that he "[w]ill for a dreadful giant take a mill."<sup>6</sup> Richard Graves's 1776 poem "The Virtuoso" makes the same connection, inscribing the connoisseur within mid-eighteenth century sensibility culture more closely by referring to Sterne's developing of such quixotism:

What to the valiant knight of Spain,  
Was Donna del Toboso;  
Such is the idol of his brain  
To ev'ry Virtuoso.

Don Quixote to a goddess lifted  
An home-spun country lass:

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<sup>3</sup> See Susan Staves's "Don Quixote in Eighteenth-Century England" for a good discussion of the tradition.

<sup>4</sup> *The Virtuoso*, 1704 edition, p. 24; all citations will be from this text.

<sup>5</sup> *The Philosophical Quixote; or Memoirs of Mr. David Wilkins. In a Series of Letters*. This is an anonymous 1782 work. See the review in the December 1782 *Critical Review*, which regards the figure positively, as an example of the benevolence at the heart of Quixotism.

<sup>6</sup> "The Virtuoso," *Poetical Works of Mark Akenside*, 1807, pp. 237-8. See Daniel McCue's "The Virtuoso in English Belles Lettres" - McCue discusses this passage but doesn't mention Quixote explicitly or make anything of the connection.

Each grain of corn the damsel sifted  
With him for pearls could pass.

Whate'er the curious deifies  
It thus his fancy warms,  
And gives to shells and butterflies  
Imaginary charms.

But let not those who look more grave  
Themselves, their wisdom pride on:  
Since every man must sometimes have  
His hobby horse to ride on.<sup>7</sup>

Graves is also the author of *The Spiritual Quixote* (1773), which casts Methodism as a form of Quixotic enthusiasm. The connoisseur's philosophy is best summarized by the pronouncement of the title character of Conolly's 1736 play *The Connoisseur: or, Every Man in his Folly*: "Every man in his folly. Now, to me, amusement is the great secret of life – it's the philosopher's stone, the longitude, the perpetual motion – in a word, it's pleasure without pain."<sup>8</sup> The conceit is that the real treasure of nature, or the true work of art, is to be found not in the precise object of the connoisseur's obsession, but in the affective experience of seeking it: disinterested inquiry and aesthetic enjoyment.

Yet his unworldliness leaves the connoisseur vulnerable to being thought a fool and being fooled. Thus, Conolly's connoisseur, Trinket, whose entire focus is his artistic pursuits, is vulnerable to Mr. Cheatly's schemes to rob him of both his fortune (by trying to pass off common objects as expensive rarities) and of his daughter. Conolly's satire frames this as the rightful punishment for a figure who thinks himself above ordinary life and who flouts common sense and dangerously neglects domestic duties. Similarly, Shadwell's Gimcrack, also a target of such schemes, is more concerned about the health of one of his lizard specimens than about his niece's fate, able to bear his family's suffering as long as his beloved curiosities are safe. The critique aimed at this figure for his favoring of aesthetic and intellectual pursuits at the expense of family duties is exactly that aimed at the similarly-situated Female Quixote – who is portrayed, in some versions, as a mother whose children are unsupervised and whose house is dirty as she follows her intellectual and artistic obsessions. (A later variation of the figure is *Bleak House*'s Mrs. Jellyby.) Yet the Quixotic connoisseur's vulnerability to the cunning is indicative of a lack of worldliness on his part and so is not entirely a bad quality – i.e., his naïveté acts as a guarantee of his good will. The connoisseur, then, is from the beginning an ambiguous figure – rebelling against the social order through a simultaneously idealistic and selfish pursuit of his own whims, yet still implicated in, and so often at the mercy of, that same order.

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<sup>7</sup> From *Euphrosyne: or, Amusements on the Road of Life* (London: printed for J. Dodsley in Pall-mall), pp. 245-6.

<sup>8</sup> *The Connoisseur*, 1736 edition, p. 69; all citations will be from this edition  
This author is only known by his surname and is cited as such in all the sources I have seen.

Connoisseurship, as it was coming to be defined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is a disposition that partakes of a rising sensibility culture's valorization of withdrawal from a corrupt social order.<sup>9</sup> (Thus, Arabella's father, like the parent of many a future sensibility heroine, acts upon such logic: upon "observing the Baseness and Ingratitude of Mankind . . . [he] resolved to quit all Society whatever" [5].) While connoisseurs proper continue to be mocked for their pretensions, the connoisseurial disposition as it is sketched out in early works such as Shadwell's – obsessive, utopian, unworldly – becomes a central, and generally celebrated, aspect of the sensibility ethos. As Graves notes, it is given powerful expression in Sterne's *Uncle Toby*, whose obsession with the science of fortifications (his hobby-horse) is intrinsically linked to his good nature, rendering him as at odds with the social order – or, in any case, as too distracted to be fully invested in it, and so more open-minded and generous. Indeed, his obsession's roots in a possible castration (his "wound") suggests that it is imagined as a kind of positive androgynizing, a sensibility-valued withdrawal from conventional masculinity.<sup>10</sup> The connoisseur had in fact always been emasculated by his obsessions – as we see in Shadwell's and Conolly's ineffectual figures – which take the place of more traditional libidinal interests.<sup>11</sup> To be invested in the world of the mind, the ideal, is to be disconnected from the body and so from the realities of gender, an equation that comes to be of central importance to the female connoisseur.

The term "female connoisseur," like that of "Female Quixote," should give us pause: is such a figure even possible, given the historical associations of femininity with a superficial materialism and unregulated aesthetic immersion? Because Quixotism colloquially signifies immersive reading and thus fits the usual sense of the overly-invested female reader, the radical implications of the Female Quixote's knowingness about art and her single-minded dedication to it at the expense of domestic duties have

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<sup>9</sup>See Janet Todd's *Sensibility*, which lays out many of the conventions of the cultural mode. Though I should also note that a thorough reading of both major and minor novels from the period, such as I undertook and is partially visible in the large number of texts I take on in this dissertation, also gives me a more subtle sense of the various conventions of sensibility literature. In other words, I am not just applying a historical tag based only on critical reading but am aiming to root my entire dissertation in a careful engagement with sensibility literature and institutions (such as *The Lady's Magazine*).

<sup>10</sup> Uncle Toby's "feminizing," associated with rendering him both eccentric and "a man of feeling," has been often noted; see, for instance, Elaine McGirr's excellent discussion of this type in "Manly Lessons: *Sir Charles Grandison*, the Rake, and the Man of Sentiment" (*Studies in the Novel*, 39:3, Fall 2007, 267-283). As McGirr notes, Toby, like the "feminized" Tristram himself, is incapable of carrying through an action. McGirr further notes that "Toby becomes a spectacular object, one of the Shandy curiosities displayed to guests and readers" (275). The connoisseur, like the Quixote, is similarly a spectacle; such display will reach its peak in Staël's *Corinne*, in which it becomes dignified. Further supporting the idea that the connoisseur is a typical sensibility figure, McGirr argues that Uncle Toby, an eighteenth-century "man of sentiment" (like Mackenzie's Harley), is also rendered "childish." (McGirr cites George Starr's "Only a Boy" in her discussion, which also develops this idea.)

<sup>11</sup> See Mike Goode's *Sentimental Masculinity*, which discusses "unmanly" antiquarians and connoisseurs.



been mostly ignored. I argue that the figure usually known as the Female Quixote – and which I will show is more properly thought of as a female connoisseur – constitutes a remarkable and important cultural development, as she counters long-standing definitions of femininity. The Female Quixote's exceptionality, and even oddness, is crucial to her conception: while the masculine Quixote is a more generalizable eccentric idealist, the Female Quixote stands in specific and stark contrast to other women and, moreover, to traditional femininity itself.

Further, traditional femininity is itself critiqued through the Female Quixote: her departure from feminine norms is often portrayed as a positive consequence of her reading practices. Thus, Arabella is told repeatedly that she is "a strange girl" (as Jane Eyre, a later Female Quixote, will also be dubbed), and this "strangeness" marks her valued difference from other women. As her cousin, Mr. Glanville, notes: "One would swear this dear Girl's Head is turned . . . if she had not more *Wit* than her whole Sex besides" (41). Separated from the world and standard socialization (a characteristic of most subsequent Female Quixote figures) – having been raised by her father in isolation – she lacks the woman's traditionally acute social sensitivity, a quality which also includes the negative qualities of snobbery, envy, and pettiness. Thus, unlike her conventionally feminine cousin Miss Glanville, who is in competition with other women and so savors the chance to triumph when they stray from the socially accepted path, Arabella separates herself from this world of gossip and coquetry.<sup>12</sup> Her world of books, "which supplied the place of all company to her" (91), has thus saved her from the common female fate of social conformity and restrictive codes of femininity, even as it then leaves her vulnerable, like the Quixotic connoisseur, to worldly guile.

Reading thus comes to represent the world of learning and art in which Quixotes and connoisseurs invest their energies at the expense of – and as a counter to – the "real" world of social expectations and limitations. It is reading, then, which functions as a marker of access to a wider sphere and greater potential for the female figure, to what these Female Quixote texts strongly suggest (without spelling out the precise parameters of this aspirational sphere) is something like what we would call intellectual and artistic culture. For women, this includes the aspirational world of learning (thus the Quixotic learned woman figure or Bluestocking) and what would later be subsumed under the Romantic terms of the imagination and the "aesthetic." Because the term "the aesthetic" has a specific philosophical history, I shall refer to the sphere to which the Female Quixote aspires in the terms the literature of Female Quixotism itself employs, though these vary and change; the most widely used such term is "genius," though "learning," and "romance reading" are also common.<sup>13</sup> My own term for the Female Quixote's

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<sup>12</sup> Ronald Paulson also notes Arabella's valorized difference from other women, which inheres in her aesthetic enthusiasm: "Arabella's madness is related to that special quality of imagination that sets her off from the other women in *The Female Quixote*" (177).

<sup>13</sup> It would seem that Female Quixote's idealization of the literary sphere would be tied to the rising prestige of authorship as well as the rise of the Romantic poet figure, but this is only partially true. Even before the coherence of a Romantic ideology valorizing the aesthetic and the corresponding rise in the prestige of authorship, the literary world – even the hackish one of Grub Street – held a certain glamor for the female reader. Literature, like learning, came to represent the antithesis of a constricting domestic sphere, an opposition the Female Quixote discourse

transformative aesthetic participation, or active reading, is reading-writing, which suggests both the enthusiastic immersion and sophisticated knowingness of Quixotic reading. As will become evident in my discussion, then, the Female Quixote discourse understands reading-writing as transcending the literary world itself, and, in a productive vagueness, corresponding with a newly-developing Romantic realm of the aesthetic more generally. Like Shelley's definition of poetry, the literary sphere of the Female Quixote encompasses creative thinking more broadly. As such, the discourse of Female Quixotism can be seen as both a precursor to Romantic thinking about the realm of the aesthetic (starting in the mid-eighteenth century, but picking up speed in the 1780s) and a form of feminist Romanticism, in which a rebellion against social constraints focuses on those of gender.

The Female Quixote repeatedly makes a claim to "genius" (and is repeatedly mocked for such a claim), a term which was beginning in the late eighteenth century to be associated not only with bent or talent, but with a visionary imagination.<sup>14</sup> In Female Quixote works, this vaguely-defined aesthetic sphere takes on a feminist significance comparable to Wollstonecraft's more concretely-defined spheres of "reason" and "education," which are to free women from the social constraints of femininity.<sup>15</sup> But the Female Quixote aims for something more radical than Wollstonecraft, whose goals are largely utilitarian. In Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), education and reason are practical means through which women will be better wives and mothers and have the means to work and live independently if necessary; the Quixotic aesthetic vocation, however, aims not at adapting to one's worldly role but at transcending it.

In creating a character that explores the utopian implications of the Quixote for women, Lennox looks both back to an older female type, the seventeenth-century learned woman, and forward to an emerging cultural figure, the eighteenth-century sensibility heroine.<sup>16</sup> In both cases, intellectual pursuits are the means through which female

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makes clear. As early as 1760, Polly Honeycombe's rejection of a supposed female "genius" for baking, in favor of an enthusiasm for reading – even for frivolous reading – sums up a Female Quixote credo that was already formulaic.

<sup>14</sup> I support this claim in my extended discussion of the discourse on the Female Quixote, in which genius first comes to hold such exalted meaning.

<sup>15</sup> Female Quixotism regards femininity as socially defined rather than innate (and is thus an anti-essentialist discourse), since it shows that education is crucial to feminine identity. That is, the Female Quixote's type of femininity emerges as unusual because she is educated in isolation by eccentric parents, and often only by the father.

<sup>16</sup> Myra Reynolds also makes the connection between the Female Quixote and the learned woman in her study *The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760*.

Ronald Paulson too notes that Arabella has affinities to both the figure of the learned woman and of the sensibility heroine. Thus: "Arabella's reading of romances, in the eighteenth century, gives her (as Fielding was quick to remark) the aura of a bluestocking." And also: "Lennox comes from the camp of Richardson . . . looking back from Lennox's female Quixote, there is no way of avoiding the fact that Pamela was a prototype of the solemn Quixote – and that Lennox thematizes the Pamela model or uncovers the Quixote in her" (174).

characters make a bid at transcending gendered limitations, such that they come to resemble Quixotic seekers. Thus, like the learned woman figure – iconically satirized in Molière's *Les Femmes savantes* (1672) – Arabella prefers intellectual and artistic pursuits to traditionally feminine social goals. Following the logic of Cervantes's originary Quixote, the subject-matter of Arabella's reading – romance – has created her idealism, but her idealism is also a result of the practice itself, of her dedication to reading at the expense of real world ties. Molière had also codified the romance-reading woman a century before Lennox, in his one-act *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659): the title figures, like Arabella, are devotees of Scudery and expect their suitors to act according to the conventions of romance. But with the development of a sensibility ethos, the superficial précieuse is revalued as an idealistic Quixote, so that Arabella is a character very much in keeping with sensibility's valuation of separation from the world.<sup>17</sup> Further, the rejection of worldliness proposed by sensibility takes on special meaning for female characters, for whom the world is associated with the social realities of gender.<sup>18</sup> The sensibility heroine – given prototypical form in Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, and remaining a type in the culture up through Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and even, in modified form, into the twentieth century – thus emerges as a figure who manages to escape the negative consequences of femininity by virtue of her unfeminine dedication to aesthetics and learning, a characteristic which dovetails with a larger Quixotic separation from reality. Following the developing sensibility ethos of her time, and drawing upon the older traditions of the learned woman and the Quixote, then, Lennox creates the most iconic iteration of a character with undoubted feminist implications.<sup>19</sup>

Though excessive dedication to learning and, especially, to the arts is already marked as Quixotic in a woman, the focus of her study comes to hold special import: as with the original Quixote, romance is that which defines and enables the Female Quixote. By the mid-eighteenth century, the period in which the Female Quixote figure coheres, the romance revival is under way, a historical development that anticipates Romanticism's valorization of the aesthetic sphere as separate from, and in reaction to, that of the quotidian.<sup>20</sup> Female Quixote fictions actually anticipate the Romantic

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<sup>17</sup> See Todd's history of sensibility; this important eighteenth-century development will be taken up in more detail in connection with my argument below.

<sup>18</sup> As Gary Kelly has argued, sensibility valorizes a smoothing out of gender differences – so that rationality is valued in women and sensitivity in men – thus countering dominant and worldly forms of gender identity (the frivolous woman, the brutish man). This sensibility shift then had particularly feminist implications, as it valued "masculine" learning in women and depreciated traditional feminine qualities such as frivolity. (See the introduction to his series *Varieties of Female Gothic*.)

<sup>19</sup> There are other Female Quixote figures before Lennox, but hers comes to be the most famous and important of the iterations.

<sup>20</sup> The positive nature of imagination was posited by Barbauld and others as a kind of corrective to a mind blunted by the banal modern world. See a discussion of this in Clery's *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*. This view of imaginative literature as a kind of exercise for the mind is in one way utilitarian, in that it seeks to make one into a better functioning subject rather than to change society itself. This then is different from the transformative power of the imagination

politicization of the aesthetic as a force for social change in their suggestion that romance reading is a means toward making a feminist bid for an enlarged cultural sphere. Such works express this aspiration toward a larger sphere through the romance convention of heroism. The Female Quixote is bent on being a heroine, a goal rendered humorously straightforward in the title of the Female Quixote satire *She Would Be an Heroine* (1816). But this signifies her aspiration not just for an increased realm of action – as feminist critics such as Margaret Doody have argued – but for a larger subjective sphere, which the romance world both encourages and signifies.<sup>21</sup> In Female Quixote narratives, wishing to read, write, be a genius, and be a heroine stand in for one another: all signify a wish to enter the world of romance, which is also a world in which women's imaginations can be exercised in a way that allows entrance to what is posited as the transformative world of the aesthetic. That is, in the romance discourse upon which Female Quixotism draws, a heroine is a woman who transcends the social limitations of femininity, so that a Female Quixote is herself a heroine by the very fact of her dedication to reading (standing in for the aesthetic more broadly) at the expense of all else. The romance loop is crucial to this logic: the heroic sphere to which she aspires in such a seemingly naive way is in fact the very aesthetic sphere she is engaging as she reads about heroines.

The enlarged subjective world promised by the romance also functions, as we can see in these Female Quixote works, as a counter to the domestic realm, considered the proper realm of femininity. Though the relegation of women to the domestic sphere is generally thought of as consolidating in the Victorian period, in virtuous opposition to the masculine public sphere, domesticity is countered to the world of learning and intellectual pursuits much earlier.<sup>22</sup> Molière's learned woman Armanda is lectured in these terms: "Our Forefathers were very wise people . . . who said that a Wife always knew enough when the capacity of her Genius rais'd her to understand a Doublet and a Pair of Breeches . . . Their Wives did not read, but they liv'd well; their Families were all their learned Discourse, and their Books, a Thimble, Thread, and Needles."<sup>23</sup> Another of Molière's learned women explains the cultural logic through which learning signifies the transcendent sphere to which femininity is in opposition: "For in short I am strangely vex'd at the Wrong [men] do us with regard to Wit; . . . by bounding our Talents to trifling things, and shutting the Door of Sublime Lights against us" (83). This very formula, with a similar play on the word genius, is repeated a century later by the obsessive reading woman and would-be heroine Polly Honeycombe: "Tho' parents tell

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implicit in Female Quixote works. But it is important to note that works of the imagination were being championed in ways that anticipate the Romantic valorization of the aesthetic.

<sup>21</sup> For Doody's argument that Lennox celebrates the feminocentrism of romance, see her introduction to the Oxford UP edition of *The Female Quixote*.

<sup>22</sup> Jacqueline Pearson's approach, in her *Women's Reading in Britain*, relies on a similar idea: "Domestic ideology worked to distance women from Romanticism" (33).

<sup>23</sup> *The Works of Molière*, translation by Henry Baker, 57; all citations will be to this edition. Though the word genius here only means bent or talent, it is important that it would later be transformed into the Romantic idea of the creative imagination, to which the Female Quixote figures would be portrayed as aspiring.

us, that our genius lies / In mending linnen and in making pies, / I set such formal precepts at defiance / That preach us prudence, neatness, and compliance; Leap these old bounds, and boldly set the pattern / To be a Wit, Philosopher, and Slattern."<sup>24</sup> For a woman to be a "philosopher" is to neglect the domestic – which here seems to include both the house and her own toilette, therefore connecting housekeeping skills with fashion and personal attractiveness – and to rebelliously embrace the dreaded female-only epithet of "slattern."<sup>25</sup> Philosophy (the learned woman's realm) and romance (Arabella's and Polly Honeycombe's reading matter) come to oppose the domestic in the discourse on femininity of which the Female Quixote is a part because both signify the ideal rather than the social and materialist world that is at the heart of feminine ideology. Even as early as Molière the connection between the misplaced idealism of the Quixotic learned woman and that of the connoisseur is in play, as Molière's learned women show literally connoisseurial tendencies. One of these would-be philosophical women pursues the abstruse studies of a Gimcrack and is admonished: "you should remove out of the Garret that long Telescope enough to frighten People, and a hundred Knick-knacks the sight of which are offensive: Not to look after what is done in the Moon, but to mind a little what's done at home, where we see every thing go topsy-turvy" (*Learned Ladies*, 57). Just as connoisseurs focus their energies on gimcracks and trinkets rather than on their responsibilities, so the learned women fill up domestic space with "knick-knacks," objects of personal obsession and intellectual interest, and aspire to the stars.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Polly Honeycombe*, Broadview edition, 104; all citations will be to this edition.

<sup>25</sup> *Polly Honeycombe*, as I will discuss below, is actually more of a pro-Female Quixote work, despite its mockery of the figure. Polly emerges as a figure who, like Austen's Emma, can exercise her strong will partly because she is surrounded by fools and cheats and is cleverer than everyone around her.

<sup>26</sup> This fascination with outré collectables may in fact seem to be the ultimate materialism (and in fact Molière's learned women collect scholars for their salons as well, a point of mockery that will recur in satires on aspiring intellectual women), but the curiosities signify the very opposite of the quotidian, the useful, the domestic, much in the way romance does. The fight against the essential materialism at the heart of femininity is a cliché of feminism and seems like a banal and obvious point. But, as I will be showing throughout this chapter, the basic satirical tactic by which idealism is rendered material, brought down to earth, is an especially powerful tactic in anti-feminist satires for the very fact that femininity remains tied to materialism in the cultural tradition I am tracing.

Further, I realize that there are other differing traditions, such as the American sentimental one, in which femininity is associated with spirituality and masculinity with a positive, commercial materialism.

Even in the Victorian tradition, the Angel in the House figure may suggest that femininity guards spiritual values against materialist commercialism, except that, of course, these spiritual values are themselves simply social conventions, for which femininity is the enforcer. In anti-Female Quixote satires, as I will show, the rightful heroine set up to counter the Female Quixote was generally a kind of Angel in the House figure who stood for the traditional values challenged by the revolutionary (post 1790s, often Jacobin) woman whose wish for personal transcendence via art and heroism threatened the social status quo. In the anti-Female Quixote satire *The Corinna of England*, the heroine even starts a kind of debased revolution, a riot meant to mock the pretensions of gender and class revolutions.

The cultural gender dynamics that I have been describing – in which an ideology of femininity based on materialism and domesticity is opposed to idealism and speculative practices (philosophy, romance reading) and, eventually, to what comes to be defined as the aesthetic sphere – are consolidated and remain the status quo, albeit in a milder form, into the present. The aesthetic domain remains contested and an area of feminist aspiration, so that the brief reign of female connoisseurship I am describing (which continues as a feminist counternarrative into the nineteenth century, though flourishing in pre-Romantic and Romantic periods) needs to be understood as a strain of the culture in constant and direct opposition to this standing norm. Indeed, the logic through which learning and the aesthetic, defined as primarily masculine spheres, work as aspirational realms – promising that through their means select women may rise beyond a limiting feminine ideology – continues as a common structuring principle of the literary descendants of romance, and particularly Gothic romance (from horror to noir), but I shall address this in my last chapter, which looks at the presence of Female Quixotism in the Gothic film.<sup>27</sup>

The Gothic is the last term crucial to the female connoisseurship I am describing. By the 1790s, the Gothic becomes the dominant manifestation of the "romance" (or "modern romance," as it is also called) as a mode of fiction distinct from the novel. It makes sense that a latter-day Female Quixote like Catherine Morland would be obsessed with Gothic novels and would gain from them a freedom from conventional femininity comparable to Arabella's. The Gothic enables feminist connoisseurship more than any form of previous romance, and this is because it develops the two apparently opposing tendencies of the romance: its imagination-stimulating suggestiveness and its tendency toward convention (the formula).

Building on mid-eighteenth-century aesthetic theories of the imagination-enhancing power of terror (and particularly the sublime) formulated by Burke, the Aikins, Nathan Drake, the Graveyard School and others, and Walpole's and Radcliffe's influential deployment of such theories, the Gothic becomes the quintessential form of the romance, deriving its aesthetic power not from its concurrent ingredients of sentiment and didacticism, but from its ability to act upon the newly valued faculty of the imagination. The Gothic harnesses these new aesthetic principles and develops the romance in sophisticated new directions that partake of (and are in direct conversation with) the emergent Romantic investments in the imagination, subjectivity, and visionary experience. Thus, the Gothic is especially potent as a conduit to the ideal world to which the ideology of normative femininity stands opposed. The logic by which this works is suggested in Austen's Female Quixote novel *Northanger Abbey* (1798;1818), in which Catherine Morland's social obliviousness, thanks to her obsession with skeletons, veils, and "horrid" mysteries of all kinds, saves her from a soul-killing femininity. Catherine invests her energies in romance reading and so partially rejects the world of social responsibilities, claiming of *Udolpho*: "Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it. I assure you [she tells Isabella], if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world" (28). The Gothic

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<sup>27</sup> Here I discuss what Clover dubs horror's Final Girl as an instance of this Female Quixote figure. The Final Girl's lack of interest in typically female concerns, and her exclusion from the female social sphere, symbolically saves her from narrative death and gives her access to what is characterized as a sublime, masculine sphere of the aesthetic.

romance renders Catherine less aware of, and so less bothered by, social worries; more so, it is even suggested that, through her reading, she reaches a state of Romantic aesthetic enthusiasm. She also achieves some level of independence from courtship anxieties, the focus of traditional femininity (along with gossip about rival women): when Isabella predicts she would be miserable if she were not to see Henry Tilney again, Catherine claims: "No, indeed, I should not. . . . while I have Udolpho to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil! My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina's skeleton behind it!" (29). The veil and skeleton here stand in for the outré objects of obsession that represent the aesthetic sphere, much as the connoisseur's curiosities do. The Gothic novel, by virtue of its investment in the aesthetic principle of the sublime, stands in even stronger opposition to the domestic and the quotidian than other, earlier varieties of the romance – as, for instance, Arabella's chivalric romances, with their focus on love. In *Northanger Abbey*, a mysterious skeleton – one version of the sublime, albeit one suited to an as yet naive reader – is a greater attraction than a suitor. As an anonymous critic of Gothic novels acknowledges of the novels so popular with women (echoing the old opposition between the aesthetic and domestic spheres): "Can a young lady be taught nothing more necessary in life, than to sleep in a dungeon with venomous reptiles, walk through a ward with assassins, and carry bloody daggers in their pockets, instead of pin-cushions and needle-books?"<sup>28</sup> Arabella's world of romance, with its chivalry and courtship, can perhaps be contained under the rubric of the domestic, but daggers and skeletons are comically anti-utilitarian.

The second apparently antithetical aspect of romance that comes to fruition in the Gothic, and that helps render it an object of connoisseurship for the female reader, is its generic conventionality. (This quality seems the very opposite of the imagination-stimulating vagueness of the sublime, but as early a theorist as Burke knew that the sublime could be created formulaically.) The Gothic apparatus developed in the second half of the eighteenth century by Walpole, Reeve, Lee, the Aikins, Radcliffe, and other innovators was quickly picked up by "all [the] . . . imitators" (to quote Austen)<sup>29</sup>, so that one critic for the *Critical Review* quipped: "[i]t would not be difficult to construct a machine for making such novels . . . . A romantic *Arkwright* may find the materials in every circulating library."<sup>30</sup> As this critic recognizes, some of the standardization of

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<sup>28</sup> "Terrorist Novel Writing" from *Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797* (London, 1798), pp. 223-5, anthologized in *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook, 1700-1820*. E. J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds. (Manchester UP, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> "Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for" (166).

<sup>30</sup> From a December 1794 capsule review of *Ivey Castle, a Novel; containing interesting Memoirs of two Ladies, late Nuns in a French abolished Convent*. The entire capsule review is: "An insipid mediocrity so generally prevails throughout this novel, that it becomes unnecessary to say anything of the improbability of the fable, or the vulgarity of the style. It would not be difficult to construct a machine for making such novels as *Ivey Castle*. A romantic *Arkwright* may find the materials in every circulating library" (472).

modern romance has to do with the changing structure of the literary world. Certainly, romance is traditionally formulaic, as Cervantes satirically notes through repeated scenes in which Don Quixote recites conventional scenarios he expects to encounter based on his thorough knowledge of romance plots. But the new literary market enabled a greater standardization of such conventions, as well as their overuse, so that from something integral to narrative structure they became a symbol of hackdom, the cliché.<sup>31</sup> Institutions such as the circulating library also allowed for an increase in the novel market, so that many more novels were being published than ever before, and more quickly.<sup>32</sup> Many of these quickly-conceived works were romances that facilely exploited some attractive, easily-recognized aspect of the Gothic – from the haunted castle to the nefarious monk to the mysterious abbey – which could easily be signaled by the title. While some of these modern hack works made use of an older sentimental novel framework (though almost always drawing upon the Gothic, if even only in a minor way) – from the imperiled woman, to the virtuous orphan, to the wicked guardian – the Gothic worked to create a stylizing effect that led to a denaturalization, and hence greater conventionality, of characters, settings, and events. Further, as Edward Jacobs argues, the collection and categorization by type of masses of novels in the circulating library (and listing in the library catalogue) – a means to make it easier for consumers to choose similar kinds of works – led to a more sophisticated consciousness of genre categories among readers.<sup>33</sup>

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The terms “novel” and “romance” were still used somewhat interchangeably at this point for narratives that would later generally be categorized as romances, the category connected to the formulaic and stylized rather than the supposedly real.

<sup>31</sup> When such conventions are in fact rendered effectively, it can create powerful effects, thus Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which I discuss in a later chapter. In a perceptive essay on *Jane Eyre*, Andrew Lang, one of the best writers on Brontë's productive conventionality, notes the power of romance conventions: “The shrieks, and cries, and nocturnal laughter, the wandering vampire of a mad woman, the shadow of a voice clamouring in lonely places, the forlorn child, the demon lover (for Mr. Rochester is a modern Euhemerised version of the demon lover) – these are all parts and parcels of the old romantic treasure, and they never weary us in the proper hands.” This may seem like a reductive review, but Lang's stripping of the novel to such bare and evocative conventions in fact helps us see something about its power. This is not facile archetypal criticism but an eloquent reminder of the evocative power of the residue of romance. Lang's romantic phrasing reminds us that the power of romance is in its simultaneous haunting suggestiveness (“the shadow of a voice clamouring in lonely places”) and jagged, skeletal presence (a demon lover or vampire woman appearing suddenly down the hallway one day). I would also like to thank Kevis Goodman for drawing my attention to the relationship between convention and cliché.

<sup>32</sup> See Raven and Garside's *The English Novel, 1770-1829*; see also the online database at Cardiff Corvey. Deborah McLeod's dissertation on the Minerva Press also gives a sense of the romance boom. Writers at the time were also aware they were in a period of increased publication, as I discuss in more detail in my chapters on the Female Quixote and *The Lady's Magazine*.

<sup>33</sup> “Anonymous Signatures: Circulating Libraries, Conventionality, and the Production of Gothic Romance.”

See also Gillray's cartoon “The Circulating Library,” which depicts the shelves labeled “novels” and “romances” nearly empty, while the contents of other shelves remain in their place. Gillray further depicts two women walking away from the counter laden with novels.



Mass genre literature as we know it begins here, with the conventionality of the romance meeting the modern world of mass production and consumption.<sup>34</sup> (Though the price of novels and even of a circulating library subscription – depicted in Green's 1810 *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* as an indulgence for a middle class family – kept this literature from reaching what we would consider a mass audience, the internal structure of such writing was in place.) And female readers, barred from the classical studies of the connoisseur, were at the forefront of these new developments in literature; they become the connoisseurs of these new conventions, the learned figures of this new learning. It was not only taken for granted that women were the majority readers of these new popular novels because they had a much narrower intellectual field (were not educated as widely as men, nor could generally make such studies their lives' work), but a whole structure was in fact built up by periodicals to tap into – and end up developing – this female connoisseurship of the new novels, particularly the Gothic. As I discuss in chapter two, *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1832) draws upon the sensibility culture formula that equates artistic interest with sensitivity, and education with an aspirational feminist sphere, to address its female readers as artistic subjects. Female readers – better conceived of as reader-writers, not only because they were active readers but because they were encouraged to become literally active, to write in their beloved genre – were thus at the forefront of a new aesthetic, cultural, and commercial development: the transformation of romance into a popular, genre-driven literature (with the genre or subgenre clearly signaled in titles) and the development of a form of reader-response that was to be the forerunner of the modern connoisseurship now called fandom.

The term connoisseurship not only makes clear the long history of the practice I am tracing, but also, from its beginnings has within it the two forms of art reception crucial to its meaning: learning and obsession with art. And these two dispositions correspond with the dual aspect of romance (particularly in its Gothic form): its conventionality and its imagination-stimulating suggestiveness. Though, as I have shown, we see these seemingly opposing, yet actually complementary, tendencies in both the eighteenth-century figure of the Quixotic connoisseur and in the romance itself, this dual tendency is more formally described by theorist of modern connoisseurship Matt Hills. (As will become clear, this is because Hills deals with the horror genre, a descendant of Gothic romance.) In *The Pleasures of Horror*, Hills, a media theorist studying contemporary fandom, comes closest to theorizing a term with both a historical and a colloquial meaning, whose history has yet not been written more broadly.<sup>35</sup> Though

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<sup>34</sup> I will return to the generative quality of romance conventionality in my discussion of both the Female Quixote and of the reader-writer of the *Lady's Magazine*. Thus, the Female Quixote, with her supposed delusions and imagined scenarios, is often described as possessing a "fertile brain" (as *She Would Be an Heroine's* Georgiana is, vol. 1, p. 47).

<sup>35</sup> I am not referring to a history of classical connoisseurship, focusing on the wealthy and classically-educated men who were the originals of the term – as, for instance, the members of the Society of the Dilettanti. The practices and stakes of this form of connoisseurship have been and are being analyzed, and I am indebted to many of these studies – for instance, Bruce Redford's *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique* and Harry Mount's "The Monkey with the Magnifying Glass: Constructions of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Britain" – in this work.

eighteenth-century literature was, as I show above, informally theorizing connoisseurship as a larger phenomenon – not just an art historical one – this history has not yet been written, so that my dissertation is partially a contribution to such a project. Hills, despite focusing on modern horror film fans (since his discussion is part of a larger work on horror rather than on connoisseurship), comes closest to theorizing such a subject position and to conceiving of it, importantly, in terms that invoke Romantic ideas about artistic reception. I will thus draw upon Hills's work, even as I historicize his terms.

In his study of horror film connoisseurs – whose artistic obsessions remain objects of as much mockery and misunderstanding to outsiders as French romances were to non-experts in Arabella's day – Hills identifies the connoisseurial subject-position as a compound of what he calls "Romantic intensity" and "cool knowledgeability," complementary states that, as I show, also define the eighteenth-century Quixotic figure. The "cool knowledgeability" of the connoisseur is opposed to a more "naive" form of reception connoisseurs themselves recognize in non-specialist critics and a generalist audience:

Horror fans are knowledgeable, and seemingly not scared by horror, given their "educated," metaphorical, and allegorical rather than literalist readings. Aware of horror's conventions and representations, fans actively "read" aesthetically and thematically . . . [while] non-fans appear to watch naively, as if what is represented onscreen is somehow affectively "real."<sup>36</sup>

The similarity to Arabella's position in relation to the non-romance-reader who mocks the works' lack of verisimilitude is not facile: in both cases, a non-specialist misunderstands the building blocks of a genre, obvious to a genre connoisseur. Hills's "Romantic intensity" is a bit different from the Quixotic obsession I am analyzing, but it is importantly related: as his reference to Romanticism suggests, the subject-position he invokes was most famously and influentially theorized in the Romantic period to describe a rapturous and mysterious form of aesthetic engagement. Hills thus draws upon a general cultural understanding of Romantic theories of art, in which the vagueness and mystery of one's aesthetic reaction undergirds its power, in his characterization of fans. (More precisely, Hills claims that fans characterize themselves this way, thus suggesting that a kind of popular Romantic aesthetic ideology diffused in general culture helps fans articulate, or even dramatize, their own experience.) "Romantic intensity" is the name Hills gives to the state preceding connoisseurial mastery, in which the future connoisseur first discovers and falls in love with a genre, obsessively consuming it and thus unconsciously storing up the expertise that will lead to "cool knowledgeability." This state of "Romantic intensity" occurs most often in childhood or young adulthood, when enthusiasm outruns critical capacity. It is, as Hills's terminology suggests, predicated upon the Romantic notion that childhood is the time of greatest receptivity and capacity for wonder. Though Hills does not refer to eighteenth-century theories of the sublime explicitly, his cultural logic, and that of the fans he interviews, is derived from the same discourse: the thrill from Gothic art is akin to that of Wordsworth's looming landscapes,

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<sup>36</sup> Hills, *Pleasures of Horror*, 74. (Hills is here also drawing upon the findings of Mark Kermode.)

providing memories "felt in the blood, and felt along the heart."<sup>37</sup> Hills explains that connoisseurs report these states as diachronic, the childhood state of wonder preceding and producing the adult's sophisticated enjoyment. But I would argue that the two can exist simultaneously and dialectically, complementing each other as they do in the Quixotic connoisseur model for which I argue: the state of Romantic intensity supplying the needed affective investment to the pleasure of connoisseurial mastery.

Childhood is crucial to the model I describe as well, as Hills's work helps us understand, since we are both describing a phenomenon codified in Romantic culture. "Romantic intensity" suggests a state of continued attachment to the genre, an attachment which is anti-social in its valorization of a personal aesthetic and intellectual investment at the expense of social duties – thus the rabid fan who spends hours pursuing his interest to the detriment of social and family duties. Such a figure is, again following the Romantic model Hills invokes, regarded as immature for valorizing the world of the imagination over that of the real and engaging in what can be seen as a form of play. Thus, the modern day genre connoisseur (ultra-fan) is often considered as psychologically regressive or stunted. The idea that this kind of imaginative retreat into a world of personal obsession is childish is made use of from the first theorization of this subject-position in the eighteenth-century; thus, Conolly's connoisseur is mocked for his "childish amusements" (68). The connoisseur's obsessions with artistic artifacts is seen as akin to a childish interest in toys, hence the names of the characters: Trinket and Gimcrack. That the modern connoisseurship Hills describes has developed a culture of collection as intense as that of the original connoisseurs – with fan objects such as action figures, collectible cards, etc. – shows the similarity in the seriousness with which genre involvement is taken. Indeed, it is important to remember that the Society of Dilettanti's motto was "seria ludo," a celebration of the seriousness of this kind of imaginative play. While making a connection between the dilettanti's elaborate costuming as the historical objects of their study and the genre connoisseur's dressing up as a beloved character may seem anachronistic, the underlying cultural practice is the same in its impulse to harness obsessional intensity (of which this regressive play is one manifestation) as a means towards connoisseurial mastery, a form of serious play. This childishness connects the connoisseur to a growing proto-Romantic ethos that celebrates the child's imaginative power and to the larger sensibility celebration of separation from society, in this case in the form of a (Rousseauian) pre-socialized state. (And old age can sometimes play the function of this social separation: the connoisseur is both childish and nearly senile, so that his old age stands in for his separation from the social center.)<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "Tintern Abbey," l. 28.

<sup>38</sup> I should explain that Hills sees connoisseurship as performative, so that the states of "Romantic intensity" and "cool knowledgeability" he describes are stances fans cultivate as part of their performance of connoisseurial mastery. Connoisseurs understand their own aesthetic sophistication in relation to a more general audience response and are invested in championing their own more informed and impassioned readings. As Hills points out, this has to do with a sense of defensiveness towards the object of connoisseurship, which is often repudiated or undervalued by a larger culture – thus the horror film – which is also what renders it a proper object of connoisseurship. (Hills also works on the cult film, which has a common logic.) Spectatorship is thus a performance in which one models competing forms of interpretation. This

### **The First and Final Girls of Genre Literature: The Female Gothic Connoisseur as Rethinking Feminist Gothic Criticism**

My dissertation tries to bring together feminist Gothic criticism, which grew out of the energy of second wave feminism, with a more recent interest in rethinking the Gothic through the historical terms in which it would have been regarded, an impulse energized by New Historicist readings. I therefore draw upon the work of both classic feminist Gothic (and romance) critics, especially Ellen Moers, Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Tania Modleski, Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Michelle Massé, and Janice Radway and of newer critics who historicize the Gothic romance, especially Ian Duncan, Emma J. Clery, James Watt, and the critics associated with the Cardiff Corvey project (such as James Raven, Anthony Mandal, and Angela Wright). While feminist critics have looked closely at various key texts – particularly by Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Brontë, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Mary Shelley – thereby rethinking the canon and showing the Gothic's complex engagement with gender, they did not generally consider these texts historically. More so, while feminist critics showed the richness and complexity of Gothic literature and discourse, they also necessarily focused on works that lent themselves to traditional close reading, thereby obscuring larger patterns in the developing Gothic mode.<sup>39</sup> The newer historicist studies recast Gothic works by looking more closely at how they interacted with cultural developments and shaped and were shaped by them, but they do not always look at the broad literary field nor do all these studies take up the feminist questions raised by earlier Gothic criticism. Some of these historically-informed studies have looked at gender more closely, however, and have influenced my project greatly, particularly Clery's discussion of the female Gothic heroine, which she recasts in terms of historical discourses on gender and the legal rights of women. Anne Williams's *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (1995), while not fitting into any of these categories neatly, has also expanded our understanding of gender and the Gothic by looking more closely at how a discourse about gender fits within the larger structure and concerns of the mode (its "poetics").

I should also note that the renewed attention to the historical circumstances of the Gothic, and to the development of the modern romance more generally, in some ways looks back to the earliest studies of the Gothic – by critics like Montague Summers, Robert Mayo, and James Foster – which surveyed dozens of works and understood the complex variety that comprised what would later be gathered under the term Gothic (and

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parallels the Female Quixote own performance of her interpretation – her status as spectacle – which reaches a pinnacle in Corinne's performance-criticism.

<sup>39</sup> Modleski and Radway are exceptions, since they look at mass fiction, but they analyze only the descendants of these canonical romances in the twentieth century rather than the equivalents of Harlequin romances and other mass fiction in the Romantic period. While mass literature proper had not come about in the Romantic period, it was being given form and its parameters were being consolidated. As such, there was a boom in publication and reading, as the Cardiff archive and Raven's and Garside's work shows. One could also perceive this development by looking at the *Critical Review* or *Monthly Review* from about 1790 on, when formulaic romances and novels were being reviewed (and generally dismissed as derivative) every month. Works were already divided by these reviews into those that deserved to be reviewed in the front of the periodical, and to be discussed in depth, and those that only merited a capsule review (which sometimes consisted only of a few lines of mockery of the work).

was historically grouped under "romance," though also "novel," "tale," etc.). Such exhaustive work – which tries to uncover ever more closely the situation on the ground in the Romantic period, when dozens of Gothic works (if one includes magazine novels and stories, chapbooks, and plays) were published every year and were part of an ever-changing field rather than of a well-understood pattern – has been carried on steadily over the last thirty years and has picked up particular energy in the last ten or so. That is, there have been several waves of particular interest in the Gothic (though critical works on the mode have appeared regularly since the 1970s), with the 1970s seeing one such wave; it was then that presses sprang up, like Arno, that reissued obscure titles, like the *Lady's Magazine's Grasville Abbey* (of which the only existing modern edition is the Arno one, with an introduction by Mayo) and many others that again fell out of print until the most recent wave.

We are now in the midst of another such wave, with the Internet allowing digitization of various sources. One of the most exhaustive such projects is Cardiff Corvey's database on Romantic-era publishing (with a particular emphasis on the Gothic), based on its analysis of the unique Corvey library, which holds nearly all the novels published within a large span of the Romantic period. The Chawton House, working along with scholars like Emma Clery, has similarly digitized some of its vast rare holdings of female literature from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, making certain titles crucial to my dissertation – particularly Sarah Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810) and E. M. Foster's *The Corinna of England: or, A Heroine in the Shade* (1809) – available online before they were released in scholarly editions (from Pickering and Chatto, working with Chawton). Google Books, with the help of libraries and, especially, a heroic but unrecognized workforce, has made it possible for anyone to see not only rare books but also the first editions of well-known novels. Finally, new presses have again appeared that are republishing forgotten titles, the type of "horrid" novels beloved by Catherine Morland: Valancourt, Udolpho, and Zittaw Presses. These presses are closely involved with scholars – Zittaw and Udolpho Presses are run by Gothic scholars Franz Potter and Norbert Besch, respectively – and train an aca-fan (to use the popular term for an academic/fan) eye on the Gothic.<sup>40</sup> Zittaw Press's Potter and his wife even recreate the practices of the Romantic printers, sewing their reissued chapbooks by hand; an industry once relying on cheap labor and anticipating the mass production techniques that we are so familiar with is redeemed by modern aca-fan artisans. Potter has lately launched a project called "Literary Mushrooms," the name given to chapbooks in the Romantic period, which makes visible the link between these early genre works and the pulp industry of the twentieth century (from magazines like

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<sup>40</sup> The rise of the term aca-fan has been documented best by aca-fans themselves; according to fanlore.org, then "it clearly happened between the time the first academics (Patricia Lamb, Joanna Russ) started writing about fandom in the late 80s and 1994 (or possibly late 1993), when Patricia Gillikin, started ACAFEN-L, the Academic Study of Fandom elist. The term 'aca-fan' was popularized by Matt Hills in his 2002 monograph, *Fan Cultures*." (Hills has been a major influence on my dissertation more generally, as his thinking on fandom and connoisseurship has influenced me greatly.) As fanlore.org also notes, Henry Jenkins, one of the most important fandom scholars in the field – he has testified before Congress in defense of video games, for instance, and more generally tries to popularize the idea of the positive uses of fandom – maintains a lively blog called "Confessions of an Aca-Fan."

*Weird Tales* to horror comics) by publishing Romantic chapbooks with cover illustrations in the mid-twentieth-century pulp style. (The project was funded by modern middle class patrons, contributors to the crowd-funding site Kickstarter) Besch uses Facebook as a platform to archive information on the Gothic and share it with both academics and non-academic fans – via his digital site "The Gothic Vault" – even as his own scholarly work recuperates that of forgotten writers like Isabella Kelly. Diane Long Hoeveler, whose *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998) combines a feminist and historical approach, though also considering mostly canonical novels, has similarly begun to apply such close attention and synthesizing power to minor works, studying them individually as well as en masse. (The February 2013 *European Romantic Review*, edited by Hoeveler, has several essays on lesser-known Gothic writers like W. H. Ireland.)

I briefly set out this critical history of the Gothic because it has been crucial to shaping this dissertation. I began my project inspired by the feminist critical work of the 1970 and 1980s, which looked at the uses of the Gothic for female readers by looking closely at what had been understudied texts. Feminist critics like Moers and Gilbert and Gubar not only uncovered a counter-history of feminist literature but also showed how it could help us rethink the Gothic more generally. It took the brilliant critical attention of writers like Moers and Gilbert and Gubar to make the case for the importance of the Gothic to rethinking gender, an intervention that has influenced mainstream feminism. (*The Madwoman in the Attic* has been recently discussed on National Public Radio, while Claire Messud's new novel, *The Woman Upstairs* [2013], is a reference to the figure of the angry woman, showing the trope's continued presence in popular literary feminist discourse.) Second wave feminism has also been indirectly responsible for one of the other critical works that has been central to my thinking, a work that actually challenged some basic ideas of that feminism: Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (1992). The horror films taken up by Clover are modern Gothic texts, and generally focus on a heroine – what Clover would influentially dub the Final Girl – so it is odd that they are missing from the recuperation of the Gothic to female cultural history. More than this, though, horror films were coming under attack from feminist critics, as Clover shows, even as the uses of the Gothic for women more broadly were being sketched out by that same feminist critical tradition. Clover's critical intervention of showing that these films are not only not generally misogynistic, but are in fact predicated on male fans identifying with women, helped to reorient the discussion and to give feminist film critics new directions in studying horror and gender in film. Clover does not look at the female audience for such films (admittedly not the majority audience, at least in the period), or at women involved creatively with the films, however, so that women are again left out of genre history. As I began studying the history of the Female Gothic, having already been a fan of horror, it seemed to me that the two traditions should be brought together, particularly as women figured largely in the first and were almost invisible in the second. Important feminist scholarship was indeed generated when they were looked at in common, as in the many great critical essays on *The Silence of the Lambs* (novel 1988, film 1991) – itself a more upscale slasher film, as Clover shows – of the 1990s. Yet that a genre had to be cleaned up, as it were, recuperated and made respectable, before it was addressed by a female audience and female critics, seemed to me to play into reactionary

ideas about gender and art. It seemed to me, then, that the cultural place of the Gothic, and its relationship to the reading and viewing woman, had to be addressed.

Speaking as an aca-fan, as a feminist critic who can speak about personal experience, then, I argue that the feminist discourse against horror – in which women take the moral and men the aesthetic ground – plays into traditional gender roles and, while attempting to combat misogyny, actually draws upon separate-spheres reasoning. I shall lay out below, then, how I discovered that the Final Girl was indeed only the last in a long line of Quixotic women who crossed into the dangerous male world (often by cross dressing, literally or figuratively) – that is, into the world more generally – and how my project aims to extend the critical feminist look at the Gothic of earlier critics like Moers and Gilbert and Gubar. Before I began my extended research into untold narratives from the Gothic's inception, I did not know that it was female writers, as much as male ones, who were laying down the basis of all genre literature – including that of horror, which would include what critics call the Male Gothic and much of the Female Gothic too – in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Women as well as men were starving in garrets to give life to the "horrid" conventions that would shock-twentieth century critics: maidens running down endless corridors from monsters, rolling eyes peeking through tapestries, grinning skeletons grasping bloody daggers. In the 1790s as in the 1970-90s, Gothic art came under attack, but the dangers to women were then, as now, much more prosaic, more corporeal and entrenched into law, less contained by a page or a screen, than any work of art. (Popular Gothic writer Anne Ker, for instance, was beset by the horrors of poverty, so that she had to beg the Royal Literary Fund repeatedly for even a few pounds.)<sup>41</sup>

While the discourse around works of art, and especially of popular art, cannot be directly compared between the two periods, I would say that we should keep in mind that progressive critics too can make reactionary assumptions and prescriptions in their attempts to correct social wrongs. The eighteenth-century fear of female reading – "a dangerous recreation," as Jacqueline Pearson calls it in her study of women's reading in the period – focused on ungoverned sexuality (reading "inflamed the passions," as the cliché went) and on the more general idea that reading lessened parents' control over their children, and especially over daughters.<sup>42</sup> The circulating library is famously dubbed "the evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge" in Sheridan's *Rivals* (1775). While such a fear of uncontrolled female access to works of art is not an aspect of modern feminism, and would in fact be condemned by it, the impulse to fear and blame works of art is similar. Thus, perhaps one reason that the horror film was more often cast as misogynistic than as covertly feminist in the 1970-90 – as other Gothic works were – has to do with a kind of

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<sup>41</sup> See Rachel Howard's essay on Ker.

<sup>42</sup> Though the critical assumption is generally that women's reading was seen as "dangerous" (as Pearson puts it), most of the discussion around controlling reading was aimed, then as now, at children and adolescents. Thus, Coleridge's review of *The Monk* (excerpted in *Gothic Documents*) imagines the horror felt by a parent if the *Monk* were seen "in the hand of a son or daughter," 298. Coleridge also quotes the infamous scene from the *Monk* in which Lewis satirically suggests that the Bible is as scandalous and graphic as any romance and that cultivating ignorance in women is perhaps more dangerous than their reading any scandalous book. (The hypocrite monk is glad to see that Elvira censors her daughter's reading, since it makes her more vulnerable.)

reversal of 1790s assumptions: while female readers were once assumed to be indiscriminating consumers of a genre cast as visceral, now male viewers were depicted in the same way. Both the Gothic novel and the horror film focus on a female character who, in Moers's formulation, emerges as "simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine," but while the novels were read symbolically as feminist protests, the films were largely read as literal attacks on women.<sup>43</sup> The difference in media cannot explain this phenomenon entirely, since novels are acknowledged by critics to have been as immediate in the eighteenth century as films are today. I would agree with Clover's argument that the answer is that these films' supposed "male sadism . . . holds the gender bottom line" (227), casting women as victims. While, as Clover shows, second wave feminists powerfully documented the social victimization of women, it is important to remember that such an insistence on gender differences has also been used historically to justify keeping women out of certain spheres. This idea is stated explicitly in *The Corinna of England*, an anti-Female Quixote novel that aims to show the danger of a woman defying the domestic sphere to enter the public one of the arts:

My dear child [the modest heroine remembers her mother saying], always avoid singularity; never wish to deviate from the beaten track; never imagine that you show understanding despising common terms, and those rules of decorum which the world has prescribed to your sex. No situation ought to preclude a young woman from acting in conformity to the laws of custom, and of prudence, which may in some sense be called *her fence of protection*, and the *bulwark of every virtue*.

Casting the horror film as a male genre in the 1970s and 80s, dangerous in its aggression towards women, essentially kept most female critics from engaging it and seeing its close alliance to other Gothic works. The horror film then became dangerous to women in another way, I would argue: it set up an area of female exclusion that came to represent a rarified aesthetic more broadly – a genre calling for connoisseurship, as Hills shows – precisely because of women's absence as viewers and critics. Some feminist critics have argued that the slasher film was part of the backlash against feminism – though the subgenre's roots are both in earlier films, especially Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), and Dario Argento's *gialli* (especially *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, 1970, and *Deep Red*, 1975), and, indeed, in the Gothic novel itself – but I argue that it serves as such mostly in its role as the province of a tough and detached male viewer. Like avant-garde movements, which must rebel against a moralizing, feminized mainstream, horror's aggression is set against a status quo identified with the anti-artistic figure of the scolding woman. Female critics' refusal to engage horror is not only a refusal to engage a self-consciously defiant artistic sphere, however, but a refusal to engage a consistently popular realm, since horror films remain popular with audiences, including women.

Much female criticism of horror would perhaps be justified if it were based on an understanding of, and engagement with, the genre, but it is based largely in a refusal of such engagement and in an incomplete understanding of its history. I thus aim to claim

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<sup>43</sup> *Literary Women*, 91. Clover refers to the Final Girl as a "victim-hero" (4).



not so much that horror films are in fact feminist – though I would say many are, as I show in my film chapter – but that the very refusal to engage with them in a critically rigorous manner (perhaps not achieving connoisseurship, but at least a basic understanding of the genre) ironically shows the entrenchment of gender biases that feminist critics would denounce. I argue, then, that feminist criticism of the Gothic was itself subject to the very institutionalized gender disparities it was critiquing. Such criticism by women, or on behalf of women (male critics can claim such a stance), does not achieve the connoisseurial imaginative investment and simultaneous detachment that, as the *Female Quixote* shows, is needed in reading romance. The literal reading of horror films collapses feminist criticism into the materialism, the uncritical immersion, that the *Female Quixote*-as-connoisseur opposes. Feminist critics could perform complex readings of *Female Gothic* texts that embedded a female subjectivity clearly but often faltered in interpreting horror films that showed the victimization of women – a victimization present in all Gothic texts – both more starkly and more seemingly ambiguously. Horror films speak viscerally about gender too, but to be understood they ask for both a fearless detachment and a simultaneous romance immersion into an unreal world that works according to its own stylized rules; in both cases, such a stance emerged as Quixotic for the female reader or viewer. I discuss horror films at some length here – though I only dedicate one chapter to them in what is otherwise a historicist Romanticist project – because I argue that they help us critique and thus advance feminist Gothic criticism, as I show below. Such a critique not only forces us to rethink canonical Gothic texts (what else may be appealing in Radcliffe to a female reader, for instance) but to rethink the history of the Gothic. My belief that women were more critical and detached readers than Gothic criticism sometimes made them out to be, and my sense that a *Female Gothic* work like *Jane Eyre* revels in its conventionality (as part of its larger unconventionality), led me to look for the active reader. As I show, I found literally active ones in the *Lady's Magazine*, readers who, after reading horrid Gothics were inspired to write them themselves. I found *Female Quixotes* – Staël's Corinne the most famous among them, as I argue – who were not only not banished from the aesthetic realm, but who were in charge of patiently explaining the logic of the aesthetic to moralizing men. What I found, then, were fearless heroines who were classic Romantic figures, not celebrating a genre unquestioningly nor blaming it reflexively but engaging imaginatively and judging connoisseurially.

What regarding the female Gothic reader as a connoisseur reveals, then, is that feminist Gothic criticism that focuses on the genre's usefulness as a tool for critiquing gender relations (through its dramatization of the power structures responsible for female oppression) can recreate the cultural logic that equates female reading with uncritical immersion.<sup>44</sup> The Gothic romance is regarded in this criticism as refracting the "real" world – and so helping women understand it, rebel against it, refashion it, etc. – rather than as constituting a newly privileged realm of the aesthetic, the engagement with which realm is itself a feminist stance. The most influential and powerful feminist readings of

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<sup>44</sup> This is not to deny that much of the thrill of the Gothic is its power for social critique and psychological suggestiveness. Richard Treadwell Davenport-Hines's *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil, and Ruin* is particularly good at analyzing the more general cultural sadomasochism (along with fantasies of destruction and apocalypse) at the root of the Gothic, rather than its specifically female expression (as is more common for Gothic criticism).

the Gothic have seen it as both a critique of a female ideology rooted in a confining domesticity and a means to unleash rebellious forces against such confinement, as in Gilbert and Gubar's classic *Madwoman*. Such readings were supplemented by those that accounted for the positive pleasure of the Gothic, such as Cynthia Griffin Wolff's view that the Gothic provides an expression of female subjectivity (and particularly sexuality) or Claire Kahane's argument that it explores the longing for a repressed female sphere represented by the Gothic's imprisoned woman. These readings do not regard the Gothic in the precise historical terms in which its contemporary readers would have thought of it, however, which is as romance. Recognizing the Gothic as a form of the modern romance (what it was often called in the period), part of the late eighteenth century's interest in the power of a new kind of aesthetic, rather than as a separate mode that developed in reaction to gender relations, helps us see how it functioned culturally. Further, rediscovering the Female Quixote as the predominant figure of the female Gothic reader – indeed, as the major cultural figure for the female reader in the period – helps us see the utopian role the Gothic held.

Some feminist critics have indeed framed the romance more generally in terms of its utopian gender ramifications, though still only within the parameters of romantic relationships; the romance in these cases still emerges as a mode focused on reforming heterosexual love. Thus, in *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984), Janice Radway uncovers the fantasies deployed by the popular women's romance novel, which focus on reforming the romantic relationship at its core and rendering the lover a kind of maternal figure (despite his status as the ultimate patriarch) who offers unconditional love and the promise of total fulfillment. Similarly, in *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982), Tania Modleski analyzes the fantasies mobilized by the various manifestations of the modern women's romance, including the Gothic, seeing the primary fantasy as an aggressive one – as suggested by the title – in which romantic love becomes the means of reclaiming female power over the patriarch. These readings, however, focus on the romance's ability to critique gender relations and imagine a more powerful role for the woman, a role in which patriarchal power is either conquered or refocused.

Radway has importantly looked beyond this, at the practice of romance reading itself (as indicated by her title), a consideration which is central to my argument that the discipline of reading is as important as the content of that reading. Radway has shown the rebelliousness of the practice: through the focused reading of the romance, often as part of a reading group, female readers prioritize their own aesthetic indulgence over domestic responsibilities. The romances Radway looks at, however, are focused on the realities of female life, particularly romantic relationships, and explore fantasies of gender power; thus, the women's investment is understood to be psychological more than aesthetic, the novel a kind of self-help work. Further, while the world imagined by these romance novels is utopian, it is still a traditionally female world of relationships and love, a different side of the domestic. This is not to say that all aesthetic investment must be disinterested, however, and the model Radway proposes does have something in common with my own interest in the way connoisseurship is rebellious precisely because it values aesthetic engagement over social responsibilities. In this way, women's obsessive reading of romance novels, perceived as proper gender behavior to a certain point, is akin to men's obsession with science-fiction works; the content matches gender expectations but

the intensity of the investment counters social expectations. Romance reading for women, however, fits into a normalized model of fantasy, at least as has been sketched by psychoanalysis and more generally understood in the culture; in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1907), Freud thus claims that women fantasize about love and men about heroism. Further, the woman's romance novel has justifiably been seen as closer to pornography for women – perhaps most famously stated in Ann Barr Snitow's classic feminist essay "Mass Market Romance: Pornography is Different for Women" – rather than to other genre literatures.<sup>45</sup> While the turn to a personal world of fantasy can be considered a protest of social conditions, such reading for women still plays into a fantasy of a utopian romantic relationship, even if the ultimate wish is for increased power. More so, female reading already has to fight harder to counter charges of over-immersion. Yet that female romance reading has developed around it the same kinds of connoisseurial practices that male genre fiction has – conventions, online forums, elaborate play-acting, etc. – suggests that romance reading partakes of certain aspects of connoisseurship as well. Many kinds of pursuits develop such connoisseurial practices around them, however – including pornography – so that content and its relationship to gender are as important. In my dissertation, I look at the romance, as it was defined in the Romantic period – its modern equivalent is *all* genre literature – as offering women an aesthetic identity; this is the meaning of the Female Quixote, as I shall show.

Instead of looking to the kinds of romances studied by second wave feminist critics like Radway and Modleski, then, I ask: what about the woman who reads other modern manifestations of the romance, such as mystery, or horror, or science-fiction? Feminist critics have focused on the Gothic romance, but their exploration of its core relationship, between the Fatal Man and the sensibility heroine, has too often led to its being read directly against romantic relationships. In this, feminist critics were often following the "Radcliffean model," as Griffin Wolff calls it, but they therefore ignored the many other models of the Gothic women were also reading in the Romantic period. Even if the discussion is limited to the Radcliffean model, however, the genre's engagement with female subjectivity in a patriarchal society is only one of the ways it emerges as feminist. I draw upon a suggestion that Ellen Moers makes about Radcliffe in her classic feminist work *Literary Women* in order to rethink the use of the romance: Moers notes the aestheticized artificiality of Radcliffe's landscapes and argues that the pleasure for the heroine is that of exploring a world of wonder and adventure. Moers suggests that the artificiality of this Gothic world – both its stylized foreign landscapes and its extraordinary adventures – signals its distance from the world of real problems. What Moers's analysis of romance heroines' enjoyment of an artificial and exciting scenario illuminates is that the Gothic romance appeals to female readers, both in the 1790s and in the twentieth century, not only because it speaks to them as women but as aesthetic subjects. For the original Female Quixote, the romance indicates an independent sphere of aesthetic pleasure and practice that is ruptured from the domestic and from any particularly utilitarian function; the regime of social duty is replaced by one of personal aesthetic indulgence. Further, the very distance from "real life" of the romance indicates

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<sup>45</sup> The idea that Harlequins are pornography for women, while an obvious observation now, held more charge at a time when they were considered retrograde (and a time before Harlequin started publishing explicitly erotic works). Snitow's essay first appeared in the *Radical History Review* 20, Spring/Summer 1979, 141-161. (Snitow builds on ideas by Peter Parisi.)

the female reader's ability to escape that reality; the regime of material necessity is replaced by that of ideal possibility. The Female Quixote figure is thus part of a larger history of female idealism and emerges as a proto-Romantic figure that seizes the aesthetic as the realm of the ideal.

Feminist criticism has begun to address the Female Quixote formula – in which the romance represents a privileged world of the aesthetic (though not exactly in those terms) – in its exploration of the figure of the Fatal Man. As such, this strain of feminist criticism draws upon an older tradition of Gothic criticism – from critics like Montague Summers and Robert Kiely – which sees the Gothic as an expression of Romanticism, so that its deployment of the sublime represents a longing for the ideal, formulated in Romantic discourse as the realm of the aesthetic. Critics like Anne Williams and Helen Stoddart have taken up this formula for feminist criticism, so that the Fatal Man becomes the sublime sphere to which the heroine aspires. My own reading builds on this approach by historicizing the powerful link between the Gothic and a feminist Romanticism that exalts the sphere of the aesthetic. My historicization of feminist criticism of the Gothic is based on a recognition that the romance, and particularly the Gothic romance, is implicated from the first with questions of the aesthetic and of the developing concept of genius, a connection foregrounded in the literature of Female Quixotism. More so, the Gothic romance gives rise to what we now know as genre literature – not just romance novels, but horror, science-fiction, westerns, etc. – so that if we wish to understand the feminist uses of the Gothic, we have to look at women's relationship with the development of this genre literature. As I show in my chapter on the *Lady's Magazine*, in the 1790s, women were considered as the primary readers, and writers, of most such literature, from what we would now consider female Gothic novels, by the likes of Radcliffe and Smith, to more "horrid" Gothics like those by Eliza Parsons (author of one of the "horrid" novels named in *Northanger Abbey*). That the *Lady's Magazine* published most original Gothic fiction before *Blackwood's* – titles like *The Monks and Robbers*, *A Tale* and *De Courville Castle, A Romance* – shows that, while both sexes read the Gothic romance, it was initially associated with women as a new genre.

Following this introduction, my first chapter, "Art and Artfulness: Theorizing the Female Connoisseur from the Learned Woman through Female Quixote Satires," serves as the historical and theoretical basis of my dissertation, as I trace the philosophy of female connoisseurship from its early emergence in the figure of the learned woman (and related *précieuse*) in the seventeenth century to its consolidation into Female Quixotism in the eighteenth and to its Romantic transformation into the figure of the artistic woman of genius, the most famous of which is Staël's Corinne. (Staël's incredibly influential novel *Corinne, or Italy* [1807] constitutes enough of a separate development that I dedicate a separate chapter to it, however, as I explain below.) Though the history I trace for the female connoisseur spans many historical developments, and is modified by these, the underlying structure that is set into place in the seventeenth century in the parallel figures of the learned woman (and related *précieuse*) and the virtuoso (later connoisseur) remains constant. The figures of the learned woman and the *précieuse* and that of the virtuoso are parallels in that they both seek to transcend the material world of limitations (often biological limitations) by a self-indulgent investment in that of the ideal: for the learned woman idealist philosophy and art, for the *précieuse* romance, and for the virtuoso natural philosophy (though of the most speculative kind). For the learned woman

and the *précieuse*, the aspiration is to transcend gender limitations, constructed as the materialist reality of female biology (which involves marriage, children, and domesticity more generally), and enter the sphere of men, constructed as the ideal one of philosophy and art. The virtuoso, while not deliberately countering social reality, defies it by being less interested in the grind of empiricism and focusing on that of the wildest speculations. Both figures, however, are brought down to earth – both are associated with star-gazing – through satire that shows that their idealism is only a more ridiculous or disguised form of materialism. Molière's satires on the figures, *Les Femmes savantes* and *Les Précieuses ridicules*, suggest that these intellectual and romance-reading women are as vain and socially-ambitious as non-intellectual women but use their supposed intellectualism (which is also debunked) as social capital. Shadwell's satire *The Virtuoso* uses a similar tactic of rendering the ideal material by casting the virtuoso's interest in minutiae as grotesque and bathetic, so that he misses the grandeur he seeks in his attention to the unimportant.

The above history is a prelude to the main argument of the chapter, which is that this tradition in which a figure tries to counter social limitations, setting up a utopian world of desire and intellect, becomes dignified by the eighteenth-century cultural development of sensibility, which revalues unworldliness. As such, positive figures of the learned woman/*précieuse* and of the virtuoso develop, in the figures of the Female Quixote and of the connoisseur/dilettante (a member of the Society of the Dilettanti). I examine what I argue are figures whose idealism is valorized and affirmed in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) and Conolly's *The Connoisseur* (1736). These figures undergo positive developments in the mid and late eighteenth century not only because they come to be seen as sensibility figures but also because they become the central figures of newly developing modes of artistic engagement. The connoisseur develops a mode of expertise, of discriminating taste and deep knowledge, based not in the social world of necessity (that of the professional) but that of personal obsession and social connection through shared interests (the Society of the Dilettanti).<sup>46</sup> The Female Quixote, while still focused on French heroic romances in Lennox's iteration, develops into an even more influential figure: that of the romance connoisseur. While male connoisseurs become experts, through their obsessional energies, on classical art and history, the Female Quixote becomes a connoisseur of the growing modern romance, a development that, I argue, is a precursor to modern fandom. For the Female Quixote, however, such connoisseurship carries the extra charge of feminism, since it acts as a bulwark against social responsibilities and a socially-imposed identity.

The third part of my chapter is actually the core of my argument, and of my dissertation: the literature of Female Quixotism, which develops in the mid-eighteenth century but peaks in the Romantic period, represents an important literary and historical development and constitutes a form of feminist Romanticism. While the Female Quixote is most usually considered a mocked figure, or perhaps an ambiguously celebrated one (as feminist criticism has asserted of Lennox's *Arabella*), I show that she is the center of a larger discourse about the relationship between art and gender. Building on the dynamic we see already in place in Molière, the Female Quixote makes a bid towards an ideal

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<sup>46</sup> I am especially indebted to Bruce Redford's *Dilettanti* for my understanding of how the figure of the virtuoso/connoisseur/dilettanti developed in relation to the eighteenth-century "associational world" and sensibility culture more generally.

sphere of the aesthetic (often called "genius" in the discourse and usually associated with "romance" reading) but is vulnerable to being satirized as only a more subtle cynic who wishes to gain an additional means of distinction over other women. As her name suggests, she is part of a larger discourse of Quixotism in the period, in which idealism is both celebrated by sensibility culture and debunked by those who fear the disruptive tendency of this idealism (particularly after the French Revolution) and seek to expose its worldly interests. I look at a couple of works in the various subgenres of Female Quixotism – which I divide schematically into pro-Female Quixote and anti-Female Quixote works – to show how the figure focused the debate on gender through women's relationship to art. The main aspiration documented in the genre is summarized by one of its works, Sophia Griffith's *She Would Be an Heroine* (1816), in which heroism, the trope of Female Quixotism, comes to stand in for a feminist transcendence of social limitations. Further, in supporting either a pro- or anti-Female Quixote stance, these works make use of the sensibility convention in which a heroine and anti-heroine are paired. In pro-Female Quixote works, the heroine is the artistic figure, so that her love of reading stands in for her unworldliness; she is here countered by a crass and worldly inartistic anti-heroine. This model is made use of from Lennox on. In anti-Female Quixote works, the artistic heroine is the worldly figure who persecutes a modest inartistic figure who emerges as the true heroine; in this case, art stands in for artfulness and social capital the anti-heroine wishes to wield cynically. Such a pair is presented as early as *Les Femmes savantes*.

Each of the sub-genres of Female Quixotism focuses the issue differently, based mainly on whether it sets itself as pro- or anti-Female Quixote. The first subgenre I look at, which is the most decidedly pro-Female Quixote, represented mainly by Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins's *The Victim of Fancy* (1786) and Maria Jewsbury's *History of an Enthusiast* (1830, though I also look briefly at Austen's *Northanger Abbey* [1798;1818] and Maria Edgeworth's "Angelina" [1801]), develops the visionary quality of the figure and renders her an aspiring or actual artist. This subgenre develops the idea that the active reading of Lennox's *Arabella* seeks to become writing, active creation – her wish to act out the adventures she reads about is a wish to author them – and culminates in her becoming a woman of genius. While the woman of genius novels develop Hills's connoisseurial quality of "Romantic intensity," another strain focuses on what he dubs "cool knowledgeability": the Female Quixote who knew too much strain, represented here by George Colman's *Polly Honeycombe* (1760), Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* (1813), and Griffith's *She Would Be an Heroine* (1816). While these novels are generally considered as anti-Female Quixote, I argue that they are more ambiguous and that they create witty and knowing figures who, in their ability to impersonate characters and mimic genre, are artistic figures. These novels also develop the strain of Female Quixotism that casts masculinity as another category that the female figure wishes to claim so as to transcend limitations on women. More so, these figures, claiming masculine aggression, are associated with rebellion and destructiveness that must be contained. The last figure of Female Quixotism I consider is that which is usually associated with the type: the foolish romance reading woman, here represented by Mary Charlton's *Rosella* (1799) and Sarah Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810). These novels are notable for their engagement with the marketplace, which is idealized by some pro-Female Quixote works as the route to artistic opportunity and

satirized by anti-Female Quixote ones as a degraded expression of the aesthetic. Both *Rosella* and *Romance Readers* – which are themselves modishly written even as they engage a modish commercial sphere – make use of the marketplace as a means of rendering the romance degradingly material. Both novels also make use of the pairing of heroine and anti-heroine, with *Rosella* making particular use of the idea that the anti-heroine Female Quixote exercises her creative aspirations on a modest protégée who serves as the modest true heroine.

In my third chapter, "Quixotic Corinne: Staël, Sensibility, and the British Female Quixote Tradition," I look at one of the most influential figures to develop from the Female Quixote as female connoisseur tradition: Romantic artist and woman of genius Corinne. While the Female Quixote tradition had generally split the dual tendencies of the figure – a visionary imagination and intellectual sophistication – as set out by Lennox, Staël brings them together in learned woman *and* inspired poet Corinne. Though Tomlins's 1786 *Victim of Fancy* depicts a woman of genius and would-be artist, and while some semi-Quixotic sensibility figures are artistic (most notably Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert), Staël is the first to render the Quixotic woman an actual artist. As such, Corinne literalizes the aspiration of the Female Quixote and becomes an author. Corinne develops both aspects of female connoisseurship, as she understands, and teaches others about, the sophisticated system of artistic conventions – represented in the novel most powerfully by the rituals of Italian society and of Catholicism – and sees in these conventions the means of aesthetic transcendence. Corinne is adopted back into the British tradition, but she often occurs as an anti-Corinne or failed Corinne. Even *History of an Enthusiast* – which postdates *Corinne*, but which I look at in my previous chapter because I wish to stress the connection between what is usually read as only a *Corinne*-referencing work and the Female Quixote tradition – casts its woman of genius as ultimately disillusioned with her artistic calling (though in this she follows the Byronic tradition). The more clear anti-Corinne work, *The Corinna of England, or A Heroine in the Shade* (1809), emerges as the ultimate anti-Female Quixote work, which tries to apply the sensibility critique of the artistic woman to *Corinne* by rendering the aesthetic woman a vain persecutor of a truly sensitive conforming heroine. As I show, however, Staël had already forestalled such an attack by critiquing the dual heroine model, rendering her aesthetic woman more deep-feeling and capable of suffering – more of a true sensibility heroine, recalling Richardson's *Clarissa* particularly – than the conforming modest heroine. Further, Staël undoes the sensibility idea that art threatens to become artfulness by removing her Female Quixote from the British social sphere, which relies on such a formula. Staël renders Italy a land in which the conventionality of art is accepted so that displaying knowingness does not threaten a sensibility regime that relies on a certain level of Quixotic obliviousness. Not only is Italy idealized as not partaking of a degraded marketplace that threatens to render art material, but the culture's admiration of the arts renders ambition itself an idealized pursuit of beauty rather than a selfish bid for social distinction.<sup>47</sup>

My fourth chapter, "The Lady's Magazine and the Reader-Writer: A Historical Case Study of Female Gothic Connoisseurship," looks at another literalization of the Female Quixote's wish to become an artist, this time a historical rather than literary one.

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<sup>47</sup> The best of the British Corinnes is perhaps Scott's Rebecca, from *Ivanhoe* (1820), though I do not discuss her in this dissertation.

*The Lady's Magazine* made the marketplace the means through which the reader could become an author and encouraged the development of an aesthetic identity in its female reader-writers. I argue that the LM deployed a discourse of Female Quixotism, since not only did it encourage female education (like many other women's magazine of the period), but it also pursued a broader Wollstonecraftian discourse that interrogated feminine ideology and championed the development of female "genius." While the LM championed female education more generally, it particularly focused on women's aesthetic education – featuring both a great deal of fiction and works theorizing the history and value of fiction – and so cast its readers as aesthetic subjects. More so, it encouraged female artistic ambition – existing as its own idealized sphere within Britain – asking its readers to submit their own "first attempts" at fiction and offering critique and encouragement to these beginning writers. More so, it allowed these writers to restyle themselves, much like Corinne herself, as artists, as they sent in their attempts under pseudonyms that transformed them into literary figures. More so, the LM's creation of an idealized sphere, a club of both female and male writers, who came together in an aesthetic community to read, write, and deploy puzzles about both their reading and each other, recalls the ludic community of the dilettanti (as well as the clubs of the Enlightenment public sphere). As such, the LM practically fulfilled the Female Quixote's wish to escape socialized femininity in a sometimes androgynous and pre-socialized identity based in the transformative power of Gothic romance.

The importance of the Gothic to the female connoisseur thus comes to the fore in this chapter, as, like the literature of Female Quixotism, the importance of the LM is not only in the kind of reading-writing practices it encouraged but in the subject matter of that reading-writing. As Robert Mayo has shown, the LM was the magazine that published the majority of Gothic stories and novels before *Blackwood's*, many of which were by reader-writers themselves. Starting in the early 1790s and continuing throughout the decade, the LM published both excerpts from foundational works theorizing and championing the new Gothic romance (and its attendant quality of the sublime) and Gothic works themselves (including the first translation of Ducray-Duminil's roman noir *Alexis; or, the Cottage in the Woods*). As such, readers of the LM learned the conventions of the Gothic and were then able to practice deploying them in imitative fiction, as I show in a discussion focused on the Gothic fiction of the 1790s LM. I end the chapter with a connoisseurial reading of what I argue is a connoisseurial text, E. F.'s (also known as "A Young Lady") *De Courville Castle* (1795-97). I show both how E. F. draws upon well established Gothic conventions and conventional language, which would trigger many associations and the memory of related works for a connoisseurial reader, and also manipulates these skillfully and effectively.

In my fifth chapter, "The 'Lurid Hieroglyphics' of Literary Conventions: Aestheticizing the Convention in *Jane Eyre*," I look at a text that both deploys and thematizes the power of literary conventionality for a female reader implicitly rendered connoisseurial, a text written by a romance connoisseur and reader of her aunt's 1790s LM, Charlotte Brontë. I focus on the most conventional scene in the novel, Rochester's story about his ex-mistress Céline, to argue that it acts much like the embedded self-reflexive text found in many Gothic texts: to activate and reflect upon the core elements and aesthetic appeal of the genre. I argue that the Céline scene acts as an emblem for the novel as a whole, evoking its lasting power, by suggesting how conventionality, romance,



and the Gothic are the means through which the reader-writer is figured as an aesthetic subject. The Céline scene, which is both self-consciously conventional and stylized, is meant to be recognized by the reader as a concentration of popular novelistic conventions, thereby evoking the feeling of connoisseurship. More so, however, its saturated quality and sensual overload is meant to represent the reader's aesthetic desire, which triggers the Quixotic transcendence of a limiting gendered social identity into an aesthetic world cast as transformative. As in *Corinne*, where the ritual is the material representation of an idealized world of possibility – cast not as religion but as art, though they are actually both seen as part of the realm of the aesthetic by Corinne – so here the exaggerated convention suggests that what is being presented is something like a celebration of aesthetic enjoyment itself. (Here Hills's "Romantic intensity" follows "cool knowledgeability" as well as precedes it.)

More so, I argue that Brontë uses the conventional Gothic figure of the Byronic hero to suggest how such aesthetic desire and knowledge act as the means of transcending gender limitations. Here Rochester plays the part of the Fatal Man who represents the aesthetic sphere to which the female reader aspires in the Female Gothic, so that his being both storyteller and embodiment of the story serves to suggest that it is genre itself that allows the reader to be cast as an aesthetic subject. As Byronic anti-hero, Rochester represents both conventionality and Gothic strangeness and so joins the two, suggesting that the conventionality that represents the material of art itself is also the means of experiencing the pleasurable strangeness that marks the difference between the real and the aesthetic. By locating the Céline scene as the feminist heart of the novel, rather than, say, its celebrated conclusion, I also wish to push against the idea of *Bildung* more generally and the idea that Jane's or Rochester's transformation is crucial to the meaning of the novel. More so, I wish to emphasize the way the conventionality of the novel is central to its feminism, as it inscribes a female connoisseurial consciousness within the text and activates its related state of aesthetic desire.

My last chapter, "The Final Girl as Female Quixote: the Career-Woman-in-Peril Thriller and the Endurance of the Feminist Uses of the Gothic," acts as a conclusion as it takes the dissertation up to the present moment, in which, I argue, the aesthetic remains as both an aspirational and forbidden sphere for women, as demonstrated by the deployment of the Gothic in the woman's film. I here aim to bring together second wave feminist Gothic criticism and my own interest in the role of the aesthetic in this discourse by looking at how the terms of Female Quixotism are redeployed by what I argue is a modern feminist discourse: the woman's Gothic film. I trace the rise of what I call the "career-woman-in-peril" film, a subgenre of the woman's film that developed out of second wave concerns about definitions of femininity that are essentially limiting and require a Quixotic transgression of social femininity. I here draw upon Clover's *Final Girl* who, I argue, is a type of the Female Quixote in her essential difference from socialized femininity: she is, as Clover, shows "masculine" in her intellectual seriousness and pursuits, her virginity symbolizing that she has not yet entered the social sphere, that she is essentially "immature." While other critics have noted that the figure appears in various kinds of films, from thrillers to action movies, they have not considered her in light of a history of Female Quixotism in which horror represents not that which destroys her but that which frees her from the social – a dynamic most explicit in Bernard Rose's *Candyman* (1992), but inherent in the entire genre. That the horror film casts itself as

seemingly threatening to female viewers, and is cast as such by the culture, plays into the Female Quixote dynamic in which the subject matter of the reading mirrors the wishes of the readers to enter such a sphere – that is, the dangerous sphere of "unfeminine" pursuits. Further, as I argue above, the horror film, like the romance and Gothic texts I have been tracing, renders the viewer an aesthetic subject because it calls for (as Hills shows) or eventually engenders a connoisseurial perspective. (That is, if one were bothered by the content or engaged it literally, one would not enjoy the genre; to persist in watching is to achieve some level of connoisseurship.) By casting the Final Girl as a Female Quixote and thus reclaiming her for the female viewer, I aim to reconvene the original girls' club of female Gothic connoisseurship.

## Chapter 1:

### Art and Artfulness: Theorizing the Female Connoisseur through Female Quixote Satires

#### Part 1: The Philosophy of Connoisseurship and the Roots of Female Idealism: The Quixotic Learned Woman and the Classic Connoisseur

The satirized romance-reading woman arises in the seventeenth century (Molière's learned woman and *précieuse* are influential variations, while Adrien Thomas Perdou de Subligny's 1678 *Mock-Clelia* is a more recognizable version of the Female Quixote) but really becomes a stock type by the eighteenth, found both as a common comic character among many and at the center of her own Female Quixote text, which, as I argue above, is a subgenre of sensibility fiction.<sup>48</sup> The Female Quixote work (usually novel, but sometimes play or tale) develops and rises in popularity throughout the eighteenth century with the rise in the readership and publication of the modern romance, and then finds new life with the invention of the Gothic romance in the 1790s. The genre begins in earnest with Lennox's 1752 canon-defining novel *The Female Quixote: or, The Adventures of Arabella* (not the first to use the term Female Quixote, which was a common formulation, but certainly the most influential) and develops from there into a variety of works: from Colman's underrated one-act play *Polly Honeycombe; A Dramatic Novel of One Act* (1760) to the famous *Northanger Abbey* (1798;1818), to more obscure but telling versions such as Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins's *The Victim of Fancy* (1786), Mary Charlton's *Rosella; or, Modern Occurrences* (1799), Tabitha Gilman Tenney's *Female Quixotism: Exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon* (1801, interesting because it is American), Mrs. Bullock's *Susanna; or, Traits of a Modern Miss* (1798, not available except in a few copies, which I have not been able to get to read), Maria Edgeworth's "Angelina; or, L'Amie Inconnue" (in *Moral Tales*, 1801), E. M. Foster's *The Corinna of England; or, A Heroine in the Shade* (1809), Sarah Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers: A Satirical Novel* (1810), Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine, or Adventures of a Fair Romance Reader* (1813), Sophia Griffiths's *She Would Be an Heroine* (1816), and Maria Jane Jewsbury's "History of an Enthusiast" (in *The Three Histories*, 1830). (Even Austen's *Emma* [1816] has elements of the type, though she is not precisely an idealist nor a reader.)<sup>49</sup> Staël's *Corinne, or Italy*

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<sup>48</sup> One can thus differentiate between Female Quixote satires, which focus on the figure, and works which only feature her as another comic type. Note also that Myra Reynolds, in her study of learned women in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Britain, *The Learned Lady in England*, also makes the connection between this figure and the Female Quixote.

<sup>49</sup> Other critics have noted Austen's use of the figure in more subtle ways in works such as *Emma*. See for example, Paulson's discussion of the Female Quixote in his *Don Quixote in England*. He says of the type: "The social blindness that goes with Arabella's madness is at least analogous to the blind spot in a Catherine Morland, Elizabeth Bennet, or Emma Woodhouse. . . . Once Quixote is embodied in a woman, Austen can create a novel that is centered on the woman who is cleverer than those around her but deluded in one area. The moment in which Quixote is feminized leads in one way to the heroines of Anne Radcliffe's novels and in another to Austen's." (177).

(1807) is the most influential variation on the subgenre, as I will argue, but Staël's transformation of the Female Quixote is major enough that I shall devote a separate chapter to it and its influence.

This section is built on the contention that looking at Female Quixote novels en masse, rather than at only a few canonical versions such as Lennox's and Austen's, reveals important literary patterns and shows that this literature is doing important cultural work – most saliently for my argument, inquiring into and theorizing the relationship between art and femininity.<sup>50</sup> Female Quixote texts make use of a proto-Romantic logic which valorizes art as an aspirational, utopian sphere that challenges social categories and restrictions. This developing view of art dovetails with the discourse of the learned woman, in which philosophy (like romance, a broad term in this discourse, ranging from Platonism to natural philosophy and sometimes overlapping with romance reading, as in the précieuse figure) is taken up as the realm that would dissolve sexual difference and allow female social transcendence. Although this proto-Romantic view of art is the basis of Female Quixotism, not all Female Quixote works end up endorsing the transformative power of the aesthetic, though they all necessarily engage the concept. The philosophy of connoisseurship, as outlined above, is a related expression of this developing view of art, and particularly of artistic reception as its own form of aesthetic production, and is thus another main expression of Quixotism in the eighteenth century. Female Quixotism should thus be understood as an important kind of female connoisseurship, as I will further argue below, and the true precursor of the more modern practice of ultra-fandom. The recent dubbing of ultra-fandom as "geekery" effectively gets at the intellectualism of the practice, and its relation with learning, and reveals its cultural stakes and pretensions. The term connoisseur (as best used and illuminated in this context by Hills) is even better at capturing the history of the practice, even though it misses the anti-social obsessiveness (and related implications of awkwardness and obliviousness I trace in the figure) conveyed by our category of the "geek." That such a practice is considered a male preserve shows not only a cultural forgetting of literary history, but is more importantly a reminder that female connoisseurship has always countered traditional femininity. The combination of learning, obsession, artistic dedication, and social obliviousness that the connoisseur figure and the Female Quixote share are aspirational in a society where femininity is defined as almost the very opposite.

Before looking at the conventions and variations through which Female Quixote texts (and I will generally refer to them as such rather than as female connoisseur texts because this is how the genre has come to be known) explore gender by exploring female artistic reception, it is important to note that the genre is actually divided into two variations: pro-Female Quixote and anti-Female Quixote works. While there are important ambiguities, all Female Quixote works nevertheless align themselves with one

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Though the Female Quixote is well understood in these terms, I will analyze the importance of lesser-noticed Female Quixote conventions – such as that of the Female Quixote's shaping of a younger woman into a romance heroine, upon which Austen plays.

<sup>50</sup> In my attempt to look at larger patterns by reading many different works, both major and minor, I have been influenced both by Moretti's technique of "distant" reading (from his *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*) as well as the example of earlier critics like Montague Summers and Robert Mayo.

position or another, and so with a larger world view or another, simply by rendering the Female Quixote as heroine or anti-heroine. The pro and anti-Female Quixote formula works largely because of the logic of sensibility culture, which both makes the Female Quixote possible and also limits her mode of action. Sensibility, as critics from Deborah Ross to Tania Modleski have shown, necessitates a lack of self-consciousness, an obliviousness to the world's workings. This obliviousness is an important trait particularly for the sensibility heroine, as Ross and Modleski stress, since women are thought to be particularly keen to social cues and thus less likely to be truly unaware of them.<sup>51</sup> But such a supposedly rare female trait is paradoxically of great value in the world, and can be a means of distinction. The worldly use of sensitivity is thus recognized from its inception: just as Richardson creates in Pamela a sensibility heroine whose disinterestedness separates her from crass womanhood, so Fielding follows up with his Shamela, who knows the value of standing out.<sup>52</sup> Fielding's satirical critique of the new sensibility is then one model for anti-Female Quixote works, though he is anticipated by Molière whose learned women and précieuses crassly deploy the status gained from their supposed greater sensitivity and idealism in the social war with other women for worldly distinction.

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<sup>51</sup> See Ross's "Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of The Female Quixote" and Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance*.

<sup>52</sup> Class plays a major role in this equation, of course: Pamela's victimization by Mr. B is predicated on her lower class status (unlike that of Lovelace or Clarissa), so that her learning and sensitivity allow her to transcend class as much as gender boundaries. Pamela's sensitivity acts here to suggest she "transcends" her lower class milieu, a social fantasy played on in the romance convention of the lower class figure who is in fact of aristocratic birth. (Though Pamela is significantly not of high birth, which plays against that romance idea, Gillian Beer notes in "Pamela: Rethinking Arcadia.") And some Female Quixote novels play on this fantasy, as for example Barrett's *The Heroine*, whose titular character imagines she must have more refined parents, or *Emma*, where Emma imagines Harriet (whose origins are obscure but not illustrious) to be of much higher birth.

What is particularly important about the Pamela formula, in which rare talents allow one to transcend group status, is that it plays into the very same social structure it seems to critique by supporting the idea that the figure is special because she is so different from her class. Such a literary and cultural formula also mystifies art and artistic sensitivity in ways that I want to avoid in this dissertation. While many of these Romantic and proto-Romantic works do mystify art, I want to argue that Female Quixote works – including of the Corinne variety – are not simply focused on the exceptional female figure but use her to show that all women have been rendered limited by cultural femininity. The Female Quixote, through both her talent and her circumstances – her separation from the world, her unusual education (often by her father) – is merely the figure who can show up the idea that femininity as it has been understood is essential and unalterable. Thus, Female Quixote works are part of the same feminist project as that which takes on female education – led by figures such as Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays – but are a more radical challenge to femininity, as well as a more widespread and popular one. That is, despite the seeming elitism of the heroine discourse, Female Quixotism (and especially in its female connoisseurship form) is about the liberating power of the aesthetic for all women. The Female Quixote often fights for her fellow women – see, for instance, Polly Honeycombe, who is ready to lead the battle.

Importantly, however, anti-Female Quixote works are not necessarily anti-sensibility: rather, most anti-Female Quixote authors recognize the feminist power of sensibility but purge it of its radical potential by defining it differently from pro-Female Quixote works. Authors of anti-Female Quixote works use the very sensibility framework of these novels to subvert the feminist heroines sensibility makes possible. Anti-Female Quixote works accomplish this by making use of (and reversing) a key sensibility novel convention: the pairing of an artistic, learned, sensitive heroine with a crass, inartistic, traditionally feminine anti-heroine who persecutes and endangers her.<sup>53</sup> In anti-Female Quixote works, then, the artistic heroine is rendered as the artful, aggressive, socially-ambitious figure whose artistic sensitivity is only a bid toward social distinction, and who persecutes and endangers a modest, inartistic and artless true sensibility heroine.<sup>54</sup> These anti-Female Quixote works make much of the misogynistic idea that artistic sensitivity is only another weapon in the long female battle for social distinction. In this view, women, socially astute as they are, seize on the fashion of sensibility to have an edge in their fight for attention.

This anti-Female Quixote critique is somewhat forestalled by Female Quixotism itself, however, since the Female Quixote is characterized as a champion of all women, so that even if her quest renders her an exceptional figure, its goal is to challenge the gender boundaries restricting all women. More pointedly, the basis of Female Quixotism is the contention that femininity is socially-defined and dependent on socialization, so that any woman could sidestep destructive normative femininity the way a Female Quixote does: by escaping standard socialization. Anticipating critics of female education like Wollstonecraft, and second-wave feminists like Germaine Greer, Female Quixote works critique gender-essentialism, suggesting that the problem is with female socialization rather than with female nature.<sup>55</sup> While the anti-Female Quixote subgenre of Female Quixote works clings to an essential materialism that doubts the possibility of transcending certain categories (such as gender), and thus cast female artistic passion as

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<sup>53</sup> This is a commonplace of sensibility, discussed by many critics, but see, for instance, Todd's discussion in her *Sensibility* and G. J. Barker-Benfield's in *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Barker-Benfield discusses the figures of Emily St. Aubert and Madame Cheron as such a heroine/anti-heroine duo, with Madame Cheron's "envy, social climbing, and 'selfish vanity'" (207). As Barker-Benfield states: "Novelists taught the moral value of taste by contrasting tasteful heroines of sensibility with tasteless women of the world" (206). Gary Kelly has also discussed this sensibility contrast in various places, arguing that it represents the middle class bid towards social power by its rejecting what it cast as the dissipated values of the aristocracy and the degraded ones of the lower classes. (See, for instance, his introduction to the series *Varieties of the Female Gothic*, as well as his discussion of Radcliffe's heroines in "'A Constant Vicissitude of Interesting Passions': Ann Radcliffe's Perplexed Narratives.")

<sup>54</sup> The sensibility heroine is masculine in the way recognized by critics like Kelly, who argues that sensibility culture smooths out gender differences, which are seen as characteristic of a corrupt aristocracy.

<sup>55</sup> In *The Female Eunuch*, Greer argues that traditional femininity, a cultural construct into which girls are socialized, robs women of their natural vitality and personality; it is not women that are weak, but rather that femininity is weakening. Her position is thus both anti-essentialist and classically Romantic.

only another form of traditional female vanity, many pro-Female Quixote works question these supposedly essential categories.

This questioning of essentialist difference inheres in sensibility more generally and is at the root of many of its canonical novels: thus, Richardson's influential *Pamela* is importantly progressive in its suggestion that virtue and intellect are not the province of the upper classes, as would have been suggested if Richardson had made Pamela an aristocrat misplaced at birth. The cause of Pamela's class and gender exceptionality is somewhat vague, however, and follows a common pattern made use of in challenging the status quo: the idea that special talent allows a select few to overcome social boundaries. Art and artistic sensitivity have been much mystified and deployed in this way, and Female Quixote works (and the seminal *Corinne*) can be seen as putting forth an early version of this formula. But Female Quixote novels suggest a more democratic logic than the figure of the exceptional woman would suggest: the Female Quixote's ability to transcend the limitations inherent in femininity is made possible by her escape from traditional socialization and is thus available to all women. (And this is one way in which looking at Staël as part of a larger traditional of female idealism that precedes her challenges the traditional view that she is concerned with the exceptional woman.) Polly Honeycombe even issues a call to arms, urging other women to defy inherited "patterns" – that is, traditional female socialization, which, as she recognizes, works through "fear" and "shame" – and follow her in the gender wars.<sup>56</sup>

The Female Quixote's aspirations are productively vague. She is famously a reader. But what she really wants to be is a writer – or, to use the term assigned by the historical period to her aspiration, a genius. This wish complements her Quixotism, for genius, as it was informally being theorized in Female Quixote novels, was already coming to suggest a self-indulgent dedication to the aesthetic, and a belief in one's own creative power, cast in conflict with traditional femininity. The Female Quixote's incessant reading expresses aesthetic longing, and stands in for an as-yet-unfocused creative potential. And this vague creativity is, in turn, figured as at the heart of her idealistic rebellion against a socially-defined femininity. The Female Quixote's seemingly naive wish to be a heroine in the style of those in her beloved romances is fulfilled by her very reading of these romances, in that to read as she does – obsessively but also knowingly – *is* to be in heroic opposition to the status quo. She embodies a cultural formula repeated across eighteenth-century sensibility texts: to be a devoted romance reader is to be a creative subject, which is to idealistically oppose a traditional femininity defined by the lack of idealism and creativity. As I will show below, her aspiration is often degraded as the wish for an idealized life of romance in which she is narcissistically central; that is, her wish for an escape from gender limitations inherent in a wish for heroism is reduced to a typically female wish for attention. Or, in later variations, she becomes the figure for the reading miss who would like to see her name in print, a victim of the two fads that are importantly linked: romance reading and publication mania. The real connection between reading and writing, and the profound insight that reception is also a kind of creativity, both cultural formulas inherent in the figure, can be reduced again to the female penchant for fads. Nevertheless, these satirical attempts to contain the figure reveal her radical nature.

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<sup>56</sup> As she says in the Epilogue, "I've conquer'd Fear – and almost conquer'd Shame" (104).

While the formula summarized above – and, in its regularity and insistence across dozens of texts, it is very much a standard formula – is characteristic of sensibility works, it is based closely on a cultural construction of femininity that had been entrenched in European culture for at least a century and which I would argue still structures our understanding of gender. The terms of this femininity are represented iconically in Molière's two satires on women who would wish to challenge these strictures at the very sites at which they are constructed: the world of literature (the literary, and more generally the aesthetic) and that of learning. That the figure of the learned woman is most often a satirical figure is telling: she is defined through, and mocked for, her difference from traditional femininity. Many of the characteristics of the Female Quixote and the conventions of Female Quixote works are rendered iconic in *Les Femmes savantes* and *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

The two works, though thirteen years apart, portray the same kind of figure: would-be intellectual women rebelling against gendered social constraints, particularly those related to the roles of wife and mother. The précieuses, active in seventeenth-century salons, are, like Arabella, devotees of Scudéry's romances and of her utopian view of woman's role. From the beginning, then, the learned woman is associated with romance reading, especially since Scudéry herself was an active member of salons, a writer of philosophy as well as of fiction, and a proponent of female education. (Scudéry writes in favor of educated women in her *Les Femmes illustres, ou les harangues heroïques* (1642), a series of speeches fictionally attributed to extraordinary historical women. This work canonizes many feminist heroines, such as Lucretia, who are then taken up by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers. A particularly important speech in this collection is "Sappho to Erinna," in which Sappho argues that women should participate in the arts.)<sup>57</sup> The anti-heroines of *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Magdalen and Cathos, and that of *Les Femmes savantes*, Armanda, all oppose the social imperative of marriage with their own aspirations to the ideal world of the intellect and the arts. They explicitly cast themselves as idealists and can thus be seen as early definers of the history of female idealism that is central to Female Quixote novels.<sup>58</sup> Magdalen thus evaluates her crass father, who is trying to marry her off: "'Lard! . . . how is [he] immers'd in Matter! how gross is his Understanding! and what a Gloominess overcasts his Soul!" Armanda similarly says to her former suitor:

You can't love but with a gross Passion, but with all the Train of material Ties; and to nourish the Fires which are produc'd in you, there must be Marriage, with all that follows it. Foh! What strange Love! How far are great Souls from burning with these terrestrial Flames! The Senses have no share in all their Ardors; this amiable Passion would marry nothing but the Heart, and leaves the rest behind as nothing worth; 'tis a Fire pure and clear, like the celestial Fires; with this they

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<sup>57</sup> *Writings by pre-Revolutionary French Women*, pp. 243-256.

<sup>58</sup> One project of my dissertation, then, is to trace the history of female idealism inherent in the Female Quixote figure, a history that goes back to the learned woman and continues into the modern romance and genre literature and film. Kari Lokke traces such a history through more canonical figures of female Romanticism.



breathe only virtuous Sighs, and never incline to base Desires . . . They love for the sake of loving, and for nothing else.<sup>59</sup>

Materialism for these figures means the subjection of their own wishes to both the social and biological imperative. The idealism of most Female Quixotes will similarly be connected with a refusal of (or lack of interest in) traditional courtship and domesticity in favor of the world of the intellect or the aesthetic, represented here by the learned women's philosophy and science and the *précieuses'* romances. For the Female Quixote, such a difference in interests will mark her as either masculine/androgynous or immature (and thus not fully or properly socialized) – traits with a positive valence in the later eighteenth century, in which they indicate unworldliness.<sup>60</sup>

Even as early as 1721, Colley Cibber plays up some of the positive aspects of the anti-heroic learned woman in his adaptation of *Les Femmes savantes*, *The Refusal; or, The Ladies' Philosophy*, emphasizing her high-mindedness. His version of Armanda, Sophronia, is a devotee of Platonic love who resents the reduction to materialism she feels romantic love and marriage mean for women. Like many future Female Quixotes, she has been unconventionally given a classical education by a father-figure, her grand-uncle (as has her learned woman mother), and is given to quoting Horace and holding forth about the higher calling of philosophy. Prefiguring the "masculine" woman valued by sensibility, she holds that souls have no sex and is called alternately a "Vestal virgin" (9) and a "prude" (10).<sup>61</sup> Her suitor, Granger, praises her unconventionality in almost the same words as Granville uses about Arabella: "Is not she a fine Creature? Has not she Parts? Would not half her Knowledge, equally divided, make fifty Coquettes all Women of Sense? Is not her Beauty natural, her Person lovely, her Mein majestick?" (10). Thus, the learned woman narrative is directly connected to the positive pro-Female Quixote tradition launched by Lennox and continued into the nineteenth century. Sophronia does not quite live up to her noble idealism, however. Unlike Arabella, she is in keen competition with other women and schemes against her sister, of whom she is jealous. But unlike *Les Femmes savantes'* Armanda, she is not ridiculed to the end: rather, she is supposedly redeemed when she proves she is of "Flesh and Blood, and born to breed" (82) by falling for Granger. (In this plot to "cure" Sophronia, Granger had been supported by her crass father, who is happy to see her brought back to her biological and social role and is eager to marry her off.) His seduction of her is not, however, the cynical affair of many anti-Female Quixote novels: he, like Lennox's Mr. Granville, understands her aspirations and even admires her for them. (Though, as with Clarissa and Lovelace, the cynical conceit is that a prude makes for a better conquest.) Granger thus courts her using her favorite Miltonic language of idealized love, fulfilling her vision of paradisaical love: he completes her quotes from *Paradise Lost*, which he too has at his fingertips, just as Henry Tilney will have Gothic conventions. Her cure is discussed in terms that mock her

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<sup>59</sup> Baker translation, pp. 13, 115.

<sup>60</sup> Such productive immaturity and gender crossing will be exploited by the *Lady's Magazine* stories, which often focus on male protagonists and chivalrous feats rather than romantic love or domestic conflicts.

<sup>61</sup> 1736 edition – all citations will be from this work.

aspirations: her being alone with Granger in the learned woman's bower of the library is satirically dubbed "an experiment in Natural Philosophy." Sophronia is finally forced to conclude that idealism cannot challenge material reality: "In vain, against the Force of Nature's Law, / Would rigid Morals keep our Hearts in Awe / . . . / In Life there's no Philosophy like Love" (104). Though she and her lover emerge as the most idealistic characters in a corrupt world, the resolution has some affinity to the tragic conclusions of *Clarissa* and *Corinne*: female idealism and female intellectual and artistic aspiration will be obliterated by romantic love.

There are other aspects of the learned woman figure that will be taken up by the pro-Female Quixote tradition. Thus, the *précieuses* emerge as productively immature in their rebellion against traditional socialization. They proclaim their unease in their social roles and make quasi-heroic speeches that prefigure the rebellious rhetoric of the eighteenth-century heroine. Magdalen (Madelon in the original), anticipating many a Female Quixote, doubts her own parentage and claims pride in her own rebellion: "I wonder . . . how you [she tells her father] could possibly get such a sprightly Girl as I" (31).<sup>62</sup> The *précieuses* thus deny their biological father and, in another self-fashioning gesture that was to become central to Female Quixotism, reinvent themselves as romance heroines, dubbing themselves Polixena and Araminta. The idealism of the learned woman figure, her rebelliousness against domesticity and traditional female socialization, would all recur as important and positive traits of the Female Quixote.

While one trajectory from the learned woman figures leads to the development of the literature of female idealism in pro-Female Quixote works, another leads to the denial and satirization of such a figure. Molière's satires thus render iconic an approach that would be copied by anti-Female Quixote works: they cast the learned women figures as either hypocritical or stupid, or both. That is, these seminal satires put into question the women's intellectual and emotional capability for idealism through the conceit that their material, biological nature cannot be overcome and that their wish to be learned is only another kind of female vanity. His *précieuses*, in a narrative conceit that would be much copied, have their idealism taken advantage of by their suitors, who pass off a valet as a gentleman admirer. The valet-in-disguise plays on their female vanity, assuring them of his connection to the world of art (which is also here the degraded fashionable world) and of their ability to enter it through his influence. The conceit of the false suitor is, of course, a much-used eighteenth-century method of discrediting female idealism. In the deployment of fear as a way to shape femininity that is one major aspect of eighteenth-century women's periodicals, one common warning against class crossing is reiterated with some frequency: that romance across classes is dangerous because a rich suitor would only pretend to descend below his class, after which he would leave the idealistic, gullible woman ruined. Romances are considered morally questionable, and warned against in writing on women's education, then, precisely because they encourage such idealism. Magdalen and Cathos are only ridiculed by the valet in disguise, but many a future Female Quixote will be ruined. (*Polly Honeycombe* plays with this convention by suggesting that being fooled by a suitor is no worse than being married off by one's parents.) In *Les Femmes savantes*, Molière takes a slightly different, but also influential, approach: casting the women's idealism as only a disguised kind of materialism and Armanda's wish to be learned as only another bid for social distinction. Here Molière

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<sup>62</sup> 1732 edition – all citations will be from this work.

uses another plot device that was to become a structural basic of the anti-Female Quixote genre: the contrast between heroine and anti-heroine. Despite her vaunted idealism, Armanda uses her learning to try to gain social advantage over her modest and conventional sister, Henrietta. Further, despite her proclamation of renouncing courtship for philosophy, she demands the admiration of her former suitor, Clitander.

The vanity and narcissism of female learning are most grotesquely represented in the learned women's mothers (and aunt): Philaminta, Magdalen's mother, and Belisa, her aunt, in *Les Femmes savantes*, and Lady Wrangle, Sophronia's mother, in *The Ladies Philosophy*. These figures are represented more satirically not only because they have the additional female failing of having neglected their motherly duties, but because they also all share a threatening authority and aggression the younger women do not possess. The satire on them prefigures the turn to grotesquerie as a corrective to romance aspirations. The satirical anti-Female Quixote device in which the Female Quixote emerges as a freak because of her artistic obsessions derives from the way these figures are handled: their romantic notions of themselves are contrasted to how others see them. As the older female figures, they would almost automatically emerge as the aggressive anti-heroines in sensibility novels, so that their type is easily transformed into the bad aunt figure who endangers the sensibility heroine through her Quixotic notions about her own attractions. Thus, the romance-reading Belisa, the caricature of a conventional old maid, and classics-translating Lady Wrangle, a typical virago, believe all men are in love with them. More so, their pretenses to learning are mocked through their ideals and projects being rendered bathetic. Lady Wrangle's translations, for instance, are mistakenly used by the cook to wrap meat, which allows Cibber to deploy the common anti-romance device of rendering the ideal material. The "Attick Salt" of Lady Wrangle's translations thus becomes the "English salt" used on the meat cooked in her papers. A version of this device is used most famously in *Northanger Abbey* in which a laundry list is found in place of the imagination-provoking incomplete Gothic manuscript, thereby deflating female enthusiasm. In Charlton's *Rosella*, a confused walk through tangled shrubbery replaces the Gothic trek through the forest. In R. S.'s *The New Monk* (1798), a parody of Matthew Lewis's *Monk*, a piece of mutton that the gluttonous parson craves replaces the Madonna figure that the tragic Ambrosio lusts after. The satire is even more closely tied to the figure of the unkempt learned woman, whose domestic situation is a grotesque and comical mess: thus in Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, Margaret (self-dubbed Margaritta) burns her dress because she is reading while preparing food. Later, she maims herself, rendering herself supposedly ugly, whereas before she had been merely plain, while investigating what she thinks is a Gothic mystery.

Satires on learned women take aim not only at female intellectual and artistic aspirations and at female idealism, but at a mode of aesthetic engagement that is developing in this period and that would also come to be a form of Quixotism: connoisseurship. As I argue above, the figure of the learned woman can easily transform into the Female Quixote because the aspiration to be learned is perceived as a form of female idealism. Further, the subject of these women's study is most often idealist philosophy and, later, romance – that is, that which is most removed from the social world of duty and biological destiny and that promises an escape from it. Connoisseurship – which as a larger category includes the earlier phenomenon of virtuosity and the more specifically defined one of dilettantism – thus coheres at the same

time into what is seen as an idealist practice and is thus satirized in similar ways. Philaminta and Belisa are not just generalized learned women, but actual virtuosas, drawn to the minute study of the exotic. A 1690s translation of *Les Femmes savantes* (by Thomas Wright, with music written for it by Henry Purcell) recognizes the connection between the learned woman and the virtuoso (and virtuosity as a kind of obsessional learning) implicit in the play by retitling it *The Female Virtuosos*. The figure of the female virtuoso will be found throughout early eighteenth-century satires as a variation on the learned lady – one well-known example being the natural philosopher Valeria in Centlivre's *The Basset Table* (1706). The figure of the female virtuoso/connoisseur is even doubly idealist, since idealism not only inheres in the practice itself but in its adoption by a woman. I shall next look at the philosophy of connoisseurship/virtuosity/dilettantism – closely related terms, and often interchangeable – as it was developing into a new form of intellectual and aesthetic engagement with important consequences for the development of artistic reception more generally and the relationship between artistic reception and gender more specifically.

Though these satires are implicated in a specific historical moment, the figure of the virtuoso/connoisseur has a much larger significance, not only in the eighteenth century and Romantic period but beyond, into the era of the mass market. Satires on the virtuoso figure may target specific historical figures (e.g., Robert Hooke in Shadwell's *Virtuoso*) and intellectual trends, but the world view associated with the figure will develop, like the practice of the Female Quixote, into a powerful philosophy of aesthetic engagement. The most important characteristic of virtuosity/connoisseurship is an over-dedication to an intellectual or aesthetic subject as determined by the norms associated with its social practice. This is partly determined by whether it interferes with one's social role, hence the convention that the connoisseur has failed at overseeing his household, in the way of a Quixote figure. Connoisseurship is thus closely connected to changing ideas about work and leisure, which I address more specifically when I look at specific texts. The conflict is also situated at the intersection of the social and the personal, and the "real" versus the aspirational: rather than working on useful scientific inquiries that could benefit society, the virtuoso follows his own Quixotic, visionary projects and whims. This is in turn related to changing practices in art and science, and the move from amateurism to professionalism that were taking place as the concept of virtuosity and connoisseurship were being invented. The stakes of connoisseurship are then related to questions of one's social role (which includes work, widely defined) versus one's personal desires (related to leisure), as well as the related question of production and usefulness. The connoisseur/virtuoso is both mocked and celebrated for his (and her) anti-social and anti-utilitarian bent. While a virtuoso may diligently work away in his laboratory for hours, he is doing so to fulfill his own curiosity, whims, and drives. The originally rebuked connoisseurs were men, as we see from the many satires on the figure, but intellectual and aesthetic curiosity and enthusiasm can be brought into line with a man's social responsibilities more easily than with a woman's (or at least a middle and upper class man, whose work is considered to benefit from eccentricity and inspiration). But women's central domestic role, as well as their role as social stabilizers and carriers of tradition via socialization and social enforcement of norms, make such a practice more

transgressive.<sup>63</sup> Further, willful social transgression – related to risk taking, abandoning one's social role, following visionary schemes – can be reconciled with, and even celebrated as a positive trait of, masculinity, and is codified in the Romantic figure of the genius, who follows his own bent. I shall now turn to specific texts that support and develop the above cultural history. A discussion of these early canonical texts about the figure will then set up my next section, in which I look at how the Female Quixote is an overlooked part of the history of connoisseurship (which still needs to be written) and how connoisseurship is central to the history of female reading reception, particularly in the history of the romance and the Gothic.

Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676), the first work I will use to set up the figure, codifies many of the characteristics that would come to be connected to the cultural type, particularly the figure's idealism and related lack of perspective, manifested in his obsession with details. Shadwell writes his satire well before the culture of sensibility would celebrate these traits, so that his depiction of obsession and misplaced idealism as grotesque and risible would inspire later anti-Quixote satires, particularly anti-Female Quixote ones. Conolly's *The Connoisseur* (1736), the second main work I will draw upon, while not as well known, also satirizes the type – connoisseur and virtuoso were practically interchangeable terms, though virtuoso kept the broader significance of one obsessed with scientific or artistic studies, while connoisseur came to mean one focused on art. By the time of Conolly's satire, the type was a cultural commonplace, but his valence had changed somewhat – Conolly's connoisseur manages to put forth a philosophy of his own eccentric practices, which prefigure the valued whims of later sensibility figures like Uncle Toby – though he remains largely a satirized figure. While we find the figure of the ridiculous and grotesque connoisseur/virtuoso up to the mid nineteenth century at least, and while the figure persists to, arguably, our contemporary figure of the awkward, mother's basement-dwelling, unkempt "geek," the type would

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<sup>63</sup> Because I do not want to take on the philosophy of connoisseurship more broadly here – since it needs its own project – I cannot delve into its connection to Romanticism as much as I would like to and I cannot do justice to the important class element. But I want to note that though classic connoisseurship is as much proscribed to lower class men as to women, a counter-connoisseurship probably developed in terms of class as well as gender. Mass-culture connoisseurship – what we now called fandom – is intrinsically classed, moreover, since it is focused on objects available to most people and is not dependent on advanced education. I cannot call the romances of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries mass works, since they were not affordable to most people and literacy was not universal, but they are more available to women, as well as to the middle classes, than the objects of the Grand Tour that the dilettanti studied or the rarities collected by connoisseurs. Further, these romances would develop into the genre art that forms the largest object of connoisseurship today. With the term "geekdom" being applied more and more broadly in the contemporary period, however, our current understanding of connoisseurship as being more defined by its practices than its focus does more justice to its importance as a form of aesthetic reception than earlier models.

Also, the questions of work and leisure addressed above are much broader than I can do justice to here, of course, but I would like to note that a later Romanticism-influenced philosopher of the aesthetic, John Ruskin, has proposed the whim as the antidote to alienating labor: in his discussion of idealized labor in the medieval period, he sees every worker on a Gothic edifice able to express his whim inside the larger structure of work. These whims, as Ruskin argues, register as excess detail and grotesquerie, positive Romantic traits.

acquire a more positive interpretation in the age of sensibility. This mirrors the change we see from *Les Femmes savantes* to *The Ladies' Philosophy*, which are spaced out historically almost as exactly as are Shadwell's and Conolly's plays. This disposition, then, comes to also represent a more ambiguous and even admirable life philosophy, particularly in its Female Quixote incarnation. A further reason I will consider Conolly's play as well as Shadwell's in setting up the Female Quixote, despite the similarity of the figures they take on, is that Conolly's play places the emphasis a bit differently from Shadwell's – while Shadwell's virtuoso is a natural scientist, Conolly's connoisseur is an art collector. Thus, while Shadwell focuses on the figure's misplaced idealism and obsession, Conolly focuses on his (in this case, imagined) mastery over artistic conventions and thus stresses what Matt Hills would call the "cool knowledgeability" of the figure rather than the "Romantic intensity" more on display in Shadwell's virtuoso. Conolly also highlights the connoisseurial drive to collect objects of one's obsession and expertise, thus prefiguring the material practice so important to modern fandom: tracking down and obtaining a rare example of one's object of obsession is an act that instantiates the obsession and expertise, and serves as a way to materially signal one's interests in a way that was familiar to the dilettanti. Finally, I will briefly look at the figure of the dilettante – that is, a member of the Society of the Dilettanti, founded in 1734 – a slightly later variation on the type and one with a more well worked out philosophy of artistic reception that stresses both the knowledgeability and the creativity of artistic reception. The Society of the Dilettanti develops the philosophy of connoisseurship by focusing on its self-fashioning aspects as forms of artistic reception and interpretation. Their use of costume and ritual could be seen as a version of the romance-derived self-fashioning of Don Quixote and of the précieuses, and I will argue that their form of creative artistic reception reaches its most enduring form – as a practice that would become entwined with the modern romance and with modern reading practices – in the figure of the Female Quixote.

Shadwell's early and influential *Virtuoso* mockingly sets up the figure. His removal from the "real" world is rendered vividly through his bringing of the "natural" world into his own study: among his collection are bottles of air from all around Britain, so that he only needs to open one to experience it. Like the learned woman, the virtuoso is associated with both the symbol of the visionary, the telescope, and that of the grotesque, the microscope. He sees both men in the moon and "small specks" in an ant's anus. This will be exactly the way that Female Quixotes will be characterized, as focused on both the visionary vagaries of romance and its grotesque, commercially-useful, often visceral – in a word, materialist – conventions. In both cases, the critique is both of the object of obsession and of the excessive nature of the focus. While Gimcrack's study of insects specifically mocks Hooke's actual studies, Shadwell finds in this subject a good metaphor for the virtuoso's obsession with minutiae. Such interest in minutiae is one of the characteristics of connoisseurship, since it is in knowledge of such minute differences – the details of brushstrokes, the slight variation on a Gothic convention – that his or her expertise lies. It is precisely the Romantic detail rather than the classical abstraction that a virtuoso finds compelling. Similarly, Gimcrack's obsession with the supposed activities in the moon (paralleling almost exactly that of Molière's learned woman) literalizes his unworldliness. Gimcrack's "extravagance" is often commented upon, and it is this precise lack of proportion and decorum that will come to be valued in a pre-Romantic and

Romantic discourse. It is not through the historical connoisseur/virtuoso/antiquary figure that such a change will come about, however; this figure remains a comic type through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though in some iterations becoming a more positive sensibility figure starting later, as shown above. It is rather through the pre-Romantic and Romantic discourse of enthusiasm, and precisely enthusiasm for art, that such a disposition will emerge as a celebration of the value of art as a counterforce to social reality. But connoisseurship drops out of the larger history of British Romantic aesthetics, since, with its focus on collection and minute differences, it does not serve as a source of inspiration for Romantic aesthetic theorists. It is only in the history of Female Quixotism that it thrives – under the term bequeathed by Cervantes, but influenced by the history of the *précieuses*, learned women, and virtuosos – as a powerful mode of idealism.

Shadwell's virtuoso figure, then, encapsulates the idealism, anti-utilitarianism, anti-social "extravagance," and anti-domesticity that come to define the philosophy of connoisseurship. His motto is: "To study for use is base and mercenary, below the serene and quiet temper of a sedate philosopher" (24). As with many of the Female Quixote figures, who are often heiresses, Gimcrack's idealism is enabled by his seeming wealth and leisure: he has spent thousands of pounds to buy equipment and twenty years to study insects. (Though, as Bruce Redford explains in his history of the *Dilettanti*: "[the virtuosi were] 'dominated by working professionals who lacked the resources for the Grand Tour' [3].) Yet such idealism is rendered ridiculous and even grotesque by Shadwell. As in Molière and the anti-romance tradition that follows and which many Female Quixote works draw upon, Shadwell reduces the virtuoso's sublime ideals to grotesque materialism: Gimcrack reads by the light given off by putrid meat (another of his discoveries). Further, like the learned woman and Female Quixote, Gimcrack is comically oblivious, unable to see threats to his household, such as his wife's cuckoldry and his nieces' danger from fortune hunters. The figure of the bad guardian that will become one of the conventions of Female Quixote works is thus again anticipated here. The satire ends, like many an anti-Female Quixote work will, with the excessive figure punished: losing both family and fortune, the virtuoso ultimately repents of having studied insects instead of men. More interestingly and suggestively, and prefiguring a threat associated with the Female Quixote, he even sets off a small rebellion, suggesting the socially destabilizing force of his anti-social studies: when weavers mistakenly think he has invented an engine loom, they attack his house. Unaware of and uninterested in the social implications of his work, Gimcrack assures the weavers that "[w]e Vertuoso's [sic] never find out anything of use, 'tis not our way" (64). The idea that such a figure is dangerous derives from Cervantes, but it will take on particular significance with the Female Quixote, who will in later versions be associated with Jacobinism.<sup>64</sup> The Female Quixote's dedication to art will not only implicitly but often explicitly manifest itself as rebellion – she too sometimes raises a mob, if not a revolution – since her very existence is already a rebellion against gender limitations.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> There are also male Quixotes who are specifically Jacobin, as in *The Infernal Quixote*.

<sup>65</sup> As critics have noted, Jane Eyre's association with Guy Fawkes – the young Jane quips that her Aunt Reed imagines her as constantly plotting, as "an infantine Guy Fawkes" – suggests her own revolutionary tendencies.

Conolly's *The Connoisseur* (1736), a much more obscure work (though Aaron Hill provided the prologue), is squarely within the satirical tradition that is by this time well in place. Nevertheless, Conolly's work highlights a different side of the figure: that of the art obsessive and collector. Conolly's connoisseur, Sir Godfrey Trinket, prides himself on his discriminating taste but is in fact prey to a fortune hunter of a different kind – the art dealer. Like Gimcrack, Trinket has both leisure and money: he has spent eight years studying insects (and pursues butterflies for hours on end) and over forty "to discover Plastick and Equivocal Generation, of all kinds of Insects and Animalculi" (10).<sup>66</sup> Conolly uses language and conventions recognizable from both Shadwell and Cervantes. Thus, Trinket's niece talks about her uncle's obsession as a madness: "You know Sir Godfrey's distemper; his Passion for curiosities is of late grown extravagant" (2). Trinket, like Gimcrack, is taken with the strange and useless: thus, one of his most treasured possessions is an old manuscript in a language he cannot understand. Its uselessness is what renders it particularly valuable. Trinket's fixations, like Gimcrack's, interfere with his duties, and even with his affection for this family: he considers the lives of his daughter and niece "mere trifles" alongside the value of his collection. Conventionally, he is the bad and neglectful guardian figure, leaving his daughter and niece vulnerable to fortune hunter Cheatly. But Trinket too is prey to this fortune hunter, who, while in fact a servant, fakes his origins and credentials to pass as an art expert and dealer. Like the heiress Clarissa Moreton in *The Corinna of England*, who fills her house with figures she takes for foreign artists and with their productions, Trinket surrounds himself with foreign quacks intent on taking advantage of his obliviousness.

Part of what is different about Conolly's work, then, is which aspects of the figure are stressed. Not only is Trinket more art enthusiast (and imagined expert) than natural philosopher, but he is also more implicated in a new marketplace. Despite the play's being a comedy of humors, Trinket seems to be not so much a product and victim of his humor (as Shadwell says his characters are) but of the market. This is important to my argument because it will also become central in the critique of the Female Quixote. Particularly starting in the 1790s, with the dramatic rise in Gothic romance publications, one common criticism of the reading woman becomes that she is only following fads. The association between women and commercialism makes this an easy critique, and follows older critiques of the learned woman: that women are not, and cannot be, deeply interested in intellectual or aesthetic objects, but are very interested in social distinction and wish to gain it through following fashions.<sup>67</sup> However, such a concern was already at work within the discourse on connoisseurship – as Trinket's nephew explains the new market-driven humor: "To what an Excess has this old Gentleman worked up his ridiculous Humour! – But the Folly, I am told, is become a Fashion" (36). The means through which connoisseurship could be used to distinguish one socially is further explored in the play: Trinket's niece remarks that her uncle's obsession is a "dull Fashion which prevails by its Novelty" and wonders to her brother "why we chuse to import our follies" (3). The answer is rooted in the logic of distinction: "As your Uncle chooses his Curiosities, because they are foreign; or perhaps to distinguish us from the Vulgar. For

<sup>66</sup> All citations will be from the 1736 edition.

<sup>67</sup> See Clery's *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury*.



you observe, we leave them off, when they become general; and not, till then, perceive them ridiculous" (3). And this is supported by Trinket's connoisseurial wish for "originals" rather than copies, suggesting it is the value of the object he cares about rather than its aesthetic properties. The idea that art is used as a means of social distinction is precisely the critique that will be made in many anti-Female Quixote works, where the figure's idealism is undercut by the critique that she is making use of her supposed artistic sensitivity. The implication, then, is that the aesthetic realm is not separated from worldliness. This critique of connoisseurship shows, on the one hand, that it is not only misogyny that is at the heart of anti-Female Quixote works; rather, there is an old anti-romance tradition that remains skeptical of claims to transcendence and idealism, which is then revived in an era in which literary innovations are also market trends. This other critique of idealism then exists alongside the more specifically misogynistic tradition of denying female idealism, and both are at work in anti-Female Quixote works.

Conolly's play, however, is more ambiguous, and allows the connoisseur to claim his obsession as a countercultural and individuating practice and himself as a proto-sensibility figure. Trinket roots his wish for originals (rather than copies of paintings) not in a social matrix of distinction but in a personal one of self-definition: "I am an Original myself" (33). The value in acquiring such a rare work of art is not so much in flaunting one's taste as one's passion and unique sensibility, something clarified by the modern fan collection, in which objects with little cultural distinction (such as action figures or pulp magazines) are nonetheless much sought after and prized by the community of connoisseurs. Trinket, more than Gimcrack, seems rooted in the proto-sensibility valorization of Quixotism. He is thus allowed moments of wisdom and goodness – Quixotically, he professes that a man's "obscure Birth shall never Eclipse his Merit in my Eyes," and proclaims that "[o]f old, Virtue, Courage, and Knowledge enobled [*sic*] the Blood – now Men erect Greatness upon Rapine and Fraud" (68). As happens with both Don Quixote and many Female Quixote figures, the seeming contradiction between his wisdom and his fanaticism is remarked upon: "'Tis Pity! That a Man who thinks so justly, and reasons so well, should be governed by a Passion, and abused so egregiously" (68). He is, like any Quixote, out of step with not only his own time, but with biological time: he's both "childish" and old. Such childishness is particularly important to the Female Quixote, for whom socialization into adult femininity means that social mores replace individual enthusiasm and that marriage, which she resists, replaces her obsessive reading. Like Don Quixote, Trinket is threatened with the burning of his collection, and has one of his "antique miniatures" (about which he shows enough knowing wit to jokingly dub it his "colossus") broken by an exasperated relative attempting to show him that it is both modern and fake (69). But even after seeing proof of the forgery, and finding out that Cheatly is himself a fake, he maintains his illusion, more than half knowingly. He claims: "'Every man in his folly [this is the subtitle of the play]. Now, to me, amusement is the great secret of life – it's the philosopher's stone, the longitude, the perpetual motion – in a word, it's pleasure without pain, and, what still is a better argument – it's my humour'" (69). Trinket likens the "secret of life" to things associated with virtuosic obsession – the philosopher's stone, the longitude, and perpetual motion, all objects of study for the Royal Society – suggesting that these objects are only mere stand-ins for a more idealistic quest. Like Arabella lecturing those who see her obsession as simple-minded, the connoisseur puts forth an unexpectedly wise philosophy, illustrated

by a poetic conceit: the true perpetual motion machine is personal obsession, or aesthetic desire. And just as Arabella and subsequent Female Quixotes have gained sophisticated insights about conventions from their reading, so too the connoisseur arrives at insight: that his obsessions are, like conventions, only important because he imbues them with meaning. Despite Conolly's claim in his preface that he is satirizing those who make learning ridiculous, then, this play makes the connoisseur figure more ambiguous, an ambiguity which is reflected in the ending. While *The Virtuoso* ends with the figure despairingly repenting his studies, *The Connoisseur* ends more comically, with Trinket celebrating his probable election as president of the Royal Society – to which he plans to donate his curiosities, a donation more valuable than his daughter's dowry. This comic strain, which refuses to condemn directly and downplays the didacticism, will, like Molière's and Shadwell's more emphatic anti-romance tactics, remain as part of the satirical tradition from which Female Quixote works will draw.<sup>68</sup> (Colman's *Polly Honeycombe*, for instance, will similarly stress the power – often a critical and satirical power – of the Quixote figure's anti-social willfulness.)

The last variation on the classic connoisseur that I will discuss in theorizing connoisseurship before the Female Quixote is the eighteenth-century dilettante – that is, a member of the Society of the Dilettanti. The dilettanti were, as Redford explains in *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England*, "upper-class men" who had "made the Grand Tour and wanted to continue their education" (1) via antiquities back in Britain. They were thus collectors as well as scholars, who would end up publishing or sponsoring much research on the classical world. The dilettanti version of connoisseurship plays up particular aspects of the philosophy of connoisseurship I am tracing here – most importantly that of self-fashioning. The dilettanti acted out and embodied their artistic enthusiasm and knowledge in ways that need to be accounted for as part of the (still unwritten) history of artistic reception. That the dilettanti perform their relationship to their beloved art is something that would be entirely familiar to modern fandom scholar Hills, whose approach to "the pleasures of horror" is "wholly 'performative.'" As Hills explains, refiguring the "excesses" we have seen associated with connoisseurship:

pleasure is not . . . a mystical, ineffable 'thing' that is somehow outside of culture . . . . Nor is pleasure treated [in his study] as somehow excessive, as a passional force outrunning social and cultural order in its blissful *jouissance* (Barthes 1976). Neither merely an existent thing, nor magically a disruptive entity, pleasure-as-performance is always a cultural act, an articulation of identity: 'I am the sort of person who takes this sort of pleasure in this sort of media product. (ix)

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<sup>68</sup> I should note that the (very limited) criticism on this play does not interpret the figure as positive in any way. While I agree that the figure remains ridiculous and even grotesque – which is an evident point – I argue that Conolly's attribution of a certain wisdom and aesthetic philosophy to the figure shows the growth of a (pre)sensibility valorization of obliviousness and eccentric willfulness. This aspect would not, however, be developed in the connoisseur figure proper, but in that of the larger Quixote figure, of whom the Female Quixote becomes the most striking and important representative into the Romantic period and beyond.

The anti-romance discourse that will help structure Female Quixote satires is particularly attentive to how works of art, and one's reaction to them, are used as part of the worldly game of distinction. Long before Bourdieu and Hills, critics of sensibility knew the power that observed sensitivity (whether actually felt or not) to certain kinds of art gave one. This kind of self-definition will come more into play with the Female Quixotes, but I introduce it here because externalizing one's reception to art was central to dilettantism, albeit in a particularly knowing and deliberate way. (Knowingness will be more of a problem for the sensibility-defined Female Quixotes, as I will show below.)

The dilettanti externalized their relationship to art quite differently from the way the modern fans Hills discusses do, certainly, though play acting and costuming based on the admired art is common to both. As I indicated above, such a larger history of artistic reception and connoisseurship needs a larger project. But even within this more limited theorization of connoisseurship and the Female Quixote, the connection between such eighteenth-century practices and later modes of embodying one's reception is significant. Don Quixote can again be seen as the representative of the impulse behind all such modern practices (as he is regarded in some modern fandom studies). And Cervantes was indeed an important figure for the dilettanti, who had themselves painted with his *Quixote* and *Novelas Ejemplares*, in which, as Redford explains, Cervantes makes the connection between reading and "innocent game playing" (39-40). But what underlies such a practice, and, most importantly for my argument, connects the dilettanti to the other kinds of connoisseurs/virtuosos I have looked at above, is the anti-social, even visionary, impulse behind such play-acting. As Redford puts it: "(t)he original Dilettanti slighted or even flouted public duties and values: instead they turned inward, to a private realm of ritual, recollection, and gratification" (4). While such play-acting happens among a group and shows the social aspect of connoisseurship, it is important to stress that it also gratifies a need for expressing one's reaction to art and puts it to use against social "reality." Like the *précieuses* and so many subsequent female romance readers, the dilettanti adopted idealized names: "Upon election to the Academy, each new member was given a name borrowed from bucolic literature . . ." (8). (Certainly such a practice was also widespread in eighteenth-century periodical culture – including that of women's periodicals, which I discuss in a later chapter.) Like Don Quixote and the Female Quixotes, and like the later Corinne, the dilettanti used costumes and portraits done in these costumes to define and externalize their relationship to the art of the Grand Tour. Contrary to the view of connoisseurs we get from the satires looked at above, which stress their "Romantic intensity," the dilettanti help us see the "cool knowledgeability" aspect better. The portraits-in-costume the dilettanti commissioned were, argues Redford, highly stylized, communicating, to those in the know, particular interpretations of the Grand Tour, society, and masquerade. Like Corinne's elaborate costuming and play-acting, this is not simple imitation of admired historical figures or artistic styles, but a performative critique of culture and art.

As the above makes clear, and as Redford stresses, the dilettanti also played up the social aspect of connoisseurship. Even the individual portraits-in-costume were meant to be seen and interpreted as a group. Redford connects the Society of the Dilettanti to other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century societies and to the "associational world" of the period. Female Quixote texts do not generally show female romance readers as part of a larger group of similar readers. Such groups obviously existed, however, in the form of

learned women salons – one of the most famous of which included Scudéry – but they were widely satirized.<sup>69</sup> And satires on learned women often show them in groups, partly because many are associated with salons, but also because these figures are depicted as worldly women who use taste (which they usually lack) as a social weapon. That is, much of the critique of learned or artistic women in groups is enabled by the conception of women as unable to invest intellectually or artistically, not to mention as unable to relate in this idealized way to other women. We can easily see the personal investment a dilettante would have in his performance, but such a display by a woman is more susceptible to being rendered as purely utilitarian – as a social performance, or, of course, vanity. From Molière's femmes savantes to Susan Ferrier's Bluemits (in *Marriage*, 1818) we have the conventional grouping of either ignorant figures leading each other down ridiculous paths or of worldly and affected women waging social battle in the guise of a learned, disinterested conversation. Catherine and Isabella's discussion of "horrid" novels in *Northanger Abbey* shows Isabella mindlessly rattling off titles and simultaneously showing off and using the meeting only to manipulate Catherine's view of her – though she is foiled by a truly artistically passionate, and thus oblivious, Catherine. The *Northanger Abbey* model of a pair of reading women, with the worldly one using romances to corrupt, or to somehow harm, the sensibility figure is common. In *Rosella*, a crass romance reader encourages her more sensitive friend, also a romance obsessive, to run away from home, involving her in all kinds of schemes. In *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, the cynical sophisticated woman uses romances to corrupt the innocent girl so as to revenge herself on her for stealing the attention of her lover. In "Angelina," Angelina is encouraged to run away from home by a "genius" romance author who ends up being a crass hack. As I will show in the chapter in which I discuss *The Lady's Magazine*, however, a community of female romance connoisseurs did exist, who, like the dilettanti, assumed idealized names and communicated about their enthusiasms through their engagement of genre conventions. And as I will show in my chapter on *Jane Eyre*, such a virtual "group discussion" through genre conventions is at the heart of the style we call Female Gothic.

## **Part 2: Section 1: Conventions and Anti-Conventionality: Defining the Female Quixote**

The Female Quixote is the figure of female connoisseurship, and as such is one of the most important developments in both Romantic literature and gender history. The arguments about art that she embodies – that artistic reception is creative, that genre is a conversation among readers (to modify Jameson's formulation), that the aesthetic is the realm of gender conflict and of feminist possibility, that romance is a feminist mode because it signifies the power of the aesthetic, that the Gothic is the type of romance that most enables feminist redefinition, and that fandom has a long and gendered history that still structures both genre and gender – not only help redefine gender in Romanticism, but also help us see the legacy of the connection between the two.<sup>70</sup> The Female Quixote is

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<sup>69</sup> I realize this is a lopsided discussion in some ways, since I am comparing historical depictions of the dilettanti with satirical ones of the learned women. What I would need to do is to find a satire on connoisseurs in groups, and I have not come across one except in visual form.

most identified with Lennox's 1752 novel, but she is everywhere – not so much the product of a canonical text (though Lennox's comes closest to being one) but of several discourses: of the learned woman, the Quixotic connoisseur, and the mid-eighteenth century sensibility obsession with heroines (which draws upon the history of female heroism as far back as Scudéry). She is conjured up through stylized language and conventionalized characterization and scenarios and these are used as a cultural shorthand for a nexus of concerns centering on the relationship between femininity and aesthetics. Before looking more closely at the way texts and groups of texts intervene in this debate on femininity and aesthetics by categorizing themselves as pro- or anti-Female Quixote, I shall describe some of these conventions, which are the units of meaning in play in this larger genre I close read en masse. These conventions are recognizable whether they show up in their positive or negative forms. That is, what may have a positive valence in one work – e.g., the heroine's obliviousness to social status – may have a negative one in another – e.g., the heroine's naïveté.

A Female Quixote is always a spectacle. Those around her wonder at her, either admiringly or condemningly. She is often associated with "whim," "fancy," "extravagance," and "enthusiasm." She is willful and visionary. Here, for example, is Maria Edgeworth conjuring such a figure with a few phrases: Angelina has a "hatred for the forms of the world" (150) and a "love of liberty" (150) – or, as a disapproving woman characterizes these, "odd notions" (152). The titles of Female Quixote works often signal their participation in the genre: we are to see "a victim of fancy" (as in Tomlins's 1786 work) or the "history of an enthusiast" (as Maria Jewsbury's 1830 novella is called). Her whimsy is sometimes a sign of her creativity and at others of her strangeness. This too is valorized differently in different texts: Arabella's appealing strangeness is Margaret's (of *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*) grotesqueness. In the unambiguously anti-Female Quixote text *The Corinna of England*, such eccentricity is critiqued as studied, as only an affectation. Many texts recognize the worldly value and fashionable nature of such a disposition. *She Would Be an Heroine* spells out such a critique in the title: Female Quixote Georgiana fashions herself in exact opposition to typical femininity so as not to be "too like other women" (vol. 2, p. 95). At the same time, such a need for display is part of the Female Quixote's theatricality. Like the dilettanti, Female Quixotes are given to self-fashioning, cultivating and displaying their eccentricities. On the one hand, then, the Female Quixote is oblivious to social cues, a positive trait. On the other, she likes to self-dramatize, a more ambiguous one. While such a disposition could suggest her vanity, it also suggests her creativity. The Female Quixote, even before Corinne, likes costumes

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<sup>70</sup> In "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," Jameson famously states: "Genres are essentially contracts between a writer and his readers" (135). In my formulation, the writer is more of a medium – particularly because I stress her status as reader as well as writer – for the implied "conversations" of readers, which are then literalized in fan fiction. While I do not put pressure on the term genre, my chapter on the *Lady's Magazine* thinks of it in terms of a shared knowledge of conventions, based on a shared history of reading similar works. As Todd shows in *Sensibility*, the language of sensibility is already highly conventional, which further helps encourage such an imagined "conversation" with other readers based on shared expectations and enthusiasms activated by the genre. This would be particularly true, perhaps, if one were reading as a potential reader-writer, as readers of the *Lady's Magazine* were. And, as many critics have pointed out, the Brontës created their own literalization of such a community.

and theatricality. Amateur theatricals – condemned, like romances, for the opportunities they offered for imaginative gender and class crossing – are common in Female Quixote novels. Such theatricality figures as yet another kind of writing. Thus, the Corinna of England has built an entire theater, significantly in place of the chapel, to stage amateur theatricals and to there embody her favorite heroines. We see Polly acting out, by herself, scenes from novels. Other Female Quixotes are even more ambitious and take on elaborate roles, as for example Georgiana, who impersonates a Gothic villain. Cherubina, in a nod to her theatricality, is shown joining forces with an actor. This bent for display – both inadvertent and purposeful – overlaps with the Female Quixote's wish for genius and literary celebrity. Staël's Corinne is again the figure in which such a bent for performance is most developed as part of an aesthetic philosophy, but such display is a conventional attribute of the Female Quixote figure.

The Female Quixote's difference from traditional femininity often manifests itself as a pre-gendered kind of identity, as immaturity, or even masculinity. A Female Quixote is almost always raised by a single father: examples include Arabella, Dorcas of *Female Quixotism*, Margaret of *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, the Corinna of England, Georgiana of *She Would Be an Heroine*, Cherubina of *The Heroine* (she has a governess, whom she domineers), and Emma (who also has a governess). Thus Lennox's Arabella:

At four years of age he took her from under the direction of the nurses and women appointed to attend her, and permitted her to receive no part of her education from another, which he was capable of giving her himself. He taught her to read and write in a very few months; and, as she grew older, finding in her an uncommon quickness of apprehension, and an understanding capable of great improvements, he resolved to cultivate so promising a genius with the utmost care. (6)

And here is *She Would Be an Heroine's* Georgiana, whose education is even more emphatically unfeminine, and who is encouraged and applauded by her father in all her whims: "report spoke of her masculine education (entirely under the eye of her father); her exquisite skill in managing the wildest horses that were ever curbed; her excellence at a shot, in which last accomplishment she bore the palm from most of the gentlemen" (vol. 1, p. 4). (*Rob Roy's* [1817] Diana Vernon also has some of the characteristic of this type.) Because the Female Quixote is not socialized into femininity, she is also at a distance from social norms. In pro-Female Quixote works, the figure's distance from traditional femininity is positive: Arabella, for instance, is not in competition with other women and tries to help them. In anti-Female Quixote works, her immaturity or lack of femininity manifests itself as the Female Quixote's awkwardness and unkemptness, as in *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*: "Margaret still neglected herself, and sat in a corner reading, with her fingers stuck in her uncurled and uncombed hair, her knees and chin together; while a romance of the fourteenth century laid on her lap" (8).<sup>71</sup> In both pro and

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<sup>71</sup> There is an interesting ambiguity in Green's formulation of Margaret's reading: we presume she is reading a modern romance, which could very well have been subtitled "a romance of the fourteenth century," as so many modern works were to identify them as neo-medieval romances (what we would now recognize as a Gothic subgenre), but the elision makes it seem as if she could be reading an actual medieval romance. This is not related to my argument, but I remark on

anti-Female Quixote novels, Female Quixotism often aspires towards masculinity. This could mean that the Female Quixote actually likes to hunt and ride like Georgiana, easily scares off ruffians and rescues her lover like Cherubina, is at ease in a barracks like the Corinna of England, dubs herself "General" like Polly Honeycombe, or, again like Cherubina, leads a group of rebels to retake what she thinks is her ancestral house. Even Arabella becomes the man she wants to marry (to cite Gloria Steinem's famous formulation) when she acts as another woman's champion and savior (a prostitute harassed by a group of men and women, who cannot believe that a woman would come to her rescue). Some of these figures, such as Cherubina and Georgiana, cross dress and often act out extravagantly. In an incredible moment in *She Would Be an Heroine*, Georgiana, as part of her exuberant play acting, impersonates a Gothic villain and mock-abducts and mock-threatens a heroine with rape.<sup>72</sup> Most of all, the Female Quixote is characterized as immature or masculine because she is anti-domestic. She prefers books to both primping and housekeeping, showing both an allegiance to her own interests over social responsibility (itself unfeminine) and to the world of aesthetics over that of the practical and useful. Thus Arabella dresses quickly and carelessly, but in a style imitative of her heroines: she is not using clothes as objects of social negotiation (or prestige) but rather imaginative play. So *History of an Enthusiast's* Julia prefers climbing trees to playing with dolls. And so Polly aims to train her genius on literature rather than baking. In all cases, then, the Female Quixote's imaginative interests – which center in reading, and are also represented by reading – are set against her gender role.

Such a rebellion gets routed through both the utopian mode of romance and the more modern and institutionalized one of the publishing trade, two major concerns of these novels. Both of these converge in the concept of genius, another conventionalized Female Quixote novel term. By 1800 or so, genius was understood as being wrapped up with literary aspiration as well as with what we would now recognize as the more specifically Romantic idea of visionary thought. The Female Quixote admires genius and wants to be one. Arabella is called a "fair visionary" (21). "Victim of fancy" Theresa Morven, who worships the author of *Werther*, has a "passion for genius" (28).<sup>73</sup> One of the epigraphs to *Victim of Fancy* is from a poem by William Hayley, which encourages

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it because it shows how the language of the new romance – a publisher's language, meant to group works into trends, and capitalize on modish medievalism – bleeds into Green's own anti-romance discourse. Though it may be that Green was also trying to make use of and mock this language – certainly, what it calls up is not an actual medieval romance but the subtitle of a modern, even hackish one. (Based on my research and reading of many romances and book reviews from the period, I would say that the subtitle was used very frequently, and certainly almost always to demarcate a subgenre of Gothics.)

Green is also mocking the uselessness of Margaret's reading: she could be making herself presentable instead of reading about something so far fetched, is the implication. That her reading is juxtaposed to her sister's domestic chores and artless singing while she works (an artless kind of art) makes it all the more pointed.

<sup>72</sup> Eighteenth-century literature has a long history of such cross dressing viragos, of course, though I cannot do justice here to the ways Female Quixote novels intersect with this history.

<sup>73</sup> All citations are to the page numbers of the PDF file of the novel, which I downloaded from the Chawton House site, since the pages are not numbered in the file.

women to "Pluck the green Laurel from Muse's hand" and emerge as "genius[es]" (3). *The Lady's Monthly Museum* of January 1800 has a satirical "complaint" from "Genius," who says that it is blamed for unconventional female behavior, such as eloping. Angelina's quest to meet a beloved female author, whom she dubs a "genius," is set off by her finding a book by this author entitled "The Woman of Genius" (157, which focuses on a heroine named Araminta, the name she begins calling her admired unknown author). The Corinna of England is a "patroness of genius" (29). In her preface to *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, Green comments on the mania for authorship – in both sexes, it should be noted – and quips:

I verily believe that every third woman in these happy united kingdoms, considers herself a genius – nay, I have heard, and readily believe it, that there are many thick-headed female dames of fortune who sacrifice thousands to establish – the reign of dullness and of folly! (10)

In this discourse, female genius is always situated, uneasily, at the intersection of romance and commerce, as indeed are the novels such would-be geniuses read. Starting with the *précieuses*, the Female Quixote admires a lofty code of romance, which is nevertheless rooted in contemporary literature – from Scudéry on.<sup>74</sup> It makes sense, then, that the aesthetic sphere the Female Quixote identifies with the concept of genius is both romanticized – in the figure of the celebrated heroine, reaching iconic form in Corinne – and aspirationally tied to modern literary institutions – the figure of the author. Anti-Female Quixote works get much mileage out of showing the distance between the two, as when Angelina meets her "woman of genius" author Araminta and finds her to be a grotesque, materialistic, drunken hack. Other Female Quixote works focus on this dilemma from a more pro-Female Quixote view: thus, *History of an Enthusiast* looks at the prospects of a female "born genius" (20) and sees her unable to find her sought-for heroic transcendence through the literary world, suggesting that art does indeed participate in the material and social world (usually an anti-Female Quixote view). Not all works that question the transcendence allowed by art are anti-Female Quixote, therefore. I will look at these questions in more depth below, but both pro and anti-Female Quixote novels work against an understood background of the female aspiration towards genius, which is routed through both romance and authorship.

Though the Female Quixote has clear character markers, and is, moreover, defined as a spectacle, she is often defined through contrast to another female figure: the conventionally feminine character. This convention derives partly from Cervantes's iconic contrast of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. But the tradition also derives from the very first learned women satires: Molière sets up the almost exact contrast between learned woman Armanda and her conventional sister Henrietta. While Armanda, like a caricature of a radical feminist, is disgusted by any gender traditionalism, including that of her sister ("Lard! what a grov'ling Mind is yours! What a mean Part do you act in the World to immure your self with Family-Affairs, and not to discover more sensible

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<sup>74</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, with the rise of sensibility, such a contrast was harder to sustain: Polly Honeycombe's high ideals are derived from bestsellers. Nevertheless, the prologue to *Polly Honeycombe* rehearses a history of romance that situates modern works within a longer romance tradition.



Pleasures than an Idol of a Husband, and Monkeys of Children! . . . the Cares which I see so many Women affected with, appear in my Eyes most horrible Meannesses" [13]), and aims to radicalize women, her sister modestly offers a more pious and resigned view:

Heav'n, whose Order we perceive to be almighty, forms us in our Birth for different Offices, and every Mind is not compos'd of Materials to fit it for making a Philosopher. If yours is created fit for those Heights which the Speculations of the Learned mount to, mine is made, Sister, to crawl upon Earth, and its Weakness confines it to trifling Cares. Let us not disorder the just Regulations of Heav'n, but follow the Instigations of our several Instincts. Do you, by the flight of a great and fine Genius, inhabit the lofty Regions of Philosophy, whilst my Imagination, keeping itself here below, tastes the terrestrial Charms of Matrimony. (15)

As this scene shows, the Female Quixote herself emphasizes the difference between herself and other women. She is defined by such a contrast, so it makes sense that this would be literalized in the figure of an opposing female figure. Finally, this pairing of two female figures, as heroine and anti-heroine, has a third origin: sensibility novels. The sensibility heroine is, as shown above, always set up against the crass world, which is often represented by a worldly woman who victimizes the heroine: Evelina and Madame Duval or Emily St. Aubert and Madame Cheron.<sup>75</sup>

Female Quixote works always make use of this heroine/anti-heroine tradition, even if only marginally. Thus, even a work like *Polly Honeycombe*, dominated by the titular figure, suggests we compare Polly to her crass Nurse, the voice of conventional morality, later shown to be a hypocrite. In most Female Quixote novels, however, this convention is deployed more pointedly and is often the main way in which the novel situates itself as pro or anti-Female Quixote, depending on whether the Female Quixote is the heroine or anti-heroine. In Lennox's iconic iteration, the generous and intelligent Female Quixote Arabella is contrasted with the mean-spirited and ignorant non-reader Miss Glanville. In *Northanger Abbey*, the Gothic-obsessed but good-natured Catherine is contrasted with the status-obsessed and self-interested Isabella. Even in "Angelina," the misguided but intelligent title figure is contrasted with a worldly and non-reading woman, Miss Burrage, who is shown to be a fraud, despite her conventionality. Though these works all critique the Female Quixote, they still set her up as the heroine, whose good nature and sincerity – which is connected to her passion for literature – cannot be questioned. The world of art and learning is thus contrasted here to the generally corrupt, or at least crass, social world.<sup>76</sup> In pro-Female Quixote works, art is allowed the

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<sup>75</sup> See Barker-Benfield, Kelly, and Todd for a summary of such sensibility contrasts.

<sup>76</sup> As these examples suggest, class is also an important factor. The anti-heroine is often an uneducated, lower class figure, though without Sancho Panza's good sense and generosity. In "Angelina," for instance, Miss Burrage ends up being a cheesemonger's daughter who had disowned her own family so as to climb socially. Yet Angelina's high class guardian, Lady Diana Chillingworth, is equally an anti-heroine, as she is unfeeling and unthinking. Gary Kelly's argument that sensibility literature valorizes middle class values against supposed lower class and upper class crassness and unfeelingness accounts for this sensibility dynamic convincingly. While Kelly's class-focused argument is important, I shall focus on its implications for gender.

transformative potential that constitutes the logic behind the figure of the Female Quixote. Such a view, of art as transcendent and potentially revolutionary, is essentially Romantic. The most famous such pro-Female Quixote novel is *Corinne*, in which Staël too contrasts an artistic heroine, Corinne, with a non-artistic one, Lucy (Lucile), and makes the case that the former is the more truly heroic.<sup>77</sup>

Anti-Female Quixote novels, on the other hand, work by exposing the Romantic mystification of art central to Female Quixotism, and they achieve this by making the artistic figure the anti-heroine. As such, anti-Female Quixote works are in the anti-romantic and anti-idealist tradition. Art, in this case, is akin to artfulness, and a means of social distinction. And though the anti-romance tradition is skeptical of other forms of idealism or enthusiasm—hence all the other Quixote satires, on everything from Jacobinism to Methodism—it is particularly easy to mock female idealism because of its tentative cultural status. Any form of female rebellion against social mores can easily be attributed to female vanity. This is the technique of the most clearly anti-Female Quixote work I look at: the *Corinna of England*. Clarissa Moreton, the Corinna of England, wishes to be a "superior woman" from very typically female motives: to triumph over other women and so gain social capital. A Female Quixote's obliviousness to the social matrix may render her innocent of this charge, but such obliviousness precludes the sophistication associated with the figure. As I argue in the next chapter, Staël reconciles these conflicts by reconciling the Female Quixote's sensibility and sophistication, and rendering the knowing and artistic Corinne as more truly heroic than the socially conventional Lucy.<sup>78</sup> But in anti-Female Quixote works, the Female Quixote emerges as a figure of threatening power to an unassuming, put-upon supposedly real heroine. The sensibility ideals that have created the Female Quixote are thus used against her.

This conventional pairing of heroine and anti-heroine often manifests itself in another conventional form in these works: the Female Quixote takes on a modest heroine as a protégée. The Female Quixote's interest in refashioning femininity is worked out not only through her own refashioning, but through her reimagining of a more artless figure. *The Corinna of England* sees Clarissa left with a ward, but Clarissa is too envious and self-absorbed to take an active interest in her. This most anti-Female Quixote novel, then, does not make use of such a dynamic, though we do find it in works more ambivalent about the Female Quixote. This suggests that while such a convention plays into the idea of an older anti-heroine endangering an innocent figure with her schemes, it can also be

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<sup>77</sup> My quotations from *Corinne* are from the Isabel Hill translation, where Lucile is Anglicized into Lucy, so I use the same name for consistency.

<sup>78</sup> Though a reader may feel as sympathetic, or more so, to the long-suffering and understated Lucy: her marriage to Oswald, with its unspoken resentments and open secrets, would make for its own compelling modern psychological novel. The section in which Oswald and Lucile travel through Italy, accompanied by resentment and unease, is one of the most vivid in the novel, and here Lucy comes into her own as a heroine which Staël uses to critique the happiness promised to conforming women. It is interesting that the conforming woman in *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* also suffers from her husband's affair with a more educated and fashionable woman, but she is able to win him back, and reform him, by becoming more educated and polished herself. Green's work thus exposes the conservatism of Wollstonecraft's idea that woman's education is justified in part by its rendering her a better wife.

seen as part of the Female Quixote's creativity and utopianism. *She Would Be an Heroine's* Georgiana becomes fascinated with a vulnerable and artless girl and shapes her into a pastoral heroine. In the process she embarrasses and even endangers her – by forcing her to stand in a revealing picturesque outfit, in the manner of Emma Hamilton, in front of partygoers – like a typical anti-heroine, but her motivation is, in part, a wish to exercise her own creativity. Georgiana, like Corinne, expresses herself through elaborate displays in costume, but she extends this passion to her protégée, whom she casts as a more innocent type to her own more knowing figure. This impulse, then, is only an extension of the Female Quixote's theatrical impulse. Charlton's *Rosella* gives us a double pairing of heroine and anti-heroine, and so multiplies the interpretative possibilities. The first pair is made up of an impressionable and rebellious romance reader, the heroine Sophia Beauclerc, and her crass and ungainly friend, the anti-heroine Sarah Swinney (probably not meant to be pronounced like "swine," but suggesting it), who encourages her in her reading and schemes. This pairing is then extended to the next generation, as former heroine Sarah becomes the anti-heroine to her own daughter, Rosella, whom she tries to make into a typical romance heroine by involving her in dangers. The most famous such pairing is in *Emma*, where Emma wishes to promote Harriet, thereby causing a small social upheaval that is soon settled by Knightley. This slippage of gender rebellion into more generalized rebellion is also conventional: the Female Quixote is often the source of chaos, usually to her protégée, but often beyond, sometimes even causing actual uprisings. Her narrative-driving propensity to cause an upheaval of the social order, to turn social conventions upside down, derives in some part from Don Quixote, and, in his association with entertaining chaos, is carried through to the connoisseur figure. It emerges fully in the Female Quixote, however: her shaping of a blank slate figure into a heroine is yet another form of reading-inspired writing.

## **Part 2, Section 2: "Romantic Intensity": The pro-Female Quixote Novel and the Female Quixote as Visionary**

The first strand of Female Quixotism I shall analyze is that which I call the visionary, which is implicitly "pro-Female Quixote," and which links up most closely to Hills's description of connoisseurship as a mode of "Romantic intensity." What I mean by a strand of Female Quixotism is both an aspect of the mode that inheres in all works, and a more specific subset of novels that emphasize this aspect. All Female Quixote novels have some suggestion of the visionary aspirations of the Female Quixote, and most Female Quixote novels suggest that there is something positive in Female Quixotism. But a subset of Female Quixote novels situate themselves as sympathetic to the figure. This subset casts the heroine's aesthetic passion as noble, and even visionary. Such a strand continues into the Romantic period and links up with famous Romantic celebrations of aesthetic longing and of the power to apprehend the sublime, as in Shelley's "Alastor" and the first books of the *Prelude*. I consider *Corinne* as an expression of this subgenre, though *Corinne* partakes of the various Female Quixote discourses. (*Corinne* then influences this British tradition in its turn, so that works critics consider as *Corinne*-influenced are actually emerging from both traditions.) Thus, in the 1830 *History of an Enthusiast*, Jewsbury's Julia, heroine of a novella that imagines the possibilities for a female visionary poet, conceives of her longings in terms of male Romantic formulations, and often quotes Shelley to express her own longings for a "communion of spirit" (64).

But Jewsbury also draws on the older Female Quixote tradition, especially as it is focused and intensified through *Corinne*. I focus on *Corinne* in the next chapter, however, so here I want to look at how the Anglophone Female Quixote discourse itself developed a Romantic idea of the visionary woman.

The subset of Female Quixote works that focuses on a visionary woman is straightforwardly pro-Female Quixote. While it is important not to anachronistically celebrate as feminist any depiction of female strength or rebellion, it is important also to note that Female Quixote works are not a monolith but rather a cultural form which takes on the same idea – of the aspiring, reading woman – from different angles and traditions. In a subset of these texts, the Female Quixote is unambiguously the heroine, even if she is critiqued for her psychologically and socially destabilizing enthusiasm. These works tend to figure the Female Quixote as emphatically artistic, thus playing up the idea that her impressionability is a form of creativity, of a passionate response to art. This pro-Female Quixote tradition is rooted in sensibility culture and its celebration of deep feeling and unworldliness, both signaled by enthusiasm and a love of the arts. Lennox's seminal Female Quixote figure herself instantiates this tradition, and her enthusiasm is not only a perfunctory marker of sensibility, but rather signals her inspired vision. All heroines in this sub-tradition are ennobled by their love of the arts, and the purity of the emotion is never in question. Even in a more didactic work like Edgeworth's "Angelina," the heroine's love of reading and learning signals her good qualities – her intelligence, seriousness, and feeling. The two forms of satirical criticism launched at the Female Quixote – that she is foolish or vain – are never launched at the female figures in this sub-tradition.

In these heroines, the enthusiasm of the Quixote figure is represented as a visionary force. As Kari Lokke has argued in her history of female idealism, *Tracing Women's Romanticism: Gender, History and Transcendence*, Staël raises the idea of enthusiasm to that of a Romantic principle, and such ennobling enthusiasm is crucial to the visionary Female Quixote. Arabella evokes such an idea in her defense of her own powerful feelings:

But with him who is incapable of any violent attraction, and whose heart is chilled by a general indifference, precept or example will have no force – and philosophy itself, which boasts it hath remedies for all indispositions of the soul, never had any that can cure an indifferent mind – nay, added she, I am persuaded that indifference is generally the inseparable companion of a weak and imperfect judgment. (311)

Here Arabella sounds not only very much like *Corinne*, suggesting that something extra is needed to separate the sacred from the profane (religion from philosophy), but like Shelley, who grounds moral philosophy in the imagination. The Female Quixote's imagination is signaled by her impressionability: "[Arabella's] mind being wholly filled with the most extravagant expectations, she was alarmed by every trifling incident; and kept in a continual anxiety by a vicissitude of hopes, fears, wishes, and disappointments" (8). Such hypersensitivity is made much use of by Gothic novels, as Clery and other critics have shown: the heroine's responsiveness allows the working of the Gothic effects. The paranoia of the Female Gothic heroine is another expression of such sensitivity.

Lennox, whose novel is the richest evocation of the figure, suggests that the Female Quixote combines such vulnerability with a passion that is self-sustaining and full of positive conviction, a "most happy facility in accommodating every incident to her own wishes and conceptions" (25). Lennox is here describing something we would recognize as the artistic temperament, which we will see figured in the later artistic figures of Corinne and Jane Eyre. Corinne's temperament too, partakes of this mix of the impressionability (linked to her melancholy) and optimistic enthusiasm (the inspired state in which Oswald finds her). This is the Quixote not as deluded figure, but as artist shaping the world, imposing onto it one's vision. The conviction of Jane Eyre's voice, what has been seen from a feminist point of view as her belief in her own self worth, is another expression of this female visionary mode.

Even more, Arabella's enthusiasm and learning are suffused with a visionary quality, which is often communicated by Lennox's imaginative use of romance. While Scudéry's romances are based in a fashionable French social scene, Arabella lends them a new aesthetic power. Take, for instance, the scene in which Arabella imagines being kidnapped, in heroine fashion, as her passport to a world of greater opportunity: "I do determine, if that misfortune should ever happen to me, that I would, if possible, visit the Valley of Tempe . . . And is any thing more common than ladies being carried by their ravishers into countries far distant from their own? May not the same accidents happen to me, that have happened to so many illustrious ladies before me?" (260-1). Moers has already analyzed how such wish for forced travel is one of the key elements of the Female Gothic, as she shows in her reading of Brontë's reference to Radcliffe in *Shirley*. There, Rose, one of the more questing figures, imagines that she too may travel as the heroines of Radcliffe do, therefore showing one of the main appeals of Radcliffe. From the beginning of the Female Quixote tradition, however, the love of romance had been connected to a specifically aesthetic and intellectual longing. In the scene from Lennox above, Arabella goes on to describe what she imagines will happen once she is carried away: "And may I not be carried into Macedonia by a similitude of destiny with that of a great many beautiful princesses, who, though born in the most distant quarters of the world, chanced to meet at one time in the city of Alexandria, and related their miraculous adventures to each other?" (260-1). It is not just that Arabella's wish is for a meeting of storytelling women, which is important, but that her evocation of such a meeting calls upon the language of romance to suggest an enlarged fate, possible in a world of "miraculous adventures." The language used here is one of desire, which is expressed through the romance language of "destiny" and "miraculous" "chance." Lennox suggests the power of romance by rendering it through Arabella's imaginative language: that ridiculous romance coincidence works via an underlying logic of desire. Arabella's retelling of her beloved romances renders them poetic, and this is an especially striking example because it focuses, self-reflexively, not on "miraculous adventures," but on their retelling. (It is also important that such a scene takes place in the learned city of Alexandria.) Such self-reflexivity is important to Female Quixote works and creates a kind of mise en abyme that we see used in a similar manner in the storytelling scene in Jane Eyre that I look at in chapter four. I focus on this passage here, however, because it seems to me to best express the visionary power found in Lennox, which will be developed in the Female Quixote works I discuss in this section. Her wish for travel will be rendered in later visionary works as the wish to be carried away by inspiration, a kind

of longing that conflates adventure with creative power, that will be made explicit in Jewsbury's Julia and in Jane Eyre.

That this strand of the Female Quixote mode aspires to create a figure of the actual female artist becomes clearest in *Corinne*. But even before Staël's synthesis of British Sensibility and Continental aesthetic philosophy, the idea that the visionary quality of the Female Quixote is artistic circulates in the British tradition. Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins's 1786 *The Victim of Fancy* is a Female Quixote novel which strikingly recognizes the importance of the aesthetic to female idealism and which engages a larger feminist discourse on the uses of arts to women. The two epigraphs to the novel make its feminist stakes clear, the first being a quote from a contemporary work that supports the right of women and the second a poem by the author to a figure who encourages female artists, William Hayley. The first epigraph is from an anonymous 1786 philosophical poem called *The Progress of Fashion*, which traces cultural fashions for the progressive purpose of showing that modern Britain does not represent the apex of justice and enlightenment. Thus, the author condemns the practice of capital punishment for theft, satirically pointing out that the life of a man is adjusted to value. Tomlins's epigraph is taken from a section in the poem in which the author takes up female education and makes the Wollstonecraftian argument that women's frivolity is the fault of education rather than being an inherent trait. The *Progress of Fashion* author further argues that women are not intellectually inferior to men and cites the name of many illustrious women (most being figures important to both the Bluestocking and sensibility canons): Ann Yearsely, Hannah More, Elizabeth Montagu, and Anna Seward. The author admits that women cannot dedicate their lives to studies because they have more domestic commitments, but strikingly extends this caveat to men, concluding that most people, not just most women, are not geniuses: "not every woman is a Montague, not every man a Locke" (74). That Tomlins quotes from a work notable for its timely intervention into feminist debates, rather than its literary or historical prestige, suggests that she wishes to emphasize the ideological work of her novel. From *The Progress of Fashion* Tomlins quotes (on her title page): "the passions of women are warmer; and the rays of their genius concentrate to the object on which they engage themselves more strongly - it absorbs all other considerations." Such a formulation strikingly suggests that women are more likely than men to exhibit the behavior of an obsessive connoisseur, countering the cultural depiction of women as lacking strong feelings. (The cultural stereotype that women are more emotional suggests that women are more flighty rather than constant.) The Female Quixote figure, countering traditional views of femininity, promotes the idea that women too are capable of emotional and intellectual application, tying this capability to a capability for aesthetic obsession. Tomlins's feminist intervention is similarly focused on the importance of specifically aesthetic desire – her heroine is a Wertherite foremost, who then develops various other aesthetic and intellectual obsessions (with figures from Homer to Milton to the contemporary Sophia Lee) throughout the work.

Tomlins's second prefatory text makes it even clearer that this Female Quixote novel is in effect a polemical text in favor of the artistic – and more generally intellectual – woman. The second epigraph is a dedicatory poem written by Tomlins to William Hayley, whom she celebrates as the defendant and promoter of female genius. The argument of Tomlins's poem is that Hayley has promoted female artists, so that women owe him thanks and praise: "Say, shall the candour of thy noble line, / Which says to

Woman, 'Poesy is thine,' / and bids, with dauntless aim, the female band / Pluck the green laurel from the Muse's hand – / Rest all unnotic'd by one grateful lay, / Unsung by those to whom you point the way?" (vol. 1, p. 3).<sup>79</sup> Hayley not only prompts women to be geniuses, he also celebrates such figures in his work: "And shalt thou, Hayley, whose melodious strain / Darts emulation thro' each glowing vein, / And fondly pays to fame and genius true / The fair Comnena's shade, the tribute due / Whilst thy fair pages female worth retrace, / Shalt thou no tribute from the sex receive?" (3). Tomlins here honors Hayley's celebration of the Byzantine Princess Anna Comnena, who was, like the ancient Corinna, a poetess and learned woman. Female Quixote works are intrinsically connected to heroism and to the celebration of illustrious women, but Tomlins takes such a tendency further, making explicit what remains implicit in other such works: that the artistic passion of the Female Quixote figure, the obsessiveness mentioned by the first epigraph, is a creative power. Corinne, the ultimate embodiment of the visionary Female Quixote, arises out of such heroine-worship and of drawing upon illustrious historic women – as Scudéry does in her *Harangues* – to support the idea of female imaginative and intellectual power. Tomlins continues the conceit that she, a budding artist, is drawing inspiration from Hayley, and styles herself a heroine, a female warrior for women's rights: "Lo! from the throng the bold adventurer starts / Her cheek yet wet with admiration's tears / And awed by genius which her soul reveres, / From motives, sacred as thy breast might own / Her flowers she brings to thy poetic throne: / Simple and few, while at thy feet she strews / The warm effusions of a female muse / She from the raptures of a youthful heart, / Tho' 'not an artist, yet a friend to art' / . . ." (vol. 1, p. 3). Such a neo-classical tableau is squarely within the late eighteenth-century sensibility culture's celebration of female talent – particularly, as I shall show, in *The Lady's Magazine*. The invocation to genius – beginning to acquire its Romantic significance – is more radical here than in the magazines, however; Tomlins shows a female Werther figure who dies because she cannot fit into society as she finds it. It is significant, too, that Tomlins sets herself up in her dedicatory poem not as "an artist" but "a friend to art," a figure whose creative power lies in her power of appreciation. As such, she, as author, is a mirror of the "victim of fancy" of the title, whose suffering is caused by her ability to be too greatly affected by artistic works. The idea that women are easily excited by novels, and even sent into hysterics, is common, but the Female Quixote traditions redeems such impressionability by connecting it to imaginative power.

Tomlins's "victim of fancy" Theresa Morven is the earliest figure of the Female Quixote as visionary and artistic woman. This is an important work, then, because it shows that the Female Quixote was already being recognized as an expression of a feminist aspiration towards the aesthetic sphere – and here this means the arts more generally, not just the strictly literary – and even towards actual creativity, even before Staël's seminal novel. Tomlins's work also resembles later, post-*Corinne* works in its evocation of the female visionary and so shows the longer history of the figure and of her concerns, connecting figures as distant as the seventeenth-century learned woman and the twentieth-century horror film's "Final Girl." Since the novel is rather obscure (though there is a newly-published Pickering and Chatto edition), I shall summarize the plot here

<sup>79</sup> All my citations are from the PDF file I downloaded from Chawton House's Novels Online series; the files are no longer available online, since the novels have since been published by Pickering & Chatto (with Chawton).

briefly. *The Victim of Fancy* is an epistolary sentimental novel, focusing primarily on the Female Quixote of the title, Theresa Morven, and her admirer, Fredrick Burrell (who is also her brother's friend). Most of the letters are from Theresa to her beloved soul-mate brother, however, so that the narrative harnesses the power of the subjective point of view. The novel is an overwrought sensibility work, mirroring not only the mid-eighteenth century Richardsonian mode but also the style of the work it takes up, Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Though the plot focuses on a female reader supposedly too invested in *Werther*, the novel is dedicated by Tomlins to Goethe himself, so that it is much more an exploration of the pleasures and pains of Wertherian sensibility than a condemnation of them. This Female Quixote novel, therefore, has almost nothing in common with the satirical anti-learned woman tradition I have been describing. The story follows Theresa who, like Corinne, is persecuted by a cold stepmother who locks her up in a convent until she comes of age. Theresa, a sensitive and artistic figure, who cries because she cannot wait until she learns Greek to read Homer in the original and longs more than anything to see the galleries and museums, develops an obsession with the author of *Werther* (whom she thinks British). Her quest, then, becomes to find the author of *Werther* so as to show that he is an upright British subject. The novel follows mid-eighteenth-century sensibility novel conventions quite closely, so that the sensitive heroine is involved in various intrigues and misunderstandings, even making the conventional trip to Bath (where she thinks *Werther's* author may be found – one of the moments of satire), and is loved by various suitors. She is set up as a noble woman of feeling – never rivaled by a purer heroine and contrasted only to crass figures – whose admirable capacity to feel strong emotion eventually kills her.

Theresa Morven is, like Lennox's Arabella, a figure who combines intellect with aesthetic appreciation; she has a "passion" for both "science" and "sensibility." But, just as Staël develops the Female Quixote's erudition and artistic powers, so Tomlins emphasizes the figure's desire, even passionate longing, for learning and art. Her Quixotism is not as literal as Arabella's, but her feelings are as dangerously strong, so that one of her admirers worries that her "lively imagination" and "warmth of disposition" (vol. 1, p. 6) might lead her astray. But her obsession is not trained on romance, and so cannot be conflated with sexual desire: she has a "desire of knowledge" that "almost becomes a passion" (vol. 1, p. 6). Such a desire cannot be collapsed into a worldly wish, however, as in the classic learned woman; rather, it is infused with emotional resonance.

Further, such a love of the arts is not confined to literature, but extends to painting, and to all forms of creative expression – expressed here under that Female Quixote term of "genius" – thus showing that the Female Quixote is conceived as a more generally aesthetic subject. Like many an artistic heroine, particularly Corinne, Theresa is persecuted as a child by a stepmother, who locks her in a convent, away from the mental freedom she desires. She therefore regards her release from the convent, on coming of age, as her "happier birth-day," anticipating Aurora Leigh's own symbolic rebirth as artist and Corinne's escape from her British imprisonment: "For twenty years immured from all that the heart pants after, from knowledge and even from nature; like a bird from its prison my soul bursts from confinement: awakens from the darkness of ignorance, I behold the face of creation: I hear the voice of genius, my heart vibrates to its sound . . . I rejoice in this my happier birth-day" (vol. 1, p. 7). This is the language of the visionary woman, which will be repeated from Corinne to Jewsbury's Julia to Aurora Leigh and



Jane Eyre. Escaping from the convent, Theresa's main wish is to live the aesthetic life she has been denied, so that the incessant attention of her suitors is oppressive. While her main goal, of trying to find the author of *Werther*, may seem like a sublimation of her sexual desire, she is characterized throughout as actually trying to escape sexuality and as more attached to her brother than to any suitor. Thus, when her admirer Burrell finds her crying, and wishes she were crying for love of him (in typical sentimental fashion), he is chagrined to find she is in fact crying out of "frustration" at not being learned enough to read Greek.

The figure of the visionary woman as represented here is not new, however, as she is conceived as exactly in the Female Quixote tradition. Tomlins's language and descriptions of Theresa are from the lexicon of Female Quixotism: she is an "enthusiast" (vol. 1, p. 6), a "whimsical lady" (vol. 2, p. 3) who has "a passion for genius" and "excel[s] . . . in [the] science of sensibility" (vol. 2, p. 8), and feels "bound in the trammels of custom" (vol. 2, p. 8). Like Arabella, she dresses negligently and has no time for the usual concerns of women: "I have breakfasted with my aunt, and my dress does not please her; it is too simple, I think is her objection. I am to set myself off . . ." (vol. 1, p. 53). Uninterested in being an object of admiration, she prefers to create art – to be a subject rather than object – though she is discouraged at every turn by her indulgent, though conventional, aunt: "I see my drawings laid about with an air of negligence. This I always hated, and now it is more displeasing to me than ever" (vol. 1, p. 53). Though she is not a ridiculously unkempt learned woman, her main worry is the negligence with which her creative works are treated. Like Arabella, she is contrasted to worldly women, who are depicted as being both inartistic and unfeeling, with the conventional sensibility suggestion that the two are related. We see such a contrast of the idealistic versus the materialistic woman in Theresa's visit to an artist's gallery: while Theresa loses herself in contemplating a painting, another woman comments to her on the price of the frame. The scene emerges as a metaphor for the idealistic woman, who sees beyond the material trappings into the transcendent meaning of art; as she remarks about the frame, "For my part, I had not even seen that it had one" (vol. 1, p. 11). Tomlins's evocation of Theresa's aesthetic enthusiasm as a form of inspired creativity explicitly connects reception and creation:

For me . . . "Who feel, whene'er I touch my lyre / My spirits sunk beneath my proud desire,' when I began to awaken from the sweet delusion, that, guided by [Sophia Lee], my imagination had yielded to - when I could behold it as the offspring only of fiction and fancy, I wet this first and most beautiful effort of modern romance with the involuntary tears of admiration, and thought of the words of Caracchi. I will flatter myself, that something like what passed in his mind, when, on beholding the paintings of Raphael, the emphatic exclamation, "And I too am a painter!" burst from his lips, at that enthusiastic moment enraptured my heart. (vol. 1, p. 52)

Theresa, who speaks here as a figure of an artist unable to reach the ideal in creating, connects reception with creation through the figure of the exalted imagination. It is not far to move from feeling "I too am a painter" in gazing on a work (or feeling one is a writer while reading) to actually attempting to create artistically. Importantly, too,

Theresa feels an analogous creative rapture in reading Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783), a woman's modern romance, suggesting even more that she too could make the leap from sensitive reader to genius writer. Clery has shown, in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, that Female Gothic heroines are aesthetes not only because they love the sublime, but because they are actual artists, who draw and write poems in their dejected but inspired state. But the Female Quixote discourse makes the aesthetic stakes of such a heroine clearer, using the conventions of Quixotism, connoisseurship, and the learned woman tradition to develop a figure of the female aesthete as Romantic artist.

*The Victim of Fancy* further develops, and makes explicit, the idea that such an artistic woman has no place in society as it exists. Tomlins makes such a case by drawing upon the sensibility tradition of the melancholy heroine, a tradition upon which Staël will also draw. Theresa's difference from feminine standards does not inhere in an aggressive assault on feminine grace and demureness, as we see with the more knowing and sarcastic figures I look at below; rather, she is a typically caring and pious sensibility heroine, who often does good to others. Tomlins, however, also draws upon the current phenomenon of Wertherism, harnessing its Romantic insights about the impossibility of gaining the ideal, which she then expresses through the idea of aesthetic rather than erotic longing. It would perhaps flout social conventions equally if the suggestion were that Theresa is erotically as well as aesthetically obsessed, an idea taken up by Theresa's aunt, who is shocked that she is following a man around the country. (Theresa mistakes a mysterious man for the author of *Werther*.) Such an interpretation would normalize Theresa's quest as an expression of romantic love, however – that is, of the drive towards courtship and domesticity. And though her conventional aunt interprets Theresa's obsession with the author of *Werther* this way, Tomlins suggests that her aunt misses the point (even as she realizes how radical Theresa is). More striking is how Tomlins uses Wertherism, as well as pre-Gothic sensibility as found in Lee, to deepen the meaning of Female Quixotism and to render it into the Romantic force it was to become in later figures such as Corinne and Jane Eyre. Theresa is not only Gothically imprisoned in a convent, she is also threatened with further incarceration for her strong feelings. This serves to link the figure of the Quixote to that of Gilbert and Gubar's "madwoman in the attic." While Theresa is not quite a freak, she is, and thinks of herself as being, somehow apart, which is why she believes herself not meant for the usual narrative of courtship: "he talks of admiring me [she says about her suitor], but there is something in this fantastical brain of mine, which was never dreamt of in his philosophy" (vol. 1, p. 8). Theresa's paraphrase of Hamlet aligns her with another melancholic hero. At the most literal level, her dedication to art makes a domestic narrative more difficult for her. Her aunt cautions her to keep her "ardent desire of knowledge" secret since men either think such ideas "affectation," or if they think they are sincere, they "despise" (vol. 1, p. 9) such women even more.

The question of the place of the erotic in Female Quixotism is more complex, however, as Tomlins shows, anticipating both Staël and Brontë: Theresa's erotic wishes are wrapped up with her artistic longings. As in *Jane Eyre*, it is not just that the aesthetic masks the erotic but that the erotic masks the aesthetic. She is in love with the author of *Werther* as an ideal, and, later, with a real man she mistakes for this author (the extent of her Quixotic delusion). This plot turn renders fairly explicit the feminist formula which recognizes that female obsession with male artists – the phenomenon of the "groupie" – is

a wish to be such an artist oneself, to somehow take possession of a power that is gendered masculine by society. Tomlins complicates this equation, however, by introducing erotic love as a competitor to aesthetic longing; erotic love can be a conduit for the aesthetic, but it can also trouble the emergence of the female aesthete. In a rather convoluted plot twist, it turns out that the man Theresa had mistaken for the author of *Werther* is her suitor's brother, in whom she finds a real man of sensibility she can love. Her experience of romantic love then "cures" her of her obsession with the author of *Werther*, a development which follows the convention of the chaste female idealist converted by love (seen in *Love's Philosophy*). Yet her "real" love of him is tinged – even infected – with a less "natural" longing after the ideal; for much of their relationship, she thinks of him as the author of *Werther* and suffers with her longing after him, her enthusiasm turned to "melancholy" (vol. 2, p. 10). The suggestion is not, as in *Corinne*, that love kills the female artist, but that her relentless search for an ideal leads to death – a convention of Romanticism (though generally seen through a male point of view). (Such a formula will be picked up by the Female Gothic and particularly by some of the Female Gothic films I look at in the last chapter.)

*The Victim of Fancy* thus emerges as a feminist rendition of the Romantic theme of the self-destructive search for the ideal, often rendered as the search for a soul mate who is akin to oneself and thus often depicted as the love for a sibling figure. It is the death of Theresa's beloved brother, to whom she has been addressing her letters, that leads to a final breakdown and death. As in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) – to name two canonical novels that make feminist use of the same Romantic conceit – the unusual woman finds her soul mate in a brother figure. All these later works, then, are drawing, like Tomlins's novel, upon overlapping discourses, most importantly that which we would describe as Romanticism, as well as sensibility and the Female Quixote tradition. Tomlins's novel resembles both those novels in that Theresa's search for a romantic object is also the search for a double figure. As in those more famous works, the heroine's love for a brother figure also signals a feminist idea: that mature femininity is destructive to the rebellious woman. The Romantic conceit of the sibling lover thus works well in a Female Quixote work, which similarly valorizes an immature, and thus "masculine," woman. Thus, Theresa's discomfort with domesticity results in a rebellion against mature womanhood, a revolt represented by her death. As in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Mill on the Floss*, then, the rebellious woman reverts to childhood freedom before dying. While this is a well-known reading of the canonical later novels, it is important to trace such a feminist Romantic theme in the Female Quixote tradition, the first to give rise to the female Romantic visionary.

Tomlins is very much within the Female Quixote tradition in her resolution of the novel, in that she ends on a more melancholy note that questions the implications of such a Romantic mode for women. As in many Female Quixote novels, Theresa takes on a protégée – in this case, the daughter of a poor woman Theresa had helped. As she is dying, Theresa warns her protégée against strong feelings (recalling the warning of St. Aubert to his own visionary daughter, Emily), referring to her own overwhelming longing as "those energies which have destroyed me" (vol. 2, p. 39). Theresa's breakdown is rendered, like Clarissa's and Corinne's breakdowns, as a dissolution of subjectivity; as in those texts, her fragmented subjectivity is expressed as confused and fragmentary writings. Before she dies, Theresa, like Corinne, leaves a legacy through her protégée,

though in this case it is a didactic one that warns against Romantic excesses: "let [her] learn to regulate the passions, even the most innocent of her heart; it is the impetuosity of mine, I am persuaded, which has done much in destroying me" (vol. 2, p. 41). It is not, however, clear that this is the moral of the work, especially given that Tomlins has set up Theresa as a figure that confirms the idea of the epigraphs: that women too can be geniuses. The ambivalence and melancholy of the ending are common to the subgenre of Female Quixote novels focusing on a visionary female figure: they emerge as demonstrations of, as well as protests against, the suffering an aesthetic woman will face.

I shall now turn to a Female Quixote novel that presents another major variation on the female visionary and thus develops the subgenre in important ways: Maria Jane Jewsbury's "History of an Enthusiast" (from *The Three Histories*, 1830). "Enthusiast" is usually regarded as a reaction to *Corinne*, but I shall argue, by discussing it as part of the Female Quixote tradition, that it develops larger Female Quixote themes and shows that *Corinne* is itself part of such a tradition. The major difference between this novel and other Female Quixote works is that the Female Quixote figure is an actual artist here, a development that partially supports the conventional argument that its major debt is to *Corinne*. Staël's themes are indeed central to Jewsbury as she takes up the question of what would happen to a Corinne figure that cannot flee Britain or, even more importantly, the degraded literary marketplace, with which all artists must reckon. As such, "Enthusiast" develops the thread of Female Quixotism that addresses one of the main critiques of the reading woman: that her enthusiasm is degraded by being fixed on the modern romance, the product of a commercial literary system. Jewsbury addresses this question by taking seriously the idea that the Female Quixote is a visionary, as Tomlins does, but goes further and makes her an actual author. In this chapter, however, I look at Jewsbury's novel to demonstrate that it arises out of the British Female Quixote tradition as much as *Corinne* does, further supporting the idea that Female Quixote novels are contributing to, while also skeptically questioning, an emerging feminist Romanticism. Further, like *Victim of Fancy*, "Enthusiast" develops the Female Quixote's "Romantic intensity" rather than her strictly creative abilities – as is suggested by the figure's being dubbed an "enthusiast." Or, more accurately, it shows that the Romantic logic through which receptivity is creative, and through which the faculty of the imagination is shown to exist in a merging of the two, is crucial to the Female Quixote discourse. Though "enthusiasm" is a core term for Staël (as Lokke argues at length) it is also a Female Quixote trope which characterizes a connoisseurial obsession with the aesthetic as a category (rather than strictly with the literary).

"Enthusiast" shows that the Female Quixote tradition, largely conceived, continues into the later nineteenth century and beyond. "Enthusiast" actually merges the Female Quixote tradition with that of the more specific female artist one (consolidated by Staël), showing the way the two draw upon each other in their implicit argument that the aesthetic is that which allows a transcendence of social roles. Jewsbury characterizes budding female genius Julia by drawing upon the figure of the "bookish miss" (7, as she is called by her disapproving grandmother) of the Female Quixote tradition rather than on the more mythologized Corinne figure we see developed in other post-Staël works such as *Aurora Leigh* and *The Half-Sisters*. *Half-Sisters'* Bianca is shown as a natural artist and *Aurora Leigh* as a self-crowning genius, but Jewsbury's Julia is embedded much more closely in the actual literary world of early nineteenth-century Britain.

The epigraph to *Enthusiast's* first chapter derives not from a canonical literary work, but from an anonymous song in the 1830 *Literary Souvenir*: "Where is Miss Myrtle, can anyone tell?" (Though not noted in the *Souvenir*, the song is by the occasional poet Winthrop Mackworth Praed.)<sup>80</sup> Jewsbury's decision to quote a contemporary source signals the greater realism of her work and its related engagement with the marketplace. As in all Female Quixote novels, Julia is shown as not conforming to female behavior: the epigraph signals that her story begins with a transgression, a dereliction of duty. No one can find Julia because, like Jane Eyre, she is hidden somewhere, reading. Yet, though the epigraph suggests that the heroine is away from social surveillance (and thus from the social world), the song it comes from depicts a flighty, flirtatious woman who loses the man who really loves her because she wishes to mix in society and be admired. The epigraph is therefore from the point of view of a suffering lover, a lover who nevertheless eventually becomes disillusioned with Myrtle and finds another woman to love and love him. This plot, then, mirrors that of *Victim of Fancy*, in which we witness the sufferings of the lover of a visionary woman. Like Theresa, Julia will love not the real man who loves her but a visionary figure that represents the world of the arts. Yet, while Theresa's longing for the aesthetic is routed through a figure she perceives as reachable – she believes the "author of Werther" resides in Britain – the man, or men, Julia loves are the Romantic poets, from Keats to Shelley to Byron, most of whom were dead by this point. Both Theresa and Julia, then, seek a demon lover figure, much in the way of the Female Gothic heroine. Is the comparison between Julia and the Myrtle of the song, then, meant to draw a reader's attention to the ways they are different and only constructed as similar by a disappointed lover? Yet, while Julia's visionary status seemingly renders her the opposite of a frivolous society woman, Jewsbury will suggest that art itself may be worldly (the anti-Female Quixote argument). As Lokke puts in in her discussion of Jewsbury's disillusionment with the marketplace: "the professionalization and commodification of female authorship in Regency Britain shaped women writers' responses to Staël's continental and idealist conception of enthusiasm, tainting it with associations of excessive self-promotion and commercialization."<sup>81</sup> While the marketplace is here less idealized than it had been when Edgeworth's Angelina had seen it as an opportunity for the "woman of genius," it is not entirely dismissed either. As Lokke further shows, Jewsbury's novella is a complex wrestling with the role of the female artist rather than a moralizing text. As such, the early parts of the novel, which sketch a portrait of a visionary Female Quixote, are as important – and as powerful, as Lokke argues – as any feminist Romantic writing.

Like so many Female Quixotes, then, Julia is characterized as possessing some "masculine" traits: she is always in trouble, cannot keep her clothes clean, and hates dolls. Jewsbury comments explicitly that such "energy" is often the sign of unusual capacity but that it is tolerated only in boys (4). Also like many Female Quixotes, Julia is identified with her father, a poor artist who had abandoned her mother. Like the Female Quixotes who no longer have a father (their usual figure of unconventional socialization),

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<sup>80</sup> See *The Poems of Winthrop Mackworth Praed*, p. 268.

<sup>81</sup> "British Legacies of *Corinne* and the Commercialization of Enthusiasm," (172). Lokke's work anticipates many of the points I make here about Jewsbury's relationship to the marketplace and to a feminist Romanticism.



Julia is left with a conventional and disapproving female guardian – her grandmother, who "had a horror of genius" (17), thinking it "the small-pox of the soul" (17). Her grandmother not only forbids Julia from reading too much – though reading is the only thing that keeps her out of trouble – but insists that she be raised like a lady; Julia is an heiress and class and sex boundaries must be maintained. While her grandmother's "hatred of genius" is rooted in her associating it with Julia's irresponsible father, Jewsbury nevertheless characterizes her as the conventional worldly figure countering the idealist Julia: "[the grandmother's] dread of genius balanced her estimation of money" (17).

After rooting Julia's character in her tomboyish childhood, associated with the romping and mischievous side of the Female Quixote (which I analyze in more detail in the section below), Jewsbury moves to the second section of her portrait of "an enthusiast," which develops the portrait of the visionary woman. Echoing Austen's description of Catherine Morland's development from tomboy to enthusiast adolescent girl, Jewsbury lays out her portrait of the artist:

She had by this time outgrown her more childish eccentricities, took care of her clothes, bade adieu to tree-climbing, riding without a saddle, or filling her bonnet with blackberries . . . was become externally . . . 'more like other young ladies'; but the spirit that actuated her as a child was now in stronger, and more concentrated, if also in more silent operation. Her mind was athirst for knowledge. (19)

Catherine Morland remains within the accepted conventions of a sensibility heroine, though her longing after Gothic adventures suggests that she feels the need for something otherworldly, that she too has imagination. Julia, however, is described as an actual visionary and budding artist:

What the restless, questioning, dreaming power within her was . . . that bade sounds and spectacles, however trivial, 'haunt her like a passion' – that made nature a vague glory that she loved without comprehending – that excited high but unutterable longings after lovely but unimaginable things: what the power within her was, which when she read of heroes and high deeds clothed them with absolute vitality . . . Julia knew not. (19)

Jewsbury is here embedding her visionary heroine into the male Romantic tradition, describing how a girl too can feel, like Wordsworth (one of many Romantic poets quoted throughout the novel by and in relation to Julia), that she is chosen to be an artist. (She will later be compared to Shelley, her hero, and finally to Byron, whom she resembles in her eventual disillusionment.) The reference to "heroes and high deeds," while conventional, show the tie to the questing Female Quixote, for whom romance heroism is another expression of such longing. Simply, what is in the Female Quixote tradition dubbed romance becomes in Romantic-era novels the emerging category of the aesthetic. Like other sensibility heroines and Female Quixotes, and like Corinne, Julia loves the night: "And night – what enthusiast loves not night" (48). Jewsbury, however, also offers a more practical explanation for an artistic woman's love of night: it is the time she is

freed from duties and social pressures: "to [Julia] night was precious. . . . she thwarted her [grandmother] very little in the day-time, either by reading, or the manifestation of the spirit's mysteries . . . . but it was not only to read, but to think and feel, and dream, that she loved her hours of retirement" (50). Jewsbury emphasizes the visionary strains of Female Quixotism to portray an enthusiast who become an artist, but she also alludes to classic Quixotism. Thus, Julia tells her Oswald-like admirer, Percy: "I wish *I* loved home, and had the strong domestic feelings you have. I wish I had not future – no dreams, no romance, or rather, I wish romance were reality" (65). Such Quixotism, however, is undergirded by the emerging Romantic canon, so that Julia, like *Victim of Fancy's* Theresa, is said to be under the spell of German literature, as well as the British Romantic poets and Staël.

Jewsbury, like Staël, is portraying not only an enthusiast, but an artist and "born genius" (20). While the Female Quixote aspires to be a genius, Julia, like Corinne, is one. Jewsbury draws upon the mythology around genius developed in the Romantic period to characterize Julia – she is misunderstood, aflame with aesthetic desire, and even freakish. Julia compares herself to male Romantic poets, particularly Shelley, using the romance image of the ever-sailing boat, from *Prometheus Unbound* ("My soul in an enchanted boat") and "Alastor," to describe her own quest. (However, the epigraph to the novella, from Spenser, describes a stuck boat, an image that Jewsbury suggests more accurately describes the society-impeded artistic woman.) More specifically, Julia wishes, like Corinne, to be a renowned artist. In a scene alluding to romance, the father of Julia's more conventional friend asks both of them to choose "fairy favours" (22) and while Annette chooses domestic bliss, Julia "choose[s] Fame" (25). Corinne too wishes for fame, though such a formulation also suggests the neo-chivalric language of the Female Quixote. Also following Female Quixote tradition, Jewsbury links this wish for artistic glory to a wish to transcend gender boundaries. Upon being asked "what good would fame do you, a woman?" Julia responds that "It would make amends for being a woman – I should not pass away and perish" (25). Though she is told by her questioner that "domestic virtues" are the "only celebrity that can increase a woman's happiness" (26), she will reject domesticity, which will also come to mean a move away from her country home and into the professional city. While Jewsbury will suggest that the city is the opposite of the land of romance Julia seeks, she also imbues Julia's views of literary fame with visionary longing (anticipating Jane Eyre's longing for adventures in places perceived on the horizon as a move away from female boredom): "I cannot content myself with books; I pine for living intercourse with the great, the gay, and the gifted . . . Oh, this dull, dreary, and most virtuous domestic life" (69).

Unlike *Corinne*, however, which celebrates the artistic woman wholly, "Enthusiast" draws from the skeptical currents of the Female Quixote tradition and suggests, in strikingly sensibility fashion, that once Julia becomes an artist she succumbs to worldliness and her art becomes artfulness. Jewsbury's novel is thus a strange hybrid, which seems to start with a celebration of the visionary woman, contrasting her to her materialistic grandmother and frivolous friends, and then takes away her exalted status as it turns her from enthusiastic reader to successful writer. Once the ideal is fulfilled – visionary dreams become published works – its power is greatly diminished.<sup>82</sup> Julia

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<sup>82</sup> Jane Eyre's isolation at Ferndean and her continual connection to the blind Rochester separate her from the materializing power of the world. *Jane Eyre* follows the tradition of the Female

begins as a Wordsworth, enchanted by all she sees; achieves Shellydom as her intellectual and visionary powers expand; and, finally, after finding herself famous in London, turns into a "satiated" Byron. As a female Romantic poet, it is suggested, the melancholy but necessary self-consciousness that constitutes a mature Romantic vision – Wordsworth's realization that his poetry is based in no longer having direct access to the thrills of childhood – is denied to a woman. Rather, it seems, Julia is a victim to the particular sensibility formula inflicted on women – as critics from Deborah Ross to Tania Modleski show – which prohibits them from being knowing. This is precisely what Staël changes, however (and she is arguably anticipated by Lennox): Corinne is not only knowing, but self-knowing, and her wish for fame ennobles her art. In some ways, then, "Enthusiast" resembles the anti-Female Quixote *The Corinna of England* (discussed in the next chapter, alongside *Corinne*) in its critique of a worldly woman who is ironically eclipsed by a heroine in the shade. In this case, Julia's childhood friend, Annette, who had had much more conventional aspirations, is shown as emotionally fulfilled in marriage and motherhood. Annette's Shelleyan symbol is not the questing bark, but the unconsciously singing skylark, to which, while she is in the midst of tending her children, she is compared by her husband. The idea is made even clearer by Annette's husband who, when she threatens she will take up poetry to show him she can be just like Julia, remarks: "You had better continue to *be* poetry, Annette" (158). Such an idea – that women can only be objects of art, rather than creative subjects – is central to the historical misogynistic idea that women cannot possess genius.

It is important to note here, however, that Julia also belongs to the visionary woman tradition, and that Jewsbury's participation in both traditions relates to the ambivalence inherent in Female Quixotism. The Female Quixote is often a visionary who must be cured, or must die, since she disrupts the social order. So it is with "victim of fancy" Theresa, whom Tomlins places at the center of a novel that celebrates the artistic woman and yet concludes with her cautionary death. In *Corinne*, such a death is a tragic triumph, as it is in *Clarissa*. Julia is never an anti-heroine like the anti-Corinne in the *Corinna of England* in that Julia actually possesses genius as well as a great capacity for self-reflection (indeed, she blames herself for her love of fame). In some ways, Jewsbury demythologizes Corinne and brings the figure into a realistic literary world, suggesting that no such idealized sphere of the aesthetic exists. In this way, then, Jewsbury partakes of the anti-Female Quixote tendency to criticize all art and to champion a form of enthusiasm that cannot manifest itself as actual action, that rejects any kind of actual literary production in the marketplace. The marketplace is that which would corrupt the Female Quixote. While most Female Quixote novels celebrate the aesthetic sensibility – the sensibility heroine tendency to sing or read poetry – they also mock its supposedly degraded manifestation in the modern romance. This tendency continues in "Enthusiast," where Julia's love of literature and learning, her exalted feelings, her "uncommon" nature, are celebrated as "genius," but where she can then be transformed into a worldly literary "lioness" whose time in London blunts these early visionary tendencies. Jewsbury both

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Quixote rather than of *Corinne* – the aesthetic remains as potential, inhering in her receptivity, rather than rendering her literally creative. Despite her Romantic visual imagination, and her visionary paintings, *Jane Eyre* is not an actual artist, of course. Rather, the very structure and narrative of the novel suggests the transformation of reading into writing, as romance conventions are stylized as if to make evident the consciousness of a knowing reader.



(somewhat) satirically traces the history of Romanticism as a whole through Julia – from Wordsworth to Shelley to Byron – but also ties such a movement to gender. A genius woman is more knowing than any Byron, Jewsbury suggests.<sup>83</sup>

Jewsbury's reworking of the possibilities for a Romantic woman derives from *Corinne*, but she filters a reading of *Corinne* through both the Female Quixote tradition and the British Romantic poets. For all its ambivalence, Jewsbury's work is important in its development of the Female Quixote as a visionary at odds with domesticity, carrying on the melancholy tradition we seen in Tomlins. As I discussed above, Jewsbury explicitly sets up domesticity as the counter to Julia's visionary wishes. This domesticity is most threatening to her Quixotism, however, when it comes in the attractive guise of her domestically-inclined lover, Cecil. Cecil is never set up as a true equal to Julia: not only is he unable to understand her visionary ideas, but he is also a rather uninspired and earnest moralist. Jewsbury's introduction of him suggests, somewhat misleadingly, that she is engaging in a deglamorization of certain aspects of British Romanticism: "Cecil Percy is not brought forward as a hero; therefore I cannot endow him with a more chivalrous estate of qualities. . . . He could, however, play on the flute, and he had a head of luxuriant, clustering, black hair. I mention these trifles to save him from the utter detestation of those who admire the Corsair style of excellence" (45). While Julia is the artist, Cecil is the reformer, setting up a pattern (again, based in *Corinne*) that would be seen from Brontë to Barrett Browning to Eliot. While Julia believes in genius, he believes in "the genius of goodness," and travels on philanthropic missions. Julia at first regards him satirically – "Your mind is dreadfully healthy, Cecil" (58) – but is soon under his domestic spell. Yet love here does not kill or convert the Female Quixote. Rather, her impossible love becomes part of her artistic identity as she becomes the female Byron. While Cecil travels with his wife (he had married a demure woman after Julia had moved to London to be a writer) on philanthropic missions, Julia travels, like Childe Harold, to forget her problems and to try to regain her visionary enthusiasm. Julia thus remains in some ways a Female Quixote, holding on to both her questing nature and her knowing bent, expressed in her *Don Juan*-inspired poetry:

That phrase "a broken heart," has had a run,  
I like it not, it makes me think of china  
Broken, and by a monkey, ten to one  
And yet I really never could divine a  
Better – "ossification" would sometimes  
Best suit the fact – but then you see the rhymes! (181).

One hears in these sarcastic lines not only Byron, but also the knowing and witty Female Quixote figure found in Polly Honeycombe or Barrett's "heroine" Cherry or *She Would*

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<sup>83</sup> In "British Legacies of *Corinne* and the Commercialization of Enthusiasm," Lokke offers another reading of Jewsbury's critique of the marketplace: that it is used as a safe substitute – in its ability to dampen female "enthusiasm" and to control it – for the limitations of domesticity, which cannot be critiqued as openly. I find this reading very powerful and convincing; even though the marketplace had earlier been seen as a route to opportunity for the female genius, it now seems to act, according to Lokke, as that which limits it. Lokke also reads Julia's departure from Britain as a rebellion against it and a move towards the possible freedom of *Corinne*'s lands.

*Be a Heroine's* sharp-tongued Georgiana. While Corinne opts for a tragic valediction, Julia mocks the conventions as much as employs them. As such, she is a good lead into the Female Quixote who knew too much.<sup>84</sup>

### **Part 2, Section 3: "Cool Knowledgeability" and the semi-pro-Female Quixote Novel: The Female Quixote Who Knew Too Much**

The Female Quixote's knowingness operates on several levels. Part of this is her indebtedness to the figure of the learned woman: she literally wants to know. Lennox's Arabella, for instance, is genuinely learned and often lectures others about the geography or history of a place. The manifestation of such knowingness as visionary learning is most evident in *Corinne*, though also in Lennox's *Female Quixote*. Arabella and Corinne combine a visionary sensibility with learning, so that they emerge as philosophers of the romance. I discuss the aesthetic wisdom of the Female Quixote in my next chapter, on *Corinne*, so I leave that sense of knowingness aside here. The Female Quixote is also knowing, as we again see in Lennox, because she understands literary conventions. Thus, Arabella explains the logic of romance to all those who would mock the mode. As such, she comes to seem like a budding theorist of the modern romance, resembling Euphrasia in Clara Reeve's *The Progress of Romance* (1785). Euphrasia is strikingly set up as a connoisseur of romances – she owns many and likes to critique them – showing that the new mode will be curated by a woman. In Reeve, as in Lennox, a woman is set up as the champion of romances, countering a much less open-minded (and less well-read) man, Hortensius. Such knowingness is closest to the connoisseurial mode Hills calls "cool knowledgeability," a mode of genre expertise that is often set up in opposition to the easy disapproval, based in a lack of genre understanding, of the non-connoisseur. Euphrasia takes on the project of both contextualizing and redeeming the romance, defending it from censors by both comparing it to what she explains are its more illustrious relatives (the epic) and by illuminating its subtleties (admitting its faults but also showing overlooked qualities). As such, the woman becomes the curator of the newly growing romance, as we see in the Female Quixote and in women's magazines. In her genre-knowingness, the Female Quixote is often taken up by Female Quixote authors as a mouthpiece, mocking the very conventions by which she is supposedly enthralled. That is, the figure is often used by authors to show their own genre savvy and to play with genre conventions in works that are pastiche as much as satire. Finally, the Female Quixote is knowing in that she is often a willful, sarcastic, energetic figure who outsmarts what is shown to be a dull and corrupt society. The plucky eighteenth-century heroine we see depicted in Polly Honeycombe, with her wit and tricks, survives into the nineteenth century through this figure. We see her in the picaresque figures of Barrett's Cherry and Griffith's Georgiana, tricksters who enjoy fiction for its transformative and satirical functions. (As such, they often expose and punish the foolish and corrupt, a Quixotic endeavor.)

The Female Quixote works that focus most closely on the knowing incarnation of the figure are *Polly Honeycombe*, *The Heroine*, and *She Would Be an Heroine*.<sup>85</sup> These

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<sup>84</sup> Lokke also sees Jewsbury's text as frequently ironic and satirical.

<sup>85</sup> *Emma* shares some of the characteristics of the knowing Female Quixote novel, but Austen's heroine is not systematically and ideologically rebellious. Her wish to promote Harriet, while

works emphasize the willfulness of the Female Quixote, who here not only ignores, but actually purposely flouts, social rules. While Austen naturalizes such behavior by rooting it in the character of a headstrong heiress, more programmatic Female Quixote novels emphasize the figure's book-derived wish to "be an heroine." The mania for "heroinism" (to use Moers's term) is spelled out in *Polly Honeycombe*, as Polly places herself at the head of all eighteenth-century heroines: "I have out-topped them all – Miss Howe, Narcissa, Clarinda, Polly Barnes, Sophy Willis, and all of them" (80). (These types of heroines often comment on the boldness of their own rebellion, a tendency which goes back as far as Molière. His précieuse Magdalen tells her overwhelmed father: "I wonder . . . how you could possibly get such a sprightly Girl as I" [31].) Such a heroine is often depicted as an eccentric heiress who can dedicate her fortune (and who relies on the insulation her position gives her) to forwarding her pet cause of female equality, or even female rule. *The Bostonians'* rich and single Olive Chancellor is a descendant of such a figure. This Female Quixote is also very much like the eccentric connoisseur who disregards all realities in his pursuit of his own ideals – which can often seem like whims. "Whim" is indeed the term most associated with the figure; a typical formulation is seen in Griffith's description of Georgiana as following "every extravagant whim fancy might strike out or caprice dictate" (5). In these Female Quixotes, however, such "whimsy" is less a sign of valued unworldliness and more of a programmatic rebelliousness, which is associated with the aesthetic's power of transformation. Georgiana defends her love of theatricality and of impersonating various kinds of characters (from a peddler, to a Gothic villain, to a milkmaid, to a rowdy sailor) with a belief in her own ability to transcend categories and limitations, which paradoxically shows her strong sense of self: "*you* do as you think fit, so will I, and not because you do so, but because I please. To-day I am Colonel Beverley, to-night I shall be Georgiana, to-morrow the Great Mogul, if whim dictates. I am a Proteus, changeable as the wind in person, yet fixed in mind" (vol. 3, p. 60).

*Polly Honeycombe*, though a satirical play, is as concerned with romances as Lennox's more famous work, and particularly with the figure of the anti-domestic reading woman. In the prologue, Colman, taking up a common mid-eighteenth-century idea, traces the roots of the modern novel in the "Sorceress" romance, which enchanted "Common Sense" until robbed of power by Cervantes. But the play is much more ambiguous in that it presents a heroine who is as freed by, as much as trapped by, novels. She Quixotically imitates their heroines because they allow her to unlock a potential she already possesses.

*Polly Honeycombe* is briefly mentioned in *The Progress of Romance* as a not entirely successful satire as the reading girl outwits her parents, who are characterized as very flawed themselves.<sup>86</sup> Reeve's critique of Colman's mixed message points out the

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circumventing social rules, is not clearly rooted in feminist ideas. Emma is also not a reader. Though *She Would Be an Heroine's* Georgiana is not identified as an obsessive reader either, her knowledge of literary conventions, which she draws upon in her disguises and pranks, suggests a literary imagination. That is, Georgiana is literary and theatrical, even though she is not explicitly shown reading. Emma, on the other hand, is explicitly characterized as a non-reader.

<sup>86</sup> Vol. 2, pp. 7-9; my citations are all from the original 1785 edition (available through Google Books).

ultimate ambiguity of most Female Quixote novels, which are rarely straightforwardly critical of the figure. Colman's prefatory statement courts such ambiguity by introducing a crass and materialistic anti-heroine in the figure of the non-literary mother: her only concern is that her son's play make money. The mother's moralizing – hoping his "Farce may do some good on the Giddy Girls of the Age" (57) – thus rings hollow. Like the ridiculous and corrupt moralist Snarle in Shadwell's *Virtuoso*, Colman's authority figures have no moral weight. Polly's Nurse, who exhorts her to read a "prayer book" rather than her novels – thus drawing attention to the fact that religious books are still only books – is in league with a fortune hunter planning to fool the romantic girl. Polly's parents are ridiculously amorous, showing that they themselves are not immune to "inflamed" passions. Further, Polly's father aims to marry Polly to a successful merchant – which Polly sees as no better than an exchange of market goods – while her mother is too drunk to protect her daughter's virtue. Her intended suitor, Ledger (a dull kind of book), is himself out for a bargain. Polly's sense that she is in the same predicament as Clarissa or Sophia Western is completely justified, then. And like Clarissa and Sophia, vindicated sensibility heroines, Polly must take matters into her own hands and disobey her parents to avoid being married to the materialistic Ledger.

While Polly's aesthetic longings are only vaguely developed, her knowingness and idealism about her own fate derive from novels. Moreover, like all Female Quixotes, she aims her rebellion at domesticity. Polly is introduced reading aloud from a scandalous society novel, keen to act out the love scenes therein. Yet Polly's enjoyment seems to inhere in the literary style of the romantic scene she reads, so that she comments appreciatively on its language, "Very pretty!" and "This is a most beautiful passage, I protest" (64). While she looks to novels to "teach a girl life, and the way of the world" (66, which they do, letting her know about parents' plans to marry off daughters), her love of novels exceeds the utilitarian, as we see from her comments. Further, she, like many Female Quixotes, has a theatrical flair and seems to love "intrigues" for their own sake. Like Cherubina and Georgiana, her constant plots express a reserve of creative energy: "I have such a head-full of intrigues and contrivances" (67). More, Polly seems to appreciate novels as the aesthetic objects they are: "A novel for my money! Lord, lord, my stupid Papa has no taste" (64). While Polly may have bad taste (as we see from the passages she admires), she at least has a sense of the aesthetic, unlike her crass father or the other characters. She further possesses an understanding of conventions which is demonstrated through her satirical commentary and her ability to mock the conventions which would entrap her. When Ledger proposes to her in his own business jargon (showing that the "real" world has its cant as well as novels), "Suppose now we should compound this matter, and strike a ballance [*sic*] in favour of both parties" (77), she answers him in his own slang, "You are a vile book of arithmetick; a table of pounds, shillings, and pence – You are uglier than a figure of eight, and more tiresome than a multiplication table. – There's the Sum Total" (79). Similarly, when Polly's father threatens to "dispose" of her to Ledger, she turns the language of commerce against him: "Dispose of me! . . . Your head's so full of trade and commerce, that you would dispose of your own daughter like a piece of merchandise! But my heart is my own property, and at nobody's disposal but my own. Sure you would not consign me, like a bale of silk, to Ledger and Co. – Eh! Papa" (81). If the language of property is to be used, Polly will claim ownership of her own heart.

As in all Female Quixote works, Polly's love of literature is tied to her idealism – she wishes to marry for love – and her idealism is tied to a wish to escape domesticity. While she shuts herself up with her books, her father threatens her with moral reading and domestic work: "We'll send you the Whole Duty of Man . . . to read, or a chair, a screen, or a carpet to work with your needle" (45). But the books have already freed her, literally – Polly has been taught by books about ladders and ropes as ways to escape the usual female fate of incarceration by parent. And while her father thinks he has taken away all her writing implements, Polly has been taught by novels like *Clarissa* how to hide emergency writing supplies. More so, novels have freed Polly mentally. As she claims in the epilogue – in which she gets the last word to make a heroic speech – novels unlock a potential women already possess: "But now no bugbears can my spirit tame. / I've conquered Fear – and almost conquer'd Shame: / So much these Dear Instructors change and win us / Without their light we ne'er should know what's in us" (104). When one remembers that "fear" and "shame" are exactly what moral tales use to control women, Polly's defiance seems particularly pointed. But Polly renders her Quixotic rebellion in an even more cleverly pointed formula: "Tho' parents tell us, that our genius lies / In mending linnen and in making pies, / I set such formal precepts at defiance / That preach us prudence, neatness, and compliance; Leap these old bounds, and boldly set the pattern / To be a Wit, Philosopher, and Slattern" (104). Polly is able to perceive the conventions that shape her, the "formal precepts" of domestic ideology which teach women that their aptitude is for housework. The use of the word "genius" is striking in that, though it still means aptitude at this point, it acquires special significance in later Female Quixote works as that to which these women aspire. Even here, the term seems to be used mockingly in the context of domestic work, which is opposed to "wit" and "philosophy." While the juxtaposition of "wit" and "philosophy" with the quality of being a "slattern" seems a joke at Polly's expense, recalling the figure of the unkempt learned woman, it highlights the conventional formula in which intellectual and domestic labor are contrasted. Polly knows that such a formula is only convention, however, "formal precepts" she can reject for a new social "pattern" she creates – rather than sews. Such a rejection of domesticity comes to associate Polly – as it does many future Female Quixotes – with both masculinity and political rebellion. The female warrior Polly sounds the call to arms: "O! did all maids and wives my spirit feel, / We'd make this topsy-turvy world to reel: / Let us to arms! Our Fathers, Husbands, dare! / NOVELS will teach us all the Art of War: / Our Tongues will serve for Trumpet and for Drum; / I'll be your Leader – General HONEYCOMBE!" (104). The joke about female volubility aside, Polly cleverly points out that the world is "topsy-turvy" already, so that a female rebellion would only set it right. As we see from the connoisseur satires, such visionary figures are bound to start rebellions if only because they do not realize the consequences of their actions. Foster's anti-Female Quixote the Corinna of England also inspires a worker's riot, though she does not have a clear goal and loses control of the rebellion. In the case of the knowing Female Quixote I explore here, however, such a rebellion is pointedly feminist. In Barrett's *Heroine*, Cherry gathers an army to take over what she thinks is her ancestral home. In *She Would Be an Heroine*, the "Amazon" Georgiana organizes an all-female army to protect Britain from the French. (In both cases, such a rebellion is associated with the Irish Rebellion, which plays an important part in both novels.) "General

Honeycombe," then, was to be an early version of the knowing and militant Female Quixote.

Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* (1813) focuses on a plucky figure, like Polly Honeycombe, whose greatest wish is to be a heroine. In his fanciful preface, Barrett invokes Cervantes: the conceit is that his "heroine" in fact lives on the moon, the land of all fictional creations, and while there she meets her doubles and foils (primarily Don Quixote). She meets Radcliffe's and Regina Maria Roche's sentimental-Gothic heroines, who see her as too romping – and who also shun Edgeworth's "comic, moral, and natural"<sup>87</sup> heroines. Here Barrett seems to be aligning himself with Austen's anti-romance critique, and this is how he has often been regarded, but such a reading obscures his much more precise engagement with what he shows to be the rebellious nature of Female Quixotism. His own work is not invested in naturalizing romance or creating a "realistic" aesthetic; stylistically he is more old-fashioned, employing the picaresque and burlesque traditions, as well as the epistolary form. Barrett, rather, like so many Female Quixote authors in this period, is interested in investigating the way the new romance affects female aspirations and desire. As such, he creates a telling version of the Female Quixote as knowing rebel and aspiring artist, though the figure remains ambiguous in his work. On his death in 1820, Barrett is celebrated in a poem in the *Ladies' Monthly Museum* which claims he regarded women as equals. His satirical *Heroine*, however, is now regarded as "reactionary."<sup>88</sup> And Barrett's poem *Woman* (1819) does indeed praise the idea of separate spheres for the sexes, celebrating woman as a primarily domestic figure. I argue, however, that his *Heroine* is important to the discourse I am tracing for showing that romances were regarded in the period as joining women's feminist and aesthetic aspirations, whatever Barrett's own evaluation of such aspirations. Further, Barrett's characterization of Cherry, with its emphasis on her theatricality and love of fictional conventions, creates a powerful portrait of the aesthetic woman, even as it aims to satirize such a figure.

Before analyzing the specific contributions Barrett makes to the discourse, it is important to yet again state how closely he adheres to certain conventions that characterize the figure, therefore showing the coherence of the Female Quixote discourse. Cherry, like all Female Quixotes, learns from romances to long for something other than the usual life of a woman: like the *précieuses*, she renames herself Cherubina, rejects her biological father (whom she thinks an impostor) and her father-picked suitor, and, after finding a manuscript she misreads in the style of Catherine Morland, sets out in the world to find her supposed romance origins. Barrett renders her adventures in a sentimental picaresque manner: while Cherry is subject to all the dangers any sensibility heroine is exposed to (both in the metropolis and in her more sublime travels), she handles them with the pluck and spirit of a picaresque hero. Like Polly, she is determined to create intrigues and generally gets the best of any conflict. This is because she, like all Female Quixotes, is characterized as masculine, despite her love of sentiment. Like many Female Quixotes – and particularly willful ones like *She Would Be an Heroine*'s Georgiana and Austen's Emma – she is raised by a single father and indulgent governess. Though Cherry is not depicted as a queer heroine, as is the pistol-carrying Georgiana, she is precisely not

<sup>87</sup> *The Heroine*, 1813 edition, viii-ix; all citations will be from this edition.

<sup>88</sup> See Horner and Zlosnik's "Dead Funny: *The Heroine* as Comic Gothic"

a delicate sentimental heroine. Thus, she saves her would-be lover, Stuart, from robbers by creating an explosion with gunpowder. She is also at ease in the city and in the presence of men, so that she takes up with various street characters who live by their wits, including an actor and a resourceful Irish servant who becomes her Sancho Panza. Thus, Cherry's love of romances is associated with masculinity: she defends an accused robber in court, engages in fisticuffs, and even leads an army. In a scene suggestive of the gender ambiguity of the aesthetic woman, Cherry is confused for a hermaphroditic "mad woman" or "monster." Driven by paranoia and delusion to act "madly" (she dresses in a soldier's jacket, lets her hair loose, and recites her beloved Ossian), she is taken by a frightened group as a "mad woman" or "huge monster . . . half man, half beast, all over covered with black hair" (vol. 2, p. 38). The Female Quixote is always threatening to become a freak – or, as Gilbert and Gubar name her, the "madwoman in the attic" – as we see in the culmination of the convention in Brontë. This is a recurring theme, suggested in almost every Female Quixote novel – an idea dating back to the original Quixote. As we see from this scene, however, much of what is at stake here is gender: Cherry is perceived as freakish because she appears "half man." This is a theme I will return to in the next section, as well as in the chapter on the Final Girl figure: there too, the aesthetic woman is doubled by the hermaphroditic monster, which reflects the anxieties and aspirations of a female audience (as well as of Clover's male viewer).

While all Female Quixotes are characterized as masculine because they do not adhere to traditional femininity, in this particular subset of novels focusing on the knowing reading woman, masculinity more specifically suggests the figure's knowingness and aesthetic view of the world. Cherry's military jacket is significantly taken from an actor, her housemate in London. Cherry's association with the actor suggests her own aesthetic longings and insight; theatricality is often used thus in the figure of the Female Quixote, a tendency that is most developed in *Corinne*. Indeed, Cherry is compared to *Corinne* and thinks of herself as such in her love of aesthetic spectacle. At one point in the novel, Cherry finds herself collected as a freak by a society lady,<sup>89</sup> who pretends to flatter her by comparing her to *Corinne*: "All the world knows you are the first heroine in it; . . . I mean to celebrate your merits . . . by crowning you, just as *Corinne* was crowned in the capitol" (vol. 2, pp. 213-4). The connection between an aesthetic disposition and heroinism is taken as a given throughout the novel, showing its conventional status in Female Quixote works. Thus, when Cherry's proper lover, Stuart – the typical figure who admires the Female Quixote but wishes to curb her aspirations – mocks heroinism, Cherry counters that heroic behavior is better than women's usual fate: "Better . . . than to remain a domesticated rosy little Miss, who romps with the squire . . . . At last, marrying some honest gentleman, who lives on his saddle, she degenerates into a dangler of keys and whipper of children; trots up and down stairs, educates the poultry, and superintends the architecture of pies" (vol. 1, pp. 211-12). Like Polly, Cherry applies the language of the intellect and the aesthetic to that of the domestic to mock the idea that domestic work can satisfy women's intellectual ambitions. The only kind of domestic work Cherry takes up is the Gothicization of a castle she thinks her ancestral home, a task that is not properly domestic at all and that actually resembles

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<sup>89</sup> This society woman, Lady Gwynn, is very much a connoisseur figure. However, Lady Gwynn is not the kind of connoisseur I am looking at in my dissertation: she is not a female aesthete as much as a vain woman who wishes to outdo other society women.

Walpole's connoisseurial Strawberry Hill project. Engaging in a kind of literary antiquarianism, Cherry models her new citadel – which she later defends from those with a claim on it – on the ruined castles of Radcliffe. In her remodeling, Cherry more specifically joins an aesthetic and political purpose.

Cherry's remodeling of the castle she claims as her own is based in both her aesthetic connoisseurship and her reforming zeal, suggesting that these are connected impulses. Yet again, this shows that the Female Quixote was seen as a figure combining gender and social rebellion with an overinvestment in the aesthetic. Like so many Female Quixotes, Cherry starts several riots and upsets the social order throughout. In a telling reversal of the usual confinement of the heroine, it is Cherry herself who confines her father to a lunatic asylum, in her utter rejection of him as her relative. All heroines believe themselves too "spirited" to have emerged from their actual parents, and Cherry takes such a rejection of one's parents to an extreme. In the novel's climax, Cherry places herself at the head of a would-be revolution. Fulfilling the wishes of "General Honeycombe," Cherry sets herself up on the battlements as a female warrior, with a "helmet on [her] head," "shield in the one hand and [a] spear in the other" (vol. 3, p. 166), ready to defend the castle from creditors and its actual owners. Further, she makes the usual heroine's speech, in which she announces that her army will be a utopian society, though one based in a feudal system of chivalry. (Her speech is actually taken, as she reveals, from a heroine's in *Knights of the Swan*, a neo-chivalric work by Genlis.) Cherry describes the society she will lead thus:

I promise to them all such laws and institutions as shall secure their happiness. I will acknowledge the majesty of the people. (*Applause*) I will give them a full, fair, and free representation. (*Applause*) And I will grant them a radical reform; or, in other words, a revival of the feudal system. (*Shouts of applause*). I will assume no monarchical prerogatives that are unjust; if I should, do not forget that the people have always the power and the right to depose a tyrant.

I promise that there shall be no . . . army of mercenaries, no army of spies, no inquisition of private property, no degraded aristocracy, no oppressed people, no confiding parliament, no irresponsible minister. (*Acclamation*) In short, I promise everything. (*Thunders of acclamation*).

Each man shall have an acre of ground, a cottage, and an annual salary.  
(vol. 3, pp. 168-9)

While Barrett satirizes idealism and radicalism here, it is significant that he associates such aspirations with the aesthetic, masculine woman. Thus, all Cherry's associates are men, while those who betray her are women. Both Lady Gwynn (who had been involved in mocking Cherry and in fooling her through various hoaxes) and a young woman that Cherry had tried to help (though in fact hurting her) set themselves against Cherry in the battle for the castle. Cherry, then, finds her best allies in lower class men, men who live by their wits. This is not only because Cherry rebels against feminine proprieties but because Cherry too is shown to have a ready wit and energy that fits in better in the rough-and-tumble world than in a domestic setting.

Cherry's knowingness is demonstrated in her knowledge of romance conventions, which come to parallel the author's own parodic knowledge. Cherry's sophistication about



fictional conventions is connected to her theatricality – similar to Polly's love of "intrigues" and Georgiana's love of assuming various disguises and playing tricks – and her enjoyment of fiction's sensations. This is why Cherry, like Catherine Morland, searches for Gothic castles to explore, and, like Jane Eyre, "must have action" and will "make it if [she] cannot find it" (as Jane Eyre says in her famous feminist heroine's speech, 109). Thus, in her picaresque journey, Cherry seeks the horrid as much as these other Gothic heroines: "No dead hand met my left hand, firmly grasping it, and drawing me forcibly forward; no huge eye-ball glared at me through a crevice. How disheartening!" (vol. 1, p. 34). She persists in her search and eventually comes upon a real adventure in which she scares would-be robbers. Barrett suggests that Cherry's "contrivance" of such an adventure is a form of writing, as Cherry says herself: "'There!' whispered I . . . 'there is an original horror for you; and all of my own contrivance'" (vol. 1, p. 44). Such a frightening scene is predictably satisfying to the heroine, suggesting the imaginative satisfaction given by romance: "I ran about half a mile, and then looking behind me, beheld the ruin in a blaze. Renovated by the sight of this horror, I walked another hour, without once stopping" (vol. 1, p. 45). Here imaginative transport is rendered in terms of the heroine's epic walking (much satirized by Barrett) and wish for movement, a Romantic formula much used by the Female Gothic. Following the logic of sublime aesthetics, the heroine's imagination is "renovated" by a ruin, renewed by a cataclysm.

Cherry's pleasure in fiction is more specifically in its conventions, so that her sophisticated appreciation comes to be a mirror of the author's own, demonstrated in the act of writing a satire itself. Cherry is a connoisseur of the Gothic, thus assessing her father for the role of Gothic villain: "as to personating . . . the grand villain of my plot, your corpulency, pardon me, puts that out of the question for ever" (vol. 1, p. 155). Barrett's casting of Cherry's love of the theatrical suggests he is interested in showing the pleasures the artificial world of the Gothic gives its readers. Cherry's assessment of her own father's relation to Gothic villains recognizes the stylization of romance: "I should be just as happy to employ you as any other man I know, but excuse me if I say, that you rather overrate your talents and qualifications. . . . Have you the quivering lip and the Schedoniac contour? And while the lower part of your face is hidden in black drapery, can your eyes glare from the edge of a cowl?" (vol. 1, pp. 155-6). Further, Cherry is more generally characterized as knowing about social conventions and recognizing them as pleasing fictions. She, like Arabella and Corinne, appreciates and understands conventions as social fictions. When her lover flatters her and then speaks in favor of flattery, she agrees in praising a non-literal interpretation: "may we not pay a compliment, without intending that it should be believed; but merely to make ourselves agreeable by an effort of the wit? And since such an effort shews that we consider the person flattered worthy of it the compliment proves a kind intention at least, and thus tends to cement affection and friendship" (vol. 2, p. 122). Her lover, who is himself a knowing figure and so is sympathetic to her (more a Henry Tilney than the earnest moralist Cecil of *History of an Enthusiast*), dubs her – the common phrase for the positive Female Quixote – a "lovely visionary" (vol. 2, p. 122).

Because the novel is more pro-Female Quixote than anti-Female Quixote – that is, because the heroine's love of reading stands in for her good nature and valued intelligence – Cherry is ultimately converted rather than punished. Barrett employs not

one but all the means by which a Female Quixote is converted: she is taken advantage of by worldly people, which opens her eyes to her follies; she is lectured and shamed by a priest to see her "whims" as sins; and she is persuaded by her lover that domesticity and temperance are better than her feverish dreams. As with Marianne Dashwood or Edward Waverley, Cherry's crisis results in a cleansing fever, after which she awakes chastened. Despite the didacticism of the ending – the pastor's lectures and her lover's advice to temper her romance frenzy – we see the strength of Cherry's longings in the intensity and complexity of her crisis (like Catherine Morland, she is unwilling to totally give up the idea that romance may be found somewhere in the world): "am I a heroine? I caught myself constantly repeating . . . . Once I fell into a doze and dreamt frightful dreams of monsters pursuing me . . . . Then I woke, repeating, am I a heroine? I believe I was quite delirious . . . I ran on rapidly, am I a heroine? am I? am I? am I? am I?" (vol. 3, p. 262). Barrett uses the urgent diction of romance, the hyperbole blazed in its titles (of romances like *There is a Secret, Find it Out!* or *Joan!!!*, etc.), to suggest the urgency of female aspirations. The repeated question suggests an inquiry at the heart of romance, an inquiry about women's potential. Three years later, Sophia Griffith's novel, which features an even more bold and theatrical Female Quixote, proclaims that such a figure would not give up the quest: rather, *She Would Be an Heroine*.

Griffith's *Lady Georgiana* is a remarkable figure – she hunts and shoots, cross-dresses and woos sensibility heroines, impersonates various extravagant figures and disrupts social events, and tries to raise an all-female army. After Cherry and Polly, however, she does not seem so singular, but just a slightly more exaggerated version of the romping aggressive Female Quixote. (She also resembles Maria Edgeworth's cautionary "masculine" women in *Belinda*, figures who also cross dress and duel. Unlike Edgeworth's Harriot Freke, though, Georgiana is good natured and principled.) The main distinction of this novel is that the heroine is characterized as queer. Further, while *She Would Be an Heroine* continues the themes I have explored in *Polly Honeycombe* and *The Heroine*, it also develops other aspects of the Female Quixote novel, particularly the convention in which the Female Quixote takes on a protégée. While this dates at least as far back as Lennox, where Arabella takes an interest in Miss Groves, it takes on special importance in several canonical Female Quixote works: *Corinne*, *Emma*, and *The Bostonians*. The dynamic between a knowing, ideologically-driven Female Quixote and her artless protégée is critical to the discourse.

*She Would Be an Heroine* is one of the most obscure novels I discuss: only a few copies are extant and almost no criticism exists on the novel. Published in 1816, the same year as Austen's *Emma*, it is, nevertheless, a remarkable novel in its depiction of a figure who takes the rebellion of the Female Quixote to its limits. Despite the almost total reversal of gender norms that Lady Georgiana, the titular figure, enacts, she is not an anti-heroine. Rather, Georgiana's extravagant behavior falls under the rubric of "whim," the repeated explanation for her behavior: vol. 1, p. 5, 35, 117; vol. 3, p. 58, 177, 218, 268. That is, she is the unworldly eccentric figure valorized by sensibility, much like the obsessed Uncle Toby or fixated connoisseur. Like the *Connoisseur's* Sir Trinket, she prides herself on her strangeness and claims her "love of oddities" (vol. 3, p. 37). Such behavior is indeed close to worldliness: Griffiths often suggests it is an affectation Georgiana adopts to set herself off from other women, disdaining to be "common": "Several . . . absurdities she was guilty of, in order to be singular, and astonish the world

by her eccentricities and intrepidity" (vol. 1, p. 92). Such a wish is always implicit in the Female Quixote's plan, and we see it satirized as early as Molière. (Until we arrive at Jane Eyre, who cultivates "singularity," with the help of the eccentric Rochester, more successfully.) But after Corinne, the wish to be different from other women is more readily perceived as a conventional wish for "celebrity" (the degraded version of Corinne's "Fame"). Georgiana declares: "I aim . . . at universal celebrity; I wish to be the wonder of the wondering world; the surprise of all feminine females; the envy of the insipid, inanimate male ephemerae, who flutter through their brief existence . . . leaving no memory of them behind! I would outdo the rest of mankind, be their envy and example" (vol. 1, p. 104). Such an aspiration is more complex than the worldly wish of a vain woman, however, which is why I do not include Georgiana with the anti-heroine figure of the *Corinna of England*. As the quote shows, Georgiana wishes not only to show up women, but men as well; her ambition is more focused and ideological than a simple feminine wish to win distinction. This is because Georgiana is characterized as *unfeminine*. Though Griffiths comments at various points that Georgiana is like other women in her wish for attention, she makes the case much more ambiguous, particularly as Georgiana takes a great interest in several sensibility heroines she takes on as protégées. Further, Georgiana's dislike of "common" women seems more ideologically motivated. Thus, Georgiana abandons an old female friend, who had been as romping and rebellious as Georgiana, because she had married and become domesticated. Georgiana, then, comes to represent a much more programmatically feminist kind of figure, though Griffiths still aims to contain her semi-heroine in an eighteenth-century discourse of eccentric femininity. Despite her feminist goal of showing up men, Georgiana does not model herself on any literary figure, the way the visionary Female Quixotes do. She is in fact not shown as a reader at all. Georgiana's willfulness, rather, arises out of her cleverness and socially stable position: like Emma, Georgiana is a willful and whimsical heiress type. Also like Emma, she is not precisely an anti-heroine. She is much like any Female Quixote in that she has more virtues than faults, as one of her lovers sums up: "That she possessed many good qualities he well knew, and he was sensible of their value: he saw, too, the pains she took to obscure them, and pitied her erroneous judgment" (vol. 3, p. 284). Thus, *She Would Be an Heroine* depicts the Female Quixote as would-be feminist, a figure who despises femininity programmatically and so cannot be contained by the common critique of female vanity. That is, following the logic of the Female Quixote discourse, such attachment to a cause, even a wrong one, is admirable because masculine – idealist rather than crassly materialist.

Georgiana is an exaggerated version of the Female Quixote, and Griffiths takes it for granted that readers would be familiar with the discourse. When Griffiths titles her novel "She Would Be an Heroine," she assumes readers understand that being a heroine equals having access to the male sphere. Some ambiguity remains in the formula, since heroinism means both being an extraordinary woman who escapes gender boundaries and fighting for all women to have this chance. I argue that the discourse of exceptionality in Female Quixote novels is in certain ways democratic, since a Female Quixote only wants to escape custom so as to show that all women could. Most Female Quixote works, as I hope to prove here, are in fact sympathetic to the figure as shown by their casting of her as a heroine and of her artistic aspirations as tied to her heroism. Only a subset of novels are firmly anti-Female Quixote, and part of their critique of the figure is in her very self-

interested wish to be a superior woman. Yet the inherent ambiguity of the Female Quixote is what allows a writer to deploy the discourse as either a pro- or anti-Female Quixote one: is it vanity or idealism? Can she be a heroine? Like Cherry and Emma, and so many other Female Quixotes, Georgiana is raised by her father, who, deprived of a son, encourages Georgiana in her masculine ways: "report spoke of her masculine education, entirely under the eye of her father; her exquisite skill in managing the wildest horses that were ever curbed; her excellence at a shot, in which last accomplishment she bore the palm from most of the gentlemen of the county of Donegal" (vol. 1, p. 4).<sup>90</sup> Her "masculine education" has prevented Georgiana's conventional socialization, so that she identifies with her father and so remains immature: upon her challenge of neighborhood men to horse racing and ice skating, caricatures are published of her entitled "Second Childhood" and "A new species of amusement for grown children" (vol. 1, pp. 174-5). Her immaturity, however, is part of her rejection of femininity. She chooses a husband she can control and whom she eventually destroys through her rebellious ways. It is not until her son dies, also of neglect, that she repents. Her rejection of domesticity destroys the family. She is not only dubbed an "Amazon" but also compared to Lesbia. Griffiths suggests that Georgiana is not only masculine, but actually queer: as already mentioned, in one of her adventures she impersonates a Gothic villain, kidnaps her friend from her husband the night of the wedding, and mock-threatens her, only to later share a bed with her. Griffiths thus seems to adopt a common method of discrediting female idealism: suggesting that it is only another form of self-interest, in this case, romantic self-interest. James would do something similar in the *Bostonians*, in which he casts Olive Chancellor's admiration of the Corinne-like Verena Tarrant as sublimated sexuality. Further, like the usual Female Quixote, Georgiana takes an interest in various modest heroines whose beauty she admires. Thus, she takes on a poor young woman, Fanny, as a companion and, in a reversal of Corinne, forces her to stand almost naked, Emma Hamilton-like, in the middle of her dinner party. When men attack Fanny's virtue, however, a group of archers leap out to defend her. Georgiana then joins these men in defending her protégée by beating them with a whip. Like Corinne, then, Georgiana stages pointed scenes, but she does so through her protégée. Yet it is precisely her adoption of a protégée that also suggests Georgiana's idealistic commitment to feminism rather than narrow, supposedly "feminine," self-interest.

Georgiana's use of her protégée seems as ideologically strategic as it is self-interested. In the scene described above, for example, Georgiana deploys a pointed theatricality: she uses Fanny to stage a feminist scene of a woman saved from rape by another woman. Therefore, Georgiana is only masculine in the way that Arabella too had been in her chivalrous defense of the prostitute in Bath, or of Miss Groves: she will enact the kind of deference towards women that she would like to see in society. The strategic

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<sup>90</sup> Georgiana's Irishness, while not commented upon itself, is important in that one of the plots of this unfocused novel focuses on the Irish Rebellion: one of the daughters of a rebel is one of the modest heroines introduced as a foil to Georgiana. This modest heroine, Ellen, is herself, however, supposedly in need of conversion – she is Catholic – much like Georgiana, so that the end of the novel sees both conversions. While Georgiana is not herself Catholic, it is telling that Griffiths joins her anti-Catholic message to that of her anti-feminist one; again, the Female Quixote is associated, even if indirectly, with rebellion.

use of spectacle – of art – we see in Corinne is thus integral to the Female Quixote's project. She will teach others how to treat women. That she has been embarrassing and exploiting Fanny, even if unwittingly, is part of Griffiths's critique. Such a critique will resurface in James's rethinking of the Female Quixote/Corinne figure: Olive wishes to expose Verena both for her cause, and, James suggests, for her own titillation. (That any kind of public exposure of a woman can only be sexual or crass is suggested by both Griffith and James – though James shows that the only alternative for a woman is also sexualizing, the private sexuality of domesticity, as we see with Ransom's own seduction of Verena.<sup>91</sup>) But precisely because she is masculine, Georgiana escapes charges of plain female vanity; she has ideals. In a more explicit and less theatrical repetition of the above scene of female rescue, Georgiana emancipates another woman she admires by endowing her with an inheritance. She states the ideological nature of her project: "I have made Maud a present, a small one; I feel so happy, so gratified, in rendering any one of my own sex *independent* of lordly man that' (smiling) 'don't be surprised, if I should often portion needy young women, and always with this proviso, that my bounty must be settled on themselves and their female offspring" (vol. 3, p. 177). Because such a project can be subsumed under the category of charity, it is ironically seen as a sign of her reformation. What remains most troubling to proper femininity is not so much this more practical means of emancipating women, but Georgiana's less controlled "whims" and "caprice." As such, this suggests that the aesthetic principle of useless amusement, inherent in the philosophy of connoisseurship, is the real threat to social boundaries. To work through the laws, to set up a fund for women, while more practical, is also less disruptive to the social order, and to ideas about gender. It is the whim, then, the caprice, that stands in for the excessive act that will dissolve gender boundaries. Like *The Connoisseur's* Trinket, Georgiana states "I do it [looking for "oddities"] for amusement; and, generally, amusement is my motto" (vol. 3, p. 48). Georgiana's constant search for aesthetic pleasure, for the excess that only "oddities" will supply, mirrors her wish to seek gender boundaries she can ostentatiously cross. Further, Georgiana's knowingness, like Cherry's, is associated with a kind of detachment that enables her to find amusement in the follies of the world. More, she deploys her detached sophistication as a tool of satirical critique.

Georgiana, like Cherry, and like Corinne, is figured as a theatrical figure who uses costumes both for entertainment and for the more pointed purpose of social critique. While Corinne improvises, Georgiana impersonates – itself a kind of improvisation. In some cases, Georgiana impersonates figures only for amusement, often with the help of

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<sup>91</sup> Though I do not have room to discuss this here, James's ending is ambiguous: Verena's seduction into the private sphere and marriage will be the cause of many tears, we are told in the last sentence of the novel. That domestication is a kind of wounding has been suggested by all post-Corinne Female Quixote works. *History of an Enthusiast's* Julia starts her decline once she loves Cecil, Emma realizes she loves Knightley only once she is rebuked by him, etc. Such a wounding is necessary to curb the aggression of the figure, however, to make her self-conscious. Because the narrative of the chaste woman domesticated has been explored so much I will not take it up in detail here, but it is part of the Female Quixote story. It is important to note, however, that while critics like Margaret Doody emphasize how Female Quixotism allows for an expression of female sexuality – as in Arabella's fantasies of multiple admirers – the figure is also characterized as chaste.

male friends. Thus, she and one of her suitors impersonate demons to scare a group of girls. In another case, she impersonates a thieving peddler to upset a household. She also impersonates a sailor, a servant, a French Gothic villain, and other figures; she crosses both gender and class boundaries. Though Georgiana does at one point play at being a milkmaid, Marie Antoinette-like, she generally impersonates men. As such, her impersonations are ways for her to rebel. While Arabella had dressed up like her favorite heroines, Georgiana dresses up like trickster figures: both use art as a means of transcending identity, but Georgiana's art is more pointedly satirical and knowing. Georgiana uses her costumes to express what she could not otherwise express: to woo a woman or to otherwise queer a courtship ritual. As the thieving peddler, she woos the housemaid. More pointedly, her impersonation of a demon interrupts a courtship ritual: she plays her trick on a group of girls who are engaging in a ceremony used to foresee their lovers. As the girls wait to be given signs of their future husbands, then, Georgiana appears in the guise of a demon, seemingly to mock the very ritual itself. In a remarkable scene already analyzed earlier, she abducts a woman on her wedding night and sleeps with her instead. The use of art to critique and undo patriarchy could not be more clear: Georgiana undoes and parodies society's conventions. In this she resembles Barrett's Cherry, who is, however, herself tricked by impersonators – as is the original Quixote – and so cured. Despite Georgiana's seeming mastery of artifice, however, artistic conventions are also invoked in her conversion: she finds herself the typical imprisoned maiden, accidentally locked in in her husband's vault, and loses her senses, only to wake up "feminine." The conventions of the Gothic are invoked precisely, almost parodically: "The candle, at this moment, sunk in the socket, and Georgiana was left in total darkness" (vol. 3, p. 255). But though she imagines herself a heroine, braving the dangers, her guilt towards her husband brings on the breakdown all Female Quixotes must seemingly face, after which "she awoke . . . rational and feminine" (vol. 3, p. 261). To be "rational" is to accept the limits of femininity and to give up "whim," "extravagance," "caprice," associated with the transformative power of the aesthetic.

#### **Part 2, Section 4: The Anti-Female Quixote Novel: Fashionable Novel Reading and the Triumph of the "Heroine in the Shade"**

The novels I have looked at so far have all introduced Female Quixotes who could claim to be, even if only partially, "heroines." Part of the reason for this is that both the visionary woman and the knowing heiress subgenre of the Female Quixote novel are essentially pro-art and so cannot render the figure associated with the arts the anti-heroine. The pro- or anti-Female Quixote distinction may seem crude – Quixotism is indeed much more complex – but it is a helpful distinction for the large group of reading woman works that appear in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The most clear distinction that emerges in these works is that of whether reading is associated with idealism, as in the original Cervantes work, or with a degraded materialism, as in the anti-romance *Les Précieuses*. In the world of Lennox's Arabella, French romances are precisely not commercial or fashionable, so that they stand in for the idealism associated with, and enabled by, reading. By the 1790s and later, however, with a thriving literary marketplace, romances often come to mean fashionable commodities. This association holds much earlier too – for Molière's précieuses, Scudéry's romances are fashionable reading. Polly Honeycombe's reading, too, is degraded: Colman includes a circulating

library catalogue in his preface, and most of the titles cited are fashionable, risqué novels (their titles beginning with "history of," "adventures of," etc.) Yet Colman's project is not to warn against such works specifically, but rather to mock both the moralists and the readers. As such, he does not provide a "true" heroine to counter Polly: all the figures are mocked. In the 1790s too, even with the rise of what was seen as the degradation of writing (Sarah Green says, in her preface to *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, that Genlis's works are "conjured up" "not with the wand of genius, but with the tool of a literary mechanic"), romances remain ambiguously charged: thus, Catherine Morland can wish to read "horrid" novels and still remain the moral center of a novel. At the same time, a more didactic strain of Female Quixote novels arises, which produces works that are much more skeptical of the aesthetic and thus cast it as a degraded form – either crassly commercial or ideologically compromised (Jacobin). Most of these works – as represented by the two novels I will be looking at in this section, Charlton's *Rosella* (1799) and Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810) – demonstrate a strategic timeliness in their satirizing of the novel marketplace. (Foster's *The Corinna of England* also fits into this subsection, but I shall look at it in my next chapter, on *Corinne*, since it is in specific dialogue with Staël as well as with the Female Quixote tradition. I shall refer to it as I discuss these other two novels, however, since it resembles them in various ways and helps me clarify some points.) But unlike earlier satires, like *Polly Honeycombe*, they also make use of a didactic form of sensibility that sets up a modest heroine in opposition to the reading woman. These anti-Female Quixote novels are important to my argument because they show the way the discourse about the romance reading woman was wrapped up with a critique of both the marketplace and of "radical" philosophy that saw literature as either too political or commercial, or both. A *Corinne* figure could not exist within such a model because she would be seen as either an ideologue or a commercial author, neither associated with idealism. The novels I discuss here approach closest to what critics often imagine all Female Quixote novels to be – novels in which satirical authors mock a credulous reader. By showing how these differ from the works I am more generally interested in in my project, and which make up the majority of Female Quixote works –pro-Female Quixote novels that suggest the figure is both idealistic and knowing, and thus a connoisseur – I can more clearly differentiate the history of female idealism I am tracing from other strains that make use of the Female Quixote.

*Rosella*, *The Corinna of England*, and *Romance Readers* are not only novels about the literary fashions of the period, but are themselves modishly written, making use of the realistic-sensibility style of many novels from the era spanning 1780-1820. Such a style superficially resembles Austen's sensibility realism, though lacking the deft play of her free indirect discourse and sharp irony. Rather, the authors writing in this mode make use of a more earnest didactic voice to censure social follies, a conventionalized sensibility diction and set of events, and Burneyesque and Edgeworthesque social comedy. This mode is important to the project of these novels, which I see as what Gary Kelly has described as the creation of a virtuous middle class subject to counter both a degraded lower class and aristocracy. While I shall look more closely at the way gender, rather than class, is constructed in relation to literature in these satires, Kelly's insights help me frame my discussion here. Just as these novels create and champion a "virtuous" middle class subject, they also set up an ideal heroine who is sensitive to art but not

specifically artistic. Such a figure had always been the sensibility ideal: in works from Burney to Radcliffe, we see heroines who are aesthetically sensitive but not specifically artistic. It is only with certain iterations of the Female Quixote that a more specifically artistic figure emerges, particularly in the figure of Corinne. These didactic-sentimental novels, then, condemn the Female Quixote but also suggest that a certain level of education and aesthetic receptivity is necessary for the ideal woman. This is particularly evident in *Romance Readers*, which programmatically sets up sisters as contrasting characters: the fanatical Female Quixote versus her modest sister. Nevertheless, the artless sister, while set up as the true heroine, is shown to also require a more thorough education, including in the arts, before she can win the heart of her lover. That such a carefully calibrated relationship to the arts is related to a middle class identity is suggested by all the authors' frequent, explicit protestations against aristocratic dissipation. In *Romance Readers*, the middle class identity of the ideal family is asserted – this family is made up of a gentleman farmer, a clergyman, and an office on half pay – and the corruption of the aristocracy repeatedly condemned. The poor too emerge as a contrast to the middle class protagonists, with Green putting a speech about the "deserving" versus the "undeserving" poor in the mouth of her heroine. While the didacticism of these novels may seem straightforward, these works are revealing in their very engagement with the nuances of the literary marketplace. Many of these sensibility-realistic novels are written by the most popular authors of the period; *Rosella*, for example, is written by the Minerva Press's Mary Charlton, who had herself written at least a dozen of the kinds of novels she mocks here. The novels' attempts at modishness their attempt to "realistically" document the fashions of the day – means that they are packed with details about cultural life. Like the silver-fork novels which they resemble, they are filled with slang and countless references to commodities. As such, they are embedded in, and interact with, the very literary world they also critique.

*Rosella* and *Romance Readers* resemble each other much more closely: both feature the foolish, rather than the worldly, Female Quixote. Put crudely, these novels make use of the figure who is too stupid to be a good reader, and who is thus vulnerable to being brainwashed by novels. *The Corinna of England*, on the other hand, focuses on a Female Quixote who is rendered dangerously vain and willful by her reading; here reading is only another form of worldliness. Both are flipsides to the pro-Female Quixotes I have discussed above: the first is foolish and liable to be acted upon, while the second is aggressive and liable to act dangerously on the world. Both versions of the anti-Female Quixote thus draw upon characteristics of the sensibility anti-heroine, the first emphasizing her foolishness and the second her vanity and aggression. There is some overlap between the two types – thus, the foolish anti-heroine of *Rosella* unwittingly endangers a modest heroine, while the willful anti-heroine of *Corinna of England* is fooled by a lover playing on her vanity – but the larger categories stand. The critique deployed by the foolish Female Quixote novel seems the most straightforward and thus uninteresting – that female readers are not discerning and need to be carefully guided in their reading – but these novels nevertheless shed important light on the relationship between gender, the aesthetic, and the Gothic which I am tracing. More so, despite some heavy-handed messages, these didactic satires reveal much about the complexities of the female reader and her cultural construction. For instance, the anti-Female Quixote of *Romance Readers*, Margaret, is rendered as deformed by her reading: she is not only



sallow and hump-backed from constant application, but also maimed by some of her romantic misadventures. She is thus a lurid example of the cultural formula that views the aesthetic woman as unnatural and even freakish. (Margaret is a variation of the unkempt learned woman, as well as of the mad Quixote, but she is more specifically marked by romance reading, as I shall show.) Yet what is satirized by Green will be celebrated in Brontë, revealing the genre threads connecting Quixotism to Brontë's aesthetic mad women. *The Corinna of England* too makes visible one of the most important themes of Female Quixotism: that art can as easily be worldly as a bulwark against worldliness. While this critique can be traced as far back as Molière, Foster's deployment of this charge shows more plainly and powerfully the argument I am making here: that the Female Quixote discourse is that which sees the aesthetic as dissolving social boundaries, specifically gender ones.

Charlton's *Rosella; or, Modern Occurrences* and Green's *Romance Readers* both focus, as their titles suggest, on the modern literary marketplace and its effects on readers. Charlton is familiar with the publishing world from her own work for the Minerva press as she was in fact one of the most prolific authors of the period. The "modern occurrences" of her title are only partially modern: Charlton not only makes references to Quixote but, like many Female Quixote authors, makes use of sensibility sensationalism in her presentation of the consequences of reading. The titular Rosella is not the Female Quixote, but rather the sensibility heroine daughter born to a Quixotic mother, Sophia Beauclerc, who had romantically eloped with her irresponsible lover. In this "rash step" (vol. 1, p. 4)<sup>92</sup> as she romantically calls it (Charlton lets us know that her subjectivity had been influenced by novels), she had been goaded on by another "reading miss," her best friend Sarah Swinney. Unlike Sophia, who is truly good and sensitive, Sarah is crass and vain: she loves the self-importance romance gives her. This trio of women is conventional and sets up the familiar Female Quixote dynamic: Sarah is the bad reading woman, Sophia is the naive one, and Rosella is the modest suffering non-reader (or occasional rather than obsessive reader). Class also helps define the socially conventional figures of Charlton's didactic drama: Sophia, the sensitive reading woman, is wealthier than the crass Sarah, who is often tempted by money and position to betray her friend. Despite the similarity in their names, Sophia is pretty and delicate, and a reading idealist, while Sarah is uglier and coarser and uses her reading much the way she does food: to satiate her outsized appetite. Sophia, goaded by Sarah, elopes with her irresponsible lover, who soon loses all his money to gambling and dies in a duel, leaving Sophia pregnant and alone. Sophia is then convinced by her corrupt family to give up her daughter, Rosella, to be raised by them under a different name. Rosella is herself in fact the daughter of all these figures: she is a product of Sarah's goading and Sarah even insists on naming her. I enter into such detail here because the structure of the novel reveals its argument: as in all Female Quixote novels, the deployment of certain conventions underlies the argument and the novel's contribution to the larger discourse. Charlton employs this convention programmatically, so that the worldly heroine, Sarah Swinney, "authors" the adventures of her more sensitive romantic friend, Sophia, who then "authors" the adventures of her daughter, Rosella. These reading women, then, play at molding their ideal heroine through their joint daughter, who does indeed suffer as she is thrust from one peril to another – thus actually writing the novel we read.

<sup>92</sup> *Rosella*, 1799 Minerva Press edition, vol. 1, p. 4; all references will be from this edition.

Charlton's novel critiques the Female Quixote by revealing the materialist basis of romance. This rendering of the ideal material is a common tactic of anti-romance, as we see from Molière on, and it was to become a cliché of reading woman critiques. Thus, we are constantly reminded of the material nature of the book. Charlton thus undercuts the transcendence Sarah feels when reading and thinking of herself as "a heroine in the bloom of youth, emerging into those delightful, mysterious, and sentimental situations which so agreeably occupy the imagination, when viewed within the inclosure of a tremendous breadth of margin, and cased in a surtout of marble paper, extremely soiled by the devotion of the curious" (vol. 1, p. 9). The wide margins suggest the publisher's trick of expanding a work to several volumes to make it more substantial and expensive. Charlton also points to the common nature of the romance fantasy: countless readers have read the novel, as seen by their fingerprints. This also marks the novel as one from a circulating library, a democratic form associated with a less prestigious wider reading public. (And it is striking that such marks are found in Charlton's own novel: next to a passage in which she refers to a popular authoress of the day by her novels, a reader writes in her identity as "Mrs. Bennet.") Yet while Sarah is the crude and materialist Female Quixote, Sophia is an heiress and can indulge her consumerism-driven romance mania. Once she inherits her money, Sophia embarks on a shopping spree (with brands like Wedgewood identified) and outfits herself and Rosella as heroines, with the right clothes, musical instruments, and cottage. Charlton further titles many of her chapters according to the fad, or "rage," her various characters fall for: "Rage for Adventures," "Rage for Education," "Rage for Accomplishments," "Rage for Casemented Cottages," "Rage for Moonlight Walks, à la lanterne," etc. While Charlton depicts a complex and rich world of aesthetic commodities, her Female Quixotes are not connoisseurs but only consumers.<sup>93</sup>

Sarah Green goes even farther than Charlton in her mocking of the romance novel market in her straightforwardly titled *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*. Green prefaces her novel with a long screed excoriating romance writing, creating one of the most detailed and pointed critiques of the modern romance and the literary marketplace. Like Clara Reeve and countless other earlier critics and Female Quixote satirists, Green roots the modern romance in a much longer tradition, though she does so to show how much the form has degenerated, even from its questionable roots. What is of particular importance to my argument is that Green explicitly charges the modern romance with encouraging female rebellion through its glorification of literariness and, particularly, authorship: "Heaven knows! we have more authors now than ever . . . I verily believe that every third woman in these happy united kingdoms, considers herself a genius – nay, I have heard, and readily believe it, that there are many thick-headed female dames of fortune who sacrifice hundreds to establish - the reign of dulness and of folly."<sup>94</sup> Green

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<sup>93</sup> *The Lady's Magazine* also makes an appearance as an object of Charlton's mockery: a ridiculous learned lady figure plans to submit her poem – on the neglect she suffers from her husband – to it. While the Minerva Press was not much more prestigious, it at least paid its authors (though not very much), who often wrote out of necessity rather than ambition. Nevertheless, Charlton mocks Minerva too, showing that readers were self-aware enough to reflect on their own reading practices.

assumes a direct connection between romance reading and romance writing: one encourages the other, and both encourage a claim to socially-transcendent "genius." While Green will focus her critique on the romance reader, satirized in the anti-Female Quixote Margaret, her preface takes up not the anonymous "reading miss" but the various well-known popular authors.

Green's engagement with the lively romance marketplace is, as described above, common in the Female Quixote genre, particularly after 1790, as the figure is imagined in relation to the institution of authorship and of the circulating library.<sup>95</sup> But Green, like Charlton, focuses on the material conditions of romance as a way to rob it of its transcendent power. Green's critique moves easily between various types of romance, from that of Lewis and Dacre, to lesser known Gothic writers like Curties, to Genlis, to more obscure figures such as one Joshua Pickersgill, to even the respectable Southey (for *Thalaba the Destroyer*). Like Wordsworth, in her preface she mocks the affected language of the modern romance and, like him, connects it to the conditions of the new marketplace, in which romances are "manufactured weekly," created "not with the wand of genius, but with the tool of a literary mechanic" (10). Green here thus makes use of an old anti-romance tactic, which I have been tracing from Molière: reducing the ideal to the material as a way to deny its power to transcend social conditions. Like Charlton mocking the commonness of romance fantasies by pointing to the fingerprints on circulating library books, Green shows the material nature of romance production.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, Pickering and Chatto edition, p. 10; all citations will be from this edition.

To be fair, Green critiques a writing mania in both sexes; the entire earlier part of the quote is: "Heaven knows! we have more authors now than ever: if a father writes, the son is straightway attacked with the *cacoethes scribendi*, and thinks to become—a greater man than his father!—" (10). But the charge that women wished to prove their "genius" through writing is more closely linked to the common charge that the aesthetic had become a way to lay a claim to a transcendence of social boundaries.

The word "genius" had, by this time, come to be used more broadly for any extraordinary talent. Edgeworth, for instance, makes copious use of it to characterize the highly intelligent and correspondingly flighty Clarence Hervey in her 1801 *Belinda*. Hervey, who is exceptionally well read, artistically sophisticated, and witty, is considered by all a "man of genius" and is expected to turn writer. As a "man of genius," however, he is not expected to make for a good husband. As I show in this chapter, however, its use as a term that combines imaginative power with social rebellion arises early and markedly in the Female Quixote discourse. Staël then consolidates the figure of the woman of genius in her *Corinne*.

<sup>95</sup> This is true much earlier too, as we see with *Polly Honeycombe* and *The Rivals*, but it is harder to imagine a figure like the isolated Arabella in a post Gothic-romance, post-Minerva Press world. Romances read by women were always accused of being simply fashionable, however, from Scudéry on. So indeed were any female preoccupations, even philosophy, since vanity and faddishness are more in tune with conventional femininity than intellectual enthusiasm. But male connoisseurs, like Connolly's Trinket, were also vulnerable to the charge of faddishness, suggesting that one prominent critique of enthusiasm is that is not an indicator of individual choice but is rather shaped by social relations (and the wish for distinction), themselves manipulated by a quickly growing market.

(Green too makes use of this conceit, referring at one point to the "dirty, much-used, marbled-papered cover" [18] of a romance.) She even reveals the common trick by which a publisher started with a catchy title, only then assigning a hack author to fill out the less important novel itself. In support of this Green cites Curties's *Monk of Udolpho* (an evident attempt to cash in on the more famous romances), contradicting Curties's own more heroic account of the novel's genesis. Other modern romances are even more perniciously worldly, according to Green, in that they are pushing a radical or libertine agenda, something of which she accuses Dacre and Lady Morgan. The world of the modern romance is thus either mechanical or grotesque, so that romances are "the vermin of literature," which "creep to our fire-sides, and cover our tables . . . [and] we find them in the bedchambers of our daughters" (2).

After establishing the grotesquely material world of romance writing, Green shows the effects of romance reading on her cautionary Female Quixote, a figure she characterizes as actually deformed by her reading. Just as romance is itself deformed – Green refers to one literary work as suffering from "rickets" – so too is the female reader in thrall to such romances. Margaret, or Margaritta, as she *précieuse*-like styles herself, is in many ways a typical anti-Female Quixote, both ignorant and vain and thus driven to social ruin (left pregnant by a libertine) by her reading. To communicate her anti-Female Quixote message, Green further makes use of the genre convention in which the anti-heroine is contrasted with a modest and inartistic heroine – Mary, Margaret's sister. Green also makes use of that other Female Quixote convention, the mentor-protégée relationship. While in pro-Female Quixote works, like Lennox's *Female Quixote*, *She Would Be an Heroine*, and *Corinne*, the Female Quixote is herself the mentor, exercising her strong will in her attempt to help other women, in anti-Female Quixote works, the aggressive figure often persecutes or otherwise endangers the true heroine. This is most evident in *The Corinna of England*, which I discuss in the next chapter. It is found as late as *The Bostonians*, where Olive Chancellor cooperates with worldly forces intent on profiting off Verena, thus supposedly exposing her to worldly dangers. *Rosella* and *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* complicate this dynamic by introducing two such mentor-protégée pairs. As discussed above, Charlton's Female Quixote Sophia Beauclerc herself unwittingly endangers her daughter, Rosella, in her attempt to transform her into a heroine, while she is herself endangered by her crass romance-reading friend Sarah Swinney. This splitting of the Female Quixote into two figures – one bad (Sarah Swinney) and only one naive (Sophia Beauclerc) – enables Charlton to critique modern romances while still maintaining the purity of a Quixotic longing. Green makes use of a similar tripartite model. In addition to the modest Mary and the Quixotic Margaret, Green introduces a third figure: a scheming libertine woman, Lady Isabella, who befriends the Quixotic Margaret and turns her from bad romances to even worse libertine novels. Green, like Charlton, can thus use this flexible Female Quixote convention to explore the dangers of romance. While Charlton's Sarah Swinney had represented the crass, lower class reader for whom romances offer the worldly prospect of class crossing and social advancement, Green's Lady Isabella is the dissipated upper class reader for whom romances offer a justification to flout social conventions. (While the socially-transcendent power of the romance is part of its power for the Female

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<sup>96</sup> Such demystifying of the literary process could in fact encourage a female drive toward authorship, as happens in the *Lady's Magazine*.

Quixote, such a tendency is mocked, or even denounced as dangerous, in anti-Female Quixote works.) Thus, while Margaret starts out by reading Gothic romances which take her away from her domestic duties and encourage her vague visionary aspirations, she is soon introduced to more libertine works by her false friend Lady Isabella, leading to her more serious consequences and eventual social death. Margaret is thus doubly abject, both foolish and morally culpable. I shall thus focus below on Green's cautionary materialization of the romance on the body of her grotesque anti-heroine.

Green's important contribution to my argument, then – aside from her deployment of the conventions of market critique and mentor-protégée pairing that I have been tracing in all Female Quixote works – is her suggestion that romances deform the female character. In the most conventional sense, this means simply that Green creates an updated form of the grotesque learned woman – a woman rendered ugly by her neglect of domesticity. But her Margaret/Margaritta is a more Gothicized version of this figure, vividly developing the thread of Female Quixotism that aligns the aesthetic with the freakish. Such a tendency is inherent in Quixotism: Don Quixote suffers constant physical indignities and damage in his visionary quest and becomes an abject and freakish figure. While the Female Quixote is often effortlessly beautiful, a strain of the tradition draws on both the anti-learned woman tradition and the Cervantean one to render the reading woman grotesque. In the case of Green, such a tactic is part of her anti-romance materialization of romance. But, as I argued earlier about the scene in which the pro-Female Quixote Cherry becomes a hermaphroditic "monster" and "mad woman," such a tradition also leads to the aesthetic freakishness embraced by Brontë. Green thus shows how closely aestheticism and freakishness were connected in the cultural imagination. Feminist literary critics have already analyzed the important role that a productive abjection plays in the Female Gothic; one thinks, for example, of the recuperation of the mad woman in the attic and the many feminist discussions of the hidden mother figures in Gothic novels. And the figure of the productively ridiculous woman is also part of feminist critical consciousness – one thinks of Margaret Atwood's and Angela Carter's freakish, carnivalesque heroines – and one I am emphasizing here in the whimsical heiress figure. But Green's novel shows how a figure so central to feminist criticism comes out of the Female Quixote discourse on aesthetics and femininity.

Margaret is characterized as a madwoman and freak from the first, and Green makes use of the Romantic chapter epigraph convention to contrast her to her conventional sister Mary. While Mary is natural, Margaret is diseased. Mary, like the inartistic figure contrasted to Julia in *History of an Enthusiast*, is like the Shelleyan figure of the skylark, natural and un-self-conscious: "'Her form was fresher than the morning rose, /When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd, and pure. /As is the lily or the mountain snow.' THOMSON" (22). Margaret, who prefers to sit inside reading, like the basement-dwelling fan figure, is crazed: "'Each nerve was fever'd, and convuls'd her brow; Her unsettled eye Wander'd high, then low, Alternately, As if the pow'r of thought had fled.' *Love and Madness*" (22). The idea that reading was dangerous for women physically – in part because it would agitate them and lead to an unnatural pattern of sleep (sleep cycles once again suggesting one's connection to the social cycles) – was common and Green plays on this here.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Mary tells her sister:

<sup>97</sup> One reader of the *Lady's Monthly Museum* writes in to report her father's anger at realizing she and her school friends all read, and love, stories like the LMM's horrid Gothic tale "Schabracco."

your health would be better if you did not sit so closely over your favorite studies, which disturb your dreams, and make you unable some nights to close your eyes: would you, like me, enjoy the fresh morning air, which you lose in broken slumbers, after your restless nights, you would soon have done with such idle fancies, which *you* describe by the title of *nervous affections* and *hypochondriac* malady! (23)

It is not only the subject of Margaret's reading that causes such distortions, but also her connoisseurial obsession: Mary claims that she too reads romances occasionally but "do not make myself like my sister, a slave to them" (23).

Green further contrasts the sisters through their taste and attitude toward reading. Green, who, like Charlton, roots her novel in the realities of the novel marketplace, specifies that the sisters are allowed to subscribe to a circulating library, but that Margaret monopolizes the privilege, and, as Mary claims, "sends for such incredible, such marvellous kinds of works" (23). Margaret's uncle suggests domestic work as a cure for her aesthetic obsessions: "I'll tell you what, Peggy, go up stairs, and see if none of your father's shirts want a wristband or a button . . . if you do not find any thing there to do, I have three old pair of worsted stockings . . . darn them for me, if you please, for I know there are two or three great holes in each pair" (23). Calling her Peggy rather than her chosen Margaritta, Margaret's uncle tries to control her imaginative self-fashioning through domestic work. But Margaret cannot perform domestic work correctly – burning her dress while trying to cook and read at the same time (she is not as deft at this as Emily Brontë was!) – because of her excessive commitment to reading. Mary, on the other hand, reads only approved literature and does so without excessive enthusiasm: "Mary read only to amuse an hour, and never suffered it to interfere with her more useful occupations; yet she was fond of literature; and her uncle Charles, with whom she was a decided favourite, had presented her with a small and elegant library, from the best approved writers for female improvement" (26). Here the sensibility heroine's small library, sign of her sensitivity and education, is contrasted to the commercial circulating library, with its modish modern romances. The new marketplace of books encourages excessive reading and connoisseurial obsession. Like Polly Honeycombe, and like the learned woman, Margaret is critiqued for her excessive attachment to the aesthetic, an attachment that also encourages the intellectual pretension of overcoming gender

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While Robert Mayo treats the letter as authentic in his writing about the LMM, it seems to me to be satirical in any case – whether it was written by a real reader or by a writer for the magazine (or the editor) as humorous commentary on female romance reading. The letter writer, reporting on how affected she and the other girls are by stories like "Schabraco," says: "Oh, father . . . these are the very things we like best. And you cannot think how much we are delighted when some of the young ladies are quite frightened at this horrid Schabraco. The school was all in an uproar at the fate of the poor lady he had in chains. Both the Miss Feelings actually fainted and one of them has been very poorly ever since" Part of this disruption has to do with reading interrupting regular sleep cycles (standing in, as they often do in the Female Quixote discourse, for a character's adjustment to social norms): "A girl named Mary, we are told, 'reads from morning till night, and sometimes nearly all night.'" (November 1798).

limitations; she is "a slattern in her dress, with all the affectation of a female pedant" (203).

More than a slattern, Margaret is a freak, deformed by her "marvellous" reading. Her mother had died in giving birth to her, suggesting that she is responsible for her and her sister's motherlessness; Green seems to suggest that her very existence threatens normative femininity, shaped by the mother. While Mary is naturally pretty, Margaret has a broad back, is marked by the smallpox, and is missing front teeth (in her distraction she had knocked out her teeth). Her strange figure matches her anti-social behavior. She is literally, like the grotesque connoisseurs, "not very well proportioned" (25); that is, she does not conform to normative ideas of decorum and moderation. Further, for women, excessive reading and imaginative activity, which remove one from the domestic, are actually deforming, Green suggests. Thus, Margaret is rendered even uglier when she again replaces the domestic with the Gothic. Noticing in her uncle's old farmhouse "strong marks of antiquity" (60) and, imagining that in it "some fatal deed had been perpetrated" (61), she decides to investigate the mystery. But, like Don Quixote, she sees the marvelous in the ordinary – mistaking "armies of rats" (60) for the "galloping" of actual armies – and, like him, suffers physically in her delusions, falling through the roof and maiming herself. Such Quixotic suffering and maiming, a violent rejection from the world, has more pointed consequences for the female figure; Don Quixote's romantic tragedy seems denied to her.

Further, Margaret's ugliness is the marker of her supposedly depraved taste, shown in her love for a grotesque libertine. Green connects Margaret's diseased perception, signified by her bruised eyes (hurt in her adventure in the farmhouse), to romantic imagination: "She turned their *bruise*-encompassed orbs, and beheld Sir Charles Sefton, standing close beside her, arrayed in a fustian jacket; a pair of brown leather gaiters, not very clean . . . he really looked *hideous*: yet Margaret directly discovered in the *disguise* . . . something strangely mysterious, some great adventure in agitation (77). It is not simply that Margaret is naive; her imagination, her "fertile brain" (43), kindles at every romance situation or even image. Thus, when her dissipated friend, Lady Isabella, asks her "why do you give me that look, just like some American savage!" (38), the very romance image sends Margaret into a reverie: "Margaret was captivated immediately; the sweet eyes of Lady Isabella, the association of ideas, that the term *American savage* brought to her mind, was wonderful in its operation" (38). Though Green here aims to critique Margaret's naïveté and impressionability, it is significant that the images that inspire her are specifically literary. The phrase and image "American savage" is a marker of romance adventure as defined in the modern romance (though this is still a bit before Cooper, Native American characters had appeared in sensibility works like Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*, 1793), and one that cannot be reduced to social modishness. That is, the critique that girls seek in romances narcissistic fantasies connected to their own wish to be admired and promoted socially cannot be derived from Margaret's reaction to what is strictly a literary convention. Though Green is here launching a conventional critique of the too-impressionable reading girl, her very recognition that the aspects of romance that often appealed to readers were the most anti-domestic undoes much of this critique. Thus, Margaret's love for the libertine cannot be reduced to a romance-induced modishness: it seems stranger than that. She and the libertine, then, emerge as a grotesque couple because both are corrupted by "culture" (in

his case, the false manners of society), not natural enough: "that a poor yellow looking devil of a baronet, the exact complexion of a china orange, with jaws like a frog, has an affair with a little ugly, broken-toothed toad, newly come from the country;—and there's the devil to pay; Miss is going to present him with a young cub, which, I dare say, will be the exact likeness of an ourang-outang" (204). It would be a wishful misreading to say that such a couple reminds one of the strange Jane and Rochester, marked as aesthetic precisely because of their anti-social nature. (The libertine in this case is too social, but he still figures as an excessive character. It is really Margaret's romance-influenced taste, and lack of social understanding, that renders them grotesque as a couple.) Yet the idea that for women too much of an investment in the aesthetic – Margaret reads too much and too "marvellous" works – is denaturalizing is clearly part of Green's critique. Margaret is specifically mocked and criticized for her use of unnatural language – she uses the language of romance to speak to her family and to fashion herself, dubbing herself a "persecuted dove" – so that her father snaps: "quit this ridiculous language, this affectation of hard words, this pedantic jargon, so disgusting in the general conversation of a young female" (24). The aesthetic marks Margaret's body with the corruptions of the world, showing that Green subscribes to the sensibility idea that while aesthetic sensitivity is prized, actual artistic obsession is dangerous.

Green's use of sensibility conventions – particularly of the heroine and anti-heroine pair – to counter the Female Quixote connects her to the most anti-Female Quixote novel I look at, *The Corinna of England*. As stated above, Mary is the modest, "natural" sensibility heroine, while Margaret is the anti-heroine. However, Margaret does not persecute or endanger her sister the way a sensibility anti-heroine would; she is not artful but grotesquely excessive. Rather, both Mary and Margaret are persecuted by the villainous anti-heroine Lady Isabella. While reading romances renders Margaret foolish and ungainly, the real threat, Green wants to show, is from radical texts. Thus, Lady Isabella is corrupted by reading progressive works, from Diderot to Wollstonecraft:

Like Margaritta, she was very fond of modern publications, but her studies were of a different kind, and all consisted of false systems: the deluding sophistry of some freethinking German authors . . . whose dangerous and delusive principles she imbibed . . . while for her lighter reading she perused the loose sentiments contained in the French novels of *Faublas*; *Le Fils naturel*, and all the dangerous works of Diderot, and other revolutionary writers. The effects of such studies on a mind like that of Lady Isabella's may well be conceived; marriage she held in utter contempt, openly expatiated on the folly of all the outward ceremonies of religion, and was a very pretty female atheist.\* [The note to this asterisk says] \*To our modern female reformist, *Mary Woolstonecroft*, and her husband, she was indebted for these latter sentiments, so uncongenial with our "*national prejudices*," as she chose to call them. (30-1)

Green thus sets up Lady Isabella as the aristocratic aggressive reading woman figure in contrast to the middle-class, less assertive Margaret; each is a different kind of "bad" Female Quixote. Lady Isabella, Green tells us, is highly accomplished, but is influenced by her reading to rebel against social conventions. Isabella is further responsible for setting into motion a double sensibility plot: she acts as the anti-heroine to both Mary and



Margaret. To Margaret, she becomes the bad mentor figure, encouraging her to read radical novels and to begin an affair with the libertine. As such, Margaret ends up the persecuted sensibility heroine, alone in the city. But while most "good" sensibility heroines (Evelina, etc.) are only threatened with rape, Margaret is seduced and abandoned. She ends up, like the Female Quixote in *Rosella*, pregnant and hidden away from society. The inartistic Mary, though also threatened by Lady Isabella, ends up with a very different fate, which is meant to show the precise place of the aesthetic in a woman's life. Lady Isabella endangers Mary by seducing her new husband – a husband who had been drawn to Mary's innocence, but is dazzled by Lady Isabella's wit and daring. Yet, Mary wins him back with the help of a proper education. That is, the patriarchy (represented by her father and two uncles) mobilizes around her and helps her win her husband back by properly educating her: she begins a course of lessons in everything from music to drawing. Without these lessons, it is stated, she could not compete with the learned Lady Isabella. Thus, like Charlton in *Rosella*, Green sets up a middle way – which is also a middle class way – as the ideal of female reading and learning. Some learning is necessary to create a proper middle class female subject, but such learning must be controlled and must not be motivated by a female wish for learning or the (social) transcendence that it promises. Margaret, the yearning girl in thrall to "marvellous" works, is the most threatening figure in this matrix of reading women: she ends up the most punished and degraded. To be a susceptible reader and female enthusiast, to show the "Romantic intensity" Hills describes, is the biggest sin against proper female moderation. Margaret's anti-social aesthetic obsession results in her expulsion from society. Yet, unlike Jane Eyre, she does not find a Ferndean for an aesthetic retreat.

## Chapter 2: Quixotic Corinne: Staël, Sensibility, and the British Female Quixote Tradition

Germaine de Staël's iconic Romantic heroine Corinne has a glorious afterlife: she becomes the prime figure of female genius for nineteenth-century British and American literature. Just as she is crowned alone and triumphant at the Capitol, she is crowned by critics as literary point of origin for the nineteenth-century female artist, woman of genius, and female rebel: L.E.L. and Felicia Hemans, Walter Scott's Flora Mac-Ivor and Rebecca; Maria Jewsbury's "enthusiast" Julia; Geraldine Jewsbury's Bianca; Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Aurora Leigh; George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver and Dorothea Brooke; and Henry James's Daisy Miller and Verena Tarrant are all recognized as her descendants. Most writing on Corinne and the British tradition focuses on these post-Corinne works, looking at what her character gives rise to rather than at the culture out of which she arises.<sup>98</sup> Staël's heroine, like Staël herself, comes to represent the "extraordinary woman," rather than an important instance in the long history of female idealism.<sup>99</sup> What critics overlook, then, is that Romantic-era Britain already had a long and lively literary tradition focused on the aesthetic woman rebelling against social constraints: the Female Quixote novel I analyzed in the last chapter.

As the prime figure of female idealism in mid-eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Britain, the Female Quixote is a figure identified by her literariness, opposition to domesticity, a wish for (and admiration of) genius, and her performative rebellion against gender norms, often expressed through elaborate self-fashioning that counters her received identity. Yet while sensibility makes the Female Quixote possible because it values her artistic sensitivity, it also limits her expression and scope because it calls for a limiting social innocence. As I showed in my last chapter, British sensibility calls for a Quixotic obliviousness, especially important in women, who are socialized to be socially aware and to police the social status quo, as a guarantee of disinterestedness. Further, the Female Quixote exists within a satirical and didactic tradition that serves to contain her; her sense of self-importance is undercut by the anti-romance tactic of rendering the ideal material. This is a tactic associated with both the British tradition and the French before it: as I showed, anti-Female Quixote satires took up the anti-romance tactic from Molière's learned woman and précieuse satires. It is not surprising, then, that

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<sup>98</sup> See, for example, *CW<sup>3</sup> Journal's* excellent Winter 2004 special edition on *Corinne*, which nevertheless does not address the novel in relation to Sensibility or the character of the Female Quixote. Most of the articles focus on the novel's afterlife, though there is some discussion of predecessors like the *improvisatrice* Corilla and Emma Hamilton. The anthology *The Novel's Seductions: Staël's Corinne in Critical Inquiry*, edited by Karyna Szmurlo, is also a terrific and varied look at the novel in different contexts. While April Alliston's "Corinne and Female Transmission: Rewriting *La Princesse de Clèves* through the English Gothic" discusses the novel in relation to British sensibility (and Gothic) literature (especially Sophia Lee's *The Recess*), it does not take up the figure of the sensibility idealist heroine or the Female Quixote.

<sup>99</sup> Works on Staël often include such a formulation. See, for example, Vivian Folkenflik's *An Extraordinary Woman: Selected Writings of Germaine de Staël*.

while the tradition of Female Quixotism holds such sway over the Romantic period in Britain, no iconic Romantic heroine emerges from the tradition.

One such heroine does emerge, rather, but she is transformed and freed from the British context which limits her expression even as it makes her character possible: the eponymous heroine of Staël's *Corinne, or Italy* (1807). Staël achieves her transformation of the Female Quixote by developing her artistic sensitivity to its radical conclusion and rendering her an actual woman of genius and artist. This both makes explicit and opens up the Romantic idea that had been suggested by, but not fully developed in, the British tradition: that the aesthetic realm to which the Female Quixote aspires allows for the transcendence of social limitations, including a narrow definition of female subjectivity.<sup>100</sup> The Female Quixote aspires to an increased imaginary sphere, and an increased sphere of action, an aspiration magnified and fulfilled in the character of Corinne. Staël's novel, so indebted to British literature, is reclaimed by it almost immediately: two translations appear in 1807, and in 1833 a seminal translation appears in which Corinne's improvisations are translated by the British Corinne L.E.L.<sup>101</sup> A satire on the novel is also published soon after: E. M. Foster's *The Corinna of England, or a Heroine in the Shade* (1809), which treats Corinne as a Female Quixote, implicitly recognizing the connection between the two figures. Unlike other satires on the Female Quixote, however, Foster's satire renders the figure almost entirely negative; no longer is she an unworldly good natured eccentric but rather a worldly and vain anti-heroine. Foster tries to contain the implications of this radicalized Female Quixote through the deployment of sensibility conventions, not recognizing that Staël had already forestalled such a critique by complicating the figure and permanently transforming her for British literature.

I shall discuss the *Corinna of England* before I discuss *Corinne*, since its attack on *Corinne* is predicated on casting it as another Female Quixote novel. I shall then turn to *Corinne* to show how its terms are indeed those of the Female Quixote novel but transformed by Staël into a more radical form of Quixotism. The satire *The Corinna of England, or a Heroine in the Shade* takes up the logic of sensibility romance and attempts to use it against itself by uncoupling sensibility from artistic enthusiasm through making the sensibility heroine the inartistic woman and the victim of the Female Quixote. Thus, *Corinna of England* starts out as most sensibility novels do, with a young woman, Mary Cuthbert, left an orphan and sent out alone into the dangerous world. Like Burney's and Radcliffe's heroines, Mary is left by her dying father to the care of a near relative – in this case, her slightly older cousin, the heiress Clarissa Moreton. The contrast between these two figures will carry out the didactic purposes of the novel, with didacticism routed through sensibility conventions. The names of the heroines – important in heroine-centric sensibility literature, where heroines stand in for ways of female being – are suggestive. Mary is a plain name, while Clarissa is the name of one of sensibility's foundational heroines, though it is here given to the anti-heroine; the author will counter

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<sup>100</sup> In "A Woman's Desire to Be Known: Expressivity and Silence in *Corinne*," Toril Moi's also argues that Staël's project is to define woman as subject, especially as a counter to the Hegelian idea of woman's limited subjectivity.

<sup>101</sup> Angela Wright's "Corinne in Distress: Translation as Cultural Misappropriation" describes the history of *Corinne* translations.

the classic sensibility canon with her own conservative sensibility ideology. The surname Moreton (which cannot yet suggest Moreland, since *Northanger Abbey* was not then published), meanwhile, suggests the aspiration and endless grasp of this anti-heroine. Clarissa is first introduced, much like Corinne, as a public figure: as Mary travels by (possibly dangerous) public coach to her cousin's home, grandiosely named "the Attic Villa," she hears two men, Walwyn and Montgomery, discussing a woman known for her oddity:

The goddess of the shrine to which I'm guiding you despises the customs of the world, as much as she differs from the rest of her sex. She is a being who stands unique in the scale of creation; it is wholly impossible to define her character; she acts from the impulse of taste – of whim – of what you will please to call it. (vol. 1, p. 5)<sup>102</sup>

This whimsical heiress, mockingly described in terms of divine uniqueness à la Corinne, is similar to Arabella and *She Would Be an Heroine's* Georgiana, and, indeed, to Shadwell's virtuoso and Connolly's connoisseur. Like these other figures, she is an enthusiast who can indulge her whims – thus, Walwyn informs Montgomery that she has become his patron after seeing him in a village performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. As with the connoisseurs and the satirized female romance readers, Clarissa's artistic enthusiasm is focused on undeserving art. Unlike the version staged by Corinne, this village version of *Romeo and Juliet* is presented as ridiculous, and for precisely the reason amateur theatricals were critiqued and mocked: class crossing. Walwyn remarks that the actress who played Juliet confused her lines and mangled them by rendering them in a lower class accent, further mocking "Heaven knows, it required all my heroism to make love to a fat and brawny Juliet" (5). Meanwhile, Mary, who learns that Walwyn and Montgomery are going to stay with the eccentric lady so as to amuse themselves at her expense, "had been congratulating herself mentally at being placed in a more humble situation in life than the lady whose large and independent fortune, and more independent manners, had been so freely discussed by two young men" (vol. 1, p. 6).

That a satire on *Corinne* follows so closely the pattern of the older Female Quixote satires shows that the Female Quixote had always been creator as much as consumer, writer as much as reader. It further suggests that the Female Quixote is the ultimate figure of the female aesthete and the female artist, and shows that the old critique that female aspirations are rooted in narcissism clings to any new figures of the creative woman. Clarissa, like many classic sensibility heroines such as Arabella and Emily St. Aubert, has been educated by her idiosyncratic father and has thus not been traditionally socialized into the limitations of her sex:

Mr. Moreton had been a man who had indulged himself in speculative inquiries, and who had professed what he called 'liberal opinions' . . . . Clarissa Moreton was his only child; she was her father's idol, for he saw

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<sup>102</sup> I cite the page numbers of the PDF file available on the Chawton House site before the Pickering and Chatto edition came out.

in her enough of his own disposition, and of the traits which marked his character, to make her so. And it was in vain that Mrs. Moreton would have taught her child to walk in the path prescribed to her sex; when her father, proud of her 'superior mind,' and of her 'bold and inquiring spirit,' encouraged her in asserting her opinions. (vol. 1, pp. 9-10)

Clarissa's father, with his "speculative inquiries," sounds like the star-gazing virtuoso rendered dangerous by his idealism, particularly as he is here suggested to be a Jacobin. Mary's mother, on the other hand, had advised her to conform to gender norms, and her words occur to Mary as she listens to the men discussing Clarissa:

My dear child, always avoid singularity; never wish to deviate from the beaten track; never imagine that you show understanding despising common terms, and those rules of decorum which the world has prescribed to your sex. No situation ought to preclude a young woman from acting in conformity to the laws of custom, and of prudence, which may in some sense be called *her fence of protection*, and the *bulwark of every virtue*. (vol. 1, p. 8)

The social contract in relation to gender is explicitly stated: women can expect social protection as long as they act within given gender boundaries. As feminism reminds us, the threat of rape is a way to enforce traditional gender roles: if a woman transgresses gender limitations, she is "asking for it." And this is indeed what Clarissa will be threatened with, though, in sensibility fashion, she will also involve the faultless heroine in this danger; just as Madame Cheron's transgressive wish to pursue men threatens *Udolpho's* Emily with rape, so the anti-heroine Clarissa's schemes will endanger Mary. Before raising the stakes in this way, however, the author employs satire to mock Clarissa's aesthetic pretensions, here closely tied to her narcissistic wish to be a heroine, thus taking on a central concept of sensibility: female heroism.

Like Corinne, Clarissa is dangerously bold and original, but this is attributed to her "vanity and self-conceit": "She had a great tincture of romantic fervour and enthusiasm in her manners, which was called '*energy*,' a word well understood in the new vocabulary of the moderns, and which has been too frequently made use of to require any explanation here" (vol. 1, p. 10). The political implications are clear: the "moderns," that is, Jacobins and Jacobin-sympathizing reformers, brim with a Satanic rebellious energy. Indeed, inspired by the new philosophy, Clarissa quotes a Satanic-sounding phrase (though it derives from approved sensibility author Thomson, from his play *Tancred and Sigismunda*): "'the conscious mind is its own awful world!' Nothing shall induce me to give up *my* friends to the antiquated and strait-laced dogmas of the old school, which must be utterly exploded by all the proselytes of refinement and sentiment" (vol. 1, p. 25). In addition to Staël, Clarissa's canon is made up of Rousseau, Goethe, and Sterne, in praise of which she recites a paean in Corinne's improvisatrice style, particularly celebrating *The New Heloise* and *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (the favorite novel of Tomlins's "victim of fancy" Theresa), novels thought to embody the most dangerous aspects of sensibility. Though Foster seems to take primary aim at modern radical sensibility, she more specifically targets the learned woman, an intellectually and sexually transgressive figure associated with this movement. (It is striking that

Wollstonecraft is not mentioned directly in *Corinna of England*, but this may be because she too had critiqued sensibility.) Clarissa, like Corinne, styles herself an artist: she speaks in elaborate, theatrical language, dresses in dramatic, Greek-inspired dresses and veils, and displays a portrait of herself being crowned by the Muses. Thus, Foster is not satisfied with making her Female Quixote a romance reader and modern radical, but adds to her ambitions the classical learning associated with the learned woman.

While Clarissa is showy and engaged in the public sphere (here connected to art, as in *Corinne*), like *Udolpho*'s Madame Cheron, Mary emerges as the unjustly overlooked true sensibility heroine. Heroism, a central concept of sensibility, is not overthrown as a term but rather recalibrated: the subtitle of the novel is "a heroine in the shade." While this subtitle provides the rare moment of ambiguity in this work – is it an ironic reference to Clarissa's unsatisfied ambitions?, a suggestion of the stain on her character? – it seems to refer most clearly to the other, true heroine, Mary, who has been unfairly thrust into the shade of a more aggressive woman's false glare, an experience common to all sensibility heroines. This play with the status of a heroine's heroism is crucial to the sensibility genre and is at the center of many romance satires, most famously, perhaps, in *Northanger Abbey*, where Austen begins with a sentence encapsulating the paradoxes of heroinism: "No one who had seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be a heroine." The negative statement actually asserts Catherine's heroism. So, too, with Mary: she shines brighter for being placed in the shade. This is not inconsistent with the author's didactic purpose to show that a proper woman is modest:

Mary Cuthbert's talents and acquirements were not of the brilliant cast; her understanding was good, her perception lively and acute; but her natural modesty and reservedness of disposition, added to her secluded education, and the retirement in which she had lived . . . had given to her whole demeanour and behaviour, an air of timidity and *mauvaise haute*, which, though it did not diminish her natural and peculiar attractions to the eyes of those who had discernment and understanding to appreciate them according to their value, made her appear to the followers of art and fashion as an awkward, bashful girl, calculated neither for ornament or amusement. (vol. 1, p. 15-16)

The author makes particularly suggestive use of the sensibility convention through which a heroine is made to seem complex: her sleep is described as troubled and thus acts as a marker of the depth of her subjectivity. Thus, "[a]fter a restless and uncomfortable night, Mary Cuthbert left her pillow; and having taken a survey of the park, and the surrounding country, from her windows, and made a little arrangement of her wardrobe, she stole downstairs, intending to taste the morning air by a short stroll" (vol. 1, p. 18). Mary appreciates the sublimities of nature, but her sensibility transports are firmly bounded by religion: "She seemed borne out of herself, and her own concerns, whilst wandering over these new and luxurious scenes; and whilst lifting up her heart, in gratitude and praise, to the Fountain and Giver of all Good, her spirits seemed strengthened and exhilarated" (vol. 1, p. 33). She is super-sensitive to the environment, like all sensibility heroines, and this impressionability is contrasted with Clarissa's shallow enthusiasm: while Mary

communes with Nature, Clarissa is shut up in her boudoir reading Staël's *Delphine* with the Chevalier, who is using it to seduce her. Art thus becomes a cynical tactic used by a conman to maneuver socially, cheapening both itself and Clarissa.

A meditation on the role of art is at the center of the novel: Clarissa's heroinism is presented as specifically literary, while Mary's is mystified into natural heroism; the author thus erases her debt to the literary sensibility tradition in which she is working, part of her project of debunking of romance. Clarissa not only strives to be Corinne, but, taking advantage of the transformative power of amateur theatricals (amateur theatricals are dangerous, like modern romances, because they enable one to insert oneself into what had before been an exclusive arena of art), she acts the part of several famous heroines. Having converted the house chapel into a theater, she acts out scenes from famous plays with her actor-protégé suitor, Walwyn, just as Corinne did with Oswald. While the similarity between life and art only adds romantic melancholy to Corinne's and Oswald's affair, it receives a cynical spin in this romance satire: Walwyn knows that amateur theatricals are the way to win Clarissa's heart, and thus money, and only wonders that the Chevalier has the audacity to court her without this cover (though he does it through the cover of novels, in the manner of other romance satire seducers):

There was so much to be expected from the scenes and the situations of the drama, and [Walwyn] had there the greatest opportunities of prosecuting his suit with all the enthusiasm of passion:—that passion was there depicted in words the most forcible, tender, and yet warmly coloured. Miss Moreton herself, by turns the soft Monimia; the interesting Belvidera, hanging with fond affection on her Jassier; the voluptuous Cleopatra; the frail Calista, mourning her fault!—Surely he had *every* thing to hope, if Clarissa's heart had but the smallest preference in his favour. And this he would have suspected, if he had not perceived, that the sighing, the sentimental Chevalier D'Aubert, was admitted to all these liberties in *propria personâ*, which he had never attempted, but as the hero of the tragic tale. (vol. 1, pp. 27-8)

Amateur theatricals, like novels, allow Clarissa to become each of these sexually transgressive heroines (even if their transgression is only the inadvertent result of excess sensibility): Monimia, from Otway's *The Orphan*, is tricked into sex with the wrong man; Belvidera, from Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, is too worldly; Cleopatra is the prototypical unchaste woman; and Calista, from Rowe's *The Fair Penitent*, is unfaithful.<sup>103</sup> Citing a list of heroines admired by the Female Quixote is a standard of reading-woman satires; we see a similar list in *Polly Honeycombe*. Like Arabella, Clarissa looks to literary heroines as models for her own gender rebellion, but her heroines are taken from a newer sensibility tradition, whose logic is made use of by this very satire.

The author structures the novel to render the artistic woman the overbearing victimizer of the unaffected true heroine, and indeed of other dependents more generally (her impoverished tenants and employees); while the didacticism of the novel would seem to render its conservative message ineffective, its use of the aesthetics of sensibility is what makes the message potent. Mary, like all sensibility heroines, is a sensitive soul thrown into an uncaring and pretentious world, though here that world is Clarissa's world

<sup>103</sup> See Janet Todd's *Sensibility* on the dangers of sensibility.

of art and rebellion. Clarissa shows she is not a proper guardian, allowing Mary to travel alone (as General Tilney does Catherine Morland), and then introducing her into a house full of decadent Continentals. Clarissa is not only an unfit moral guardian, but, like the other older women in sensibility novels, she is a stepmother figure, dangerous to Mary because she sees her as a rival: "Miss Moreton was very much pleased with her cousin; her modest behaviour and diffident manners were the passport to her favour; for a rival under her roof . . . could not have been suffered" (vol. 1, p. 16). The author here demonstrates the most common technique of conservative satires: suggesting that reformers and idealists are in fact as cynically motivated as everyone else, but more dangerous because of their delusions about human nature. Yet in these Female Quixote satires, this cynicism is aimed specifically at the supposed truth of female nature – particularly envy and narcissism – from which only a few sensibility heroines are exempt. Sensibility culture's investment in the special aesthetic woman is built on the idea of the difference of the heroine to her sex: the heroine has artistic potential precisely because she is unlike other women. Thus Arabella selflessly wishes to help fellow women (though she must identify with a masculine heroic tradition to do so), something the anti-heroine of Lennox's novel, Miss Charlotte Glanville, does not comprehend:

As Miss Charlotte had a large share of coquetry in her composition, and was fond of beauty in none of her own sex but herself, she was sorry to see Lady Bella possessed of so great a share; . . . Arabella, on the contrary, was highly pleased with Miss Glanville; and finding her person very agreeable, did not fail to commend her beauty; a sort of complaisance mightily in use among the heroines, who knew not what envy or emulation meant. (79-80)

Clarissa resembles both the worldly anti-heroine Charlotte Glanville, who hopes Arabella's eccentricity will make her look better, and Austen's Isabella, also a kind of guardian for Catherine Morland in Bath, who uses her simply to gain advantage with men. Clarissa is also akin to the older guardian figures in Burney and Radcliffe, ridiculous but also dangerous. She is made use of as the bad guardian most strongly in the climax to *Corinna of England*, where she puts Mary in danger of being raped and even indirectly killed. Believing that Walwyn, who had returned to his barracks, is ill, Clarissa, "inflamed" by reading *Corinne*, decides to visit him so as to cause an affecting scene, which she secretly hopes will be witnessed by the man she really loves, Montgomery; sensibility, as its critics pointed out, is a social performance. Indeed, Clarissa here becomes almost a Gothic villain, as she takes Mary on the long and dangerous Radcliffean journey:

Mary Cuthbert had so frequently heard of the highwaymen who infested the environs of the metropolis, that her young and timid heart began to sink . . . an undefinable sensation of dread seized on the mind of Mary Cuthbert, as she felt herself bowled over a wide down, where no friendly star afforded glimmering light. The silence of Miss Moreton—the mysterious manner in which she had spoken of her friend, and of her friend's residence, filled her with alarm; yet she knew not what to fear; for such was the strange inconsistency of Miss Moreton's character, that it was impossible to fathom any of her projects.



At length they entered a long and gloomy avenue.—Mary could perceive, by the lights which issued from it, that they were approaching a large and massive pile of building; it appeared to wear the air of grand and feudal gloom; and the partial illumination of the building, at the termination of the vista, added to the solemn and sombre look of the avenue. (vol. 2, pp. 19-20)

Mary thinks of Clarissa in the terms Emily St. Aubert thinks of Montoni: she wonders and fears at what is passing through her inscrutable mind. In deflating satire fashion, however, the sublime approach is not to a mysterious castle but to a barracks, and we are back in Burney territory (as with Evelina being forced to attend Vauxhall by her crass relatives). Drunken men leer at and grab Mary, yet that does not stop Clarissa, who fits in at the barracks, which she wanders around in with "a firm and martial tread" (vol. 2, p. 22); like Polly Honeycombe, the call to be a heroine is a kind of call to arms, though here deflated by its connection to debased soldiers rather than to ancient warriors. At Mary's insistence, they take refuge in a small room, and the Gothic is again evoked to further cement our sympathy for Mary (as well as to create narrative tension in this didactic novel): "it was . . . a small and desolate apartment with a stone floor . . . . The officers in the passage crowded on the ladies; and Mary could not retreat or advance; she felt as if she could not breathe. . . . 'This place feels like a grave!' said Miss Moreton. Mary Cuthbert felt an internal shiver" (vol. 2, p. 24). And this is indeed a chamber of death, as it had served as a room for fever patients, so that Mary does actually fall ill, which, of course, only hastens her reward: Montgomery, who falls even more in love with her upon seeing her contrast to Clarissa, finally declares himself.

Montgomery recognizes the logic of sensibility that defines Mary and the power it gives her of being able to walk through perils unscathed: "[C]harming Miss Cuthbert, you are most peculiarly situated; Providence has thought fit to place you, where your patience and your forbearance must be exerted; but, while you follow the pious rectitude of your own heart, you will have nothing to fear! you will go through the path of duty with cheerful magnanimity!" (vol. 1, p. 40). The "peculiarity" of her situation is what makes her interesting, of course.<sup>104</sup> The romance heroine is often told mysteriously about her fate – created seemingly by "Providence" and "Chance" – yet actually by genre, thus heightening the literary reverberations; she is part of a larger romance plot, but she cannot know it (as Modleski points out about the heroine's split consciousness) the way the knowing Female Quixote does. Clarissa too comments on the sensibility novel predicament Mary is in, but does so, ironically, to berate her for thinking herself a heroine and indulging novel-induced fears (which make her rush into the fever-room to flee the soldiers): "'This comes of the overstrained affectation of you uninformed girls'

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<sup>104</sup> There is a suggestive echo of this scene – of the hero commenting on the heroine's romantic situation – in *Jane Eyre*, showing that the diction of sensibility mystifies the heroine's circumstances. Though the heroes' predicaments are auguries of the heroines' future happiness, Rochester's prediction for Jane is more sinister, suggesting Jane's closeness to temptation rather than safety from harm. Playing the fortune tellers, he says to Jane: "'[F]ind me another placed as you are. . . . You could hardly find me one. If you knew it, you are peculiarly situated: very near happiness; yes; within reach of it. The materials are all prepared; there only wants a movement to combine them. Chance laid them somewhat far apart; let them be once approached and bliss results'" (197).

... 'You read romances till your brains are turned, and then you fancy every man you meet with is to turn ravisher and thus probably is my *destiny* completed, just as I was attaining the very climax of fame; and about to receive the *suffrage* of the whole world!' (vol. 2, p. 26). It seems that certain sensibility novels are indeed fit reading for women, as they warn them of the world's dangers, and that it is the more radical form of sensibility, of authors like Staël, that really threatens the status quo. While traditional sensibility novels emphasize the danger women face in the world, and warn them to fear men, more radical ones encourage women to engage the male sphere in order to fulfill their "destiny" and find "fame."

Clarissa's mocking of proper sensibility novels – by, one assumes, approved authors such as Burney and Radcliffe – aligns her more closely with an improper radical sensibility associated with revolution. The political implications of the novel, unsurprising as they are, are here hooked into the Female Quixote: she becomes a radical figure capable of creating social chaos, if not exactly carrying out a successful revolution. Clarissa's wish to be a heroine not only destabilizes Mary's life but that of the whole neighborhood, making her into the ultimate bad guardian figure; she even, in one of the more striking scenes in a romance satire, starts a mini-French Revolution, but does so through her alignment not with the new French heroine Corinne but with an old British one: Lady Godiva. Before this striking scene, we are made aware of Clarissa's wrong-headed sensibility via another romance satire convention: it is revealed that though Clarissa is full of high sentiment, she does no real good for the actual poor. The critique that reading romances makes women less likely to help the actual poor, because they are not picturesque figures of romance, was very popular, appearing repeatedly in the *Lady's Magazine*. In *Corinna of England*, however, this convention is tied to a larger social danger: a poor woman of the neighborhood that Mary meets in one of her many nature-walks reveals that Clarissa has forsaken her duty of helping the poor because she thinks their problems too "common." This woman also reveals that the Moretons are interlopers, and even usurpers (with its Napoleonic reverberations), of a sort: the Villa used to belong to an old family before it was sold to Mr. Moreton, a rich merchant "fond of everything new" who "laid by" "old customs" (vol. 1, p. 34). While this poor woman used to rely on the squire's charity, given freely at his chapel, Mr. Moreton closed up the place of worship, transforming the property into the modern Villa, a work finished by his daughter. The transgression of class and gender is clear: the nouveau riche man and his bold daughter claim classical learning for themselves, which can only result in a grotesque parody of a grand house and the ruination of the entire neighborhood. The author's didactic economy is unrelenting: the poor woman's husband was injured while converting the chapel into a theater for Clarissa. Instead of providing charity, then, Clarissa actually encourages the sort of revolution called on by radicals such as Shelley, and her rebellion, like theirs, fuses gender and art. On a ride through nearby Coventry, coming upon a procession honoring Lady Godiva, Clarissa is inspired to take on her role, improvising a speech in the manner of Corinne (and of Barrett's Cherubina):

"Ye Citizens of Coventry, free men of an ancient city, behold this day  
*another* woman speaks! *another* woman asserts the glorious prerogative of  
 her sex, the bold freedom of thought and of action, hitherto so exclusively, so  
 unjustly confined to men alone!—People of Coventry, and do I then behold you

sunk to a state of effeminacy and servitude" . . . "People of Coventry! *Men!* possessed of capacious minds, of soaring genius, of depth of intellect; how do I behold you engaged? In what manner do I see the energies of youth, the judgment of manhood, the experience of age, employed? Is it in any one thing noble or praise-worthy?" . . . A pause of the Corinna was here followed by, "In providing bread for ourselves and our children—in honest industry—in weaving for our employers—hear her, hear, hear, hear," was the prevailing cry, and Corinna was suffered to proceed. —"In providing bread for yourselves and your children! you say—How? By the labours of your hands; but what is your labour?—the weaving of a few gaudy ribbons, which ought to be prohibited in an enlightened country. —Is the manufacturing these tasteless, useless ornaments, a worthy object for men—men, who have arms to chissel out the hero's form, and eyes that with Promethean fire can animate their work? . . . Shame, shame on these inglorious occupations! Was it for people such as these, that the fair, the chaste Godiva, adventured her beauteous form, unclothed, uncovered, through your narrow streets? Was it for ribbon-weavers alone? No! she fondly prophesied that a race of painters, poets, heroes, should spring up in after times, burning with her patriotism, fraught with her enthusiasm, and glowing as her own sanguine fancy!—Rally, rally yourselves, ye citizens of Coventry! Escape from the delusion by which you are enthralled—seek for more noble pursuits, more glorious occupations. . . . — People of Coventry, farewell!—Adieu!" (vol. 2, p. 10)

Clarissa here rehearses the argument of reformers such as Shelley who critique the poorly-paid and deadening mechanical labor enforced on the populace, chaining not only their bodies but their souls.

The call to arms is also a call to an inspired form of labor that is a kind of art, akin to the art that women like Clarissa aspire to consume and create. This connection is made clear by Clarissa's hatred of the domestic, and mechanical, labor usually assigned to women, such as kitting, to which Mary applies herself while Clarissa conducts her salon. This point is further made through a character that emerges as another double for Clarissa, an heiress who knows how to properly fit both her class and gender roles: Miss Davenport, a lady of the neighborhood whom Mary befriends and who emerges as a more proper companion for her:

With an improved and highly cultivated mind, Miss Davenport was yet fond of those works of ingenuity and industry, which peculiarly belong to females; and while Miss Moreton disdained to handle a needle, lest she should depart from the dignity of her character, and rank only with a *mechanical sempstress*, Miss Davenport was always engaged in some piece of useful or entertaining work of invention or fancy; and carefully concealed that she had pursuits of a higher nature from the eye of common inquiry, lest she should be thought to have strayed from the path prescribed to her sex. (vol. 2, p. 5)

The cult of genius and of the heroic is more generally critiqued here, but it is especially women's use of the rhetoric of genius and heroism that is depicted as a social problem.

Clarissa's words about the petty nature of the labor the workers are confined to also suggests Wollstonecraft's critique of the kinds of occupations relegated to women, who are also infantilized.

A counter to this kind of mechanical labor would be real art (and one thinks of the expansion of the definition of art in Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* – to create a new society is also art), but it is precisely this kind of art that is dangerous. Aside from the humble Mary, who sticks to knitting, and the proper Miss Davenport, who loves to sew, the author gives us yet another counter to Clarissa, Deborah Moreton, her old-fashioned aunt and proper mother figure, who does not have much enthusiasm for art of any kind and who explains the problem with it (she is speaking about music, but her assessment would certainly apply to all the art Clarissa loves):

"[E]very thing is carried to an excess, and *music* in particular, as if that word was an incantation, which bound up every sense but *hearing*." . . . "It seems, indeed, to be a magical art," said Mrs. Deborah, "and to have the power of transforming every thing. The difference of rank, and the different classes of society, are entirely overlooked in the pursuit of this tweedledum and tweedledee; and my lord is to be seen walking, arm in arm, with his fiddler; a *bishop* has been known to sing Goosygander with a shoe-black, if he had but a voice; and a *young lady* is on terms of intimacy with an abandoned courtesan, merely because she can pitch her pipe to an Italian bravura. What the world will come to at last, I know not; for it is not that people are fonder of music than they were formerly, when the 'Dusty Miller,' 'Farewell Manchester,' and 'Lady Coventry's Minuet,' were as much as a young lady, in *your* station," addressing herself to her niece, "was expected to know of it; and these good old tunes she kept herself in constant practice of, by playing them on her spinnet at least *once* a week." (vol. 1, p. 48)

Like romances and amateur theatricals, modern music presents the threat of class crossing; Deborah Moreton recommends the mechanical practice of playing the spinnet on a regular basis, rather than singing with whomever one wishes when the spirit takes one. The "excess" and spontaneity that Deborah Moreton fears – associated with the improvisatrice Corinne – are exactly what causes all gender and class boundaries to collapse, just as Clarissa's speech causes insurrection, described in terms that remind one of Burke's evocation of the French Revolution. The Coventry crowd is aimlessly stirred up by Clarissa's speech, so that the people express anger both towards their employers and, irrationally, towards the "French democrat" they think is living at the Attic Villa. In a frenzy, they attack both the houses of their employers and the Attic Villa, refusing to work and looting and destroying Clarissa's mansion.

Clarissa is thus aligned with revolutionaries. Mr. Copy is reminded by seeing her of Jack Cade, and, more alarmingly, news travels that Clarissa is in league with the French and Bonaparte. But it is not only class boundaries that are threatened: following Burke's famous description of the symbolic rape of Marie Antoinette, the author, also supported by sensibility convention, submits the heroine to the ultimate threat:

Mary, at length, sunk into a quiet slumber, from whence she was awoke by

loud and tumultuous shouts. . . . The assailants levelled their attacks at her windows; and, at the moment she was getting out of bed, a fragment of glass, impelled by a large stone, sprung to her face, and stuck into her temple. . . . Poor Mary shrieked with affright, when she saw three of the licentious rioters enter the chamber where she had taken refuge. They held a candle to her face; the picture of affright which was there displayed to the view, seemed to have some effect, even on their brutish and besotted faculties; they presently quitted the apartment, and left the unhappy girl in a state of insensibility, extended on the floor! (vol. 2, pp. 14-15).

This almost-rape, threatened again in the later barracks scene, had actually appeared yet again earlier in the novel in a milder version, when Mr. Germ's battledore had sailed through Mary's bedroom window in the middle of the night (as she had been looking out the window, unable to sleep, in Gothic-heroine fashion). All of these scenes constitute variants on the fearful intrusion into the Gothic heroine's chamber by a would-be ravisher – here, however, always somehow caused by Clarissa. *Corinna of England*, then, makes use of sensibility conventions to counter a more radical sensibility associated with the Female Quixote (and particularly in her expression as Corinne), offering instead a more subdued sensibility, embodied in Mary.

It takes Staël to synthesize the Female Quixote's variations so as to render her a more radical figure outside sensibility strictures, and her crucial intervention is to focus on the concept of the aesthetic to merge the Female Quixote's critical intelligence, aesthetic passion, and emotional complexity. In *Corinne, or Italy*, Staël reinvents the Female Quixote as an actual artist and acknowledged genius by bringing together her many facets. Kari Lokke has shown how Corinne merges seemingly contradictory abilities and attitudes in her aesthetic philosophy of enthusiasm, and I am greatly indebted to her reading, but I want to emphasize Staël's transformation and radicalization of the particularly British figure of the sensibility heroine and her offshoot, the Female Quixote. Staël introduces Corinne being crowned at the Capitol, which is only a more exalted variation on the Female Quixote's perpetual status as spectacle. From her extravagant dress to her strange whims, the Female Quixote is a freak of non-conformity, her outré behavior suggesting her rich subjectivity. Corinne has the authority of artistic tradition behind her, however, and is celebrated in the style of male artists like Dante and Petrarch. The vagueness of the Female Quixote's aspirations – to literature, genius, and rebellion – has been transformed into the varied, all-encompassing nature of Corinne's art: she combines in herself and her practice all the arts and disciplines. While the Female Quixote's creative nature is expressed through her susceptibility to art, Corinne actually becomes an artist. As travel guide to Oswald, she assumes the position of writer and he that of her reader. (In a more literal instance of this dynamic, he admires her from the audience as she acts in her own adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*.) The Female Quixote's propensity for making heroic speeches, a practice she inherits from her beloved romance heroines (beginning with Scudéry's) is transformed into Corinne's improvisation and inspired oratory, one form her poetry takes.<sup>105</sup> The traditional heroine's speech is

<sup>105</sup> Scudéry had herself published a collection of speeches attributed to historical heroic women, such as Sappho and Lucretia: *Les femmes illustres: ou les harangues héroïques* (1642). See a discussion of these speeches in Mary Ann Garnett's "Madeleine de Scudéry: *Les femmes illustres*:"

aestheticized into Corinne's lyrical narrations, inspired conversation, and, most importantly, her poetic improvisations. The Female Quixote's heroine-inspired dresses – one way she performs her reader response to romances – become Corinne's elaborate costumes, another part of her artistry. Thus, every aspect of the Female Quixote's extravagant behavior is transformed into a deliberate artistic creation.

Corinne is not only an artist, but, like the Female Quixote, a critic and philosopher, performing her strong reaction to the arts in her inspired critical commentaries. As her admirer Prince Castel Forte says, "It is so rare a thing . . . to find a person at once susceptible of enthusiasm, and capable of analysis; endowed as an artist, yet capable of so much self-knowledge."<sup>106</sup> Lennox's Arabella, who tirelessly explains the logic of romances and justifies their worldview to skeptics, is the Female Quixote figure that comes closest to such a powerful merger of the critical and imaginative faculties. But Lennox only suggests what Staël develops into a powerful vision of the female artist-critic. Oswald, a figure of British sensibility, remains only partly reconciled to art, represented by Corinne and Italy, thus showing the side of sensibility that sees art as too close to artfulness. He emerges as a figure ultimately suspicious of both art and the artistic woman; like Richardson's Lovelace, he doubts the purity of a complex woman. (However he does appreciate her enough to be a worthy lover, we are meant to understand; his attraction to Corinne and her vision differentiates him from later figures of the artistic-woman-hating man, most pointedly Charlotte Brontë's St. John Rivers and John Graham.)

Corinne's and Oswald's differing views on aesthetics mirror their differing views of gender: like a male reader mocking a Female Quixote's romances, Oswald is quick to criticize Corinne's beloved Italian art from a skeptical, Enlightenment perspective. In viewing the Coliseum, "Oswald's enthusiasm equaled not that of Corinne . . . he saw but the luxury of rulers, the blood of slaves, and was almost prejudiced against the arts, for thus lavishing their gifts, indifferent as to the purposes to which they were applied" (70). Corinne tries to expand his vision: "The very degradation of the Roman is imposing; while mourning for liberty they strewed the earth with wonders; and ideal beauty sought to solace man for the real dignity he had lost. . . . There is something superhuman and poetical in the magnificence, which makes one forget both its origin and its aim" (70-1). That the female character here argues for the power of the aesthetic at the expense of conventional morality strikingly reverses the traditional woman's role of upholding the status quo. But "[t]he eloquence of Corinne excited without convincing [Oswald]. He sought a moral sentiment in all things, and the magic of art could never satisfy him without it" (71).<sup>107</sup> While the British Oswald predictably critiques the sensuality and

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*ou les harangues héroïques*," in *Writings by pre-Revolutionary French Women*. The connection between the idealistic woman and the speech holds up to James's Verena Tarrant, who is described as delivering an impressive "harangue" herself.

<sup>106</sup> My quotations are from Isabel Hill's celebrated 1833 translation, in which Corinne's poetry is reworked by LEL. I use this translation not only because it was the seminal one of the nineteenth century, but also because I believe it best captures the sensibility rhetoric informing Staël's style.

<sup>107</sup> Staël calls Oswald Nelvil here (translated by Hill as Nevil), but I substitute Oswald for consistency.

ritualism of Catholicism, Corinne counters that it is the seemingly superfluous, ornamental elements that distinguish religion: "If religion consists but in morality, how is it superior to philosophy and reason?" (174). What she proposes as the additional element – calling it alternately "enthusiasm," "love," or "disinterestedness" – has much in common with the "whim" of the Female Quixote, her extravagant and disproportionate enthusiasm. Corinne explains:

The pomp of our worship; those pictures of kneeling saints, whose looks express continual prayer; those statues placed on tombs, as if to awaken one day with the dead; our churches, with their lofty aisles – all seem intimately connected with devout ideas. I love this splendid homage, made by man to that which promises him neither fortune nor power; which neither rewards nor punishes, save by the feelings it inspires; I grow proud of my kind, as I recognize something so disinterested. The magnificence of religion cannot be too much increased. (175)

Corinne connects the ineffable, mysterious feelings inspired by religious art to the aesthetic principle of disinterestedness, reminding Oswald that great art is not simply didactic or mimetic. Her opening up of the "superstitious" past to artistic appreciation is akin to the larger history of aesthetics in the British eighteenth century: the Gothic past came to be appreciated precisely for its formal excess, a trend in which Corinne's forebears were at the forefront as Gothic novel writers and readers.

That art is a stylized system that can only be understood on its own terms is an insight that both Lennox's Arabella and Staël's Corinne explain to their more inartistic suitors. Both Arabella and Corinne lecture their lovers about art within the context of its society, time, and genre, trying to communicate the power such art holds once a reader or viewer understands its particular logic. Arabella and Corinne are associated with a distant past, and Corinne with a foreign society, because such a difference is made to stand in for the distance of art from any easy notions of the "real." Arabella thus explains the stylization of romance, which she calls its "laws": "The Empire of Love, said she, like the Empire of Honor, is govern'd by laws of its own, which have no dependence upon, or relation to any other" (320-1). While her lover is impatient with such a strict and mannered system, Arabella understands, and speaks eloquently about, the wisdom communicated by romance symbolism and exaggeration:

Love requires a more unlimited obedience from its slaves, than any other monarch can expect from his subjects; and obedience which is circumscrib'd by no laws whatever, and dependent upon nothing but itself. I shall live, Madam, says the renowned prince of Scythia to the divine Statira, I shall live, since it is your command I should do so; and death can have no power over a life which you are pleas'd to take care of. (320)

Arabella, like Corinne, contextualizes art to her listeners, so as to explain to them a particular artistic effect or detail that would seem ludicrous without such knowledge:

For be pleased to know, Sir, said she . . . that his killing a stork, however inconsiderable a matter it may appear to us, was yet looked upon as a crime

of a very atrocious nature among the Thessalians, for they have a law which forbids upon pain of death, the killing of storks; the reason for which is, that Thessaly being subject to be infested with a prodigious multitude of serpents, which are a delightful food to these sorts of fowls, they look upon them as sacred birds, sent by the gods to deliver them from these serpents and vipers. (261)<sup>108</sup>

Staël develops the inherent wisdom of Arabella's knowledge in Corinne, who guides Oswald through an entire landscape and history of aesthetics. Like the oppositional lover found in many Female Quixote works, Oswald challenges Corinne at every turn, so that Corinne must explain not only Italian art but Italian society itself, which comes to stand in for an aesthetic he at first does not understand. Thus, when Oswald comments that Italians are frivolous, Corinne explains that his judgment is superficial: "You say but what all foreigners say of the Italians, what must strike every one at first; but you should look deeper . . ." (97). Corinne explains the conventions of Italian art and society to Oswald, connecting them to art and culture's roots in history. Conventions are endlessly revealing, if one knows how to read them, Corinne suggests, and have something of the magical power of ritual: "The city still has spells, into which we require initiation. It is not simply an assemblage of dwellings; it is a chronicle of the world represented by figurative emblems" (85). Italy's ritualism especially bothers Oswald, so that society's rituals come to suggest the artistic sylization into which Corinne must initiate him. In one of many criticisms of Italy that he addresses to Corinne, Oswald claims: "Funeral ceremonies are performed by the priests, as the duties of love are fulfilled by *cavalieres serventes*. Custom has prescribed all rites beforehand" (95). Despite Oswald's insistence on his own unmediated depth of feeling, however, it is he who betrays Corinne, thereby discrediting his idea of an artless purity.

Despite her aesthetic sophistication, Corinne's characterization as artistic genius and philosopher would not be as effective if it were not underpinned by Staël's rich evocation of Corinne's haunted subjectivity, drawn directly from sensibility novels. I here differ from Lokke, who sees sensibility melancholy as a punitive and patriarchal mode that is critiqued through Corinne's productive enthusiasm. I contend that the novel's focus on the doomed love affair of two people separated by cultural strictures on gender draws upon the figure of the productively suffering sensibility heroine, particularly Richardson's Clarissa. Corinne's secret (that Oswald's father had known and disapproved of her) gives their love its grand sadness. Despite Corinne's ambition, experience, and sophistication, she is a heroine in the sensibility tradition, and Staël uses a particularly powerful sensibility convention to render Corinne's rich subjectivity: that of the insomniac heroine, awake and troubled when everyone else is asleep. Sensibility heroines never sleep well, a cliché Austen plays on in making Catherine Morland a sound sleeper, in spite all of her emotional commotions. They are awake before anyone else, ready to commune with

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<sup>108</sup> In her "Quixotic Ethnography: Charlotte Lennox and the Dilemma of Cultural Observation," Ruth Mack also discusses Arabella's ethnographic vision. Mack is concerned with eighteenth-century theories of knowledge and the development of the novel, however, rather than with Arabella's understanding of genre and its feminist implications. Mack also reads Arabella, as I do, as "strangely in the know" (193). Further, Mack also refers to the striking instance of Arabella's sophisticated explanation of the historical importance of stork killing as an example of her ethnographic vision.



nature before the social order imposes itself, and they always, to use the clichéd sensibility phrase, "awake unrefreshed," suggesting the tumult – and thus complexity – of their thoughts.<sup>109</sup> Corinne "unable to sleep" (266), walks the streets, meditating on her love for Oswald and connecting it to a larger, unsatisfiable longing that Staël aligns with art and religion. Corinne here recognizes her own unlimited subjectivity: "Among the stars there is immortal love, alone sufficing to a boundless heart" (270). The woman, at the center of subjectivity, represents all mankind, as her longing keeps her awake, communing with the sublime. Her meditation then assumes a larger scope, her elegiac gaze aligned with that of Roman philosophers and artists as she regards Rome from St. Peter's:

Her imagination represented this edifice as it must be, when, in its turn, a wreck; - the theme of wonder for yet unborn ages. The columns, now erect, half bedded in earth; the porch dilapidated, with the Egyptian obelisk exulting over the decay of novelties, wrought for earthly immortality. From the summit of St. Peter's Corinne beheld day rise over Rome, which, in its uncultivated Campagna, looks like the Oasis of a Libyan desert. (268)

As in Radcliffean Gothic, the heroine's own sublime subjectivity is suggested by the sublimity of the landscape, which she regards from great heights, at hours when others more in tune with social routine are asleep. As grand and historically-informed as Corinne's subjectivity is, part of its power is that it is vulnerable and melancholy, as in the elegiac passage here. (Though, in sensibility fashion, this vulnerability is her strength: her gaze encompasses eons and so beholds natural and cultural destruction, but this suggests its own grandeur and timelessness. In a conventionally sublime tableau, she is the lonely figure silhouetted against a cataclysmic world.) When Oswald abandons her to marry her conventional half-sister Lucile (Lucy), Corinne, like Clarissa Harlowe, has a breakdown reflected in her art – she can no longer create. Like Clarissa after her betrayal and rape by Lovelace, Corinne's subjectivity is rendered as actually fragmented (in the chapter called "Fragments of Corinne's Thoughts," 343). And while the sensibility logic that suggests vulnerability is strength is perhaps sadomasochistic (as Lokke argues), I would argue that Corinne's newfound melancholy gives her a grandeur her early plenitude lacks.

While British culture attempts to control this newly powerful figure of the Female Quixote in satires like *The Corinna of England*, as I showed above, Staël had already forestalled, or at least complicated, such a critique by complicating sensibility and uncoupling it from a lack of self-knowledge and a cowering modesty. As Deborah Ross and Tania Modleski have shown, the classic sensibility heroine must be unaware of her own worth, which is dependent on her unworldliness, since a knowledge of its value would render her unworldly.<sup>110</sup> This is the logic of Fielding's *Shamela* (1741), whose

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<sup>109</sup> This is a phrase found in too many novels to cite; it is a sensibility conventional marker. Elizabeth Barrett Browning draws upon this convention in her Corinne-inspired *Aurora Leigh* (1856) by situating Aurora's artistic self-crowning on one of these early mornings.

<sup>110</sup> See Deborah Ross's "Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of the Female Quixote" and Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance*.

anti-heroine understands that her unworldly goodness has value. Foster therefore tries to condemn the Corinna of England by highlighting her knowing ambition to stand out from other women through her art and idealism. Staël's sensibility does not rely on such innocence, however, and in fact suggests that depth of feeling is enhanced by sophistication. Corinne is characterized as both self-aware (as Castel Forte says of her) and openly ambitious, and these qualities are dignified through their association with the arts: "[Corinne] naturally confessed that admiration had many charms for her. Genius inspires this thirst for fame: there is no blessing undesired by those to whom Heaven gave the means of winning it" (283). Staël achieves such a transformation of sensibility partly by sidestepping the problem. She takes Corinne out of society altogether – or, rather, out of British society, in which the arts can easily become associated with worldliness and with social ambition.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, in the Italy that *Corinne* imagines, the satirical accusations of vanity deployed by anti-Female Quixote writers from Molière to Foster to critique idealistic women would not make any sense because Italy has no such social distinctions: "Here is no ceremony, no fashion; none of the little everyday tricks for creating a sensation. The usual sources of artifice and of envy exist not here" (98). Aspiring to idealism and the arts in a society in which the aesthetic can be perceived as worldly will therefore remain a problem for British Female Quixotes. Thus, *History of an Enthusiast's* Julia will find that her ambition to be a poet is degraded in the artistic marketplace; she sets out to become an ideal-seeking Percy Shelley and ends up a disillusioned Byron.

Staël most pointedly forestalls a British sensibility-derived critique of Corinne through her transformation of the conventional pairing of heroine and anti-heroine. Staël flips the conventional pairing, so that Lucile (Lucy), the inartistic, artless heroine comes to represent a socially-valuable mode of sensibility, shown to be closer to worldliness than Corinne's artistic, intellectual sensibility. While Lucile follows the path prescribed for her, Corinne must at every step struggle and suffer to define her moral code. Yet Corinne's hard-won personal moral code has no worldly benefit: it only results in her suffering, as Oswald abandons her for Lucile. Staël therefore makes pointed use of the sensibility idea that suffering is a sign of purity to dignify the figure of the sophisticated, knowing heroine. Further reversing the usual contrast of heroine and anti-heroine, Corinne's rejection of British society and its hypocrisies puts her, rather than Lucile, in the place of the sensibility heroine standing outside a corrupt social order.

More strikingly, Staël reworks the powerful sensibility convention of contrasting heroines in the novel's conclusion, which sees Corinne taking on the education of Oswald and Lucile's daughter, rendering her in her own image. Here Staël combines the double-heroine model with another convention of Female Quixote works: the Female Quixote's tendency to adopt a protégée whom she wishes to transform into a heroine. Arabella herself takes on a young woman outcast for sexual transgressions; the Female Quixote of *She Would Be a Heroine* adopts a poor and virtuous girl whom she styles into a pastoral

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<sup>111</sup> In her introduction to the Pickering and Chatto edition of *The Corinna of England*, Sylvia Bordonni argues that Corinne is critiqued by Foster as the model of a foreign heroine inimical to British society. But such a heroine could not exist in British society because her artistic ambition would be neutralized as vanity.

heroine; in *Rosella*, Rosella is the daughter of a Female Quixote who schemes to involve her in heroic adventures; and Austen's Emma famously tries to promote her idealized Harriet. This, then, is a form of writing too, a radical kind of art that Corinne takes directly from the British tradition. In Female Quixote novels, however, the protégée never carries on her mentor's teachings: as a supposedly more natural and simple figure, she always succumbs to biological and social destiny. Rosella rejects her mother's romances and, instead of becoming the heroine her mother wishes her to be, ends up in a conventional marriage. Harriet, despite Emma's attempts to promote her through the class system, is brought back into line by Knightley. Verena Tarrant succumbs to the attractive cynic Basil Ransom rather than to her feminist patrons. Corinne's surrogate daughter, however, takes more to her cultural than to her biological mother: she remains as a promise that the aesthetic vision of the Female Quixote would survive.

### Chapter 3: The Lady's Magazine and the Reader-Writer: A Historical Case Study of Female Gothic Connoisseurship

#### Introduction

*The Lady's Magazine* (henceforth LM, with a run from 1770-1832 of thirteen yearly issues) literalizes the formula at the heart of Quixotic female connoisseurship: the reader-as-writer.<sup>112</sup> As Robert Mayo has shown in his authoritative *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815* and in his essays on the LM, much Romantic-era fiction was published in magazines and, more strikingly, was authored by readers of these magazines:

The more popular magazines with their larger circulation could command a more extensive writing public . . . and it is not surprising to find the most ambitious amateur efforts in the columns of the *Lady's Magazine*. . . . at least one-half of the fiction, which occupied anything from a quarter to a half of the contents of the *Lady's Magazine*, thirteen issues a year, for more than half a century, was supplied by readers, mostly feminine.<sup>113</sup>

In this chapter I shall argue that the LM functions in the Romantic period as an institution that encourages and develops what I call female Gothic connoisseurship by publishing both Gothic romances and works theorizing the new Gothic romance aesthetic and, more importantly, by encouraging the purportedly female readers of the magazine to submit their own "first attempts" at authorship. As such, the LM claims to encourage "the early efforts of genius" (Jan 1801) as well as "to afford a Repository for the productions of Female Genius, whether dawning or mature" (Jan 1800). As in the literature of Female Quixotism, female romance reading and writing are the path toward "genius."<sup>114</sup> The LM

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<sup>112</sup> Many periodical historians give the dates for the LM as 1770-1837, but after 1832, it merged with other women's magazines. I follow Alison Adburgham in giving 1832 as the end date. These distinctions are not particularly relevant to my argument here, however, since I have looked carefully only at the 1770-1802 LM – the period covering the height of the periodical's involvement with the Gothic, including the rise up to it – so my argument here pertains to this period. The LM changes a great deal even within a span of a decade, so I do not comment here on its later run, which I have not yet examined. (I would like to trace the development of the romance into the later run of the LM, however, in future work.)

<sup>113</sup> "Gothic Romance in the Magazines," *PMLA*, Vol. 65, No. 5 (Sept., 1950), 762-789; pp. 772-3. Mayo points out, though, as should I, that this information is gained from the messages of the editor to these writers in the "to our correspondents" pages, so we must assume these are factual rather than part of the LM's conceit that it relies on amateur writing. Even if it were only a conceit it would be significant, but I agree with Mayo that the works identified as sent in by amateur writers, who were reminded many times by the LM that it could not compensate them, seem to be such.

<sup>114</sup> As in my Female Quixote satires chapter, I hasten to add that the concept of genius had not yet assumed its Romantic meaning at this period, though it was in the process of gaining such significance. Works like Alexander Gerard's *On Genius* (excerpted in the LM) and William

therefore takes up and helps fulfill many of the concerns tied to female connoisseurship: female (aesthetic) education, the literary marketplace as route to female emancipation, and the romance as stand in for female aesthetic aspiration. Like the Female Quixote novel, the LM is obsessed with female potential.

The LM has progressive roots, being published by George Robinson, the publisher and generous supporter of figures like William Godwin and Thomas Holcroft. (Robinson also published the foundational work of the Female Gothic, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; the 500 pounds he paid Radcliffe achieved legendary status, as writers were usually paid less than a twentieth of that sum for a novel at that time.)<sup>115</sup> Additionally, while the LM obviously denounces the French Revolution (though mostly only after the execution of the royalty), it continues to publish work from figures sympathetic to it – Helen Maria Williams, Mary Hays, Mary Wollstonecraft and even the once-Jacobin Jean-Baptist Louvet du Couvray – into the later 1790s.<sup>116</sup> Thus, the LM publishes excerpts

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Duff's work on genius (which Jacqueline Howard argues influenced Radcliffe's shaping of the aesthetic woman) were, however, already in circulation. Genius was in the process of being defined in its modern sense through its association with both the rare capacity for innovations (Gerard) and as a psychological type of the artistic visionary (Duff). (My discussion of Howard's views on Duff and of Duff himself relies on Rictor Norton's biography of Ann Radcliffe, *Mistress of Udolpho*.)

As I have argued in my previous chapters, genius was also being theorized in the literature of the Female Quixote. Staël solidifies the figure of the woman of genius in her *Corinne*, but the literature of the Female Quixote tries to open up this category more widely – the woman of genius suggests an exception to the rule, while the Female Quixote's theorization of genius questions the limits on female achievement more broadly. The LM partakes of both the narratives of the extraordinary woman (especially in its features on remarkable women in history) and of the more democratic one of the woman who can attain genius (or at least aspire to it) through the reading-writing of romance.

<sup>115</sup> "Copyright Documents in the George Robinson Archive: William Godwin and Others 1713-1820," G.E. Bentley, *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 35 (1982), pp. 67-110. Robinson's "firm was of a liberal political persuasion" (77). As Bentley explains, Robinson founded the Whig *New Annual Register* in 1781, to rival Burke's Tory *Annual Register*. Robinson was also known for supporting controversial authors, being fined in 1793 for publishing Paine's *Rights of Man* and also supporting Godwin throughout the 90s as he wrote his *Political Justice*.

As Norton reports in his biography of Radcliffe, the sum she was paid for *Udolpho* was stunning for the period, as Minerva writers, for instance, were routinely paid only 10 or 20 pounds for a novel. The sum gained mythical status among writers, so that it was often reported as being twice or three times the amount. Norton explains that it was this payment that allowed Radcliffe and her husband to visit the Continent, an account of which Radcliffe then publishes and which is the only work of hers excerpted in the 1770-1805 LM (except for some of the interspersed poems in *Udolpho*). While other publishers apparently thought Robinson had made a mistake, he maintained that the novel was worth the price.

<sup>116</sup> Showing its sympathy for the sufferings of the French royal family, the LM publishes accounts of their imprisonment and attempted escape, along with portraits. It also publishes excerpts from Dr. John Moore's accounts of the Terror. In the later 1790s, the editors speak directly against the revolution, as, for example in the yearly address for 1797: "In the execution of this plan, our employment has been the more agreeable since we have been at liberty to pass, without remark,

from Williams's *Letters from France* in August and September of 1792. Once the royalty is executed, the editor predictably publishes a strong condemnation, dubbing the people "[the king's] ferocious subjects" (Jan 1793).<sup>117</sup> In 1794, however, in a condemnatory article about Robespierre, who is described as a cruel and petty tyrant, the writer makes the point that the people are not pro-royalty but are loyal to the Constitution.<sup>118</sup> The LM further shows its sympathy for some elements of the revolution, as it praises the people themselves, meditating presciently on the consequences to the governments of Europe if "a real patriot" takes control of "this enterprising people." More strikingly, in 1794, at the height of fear and paranoia about revolution in Britain, the LM publishes an account of Thomas Hardy's trial with a coda that celebrates his acquittal.<sup>119</sup> It is perhaps this underlying democratic sympathy that helps make the LM the "most successful publishing venture of its kind in the century" with a run of about 16,000 (which does not account for all of its readers, only subscribers and buyers).<sup>120</sup> Further, the magazine is priced so that it

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many of the mournful, though predominant, occurrences of the time. It is not necessary that we should notice when Folly assumes the mask of profound political Sagacity, nor when wild Ambition sacrifices the happiness and the lives of millions to attain its ends: we have not been accustomed to detail the calamitous evils of war, the rapid impoverishment of kingdoms, nor the havoc made among the human race."

Soon after, it publishes a portrait and account of General Napoleon Buonaparte (May 1797). This does not mean the LM is political, but it does address aspects of politics that are central to the cultural conversation. (And the publication of foreign and home news, a regular feature of the LM, continues uninterrupted.)

<sup>117</sup> Accounts of both Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette are published in the March 1793 issue and, despite its being a woman's magazine, the king is treated with a bit more sympathy than the queen. Thus, the king is treated as a suffering figure and his last hours are described in detail. The queen is judged more rigorously, so that while the piece praises her informality, it also says, rather satirically, that she is not quite the divinity described by Burke. In October of 1793, the LM publishes the transcript from the trial of Marie Antoinette and her execution is described.

<sup>118</sup> In the next few months the LM publishes a profile of Tallien as well as excerpts from Louvet de Couvray's *Life of the Chevalier Faublas*. In part this is just good business, since France is the country of most interest at the moment, but it also suggests the LM's moderate or even progressive stance.

<sup>119</sup> The coda reads as follows: "Such was the issue of the trial of a man on whose conviction some political bigots appear to have imagined that the very existence of our happy constitution must depend: but surely every Englishman who has the honour and prosperity of his country at heart, must own, that nothing can remain in the constitution worth preserving, when the meanest, or even the most obnoxious of his countrymen, may be capitally-convicted by the law-officers of the crown, without legal evidence, the most clear, positive, and indubitable" (November 1794).

<sup>120</sup> Mayo, *English Novel in the Magazines*, 212; 213.

is within reach of the middle classes (and, as Francis Place claimed, "the lower middle classes") 6 pence up to 1800 and 1 shilling thereafter.<sup>121</sup>

Such populism goes along with the genre to which the LM belongs, not the respectable essay-serial (like the *Rambler* or *Adventurer*) nor the historical miscellany (like the *Gentleman's Magazine*, founded by Edward Cave in 1731), but rather the "common miscellany," as Mayo calls it.<sup>122</sup> The *Gentleman's Magazine* (GM), the most popular historical miscellany of the earlier eighteenth century, and the most obvious contrast to the LM, was in many ways a model, though its focus differed from the LM's. As the term for it – historical miscellany – used by Mayo suggests, the GM tried to cover the culture of the day in a comprehensive way. The GM:

was a magazine for gentlemen in the enlarged eighteenth-century sense – that is, a magazine for the commercial classes, for professional people, both great and small, and for alert readers with no matter what social connections, possessing an interest in politics and government, history and biography, mathematics, machinery, theology, natural history, antiquities, literature, and geography. Its typographical ugliness was a badge of its fundamental sobriety and practicality.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Alison Adburgham reports this from Place: "Francis Place wrote rather disparagingly in his notebooks (1825-30) that it was successful *because* it was only sixpence, and aimed at the lower middle class" (132).

Some pieces are even published in the LM that seem addressed to servants, such as the July 1794 piece entitled "A Father's Advice to His Daughter, On her Going out to Service." Though this piece in many ways evokes a Pamela scenario that would be of interest to any reader, its realism and attention to class and gender nuance is striking. While the father predictably warns her about rich seducers who could not possibly have honorable intentions (telling her this is the story of most of London's prostitutes), he also tells her she must marry a man who can support a family, since she herself does not have a fortune. He warns her, however, not to marry too early, since, he says, being a servant is easier than being a "slave" to a husband.

I stress the progressive aspects of the LM because its focus on didacticism, its celebrations of the British royal family (particularly the women, though this is more a celebration of notable women than of a class), its celebrated fashion plates, its often overbearing moral stories, etc., leads critics to overlook its surprisingly progressive nature. Mayo, while a careful reader and thorough researcher, is himself too caught up by the bad quality of the amateur prose and by the lightweight nature of the enterprise – especially when compared to essay-serials by figures like Johnson, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie, and the more intellectual *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews* – to do justice to its complexity and more general moderation at a time of great political fear and repression in Britain. When one comes to the LM expecting *Blackwood's* or the *Critical Review*, the didacticism seems condescending, the moral stories insipid, and the contents sometimes frivolous, but a closer look reveals a lively variety that reflects social trends and anxieties. Here one could feel the confusion played on in *Northanger Abbey* when the "something horrid coming out of London" is meant by Catherine to refer to Gothic novels and to Eleanor to announce political upheaval.

<sup>122</sup> *English Novels in the Magazines*, 212-13.

<sup>123</sup> *English Novels in the Magazines*, 162.

The LM, on the other hand, looks primarily to a realm of manners and aesthetics. The term "common" suggests its detachment from the precise historical moment (though it covers major events and includes a detailed report of "domestic" and "foreign" news every month) and its turn to a "common" culture focused on literature.<sup>124</sup> As the editor claims in 1780, the LM has "none of the modern Incentives to recommend it: neither Politics, the Antiquarians Reveries, the Slanders of Domestic Failings, nor the Fatuous Pretensions of Criticism."<sup>125</sup> As the authors of *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* point out, women's magazines generally eschew politics and public concerns.<sup>126</sup> But the LM does not reject the public sphere; rather, like the essay-serial, it focuses on aspects of public culture like manners that are only implicitly tied to politics.<sup>127</sup> It expresses its political sympathies indirectly, however, through its selections. Thus, while the editor rejects a contribution from a correspondent on the slave trade, saying that it is too political, it later publishes a story that explicitly and powerfully condemns slavery ("Lanzou and Yuna; An African Anecdote," from the September 1797 issue). The LM is thus not explicitly partisan, but its sympathies are felt in its contents and tone. In its lack of explicit partisanship, it, like the essay-serial, lays claim to a "genteel" (the word often used for it by critics) realm from which contention, gossip, and scandal (a big part of some periodicals) are excluded.<sup>128</sup> The LM does not publish the

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<sup>124</sup> For instance, the (abridged) travels of Captain Cook are serialized in the LM, but it seems to function more as a collection of entertaining travel anecdotes rather than a work with political implications. The editor points out that the narrative has been abridged to suit it to the ladies.

<sup>125</sup> Later the LM seems to claim that it does address these topics too: "We shall, therefore, never hesitate to present our Fair Patronesses with a selection of such facts or observations, relative to History, Geography, Antiquities, Criticism, and the whole circle of Polite Literature, as appear to us most to merit their attention, for their novelty or importance; and when to these are added the numerous original and amusing communications which we continually receive from our ingenious and liberal correspondents, we trust . . . our Publication will be found to deserve that approbation" (Jan 1792).

<sup>126</sup> "Conspicuous by its absence and in contrast to the pervasiveness of the motif of domesticity is the theme of the public and civic life, political progress or political institutions" (13).

<sup>127</sup> As noted above, the LM does report extensively on the French Revolution, but this seems an exception. It also reports on major events like the Gordon Riots (calling on correspondents for the latest news) and an attempted assassination of the king (by a woman, no less). It also reports on important trials, such as that of Horne Tooke and Warren Hastings, including court room transcripts. It is true, however, that it addresses politics much less than the GM. But, as Mayo notes, this has to do with its status as a "common miscellany," of which there were many not specifically aimed at women. It may be that women were more likely to read "common" rather than "historical" miscellanies, though it may also be that if one wanted to read fiction in the magazines, one had to turn to common miscellanies.

<sup>128</sup> Ellis, for instance, says in his *Politics of Sensibility*: "*The Lady's Magazine's* decorous, proper and moral contents sought to create that domestic amiable sensibility of the middle station of life. The pseudo-genteel essays addressed themselves more to the social *aspirations* of its readers, than to practical domestic advice on the one hand, or on the other, concerns of party politics, foreign news and scientific or religious controversy" (40).



crass secret histories of a "modish" magazine like *The Town and Country*, as Mayo notes (213), but this signals its seriousness and its rejection of limiting social realities. At the same time, the LM's miscellany status counters its gentility in that it causes it to partake of the very "miscellaneous" quality of the world (as one LM writer suggests): it draws from the many genres of fiction and non-fiction – from travel narratives, biographies, conduct manuals, anecdotes, tales, novels, and romances – so that it acts as a vital link to the world of popular (in the sense of media rather than folk circulated) culture and reading.<sup>129</sup> What will be particularly documented in its pages, then, is one of the major developments of the late eighteenth century: the rise of the romance and of the female reader-writer.

The LM's focus on morality and association with fashion plates (for which is remains famous as an early innovator) has led critics to overestimate its gender conservatism.<sup>130</sup> My own analysis supports the critical assessment that the LM is a sensibility-promoting institution; this more accurately suggests its progressive support of female achievement and aesthetic education combined with its conservative investment in female chastity and domestic virtues.<sup>131</sup> This also relates to its rejection of the gossip

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<sup>129</sup> The connection between the genre of the miscellany and the jumbled up nature of the world is suggested by an LM article on female reading in which the magazine is recommended as a kind of safer stand-in for the "miscellany" that is the world:

But how are women to acquire knowledge? How are they to acquire the literary accomplishments of expressing themselves with propriety and elegance, even on subjects it may be admitted proper for them to know? How indeed but from books? - Men may roam abroad and get practical information, by conversing with mankind: but this is too dangerous a method for women. The world is too miscellaneous a work for their chaste perusal. Women should read "books of instruction" but also books for "amusement," since they can't go out as much as men and can't get a break from the inevitable "ennui" of life. (May 1771)

Yet another iteration of the LM's mission and special appeal to women is made later in the 1790s, again suggesting a particular approach to public events: magazines, says the editor, "cannot fail to furnish something agreeable to every taste, which may convey instruction without the trouble of laborious study." As such, the LM "will neither cause any great consumption of the time of the busy, nor exhaust the patience even of the idle." The editor claims that every type of person has a specialized magazine catering to him (mentioning people who would be thought male by default): "the politician, the antiquary, the artist, and the man of fashion." The LM is especially for "the fair sex," and the fact that it is aimed at women means: "we would exclude the dry and less pleasing details of the arts and the abstruser sciences, and the too minute discussions of political enquiry; at the same time that we shall always carefully and faithfully give the most prominent outlines of the great events of the times; times which daily produce the most extraordinary scenes, the most momentous revolutions" (January 1795).

<sup>130</sup> See again, for instance, Ellis's discussion.

<sup>131</sup> A typical pronouncement of its didactic purpose: "The LADY'S MAGAZINE was intended to be the Receptacle of instructive and entertaining literature, adapted to the delicacy and refined taste of that sex which was created to polish and to gladden life. From it we have ever been careful to exclude whatever might, in the slightest degree, be supposed to have a gross or immoral tendency. We have selected specimens and extracts from the most approved literary publications of the age" (Jan 1797).

sphere of a *Town and Country* (see Mayo, 213); while such a rejection of the crude and messy social reality of gender relations may serve as condescendingly protective, it also goes along with the sensibility idea that social reality can be transcended.<sup>132</sup> While the LM has an investment in didacticism, then, it progressively champions a female aesthetic identity and addresses its readers as aesthetic subjects. Most generally, the LM does this by focusing on illustrious women, particularly on female authors. More pointedly, the LM casts the reading and writing woman as the central figure of the institution. Such a figure is both a more general representative of intellectual achievement – as shown by the typical plates affixed to every January issue in which "genius" presents the LM to "the fair of England" – and of private readerly enjoyment – as shown by a representative plate depicting a woman reading in a gazebo.

While the LM presents itself as a primarily female institution by reiterating its mission to develop "female genius," it also commits itself, like the literature of Female Quixotism, to critically analyzing femininity by interrogating gender essentialism. One way the LM carries out this interrogation is through its many articles about global female experience, which introduce a certain cultural relativism that complicates the connection between sex and gender. Further, as an institution that promotes "female genius," the LM recycles debates about the capacity of women in relation to men.<sup>133</sup> "Genius" here does

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Moreover, social conservatism does not mean aesthetic conservatism. Thus, one of the more socially conservative women's periodicals, *The Lady's Monthly Museum* (LMM), features stylistically hybrid and often risqué Gothic stories. Little reliable information is available on the workings of the *Lady's Monthly Museum*, so I rely mostly on my observations from the contents and style of the periodical itself. Mayo and Pitcher, whose differing evaluations show the inadequate and contradictory information available, seem to disagree on the LMM, or at least emphasize different aspects of it. Mayo calls it a more "professional" magazine and praises its use of installments above the LM's, while Pitcher focuses on the distance between the supposed female group that runs the magazine and the "conservative gentlemen" who are in fact in charge. While I do not have room here to analyze the LMM in any detail, what strikes me most about it is the hybridity of its Gothic fiction. It also seems to me, based on my preliminary research into the LMM's early years, that it combined conservative morality with sensationalism in a formula that allowed for more grotesque, but also cautionary, Gothic tales. (The LMM was not one of the Methodist magazines so beloved by the Brontës, though, according to Mayo's description of these religious sensationalist-moral magazines, there are some resemblances between the two.)

<sup>132</sup> "The *Town and Country* and *The Lady's Magazine* after 1770s were the powerful leaders of two divergent tendencies in popular taste – the one increasingly modish, raffish, and satirical; the other predominantly decorous, sentimental, and moral" (188). Mayo categorizes these as "townish" versus "genteel."

<sup>133</sup> Franz Potter argues that recycling is the dominant motif of minor Gothic literature and of chapbook Gothics; that is, such literature makes a virtue out of its conventionality. While the LM is invested in the pleasures of fictional conventionality, its recycling of non-fiction articles suggests a different economy, an economy of periodicals I analyze in more detail below. As critics writing on periodicals have noted, the open conversation is a convention of periodicals, so that repetition of the same questions over the years is common. This feature has become even more common in digital magazines, which are even more ephemeral than print ones; as such, the same questions are repeatedly turned over in electronic periodicals so as to provoke an emotional more than intellectual response. For instance, the provocative question "Are women funny?" has

not emerge as the force which promises to equalize the sexes, as it does in Female Quixote novels, but this is due in part to the open-ended nature of magazine discourse: the debate must be kept open to fuel further issues.<sup>134</sup> Thus, as in popular women's magazines to this day, gender remains an ongoing question: it is expressed as "could she be a heroine?" rather than the triumphant "she would be a heroine" (as in Sophia Griffiths's Female Quixote novel of that name). Like so many eighteenth-century miscellanies, the LM, taking advantage of a lax periodical copyright law, recycles not only topics but actual articles, a practice now easier to trace through resources like Google Books.<sup>135</sup> Each article, then, adds to the ongoing debate about the potential of women. Even articles that have nothing to do with womanhood contribute to this debate, as they suggest that women have wider interests unrelated to gender and that therefore femininity does not completely define female subjectivity.<sup>136</sup> In some cases, the debate

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made the rounds over the last eight or so years, as a vital comedy scene has arisen in which women are well-represented but still not on par with men. The question is often posed in its most provocative form, as if to underline its status as the latest representation of the basic question "are women equal to men?"

<sup>134</sup> Online periodicals have taken advantage of this open debate format by incorporating readers' comments as part of the experience. The ongoing discussion is now literalized, as readers circle around the same ideas. The popular feminist woman's magazine Jezebel (and the entire Gawker media empire, of which it is a part) has been particularly successful in incorporating dedicated commenters into the discussion. And in Jezebel's case at least one of these commenters has been promoted to a writer by virtue of the quality and popularity of her comments. After becoming a staff writer for Jezebel, Erin Gloria Ryan (also known by her correspondent pseudonym of "Morning Gloria") went on to write for other venues; because Jezebel does not pay well nor offer much job security, she eventually moved on to a job writing for television. "Morning Gloria"'s talent at turning a phrase, and of mastering the brief internet comment genre, had been the subject of a Washington Post article before MG was promoted to writer; the Post article was featured and discussed on Jezebel, of course.

<sup>135</sup> Despite the lax laws, the editor often disciplines correspondents trying to pass off already published work as their own. They do this in part because the LM's popularity is based on its original material, so much so that the editor often reiterates this and boasts about it. More so, it seems that violating copyright laws had serious consequences, so that the LM editor comes out strongly against it and chides a correspondent whose copied material could have led them to such a violation. (The correspondent may have been fictitious and a cover for their own copyright violation.) Thus, the editor responds to a correspondent who asks why the LM did not print more of Dr. Gregory's *Advice* in the last number by claiming that it was actually a mistake of the "compositor" that they published as much of it as they did, since "we have the highest veneration for *Copy Right*, and shrink at the very idea of violating it; and Mary Turner should be informed, that had we been drawn into the snare, she laid for us, we should have suffered as literary robbers and thieves of private property" (August 1784). The editor excuses the transgression by arguing that they have at least introduced a great work to parents of Britain, since half of them had not heard of it.

<sup>136</sup> Fiona Price makes a similar point, in *Revolutions in Taste: 1773-1818*, in her analysis of miscellanies aimed at women, which necessarily mix in items of general interest that break down the idea of female reading and admit a kind of general culture. This suggests the common formulation that feminism is the idea that women are people too; that is, items of "general

about the nature of femininity is staged directly, as when correspondent "Sukey Foresight" carries on a heated argument with a male correspondent in which she defends women's capacity for genius (connected here to innovation) against the perennial charge that women have never invented anything.

Even further than its interrogation of femininity, the LM's importance for feminist literary history is that, while it presents itself as a female institution, it also serves to create an androgynous cultural space. As scholars have shown, and as my own research confirms, many of the contributors to the LM, both professional and amateur, are male. Gender in eighteenth-century fiction authorship is, as is well known, fluid and performative. Thus, the tag "by a Lady" affixed to many sentimental novels is often a cover for a male author.<sup>137</sup> In most cases, however, the LM does not attempt to hide the sex of the author to feminize the institution; many of the authors are revealed to be male, both by the notes written to them by editors and by their gender-specific names or pseudonyms. My own research suggests that as many as half the LM correspondents (thus, the reader-writers) were male.<sup>138</sup> While some of the content of the LM is unsigned, usually indicating material excerpted from other publications, some pieces are signed only with initials. Such a practice is common in the period and serves as the primary convention in the *Gentleman's* – where initials seem to have generally represented male contributors. In the LM, however, initials suggest gender ambiguity. As in the Female Quixote subgenre, in which cross-dressing and father-identification are conventional, the LM's androgyny serves as a means for female contributors to break away from a restricting female identity. (This applies to the male correspondents of the LM too, but I am focusing on the appropriation of masculinity by female readers-writers rather than vice versa.)

The LM's function as a partially androgynous space is both caused by and serves to support a kind of "immaturity" that comes from a resistance to conventional female

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interest" implicitly address women without focusing on gender and thus assert the ability to transcend gender.

<sup>137</sup> That such cross-dressing is integral to the LM too is revealed by one of the proprietors of the LM itself: when a rival LM springs up, the original LM sues and part of what emerges (as seen in the court transcript published in the LM) is that the "Lady" supposed to have written the *Sentimental Journey* serialized in the magazine (based on Sterne's) is actually a male author.

<sup>138</sup> Iona Italia cites Jean Hunter's research into the gender distribution of LM correspondents by looking at the signatures to letters, in which she has found that between a third and a half of signatures were masculine.

Ellis also cites Hunter, though he focuses on the fact that the majority were still female signatures, admitting, however, that this may be virtual cross-dressing, significant in itself: "Even if the identity of most of the pseudonyms of *The Lady's Magazine* was revealed as masculine, the significance of this transvestism should not go unnoticed. Jean Hunter also notes that although the real identity of the correspondents is hidden by the pseudonyms, in the 1770s, by her estimation 57-66 per cent of correspondents claimed to be female, figures that were supported in later decades" (41).

Aldburgham also notes that George Crabbe "poured out some of his most sentimental verse" in the *New Lady's Magazine*, a competitor of the LM, to which his father subscribed (148).

socialization. Such "immaturity," connected to an excessive investment in the aesthetic at the expense of domestic duties and with an "unfeminine" playful detachment, is enabled by the LM's status as, at least in part, an adolescent-focused periodical. Based on the signatures of the correspondents, on their letters, and on the editor's responses to them, it seems that the LM was read widely at boarding schools. Its popularity with adolescents is explained by the LM's publication of genres that were new and fashionable but that had not achieved literary respectability – primarily the romance. More so, the LM's status as an institution for young female readers lessened its cultural prestige – the poetry of the LM is frequently mocked, even by Minerva Press authors – and so rendered it a place to which adolescents of both sexes would dare to send their "first attempts."<sup>139</sup> (Thus, Charlotte Brontë, who was an avid reader of her aunt's old copies of the LM [her stash was from the Gothic-filled 1790s], thought it would have been a perfect place for her juvenilia. Brontë's volumes of the LM suffered the fate of Don Quixote's romances: her father burned them.) The mid-1790s LM sees two serialized romances with representative names that signal age, one by "a Young Lady" (identified by the editors as actually female this time) and the other by "Juvenis." Further suggesting the androgyny and connected "immaturity" of the LM is that one of its most popular features seems to have been its puzzles; editors routinely inform correspondents that they have many more puzzles submitted than they can publish. Play is central to connoisseurship and is especially important for the Female Quixote and female reader-writer, for whom it is associated with a freeing pre-adult state.<sup>140</sup>

Most of all, however, it is the LM's investment in the new kinds of romance that renders it a female connoisseurial institution. As Mayo has shown, the LM is the first and most prolific publisher of romance, and especially Gothic romance, in the pre-*Blackwood's* period. This is the primary difference between the LM and the *Gentleman's*. The contrast between the two magazines is therefore related to the contrast I am drawing in my dissertation, between classic connoisseurship, the province of men, and that of fiction connoisseurship, the province of women. The GM is closely associated with antiquarianism; its Romantic-era editor, John Nichols (who becomes editor in 1783), is himself a member of the Society of Antiquaries. Thus, when a correspondent sends the LM an illustration of a newly discovered old coin, the editor suggests that such a letter is more properly sent to the GM (March 1797).<sup>141</sup> Fiction is occasionally reviewed in the

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<sup>139</sup> The "first attempts" formulation was common in the yearly "address to correspondents," in which editors presented their magazine as an intellectual and artistic space where young writers could see their works in print.

*The Lady's Magazine* is mentioned in both Elizabeth Blower's *Maria* (1785) and Mary Charlton's *Rosella* (1799, a Female Quixote novel discussed in the satires chapter) as the place to which two ridiculous women send their poetry. In *Rosella*, a character that is a version of the grotesque learned woman, and who has been abandoned by her husband, sends poetry detailing her sufferings to the LM.

<sup>140</sup> It is true, however, that many of these puzzles were love letters of sorts: thus, an adolescent boy might send in a puzzle to which the answers were the girls at a nearby boarding school, etc. One thinks of the puzzle Austen's Emma and Harriet solve together, written and read as a form of flirtation.

GM but not published there in this period. On the other hand, the LM publishes both older fictional forms like the oriental tale, the moral tale, and the sensibility novel, as well as newer ones like the neo-chivalric romance, the Gothic fragment, and the Gothic romance. In the 1790s, the era on which I will focus my discussion of the LM's fiction, the modern romance – in all its subgenres, though particularly the Gothic – fills its pages. The LM is also one of the main venues for romance in translation, from *Letters of Aza*, translated by Clara Reeve for the magazine in the 1780s, to translations of La Fontaine, Florian, and Tressan in the 1790s. Most importantly, François Guillaume Ducray-Duminil's roman noir *Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods*, an influence on Radcliffe, was first translated here starting in 1791. In the 1790s, the height of the Gothic novel's popularity, the LM serializes various original Gothic novels: *De Courville Castle: A Romance* (1795, by E. F., "a Young Lady"), *The Two Castles: A Romance* (EF's 1797 follow-up to *De Courville*), *The Monks and the Robbers: A Tale* (1794; 1798-1805, by several authors, including A. Percy and perhaps Mary Meeke, as it was dropped and taken up again by various writers), *Emily Veronne; or, the Perfidious Friend. A Novel* (1799-1802, unidentified writer, but the editor refers to her as "our fair correspondent," who follows this novel with another, *The Elville Family Secrets: A Novel*, which she drags out from 1804-1810), and perhaps most notably George Moore's *Grasville Abbey: A Romance*. (1793-1795), which would go on to be published as a separate volume and emerge as one of the most popular Gothic novels of the period. (These represent only the novels published in full; others are begun but dropped by the writers, including *The Forest of Alstone: An Original Tale, Founded on Fact*, by E. Caroline Litchfield, *The Castle on the Clift; A Romance*, by Juvenis, and *The Castle of La Roche: A Tale*, by a Lady.) As such, the LM encourages the kind of connoisseurship I have been analyzing: one that is both excessively dedicated to the realm of fiction as against a "real" world of domestic responsibilities and knowingly detached in its subsequent sophistication about the mode.

Most notably, readers of the LM would develop their connoisseurial understanding through the practice of what we now call fan fiction, and what I call reading-writing. I thus fundamentally disagree with Mayo's assessment that much of this LM amateur fiction constitutes "the daydreams of school girls."<sup>142</sup> Rather, the active reading of the female connoisseur that I have been tracing is transformed into imitative writing. As Jacqueline Pearson, one of the few critics to have looked closely at the LM, explains: "The evidence suggests that 'women liked to read what women had written,' and the *Lady's Magazine* fostered this sense of community by eliding the roles of writer and reader, encouraging writers to contribute poems, letters and fiction, so that a hierarchical distinction between readers and writers is replaced by a looser and less hierarchical community of literary men and women" (97). The LM thus encourages correspondents to send in their original compositions from almost its inception, and by the late 1770s this becomes one of its most prized features. Further, while periodicals had relied on the contributions of correspondents, in the form of letters and short narratives, from their emergence, the LM transforms the practice by featuring fiction imitating the

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<sup>141</sup> "The drawing of the coin found near Dover Castle would, perhaps, be more acceptable to the Gentleman's Magazine. It will be returned if desired"

<sup>142</sup> *English Novel in the Magazines*, 329.

latest experiments in genre from amateur writers and by guiding this practice in a way that suggests a writing tutorial. Its reliance on correspondents' fiction is advertised by the LM as a draw: "in point of *original Writing* we have nothing to fear from a Comparison with our Contemporaries" (April 1789). Much of the appeal is that in this era of lax copyright and reprinting, these reader-written works were unique to the LM – that is, until they were reprinted by other miscellanies, as many LM romances were. As Mayo points out, the inability to enforce periodical copy right is one main reason periodicals like the LM did not think it was worth paying for contributions (160). But the appeal of amateur writing also lies, as Pearson notes, in the idea that this work was written by readers, by fellow romance aficionados. This would lend reader-writing the sense that it was an ongoing conversation about genre in which one too could participate, a club like the Society of the Dilettanti. Furthermore, the LM harnesses the mania for seeing one's own work in print and thereby imagining oneself a genius that Sarah Green decries in her introduction to her romance reading woman satire *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810). As I argue in my chapter on the Female Quixote, the marketplace emerges as the route to the opportunities promised by romance. While the LM does not pay its contributors – and they must even cover the postage for their correspondence – it offers them the opportunity of seeing their own work in circulation in the marketplace. That amateur writers pride themselves on seeing their work in print is a convention of eighteenth-century periodical publishing, but the LM harnesses this urge for literary involvement more aggressively than other magazines and helps shape the reader-writers' sense of themselves as beginning authors. A few correspondents do go on to have their work published outside the LM (and some of the romances of the LM are published as separate volumes, both by the publisher of the LM and others), but the LM is not a reputation-maker more broadly. Its importance is rather in its presenting itself as a creator of aesthetic subjects who both read and write creatively. While the LM cannot enforce professional standards such as timely submissions of regular installments (a big problem, as many contributors stopped sending in installments after a few months and left many unfinished novels in the LM), it can threaten the status of correspondents as authors by discontinuing their works. The editors must constantly prod correspondents to act professionally – to submit installments on time, to submit longer installments that advance the story, to finish writing the novels they have begun, etc. – but must do so by relying on their own sense of themselves as in-demand authors. Thus, the LM continually reminds tardy correspondents that readers are clamoring for their next installments and warns that they are disappointing their public. Like the modern Harlequin publishing house, then, which encourages its female readers to think of themselves as possible authors – even offering writing tutorials and consultations with established authors on their website – the LM is an institution that closely joins reading to writing.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> An analogous twenty-first century phenomenon that seems to be on the rise is that of fan fiction, which is written for a smaller community for free, being picked up by publishers and transforming the writers into highly-paid authors. The most famous such instance is the recent *Fifty Shades of Gray* trilogy, by E. L. James (the initials add some mystery, though one would think the publishers would advertise the writer as a woman writing about women for women) which began as *Twilight* fan fiction. To have her work published as a separate novel, James only changed the names of the characters and some details so as to not violate copyright and to render the work appealing even to those who had not read *Twilight*. But electronic versions of the

### ***The Lady's Magazine* as Interrogator of Femininity and Promoter of "Female Genius"**

As with the Female Quixote as connoisseur, the story of female connoisseurship in the LM must begin with the figure of the learned woman as well as with the sensibility valorization of the aesthetic woman. The LM takes up the same concerns as the Female Quixote novel, but does so not through the utopian promise of romance but through the more prosaic one of the woman's literary magazine.<sup>144</sup> The LM thus sets itself up from the beginning as a place for specifically female achievement. In an October 1781 message, the editor claims that the LM is "a work in which females only figure, and to which the composition of females only are invited." That this is a general mission statement rather than literally true is transparent; male writing and male correspondents are an obvious part of the magazine. Such a pronouncement, then, is only a conventionalized reiteration, similar to the many essays skeptical of fiction published in a magazine that is full of fiction. The board of LM editors is also fictionally figured as a "Parliament" of women which chooses the works to be published, thereby suggesting a parallel world of female authority. The idea of the LM as an exclusively female space is reinforced by the allegorical neo-classical frontispieces decorating the first issues of every year, which always feature a woman or a group of women either receiving the LM itself from a figure representing genius or participating in a learned or artistic pursuit. Corinne's crowning at the Capitol would have fit in well here as a tableau of female achievement. The LM here builds on a long tradition in eighteenth-century periodicals of celebrating women's achievement and championing female education: "Women's need for greater access to education is a recurrent theme of periodical editors throughout the century."<sup>145</sup> Magazines run by women, like Frances Brooke's *Old Maid* and Charlotte Lennox's *The Ladies Museum* (1760-1), were even more keen to promote female education. As Italia shows, the eidolon of Lennox's *Ladies Museum*, "the Trifler," is an ambitious young woman for whom "writing forms an alternative to love" (194) and who is snubbed by her mother in favor of her prettier sister. Like the typical learned woman and Female Quixote, "the Trifler" has a "desire of Fame" and addresses herself particularly to fellow women.<sup>146</sup> Some periodicals aimed at women, like the *Athenian*,

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original fan fiction document still circulate among readers. James has also announced plans to write a how-to book on writing professional erotica, showing that the LM model, taken up by Harlequin, continues in women's fiction. While women are chided for supposedly giving themselves up to a ridiculous fantasy, the readers' wish to write such erotica themselves, and for profit, suggests that one can wish to master conventions even while supposedly mastered by a fantasy.

<sup>144</sup> In my thinking about "prosaic" genres, I owe a debt to my graduate school colleague and dissertation writing group co-member Austin Grossman, who made the point in a discussion about Dorothy Wordsworth's diary versus William Wordsworth "epic on the self" that the diary is already a less exalted genre.

<sup>145</sup> Italia, 178.

<sup>146</sup> Lennox also serializes her new novel *Harriet and Sophia*, focused on sisters who are opposites – Sophia is learned and Harriet frivolous – in her *Ladies Museum*. Anticipating the pairing in



even include difficult mathematics and physics problems as regular features.<sup>147</sup> As these examples suggest, the LM does not stand out for its focus on female improvement and education in the history of female magazines; rather, it follows and builds on a more general trend. What distinguishes the LM is the way its mission of female improvement is linked to its championing of female reading and writing, or, more accurately, reading-writing.

The LM's celebration of female education and female achievement must be acknowledged as disciplinary as well as emboldening, however. Developing the conservative implications of Wollstonecraftian arguments in *Vindication*, the LM promotes female education as a counter to sexual dangers and as a shield of female virtue.<sup>148</sup> This disciplinary mission is represented in the allegorical frontispiece to the 1779 January issue (which comes with an explanation). The attached essay explains that the three young ladies depicted in the frontispiece have just escaped from a glamorous but immodest female figure, Dissipation, who had lured them into a dangerous landscape of illicit activity (one imagines the prostitutes taking Evelina off the right path in Vauxhall). The frontispiece itself depicts the ladies approaching Apollo, their rescuer, who is accompanied by Athena, goddess of wisdom, and Diana, goddess of chastity. Apollo is handing the ladies a volume of the LM itself, which he pronounces "the composition of females as remarkable for their virtues and mental acquisitions, as for their personal charms." In showing learning as a counter to social "dissipation," the LM is participating in the sensibility valorization of education as a counter to a too-social femininity – i.e. vanity, envy, frivolity. Though a modern reader may perceive this tableau as ridiculously didactic, it suggests more progressively that women have been saved from superficiality by education and brought into a serious realm of learning. Thus, in a similar frontispiece from another year, an adolescent girl wandering in a public place is pulled in two directions, on one side by a woman dubbed "Folly" holding playing cards and on the other by a woman holding the LM, another conventional sensibility scenario of how the LM acts to save women from typically female dangers with the aid of reading and of education.<sup>149</sup> (These are all variations on the "choice of Hercules" motif, a popular emblem for painters in the period.)

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Corinne, the serious Sophia, educated by a "male mentor" is disliked by her mother, "who prefers her elegant and coquettish sister" (Italia, 197). Italia points out that this mirrors the Trifler's own situation, so that the world of the women's periodical mirrors the novelistic category of female types (both mirroring societal types). Further, both figures are reader-writers: "Like . . . the Trifler, Sophia is a writer as well as a reader" (197).

<sup>147</sup> Math problems were features of other magazines as well, like, for example, the *Town and Country*.

<sup>148</sup> Showing the range of points of view in the LM, Godwin's own more cynical view of education as indoctrination was published in the 1790s. One strength of the miscellany is its ability to encompass such differing positions.

<sup>149</sup> As Mayo explains, the LM's casting of itself as monitor is related to its following the tradition of essay-serials like the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, journals of manners in their own period and the approved reading for sensibility heroines in the LM's time. As Mayo notes, this didactic tradition persists for a century in the formally conservative periodical genre, so that much of the early LM

The LM specifically ties its mission as a periodical to the social mission to educate women in the editor's yearly address for 1787, in which he claims that "polite learning" is crucial to forming a morally and socially adjusted individual and that such learning was limited to men until Steele and Addison extended this mission to women. The editor then, as often in these yearly prefaces, connects women's education to social progress, casting education as inoculation: "[it was] as if Heaven had ordained, that the same Age which was to secure the natural Rights of Beauty by the Art of Inoculation, should likewise introduce the Means which communicate the far more important Beauty and more durable Embellishments of the Mind." The LM, like the Female Quixote tradition, then, argues not only for the capacity of certain women but of all women; female education is a social program that will benefit all. At the same time, unlike the utopian learned woman tradition mocked by Molière and the related Female Quixote tradition, which champions the power of an idealized realm of the aesthetic, the LM is more conservative about its promises. Some of its pieces on female education tend to advocate an education that fits women to their social roles, especially their domestic roles as wives and mothers.<sup>150</sup> Yet balancing these more conservative essays on education are selections from Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Macauley Graham, Godwin, Vicesimus Knox, and even the editor of the magazine (who defends a classical education for some women), all more progressive figures who extend both the subject matter and purpose of a female education.

The LM thus generally supports a Wollstonecraftian view of female education, which, while containing some conservative implications, is generally regarded as a basis of feminism. Thus, while Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* focuses on the social, rather than purely individual, benefits of educating women, it more progressively challenges the essentialism of gender. Even before publishing excerpts from *Vindication*, the LM prepares the stage for Wollstonecraft's argument by publishing articles and excerpts that anticipate her reasoning. As early as January 1771, "Lucinda" writes in to the LM with a proto-Wollstonecraftian argument, countering Rousseau's model of female education and using his own theories against him. "Lucinda" cleverly appropriates Rousseau's ideas about the corrupting power of society for her own feminist purposes, claiming, as Wollstonecraft was to do, that women are not naturally weak and frivolous but have been rendered so by society – as she puts it, these are the

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is full of essays taken from essay-serials like the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and the later *Rambler* and *Adventurer*, or of writings in that style.

<sup>150</sup> Thus, a typical article from the December 1780 LM states that women do not possess men's strength of understanding and so are not meant to be leaders, but that they nevertheless should be educated because they are the first educators of sons. If one looks more closely, however, keeping in mind both the capaciousness of magazines and the generic feature which renders magazines as a forum for debate rather than for strict ideological indoctrination, what emerges is that the LM features as many progressive as conservative messages. The selection referenced above (Dec 1780) is from a translation of Fénelon, a well-accepted and more conservative source on female education. This shows that the LM was in the business of recycling established texts on femininity, even more conservative ones, if they could at all be incorporated into their vision of female accomplishment. The now old-fashioned, yet still pro-female statements of the likes of Fénelon and of essay-serials were thus part of the miscellany.

"consequences of our bad education." In May of 1787, an excerpt from an anonymous treatise on education similarly makes the proto-Wollstonecraftian argument that girls are educated to be superficial and to focus excessively on their looks. The LM's yearly address for 1790 joins in the Wollstonecraftian rhetoric: while making the usual assertions about the LM as the "Repository for the first attempts as well as the more mature exertions of the Female Pen," it proceeds to connect women's success as writers with the "improvement in female education." In the August 1790 issue, the LM features an excerpt from another proto-Wollstonecraftian figure, Mrs. Macauley Graham (Catherine Macaulay), who echoes "Lucinda" from almost twenty years before in holding Rousseau responsible for women's bad education. Anticipating Wollstonecraft quite closely, Mrs. Graham critiques Rousseau for regarding women with the eye of a sensualist and argues that women have been educated to take pleasure in such subjugation. More so, she argues that typical female education does not provide any sense of self-worth aside from the power of pleasing men. In 1792, the LM then features two excerpts from Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, which similarly focus on the weakening nature of taught femininity.<sup>151</sup> The pieces on education continue into the 1790s, echoing both the Wollstonecraftian idea that the false sensibility encouraged in women is corrupting and her related one that such femininity is not innate.<sup>152</sup>

The LM itself is as fascinated with interrogating femininity as is this larger Wollstonecraftian discourse it excerpts, though it often carries out such an investigation through genres and rhetorical forms more associated with didacticism. Thus, while the dominant figure of femininity in the romance is that of the barrier-breaking heroine, the LM features many different versions of femininity that often counter each other. As stated above, such an open discourse is characteristic of the magazine genre, which sets itself up as a timely debate. Like women's magazines to this day, the LM gains much of its energy from the constant mystery that femininity represents; it is a category up for debate in a way that masculinity is not.<sup>153</sup> Thus, the LM calls upon supposed experts on femininity – from Fénelon, to Knox, to Lord Kames – who join the chorus of men who write in repeatedly to hold forth to women on their own natures. This streak of

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<sup>151</sup> The latter caution about over-romanticism is very much in tune with one of the clichés of the late eighteenth century, repeated ad nauseam by the LM: that women need to control their sensibility and need to distinguish between real sensibility, which leads to true compassion, and false one, which is a means of winning distinction. That Wollstonecraft says much the same thing, equating false sensibility with a bad education, shows how the sensibility discourse could support both progressive and conservative messages – an argument I develop in more detail in my discussion of the pro and anti-Female Quixote traditions.

<sup>152</sup> Even the more conservative writer of the essay-serial the *Looker-On*, who had been published in the LM calling for an education that will make women better mothers, echoes Wollstonecraft in decrying the fashionable education of the day and its hurtful recommendation of a sedentary lifestyle for women. Similarly, Vicesimus Knox, in an excerpt called "The Literary Education of Women," while maintaining the class status quo by claiming that "the literary education of women ought indisputably to be varied according to their fortunes and expectations," allows that a rich and intelligent woman may be educated in the classics, citing history as proof that it is possible for women to be as learned as men.

<sup>153</sup> See the discussion of the woman's magazine as a genre in *Women's Worlds*.

didacticism comes from both the essay-serial and the conduct manual tradition. The LM also draws on the concurrent fashion of the moral tale – a form that allows an opening up of possibilities within a closed didactic frame – in which Richardsonian sensibility is joined to a more conservative tradition of cautionary fiction. As Mayo shows, Marmontel's *Moral Tales* is one of the most excerpted works in the LM, though his moral tales are unusually sophisticated and ironic explorations of manner.<sup>154</sup> The didacticism of many of the LM's pieces is similarly more complex than the category "didacticism" suggests. For instance, moral tales in the LM are often accompanied by suggestive and mysterious engravings that seem only tentatively connected to the story. This is because engravings were more expensive than the stories they accompanied and were often commissioned separately from writings that could be obtained free. As such, the disjunction between tale and illustration works to transform the straightforward didacticism of many of the moral tales. Didactic tales can also act as explorations of various scenarios. Though they usually begin and end with a statement of the moral, these tales put into play various forms of transgression that are explored before the characters are punished.<sup>155</sup> Most of the time, the moral tale is a straightforward sensibility narrative – with the literary pleasure focused on the sentimental situation – with a moral only added on as an afterthought. In some cases, like "Julia; or, the Clandestine Marriage. A Novel" (which is actually the length of a modern short story), a transgression may even be forgiven within a larger moral lesson about the dangers of such behavior. While critics who emphasize the LM's didacticism are supported in their argument by the many insipid and moralizing tales found in every issue, a closer and more imaginative look at these tales shows how they could be read as more open-ended entertainment under the cover of closed didacticism.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Mayo, *English Novels in the Magazines*, 376. See also Mayo's larger discussion of Marmontel's stories and their irony and sophistication, 376-9.

<sup>155</sup> Reading so many moral tales in the LM has drawn my attention to their structure such that I now recognize how much work first and last sentences do in short compositions, like the tale or the anecdote or the chapter. As an instance of how the moral tale structure can close off the more radical possibilities opened up in a work, I propose the chapter focusing on Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre*. Helen is set up as a martyr to a cruel and stupid system, and her "carelessness" comes to signal her visionary nature. Brontë pulls back from the full condemnation of the chapter, however, in her last sentence – "Such is the imperfect nature of man! such spots are there on the disc of the clearest planet; and eyes like Miss Scatcherd's can only see those minute defects, and are blind to the full brightness of the orb" (67) – in which she sums up the lesson as one of human pettiness rather than institutionalized persecution. While the condemnations stands, and Helen's characterization as a deity ("orb") supports the larger argument, I also like to think that Brontë is deploying ironic understatement strategically. In any case, a careful reading of moral tales teaches one about argument, about the importance of thesis and concluding statements, as well as about how signaling obedience via such structures leaves a writer free to pursue a more complex and even radical exploration within the work – hence Brontë. I cannot claim that readers of the LM were reading moral tales in this against the grain way, but they would have at least become familiar with a genre as conventional and stylized as the Gothic such that perhaps they could gain some distance from the moral. (That is, the moral tale does not naturalize its ideology so that one can recognize the moral and pick it apart.)

Another popular magazine subgenre that interrogates femininity and that the LM frequently features is the anthropological essay or short story. The "how women live around the world piece" is a standard of women's magazines, but, as has been recognized, can act as much to foster complacency about one's culture as to prompt one to think critically. Thus, the LM features its share of Orientalist pieces, like an account of the seraglio at Constantinople (June 1798) or a denunciation of the practice of suttee (April 1796, in a piece sensationistically called "Barbarous Practices of the Hindoos").<sup>157</sup> While serving in some ways as examples to bolster the supposed superiority of British culture, both the seraglio and suttee, as we know from their feminist deployments by Wollstonecraft and Charlotte Brontë, can be made use of to rethink British culture's own participation in similar practices and to challenge its supposed comparative feminism.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Despite its complex didactic tradition, the LM admittedly serves as a forum for men to lecture women, suggesting that femininity is a problem that must be addressed and managed. (The alternating voices of men and women also enacts a lively battle of the sexes in the pages of the magazine, so that female readers can have satisfaction in seeing women's worth defended. Both the editor and correspondents take on this female champion role.) Thus, one male correspondent, T. C. Lacey, submits short moral tales and poems throughout the 1790s, most of which reinforce female obedience. The LM does not resort to the more sensationalist scare tactics of the LMM – such as stories about lost reputations that lead to suicide – which itself emerges as progressive. When one thinks of Polly Honeycombe's defiance of "fear" and "shame," one must remember the continual emotional assault that even a fairly progressive periodical like the LM makes on women (applying to shame), and the more terrifying tactics of the LMM (more focused on fear). In this they follow Rousseau, who had admonished educators to make disciplinary use of girls' tendency to care more about what others think. Yet it is tempting to read such continual discipline as a sign that women were actually acting out, that the dreaded rebellions were constant. Whatever the case, the ubiquity of moral stories in the LM does not point only to the simple the interpretation that women were subjected to constant indoctrination. Rather, these moral tales, which needed to be entertaining enough for a popular magazine, act as further explorations of the limits of female nature and behavior, and provide titillating accounts of what would happen if a woman were driven into (or more often fooled into) rebelling. Such moral tales imagine alternative identities for women, which is one of the aspects of the woman's magazine more generally – thus, articles focused on different types of women, spanning the clichéd spectrum of prostitute (a figure featured as an object of pity in the sensibility LM and of warning in the more crude LMM) to nun.

<sup>157</sup> An example of an Orientalist text that explicitly tells British women how fortunate they are and how much more freedom they have than women from other cultures is this piece from *Character and Manners of the Modern Persians* (1791): "The women in Persia, as in all other Mahomedan nations, after marriage, are little better than slaves to their husbands. . . . Thrice happy ye, my fair and amiable countrywomen, born and educated in a land of freedom . . . . Rejoice that these blessings are afforded you!" The writer does go on to say, however, that "[t]he Persian ladies . . . during the days of courtship, have in their turn pre-eminence; a mistress making no scruple of commanding her lover to stand all day long at the door of her father's house, repeating verses in praise of her beauty and accomplishments."

<sup>158</sup> Wollstonecraft sees British education as akin to preparing women for the seraglio, while Brontë critiques the underlying tones of both suttee and seraglio in Rochester's courtship rhetoric. (As has also been noted by critics, Bertha's self-immolation is also a feminist turn on suttee.)

(And, as has been recognized and as I explain in my *Corinne* chapter, Staël also engages in this tradition, setting up Italy as a land more welcoming to unconventional women than the supposedly more progressive Britain.)

The LM's deployment of such pieces, in keeping with its popular formula of presenting various points of view so as to foster a debate, both plays on the self-congratulatory and reassuring idea that British women have it best and also challenges this view with visions of societies and historical periods in which women are more powerful and free. (The vignettes from other historical eras and other societies are of course similar in their relativizing roles. Often the two are combined in the figure of the classical heroine, a legacy we see, again, in the foreign and historically-inflected *Corinne*.) What is most important for my argument is that the LM's presentation of such different possibilities for women works with its project of interrogating femininity rather than indoctrinating its readers into one form of it. Thus, the 1780 LM publishes excerpts from Captain Cook's travels and includes a plate of a Tahitian woman; while this depiction of foreign femininity is from a European point of view, it opens up other forms of femininity and fashion in the LM. In the December 1786 issue, the LM publishes a surprisingly balanced piece on women in Cairo, which notes that though women may be more confined there, their clothes are not as confining as those of British women. In February of 1793, the LM publishes "Azakia, a Canadian" story, focusing on Huron society. While this story has much in common with the LM staple of the oriental tale, on older sensibility and didactic genre that only superficially engages historical and cultural comparisons, it is more truly interested in cultural difference, particularly as it looks to Native Canadian society rather than to the traditional East. The Azakia of the title is Huron, a society depicted as one where unmarried women can have multiple lovers and where divorce is much easier than in Britain. As such, though Azakia is already married, her society's divorce laws allow her to marry the Frenchman whose life she saves. Though such a story begins to suggest a freer life for women, it is ultimately less progressive than this account of it sounds; it is the French man who pursues Azakia even as she remains devoted to her husband whom she believes dead. It is only after her French pursuer finds and saves her husband – whose gratitude is expressed in his "giving" Azakia to his French savior – that the divorce can take place. In another way, then, while at first seeming to suggest a Utopian society of greater female freedom, "Azakia" eventually reveals a society much like Britain, where women are exchanged between men. While ultimately subsumed under traditional ideas about gender, such pieces could open up avenues of comparison. One LM piece that extends this comparative and distancing effect particularly effectively is an essay that historicizes female life, "The Lady's Lawyer." This piece from February 1790 explains the history of dowries at some length, demystifying an aspect of female life and situating gender relations within a changing history. Such a piece, then, educates women about the way that gender itself varies with history as well as culture.<sup>159</sup>

The LM further performs a historicizing and educatory role by teaching women about their learned women forebears. Mirroring the heroine tradition associated with Scudéry as well as the heroine-obsession of eighteenth-century women's literature, the LM features extraordinary women from its inception. Thus, in the 1770s, the LM

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<sup>159</sup> Modern feminist magazines will often feature similarly historicizing pieces about traditional aspects of female life, like the engagement ring.

launches a series called "Female Biography" in which both "ancient" and "modern" notable women are to be celebrated. One particularly striking instance occurs in the June 1771 issue, in which the "ancient" woman celebrated is the Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia, whose story focuses many of aspects of Female Quixotism that I have been exploring.<sup>160</sup> The biographer explains that she was educated by her father

in the most abstruse sciences, which are reputed the peculiar province of men, as requiring too much labour and application for the delicate constitution of women a notion which can proceed only from vulgar prejudices; since all ages and all nations furnish numerous examples of women who have excelled in all the liberal arts and sciences, and in every accomplishment that dignifies the human nature.

The writer goes on to cite contemporary accounts of Hypatia's achievements: as a wonder of Alexandria, she drew visitors from around the world to hear her lectures and learn from her. As such, she is an obvious precursor of the Corinne figure. Hypatia's connection with the learned city of Alexandria also reminds us of Arabella's wish in the *Female Quixote* to visit Alexandria and there to meet other learned women. Like the story of the Female Quixote, however, Hypatia's life is cautionary; her prominence and involvement in politics render her a scapegoat, and she is tortured and murdered by a group of men. Her murder is recounted in some detail and serves to suggest the price the aspiring woman may pay. Exemplifying the cyclical nature of magazine discourse, Hypatia returns in eight years in an essay in the March 1779 LM. This time, however, her story is pitched more precisely as a cautionary tale rather than as a protest against misogyny. In this instance, her story is a stand-alone essay by a male writer, who begins the piece in the way of all moral stories of the period, with a thesis stating the moral:

Man, when secluded from society, is not a more solitary being than the woman who leaves the duties of her own sex to invade the privileges of ours. She seems, in such circumstances, like one in banishment; she appears like a neutral being between the sexes; and though she may have the admiration of both, she finds true happiness from neither.<sup>161</sup>

Some critics perceive a decided arc in the run of the LM from 1770 to 1832 in which the increasing separate spheres ideology can be seen emerging.<sup>162</sup> While this may be true for

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<sup>160</sup> Hypatia is now also the name of a feminist academic philosophy journal, showing the continuing power of representative notable women.

<sup>161</sup> His formulation is striking: a rebellious woman is like a marooned man, a Robinson Crusoe. Or perhaps the figure is like a hermit "disgusted" with society, a comparison that suggests the Romantic possibilities of the comparison: a woman who rebels against social roles is like the Romantic rebel who rejects society.

<sup>162</sup> Isobel Grundy, in her introduction to the Adam Matthew microfilm series of the LM, summarizes the thinking on this supposed emergence of domestic ideology seen to emerge in the LM. She notes that "In its early days it saw no reason to constrain the education or activities of

the post-1805 LM, my research does not find a clear arc, but rather a cyclical movement in which multiple positions co-exist. Thus, the earlier LM may place more focus on the learned woman, but it also includes more domestic tips, while the 1790s LM sees an increase in fashion coverage but also a rise in reader-authored fiction. So too this later essay on Hypatia (now spelled Hypasia) is both cautionary and celebratory. Much of the essay praises Hypatia's learning and her virtue, and condemns the wicked men who use her as a scapegoat. The writer's conclusion encapsulates both these points of view: "This great reputation which she was so justly possessed of was at last, however, the occasion of her ruin. . . . Such was the end of Hypasia, the glory of her own sex, and the astonishment of ours." This anecdote about Hypatia's life may seem like a cautionary piece but also serves as a condemnation of misogyny and a celebration of female potential.

More than classical heroines, the LM celebrates modern notable women, particularly authors. The LM regularly features articles about female authors and selections from their works, mapping out a canon of female authorship and creating an anthology of female literature. In the 1770s, for example, the LM regularly publishes short excerpts from women's writing, titling the feature "Select Pieces of Literature in Prose and Verse from Select Female Hands." In 1778, the LM prints multiple excerpts from Mrs. Thicknesse's *Sketches of the Lives and Writing of the Ladies of France*, familiarizing readers with the French legacy of literary women. (French literature was to be central to the LM up to the late 1790s, when its popularity was rivaled by that of German literature.) Ann Thicknesse's work, published in 1778, itself participates in the tradition of celebrating learned women. Dedicating the work to Elizabeth Carter, Thicknesse describes her mission as that of showing British women that they too can achieve intellectual distinction if not held back by an inadequate education. Thicknesse's claims in the introduction to her work are thus similar to those the LM itself often makes or implies:

If women are thought to possess minds less capable of solid reflection than men they owe this conjecture entirely to their own vanity, and erroneous mode of education. Whilst the toilet is made the chief object of their care, and engrosses all their attention, no wonder they find so little time or inclination to improve themselves in the study of science, or literature. . . . That Nature is not in fault, we can prove, by setting forth so many examples of women who have made a considerable figure in the republic of letters. But it is in FRANCE that we must look for such uncommon genius among the Ladies. . . . I therefore claim no other

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women. By 1825, however, it lamented that "Women have completely abandoned all attempt to shine in the political horizon, and now only seek to exercise their virtues in domestic retirement." Grundy continues "At about the same time the Political and Foreign News content of the magazine also disappear and the importance of personal appearance (dress, diet and complexion) and domesticity are shown by the growth of these sections." Grundy notes, however, that "the picture is more complex than that. Numerous counter-examples can be produced to show that the cult of appearances was already present from the outset . . . and the growing emphasis on domestic science is more to do with the expansion of the audience of the magazine beyond those with servants at their beck and call."

[http://www.ampltd.co.uk/digital\\_guides/women\\_advising\\_women\\_prt2\\_3\\_4/pub\\_notes\\_prt4.aspx](http://www.ampltd.co.uk/digital_guides/women_advising_women_prt2_3_4/pub_notes_prt4.aspx)



merit in this performance than that of having the honor of making known to my country-women some of their own sex, of another nation, who have rendered themselves, by their superior talents . . . well worthy of the imitation of such who have abilities or inclination to follow their example.<sup>163</sup> (iii-iv)

Representing the LM's larger tactics, Thicknesse interrogates femininity through comparing women in different societies and concludes that it is education that renders women weak (that is, the ideology of femininity which stresses vanity as the expense of intellectual seriousness) rather than innate sexual difference. The LM's April 1778 selection from Thicknesse's work discusses the sixteenth-century learned woman Louise L'Abbe, who is celebrated not only for her writing but also for her service in the army; women could enter the male sphere temporarily, it seems, if in support of an accepted value like patriotism. Thicknesse also discusses L'Abbe's fame as salon hostess, though not without raising the traditional critique of female intellectual gatherings in her criticism of L'Abbe's romantic involvement with some of her salon guests; even in more progressive discourses, chastity remains central as a female virtue.<sup>164</sup>

Most notably, Madame de Scudéry herself, the author originally associated with Female Quixotism, is discussed in one of the excerpts from Thicknesse as an example of the professional female writer. Scudéry had appeared in the LM before, when parts of her *Philoxipe and Policrite* were excerpted; while Arabella's love of her seems old-fashioned, we are reminded that she remained an important example of the learned and literary woman. Thicknesse's approach to Scudéry is notably historicizing: she is presented as a working writer who "composed" out of "necessity" rather than "taste." While this is partly a way to excuse her long and sometimes uninspired romances, which Thicknesse claims she had to extend at such length for profit, it is also a way to further historicize female experience and to show a female professional as much as a female artist. Thicknesse further educates the reader about the historical and aesthetic parameters of Scudéry's work by explaining that her romances were secret histories of her contemporaries. While many profiles (Alison Adburgham's word for these) in the LM are of the more moralizing kind, they often speak frankly to women about the various historical circumstances of female identity. As such, when Thicknesse reports that Scudéry wrote romances because they were "in vogue," she is helping female readers reflect on and understand their own contemporary marketplace, with its similar vogue for romances (albeit of a different kind).

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<sup>163</sup> iii-iv.

<sup>164</sup> Like other LM articles, Thicknesse's joins a relatively progressive class attitude to the feminist celebration of female achievement. We are told that L'Abbe was looked down upon by many ladies because she was a merchant's wife, but, Thicknesse says, what really angered the ladies was that L'Abbe wrote satirical verses about them. This sensibility sense of gender and class justice, while far from revolutionary, is an important part of the LM's support of the modern cultural marketplace as allowing some mobility via education and personal achievement. In Dec 1779, thus, the LM publishes a letter from a correspondent discussing the working class poet Mary Leapor, whose poetry had been featured in the magazine earlier.

The LM is thus intertwined with modern literary culture and helps its female readers understand and negotiate that culture. From its inception, the LM claims to be advised by and in close contact with renowned female writers (Jan 1778). Thus, in April 1783, the editor claims to have consulted with Hannah Cowley herself in his choice for which part of her play *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* to excerpt in the magazine. The editor also reports that the LM commissioned an engraving of a scene from the play to insert as an honor to Cowley. This is not only a way for the LM to claim its legitimacy and literary pedigree, but also to present itself as an institution which, in its association with notable women, supports female achievement. The LM does not present the full spectrum of female writing from the period, however, partly because of its commitment to a more canonical literary tradition, which excludes Minerva Press authors. While the LM's policies as to its curatorial process can only be gleaned from its contents (and the claims of the few critics who discuss the LM, like Mayo and Adburgham, seem to rest largely on the same internal evidence I have), it seems that the omission of Minerva Press and similar authors is due to the LM's intellectual and moral seriousness. As Deborah McLeod has shown in one of the few modern studies of the Minerva, William Lane's press was reviled and mocked not for its risqué nature or Gothic excesses but for its syrupy sensibility, associated with an indiscriminating female readership. The LM, on the other hand, while not as intellectually rigorous as the GM, allied itself with the learned and literary woman tradition sketched above.<sup>165</sup> (One exception may be the prolific Minerva author Mary Meeke, who may have been one of the writers of *Monks and Robbers*, as Mayo and others have speculated.) Another reason Minerva Press authors may not have been included is that they were not necessarily known as entities separate from the press, and were thus not celebrated literary figures. The critical periodicals, particularly the leading *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review*, similarly employed a two-tier system, in which serious authors, including female authors like Radcliffe, Inchbald, and Mary Hays, were given full reviews at the front of the periodical while minor works, often from the Minerva, were given capsule reviews.<sup>166</sup> Such a system attests to the separation of literary fiction from that which would develop into both genre fiction and mass fiction. While the LM, along with the Minerva, helps build the genre conventionality associated with genre fiction, its discussion of the literary scene focuses on critically acclaimed and established female authors.<sup>167</sup> Thus, the reader-writers base their own attempts on the works of well-regarded authors like Radcliffe, Walpole, Charlotte Smith, and Reeve – though the influence of Radcliffe imitator Regina Maria Roche, a Minerva author, is also seen.<sup>168</sup> It may also be that the LM and the Minerva are

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<sup>165</sup> It may also be that the Minerva Press, whose books, though frivolous, were expensive, was more protective of its copyright, even extending to shorter excerpts.

<sup>166</sup> This observation is based on my own research, but other critics on the periodical, such as the comprehensive Mayo, also writes on this aspect of reviews.

<sup>167</sup> The comparison to the Minerva is important, however, and more work needs to be done on the relationships between the two institutions, since both were in the midst of the new reading and publishing boom.

in competition, since they both publish fiction in imitation of the famous authors associated with a school of romance. While Minerva authors are hacks, professional writers writing to order, most LM authors are amateurs writing for free, but the resulting imitative fiction is very hard to tell apart. This is why it is often hard to tell through internal evidence whether a work was written by a hack or an amateur, so that one must rely on other evidence, including the messages from the editor to the supposed writer. Both the Minerva and the LM are in the business of providing "more" (to use David Brewer's terms) of the kind of fiction loved by readers.<sup>169</sup> For that reason, both the amateur and hack had to be familiar with the conventions of this predominating fiction.

Despite its parallel position to the Minerva, the LM is in touch with the female writing scene both through its purported connection with notable authors like Cowley and through its frequent featuring of articles about contemporary authors. Though the LM often mentions that many notable female authors support the LM, no famous authors are explicitly associated with the LM except for Cowley (through indirect patronage, if the editor is being truthful) and, strikingly, Clara Reeve. (No authors are made famous by their LM work, until Mary Mitford begins serializing *Our Village* in the 1820s. An early work by Anna Maria Porter, "The Delusions of the Heart," is first published here, but this is not a major literary event.) In respect to my argument about the importance of the romance to the female reader-writer, the most important aspect of the LM connection with Reeve is in their publication in April 1778 of part of her introduction to the *Old English Baron*, which excerpt they title, significantly, "Defence of Romances and Novels." More so, the editor writes that the introduction should entice women to read the *Old English Baron* and claims he means to excerpt a part of the novel, calling on Reeve to let him know which portion she prefers be included. He then claims a close connection to Reeve, stating that she "is no stranger to the compiler of this collection." If the LM had excerpted part of the OEB, this would have been the first Gothic novel published in a

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<sup>168</sup> The skepticism of the LM towards the Minerva was reflected back at it: Minerva authors like Mary Charlton, ignored by the LM, returned such dismissal with its own mockery. In *Rosella*, for instance, the LM is portrayed as the place for the bad poetry of the falsely learned lady, thus suggesting its association with female aspirations and pretensions.

Another reason for the lack of rapport between these two institutions invested in the new romance may be that the LM tries to offer fiction unavailable anywhere else, to develop its own literary scene. That this is a major part of the explanation seems supported by the LM's boasting of its patronage by Cowley and its attempts to form a connection with Clara Reeve, as well as by the fact that later in its run it invests in being the first to feature foreign authors in translation as well as to develop its own amateur writers. But the LM is in close contact with the contemporary scene more broadly as demonstrated by the letters from its readers, which show their familiarity with contemporary literature. Thus, correspondents often send in puzzles focusing on contemporary authors or novels. One correspondent even sends in a chart ranking contemporary female authors on various aesthetic criteria. The LM itself, however, creates its own canon of modern popular writing, which often looks quite different from later notions of popular fiction in this era. (For instance, French and German didactic-sensibility-romances seem to make up a larger percentage of the LM's fiction than of general fiction.) I shall discuss the LM's own scene of fiction below, but it is important to note that, like the Minerva, it taps into the new reading market. The LM and the Minerva are thus each exploiting the new interest in formulaic romances in their own way.

<sup>169</sup> See Brewer's *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1825*.

woman's magazine, a major event. While the OEB is never excerpted here, a few months later, Reeve's translation of *Letters of Aza* appears. This translation from Reeve continues for a couple of months, and is thereafter dropped, so that the editor has to ask Reeve to continue the piece. It is not clear what was happening behind the scenes, but after some months, a continuation of *Letters of Aza* is given, with the note "not by the author of the Old English Baron." This incident is important because it shows both the LM's proximity to real female stars of publication – and thus the proximity of their reader-writers to figures they aspire to – and its simultaneous distance from them and from formalized rules of publishing. Mayo argues that Reeve must have realized she would lose her prestige by writing for periodicals, not to mention that the LM was probably not keen to pay her for labor it could attain for free from other writers. The oft-made comparison between eighteenth-century periodicals and Internet publishing is particularly important here, then, in that in both cases getting paid well, or even at all, for writing is difficult. Nevertheless, the LM's attempt to form an alliance with Reeve shows its early investment in established female authors of the period, and especially writers of the new romance. (It was not until the 1790s that the LM joined the Gothic craze, still an early investment in this new type of romance.)<sup>170</sup>

Aside from the LM's attempts to ally itself with notable female authors of the period, it more generally features their names and presences as part of its discourse, showing its investment in the accomplished writing woman. In the November 1791 issue, for example, an article praises modern authors at the expense of earlier female writers. The article claims that while notable female writers existed in the sixteenth century, it was not until figures like Aphra Behn, Katherine Philips, and the Duchess of Newcastle that women began writing fiction that would be read more widely and beyond its period. More recent female authors have an even better chance of becoming classics, the writer claims, naming figures like Montagu, Carter, Chapone, More, and Barbauld. This is the Bluestocking group and its associates, showing even more clearly the link between the discourse of the learned woman and that of the notable literary woman. The writer celebrates figures from other genres too, naming Seward and Williams in poetry, and Burney in the novel, as accomplished female writers.<sup>171</sup> More modern and modish figures are celebrated by the LM too, both through excerpts and biographical pieces: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, and Elizabeth Inchbald are especially popular in the 1790s. Other features about female authors are even more focused on aesthetics rather than personal character. Thus, in a particularly telling feature from June 1792, an anonymous correspondent ranks contemporary female writers on what he or she calls "The Scale of Female Literary Merit." The categories are, importantly, all aesthetic: "sentiment,

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<sup>170</sup> Reeve's entanglement with the LM is recounted in detail by Mayo, so that my account draws from both his work and my own research.

<sup>171</sup> Despite some diversity in the figures, these authors are all part of the respectable sensibility canon and, as importantly, do not write for profit. Charlotte Smith, for instance, notable for her need to write to make money, is missing from the group. Smith shows up later, though, so she is not excluded from the LM.

It is also notable that Barbauld is classified with the essayists rather than with the poets, and that Williams is noted for her poetry, showing the multiple ways female authors could be classified.

imagery, animation, strength, harmony, feeling, and originality." Mary Robinson, wildly popular but not particularly celebrated for her virtue, earns the highest score. As stated above, that readers of the LM were deeply familiar with contemporary female authors and their works is also evident by their frequent inclusion as answers to puzzles. Thus, one puzzle, from September 1797, focuses on some of the most famous female writers of the period: Bennett, Smith, Radcliffe, Burney, Robinson, Reeve, Lee, Gunning, Parsons (a Minerva author, showing they were not totally excluded), Howell, Gibbs, and Inchbald. More pointedly, these female authors, celebrated for qualities like "originality" and "strength," were starting to form a new canon of female genius. It is striking, then, that a profile of Inchbald from July 1800 speaks of her as a kind of Female Quixote. (And the *Lady's Monthly Museum*, which had profiled Inchbald two years earlier, had actually referred to her as a Female Quixote.) Invoking the dubious intrepidity of the female genius, the profile recounts how Inchbald had been prompted to run away to London after reading too many novels, but excuses her behavior as the ambition of an "adventurer": "the common rules of custom and prudence are not the ordinary measure of minds bent on adventure and experiment. The difficulties to be encountered form an apology in the breast of the adventurer."<sup>172</sup>

This daring new figure of the female writer is fostered by the LM itself, as I shall show below, and represents an actualization of the ambition of the Female Quixote: to be a genius. As noted above, the LM ritually praises its reader-writers in its yearly address to readers. The LM's framing of one such instance of praise, in January of 1781, is particularly telling:

the editors were only the Gentlemen-ushers to introduce the productions of the Sex to the Notice of the Public. If any praise, if any encouragement be due, it must cocenter only in our Female Correspondents. They have abundantly convinced the world that no *Salique* law can be introduced in the *Republic of Letters*; they have not only aspired to the laurel, but have even snatched it from the temples of those who call themselves the Lords of Creation, and by their superior merit have established their claim to wear it.

The editors here compare women's exclusion from literary achievement with a historical and legal exclusion (and a French one, though, ironically, women authors, if not monarchs, thrived in France), thus with a form of exclusion that is enforced from without rather than arising "naturally." While the tone of the passage contains traces of satire – the phrase "Gentlemen ushers" suggests male indulgence of female vanity, while the term "Lords of Creation" suggests a feminist's own exaggerated phrasing – the point remains that the LM offers a venue for female writing and supports such aspirations through its articles. As such, the LM presents itself as the forum for, and a proof of, female genius, as seen in its continual praise of its female correspondents: the LM wishes to "cherish the unfolding bud of genius, and assist its development" (Jan 1793); touting itself "an instructive and amusing Repository for the dawning efforts, or more mature exertion, of Female Genius" (Supplement 1795) and the "Repository of original productions of Female Genius" (Jan 1796); including a flawed submission as "an encouragement to early

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<sup>172</sup> Admittedly, "adventurer" is a word with risqué connotations for a woman, particularly for one who had started out as an actress.

genius" (April 1796); promising that it "will still offer to Female Genius a receptacle for fugitive productions" (Jan 1799); claiming again that its purpose is "especially to afford a Repository for the productions of Female Genius, whether dawning or mature" (Jan 1800) and, again, that its point is to support "the early efforts of genius" (Jan 1801). I am not claiming that the concept of genius as used by the LM in these cases is identical to the Romantic idea of creative inspiration. The Romantic transformation of genius was still in development, but, as I shall show, one can see some of that early development here. The LM generally uses the word more loosely to mean something like great talent, though with the implications of artistic talent and sensitivity the word suggests in the 1790s. Radcliffe, for instance, repeatedly refers to many of her aesthetic heroines as possessing genius (see Jacqueline Howard's discussion of this in Norton's biography of Radcliffe). In the LM, the word also appears in its various meanings.<sup>173</sup> The deployment of the term genius by the LM does not, then, suggest the utopian and rebellious connotations it holds in the Female Quixote discourse. Nevertheless, as is evident by the term's association with the new reader-writer figures – Sarah Green claims that every aspiring writer "imagines himself a genius" – as well as with the Romantic figure of the enthusiastic aesthete (as seen in Radcliffe and others), the term is beginning to acquire its modern association with unusual talent and inspiration. More particularly, the LM is itself in this period staging a debate – part of its debate on gender and on the romance – about the nature of genius and its association with gender.

The LM participates in the growing discourse on genius, and its theorization by artists and critics, by publishing various articles and debates on the topic. The LM thus includes an excerpt from Alexander Gerard's *Essay on Genius* (published in 1774, though composed and presented to the public starting in 1758), one of the important works theorizing this concept in its newer sense, in the supplement issue of 1782. As seen from the portion excerpted, Gerard reconceives genius in a way that is close to its modern Romantic meaning, in that he equates genius with innovation and with "imagination" rather than reason: "It is imagination that produces genius."<sup>174</sup> This shows not only that this newer meaning of genius is already in play at this point, but that the LM is encouraging its readers to think about the concept. (As I shall show below, this is related to the LM's larger interest in the aesthetics of the new romance – associated with the new aesthetic principles of imagination and the sublime, as much as with conventionality – and with its wish to dignify this newer cultural form.) While Gerard does not discuss

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<sup>173</sup> As such, the LM uses the term in its older sense of spirit of an entity in January 1788, when it explains that an allegorical engraving is meant to represent "the Genius of the Lady's Magazine" presenting a copy of the periodical to Minerva. The LM also employs the term in its more general sense of talent in its reference to the "juvenile genius" of a male correspondent it wishes to encourage by including his contribution.

<sup>174</sup> At least two excerpts in the LM discussing the difference between male and female intellect claim that "imagination" is the realm of women. However, the term "imagination" was itself in flux and these two figures use it to mean a less lofty form of genius. But it is also that "imagination" was in the process of being rethought, so that the affinity for romance and fiction – associated with women and "imagination" – would soon come to be claimed for Romantic genius. As Christine Battersby notes in her *Gender and Genius*, definitions of genius often work to exclude women even as the criteria for genius shifts. In this case, it seems that if "imagination" is part of genius, then it is no longer the kind of "imagination" associated with women.

gender in relation to genius, the cultural idea that such creative power is rarely shown by women is in play here and becomes part of the LM's debates on femininity and female potential.

The most striking debate about gender and genius in the LM is that staged between one "Sukey Foresight" (who may or not be a real correspondent, though her address is included, "Lothbury," which is not always done and so suggests the letter is authentic) and "an Impartial Combatant" in 1780, with Sukey maintaining that genius has no sex and her male interlocutor claiming that history has shown no instance of female genius. As will be seen, Sukey's deployment of philosophy, and particularly Locke's idea of the *tabula rasa*, counters her opponent's essentialist views learnedly and effectively. Sukey writes to the February 1780 LM to propose a debate in the magazine on the question of whether men or women have more "mental endowments," a debate the LM titles "Whether female Genius is equal to that of the Males." While the LM's title shows that the word genius has not yet acquired its Romantic meaning, the debate over "mental endowments" falls along lines of distinction that echo Gerard's definitions of genius: what is at stake, as it becomes clear, is whether women have ever shown innovation, suggesting that this is the ultimate criterion of genius. Sukey encourages a debate, though she "humbly" states her view – one supported by many articles in the LM – that the only reason for historically greater male achievement is the difference in education: "[that] men . . . have had the superiority in literary productions, and that there have been a greater number of learned men than women is readily granted" but "this advantage has been acquired by study and application, and by different modes of education, rather than by any natural or innate advantage." Sukey thus counters the idea of gender essentialism that the LM has itself been invested in at least debating. The next month she is answered by "An Impartial Combatant" with a line of thinking that continues to dominate debates about gender and genius: that while women can understand anything men can, they have never invented anything themselves. "An Impartial Combatant" actually rehearses some of the more progressive ideas on female capacity of the period – he gives women credit for a quicker and livelier intelligence than men – showing that his answer to Sukey is the seemingly benevolent view of gender that sees men and women as different but complementary.<sup>175</sup> Yet his central idea rests on a history of male innovation in which women do not seem to appear: "I do not believe (pardon me ye fair) that a woman could have been a Newton, though she may be his disciple; I do not believe a woman would ever invent a mechanical machine, give a problem, or lay down a rule in mathematics; though I believe she may understand the principle of the one, solve the other, and follow the third." He sums up: "I do not recollect to have heard of them as the inventors or discoverers of any of the arts and sciences."

Not only is invention the criterion which determines genius in any discipline, as we see from this debate, but innovation is connected to other traits that I have been tracing in this dissertation as considered the province of men, most pointedly focused obsession. "An Impartial Combatant" thus argues that the reason for the difference between the sexes is that invention requires a kind of extended focus of which women do not seem capable: "Vivacity and activity of mind are not suited to the plodding qualities necessary to pursue a train of deep reasoning." Further, men have "stronger" "organs" and "bodily powers" and so can focus more obsessively, reminding one of the virtuoso figure:

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<sup>175</sup> See Bèreges on Wollstonecraft's formulation of this idea of complementarity.

"The bringing any discovery to perfection, requires unwearied attention, assiduity, and patience, and often calls for the night as well as the day, to help them in their works." His reference to working throughout the night recalls the Female Quixote's particular association with insomnia and night vigils, suggesting how the myth of the wakeful genius was being invented and aspired to by the Female Quixote figure. Like the figure of the Romantic genius, the Female Quixote aims to break out of restricting social patterns, a quest figured by her being out of step with time and daily routine. "An Impartial Combatant"'s argument that women cannot focus obsessively on problem is countered by the Female Quixote and learned woman figures, who are defined by their excessive focus on the objects of fascination. It is fitting, then, that Sukey's response draws upon her own learning (though she claims her education is not as vast as her male interlocutor's) to challenge "An Impartial Combatant"'s gender essentialism. Sukey cites Locke's concept of the *tabula rasa* (quoting from his work) to argue that it is "experience" that makes the difference between the sexes; there has been no female Newton because "no lady ever experienced an education similar to Sir Isaac Newton." Sukey further argues that Locke's theory of the mind does not make a distinction between the sexes, as, she says, is evident in his calling his work "On Human Understanding." Sukey sounds much like a Female Quixote in her charge that it is "the pernicious *customs* of the times" that limit women's achievement and in her laying blame on parents for imposing limitations on daughters: "Surely then, our capacities might have found scope, in the literary and philosophical world, had not our parents neglected to survey the powers of our minds, and not have restrained a rising genius, in order to conform to the pernicious *customs* of the times, for not other reason, than that she wore *petticoats*."

That Sukey has taken up the role of the female warrior, an avatar of the Female Quixote (and a reminder of "General Honeycombe"), is evident in the next confrontation, when "An Impartial Combatant" counters that even if women were capable of similar achievements, maintaining separate spheres is better for society. He thus begins his letter with a recognition of the long history of the female warrior for her sex (and it is fitting that a history of Joan of Arc is being serialized concurrently): "I [a]gain put on my *armour* to combat with the champion of the genius of the fair sex, Mrs. Sukey Foresight. The modesty with which she defies me makes it unnecessary to put on a *coat of mail*, or to use sharp weapons in my defence." While he maintains that men are still more suited to the hard work of invention, not to mention that they have more freedom to travel and learn, he argues that it would not matter anyway, drawing upon the old idea of the pedantic learned woman to critique such female aspiration:

If a painter were to chuse [*sic*] a subject to inspire us with admiration and love, and all the delightful sensations which an amiable woman inspires in the breast of man, would he chuse to draw a woman sitting with globes and mathematical instruments about her, with tubes and telescopes, with compasses and squares; or would he not rather place her in the midst of her family, fondling an infant on her lap, and at the same time teaching the others of more mature age, to exercise each their budding geniuses?

"An Impartial Combatant" here draws upon the long anti-learned woman discourse to conjure up the woman rendered ridiculous when surrounded by scientific instruments.



That the LM itself features engravings of women in such learned surroundings (women in libraries, resting their arms on globes, for instance), part of its project of celebrating the intellectual woman, is conveniently overlooked here by the male correspondent.<sup>176</sup> It is particularly telling that this scene is imagined from an aestheticized male point of view, the painter's, for whose pleasure female domesticity is shown as being created. An Impartial Combatant's tableau, then, suggests that domesticity is most prized as a male social and aesthetic construction. (This aestheticized view of femininity may also derive from Rousseau's tableau in *Émile*, in which he asks the male reader whether he would prefer seeing a woman engaged in domestic duties or surrounded by pamphlets and in the process of writing.)<sup>177</sup> The LM itself implicitly supports Sukey rather than "An Impartial Combatant," but it does so not primarily through its support of the learned woman surrounded by telescopes but by the reading and writing woman contributing to the magazine itself. This does not mean that the LM supports the idea of separate creative spheres, however: rather, romance reading and writing are the province of the learned woman here as much as are more traditional disciplines.<sup>178</sup>

### **Catherine Morland's Ideal Library and the Creation of Gothic Connoisseurship in the LM**

The writing woman of the LM is made possible by the reading woman of the LM. The LM not only publishes more fiction than any other periodical, reflecting the growth in fiction and reading in this period, but it also constantly reflects on the publishing and reading boom of the late eighteenth century. An essay in the June 1790 reflects on the cultural shift created by the great rise in publication:

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<sup>176</sup> Again, "An Impartial Combatant"'s use of the term "genius" to refer to children's growing capacity, which he thinks women should rather attend to instead of their own intellectual ambitions, shows that it remains a term of more general use. "An Impartial Combatant"'s use of the term here is suggestive, though, in that he seems to wish to contain it by limiting it to its meaning of capacity; that is, it is as if women should only concern themselves with this less transformative form of genius, a form that can be guided.

<sup>177</sup> The passage, which ends the section on Sophie's education, is as follows: "Readers, I appeal to you on your honor – which gives you the better opinion of a woman as you enter her room, which makes you approach her with the greatest respect: to see her occupied with the duties of her sex, with her household cares, the garments of her children lying around her; or to find her writing verses on her dressing-table, surrounded with all sorts of pamphlets and sheets of notepaper in every variety of color?" (translated by William Payne).

<sup>178</sup> It is important, then, that "An Impartial Combatant" refers to Newton as the figure of genius rather than to a literary figure. He allows that women lead men in "imagination" rather than "genius," but his definition of imagination is one that was already beginning to fade – of losing control over one's ideas – rather than the emerging one – asserting creative control: "Genius is a desire for knowledge and of exploring causes and effects; imagination is a deceitful phantom, which leads the mind into flowery regions, which please but perplex it, and it returns unsatisfied and unbenefited [*sic*]." What this 1780 distinction shows is that while the terms themselves were still unstable, the culture was in the process of thinking through the relations between different kinds of creativity.

"Of making many books there is no end." How fit a motto for the present state of literature, when the press groans with voluminous labours, and booksellers are adding warehouse to warehouse to contain them. At no time, and in no country, do we find so great a torrent of writings overflowing a nation as at present. Literary fame fills the breast with irresistible ardour, and we may safely say, that negligence is only in fault if "any flower *now* born to blush unseen, or waste its sweetness in the desert air."

It is notable that the author starts by discussing the dramatic increase in writers first, suggesting that the reader-as-writer figure is a cultural type. He here also echoes Sarah Green's mockery of the popular wish to enter the writing sphere, a sphere degraded by making the entry point to writing too easy. Unlike Thomas Gray's long past world, teeming with forgotten geniuses and thus the promise of endless potential, the modern literary world is full of people only too happy to proclaim any small talent.<sup>179</sup> And, as with the proliferation of consumer-participation in any media, production outruns consumption. The metaphor, a common and even clichéd one, is that of unrestrained reproduction: "the press groans with voluminous labours."<sup>180</sup> Despite the clichéd point, the author of the piece posits the question in an interesting way: "But are there readers for all the books published? Is the number of readers increased?" The writer answers with a strikingly specific, and optimistic, statistic: "I would boldly give it the affirmative. There are unquestionably fifty readers of books now to one who was a reader fifty years ago – and for this plain reason, that there is precisely that number more who can read." From mocking the literary pretensions the new easier access to print encourages, the author turns to praising the growth in literature and links it to the increase in education.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> While the wish to see one's name in print may be grown more now, one remembers that periodicals had always been associated with such an aspiration, so that they anticipated such a larger participatory culture.

The idea that audience participation will render more content than one can consume – that the real scarcity will be in consumers rather than producers – is especially pressing for the Internet age, though it has arisen in relation to other media at the point where consumers could become producers. I am thus reminded of a line from Gus Van Sant's *To Die For* (1995), about the mania to appear on television. A character asks a question similar to that of the late eighteenth-century media critic quoted above: "[She] used to say that you're not really anybody in America unless you're on TV, 'cause what's the point of doing anything worthwhile if there's nobody watching. . . . But if everybody was on TV all the time, there wouldn't be anybody left to watch . . . ." [quote from IMDB.]

<sup>180</sup> I had at first read the phrase as referring to the weight of the volumes making the tables "groan," which may also be how it works, as I find by doing a search for the ubiquitous phrase, though this writer seems to put a birth spin on it. In any case, a Google search for the term "the press groans" bring up dozens of references from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; I myself have come across it many times in popular writing from the period.

<sup>181</sup> Celeste Langan expressed this aspect of the LM best when, commenting on what I had been relating about the institution, she pointed out that what we are dealing with here is "literacy rather than literature." This author's formulation confirms that Romantic culture was thinking through a similar distinction. However, the amateur writers were invested in a new and sophisticated

Just as the LM credits the rise in female education with cultural improvement, so this author credits the rise not only in literacy, but in love of reading, with social improvement. He goes on to praise the readers of every class, from the poor who devour pamphlets to the rich who collect books. The LM phenomenon of the female reader-writer, then, should be seen within this larger increase in reading and writing, and in a cultural self-consciousness about this new literariness, a literariness enabled by the lively publishing trade.<sup>182</sup>

Aside from reflecting the larger discourse on the reading-writing woman, the LM sets itself up as the institution that celebrates her. An engraving for the March 1795 issue of a woman reading in a gazebo makes iconic the figure at the center of the magazine; she is a spectacle of sensibility, but the focus is also on her own subjectivity, her own attention to the book. Many such versions of the reading woman occur in the magazine, but I shall look more closely at one example that shows how the LM helps solidify the connection between female aspirations and reading. The piece, from 1778, is figured as sent in by one "Pratilia," who had written to the LM before to complain that it deals too much with politics and requesting that instead they begin to feature book reviews (a notable absence in the LM). The editors advise Pratilia to read her father's *Gentleman's Magazine* for such reviews, and she responds by saying that it does not review enough novels. Pratilia then offers her own vision of a literary space by reworking Addison's description of a woman's library in the *Spectator*, transforming his vision to hers. Jacqueline Pearson, the only other critic I know to have looked at this scene, describes Pratilia's "utopian vision" thus: "Revising Addison's original, the author transforms a satire on female vanity into a utopian vision of female power and pleasure centered on literary production and consumption."<sup>183</sup> Pratilia claims that Addison gave her the idea to make her own dressing room into a library if she ever wins the lottery and has the means to do so, showing the female aspiration towards economic freedom as tied to intellectual freedom. Her dream (re)vision of Addison's female library is that she removes male writers from the library, dedicating it entirely to female authors, of which, she says, there are so many.<sup>184</sup> Pratilia's project is explicitly connected to a Utopian investment in female achievement and transcendence of social limitations: thus, Phyllis Wheatley, whom she cites as an example of genius overcoming prejudice, would be featured in her ideal library along with other notable female authors. Women's periodicals, ephemeral though they may seem, would also be featured in her library, including a former *Ladies'*

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literary mode – literature rather than literacy – even if they could not engage it at sophisticated levels. I argue, then, that the phenomenon and the case of the LM is important to literary studies and not just to literary history.

<sup>182</sup> The piece is then republished five years later in the *Universal Magazine*, showing that the LM was in the vanguard of publishing meditations on the growth of reading and writing. (It is here retitled "Of Making Many Books There Is No End. A Rhapsody.")

<sup>183</sup> *Women's Reading in Britain*, 97.

<sup>184</sup> She also removes romances, which goes against the idea of the LM as supporting romance reading. This may be, however, because in 1778 sensibility literature still dominated and it was not until the 1790s that the romance came to predominate in the LM in its modern form. Pratilia here claims a more virtuous canon of female reading, however.

*Magazine* (by "Mrs. Stanhope," the eidolon of a male publisher) and the current *Lady's Magazine*, a work to which Pratilia has herself contributed. This emblematic scene shows the close connection between women's reading and writing; Pratilia creates a Pantheon of female writers and places herself in it through her contributions to the LM. Further, her dream vision features a set of *Ladies' Pocket Books*, works that even further literalize the close connection between reading and writing. *Ladies Pocket Books*, little miscellanies that also served as notebooks in which women could jot notes, allowed women to literally write in the official text, literalizing the aspiration of the reader-writer who could publish in the LM. The LM itself is then an ideal feminist space much like the female library described above, dedicated to curating works appealing to women. In the 1790s this means that the LM is dominated by modern romances and particularly Gothic romances.

The LM prepares its readers to understand and participate in the new romance scene by educating them about the history, psychology, and aesthetics of the new mode. The LM draws upon the voluminous historicizing work of the mid and late eighteenth century which theorizes the aesthetic difference between the medieval and classical world, and between the modern and pre-modern world. Works excerpted in the LM by writers like Thomas Warton, Hugh Blair, Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, and Anna Barbauld serve to educate the reader about the historical growth of romance and about its revalorization in the modern world. These theoretical works then fit in well with and enhance the LM's ongoing interest in historicizing and psychologizing the supernatural so as to rid girls of any lingering superstitious belief. The LM is, therefore, a good representation of the way the Enlightenment project of critical analysis and demystification merges with, and supports, the Romantic reinvestment in terror as an aesthetic category. The LM features various articles explaining the origins of belief in the supernatural, and while one could argue that their very presence suggests that female readers need such explanations, I wish to emphasize that the LM is here only participating in a larger cultural project of explaining the appeal of superstition as a psychological and cultural phenomenon. In 1771, thus, the LM features an article about the historical belief in witches and the infamous witch hunts in the reign of James I and of seventeenth-century Salem, significantly attributing them to misogynistic beliefs. Another such excerpt, "On Evil Invisible Beings" (January 1784), examines the horrific visions reported by monks and explains that they are caused by fasting, self-torture, and self-induced hysteria. This piece participates in the anti-Catholic bent that would also influence the Gothic in that it draws on the sensationalist appeal of such horrors with the excuse of denouncing them. A piece called "On Legends" (February 1795) similarly explains legends as fiction taken as truth by monks. The writer explains that ancient authors embellished stories for rhetorical effect and that these aesthetic embellishments were taken as fact by the monks – again setting up Catholicism as a cautionary, too literal investment in the supernatural in contrast to a properly distanced aesthetic investment.

Many such pieces are featured throughout the late eighteenth-century LM and serve to show how the new investment in fear and mystery is an aspect of psychology and aesthetics. A June 1780 piece from Barbauld thus argues that a belief in superstitions should not be derided because it is common to all and is explained by the power of association. She points to the significance people give to dates, such as battle anniversaries, as an example. Barbauld's piece then combines a psychological explanation of usually denounced beliefs with a literary appreciation of the power of

association. These examinations of the supernatural work in a way that suggests Emma Clery's argument about the eighteenth-century shift in attitudes toward the supernatural. Clery uses the example of two reactions to the Cock Lane ghost sensation, Samuel Johnson's and Horace Walpole's, to explain the shift. While Johnson finds the importance of the case to be in its religious and philosophical implications, Walpole appreciates its aesthetic and spectacular value; for Walpole, the whole investigation is a form of entertainment. Clery points out that the shift in attitudes toward the supernatural was often subtle and can be detected even in what seem to be more serious, and thus seemingly credulous, investigations into it. She argues that collected accounts of supernatural events that pass themselves off as factual were often actually enjoyed for their aesthetic value as good stories.<sup>185</sup> Something similar is at work in the LM – though its purpose is never to encourage belief but to discourage it – in which cultural accounts of superstition could also evoke the very frisson they eschew. This aspect of the LM works closely with its participation in the late eighteenth-century romance revival.

The LM partakes of the mid- and late-eighteenth century theorization of the aesthetic value of medieval superstition versus classical skepticism. (Here as in the wider culture, Catholicism acts as the scapegoat for the negative aspects of belief.) In May 1779, a piece entitled “Effect of Chivalry on Taste and Manners, during the fourteenth century” is excerpted from a newly published work of history by one William Russell. Russell argues for the vital superstition of the past and its positive influence on imaginative literature:

From these new manners [chivalry] arose a new species of composition; namely, the Romance, or modern heroic fable . . . Had classical taste and judgment been so early established, imagination must have suffered; truth and reason, as an ingenious critic observes, would have chased before their time, those spectres of illusive fancy which delight to hover on the gloom of superstition, and which form so considerable a part of modern literature. We should still have been strangers to the beautiful extravagancies of romantic fabling.

Russell further credits the troubadours' travels to the Crusades along with their patrons for the introduction to European literature of many romance elements like “dwarfs, giants, dragons, and, necromancers.” The figure more closely associated with this kind of literary history is Thomas Warton, and an excerpt from his *History of English Poetry* (entitled “Observations on the State of Poetry in the Middle Ages”) appears in the supplemental installment for 1782. Warton here argues, like Russell, that medieval culture is “good for poetry.” The “pageants” and rituals of medieval society fueled the imagination, particularly Catholic “superstitions,” and encouraged meditation on the supernatural and the terrific. “[F]eudal manners,” too, were “irregular” and full of incident. Warton sums it up thus: “Ignorance and superstition, so opposite to the real interests of human society, are the parents of imagination. The very devotion of the Gothic times was romantic.” Warton is not only theorizing the new romance but

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<sup>185</sup> And Walpole plays on this slippage in the conceit of *Otranto*, as Clery argues; the story is supposedly written by a medieval monk to compel belief, rather than being a modern romance in which the question of belief does not come into play.

beginning to assign new meanings and valences to terms like "imagination," "Gothic," and "romantic." As I argued above in the section on female genius, while the term "imagination" was still used for a kind of futile day dreaming, and associated with the reading woman (women excel in imagination is what those writing on the differences between the sexes had said), it was at this very moment being rethought and revalorized in connection to new aesthetic theories. This piece from Warton is also excerpted in Emma Clery and Robert Miles's *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook*, their collection of works and parts of works from the mid and late eighteenth century that were part of the aesthetic theorization that led to, and undergirded, Gothic fiction. My argument about romance revival excerpts in the LM is thus influenced by Clery and Miles's project of reconnecting Gothic criticism of the novel with history of the Gothic as an aesthetic philosophy, though my own focus is on reclaiming this history for feminist literary history. Thus, I argue that LM readers would have been familiar with the aesthetic theories behind their favorite Gothic romances. Further, what the presence of such aesthetic theory in the LM shows is that it attempts to educate its female readers about the aesthetic theory behind their favorite reading, thus helping render them romance connoisseurs.

These theoretical works serve not only to educate LM readers about the new thinking on the origins and power of romance but to build in them a knowledge and appreciation of the related aesthetic values of sublimity and imagination. These aesthetic values were being attributed to many medieval and ancient works (the Bible, for example) and were also being reclaimed to reenergize and redefine modern art (medievalist writings excerpted here focus not only on literature but also on architecture and painting). Walpole himself is excerpted in the supplemental installment for 1784 praising Gothic architecture at the expense of Grecian: "One must have taste to be sensible of the beauties of Grecian architecture: one only wants passion to feel Gothic." The terms of what we now call Romanticism are being theorized here, and these terms are similar to the aesthetic philosophy of the *Female Quixote*: "passion" is superior to "taste." That is, an enjoyment of a work of art based in enthusiasm is valued over one based in an understanding of artistic rules. The term "superstition" we have seen as a central concern of the LM is reworked by Walpole so that it emerges not as false belief but as "passion": "Gothic churches infuse superstition; Grecian admiration." (Corinne makes a similar argument to Oswald but using the culture of ancient and medieval Italy, and the rituals of Catholicism, rather than British history.) The same idea in relation to other arts is developed in other excerpts. Thus, an excerpt from William Gilpin entitled "Taste, Painting, Perspective" is featured in the July 1789 issue making a similar point about ancient versus modern furniture: older furniture, he explains, is heavier because it reflects the graver manners of the times.<sup>186</sup> An anonymous piece from 1792 thinks along the same lines, connecting the sublimity produced by ruins with their suggestion of the "vastness of time." Radcliffe would make use of all these insights in her ruined Gothic edifices filled with massive furniture. In 1799, painting is discussed in the same terms by

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<sup>186</sup> Tellingly, such "Gothic" furniture is also associated with the oppressiveness and corrupt power of the ancien régime, as we later learn from a May 1798 excerpt from Helen Maria Williams's *A Tour in Switzerland*, in which she describes how the new republic values Greek and Roman-style furniture, with pre-Revolution furniture "thrown aside as rude Gothic magnificence."

the correspondent "Mr. Roscoe," who submits verses in praise of Fuseli's sublime paintings based on Milton's works.

These aesthetic writings also educate the LM's readers about the important aesthetic and psychological concept of the sublime, which undergirds much of the new romance aesthetic. Thus, an essay called "On Sublimity and Beauty," whose author I cannot trace but who reiterates the ideas of Burke and Blair, celebrates the sublime as the aesthetic principle that appeals to the imagination. Like Burke, he finds the sublime in both the natural world and in ancient works like the Bible and Virgil. He also associates the sublime with genius through a metaphor that itself draws on sublime imagery: "The fire of genius must flash upon us like lightning . . ." Works of genius have an appeal that is both immediate and powerful, like the "passion" which Walpole argues that Gothic architecture induces. This writer argues for a Romantic version of artistic reception ("must flash upon us like lightning"), at the same time as anticipating the Romantic image of lightning for artistic creation (for instance, Byron in *Childe Harold*: "Could I embody and embosom now / That which is most within me . . . / And that word were Lightning, I would speak."). The aesthetic power of the sublime is treated more skeptically in a piece from Lord Kames (Henry Home), in which he argues that the sublime can be counterproductive in rendering art too hard for the mind to grasp. He argues that this is why readers prefer human heroes to sublime ones like Milton's angels. While Kames's is an anti-sublime argument, what is important is that the argument is made in terms of aesthetics rather than morality; despite the didacticism of much of the LM, the readers are learning to think in terms of aesthetics. The idea that literature works on its own terms, which are those of pleasure and imagination, are similarly made in a July 1797 excerpt from Barbauld, taken from her introduction to a new edition of Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*. Barbauld argues that while didactic poetry once played an important cultural role, poetry must now appeal primarily to pleasure and imagination.

While the new aesthetic theory is invested in tracing the history of romance and in revalorizing principles it associates with its growth, much of its purpose is in vindicating and championing modern literature, both the modern romance and the novel. Thus, the LM reprints Reeve's "Defence [sic] of Novels and Romances," part of the introduction to *The Old English Baron*, which explains both her debt to Walpole and her attempt to make better use of supernatural devices in her own Gothic novel. Again, her argument is made on aesthetic rather than moral grounds; she argues that Walpole's use of the supernatural takes readers out of the story. Similarly, a September 1785 piece on "the differences between the ancient and the moderns," explores the modern genre of the fairy tale, describing its beginnings at the French court and its later spread to the masses. This writer further explains that while fairy tales are based on superstitions that were once believed, modern readers enjoy the stories without taking their wonders literally. A selection from D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, a major text of the period, also appears to defend novels and to link them to ancient romances. D'Israeli shows that romances have long been considered immoral, thus offering a history of romance's reception and putting into context current fears over the modern romance and the novel. D'Israeli uses his comparativist sensibility to prompt critical thinking: romances may express feelings too warmly (a phrase understood to refer to sexual passion), he allows, but so does the "Song of Solomon," which is "sanctioned by the authority of the church." D'Israeli also

makes the common late eighteenth-century argument that novels are derived from romances but that they try to disguise their provenance. All these examples illustrate that the LM addresses its readers as figures interested in new fiction and in its history. More so, the LM is invested in defending the new romance and Gothic aesthetic and in offering for it a respectable literary pedigree. LM readers would thus become connoisseurs in this new aesthetic, a knowledge they could use in their own attempts at Gothic fiction.

Features on the new aesthetic would serve to support the LM's own investment in the new romance in all its forms, the neo-chivalric (Reeve, Lathom), the sentimental (Smith), and, most of all, the Gothic. One striking omission in the LM's involvement with modern fiction is the lack of major Female Gothic figures like Radcliffe and Smith (some Smith is excerpted and discussed, but not as much as one would expect), but this may be because the LM wishes to establish its own unique fictional scene. Therefore, in place of the popular Gothic romances of the period, the LM features works not available elsewhere: original fiction written exclusively for the LM and original translations of romances (and other genres), available first in its pages.<sup>187</sup> I shall discuss the original fiction below, but first I will look at how the LM becomes the site for romance, and especially Gothic romance, through its overwhelming focus on the genre, particularly during the 1790s, the peak era for its development. (Despite the continuing popularity of Gothic novels into the new century, and particularly 1800-1810, its major highlights occurred in the 1790s, with the publication of most of the novels that have come to define the original Gothic canon.) The most important such publishing coup for the LM is its serialization of the first English translation of Ducray-Duminil's roman noir *Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods* (published in France in 1789, and begun in the LM in 1791), as Mayo and Norton both note. While this is a mostly forgotten work, like many romances featured in the LM, it was popular at a time of great developments in the Gothic. Ducray-Duminil's novel is in the sentimental style of the roman noir, rather than the more risqué and ironic mode represented by Pigault-Lebrun's roman gai (see Coward's *History of French Literature*). The setting and title of Ducray-Duminil's novel, which Mayo thinks may have inspired Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*, evokes the cozy-frightening effect of sentimental Gothic. The very cottage itself, which lies at the edge of a precipice in a sublime landscape, is an emblem of Radcliffe's "beauty sleeping in the lap of terror."<sup>188</sup>

*Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods* is an effective Gothic thriller that demonstrates the LM is a periodical of fiction dedicated to exploring the aesthetic of fear beyond the bounds of sentimental fiction for women. The love story in *Alexis* is only a small part of a novel of some terrifying scenes and memorable Gothic set pieces which are in part made possible by the male protagonist. As stated above, LM readers would have been familiar with French writers by this point, and *Alexis* brings into the LM the whole conventional structure of the roman noir that was to be so important to British Gothic, as James Foster explains in his *The Pre-Romantic Novel in England*. (The figure of the hermit that would be so important to LM Gothics, for example, is rooted in the

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<sup>187</sup> As I shall develop below, the reader-writers also contribute to this translating project, and the "to our correspondents" page shows that readers are constantly sending in translations of new, fashionable works from French and German authors (Lessing, Kotzebue, etc.).

<sup>188</sup> Norton describes Radcliffe's use of this image and its connection to the aesthetics of the sublime (pp. 86-7).



roman noir, as Foster explains in his history.) Mayo argues that one *Romance of the Forest* scene echoes *Alexis* particularly closely – Adeline's dream of the murdered chevalier, a scene which occurs in reality in *Alexis* – but that other Radcliffian elements are influenced by the roman noir.<sup>189</sup> *Alexis* thus introduces the mechanics of the roman noir and of the growing Gothic machinery to the LM. Further, *Alexis* is one of the most effective Gothic novels published in the LM, perhaps because it builds on the long honed tradition of French terror fiction. Many Gothic conventions appear – the incomplete manuscript, the guilty patriarch with a secret (in this case, the horrific one of having been tricked into killing his wife and son, a plot point taken up in Regina Maria Roche's *Clermont*), the repeated danger and imprisonment of the hero, a heroine who comes upon the body of her murdered mother, etc. – which are all deployed in the service of aestheticized fear. *Alexis*, then, cannot be reclaimed for a didactic or domestic purpose; it is included for purely aesthetic reasons.

*Alexis* also focuses on a sensibility hero, the Alexis of the title, rather than on a heroine, a shift which would be repeated in many romances featured in the 1790s LM. While the sentimental hero is established as a Female Gothic standard by Reeve's *Old English Baron*, a Gothic novel that would also be a major model for LM Gothics, focusing on a hero rather than a heroine opens up other possibilities for the Gothic, including an exploration of its neo-chivalric branch. Many minor 1790s Gothics, of the "horrid" kind listed in *Northanger Abbey*, would make use of a male sensibility protagonist. Though *Alexis* includes a plucky heroine who joins in many of the adventures (and who cross-dresses), the focus on Alexis allows some risqué moments that differ from the limited range offered by British Gothic – i.e. the heroine threatened with rape. *Alexis*, on the other hand, plays an analogous scene of persecution with some irony and humor, usually associated with the male Gothic: a lusty lady threatens to challenge Alexis to a duel if he refuses to become her lover. Foster has commented on the picaresque elements of the novel, and such elements seem enabled by Ducray-Duminil's use of a male protagonist.<sup>190</sup>

The LM continues to publish a significant number of romances in translation into the 1790s and early 1800s, demonstrating again that it recognizes its female readers as romance aficionados.<sup>191</sup> Though the romances published in the LM fit within a larger sentimental mode, they would more particularly be categorized as neo-chivalric and historical romances (as Mayo also notes). The 1790s LM serializes translations of Jean Piere-Clariss de Florian *Gonzalo de Cordova: an Heroic Romance*, the Comte de Tressan's *The History of Robert, surnamed the Brave* (1800), and August Lafontaine's *Idda of Tokenburg: A Tale* (1800). These neo-chivalric romances are published in translation in the LM soon after appearing in the original language; they are taken up,

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<sup>189</sup> It is not clear if Radcliffe had read the novel, but the LM version seems to be the only English translation in the early 1790s. Mayo claims Radcliffe could read French well, while Norton claims she did not but that her husband did.

<sup>190</sup> One wonders whether Smollett's *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, the first original novel serialized in a periodical (*The British Magazine*) was also exerting an influence on the new-chivalric Gothic.

<sup>191</sup> As I described above and shall develop below, the LM's publication of romances is also related to its appeal to adolescents.

often by female reader-writers, and translated for a wider readership. Thus, a translation of *History of Robert* (which begins as a love story but becomes a chivalric adventure) is sent to the LM by "Eliza M" to begin serialization in January 1801. The French edition of the novel had at this point not even been reviewed in Britain – it is reviewed by the *Monthly* later in 1801 – so that "Eliza M" is at the forefront of romance reading-writing with her translation. Tressan's novel anticipates Scott in its attention to historical details; for instance, Tressan includes historical information about the period in which his work is set, including a discussion of the history of troubadours. "Eliza M" and the readers of the LM are therefore educated about new developments in the romance through these early translations. The LM even publishes a translated excerpt from de Couvray's *Chevalier de Faublas*, a neo-chivalric vignette it entitles "The Adventures of the Baron de Lovzinski." While this passage is a safe choice from what is considered a sexually risqué book, the very fact that historical romance is a safe alternative for women means that they are given the chance to participate in the romance boom and to learn its conventions. That is, the turn to romance allows women to be defined outside the traditional terms of sexuality and domesticity. Relatedly, most of these neo-chivalric romances focus on a male protagonist, and even the titular Idda has a chance to take up male armor and go to war (though for the traditionally female reason of wishing to sacrifice herself to save her husband). I argue, then, that the turn to romance is a turn away from domesticity and an escape into a world of greater gender fluidity.<sup>192</sup> While these novels could perhaps fit under the rubric of traditional romance – the LM of the 1790s was remembered by Charlotte Brontë as full of "foolish love stories" (see her letter to Coleridge, quoted below in my *Jane Eyre* chapter), so I allow that this is how they were often perceived – I would argue that they are the beginning of a what we now call genre literature, particularly the branch that would develop into the genre of fantasy. The accoutrements of genre obsession – particularly an exotic otherworld meticulously built through material details ("world building," as it is called in modern fantasy and science-fiction writing), stylized "historical" language, and the figure of a questing hero encountering serial adventures – are already in place here and serving as the domain of women.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Idda of Tokenburg* even plays out as a fantasy about escaping from gender constraints. What Idda – introduced through her portrait in a convent, the very figure of the wronged but vindicated woman – suggests is that the adult femininity of marriage is dangerous and constraining. While Idda had rescued her husband by substituting herself for him in his prison (assuming his clothes), he tries to kill her when he thinks she has been unfaithful. Idda responds by leaving him and becoming a sort of patron saint of wronged women.

<sup>193</sup> To give an example of what a reader would find upon dipping into one of these romances, I here include a few sentences from *Gonzalo de Cordova* from April 1793 (an issue that also includes *Alexis* and two oriental tales): "But the formidable Ali still continued a more equal combat with the magnanimous Lara. The first blows they exchanged, shivered their armour in pieces. Both wounded, and both inflamed with rage, they leap on the ground from their coursers, at the same instant and engage hand to hand with redoubled fury." The disorienting changes in tense are a common feature of magazine romances, perhaps because of the haste with which they are written or the difficulty of the translator in reworking French tenses. It may also be a device deployed on purpose to evoke immediacy. (I would not hesitate to state the latter as an explanation in Charlotte Brontë, who makes expert use of the technique, but

Aside from publishing romances in translation, the LM embraces the rise of the Gothic in the years 1790-1805 by publishing works that are not properly Gothic, and not even properly romances, but that are reclaimed for this new aesthetic. The LM makes uses of the fact that new aesthetic developments change the way in which existing works are regarded. Thus, in the late 1780s and early 1790s, it is hard to come across an oriental tale, a fairy tale, or a sensibility novel about a persecuted heroine without seeing its Gothic elements. It is not that the LM explicitly recasts older texts to function as Gothics, but that the new romance aesthetic discussed in the LM suggests such a recategorization to the reader. And many of these excerpts seem chosen for evoking such associations. Thus, when one comes across an excerpt from the Indian Vedas called "Hymn to Night" (1801), it is evident that the LM is thinking of this work in terms of mid and late eighteenth-century evocations of the pleasures of fear by figures like Collins and Gray. More so, semi-Gothic tales are either reviewed or excerpted in the 1790s, works like Johan Karl Augustus Musäus's "The Book of the Chronicles of the Three Sisters" from his *The Popular Tales of the Germans* (excerpted November 1791). Musäus is not identified by name, suggesting that the appeal is not so much in the precise author as in the German and folktale connection, an important influence on the Gothic. Matthew Lewis actually derives "The Legend of the Bleeding Nun," of which he makes famous use in his *Monk*, from one of Musäus's stories.<sup>194</sup> The LM thus recognizes that female readers would be interested in the vogue for German romance. More so, this Musäus story is published in 1791, several years before the peak of German influence on British romance (with *The Monk* and the translation from Karl Gross called *Horrid Mysteries* in 1796), so that readers of the LM are being given early access to what would be fruitful sources for the Gothic. While these works are not Gothic, they are fully within the aesthetic tradition that undergirds the Gothic and so play a role similar to that of the works theorizing the new aesthetic I described above. Many other such works are published in the LM especially right before the major Gothic boom in the early 1790s, as they are then replaced by Gothics proper. Thus, on the cusp of this development, in 1789, the LM publishes a long summary of Richard Hole's *Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment*, "an Arthuriad, focussing on how Arthur's Britons encountered the invading Saxons and Scandinavians in the fifth century."<sup>195</sup> Hole's work makes use not only of romance medievalism but also of "horror": "Much Gothic horror emerges from the use of magic." Another work that functions in a similar way is Macpherson's Ossian prose poems, parts of which are rendered into verse and published here in 1781.

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magazine romances – both those translated and composed for the magazine – are often sloppily written and it is easy to find errors and inconsistencies.)

The language used here is not particularly archaic, though; the romance that most experimented with a self-consciously old-fashioned language (based on Elizabethan English) is *Monks and Robbers*.

<sup>194</sup> From Eino Railo's *The Haunted Castle*, referenced in Patrick Bridgewater's *Kafka, the Gothic, and Fairy Tales*.

<sup>195</sup> Commentary from *Romantic Circles*, which recounts the work's debt to Thomas Percy's and James Macpherson's writings.

What the above examples demonstrate is that while the supernatural of the male Gothic was not part of the LM's Gothic stories proper, the mode could be introduced into the LM through other means, through accepted genres like poetry (including prose poetry). Hole's work was itself poetic, a "romance epic in seven books, written in imitation of both Ariosto and Ossian," though the plot summary given in the LM renders it akin to a short story. As Mayo – who counts such long summaries in his account of magazine fiction – recognizes, detailed summaries of the plots of longer works function as short fiction. Because the short story as such had not been developed, many short story-length magazine pieces read exactly like condensed novels (covering vast periods of time, introducing many characters, etc.), thereby almost erasing the difference between the plot summaries common to reviews and short fiction. As such, the summary of the long poem *Arthur, or the Northern Enchantments* would act as a short story with supernatural elements. Further proof that the Gothic supernatural could be introduced via older genres like poetry and the theater are that Matthew Lewis's poetry from his Gothic novels is excerpted here, as are reviews of theatrical adaptations of his novels. Lewis's reworking of Burger's ballad, "Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene," is published in the poetry section of the August 1796 issue. (And a reader has drawn a line around this poem in the issue I looked at, writing in "favourite lines.") The supernatural Gothic was apparently sanctioned in theater as well as poetry, since the prologue and epilogue to Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* are published in the January 1798 issue – though the notorious name of Lewis is not included, as the pieces are identified only as from "The new Drama of the Castle Spectre." In his theatrical work, at least, Lewis was not verboten, as other of his pieces are featured, such as his prologue and epilogue for Holcroft's *Knave or Not?* (February 1798).<sup>196</sup> An LM reader would indeed be familiar with the influence Gothic novels were having on theater, as the magazine publishes accounts and reviews of Gothic plays, such as those by William Boaden. In July 1797, Boaden's *The Italian Monk*, an adaptation of Radcliffe's *The Italian* which is also influenced by Lewis's *Monk* (as the title wishes to make clear) is reviewed favorably. In January 1799, Boaden's *Aurelio and Miranda*, a toned-down adaptation of the *Monk* – the supernatural elements are removed, and the evil monk is replaced by a bad nun – is also given a good review. Though Boaden's work may be suitably tamed, what is striking is that the reviewer assumes that readers are familiar with the original *Monk*: "Those who have perused the novel will see that the subject is happily dramatised, preserving all the interest of the original, with little abatement of its elegant diction." The morality of the play is not remarked on at all, showing that despite the strictures on publications aimed at women and adolescents like the LM, a sophisticated conversation on aesthetics could be staged.

### **The Female Reader-Writer and the Gothic Fiction Boom of the 1790s LM**

The 1790s LM is a historical site of Gothic connoisseurship and provides a fascinating case study of imitative writing as genre criticism. Nowhere else was there such a concentration in this period of Gothic fiction, Gothic theory, and Gothic practice. In the later 1790s other genre magazines would appear that focused on publishing Gothic romances – like the *Marvellous Magazine* – but the LM was the first to become, for a

<sup>196</sup> This play caused a controversy and was at first not well received because of its apparent satire on the government, as we learn from the account given of it in the LM.

decade or so, a genre magazine. As I detailed above, the LM was committed to publishing fiction in the popular style from the first, starting with the Sterne imitation in its first issue, and moving on to a series of sentimental-realistic novels in the 1780. Some of this fiction was purportedly written by readers of the magazine, such as *Memoirs of a Young Lady* – revealed to be written by man – but much of it was reprints from established authors, particularly French sensibility figures like Genlis, Marmontel, Arnaud, etc. With the coming into fashion of the romance, and particularly the Gothic romance, in the early 1790s, the LM begins publishing much more original fiction than before, suggesting that readers were particularly keen to try their hands at this kind of work. What the Gothic seemed to offer in its very conventionality was an easy entry point to writing. I shall argue that it is this practice of writing imitatively that helped shape the connoisseurship of the LM reader-writer, giving her the "cool knowledgeability" of genre connoisseurship Matt Hills describes. Further, the LM's focus on romance and its encouragement to imitative writing are signs of, and help enable, the "Romantic intensity" Hills sees as central to connoisseurship. While such imitative writing is the exact opposite of the innovation that was becoming central to creative thinking and to the concept of genius that I am arguing the Female Quixote figure aspires to, it forms the basis for an identity based in the aesthetic, broadly defined, which I argue undergirds the developing premise of genius. This is a democratic kind of "genius" that focuses on reception rather than on creation, so that any reader could have access to it, but the Female Quixote figure of the reader-writer suggests how such reception is creative. That is, the reader-writer reads and loves the innovative Radcliffe and that reader's reception manifests itself as a conventionalized rendition of that reading in her amateur imitative writing. If the reader-writer possesses unusual talent, or genius, she may later write *Jane Eyre*. But one does not need to write a transformative text in order to constitute oneself a connoisseur; rather, what connoisseurship necessitates is both an intense affective relationship to the genre and a knowledge of that genre, a close engagement and knowledge which manifests itself in the LM as imitative writing.

As I shall argue in my next chapter, Brontë herself dramatizes such a dynamic – the connoisseur within the text, the pure reader rather than the transformative writer – in her story-within-a-story about Rochester's life in France. The highly conventional story of Céline is one that an LM reader-writer might have written in its demonstration of the pleasures of genre. It is the reader's story that I am telling here, then, so that it emerges as a kind of parallel track to the Corinne genealogy of the Female Quixote. A Female Quixote aspires to be a creative subject and the artist Corinne is one such end point, as woman of genius Corinne too literalizes the creative reception of the Female Quixote. The other such literalization is that of the female connoisseur as demonstrated in the LM; the repetitive homages to Radcliffe and other Gothic writers are a kind of active reading. What emerges from all these writings is pure genre itself. More so, such loyalty to genre is a discipline in itself, teaching women to think in terms of structure and aesthetic units. Even if a writer is communicating psychological conflicts and anger at the gender status quo in the Gothic, as some of these reader-writers seem to be doing, they must do so in highly stylized terms. As I shall show, these writings demonstrate readers' engagement with the pleasures of Gothic conventions, with the aesthetic possibilities offered by the Gothic. A sub-genre that focuses this idea is that of the Gothic fragment, created by the Aikins and Nathan Drake, which is purely an exercise in Gothic atmosphere; the plot is

here only another way to create Gothic effects. While Gothic fragments were not as popular as Gothic novels in the LM, the installments themselves often act like fragments so that they become more conducive to Gothic effects. The amateur writing thus makes palpable the aesthetic enjoyment of the reader, an enjoyment which is the guarantee of that disinterestedness that ruptures her from the limiting social matrix. This is the dynamic inherent in the Female Quixote figure, but here it manifests itself as a shared enjoyment of genre. Readers enjoy reading each other's writings because they reflect each other's enjoyment in their swapping of reactions that are the amateur writings themselves. Such enjoyment, then, can act as the bond of a female intellectual group, which is continually satirized as unsustainable. The reader-writers cannot snobbishly distinguish themselves from other reader-writers because all are assumed to be disinterested here (as Pearson notes about the egalitarian versus hierarchical structure.) At the same time, all reader-writers can partake of an institution that allows them to rub elbows with already established writers; writers in training like E. Caroline Litchfield and Juvenis appear next to figures like Helen Maria Williams, Clara Reeve, and Mary Robinson.

I shall discuss the reader-writers of the LM, and their shaping by the LM, before I discuss their writings, since the writing has to be understood as shaped by these very particular kinds of authors within a historically specific set of circumstances. The LM, like many other eighteenth-century periodicals, relied on readers' contributions, both actual and pretended. Miscellanies like the GM and the *Town and Country* seem to have had many real contributors, but the LM garnered as much, or more, readerly participation than any other periodical, as Mayo has noted. The writers of *Women's Worlds* argue that participation, sometimes real but just as often imagined, has always been central to women's magazines. Adburgham also makes a perceptive point about the appeal of such a reading-writing community, writing sensitively about the reading experience:

[The success and longevity of the LM] may have been partly due to the strength of what would now be called 'reader participation.' The 'Letters to the Editor' column and advice to readers on personal problems will have given its subscribers a sense of belonging. Women living in country districts had few social contacts outside their family and immediate circle of acquaintances within carriage distance. In winter time their isolation could seem endless. The *Lady's Magazine*, arriving each month, would give them a feeling of friendship with other women . . . . Even the contributors to the magazine were corresponded with through its columns. The overriding reason for this was almost certainly to save postage; but at the same time, it will have given readers the sensation of being acquainted with the people whose literary work they read. They would get to know something of their shortcomings, and of their relations, cordial or strained, with the editor. (148)

Such participation seems central to other kinds of women's popular writing, like the aforementioned LM-resembling Harlequin Publishing, which strives to create its own "woman's world" of fantasy and secrets. Despite the name and repeated mission statement of the LM, however, its community was not as strictly gendered as these others. As noted above, up to a half of the correspondents to the LM were male at any one time, a fact that could have been easily hidden by pseudonyms if the editor were

determined on creating the illusion of a female space, the way Harlequin does with its male writers hidden under female pseudonyms. While this was the case some of the time, and particularly at first, the LM always featured many male writers, and particularly by the 1790s, when its Gothic novels were written by both men and women. This is because the tag "lady's" magazine functioned in this period, and particularly in the 1790s, not so much to mean a woman's magazine as we would think of today but as a magazine focused on light fiction. This is supported by the fact that when one looks to see where much of the Gothic magazine fiction was published in this period, one finds titles like *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, *La Belle Assemblée*, and the *Young Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*. As the last title suggests, these magazines had their greatest appeal to adolescents, as we can see by looking closely at the correspondents to the LM. While the LM celebrated female achievement, then, part of this celebration was the sense that one could transcend narrow definitions of femininity, a transcendence allowed by the virtual space of the magazine in which identity was unfixed.

While the pseudonymous system of the LM opened up possibilities of self-fashioning for its reader-writers, allowing them to draw upon literary and sensibility characters as avatars, most correspondents followed the common practice of eighteenth-century periodicals and chose either initials or names that were Latinate, didactic, or "real" (that is they used their real names or monikers that could be real names). A comparison of 1790s LM and GM pseudonyms thus does not reveal as much of a difference as one would expect. At the same time, such traditional self-fashioning, associated with a world of gentlemen scholars and men of business, takes on a different meaning in the LM. Most importantly, the gender-neutral initials used by so many correspondents comes to suggest an androgynous space removed from gendered pressures, such as the domestic ideology and the "fear and shame" (to quote Polly Honeycombe's formulation) indoctrinated into women. In other cases, male pseudonyms served a more monitory and restraining function, their presence reminding female readers of the male surveillance of what was to be a freeing space of female self-expression.

An example of the latter case is the overbearing presence of one T. Lacey in the 1790s LM, a correspondent identified as male by his professional address of Clement's Inn. This T. Lacey specialized in sentimental moral tales ("The Shipwreck, or the Cottage of Benevolence. A Tale," "The Village Lovers. a Tale," "The Italian Lovers; or Female Heroism, A Tale," etc.), sentimental poems, and didactic essays with oppressive titles like "Remark on Seduction" and "An Essay on Female Modesty." While, as the titles suggest, Lacey's writing is well within the sensibility tradition of the LM, his self-appointed position of moralist fits in uneasily in a magazine supposedly dedicated to celebrating female works. Similarly, one Yrneh Yelffo who begins by contributing puzzles and poems in 1793, soon becomes the less playful H. F. Offley and Henry Francis Offley and begins writing the authoritative-sounding column "The Universal Monitor," in which he moralizes and gives advice about marriage.<sup>197</sup> Similarly, other male correspondents discipline female reader-writers by writing to and about the female contributors to the magazine. Thus, "Veritas" writes a poem addressed to E. Caroline Litchfield, a correspondent serializing the sensationalist romance *The Forest of Alstone*, warning her against the flattery of C.M., another correspondent who had written in her praise. C.M.

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<sup>197</sup> Using Google Books, I also find that Henry Offley is the author of a book defending Richard Brothers.

then responds by claiming that his praise of Caroline is sincere and proceeds to mock Veritas's poem. While I do not have room in this chapter to analyze the fascinating gender dynamics created by the relationships between correspondents, it is important to note that the LM functions as a microcosm of a larger world of gender conflict. Just as female authors had to negotiate a public sphere that offered mockery and sarcasm, so the female writers of the LM, despite the editor's frequent chivalry on their behalf, were addressing a miscellaneous public. The burgeoning Digital Humanities field that compares eighteenth-century periodicals and Internet forums has commented on the similarity between the two at length, and while I cannot do justice to this comparison here, I note that the digital concept of "trolling" was well understood by these commenters.<sup>198</sup>

Despite the traditional nature of most of the pseudonyms, they often take on new significance in this new kind of amateur writing community. The most common avatars are initials and real names, but Latinate and pastoral pseudonyms are also very popular: Pastora (1780), Amator (1780), Sinceritas (1790), etc. Juvenis was one of the most popular of such names, which makes sense given that the LM repeatedly advertises itself as the publication for the "first attempts" of "genius"; the editor would presumably be more sympathetic and lenient to one indicating he is a first time writer. The very use of Latin would suggest a male correspondent, since boys were much more likely to be taught Latin – though when one correspondent makes such an assumption, the editor takes offense on behalf of women and reminds him that some women are learned and also know Latin. It is true that most of these pseudonyms are so basic that they would not necessarily indicate a knowledge of Latin, only of periodical pseudonym conventions, but the use of Latin presumes a certain amount of learning or pretension to it. The predominance of Latin and especially of the name Juvenis also suggests that the LM emerges as the venue open to a young Gothic writer of either sex. Further, the popular Latinate construction also often served to indicate the provenance of the correspondent – e.g. Salisburensis (1780), Oxoniensis (1790), Stocktoniensis (1791), and even Americanus (1792) – suggesting both a sense of local pride and of a consciousness of the

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<sup>198</sup> In my analysis of eighteenth-century periodical pseudonyms, and the helpful comparison to Internet avatars, I am particularly indebted to the pioneering work of Tedra Osell ("Tatling Women in the Public Sphere: Rhetorical Femininity and the English Essay Periodical" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* and her dissertation, *The Ghost Writer: English Essay Periodicals and the Materialization of the Public in the Eighteenth Century*.)

Other male correspondents wrote in with similarly provocative materials, semi-serious love poems or puzzles describing ladies at a certain boarding school, to which the editor objected. It is hard not to see a similar dynamic at work in the comments section of Internet feminist sites, which are a big draw for male "trolls." The aforementioned feminist site Jezebel, which relies greatly on its commenters – the articles are often just brief summaries that serve to give a subject to a conversation – maintains a sense of such gender rivalry with its companion site, Gawker. Gawker fashions itself as a modish *Town and Country*-like magazine of New York-focused satire and expose, employing a mostly male, self-consciously brash staff, and its commenters play to this image by contrasting their own world-weariness with the supposed over-sensitivity of the mostly female Jezebel commenters. Only a small percentage of commenters contribute to both sites (assuming they use the same avatar). And while Jezebel commenters do not tend to refer to Gawker commenters, Gawker commenters often define their own daring and sophistication against that of Jezebel commenters' imagined naiveté and anger.



unifying power of the periodical. As one critic Adburgham points out, the LM would have been especially welcome to readers in the country who were feeling particularly isolated, so that the space of the LM serves to shorten such distances. Finally, the last kind of traditional pseudonym used by correspondents is the descriptive or didactic one: the aforementioned "Sukey Foresight" and "An Impartial Combatant" (1780), "A Constant Reader" (both 1780 and 1790), "A Single Gentleman" (1790), "Furze Stub" (from Long Moor, 1791), and the very popular "A Lady" or "A Young Lady" – the non-classically educated equivalent of Juvenis. Such seemingly transparent and plain speaking pseudonyms are often covers, however; both the "Lady" responsible for *Sentimental Journey* and, more amusingly, *Memoir of a Young Lady*, are revealed to be men.<sup>199</sup>

The LM also features sensibility-influenced and literary avatars, which the GM generally did not. One would perhaps expect many more such literary pseudonyms in a magazine focused on fiction, but it could be that traditional pseudonyms give more weight to the act of fiction writing. Nevertheless, such literary and sensibility pseudonyms do seem to have increased slightly from the 1770s to the 1790s, suggesting that the rise of literary-focused magazines, and the increased fiction-focus of the LM itself, had some effect on periodical pseudonyms. One category lies at the intersection of plain speaking, real, and sensibility avatar: the idealized name (almost always feminine). A very common such avatar is Eliza, but names like Louisa, Emilia, and Eugenia would also fall under this rubric. While Elizabeth was a common name, some of these names sound like the idealized self-renaming of the Female Quixote – like Peggy upgrading to Margaritta (in *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*) – especially when they do not include a surname or even its initial (i.e., Eliza versus Eliza M.). These names are also meant to evoke the direct appeal of a sensibility heroine, thus intersecting with the transparently descriptive names. More suggestively, such names are also names of literary heroines, so that it becomes difficult to disentangle the reference that may be meant, leaving both meanings open. Thus, is Sophia (1795) the correspondent's real name or is she taking up the name of *Tom Jones*'s heroine? Is Matilda a reference to *Otranto* to *The Recess* to the Gothic more generally or is it her real name? Is Indiana referring to the heroine of Steele's *Conscious Lovers*, to that of the novel *Indiana Danby* (a less-popular novel I have found only through the archival power of Google Books), or is it simply a name the writer likes (this is before Burney's *Camilla* makes the name more popular)? Often all these meanings are in play, which makes the reading of signatures part of the ludic nature of the magazine and part of the act of enjoying its fiction. Such names are more puzzle-like than names that take on the form of puzzles (and are often used by correspondents who submit puzzles), names like Yrneh Yelffo or Evod Mailliw or Samoht Pohsib, which, though evocatively strange-looking, are easy to decipher. Other names are more direct literary references: Imoinda (1780), E. Caroline Litchfield (1792), Una (1795), Telemachus (1797), Mercutio (1793), Werter (1796), Hafiz (1798), and even Valancourt (1800 - though unfortunately the editor rejects his contribution, so that we only know him from the message to the correspondents page). It is particularly notable

<sup>199</sup> The real author of *Sentimental Journey* is revealed in the trial over the rogue *Lady's Magazine* competitor. The author of *Memoirs of a Young Lady* is referred to as "he" in one of the "addresses to correspondents," which seems particularly careless, unless we are supposed to assume that the male correspondent is submitting the memoirs on a woman's behalf.

that many of these are male pseudonyms, indicating the complex gender dynamics of the magazine; what they specifically seem to wish to communicate is sensibility and adolescence. The most interesting of the literary names is that of E. Caroline Litchfield, author of the unfinished *Forest of Alstone*, which is a play on the title of Isabelle de Montolieu's popular sensibility novel *Caroline of Lichtfield* (1783), which was translated by Thomas Holcroft in 1786 and published by the firm of Robinson itself. (It has been reissued recently by Pickering and Chatto.) This author, however, seemingly named E. Caroline and residing in Litchfield in Britain – evident from the name, but also attested to by the editor calling her Caroline of Litchfield in his addresses – cleverly reminds readers of the famous sensibility heroine from only some years back. Additionally, Litchfield has literary fame as the birthplace of both Samuel Johnson and David Garrick as well as the residence of Anna Seward. (And Holcroft notes in his translation that the title refers to Lichtfield, "a supposed Prussian title," [n]ot Litchfield in England," thus showing the possible confusion.<sup>200</sup>) As such, this pseudonym suggests the Quixotic way that fiction shapes reality, at least in the subjectivity of these self-fashioning fiction connoisseurs.

The correspondents, then, had a limited set of conventions to choose from in their self-fashioning but could work small innovations within these parameters. More so, the correspondents were fashioned as reader-writers by both their relationship to the editor of the LM and their relationships to each other (which, nevertheless, was necessarily routed through the figure of the editor who chose how to bring them into conversation). The editor's relationship to correspondents, which was that of both encouraging supporter and harsh critic, is played out in the magazine itself on the "to our correspondents" page in which the LM communicates with those who have submitted work. As Mayo explains, the LM office provided a drop box in which works could be left, though writings could also be mailed in; the editor often notes receiving "packets" from readers. (And given the postal system of payment by recipient, the LM reminds writers to pay the postage, telling one correspondent that "his poetry is by no means worth three-pence per line, at which rate he has transmitted it to us" [October 1791].) Using the "to our correspondents" page to communicate with writers while saving postage – and simultaneously dramatizing the magazine-writer relationship for all to see, be entertained by, and learn from – the LM plays both the part of supporter and harsh critic. As outlined above, the LM repeatedly praises its contributors, whom it flatters as budding geniuses, saying "the numerous and ingenious communications of its Fair Correspondents still support its reputation above that of every rival." As such, it encourages correspondents to send in "their first attempts," promising a polite reception: "we never criticize any pieces we receive, and would not so much wound the ear of delicacy, as to plant a thorn in that bosom, to which it might seem adulation to present a rose." Though such condescension seems aimed at the assumed female correspondent figure, in practice there were as many male correspondents and the LM extended its indulgence to all beginning writers: "We have inserted the last contribution of *Periclitator*, because we are ever desirous to encourage *juvenile genius*, and because we conceive that with *care* and assiduity he may greatly improve" (October 1800). In practice, however, the editor could be harsh in his criticism and mockery, though particularly to male correspondents.

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<sup>200</sup> *Caroline of Lichtfield; a Novel*. Translated from the French. 3 vols. G. G. J. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row: London, 1786. The new Pickering and Chatto edition is of the Holcroft translation, edited and introduced by Laura Kirkley.

The LM's "to our correspondents" page thus acted as a kind of basic tutorial in which the editor could briefly let writers know why rejected works had been rejected. While the editor only offered brief and mostly general advice, one could imagine that would-be writers would read these suggestions closely so as to tailor their work for submission. Based on the editor's comments, then, an aspiring writer would first of all need to submit a long enough sample so as to show the LM what she could do and also assure the editor that she could finish the work. As Mayo points out, the biggest problem with the LM's reliance on non-paid writers was its lack of leverage: installments were sent in months late, were often too short and barely advanced the story (to the frustration of readers), and often stopped altogether. Works like *The Forest of Alstone* and *The Castle on the Clift* have intriguing beginnings – thus, *Forest of Alstone* is written from the point of view of the villain – and make one eager to see where the writer will take the story, but the story remains a fragment.<sup>201</sup> One of the most common messages to the correspondents, then, is simply the request for more work, as in this despairing request to Juvenis: "We should be much obliged to the author of *The Castle on the Clift* to transmit a further communication; or, at least, let us hear from him" (July 1799). Since the writers were "Volunteers" (as the LM called them), the only leverage the editor had over them was that of their own sense of themselves as in-demand authors with an eager reading public: "We are as sorry as Hortensia can be for the negligence of Juvenis, and some others of our correspondents; but it is not in our power to remedy it" (December 1799). Neither Juvenis nor E. Caroline Litchfield wrote in again, thereby presumably forfeiting the right to publish in the LM, at least without a reinvention. (At the same time, the author of *Emily Veronne* is a lot less punctual in her second submission, *The Elville Family Secrets*, which drags on from 1804-1810. She had begun delaying installments even before she finished *Emily Veronne*, but the LM was indulgent with her, perhaps because she was one of its best writers, sent in longer installments, and completed her first novel.) Acting professionally, even as an amateur, was thus the first dictum. Even the already famous Clara Reeve is chided repeatedly for not continuing her translation of *Letters of Aza*: the editor "whispers" to her that the readers are becoming "boisterous" (March 1779) and she is asked for "the debt she owes the public" (May 1799).

The only threat the editor can make to enforce professional behavior is that of taking away a writer's platform; the LM tells correspondents that if they will not "fulfill their duty to the public," the editors will have to finish the stories themselves.<sup>202</sup> It should be noted, however, that the LM is equally careless with the contributions, often admitting to correspondents that it has lost their work and that they should send duplicates – a difficult task unless the correspondents had taken the time to make a copy.<sup>203</sup> Most

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<sup>201</sup> Readers submitted Gothic fragments too - like "Raymond" - but this genre took a certain kind of poetic skill that was rare; thus, despite the seeming ease of the mode for a beginning writer, few fragments made the pages of the LM. It is also quite likely that readers preferred narrative; even the most badly written works in the LM manage to create some narrative suspense and to evoke the most basic curiosity of "what will happen next"?

<sup>202</sup> This never happens with original stories; in the case of *Monks and Robbers*, however, another author picks up the story after the original had dropped it, though not for some years.

correspondents seemed to have written quickly, however, so that they probably would not have planned ahead for the LM's own carelessness: a common complaint is that the writing is "illegible" (the message to the writer of *De Courville Castle* for January 1797) and a repeated dictum is "to guard against negligence and haste" (January 1799). In this negotiation with very little responsibility on either side, the only leverage the amateur writer had, in her turn, is the threat of taking her writing elsewhere. Thus, the editor tells one correspondent, who, "in a fit of peevishness" has sent his work to other periodicals, that they have more works than they know what to do with anyway. There is a battle of interests and needs here, then, as in the larger professional writing world. Just as the writer wishes to have the freedom to send her work to many venues, so the LM tries to control her options: the writer of a regular column, "The Female Reformer," is told that because his work has appeared in other periodicals, the LM will not publish as much for him anymore. The LM, then, was trying to create its own scene of fiction with its own loyal reader-writers.

Aside from trying to enforce basic professional rules of regular submission, the LM guides its writers in some very basic ways. The most basic rule is to give the audience what it wants, suggesting that the LM is a kind of rival Minerva Press, which could be even more attentive to audience demands because readers could write in monthly. Thus, the editor would tell writers when to speed up the pace of the narrative (that is, to send in longer installments): "We would recommend to our correspondent who favours us with the *Monks and the Robbers* to transmit longer continuations, that the story may be sooner brought to a *conclusion*; for which several of our readers have, and we think not without reason, intimated a wish" (July 1801). As Mayo points out, *The Monks and Robbers*, a story originally dropped and then continued again some years later, dragged on for "nearly eleven years (*English Novel*, 319)". In other cases, the editor (under the guise of the "Matron" who supposedly heads the "female Parliament" running the LM) asks that pieces be shortened: "It is recommended by the Female Parliament, the Matron in the chair, that all out Correspondents shall in future make their Narratives shorter; as prolixity is by no means compatible with periodical publications" (January 1785). But this is all on behalf of readers: when a correspondent asks why the *Sentimental Journey* (by "A Lady") had been discontinued, the editor claims that "many" correspondents had asked that it be so, suggesting that the LM is a democracy. In other cases, the editor tells correspondents what types of works they have in abundance or are no longer inserting: thus, a correspondent is told not to be upset that his puzzle was not inserted because they receive so many of them (December 1798) while another is reminded that "we no longer insert Enigmatical Lists" (May 1801). The LM also tries to enforce a basic level of polish, letting writers know when they need to revise (though not usually precisely how): "We would recommend to Camilla to revise and abridge her Essay; it at present requires too many corrections, and is too prolix" (September 1798). Further, the LM enforced a certain level of decorum, censoring works that were

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<sup>203</sup> Mayo also documents the general "unprofessional" nature of the whole operation on both sides. An amusing example of the LM's dismissive attitude to its writers has the editor critique a correspondent's work and then mention that he has lost it anyway: "Claybourn Park appears to deserve attention; but the continuations are still much too short, and we have had the misfortune to mislay the first of them."

"indelicate," "luxuriant," or "licentious": "The Lines addressed to Miss B\*\*\*\* *on a kiss*, are rather too *luxuriant* for the Lady's Magazine" (March 1799) and "The Wandering Lover, a Tale, is too incorrect; and, besides, somewhat licentious in its incidents" (October 1799). The LM more generally, however, encouraged the writers to work on their writing and resubmit, thereby keeping up the idea that any writer could make it into the LM:

Some among them, perhaps, whose communications have not been inserted, may have experienced a disappointment they may flatter themselves was not merited; but they should remember, that even when we see much to approve, and considerable promise of future excellence, the imperfections of a first essay may be so numerous and glaring as to render it unfit for the public eye. Such, however, are not immediately to despair: let them review and correct; let them acquire the habit of being jealous of the deficiency of their own productions, and it is by no means improbable that their next attempt may have very different success. (January 1795)

Despite this generally encouraging tone, however, the editors could wield their critical function with sarcasm, mirroring the harshness of the larger publishing world. As such, they followed the example of other miscellanies (like the *Town and Country*) which similarly mocked its correspondents (or pretended correspondents) and of reviews like the *Critical* and the *Monthly*, which often reviewed works from the *Minerva* and similar productions with a mocking capsule evaluation or a satirical one liner. These mocking dismissals, which made the "to our correspondents" page an entertaining read in itself even to those who had not submitted work, thus served to toughen up would-be writers. In some cases, the editor is simply direct with his harsh criticism: "Our readers will see from this specimen that it is impossible to class such verses with *good* or even *tolerable* poetry – and we have no room for what is *very bad*" (January 1790). In others, he uses a play on words much as the critics in the review would: "The account of an *Extraordinary Transaction* is so extraordinary, that its insertion would likewise be extraordinary" (December 1795). Similarly, the editor plays on the very genre of the "to our correspondents" page in some of his more amusing and cutting critiques: "In answer to the query of S.D.N. we must observe, that when we acknowledge communications as *received*, we do not, *by that*, mean that they are intended for insertion. – The Soldier's Farewell is *received*, but is not intended for insertion" (April 1798).

LM reader-writers, though not guided as closely as professional authors, would have been shaped closely by the authoritative voice of the editor. In addition to the relationship between reader-writer and editor, however, there is the relationship of the correspondents to each other. I have already discussed above how the editor used supposed readers' reactions to guide writers and to create a sense of a responsive public. The figure of the editor is indeed always present in the relationships of the correspondents, since their communication must be routed through him, but within these limits, the LM has some aspects of a community. As described above, male writers will occasionally write in to particular female correspondents, as Veritas does to warn Caroline Litchfield about male flattery. In other cases, correspondents address readers who may or may not be writers themselves, as when puzzles are sent in about actual

people of a certain neighborhood or boarding school, as for example: "Enigmatical List of Young Gentlemen at Daventry, Northamptonshire," "Enigmatical List of Young Ladies of Aylesbury, Bucks" (September 1799), and "Enigmatical list of young ladies at Mrs. \*\*\*\*'s Boardingschool, Northampton" (September 1799). Such puzzles about real people are quite common, and connect the real to the virtual community. Some correspondents even attain a certain level of fame and are celebrated in the magazine by their fellow readers. Thus, "Evod Mailliw" sends in an "Enigmatical List of Correspondents to the Lady's Magazine" (November 1793). One reader is even driven to write a celebratory poem on the magazine, which the LM uses to launch its tenth volume. This correspondent, G. R-F F-Y (from Goodman's Fields), singles out certain writers for special praise as well as celebrating the community in general: "Thy serious pieces, K-W L-Y, merit praise / They teach us upward all our thoughts to raise; / And many more, with signatures unknown, / Gain from their pieces honour and renown" and "Here HENRIETTA and JOANNA dwell, / And various themes in various guises tell." As such, the reader-writers become celebrated authors within the literary world of the LM, which this amateur poet casts as an immortal institution: "From all thy works we much improvement gain, / And millions yet unborn shall praise the LADIES MAGAZINE" (January 1779).

I have described the self-fashioning as well as the LM shaping of reader-writers at some length because it is part of the way readers become reader-writers – that is, fiction connoisseurs. It is in the fiction itself, however, that the reader-writer connoisseurship is most evident, particularly in the Gothic fiction that filled the pages of the 1790s LM. I shall first discuss the fiction more generally and then focus in on a few telling cases, though I can only begin analyzing this complex topic in this chapter. As I note above, it is often difficult to tell whether a work is written by an amateur or a hack, but I shall assume that those works identified as having been written by a correspondent are amateur works written by a reader-writer. The LM is accused by some correspondents of writing some of these contributions itself (as Mayo also notes), but if that were always the case, as Mayo argues, there would not be so many unfinished works. I should say that it is as important that the LM is invested in a reader participation model as an attractive feature, even if also it relies on uncredited professional writers. In most cases, however, where there is a trail of communication between the LM and a correspondent for months before a work appears and gaps of several months between installments, I assume that the writer is indeed an amateur. The LM features serialized novels from its inception, but these and other pre-1790 novel-length works are all in the sentimental tradition. A novel called *The Haunted Castle* (no author given) begins in 1784, which would seem to be Gothic by its title – and certainly the recent publication of Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1782) could have sparked an imitation in the magazines. But though *The Haunted Castle* has elements of mystery, it – or what we read of it, since it remains unfinished – cannot be classified as Gothic. Similarly, *Seymour Abbey*, by "Constantia," which runs from 1786-1788, sounds like it could have Gothic elements but is actually a sensibility novel.

The first Gothic or Gothic-influenced novel published in the LM is an unacknowledged translation from Madame Genlis (her *Adele et Theodore, ou Lettres sur*

*l'éducation*, 1782) called *Female Fortitude* (January-July, 1786).<sup>204</sup> If it were placed in the Gothic canon, this novel would be in the sentimental Gothic tradition we most associate with Radcliffe, as it focuses on the suffering of a woman at the hands of a tyrannical husband whom she is forced to marry by her father. Its plot echoes that of many Gothics, however, including *Otranto* and the *Recess*, so that it only comes to seem Radcliffean because Radcliffe has taken on such an important role in writing on the Gothic and gender. Since it is written before Radcliffe's first work yet still reads as "Radcliffean" to a modern scholar, it draws our attention to the way that Radcliffe herself deploys elements circulating between various sensibility, Gothic, and roman noir works. It also reminds us of the many references that would have been available to a reader-writer in the period. As the title suggests, *Female Fortitude* tells a story of exemplary female endurance and could thus fit it under the didactic rubric – which its having been written by Genlis would support. Its elements are strikingly Gothic, however, and anticipate not only Radcliffe's Gothics, but also works like John Moore's *Zeluco* (1789); in its turn, it seems influenced particularly by *The Recess*. What it demonstrates, then, is that the readers of the LM would have been exposed to avant-garde literature – avant-garde in the sense that it is anticipating the next major literary development – early on. The story focuses on the forced marriage of a sensibility heroine to a Fatal Man figure – he is "haughty" and possesses a "piercing gaze" – who imprisons her in a castle indefinitely out of jealousy and pride. The castle is particularly a locus of Gothic effect: "Know therefore, that in this castle there are immense vaults, unknown to all the world, which yet the sun never saw," he tells her. The story also anticipates the uncanny Radcliffean conceit of a daughter's spatial proximity to an imprisoned mother she believes dead (from *A Sicilian Romance*, 1790). Though *Female Fortitude* seems to suggest that the LM is interested in sensibility Gothics in the style eventually dominated by Radcliffe, the case is more complex and varied. *Female Fortitude* anticipates Radcliffe less than it imitates Sophia Lee in that it does not aestheticize female suffering. In contrast to an adolescent heroine for whom the castle represents the mystery of a masculine world of art and desire, Genlis gives us a married heroine for whom the fantasy has ended, in the model of Lee's weary and disillusioned heroines. As in the *Recess*, this focus on a married and directly victimized woman renders the effect quite different; the castle really is a prison rather than the "place of wonders" (cite exactly from Udolpho) it emerges as for Emily St. Aubert (and for Jane Eyre, I will argue).<sup>205</sup> While this story draws our attention to the many modes of the Gothic in the LM, I would argue that its focus on female suffering renders it less characteristic of 1790s LM Gothic narratives, which are important precisely because they offer an escape from such a gendered subjectivity. These later Gothics, many authored by readers themselves, would often focus on a more active male hero and would experiment with various forms of subjectivity.

<sup>204</sup> Mayo catches this unacknowledged translation and gives details about its original in his *English Novel in the Magazines*: it's a translation of Genlis's "Histoire de la Duchesse C\*\*\*, écrite par elle-même," (493).

<sup>205</sup> Ian Duncan has drawn my attention to a similar effect in Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, in which the Radcliffean opening up of subjectivity in imprisonment is inverted and critiqued.

After *Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods* in 1791, there is a Gothic boom in the LM that mirrors that in the larger culture. I shall first give a brief overview of the major Gothic published in this decade in the LM and then focus on a few cases so as to discuss the reader-writers' deployment of conventions and their demonstration of Gothic connoisseurship. The first reader-writer to send in her attempt at the Gothic is the aforementioned E. Caroline Litchfield, whose *The Forest of Alstone: An Original Tale, Founded on Fact* continues for a few installments and is then dropped. *Alstone* is one of the Gothic novels that is almost certainly by an amateur reader-writer and features both a connoisseurial knowledge of conventions and some interesting departures from these, most strikingly in the writer's choice to follow the villain rather than the usual sensibility hero or heroine. The next Gothic novel begins early the next year: G. M.'s *Grasville Abbey, A Romance*. As Mayo, who has edited a modern edition of the novel explains: "In February 1793 . . . the Lady's Magazine signalled the receipt of a new novel in manuscript, and invited the author to submit 'further specimens' of the work. Apparently the editor was satisfied with what he was shown, for the following number of the magazine commenced publication [of the work]" (Arno edition, vii). *Grasville Abbey*, as far as could be gleaned from the LM and from the research of scholars like Mayo, is written by one George Moore (who some suggest was a clergyman) who offered it to the LM free, thus constituting an amateur work. It differed from other LM works, however, in that, according to Mayo, it seems to have been finished as a three volume novel – presumably to be sold to a publisher – before it was started in the LM, thus not constituting a novel written for serialization. As Mayo explains, it seems that the editor had to adapt this novel to magazine form by halving the chapters for each installment (xiii). Its three volume novel-length (rather than magazine-novel length) meant that it ran for four years, after which it was published as a novel by Robinson (xiii). The importance of *Grasville Abbey* is that it consolidates certain conventions that would come to be much copied by minor Gothics in the 1790s. It also picks up some important elements from Radcliffe – particularly her use of epigraphs – which help spread this convention. As Mayo explains, it was also one of the most popular Gothic novels of the 1790s and was not only referenced by other writers, but was also, argues Mayo, one of the major novels parodied by *Northanger Abbey* (as the title begins to suggest). Just as strikingly, it was written by a male writer, suggesting that the Henry Tilneys were as involved with the LM as the Catherine Morlands.

As *Grasville* is progressing, another Gothic novel appears, in August 1794, which, as its title signals, draws on yet another strain of the Gothic: the anonymous *Monks and Robbers, A Tale*. The figure of the robber suggests Schiller and German Romanticism as much as it does Radcliffe's banditti, suggesting the growing importance of German literature on the British Gothic; the subtitle "tale" even suggests a folkloric connection, again related to the German tradition. When one remembers that this is still two years before Lewis's *Monk*, the avant-garde nature of the LM investment in genre becomes clearer and more impressive. The other notable thing about *Monks and Robbers* is that no author is given, suggesting it was a hack work; some scholars even suggest that prolific Minerva writer Mary Meeke may have been the author. Since *Monks and Robbers* is dropped after several installments, however, the professional relationship between the LM and the writer is less clear. Since the author is not named, one cannot imagine that she would have written here for exposure, which seemed to not be needed



anyway in the hack world. Whatever the case, the importance of *Monks and Robbers* lies in its imitation of what would come to be known as male Gothic rather than Female Gothic conventions. *The Monks and Robbers* is continued only after several years, in April 1798, by another writer, one A. Percy, showing that these works were less the property of a certain auteur and more the collective property of the LM; it is genre conventions rather than an authorial signature that creates a work's artistic unity. Percy's continuation of the novel veers off in another direction, from the Rauberroman into both neo-chivalric and Radcliffean territories.

The second half of the 1790s features even more amateur works, and it is these that I shall focus on, as they provide a striking instance of the reader-writer at work. The most instructive case study is that of E. F. (who first appears under the avatar "A Young Lady"), who has the distinction of serializing two consecutive Gothic novellas – *De Courville Castle: A Romance* (February 1795–April 1797) and *The Two Castles. A Romance* (June 1797–November 1798) – showing that she had mastered the form enough to be welcomed back by the publishers. What is striking about this author is not only that she finishes two novellas, but that these two are different enough from one another, with the second showing some interesting experimentation with form. While textual scholar Edward Pitcher thinks this may be the professional author Ann Ker, E. F.'s identity is disputed and there is no evidence that she was paid for her contribution – especially as she too lagged at certain points in the works' runs and had to be reminded to send the next installment.<sup>206</sup> E. F. seems to me to be the representative writer of the LM because her works are precisely in the style that would come to predominate in the minor Gothic, those "imitators" of Radcliffe (to paraphrase Austen) that would thrive in this period.

The 1790s continues with more Gothic novels, and by this time it is clear that the genre has been well-established and its conventions understood, and, moreover, that later reader-writers seem to have learned from earlier ones. These later novels thus all resemble not only more famous major Gothics, particularly Radcliffe's, Charlotte Smith's,

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<sup>206</sup> Pitcher, whose scholarship focuses on tracing the ephemera of the Romantic period and particularly of the periodicals, has done some new research correcting or updating Mayo's findings, and it is he who proposes that EF may be Ann Ker (also spelled Anne), in his essay "Robert Mayo's *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815: More Emendations and New Facts*." Pitcher's suppositions are based on matching up periodical fiction written under initials with plots of novels published under real names, since authors tended to use pseudonyms or initials for their periodical fiction. Pitcher finds that an author using the initials EF in the *Lady's Monthly Museum* is published at the same time as one using the initials AK (thus indicating to him that they could be the same writer under different names), and that EF's periodical stories seem to be similar to Ker's novels. Most suggestively, Ker publishes a novel in 1817, *Edric the Forester*, that resembles in title and plot of the *Lady's Monthly Museum*'s story "Edric of the Forest," published when EF and AK were at the magazine in 1798-1799. Pitcher suggests that the magazine story may have suggested the pseudonym EF to Ker, who would stop using her real initials and write for magazines under EF. Pitcher then wonders if this is the same EF from the *Lady's Magazine*. But if his only proof that EF is a pseudonym based on the story of Edric, written in 1798, why would Ker use this pseudonym as early as 1795, presumably much before she had written this story?

Rachel Howard's essay on Ann Ker (again referred to both as Ann and Anne) in the Cardiff journal *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840* (issue 11, December 2003), does not mention Ker doing any periodical writing.

and Regina Maria Roche's, but also those of other LM writers. Juvenis's unfinished *The Castle on the Clift, a Romance* (November 1798, January and March 1799) resembles both Regina Maria Roche's wildly popular four volume *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) and EF's earlier *The Two Castles*. Both the unfinished *The Castle of La Roche, a Tale*, by a Lady (1799) and the impressively long three volume-length *Emily Veronne, or the Perfidious Friend* (1799-1802 by an anonymous author whom we know to be female from the comments made by the editor) are close imitations of Radcliffe, though with the added realism and recent historical setting used by Smith and Roche, and also, significantly, by George Moore in his LM *Grasville Abbey*.

Finally, the 1790s LM features several Gothic fragments, the most striking of which is "Raymond: A Fragment" (February 1799) by Juvenis, presumably also the writer of the simultaneous *Castle on the Clift*. (Though as that work remains unfinished, perhaps Juvenis is more inspired to write fragmentary effects than complete narratives.) I shall not analyze LM fragments in detail, so I will just briefly describe their most important implications here. First, the presence of fragments identified as such shows that LM readers knew the genre – most famously practiced by the Aikins and Nathan Drake – and could imitate it. Further, it shows that reader-writers are not simply interested in Gothic plot but in Gothic effects, which is what take the forefront in fragments. (As such, the Gothic fragment anticipates the fragmented Gothic poetry of Coleridge, especially "Kubla Khan.") The inspiration for the fragment, however, is not limited to the examples of the Aikins and Drake, a point made more obvious by LM Gothics, which often traffic in fragmented effect, as I shall show below, and demonstrate how fragmentary effects exist within longer Gothic novels. The Gothic novel's interest in disorientation and strange mental states, as well as in the cycles of sleep and "awaking unrefreshed," are also conducive to an examination of disjointed consciousness: thus, for instance, the scene in *Udolpho* in which Blanche faints and upon coming to consciousness witnesses several newly arrived figures in heated battle. Juvenis's "Raymond" is an effective instance of the genre, showing that it was an easy entry point for the beginning writer, not requiring narrative or plotting skill or the ability to sketch character. "Raymond," however, makes good use of the fragment's strengths: the ability to introduce strange scenes and imagery without the need to explain them, and the ability to make good use of the Burkean visual and auditory sublime as well as other aesthetic categories like the disgusting and even the horrific. These effects all seem allowed by the LM in a genre that is closer to poetry and that is thus more distanced from the "real"; because there is no plot and not clear sequencing, no moral order has to be put into place. To illustrate the above claims, briefly, then, here are the fragmented events of "Raymond": Raymond sits in a melancholy reverie, in a beautiful landscape, listening to a nightingale singing in the distance. The piece begins in the territory of the Radcliffean mild-sublime, so that while the hero is masculine, the effect is that of the Female Gothic. His reverie signals to, and introduces, another Gothic convention: the victimized woman; he is thinking about his beloved, who seems to be in some vague sexual danger. This shows that the fragment works by mere suggestion: as soon as the woman in peril is evoked, the reader can conjure for herself many scenarios well-known from other Gothics. Soon the scene is changed via the auditory, as Raymond hears a scream and is suddenly thrust, with no explanation, into a sublime landscape. Various visual and auditory sublime effects are made use of, as Raymond finds himself in an iconic collapsing tower, where, among

sounds of thunder, collapsing armor, screams, and groans, he climbs the moldering staircase (made iconic use of in *A Sicilian Romance*) and comes upon a scene of actual horror: first a skeleton in a suit of armor, and then the sexually suggestive one of a man stabbing a woman (the Gothic transformation of the sensibility rape). Disgust is evoked via the skeleton (Raymond is said to feel disgusted at the sight) and, more shockingly, horror via the stabbed woman (the bloody knife is described). More unusual for the LM, the ending is not the restorative one of most Female Gothics but rather the violent and tragic one of the male Gothic: Raymond finds that the woman is his beloved, and though he kills her murderer, it is too late to save her. The piece ends with his fainting away, suggesting the connection between Gothic fragments and episodes bookended by fainting heroines in Gothic novels. "Raymond" is somewhat unusual for the LM in its graphic nature, though such shocking stories and novellas were to be featured regularly in the early years of the *Lady's Monthly Museum*. (That periodical also had a stronger didactic bent, however, and seemed to have had more hack than amateur writers, so I do not focus on it here.) "Raymond" also has something in common with the LM's shorter sentimental pieces, which often also play up the hysterics; it differs from most of those, however, in that there is no moral. As such, this piece shows a reader-writer enjoying the conventions of the Gothic in an almost pure form, as simply conventions, demonstrating his connoisseurship. As I turn to discussing the longer serialized fiction, it will become clear that this genre expertise is also deployed by the writers of the serialized novels.

The Gothic novels of the 1790s LM have much in common in the way they take up and make use of developing Gothic conventions. Mayo, one of only a few other scholars who has read these novels, is right in saying that they follow rather than lead fashions. As such, his assessment, with which I generally agree in this case, supports my argument that LM reader-writers are Gothic connoisseurs, at least in the sense that they are thoroughly familiar with Gothic conventions as evidenced by their deployment of them in this proto-fan fiction. In these non-paid reader-writers we recognize the "Romantic obsession" and "cool knowledgeability" described by Matt Hills. I shall analyze a representative sample of these conventions below so as to demonstrate the ways these writers were picking up on and deploying such conventions as building blocks for their own novels. Their very choice of some conventions over others is a guide to their reception of these genre works, to which conventions were thus to be favored by readers and authors and which would thus become popular rather than be dropped from the genre.<sup>207</sup> I shall also analyze how the very conventionality of these works draws on the readers' connoisseurial knowledge. While the very close adherence to conventions may seem uninspired to a scholar, and indeed to many contemporary readers – imitative romances were excoriated by critics in the monthly reviews – the connoisseurial reader,

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<sup>207</sup> I would like to thank Kelvin Black and Jhoanna Infante, members of my dissertation writing group, for this insight. They suggested that I look at which Gothic conventions from the innovative writer are being picked up and perpetuated by imitative writers so as to see both how the major writers are being received and which elements are being carried on or discarded. Infante also first drew my attention to Franco Moretti's *Maps, Graphs, and Trees*, which thinks about genre development within such an "evolutionary" framework. Both Black and Infante have been greatly influential in my thinking, and my chapter owes a great debt to our dissertation group. I would like to further compare innovative versus imitative Gothic novels within this framework in later developments of the work in this chapter.

as I shall argue, not only sees subtle meaning in the conventions but in their deployment; the enjoyment is in the fact that readers' horizon of expectations is engaged and their knowledgeability rewarded.

The very titles of 1790s LM Gothics reveal their genre allegiance. The title marker that prevails in these Gothics is "castle" – *De Courville Castle: A Romance* (1795-7), *The Two Castles: A Romance* (1797-8), *The Castle on the Clift: A Romance* (1798), and *The Castle of La Roche: A Tale* (1799) – suggesting Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* / *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789). The subtitle "romance" of many of these suggests that Radcliffe will be the major influence, but Walpole's and Clara Reeve's male-centered, faster-paced novellas are as important, for reasons that I will suggest below, though the novella structure is also probably more conducive to magazine fiction. As Mayo also argues, Radcliffe's drawn out narratives of suspense do not work as well for narratives that are continued over many years. As Mayo explains, Romantic magazines were invested in variety above all, so that fiction installments are much shorter than they would be in nineteenth-century magazines, like *Household Words*, devoted to serialized fiction. More so, however, I will argue that Walpole's and Reeve's male-centered Gothics allowed readers to explore a less gendered subjectivity – the figures were usually sensibility heroes as in Reeve, and more rarely Gothic villains as in Walpole. The other romances published in the LM at this period in the LM also tended to focus on male heroes – *Alexis, or the Cottage in the Woods*; *Gonzalo de Cordova*; *Robert, surnamed the Brave* – suggesting that there was something attractive about this male point of view to the adolescent female and male readers of the 1790s LM. This does not necessarily suggest a freeing of female subjectivity, since the primary model for such a male-focused Gothic is Reeve's purposely understated and controlled *Old English Baron*. More so, the impressionability of a Radcliffian heroine allows for a more ambitious and ambiguous exploration of subjective states, one that is close to the "inflamed" sensibility warned against by LM essays. The neo-chivalric Gothics with active male heroes may thus represent a safer and more conservative expression of the Gothic vision, which the LM can square with its didacticism. Nevertheless, the very move away from a focus on female impressionability leads to more of a focus on Gothic action and events that encourages the deployment of various Gothic devices and set pieces. The most oft-deployed of these is that of the exploration of the haunted castle, but the subjectivity of the exploring hero or heroine does not suggest the quasi-sexual exploration of female desire associated with the Female Gothic but the more general generic effects of surprise, dread, and curiosity. The set piece of the puzzle-box castle becomes as important, and even more so, than the multi-layered exploration of mood suggested by Radcliffe's "mysteries." While Mayo calls these stories "the day dreams of school girls," there is nothing to suggest the direct expression of subjectivity here; everything is filtered through highly conventional language, plot, characters, and images.

Before discussing the conventions made use of in these magazine Gothics, I will review the titles and the main set up of each work so as to show the many conventions that are in play in the magazine fiction, conventions that were central to Gothic connoisseurship in this period. Additionally, several of these novels seem to anticipate developments in the Gothic, even if they do not carry out these developments themselves. Despite not fulfilling these innovations themselves, LM magazine Gothics also anticipate

the form that many minor Gothic novels – Catherine Morland's horrid novels, many of them from the Minerva – would take. Imitative Gothic novelists in the later 1790s – Regina Maria Roche, Eliza Parsons, Francis Lathom – adapt the major Gothics in ways resembling these earlier LM Gothics. This is probably because the LM and institutions like the Minerva are in the business of giving readers "more" (to again use David Brewer's formulation) of what they like about the major Gothics. Imitations, amateur or hack, therefore look the same, particularly with the restrictions enforced on novels that appeal so much to women and young readers. Nevertheless, reader-writers of the LM are at the forefront of the boom in minor Gothic novel writing based in connoisseurship.

The first LM serialized work that promises to engage the Gothic, though it only hints at such developments in the first three installments, after which the author drops the story, is *The Forest of Alstone: an Original Tale, Founded on Fact* by the literarily-named E. Caroline Litchfield. Though *Alstone* begins as a sensibility novel, its title promises an eventual engagement with the Gothic. "Forest" references Radcliffe's recent *Romance of the Forest* (1791), while "Alstone" subtly suggests the Gothic castle (both Walpole's and Radcliffe's own *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*). *Alstone* begins in the modern city, but the title suggests that Caroline Litchfield had intended (had she written more installments) to move into a Gothic landscape, as some early sensibility Gothics do after setting up a Gothic premise (as, for instance, Elizabeth Blower's 1785 *Maria*). The sensibility-Gothic mode, in which a modern day setting and sensibility plot of an orphan girl in danger is combined with the Gothic setup of ancestral house exploration and revelation of family secrets is one of the most popular modes of the Minerva – as in, for example, Roche's incredibly popular *Children of the Abbey* (1796), which remains in print throughout the nineteenth century. *Alstone's* subtitle "a tale" reminds one of Sophia Lee's subtitle to the *Recess*. The additional tag "founded on fact," while made use of in the period for various kinds of fiction, does not become a popular tag for Gothic romances until later in the 1790s, as far as I know, so that Litchfield seems to anticipate the appeal of such a claim. Further, as mentioned above, *Alstone* is notable because Litchfield decides to focus on a male villain rather than on the usual sensibility hero or heroine, perhaps inspired by Moore's *Zeluco* (1789) or *Otranto*. Litchfield's choice allows her to escape both a female and a moralistic subjectivity: the villain will need to be punished, but until then he can rebel against all the strictures with which women, especially, are frightened. Litchfield's choice also draws attention to how a reader-writer could easily enter the genre conversation by making a choice at each turn (a building-with-conventions genre model that has been mapped out into charts by modern genre connoisseurs): should one focus on a hero or heroine, a sensibility figure or a villain? Should one stress the Gothic or the sensibility aspects of the work? How much of the work will be set in the city (the area of sensibility danger) and how much in the regional landscape (where sensibility dangers become Gothic)? The supernatural seems to be mostly off-limits in the LM, but can it be introduced in any way? Certainly the explained supernatural is the main way to bring in such effects, but is there another way? In this way, a writer would sketch out the frame of the work and later indulge in adding her own touches. For a reader, the case of *Alstone* poses this same equation from the other side, imagining where the writer can maneuver from her set up: will the villain seduce the woman in peril he has come across and then repent, or perhaps he will have a seemingly supernatural experience and repent first, etc.? In any case, Litchfield must get us to the

forest of Alstone of the title, so that one imagines that either the heroine will flee there, pursued by the villain, or that somehow the villain will travel there on his own and have some kind of Gothic encounter.<sup>208</sup> As such, the reader and reader-writer are both thinking about the established conventions and trying to figure out what subgenre of narrative this will be.

*Grasville Abbey: A Romance*, by GM (George Moore), makes a similar appeal to conventions, particularly to those of *Romance of the Forest*. The "ville" in the title already reminds a reader of *Romance's* Fontanville forest and the "abbey" of its ruined building within that forest. *The Monks and Robbers: A Tale* (1794; 1798-1801) – an anonymous work on its initial appearance in 1794, and continued by one A Percy in 1798, a figure not addressed in the messages to correspondents – stands out here in that it seems to reference a German tradition, especially Schiller's play. More strikingly, this work begins its serialization two years before Lewis's famous novel, so that it also seems to signal an interest that would only later be fulfilled by Gothics. *Monks and Robbers* is more probably written by a professional, so I will not analyze it in any detail, but it is important for its departure from most of the conventions worked with in LM stories; specifically, its satirical male Gothic tone contradicts the idea that the male Gothic was proscribed to female readers. As an example, the very beginning of *Monks and Robbers* both adheres to magazine periodical conventions (though these were only at the beginning of being settled) and departs from them: "Hark! said Manfredi, vaulting into his saddle; hark! the screams are again renewed, and in the same direction. Methinks, added Rudolpho, they now seem nigher than before . . . . Rapid as the lightning's blaze, they rushed on at a venture through brakes and thickets, and fancied they could now plainly distinguish the shrieks of a female in distress" (August 1794). Most magazine Gothic romances from the 1790s, and many minor Gothics from the period, begin in media res for the obvious reason that it is easier to capture attention through a suggestion of urgency. It is perhaps also easier for beginning writers, or writers who must compose quickly, to begin in the middle of a situation that would then follow conventional rules working itself out. The focus on two male figures, however, seems unusual, particularly as we find out they are knights and that this seems to be a neo-chivalric Gothic. A translation of *Gonzalo de Cordova* was being serialized at the same time, showing the popularity of the subgenre – which gives female readers a temporary break from a domestic identity – for LM readers. The names seem familiar, particularly "Manfredi," but what plays against convention is that he is a hero rather than a villain, as his *Otranto*-derived name would seem to indicate. This slight breach of convention, however is followed by one of the basic building blocks of the genre: a woman in peril. Yet here we are following the male rescuers, rather than the woman herself, thus again pursuing a less common point of view. Finally, this brief quote suggests that the author is making use of archaic diction, an aspect that will particularly be played up by the second writer to continue the novel after this writer drops it.

*The Monks and Robbers* thus stands out for several reasons in the 1790s LM: it seems to engage the male Gothic as much as the female, it makes extended use of

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<sup>208</sup> I am drawing, however, on my knowledge of later conventions, particularly of the sensibility-Gothic that would be so popular – Roche's *Children of the Abbey* is the most famous of this category – so that it would be harder to know where Litchfield is going in 1792, since it is earlier in genre history.

"historical" diction, and it is the product of several authors. I do not have room here to analyze these aspects in depth, but I draw attention to this novel because it contradicts the general notion of what women were most generally reading; here we have a woman's magazine publishing a novel that has many elements of the so-called male Gothic. The rest of the installments sent by the first author continue to focus on the figures of the title, the robbers (responsible for the woman in peril) and their accomplices, the corrupt monks. The second installment is particularly far removed from the melancholy sensibility of a Reeve, Lee, or Radcliffe, as we see the dissipated monks drinking and boasting of their crimes. The second author to take up the story, one A Percy, bridges the long gap of four years hilariously, as Mayo points out: "Rudolpho still continued galloping on furiously at a hazard . . ." (April 1798). Percy introduces more female characters and thus injects a Radcliffian focus on the endangered sensibility heroine's subjectivity. At the same time, he or she quite effectively picks up the satirical tone of the first author when focusing on the male figures. Unlike Matthew Lewis, however, whose irony and satire actually enhance the horrific effects of the novel, Percy's is a more conservative corrective to Gothic enthusiasm, perhaps showing the limits of the LM; further, such satire is generally used to mock a belief in the supernatural, as when gullible characters are shown to be ridiculously superstitious. Most strikingly, Percy casts readers of the Gothic in grotesque terms, suggesting Gillray's famous cartoon of women reading horrid tales: "'Yesternoon, I saw [a "crone"] crutch in hand, palsied head, and bent body, relating with curious delivery the wonders she had seen or heard of goblins and terrific spectres that glide at midnight; sealing her words with many a harmless oath, she vowed that it was true, while some eight or ten buxom wenches stood around her with open mouth and spread fingers, catching at all she said" (April 1799). These terms suggest anti-Gothic satires like R. S.'s *The New Monk*, though these moments of satire fit strangely within the neo-chivalric plot. *Monks and Robbers* thus stands out as a particularly strange mix of conventions and registers, emerging as a male Gothic narrative limited by its place in the LM. The most striking and notable aspect of this novel, though, is its attempt at introducing antique diction: Elizabethan English as recreated by an enthusiastic theater-goer. While the first author had introduced this conceit, Percy carries it out at greater length, which may be why he or she chooses to introduce more speeches, including several soliloquies, to the text. Thus: "'By this light,' said the prior, 'the very fellows in faith! But go, good Serafino; go quickly on before. Say I will come anon,'" etc. (September 1798). This commitment to a "historical" language shows the influence of the theater on a Gothic writer's repertoire of literary conventions; since the Gothic was closely influenced by the theater, and particularly by eighteenth-century interpretations of Shakespeare, from *Otranto* on, new Gothic writers could look back to some of these origins for developing the genre. (It is not surprising, then, that Gothic author William Henry Ireland, author of the 1799 Lewisian Gothic *The Abbess* – with the title abbess standing in for Lewis's monk – claimed to have discovered some papers of Shakespeare's and even an entire play, *Vortigern*, soon shown to be his own composition. The events surrounding this play were also reported in the LM.) More so, Percy's use of the antiquated language helps with the world building tendency that would come to be central to the fantasy branch of the Gothic. He or she also anticipates the interest in historical fidelity of Scott, whose *Kenilworth* (1821) similarly employs Elizabethan English. As such, the LM is an early forum for these kinds of Gothic

experiments, allowing its readers to see some early trials in an exciting, ever-developing genre.

The mid-1790s gives rise to three "castle" narratives that are of particular interest because of their resemblance to each other, suggesting that the LM had found its own imitative Gothic subgenre. *De Courville Castle*, by a Young Lady (later identified by the initials E. F.), is the Gothic narrative I shall look at most closely because it engages with the Gothic romance as a whole without imitating any one canonical novel too closely, thus suggesting a kind of compendium of Gothic conventions removed from particular authors (though reminding one of the authors who invented them) and existing as a kind of average of the genre. *De Courville* then reads as if the Gothic romance of the 1790s were averaged out, and what is most surprising in this reduction to conventions is that the protagonist is a hero rather than heroine. While one could argue that a more closely Radcliffean romance should represent this average, I will argue that *De Courville's* repetition of every conventionality apart from the Radcliffean heroine represents a more thorough engagement with conventions as such. My argument also takes into account my research on the *Lady's Monthly Magazine*, which I bring in here only as a kind of background to my interpretation of the LM, as there too the representative Gothic emerges as a work steeped in Radcliffean conventions but representing those conventions through a male hero. I shall further argue that the repeated transformation of a Radcliffean heroine into a hero – as if we were following Ludovico's adventures in *Udolpho*, only hinted at, rather than Emily's, or as if Emily has become Ludovico, as she structurally does – works to counter the didacticism of the LM and to allow the reader a more expansive engagement with the Gothic.

The title of *De Courville Castle: A Romance* again reminds us of *Otranto* as filtered through Radcliffe's France-set *Romance of the Forest*. The French name is perhaps meant to remind us of the less horrid, more sensibility-based *Romance of the Forest* rather than the more recent *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Yet *De Courville* departs from Walpole, Lee, and Radcliffe, resembling Reeve's *Old English Baron* most closely in its engagement with the neo-chivalric branch of the Gothic romance and its employment of a male hero, Alphonso. That Reeve's moderated version of Gothic effects would be influential on the "genteel" women's magazines makes sense, except that a closer look at these imitations shows they emphasize the horrid aspect much more than does Reeve. *De Courville* itself features a grizzlier scene of the explained supernatural than any in Reeve or Radcliffe, suggesting that within a more accepted Reevian and Radcliffean tradition, writers could satisfy the craving for the horrid that we see in a Gothic enthusiast like Catherine Morland. *De Courville* follows sensibility hero Alphonso, who must explore the castle of the title to discover the nefarious plot carried out by his uncle and learn the true fate of his parents. While Alphonso is the main character, EF makes use of the romance narrative device of nested stories to allow us to follow various characters, both male and female, as they tell of their own Gothic adventures. This method of multiple narratives is, of course, common to the Gothic romance: it is made masterful use of by Maturin in *Melmoth the Wanderer*, but is also deployed in Walpole (the back story that explains the curse of the castle), Lee (the parallel stories of the two sisters), and Radcliffe (her bisected narratives, especially the odd change in point of view in the last third of *Udolpho*). The flexibility of such narrative interruptions is especially made use of by LM writers, who need flexibility in negotiating the installment format. Further, the format of



the installments already suggests a patchwork of multiple narratives. Yet even *Grasville Abbey*, which, as Mayo argues, seems to have been already written as a three volume novel, makes use of this device, suggesting that its appeal is more closely tied to romance itself and flourishes as a narrative necessity in a time of literary experimentation with a new genre.

The other LM castle narrative that is of particular interest is EF's follow-up to *De Courville*, *The Two Castles: A Romance*. While the title suggests that EF will repeat her former success, *Two Castles* is actually quite different from *De Courville*. It focuses on siblings on the run rather than on a male hero, and develops quite effectively the tensions of a group of young men and women living in a supposedly haunted castle. *The Castle on the Clift: A Romance*, by Juvenis, is also important because its plot seems inspired by EF's two earlier castle romances: set in the medieval period, it begins with a brother and sister on the run who take refuge in a seemingly haunted castle. Though Juvenis drops the narrative after three installments, *Castle on the Clift* shows the influence of previous LM Gothics on aspiring LM writers: the focus on the brother and sister suggests not only EF's castle stories but also George Moore's *Grasville Abbey*, with its sibling protagonists. Mayo's discussion of the two sibling structure in his introduction to the Arno edition of *Grasville Abbey* seems convincing: the male hero allows for more action and initiative. I would argue, however, that the brother and sister parallel model also allows a certain split identification which goes along with the aspects of the LM I discuss above that complicate gender and question gender essentialism. Further, the sibling and male hero model that would be so popular in both the LM and in the imitative Gothics of the Minerva suggests that these appeal as much to adolescent boys as to girls, further questioning the relationship between a necessarily gendered subjectivity and the Gothic.

The last two romances that appear in the 1790s LM – *The Castle of La Roche: A Tale* and *Emily Veronne; or the Perfidious Friend: A Novel*, are, despite their differing titles, both close imitations of Radcliffe, and particularly of her exploration of a haunted and enchanted subjectivity. As such, they both focus on sensibility heroines in peril in a sublime landscape. *Castle of La Roche* is interesting in that its title seems to refer to Gothic writer Regina Maria Roche as part of its signaling of Gothic belonging. In this the writer recognizes the power of an allusive title in the Gothic romance publishing frenzy of the period: publishers mixed and matched the titles of popular novels – the *Monk of Udolpho* is a famous example – and often released older novels under new titles. This writer's incorporation of a Gothic writer's name into her title is a clever variation on this practice. This writer's designation of her narrative as a "tale" also suggests Roche's influence, as *Children of the Abbey*, though a four volume novel, was subtitled a "tale," suggesting the sensibility plainness of the story. *Castle of La Roche* imitates Radcliffe very closely, however, showing a less thoughtful form of connoisseurship which could mix and match conventions in a more discriminating manner. Thus, "A Lady" begins her novel with an almost direct imitation of Udolpho's first line: "In a romantic situation on the banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood a castle . . . ." Her description of the sensibility heroine is similarly lifted right out of Radcliffe: "she would not have disgraced the pencil of a Guido." Nevertheless, this writer gives us a good imitation of Radcliffe, for those readers who want "more" – and certainly Radcliffe herself was not to offer "more" for a long time – and even renders the Radcliffian heroine's courage more pointed: her Almira "didn't know fear." This writer also takes up

the Radcliffean epigraphs; she begins her novel with a much-used in Gothics, but still effective (near)quote from Macbeth, "A woman's story at a winter fire," a particularly effective way to draw attention to the Gothic as the realm of female storytellers. (The Radcliffean Gothic-novel epigraph had been introduced into the LM much earlier, by Moore in his *Grasville Abbey*, but it begins to be made more use of later in the 90s.)

*Emily Veronne*, written by an anonymous female correspondent, is perhaps the best adaptation of the Radcliffean mood to the LM. (This correspondent would serialize another novel, *The Elville Family Secrets*, advertised as "by the author of Emily Veronne" but she would draw this one out from 1804-1810. Nevertheless, perhaps because she was one of the best writers for the LM and was timely with her previous novel, the LM lets her take her time with her second one.) Drawing upon the Radcliffe of the first part of *Udolpho*, in which mood and Romantic melancholy are stressed, and also upon Charlotte Smith's sensibility Gothics more than any other writer thus far in the LM, the author of *Emily Veronne* creates a lyrical and effective imitative romance. That the title is the name of a heroine suggests the novel's emphasis of the sensibility aspects of the Gothic over its terrors. (We see the editor advise this writer, upon her submitting her work, which he likes and wishes to see more of, to add a subtitle: "We would recommend to our fair correspondent to add a second title, besides Emily" [October 1798]. The subtitle "the perfidious friend" suggests it will focus on the trials of a good heroine in a bad world.) The writer's dubbing of her work "a novel" also suggests she will use Gothic terrors very lightly. Aside from *Udolpho*, her main influence seems to be Smith's *The Old Manor House*, down to the secret lover who must leave to fight in America, but she makes the Monimia character more central and active character. This Radcliffe-Smith romance is also notable for the writer's effective imitation of the dense literariness of such Gothics in their incorporation of quotations from the sensibility canon in the text itself. Like Radcliffe, she renders her heroine's subjectivity through quotes from sensibility poets like Thomson and Gray, including one of the clichéd quotes that Austen singles out for mockery in *Northanger Abbey*: the Thomsonian "[t]o teach the young idea how to shoot." Nevertheless, though she at times copies too closely from her admired authors, this "fair correspondent" uses her apprenticeship to Radcliffe and Smith to develop her own lyrical romance voice, as evidenced by many of her turns of phrase; thus: "They then walked down a rough dangerous path to the bottom, where the water was calm, and gently rippling in various wave-worn caverns . . . On a tremendous cliff, on the opposite side, were the remains of an ancient building, that occasioned much speculation in the traveller" (September 1799).

I shall now look more closely at one LM Gothic, *De Courville Castle*, so as to model what I argue is a connoisseurial reading of a connoisseurial text. Part of my argument here will be that one can close read such texts but must do so through the lens of genre connoisseurship, looking closely at how the reader-writer engages the horizon of expectations of readers familiar with the genre. Such conventionality, as I will show, while seeming to close off interpretative possibilities – the usual critique of overly-conventional writing – also opens up meanings and associations to the connoisseur. Such conventions communicate a great deal to a genre connoisseur and allow her to fill in the specifics with her own associations, derived from her prior reading in the genre. To take one example: the Gothic hero and heroine's sleep cycles, ritually reported, serve to signal the complex mental states the figure is experiencing. Thus, the common phrase "she (or

he) awoke unrefreshed" suggests the figure's tumultuous subjectivity. A brief close analysis of *De Courville Castle* will thus model this connoisseurial reading.

*De Courville* begins, like most LM Gothics, in media res: "Gracious Father! what can this mean? exclaimed Alphonso to his servant. I know not, indeed, answered Philip, unless your uncle be dead. But it is very extraordinary, replied Alphonso, that there is no person in the castle." While the beginning of *Otranto* can be described as in media res, this is much more common a beginning for LM Gothics, which often begin, even more directly, with exclamations. This beginning, then, is eerie and effective, not only setting up the conflict but also creating a sense of dread. Finding the castle abandoned, Alphonso and his conventionally loquacious servant find a place to stay in a cottage in the forest, another locus of the Gothic. Radcliffean heroines often end up in the care of kind peasants, but the cozy cottage in the woods can also be a place of danger, as we see from *Alexis; or the Cottage in the Woods*; Lewis will put a particularly effective twist on this convention in the *Monk*. In Gothic romance, the peasants in the cottage can offer either a refuge from the dissipation of the city and the violence of the feudal castle, serving as a break from the tension of the story, or they can be in league with the masters and thus offer only a false sense of safety. The cozy cottage, like the cozy fire in the Radcliffean castle near which Emily and Annette sit gossiping and guessing, becomes a place for stories. As Alphonso, conventionally unable to sleep, sits by the fire, the narrator doubles back and we are filled in on his story. Within this typically romance nested narrative, then, the narrator introduces a Radcliffean story with a twist: Alphonso was raised by a stern and gloomy uncle who seemed to possess an uneasy conscience. The patriarch with a secret is introduced into British Gothic as early as Walpole, and receives various turns as the Gothic develops, with Radcliffe's sly suggestion of St. Aubert's guilt serving as an effective variation. As soon as Alphonso comes of age, then, he is sent traveling by his uncle, but not before he gives Alphonso the exact advice that St. Aubert gives Emily: "Never let the passions get the better of your reason" (February 1795). The author here creatively synthesizes in the uncle the figures of St. Aubert and Montoni, themselves, as has been noted, a splitting of the father figure. The story continues as we learn that on his travels in Germany, a country with Gothic associations, Alphonso was set on by the ubiquitous genre banditti and was luckily rescued by a Baron de Stainville. One notes that E. F. likes the "ville" ending; "stain" would perhaps suggest the Baron's villainy, but we find out he is a good man and has a beautiful daughter, Julia (a Radcliffean name, from *A Sicilian Romance*.) Within this one installment of only four pages the author must manage yet one more narrative feat: Alphonso and Julia must fall in love.

Magazine Gothics, then, often work like condensed narratives; as Mayo notes, writers had not figured out how to make the best use of the form and publishers did not want to commit to longer installments. Condensed narratives were themselves appealing, as we see from the lively chapbook business, so that the format may have worked better than it works for later readers.<sup>209</sup> What is particularly important for my argument is that the writer manages to condense so much by her use of the shorthand of convention and of conventional phrasing. Describing Julia's thoughts in this shorthand, the writer says that

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<sup>209</sup> It should be noted, however, that condensed narratives are a popular feature of twentieth-century periodicals like *Reader's Digest*, so that the form has some appeal even recently. The interest in online recaps of television shows suggests that curiosity about plot and investment in story remain strong draws.

"she thought him the most elegant young man she had ever beheld; she arose pale and languid: her father observed it, and asked if she was ill." The hero's and heroine's sleep cycles here stand in for, as in so many sensibility narratives, a variety of emotions. The phrasing itself is highly conventional, and appears in many sensibility Gothics, including, for instance, Roche's *Children of the Abbey* ("She arose pale, trembling, and unrefreshed.") and the LM's own *Emily Veronne* ("sleep, that often knits up the ravelled sleeve of care' never visited her eye-lids; she arose pale and languid, and descended to the parlour . . ."). This does not mean that these writers necessarily read each other, but that all are drawing upon a common group of conventions that are immediately telling. (And Alphonso himself "retired to bed, but not to sleep . . .") These conventional phrases, then, like conventional scenarios, help a beginning writer enter the discourse, doing the basic work of narrative-building: characterization, narrative transition, atmospherics, etc. Some conventional phrases that LM writers use to sketch a character type are: "too long accustomed to silence the repulsive voice of conscience, he found little difficulty now in repressing its secret instigation" (the villain in *Forest of Alstone*); "she thought him the most elegant young man she had ever beheld (the hero in *De Courville*); "Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self" (the heroine in *Emily Veronne*). Other phrases suggest psychological states through formulas (the conventional reporting of sleep cycles is part of this subset): "they mingled their tears together" (*Alstone*); "They both retired to rest in ill spirits. Julia rose early. Alphonso was already risen. They ate a sparing breakfast . . ." (*De Courville*); "Alphonso gave a scream of horror; the paper dropt from his hands, a mist gathered before his eyes, and his arms dropped motionless by his side. Julia in vain called on his name; he was insensible to everything around him, and remained in that state for some time" (*De Courville*). These former phrases suggesting mood or mental state often involve changes in consciousness and so help draw attention to a figure's subjectivity. The most used of such phrases is "better conceived than described" and variations on it: "Her situation is more easily to be conceived than described" (*Grasville Abbey*); "his situation may be more easily imagined than described." (*Grasville*); "The separation may be better conceived than described . . ." (*Emily Veronne*).<sup>210</sup> Radcliffe's matter-of-fact declarations of a shift of focus are soon copied by writers who obviously find them useful: "we will now return to where we left Alphonso in the peasant's hut" (*De Courville*). Other phrases are recognizably Gothic but remain harder to track down; their very formulation creates a Gothic effect; thus, one character says to himself in the *Castle on the Clift*: "there is certainly some mystery impending over this mansion." Such a phrase has such suggestive power that it remains part of its diction up to the formulaic Gothics of the 1950s and 60s. Even Brontë makes use of it, showing its power: "there was a mystery at Thornfield; and . . . from participation in that mystery I was purposely excluded."

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<sup>210</sup> Stephen Behrendt notes the use of such formulaic phrases, and particularly the formulation "can better be conceived than described," in his introduction to his edition of Percy Shelley's *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. He argues that this formulation is formally romantic in that it allows readers to fill in the gap with their own conceptions. I would add, however, that the phrase is so formulaic that it signals the great nature of the emotion more than it actually stimulates one's imagination to conjure a unique interpretation. If anything, these formulas eventually gain some power of associations from their frequent use, signaling to a reader that she has entered a sensibility zone of feeling.

To return to *De Courville* (taking a page from Radcliffe's useful cache of phrases): the first installment, incredibly, still has one more narrative advancement to present, as the writer introduces a second story within a story. The baron tells Alphonso about his meeting with a distraught hermit (that common romance figure, made particular use of in the roman noir) who relates that he has "a tale of horror to tell" about his great suffering from his brother. At this point any Gothic connoisseur should be able to figure out the Radcliffean twist of the usurping brother, used to famous effect in *Romance of the Forest*. With romance coincidence, this hermit must clearly be Alphonso's father who is not dead but in hiding. While this may seem like an obvious deployment of the convention to a later Gothic reader, it is probable that the convention was still fresh enough to be suggestive but not definitive. More so, this writer adds enough narrative detail to this basic plot that it becomes particular enough as its own story. Unlike the consistently lyrical Radcliffe, who only introduces prosaic details to great atmospheric effect, many of her imitators, drawing upon a realistic-sensibility strain that values the relatable detail, will mention trivialities. Thus, while E. F. relates several major events within a few pages, she spends a comparatively great amount of the narrative detailing how Alphonso reveals to the baron that he loves Julia:

He accordingly sent a servant to the baron's apartment, to inquire whether he might be admitted to an hour's conversation with him. The baron, who was reading in his room, was surprised at the message, and wondered what Alphonso had to say to him, that he wished to speak privately; he therefore sent word back, he should be very happy to hear whatever he had to say, and begged him to come immediately. When Alphonso came into the room, the baron took him kindly by the hand –

Though the details give a greater reality to the events (and the detail of the baron reading in his room adds a particularly cozy touch), suggesting the writer is careful enough to sketch the scene, the radical shifts in focus, and thus pacing, are a sign of the writer's amateurishness (as well as probable haste). E. F. has not yet figured how to connect events while leaving out unnecessary explanation.<sup>211</sup> As such, we see a Gothic connoisseur in the writing school of the LM trying to devise a way to join conventions into a narrative.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> In doing a close reading of this early amateur fiction I am reminded of some equally amateurish movies mocked by the series *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. While I hesitate to draw yet another contemporary popular culture reference, it seems to me that this show is only one of the few venues for close criticism of "bad" art. I would argue that a beginning filmmaker could learn a great deal from watching this show's close reading of the structure of such films. One of the most mocked aspects of amateur (rather than hack, it should be noted) films featured on the show is unnecessarily prolonging a tedious action: a hack knows that one does not need to show an actor walking from one place to another (or parking the car, etc.) unless it contributes to the scene. Such awkwardness seems to ensure the amateur nature of *De Courville*.

<sup>212</sup> Additionally, we see in the uneven pacing the marks of the writer's haste. Most LM fiction contains signs of such hurry: uneven punctuation, lack of paragraph breaks, and inconsistent marking of dialogue. It may be, then, that the uneven pacing and awkward condensing of events

The above close reading may seem too close for a work that was meant to be read quickly, but I would argue that a connoisseur would pick up on these details and draw some of the conclusions I have done above. I shall not look as closely at the rest of *De Courville*, since its later use of convention is much the same as that in the first installment, but I will mention a few striking deployments of such conventions. To discuss conventions, then, I need to discuss plot in the kind of detail that would seem like superfluous plot summary in another case. E. F. ends the first installment on a weak cliffhanger, given that we can guess the outcome: how will the baron react to Alphonso's declaration of love? This could be read as evidence that readerly investment lies in the love story, and this is probably as true as the argument that the readers are interested in the horrid. At the same time, the next installment introduces another major leap in the plot and a change of scene, so that it could be that E. F. could not condense anymore and had to save it for a second installment. And the love story could turn out to create its own suspense; it may seem obvious that Alphonso and Julia are meant to be together, but it could be that Julia is already promised to another lover, thus laying the suspense on the love plot. Yet sensibility literature dictates that a heroine would let a potential lover know that she is engaged, suggesting that Julia's behavior toward Alphonso indicates she is not. I rehearse such suppositions in detail so as to model what I argue is the closest we can arrive to an LM reader's response. Such a response relies on my own critical connoisseurship responding to the writer's connoisseurship, however awkward her narrative.<sup>213</sup> The next installment is important because it shows E. F. wielding various conventions of terror effectively and showing that the readers must have been as focused on the mysteries of *De Courville* as on the progress of Julia and Alphonso's love. Given the baron's approval of his love, Alphonso heads back to De Courville castle only to find it abandoned, thus returning us to where the novel began. The castle is said to be haunted, a Radcliffean convention, but Alphonso – like Ludovico in *Udolpho*, and like the hero of the LM's *Grasville Abbey* before him, and Edmund in Reeve's *Old English Baron* before that – decides to solve the mystery.

Alphonso's exploration of the castle takes up much of the rest of the novel, whose plot is filled in with other nested stories that eventually reveal the mystery. This structure of repeated flashbacks is used often in the LM, suggesting that it is a good model for both condensing novels and for allowing flexibility to a beginning writer. On exploring De Courville, Alphonso finds the usual horrid clues to his parents' murder, based quite closely on Radcliffe's in *Romance of the Forest*, though such symbolic Gothic objects of family sin are multiplied by E. F., so that the exploration of the castle takes on a much larger role here than it does in Radcliffe's *Romance*. Alphonso finds not only a confessional letter from his uncle telling of his usurpation of his brother's estate, but also a book with his mother's name in it, a trail of blood, a bloody handprint, and a chest with

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in magazine fiction is also due to haste, though I agree with Mayo that much of the problem has to do with attempting to adapt three volume novels to the short installment structure of the LM.

<sup>213</sup> I am indebted to Robert Mayo's own careful consideration of some magazine narratives, though he does not look this closely at *De Courville*, for helping me learn to close read eighteenth-century magazine fiction. I am especially indebted to him for teaching me to think about the early installment structure and about the problems of adapting a novelistic form to what is really, as he points out, a short story or perhaps novella length.

a woman's skeleton. Catherine Morland would not have been disappointed. Seeking help with this mystery, Alphonso travels yet again to the baron, which allows E. F., with the help of romance coincidence, to bring together more pieces of the Gothic puzzle via well-known conventions: on his travels Alphonso runs into Julia who is accompanied by, in dream logic, his uncle. While this strange conjunction is explained by E. F., the need for such dream-like condensing serves to add a real element of eeriness and surprise. We only learn why Julia and Alphonso's uncle are together after another story-within-a-story in which Alphonso's uncle details his usurpation plot. We find out what we had already guessed, that the bad uncle is an illegitimate half-brother to Alphonso's father. As in *Romance of the Forest*, rehearsing the inheritance plot that E. J. Clery sees as built on the real resentment of younger brothers, the uncle forces a servant to kill his brother and attempts to seduce his mother, imprisoning her in the castle when she refuses. Alphonso's mother escapes with the help of her maid, whom the uncle then kills, accounting for the skeleton in the chest. In his guilt, the uncle adopts Alphonso but eventually cannot bear living in the castle, so that he abandons it and spreads rumors that it is haunted. We also find out that the murderous servant is the man in the cottage that had hosted Alphonso, retroactively rendering the cozy cottage sinister. It takes another installment to reveal how Julia ended up with the uncle, and here another convention is employed wholesale: Julia had been abducted from her father's house by a libertine and rescued by Alphonso's uncle, who is wounded in the process. After his uncle dies from the wound, Alphonso returns to the castle for more revelations. Though we know the supernatural effects are rationally Radcliffean, E. F. stages a horrid scene that briefly suggests she may employ a real monster, embedding a truly horrific scene in this otherwise acceptably Female Gothic narrative. The story ends happily, however, when it is revealed (partially through the identity-confirming aid of a portrait of the mother, a major sentimental-Gothic convention) that both of Alphonso's parents are alive; just as his mother had escaped, so too had his father, with the help of the servant meant to kill him. Both, in another act of romance coincidence condensation, were helped by the same hermit; the father went to live with the hermit, as we had already guessed from the first installment, while the mother had taken refuge in a convent. In another grisly twist, however, we learn that while the servant did not kill Alphonso's father, he killed a peasant whose body he passed off as his father's, and, when his wife found out about his crime, he killed her too. E. F. here seems to be drawing as much on folklore as on the Gothic – one thinks of the gruesome Grimm tales being collected in the same period – anticipating Lewis's male Gothic as well as Radcliffe's more pointed use of terror, and of the usurpation plot, in *The Italian*.

While writing a highly-conventional novella, E. F. both makes good use of these conventions and also occasionally pushes beyond the parameters of Radcliffean Gothic, showing the ways an imitative writer could nevertheless add moments of her own inspired creativity. One particularly effective use of Gothic elements occurs in Alphonso's first exploration of the castle, showing that E. F. excels at building suspense. On entering his uncle's apartment, Alphonso is startled at the lifelikeness of the portrait:

He looked round, and perceiving a whole-length portrait of his uncle, he involuntarily made a stop, fixed his eyes stedfastly [sic] upon it, and thought, for the moment, he stood before him. It had the same stern frown

which had so often made Alphonso tremble when a boy; the colours were rather faded, which gave the countenance a more gloomy cast. He stood looking at it for some time, when he was roused from his reverie by the loud clapping too [sic?] of a door. His imagination was so bewildered that he gave a sudden start and struck against the picture, the nail of which giving way, it fell with a loud crash . . . his eyes were arrested by an object which he had not observed before; this was a door which had been concealed behind the portrait. (March 1795)

The life-like portrait is an important Gothic locus, from Walpole on, and E. F. makes good use of it here to suggest the way Alphonso's uncle still haunts the place. Though such a conceit had been made use of before – in, for example, Blower's *Maria*, when the heroine mistakes a wounded figure in a painting for a real person – E. F. takes up and deploys the convention well. The detail about the faded color works well too to give a sense of the Gothic ruin to the portrait, bringing two Gothic loci together. Though the portrait does not come alive, as it does in *Otranto*, the loud noise Alphonso hears just as he is losing himself in contemplation has a startling effect. More so, while the picture does not come out of its frame, Alphonso is enabled to go into it, in a way, via the door behind it (reminding us of a similar scene in *The Recess*).

Though not employing the supernatural of male Gothic, E. F. comes close to its grisly horror in another effective scene of Alphonso confronting the mysteries of the De Courville. This scene, in which Alphonso is haunted in his bed by a grotesque figure, reminds one of Mary Shelley's more effective and famous use of a similar scenario twenty-two years later in *Frankenstein*:

He was . . . startled by a violent shaking of the curtains of his bed. The moon then suddenly emerged from a cloud; and, by her light, he perceived a figure, of apparently enormous bulk, at his bed-side. He immediately grasped his sword, and jumped up; when the figure retreated. He started from the bed, and pursued it round the room. The moon was again obscured, and he was left in darkness. (May 1796)

E. F. uses the revealing and obscuring effects of the moon expertly here to create suspense. That such a Gothic scene can exist outside a narrative, as a purely visual recombination of conventions into an effective tableau, is suggested by Shelley's report that *Frankenstein* had its origin in her dreaming such a scenario. Also striking is Alphonso's reaction here; as Mayo argues about the male hero of *Grasville Abbey*, this change in gender allows an author to imagine a protagonist who pursues danger rather than fainting away. E. F. reveals more of her monster, creating a scene of horror, As Alphonso keeps watch the next night:

A figure, shocking to behold, entered; it appeared to be a human form . . . a ragged mantle covered its shoulders, and fell on the ground, and a quantity of long black hair hung over the face, and entirely concealed it. One arm was bare, and dreadfully torn, with which it grasped a rusty dagger; the other held a human skull. It walked with a solemn step to the window . . . then turned to the bed, and laid the skull upon the pillow, and groped about as in search of some other object.



Alphonso thanked heaven for his escape, as he made no doubt he should have been murdered, had he been in the bed. . . . Alphonso sprung upon it, and wrested the dagger from its hand; it uttered a tremendous scream and fell to the ground. (May 1796)

Because Alphonso does not faint, E. F. can describe the horrific scene he sees in detail and she creates as horrific a figure as she can get away with in the LM. E. F. here also seizes on another effective Gothic scenario that would come to be deployed often: the protagonist watching a monster seek him or her in the dark, particularly in the place the hero would have been had he not kept watch. The murderer attacking the protagonist's pillow, a stand in for the vulnerable position of sleep, is used to similar great effect, for example, in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*. E. F. has a talent for picking up on particularly effective conventions and deploying them in ways that would remain effective long into the genre's future. But because LM narratives owe as much to the action-focused romance of the eighteenth century – particularly the neo-chivalric, a version of which was being serialized simultaneously in *Gonzalo de Cordova*, but also works like *The Recess*, full of intertwined incidents – as to more mood-exploring Gothics, E. F. has Alphonso react as any brave knight would and tackle the monster, thus ending the installment. E. F. herself may not have known what to do with this monster, since in the next issue we find the editor asking her to send in more installments. At the same time, the story seems fairly well plotted, so it is also possible that E. F. did not have the time to write out what she had planned.<sup>214</sup> The next installment provides the expected explained supernatural conclusion, revealing the monstrous figure to be the servant set by the uncle to kill Alphonso's father, who is revealed to be alive, thus justifying Alphonso's curiosity and tenacity in exploring the castle.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Though the narrative awkwardness I have described above leads me to believe E. F. is indeed an amateur, her plotting is fairly expert, though this may be because plot conventions make this easy. The editor's various pleas to her to send in the next installment also seem to confirm her amateur status.

<sup>215</sup> What is particularly confusing and seems to show E. F.'s haste is that both the uncle's real father, a valet, and the servant he forces to kill his brother are named Felix. The story makes it fairly clear that these are not supposed to be the same character, however, which makes E. F.'s use of the same name for both odd. It could be that E. F. had intended to make them the same character and at some point forgot. (We see this kind of confusion and changes in character names in other hastily written Gothics, most famously Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*.) Using the same name for two characters is not a literal mistake, but it is confusing and suggests that perhaps E. F. was also confused. At the same time, E. F. does use the name Alphonso for both the hero and his father, so that it could be she using names to create a sense of uncanny repetition. After all, her choice of the "happy" name Felix for both the uncle's real father and the murderer could suggest E. F. is being clever. Such questions bring up an interesting, if obvious, point: if this were a well-regarded author, with the benefit of an editor, we would assume such doubling was a clever rather than confusing choice. This also shows the perils of writing in installments, since it may be that E. F. had lost her earlier installment and could not check to see if she had not used her favorite name of Felix before. I shall imagine, however, that E. F. chose the name Felix on purpose.

E. F.'s imitative skill is prized by readers, as the LM features her next Gothic, *The Two Castles: A Romance*, as soon as she wraps up *De Courville*. *De Courville*, like the LM's *Grasville Abbey* and its non-Gothic 1790s work *Derwent Priory*, itself is later published as a bluebook in 1801, in which it is dubbed "The Gothic Story of Courville Castle," showing the traction the word "Gothic" was beginning to have. (It was originally dubbed "a romance" as were Radcliffe's works and Lewis's *Monk*, but the neo-chivalric nature of *De Courville* rendered it a better candidate for the subtitle Gothic.) The bluebook of "Courville Castle," now available both through Google Books and through Diane Hoeveler's site at Marquette, features an engraving of the horrific scene I describe above. The engraving unfortunately takes something away from the scene, however, as the illustrator has made it clear the unidentified monster is a man. The subtitle of the bluebook also takes away much of the mystery, as it summarizes the aspect of the plot meant to suggest the moral (though not without highlighting its more sensationalist aspects): "The Illegitimate Son, A Victim of Prejudice and Passion: Owing to the Early Impressions Inculcated with Unremitting Assiduity, by an Implacable Mother; Whose Resentment to Her Husband Excited Her Son to Envy, Usurpation and Murder; But Retributive Justice at Length Restores the Right Heir to His Lawful Possessions." In addition, the title page lets readers know that another short narrative is included, "The English Earl; or the History of Robert Fitzwalter," as a kind of B-story after "Courville." Underneath these larger titles, and instead of the usual romance epigraphs, the publisher adds a moral: "Though education in a great measure stamps the man, virtue is within reach of all; and although the path may be rugged, the reward is sure." The idea that "virtue" is unrelated to "education" and is thus open to anyone seems meant to appeal to a lower class audience. (And the bluebook's price of six pence also attests that these works were meant to attract such an audience.) E. F.'s story, then, seems to have circulated quite widely, further attesting her skill; an 1821 publication with this title also exists, suggesting its lasting appeal. E. F. herself is not named in this bluebook, though we are told the story is "From the Lady's Magazine," suggesting the appeal of its brand name (much like the Minerva). It may also be that Robinson was powerful enough as a publisher to try to claim copyright, at least for a volume (the LM's stories were copied in other periodicals); this is supported by the fact that the LM is not named on the title page, but only within the work. Despite its wide circulation, the bluebook is not the lofty venue aspired to by a Female Quixote, and the fate of being a hack writer – what E. F. may have become, if she is indeed the Ann Ker some suspect (though, as I note above, this seems unlikely), or someone like her – is dreary. Rachel Howard describes Ker's repeated letters to the Royal Literary Fund, "six applications over fourteen months," in which she details how gout renders it harder for her to write; for her efforts, she is sent five pounds. The critics offer no comfort, as they mock the imitative nature of Gothic writers: "Many ladies, from the frequent perusal of novels, acquire a set of phrases which they know not how to apply . . . . They manufacture a tale from former works of narrative invention, with some trifling or absurd alterations or additions . . . . Mrs Anne Ker appears to have followed this example . . . ." (the Critical Review on *Adeline St. Julian*, quoted in Howard). I thus hope that E. F. was not forced to become a hack writer, and that her works were written for the more indulgent community of the LM, in which her writing was dubbed more idealistically "the first efforts of genius." Despite the Female Quixote's wish to engage the marketplace, then, it would remain an area of necessity and

exploitation for female writers, from the Minerva Press and bluebook business to that of Harlequin. With the Internet, some of the dynamics of eighteenth-century publishing return, as has often been noted, so that readers again have a forum, but also remain easily exploitable. E. F., however, was at least appreciated by the adolescent Charlotte Brontë (and perhaps Percy Shelley too, in her bluebook incarnation), who would go on to embed her own ultra-conventional, *Lady's Magazine*-like novel – the Céline story has all the elements, even dueling – within her celebrated *Jane Eyre*, appreciating its conventionality as only a connoisseur could.

## Chapter 4:

### The 'Lurid Hieroglyphics' of Literary Conventions: Aestheticizing Conventionality in *Jane Eyre*<sup>216</sup>

Through romance coincidence, issues of the 1790s *Lady's Magazine* – when its serialization of Gothic romances was at its height – make their way, after having "suffered ship-wreck" (much like a romance heroine herself might, or, indeed, like *Villette's* Lucy Snowe, who is fond of the metaphor), to perhaps their most appreciative audience, an adolescent Charlotte Brontë, who says of them "I shall never see anything which will interest me so much again." As Brontë writes in a 1840 letter to Hartley Coleridge:

I am sorry Sir I did not exist forty or fifty years ago when the Lady's Magazine was flourishing like a green bay tree – in that case I make no doubt my aspirations after literary fame would have met with due encouragement – Messrs Percy and West should have stepped forward like heroes upon a stage worthy of their pretensions and I would have contested the palm with the Authors of *Derwent Priory* – of the *Abbey* and of *Ethelinda* – You see Sir I have read the Lady's Magazine and know something of its contents – though I am not quite certain of the correctness of the titles I have quoted for it is long, very long since I perused the antiquated print in which those tales were given forth – I read them before I knew how to criticize or object – they were old books belonging to my mother or my Aunt; they had crossed the Sea, had suffered ship-wreck and were discoloured with brine – I read them as a treat on holiday afternoons or by stealth when I should have been minding my lessons – I shall never see anything which will interest me so much again – One black day my father burnt them because they contained foolish love-stories. With all my heart I wish I had been born in time to contribute to the Lady's magazine."<sup>217</sup>

The fragmented Gothic manuscript in "antiquated print" saved by Brontë's aunt and making its way across time and distance, "discoloured with brine," appropriately tells the story of Brontë's literary forebears and of a utopian epoch of female writing that cannot

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<sup>216</sup> Other critics have seized on the powerful image and phrase "lurid hieroglyphics," which appears in the Céline scene I analyze as Rochester breaks from the story to comment enigmatically on the secret of *Thornfield*. Thus, Meg Harris Williams, whose *A Strange Way of Killing: The Poetic Structure of Wuthering Heights* contains a virtuoso analysis of *Jane Eyre*, uses the phrase to refer to symbolic stylized patterns that Brontë sets up as tests which Jane must work through. Sally Shuttleworth also uses the phrase in her title for the *Jane Eyre* chapter of her book *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*. I use it as the image for Brontë's powerful stylization of literary conventions; like hieroglyphics, conventions are both over-articulated and, in the many associations they carry from their repetition, suggestive.

I would like to thank Hilary Schor, who read an earlier draft of this chapter, for her close reading and detailed advice, which helped me to rethink and rewrite this work. Professor Schor's advice and conversation have influenced my thinking in this chapter tremendously.

<sup>217</sup> 26, Oxford ed. of Brontë's letters

be recaptured: "With all my heart I wish I had been born in time to contribute to the Lady's magazine."<sup>218</sup> Such romance coincidence is also romance inevitability; the popularity of the LM ensures that many women of that time would own copies which could be discovered by their daughters or nieces as *The Female Quixote's* Arabella discovers her mother's library of old French romances.

As my previous two chapters show, Brontë's memories about the LM as an institution that "encourag[es]" a woman's "aspirations after literary fame" are entirely correct, despite her having read them in the first rush of enthusiasm dubbed "Romantic intensity" by Matt Hills. One imagines that not only Brontë's talent but her fluency (at another point in the letter to Coleridge she compares her ability to extend a narrative to Richardson's) would have made her contributions welcome to the LM. Brontë's alternately wistful and self-satirizing tone captures the adolescent promise of the LM, which plays at treating its young writers like celebrated authors, helping to crown ascendant Aurora Leighs. (Brontë's evocation of the sheer fecundity of the LM, though referencing Psalm 37:35, recalls the famous description of circulating libraries, from Sheridan's *Rivals* I. ii. as "evergreen tree[s] of diabolical knowledge.") What Brontë longs for, like Staël's Corinne and *History of an Enthusiast's* Julia, is "literary fame" (the "fairy gift" chosen by Julia). Her lofty aspirations – which would be honored by the lofty rhetoric of the LM – are figured through her grand and ambitious heroes, avatars of herself: "Messrs Percy and West should have stepped forward like heroes upon a stage worthy of their pretensions." (In place of submitting to the LM, she and her siblings made their own magazine, modeled on *Blackwood's*, whose Gothic stories and novels are more aesthetically successful versions of 1790s LM narratives.) Brontë remembers the title of only the non-Gothic *Derwent Priory* (which nevertheless sounds Gothic and is playing on the popularity of Gothic-evoking titles) and part of the title of the Gothic (*Grasville Abbey*; "Ethelinda" could refer to Charlotte Smith's 1789 novel, showing the affinity in the minds of readers between popular Gothics in the LM and outside of it, or to another heroine of a work in the LM (like the March 1797 story "Athelwold and Ethelinda; A Tale"), or simply to one of the evocative names Brontë associates with the LM. But she cannot check her memory against the originals, so that they remain symbolic buried texts. With poetic symmetry, her father burns these Female Quixote works in the manner of Don Quixote's romances. Their spirit, however, enters the Annuals, their true stylistic descendants. Continuing her apprenticeship to the long history of romance conventions with the help of the Annuals – and their lurid engravings, also modeled on the LM's plates – Brontë emerges as the figure who would best deploy and thematize the aesthetic work of conventionality.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> The LM would have still been published when Brontë was an adolescent, though it seems to have published less amateur fiction later in its run; in any case, Brontë seems to long for the days in which amateur contributions were at their height, and that seems to have been the 1790s. More so, the Gothic stories in the 1790s LM are those that most resemble Brontë's own juvenilia, so that the span of the LM she reads is fortuitously that for which her work would have been most suited.

<sup>219</sup> In her essay "'That Kingdom of Gloom': The Annual, Charlotte Brontë, and the Gothic," Christine Alexander also makes the point that the *Lady's Magazine*, *Blackwood's*, and the Annuals carried forward the proliferation of Gothic works into the middle nineteenth century,

Nested within the great lurid novel *Jane Eyre* is a condensed sensationalist one, resembling one of the condensed narratives of the LM: the story of Céline, Rochester's French ex-mistress. One of the most seemingly naïve sections of *Jane Eyre*, this vignette is actually one of the most self-consciously crafted because most mediated through literary conventions. Like many Gothic works, *Jane Eyre* uses the conceit of an embedded narrative as a means to create a highly stylized, self-conscious passage that is also a meditation on art; a classic example is "Mad Trist" in "The Fall of the House of Usher." The ur-scene for this Gothic narrative topos is perhaps Ludovico's night vigil in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, in which he sits reading a moldering book of Provençal romances as he investigates the mysteries of his own "reality" in the Château-le-Blanc. The book acts as an uncanny object similar to the moldering tapestries of the haunted chamber (which also tell Provençal tales through their faded illustrations, heightening the artificiality of the diegetic world): both constitute old media that tell stylized, and thus somehow "cruder" and more archetypal, stories.<sup>220</sup> As has been noted, such inset texts in romance-derived works take us back to the origins of the genre we are reading – in the case of *Udolpho*, a chivalric romance that invokes the supernatural, much like *Otranto* – and reveal the core of the genre. The story Ludovico reads focuses on the pageantry of chivalric romance, the glittering world of sumptuous commodities whose superfluity

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past what is usually considered the mode's major span. She also sees the Annuals as being closely modeled on the *Lady's Magazine* (p. 413). Alexander's essay is my main source for information on the Brontës and the Annuals, and her insights about Brontë's use of these Annuals has been important to my thinking. Alexander does not look at the LM closely, however, except to comment that it was an important site of the popular Gothic and to remind us of Brontë's early love of it (as seen in the Coleridge letter). Alexander seems to suggest that the LM and the Annuals are similar, but she does not develop this parallel. While I do not have room in this dissertation to consider Annuals, I think that a closer look at them in terms of the LM is important and may perhaps make part of a future project. The one major difference between the two, which has been well noted, is that the Annuals paid writers well and so attracted major figures like Scott, Mary Shelley, and Wordsworth, while the LM relied on (usually pseudonymous) amateurs and hacks and reprinted the works of only major writers. My reading into Shelley's Annual stories, however, shows a great resemblance to 1790s and early 1800s LM stories and romances. Both, for instance, resemble condensed novels, make great use of romance coincidence, and carry forward a sensibility language that was not much in use by major novelists, even Gothic ones; they seem to draw on an eighteenth-century language and style that would seem old-fashioned in comparison to the works of other contemporary romance writers like Scott and Maturin. Further, Shelley's Annual stories also keep the sensibility neo-chivalric novel – based on Reeve's *Old English Baron* and 1790s minor Gothics – in the mainstream, when it had already been replaced by Scott's historical novel. It may be that the excessive sensibility of the Annuals is what makes them resemble the LM, but I would need to look at this issue more carefully to say. The other major similarity is that engravings were important to both, though more to Annuals; as Alexander shows, the Annuals were based around an improvement and proliferation of such engraving. As in the LM, the "text was usually commissioned to accompany the illustration" (p. 415). Alexander's analysis of Annual engravings in relation to Brontë's artistic imagination is excellent and has been influential in my thinking about Brontë's use of popular conventions.

<sup>220</sup> Horror films use this technique by having its mystery explorers find old photographs or old films that serve to conjure the uncanny even when they are not actual portals to the supernatural.

signals the aesthetic overload central to all romance.<sup>221</sup> More so, the secondary fictional world of the book bleeds out into the primary fictional one of the main story – as Ludovico reads about strange events, he hears strange sounds in his own reality – acting as a reflection of the artificiality of this seemingly "real" world. Radcliffe makes use of the device through which the Gothic signals its own stylization: the confusion of art and "reality," as in the paintings that seem alive and even come alive. Eventually, as in *Otranto* and "Usher," the two collapse into each other so that Ludovico disappears, as if into the story, only to be found as part of another narrative later. I rehearse this well-known aspect of the Gothic embedded narrative because I shall argue that the Céline episode in *Jane Eyre* functions in a similar way: it both activates and thematizes the romance conventionality that is the novel's engine. More so, it acts as the scene that dramatizes Brontë's version of the female connoisseur's formula, showing how the elements of literary conventionality become the means of transcendence into an idealized world of the aesthetic. Brontë's aestheticization of a scene recognizable as a literary cliché from popular literature enacts the power of literary desire; the Céline scene is rendered lyrical and stylish because the conventions reflect, as it were, the reader's fascination. Further, the Céline narrative shows how the act of connoisseurial aesthetic engagement is transformative for the reader. As the Céline scene becomes more familiar, Jane, the listener to this tale, becomes more strange, suggesting the means by which the reader becomes an aesthetic subject (signaled here by her becoming an aesthetic object). The Céline vignette, then, contained yet also an emblem of the larger novel, works to disturb the novel's own containment within a Bildungsroman structure, which favors the growth from romance to realism. While in some ways the Gothic structure of the novel already acts against any such easy containment, asserting the power of its sensationalism, I shall argue that the Céline scene is more particularly the emblem of an enduring female celebration of the popular conventions through which she can break out of social conventionality.

### Conjuring Conventions

The mini-Minerva Press novel that constitutes the Céline scene reveals in florid detail what female readers already guess: Rochester is a typical Byronic figure, a decadent antihero with a past.<sup>222</sup> His ward, Adèle, is "the daughter of a French opera

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<sup>221</sup> Gillian Beer lists "profuse sensuous detail" as one of the main elements of romance. (*The Romance*, p. 10).

<sup>222</sup> *Jane Eyre* has recalled the Minerva Press for some of its nineteenth-century critics, though most of these early critics refer to the more conventional parts of the novel in terms of "romance" – a connection I shall take up. Their references to the Minerva are less charged or interesting. Elizabeth Rigby (in her infamous 1848 *Quarterly Review* article) says in passing that Jane's sufferings on leaving Thornfield remind one of Minerva, though it is not clear why she is singling out these scenes: "[her] wanderings and sufferings which, though not unmixed with plunder from Minerva-lane, occupy some of, on the whole, the most striking chapters in the book" (p. 89). Perhaps Jane's excessive suffering as an outcast sensibility heroine flying from the libertine remind her of figures like Amanda from *Children of the Abbey* (1796), who must also find her way alone in the world.

Other critics praise Brontë's daring in comparison to that of previous female authors, like those of the Minerva. Thus, the critic for the *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* (edited by Ainsworth)

dancer,” Céline, who betrays Rochester with an officer, only to have the whole end with a duel in the Bois de Boulogne. Like the quintessential romance Ludovico reads, which is pleasurable though uncannily familiar because it represents an ur-romance, so the conventional Céline story represents the pleasure of literary conventionality at the heart of *Jane Eyre*.<sup>223</sup> In the Céline scene, Brontë pays homage to artistic conventionality by offering readers the conventions they recognize and love. Brontë deploys popular conventions for the benefit of the knowing reader – the literary connoisseur – offering her the pleasure of feeling she has summoned, or even helped shape, the very text she had wanted to read. The desired text Brontë conjures – which is conjured as if from the readers' energies, the concentrated essence of the novel – is one based in women's popular literature, a sensationalist and clichéd narrative that would be scoffed at by critics if issued by the Minerva Press. It is this predictability that allows the pleasure of artistic mastery.

The pastiche of the Céline scene suggests that the reader is offered formula (perhaps a bit like an infant, whose every wish is materialized) not because she does not know better but because she knows the formulas exactly and can conjure associations from their many iterations in dozens of popular novels. A repetition of conventions will thus evoke an entire genre history and the history of its reading. While I cannot enumerate all the literary and cultural conventions drawn upon in the Céline scene – especially since what emerges is less the citation of specific genres and more the play with conventionality as such – I shall describe the general outline. Brontë evokes the world of high society intrigue central to popular literary history (from secret histories to sensibility works to silver-fork novels to all manner of modern romances, both British

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says in 1852 – and his words are meant as praise, as his whole review acknowledges and celebrates the revolutionary anger of the novel – of Rochester as love interest: "What a fluttering the descent of this grim, lawless eagle would have made among the dove-cots of the Minerva Press! How contrary to the æsthetics of novel-craft, to the etiquette of post-octavo and thirty-and-one-sixpence, to the antecedents and glorious constitution of fiction as by common law established, is this frowning, moody, impetuous master of Thornfield Hall! What *could* Rosa Matilda do with such a creature – unless to scream for the police, or destroy her manuscript?" Though this is one of the shrewdest reviews – it also compares Brontë's ugly aesthetic to that of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – the idea that previous female novelists had not created such Gothic figures seems to forget the long history of Romantic female writing. Rosa Matilda, though perhaps here meant as a more general genteel name, was also the pseudonym of Charlotte Dacre, who created a great Gothic antihero and anti-heroine pair in her *Zofloya, or the Moor*.

<sup>223</sup> While Brontë is here deploying literary conventionality expertly, she practiced such play with conventions in her juvenilia, as Alexander argues (in discussing what Brontë learned from the very conventional Annuals):

Each successive manuscript [of the juvenilia] can be seen as a new move in a narrative game, and the Gothic conventions constitute just one card in the pack.

But the conventions are an important device that can be used time and again to organize those "foolish romances" Brontë was so fond of while at the same time providing parodic comedy for her narrator Lord Charles. (427)

Alexander relies more on Robert Heilman's idea of Brontë as an innovator of the "new Gothic" than I do, since I am less interested in showing Brontë's departures from classic Gothic than other critics.



and French); such intrigue is centered in the city and more particularly on the Continent, so that Paris emerges as its ultimate manifestation. This is a world of mistresses and illicit love, and that an opera dancer (an actress figure) and an officer (military men stationed in a town often cause such entanglements in novels) would represent those two concepts seems overdetermined; these two characters represent female and male fashionable sexuality more generally. Duels are similarly central to novels of fashionable life, and many novels from 1750-1850 use it as a plot point (from Richardson's *Clarissa* [1748] to Burney's *Cecilia* [1782] to Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline* [1788] to many Minerva Press works to later romances like Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* [1844-6]). Conventionally in novels, Parisian duels take place at the Bois de Boulogne, just as all fashionable British families live in London's Grosvenor Square.<sup>224</sup> The main element missing from this novelistic dissipated world is gambling (though we can assume the "young roué of a Vicomte" engages in this practice), the other fashionable vice that tends to be paired with dueling. Byronism is perhaps the convention that best concentrates such dissipated glamour, as many have noted.<sup>225</sup> French novels are also important, as Andrew Lang quipped: "[Rochester] sprang out of forty French novels, devoured at Haworth in one winter," he says, suggesting how evident the underlying structures are. Brontë is also drawing upon the recent British silver-fork genre, as Leslie Stephen notes: "Rochester had to impose upon [Jane] by giving an account of his adventures taken from the first novel at hand of the early Bulwer school, or a diluted recollection of Byron."<sup>226</sup> Stephen points to the literary source of the vignette, mocking Brontë's social ignorance. He grounds his mockery in a fusion of literary popularity and femaleness, both associated with ignorance of the "real" world:

The parson's daughter did not really know anything about the class of which he is supposed to be a type . . . . He is supposed to be specially simple and masculine, and yet he is as self-conscious as a young lady on her first appearance in society . . . . Set him beside any man's character of a man, and one feels he has no solidity or vitality in him. (355-6)

Such a critique is familiar from that launched against Lennox's *Arabella*, who must explain the uses of stylization to male readers. More recently, then, critics have noted Brontë's deployment of silver-fork conventions, particularly its focus on commodities. Thus, Elaine Arvan-Andrews explains: "Brontë's representations of the lush life in her juvenilia were modeled on the silver-fork genre, particularly its manifestation in popular

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<sup>224</sup> The duel also plays an important and self-consciously deployed role in Russian literature, from Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1825) to Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869).

<sup>225</sup> Imlay notes the many parallels between Rochester and Byron: "his sense of humour and self-mockery, his lameness, his restlessness, his apparent cynicism, his descent from a Norman-French family, his natural daughter (Allegra), and especially his 'noble Newfoundland,' . . . Above all, Byron and Rochester share an irrepressible sexual suggestiveness and a kind of implied appeal for moral rescue" (25-6).

<sup>226</sup> *Hours in a Library*, 356.

gift annuals, also known for their sumptuous engravings of aristocratic beauties."<sup>227</sup> Arvan-Andrews notes that Brontë, who had a particularly pictorial imagination which was fired by ornate materiality, brought some of her fascination with glittering society into *Jane Eyre*, though she points to Blanche Ingram and the party scenes as the main locus for this. I argue that the embedded nature of the Céline story renders it more powerfully a glittering aesthetic object, like a jewel of the kind fetishized in the annual fashion plates that Brontë loved to study and sketch: 'she closely scrutinised the setting of [the fashion plate beauty's] jewels, sometimes spending months over the task.' (Gérin, quoted in Arvan-Andrews, p. 265).

The power of the Céline scene, then, is in Brontë's choice of conventional figures, which would concentrate, a bit like in an engraving, the most meaning. Paris is the world of fashion, of convention, of the popular aesthetic. The hotel, while here indicating a private house, is one taken for a mistress, so it suggests an anti-domestic place of unsanctioned sexuality. At the same time, the name hotel would suggest the glamour of travel, here fused with the glamorous sexual dissipation communicated by Rochester.<sup>228</sup> The carriage is another space associated with travel and illicit love (usually the means by which libertines abduct sensibility heroines). Brontë fills her account with more evocative details, metonyms for larger popular novel conventions: the cloak that covers Céline representing the mystery and illicit sexuality of the anti-heroine (Rochester can see only "her little foot," a reminder of Jane too, as Céline passes between one sexualized space and another), the "spurred heel which . . . rung on the pavement", the sign of masculine sexual aggression (and the close attention to this sound suggests gesture writ large), her "satin and jewels" and his "officer's uniform," etc. All are signs of a lurid (in both its senses of vivid and sensationalized) world.<sup>229</sup> Brontë adds more material detail to this narrative than is necessary, using phrases that evoke a stylized and stylish world from popular literature: "equipages that rolled along the fashionable streets toward the neighbouring opera-house" (the beau monde going to see intrigues in a place of intrigue), "an elegant close carriage" (close meaning closed, again suggesting mystery and secrets, as well as the "close" atmosphere of the night and Céline's boudoir), "the brilliant city-night" (an especially glamorous night, with the "brilliant" suggesting both splendor and artificial brightness), a "warm evening" full of "moonlight, and gas-light besides" (echoing the "close" and artificial atmosphere of these various spaces: opera-house, carriage, boudoir). Rochester enters the scene already primed for observation – he arrives "tired with strolling through Paris," signaling his flâneurie and ease of movement in this

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<sup>227</sup> "The 'Lure of the Fabulous': Gift-Book Beauties and Charlotte Brontë's Early Heroines," *Women's Writing*, 16:2, 2009, 263-282.

<sup>228</sup> The OED notes that though "in French speaking countries" hotel referred to a nobleman's house in this period, it was simultaneously used in English as the name for an inn.

<sup>229</sup> The cloaked woman quickly bounding from a carriage is an image often used metonymically in period films, and especially in the trailers, to suggest forbidden love. Two such films come to mind: Milos Forman's *Valmont* (an adaptation of *Dangerous Liaisons*) and Bernard Rose's *Immortal Beloved* (about a secret Beethoven love affair). Elizabeth Imlay also notes that the reference to Céline's delicate features ally her to Jane (see below).

world – and his voyeuristic power is communicated to Jane and the reader.<sup>230</sup> Another important source for this scene is discussed by Elizabeth Imlay in *The Mysteries of Love*, her fascinating and subtle analysis of Brontë's use of mythical figures, as filtered through contemporary sources, including the many translations of Homer, *The Golden Ass*, etc. in *Blackwood's*. Imlay's sophisticated analysis is illuminating here, not closing down the novel as allegory but opening up its deeply allusive structure. One of the few critics to take this scene seriously as part of the novel's structure, and to see it, as I do, as undergirding its larger aesthetic vision, Imlay reads it as part of the novel's characterization of Rochester as Vulcan – a comparison made explicitly in the novel. (Imlay more generally sees Rochester as an Eros figure in his association with sensuality, the arts, warmth, and humor.) As such, Imlay reads the Céline vignette as inspired by the Venus, Ares, Vulcan love triangle, which Brontë may have been reminded of by an 1834 translation of *The Song of Demodocus* in *Blackwood's* (Imlay, pp. 24-5). While we can think of this mythical structure (kept alive in modern culture through many sources) as only another source informing Brontë, Imlay makes the compelling case that its presence is even suggested by the names; Varens, she argues, can be seen as a near blend of "Venus" and "Ares." As such, the "the Vicomte is sporting a soldier's uniform as a substitute for the helmet and breastplate . . ." (25).<sup>231</sup> Céline's status as Venus is also central to Brontë's deployment of the aesthetic here, as I shall look at below. While

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<sup>230</sup> Joseph Litvak argues that Rochester's aggressive voyeurism here mirrors Jane's own, as she too revenges herself on Blanche in her voyeuristic construction of her. Brontë's exploration of the female observer figure as double for the writer, a dynamic central to *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, is well known.

<sup>231</sup> *Charlotte Brontë and the Mysteries of Love: Myth and Allegory in Jane Eyre*. Imlay focuses on looking at the uses of the myth of Cupid and Psyche in *Jane Eyre*. I wish to stress that the inclusion of "allegory" in the title does a disservice to Imlay, in that her reading is much more light-handed than that: she shows suggestions and allusions, most of which are filtered through contemporary works Brontë would have read, rather than simple allegorical formula. Brontë herself works through various contrasts, as between Rochester and St. John, which are made explicit even as they do not at all detract from the essential mystery of the novel – the part of Imlay's title that should be stressed. Imlay, more than anything, traces Brontë's stylistic deployment of the sense of mystery inherent in the broad allusiveness of art (and particularly the Gothic); that is, like Poe, Brontë relies on a language that in its literary allusiveness and deliberate stylization suggests the arcane and ritualistic. One of the strengths of Brontë's Gothic writing is her deployment of a richly symbolic language, signaled by Imlay's "mysteries" – a title through which Radcliffe tried to suggest something similar. Further, the Rochester versus St. John contrast that Imlay makes (Vulcan versus Apollo, the Gothic versus Neoclassicism) is central to Brontë's vision of gender and aesthetics, but I look more at this below.

Other influential readings of the Brontës rely on such a mythical reading – most famously, Gilbert and Gubar's reading of *Wuthering Heights* as creating a myth of a female authority (embodied by Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff) that is then replaced by a dimmed and patriarchal one. While this may be feminist mythmaking, there is no doubt that both Emily and Charlotte Brontë excel at harnessing popular structures of myth, folklore, and literary convention. Gilbert and Gubar root their readings in nineteenth-century literary history and Imlay connects hers to nineteenth-century classical translations (especially those in *Blackwood's*, which the Brontës would have known), so that their work cannot be called ahistorical; rather, they try to uncover the literary and cultural patterns that the Brontës make resonate so strongly and innovatively in these works.

various literary registers are at work, as Imlay herself notes, the Céline vignette gives the sense that Brontë wishes to foreground conventional structure (which Imlay reads through myth and I through popular novel conventions).

Brontë thus creates the illusion of readerly power in that Rochester's story in its conventionality is exactly what a knowing reader would expect. As Meg Harris Williams shows, Brontë thematizes the idea of Rochester as a female creation from the beginning, as she meets him while at the height of longing and boredom. On a restless walk, she stops high on a hill, in a place figured as unusually receptive, and Rochester appears as if summoned by Jane: "The 'heaving' heart mingles with the 'currents' felt in the air, to invite a 'tale of incident, fire and feeling' which accordingly materialises, as if in response to Jane's wish."<sup>232</sup> On her walk back to the then-dull Thornfield, Jane stops again at the exact spot where she had met the stranger and waits for the sound of his horse – she desires an exact repetition of the adventure, something only possible if she were to write it herself. The wish-fulfillment that is Rochester's subsequent appearance at Thornfield is thus more than the much-discussed wish-fulfillment of this novel: it suggests a reader-turned-writer embedded in the very narrative itself, separate from both the character Jane and from Brontë, present rather in conventions, in genre.

Thus, the mysterious Rochester's revelation of one secret from his past – his French mistress – is already set up as an unfolding of a known plot. Rochester himself draws attention to the conventionality of his affair with an opera dancer, a French one naturally: "I began the process of ruining myself in the received style; like any other spoonie. I had not, it seems, the originality to chalk out a new road to shame and destruction, but trod the old track with stupid exactness not to deviate one inch from the beaten centre" (140). He points out that there is "a received style" in which a rich man ruins himself – the script is familiar from much popular literature – and emphasizes his lack of "originality"; he did not "deviate once inch from" "the old track." That the character involved in the plot reinforces its truth seems to flatter the knowing reader; the character in the familiar plot attests to its familiarity. This sense of conventionality is reinforced when Jane comments to herself later: "I steadily reviewed the tale Mr. Rochester had told me. As he had said, there was probably nothing at all extraordinary in the substance of the narrative itself: a wealthy Englishman's passion for a French dancer,

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<sup>232</sup> *A Strange Way of Killing: The Poetic Structure of Wuthering Heights*, p. 169. Williams's study, though mostly focused on *Wuthering Heights*, contains a virtuoso reading of *Jane Eyre* that anticipates some of my points, as above. Williams particularly seizes on the striking image and phrase of "lurid hieroglyphics," using it to also understand Jane's stylized surroundings, particularly the charades. Williams, however, uses a psychoanalytic framework to understand Jane's development, which I do not engage directly. Further, she stresses the novel's *Bildung*, which I wish to downplay, in a reading that resembles Gilbert and Gubar's. Williams reads the novel as Brontë working through questions of aesthetics that she has been following from the juvenilia; she resembles Tayler and Bock in this emphasis. More than these other critics, however, Williams close reads brilliantly and makes a case for the "poetic structure" of both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* that is subtle and convincing. I am not sure why her work is not better known, except that she has been more associated with psychoanalytic studies than literary criticism (though she is involved in both). She is one of the critics who looks at gender and aesthetics closely, and engages at length with Brontë's aesthetic project in *Jane Eyre*, so I find her work very useful. Further, her attention to Brontë's imagery and phrasing has helped me become a better reader of these, and I am indebted to her in this chapter.

and her treachery to him, were everyday matters, no doubt, in society" (145). The casually inserted "no doubt" further serves to mark the conventionality of the scene; Jane here stands in for the sophisticated female reader whose casual attitude stems not from approval of the events (though her unconventional open-mindedness is emphasized here), but familiarity with genre. Yet, further suggesting the layers of literary history evoked, Jane's formulation has a simultaneously naïve air, as if she were an easily impressed girl who has learned all about "society" from bad novels. There is an almost parodic ring to the line, induced by the sentence ending on the word society; it almost sounds as if it should be capitalized here, since it is only an abstraction to a poor, "inexperienced" girl.<sup>233</sup> Brontë's class-based reliance on novels rather than experience for knowledge of society (meaning high society), is precisely what many reviewers derided, as when *The Christian Remembrancer* (in 1848) commented that the party scenes with Miss Ingram seem written with "the black end of the kitchen poker (creating stylized and "lurid hieroglyphics"?). But the aesthetic force of the passage is derived precisely from its eschewal of realism, from its deep roots in popular fiction.<sup>234</sup> Still, the sophistication Jane voices in her assessment of society subtly suggests the supposedly false, because novel-derived, sophistication of less celebrated eighteenth-century Female Quixote figures who think they know all about the great world from their popular novel reading. In *Jane Eyre*, however, the Female Quixote's reading is not rendered invalid, since the world of the novel is a self-consciously literary one in which echoes of other novels render the literary coherence of the world more convincing. Jane's narrative voice here thus embodies both aspects of the Female Quixote, both valorized by the novel: her sophistication about genre and her literary-derived knowingness.

Jane identifies conventions wholesale, then, in Rochester's story: "a wealthy Englishman's passion for a French dancer"; nationality makes the formula complete. Later in the narrative, Rochester refers to Céline as his "flame," immediately following with "that is the very word for an opera inammorata," thus emphasizing his use of conventional language. Rochester employs foreign slang throughout his tale, allowing Brontë to indulge the conventions of the fashionable French novels she had read to practice the language. The pastiche is further helped by the very rhythms of Rochester's speech, a stylized rendition of fashionable ennui. As he tells Jane: "I installed [Céline] in a hotel . . . Happening to call one evening, when Céline did not expect me, I found her

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<sup>233</sup> I am reminded, for instance, of Cleland's parodying of Richardsonian sensibility subjectivity, as when his Fanny Hill speculates in a crass because naïve-yet-self-interested manner about the opportunities of the city. Elizabeth Rigby's infamous review of *Jane Eyre* made much of Brontë naiveté about society and her subsequent crass exaggerations; Rigby suggests, like Fielding in *Shamela* and Cleland in *Fanny Hill*, that the poor girl's sensibility, predicated on ignorance and an assertion of her own innocence, is a crass bid for power in that very same system.

<sup>234</sup> Indeed, Brontë codified this voice of doubt and even naiveté, which is the voice of the Female Gothic heroine, the voice that, as Tania Modleski has shown, forms the basis of the modern popular Gothic. That is, Jane's tone of wondering naiveté which recognizes that there is a mystery at Thornfield from which she's excluded, is ignorance made aesthetic, which is at the basis of the Radcliffian Female Gothic. The Radcliffian heroine is enshrouded in a mystery that never quite harms her; she lives in an enchanted world, here the house of wonders that Thornfield seems to be. (The "place of wonders" that Thornfield is derives from Radcliffe mostly: Emily St. Aubert calls Udolpho, where we think she has suffered, "a place of wonders.")

out; but it was a warm night, and I was tired with strolling through Paris . . . I sat down in her boudoir; happy to breathe the air consecrated so lately by her presence" (140).

Rochester is the conventional aristocratic world traveler, a Byronic figure who "strolls" casually through Paris and is jaded enough to tire of the fashion capital. As such, he can "call" unexpectedly on his mistress whenever he tires of other Paris entertainments.

Leslie Stephen finds Rochester's cynicism unconvincing, more proof of Brontë's female ignorance of the world: "There is not a trace of real cynicism – of the strong nature turned sour by experience – in his whole conversation".<sup>235</sup> Stephen is right to sense that Rochester's cynicism fails to sound "real," but I argue that the strength of his speech is precisely in its marks of a female consciousness shaped by books. That is, we can see the trace of female reading in Rochester's creation.<sup>236</sup>

At the same time, Rochester parodies the terms of this Byronism, and the parody acts as a further emphasis of its conventionality. Thus, Rochester stresses his own thrall to cliché: "I installed her in an hotel, gave her a complete establishment of servants, a carriage, cashmeres, diamonds, dentelles, &c. In short, I began the process of ruining myself in the received style; like any other spoonie." The list of fashionable commodities, otherwise part of the romance pageantry, here sounds more like a degraded catalogue of commodities, finished with a bathetic etcetera. His self-assessment is equally bemused: the comical-sounding "spoonie" is a pejorative slang term denoting someone "foolish," particularly "amorously foolish" (OED). (One of the OED quotations for the term is from the concurrently-published *Vanity Fair*, which is full of current slang, as befits the silver-fork genre.) Thus, the sensuality of the scene, its Technicolor saturation,<sup>237</sup> is occasionally undercut via Rochester's self-mockery:

I sat down in her boudoir [says he], happy to breathe the air consecrated so lately by her presence. No, I exaggerate; I never thought there was any consecrating virtue about her; it was rather a sort of pastille perfume she had left, a scent of musk and amber . . . I was just beginning to stifle with the fumes of conservatory flowers and sprinkled essences, when I bethought myself to open the window. (140)<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> *Hours in a Library*, 356.

<sup>236</sup> Imlay cites Stephen's reading of Rochester as female in his preoccupation with love but sees this as a positive aspect of his character. Rochester's cynicism is the transparent cover for strong feeling, so that it sounds markedly different from the cynical voice that, for instance, Thackeray's narrator takes up in the contemporaneous *Vanity Fair*.

<sup>237</sup> I want to thank Catherine Robson for suggesting the term "oversaturation" for the quality I am describing (in a Q&A session at the Dickens Universe Conference).

<sup>238</sup> Joseph Litvak calls this scene, with its infidelity plot and bad acting, a "boulevard drama." The 1943 adaptation, written by Aldous Huxley and directed by Robert Stevenson, with Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine, shows a similar apprehension of the scene: two of Adèle's dolls are in the frame as Rochester tells the story, and his dismissal of Céline and her lover is emphasized by his knocking them down with his cane. (More precisely, the dolls are on a kind of turntable, so that they spin around, suggesting the empty showiness of these society figures.) Litvak draws close parallels with Thackeray's evocation of such dissipated society, *Vanity Fair*, through puppetry.

Céline's gaudiness, signaled by her strong perfume – itself an overpowering sign of her frivolity, her sexuality, her lavish spending of Rochester's money, her subjectivity invaded by Rochester – are thus all dismissed by Rochester through his opening of the window. Echoing the dynamics of the scene, he drily dismisses gaudiness even as he admits his degrading thralldom to such conventional attractions.

The result of such exaggerated conventionality is that the convention is aestheticized; the delight in pure form here comes to resemble Aestheticism. The embedded Céline story, distanced from the main narrative by time and location, becomes concentrated style. Indeed, this move towards concentration and stylization is thematized within the story itself; at one point, Rochester is forced to cut the story short as he is called in to business (his story is interrupted like Coleridge's dream of "Kubla Khan" as he is called to "real" life). He announces that "in that case, I must abridge" and proceeds to render the rest of the tale pure pulp lyricism:

Opening the window, I walked in upon them, liberated Céline from my protection; gave her notice to vacate her hotel; offered her a purse for immediate exigencies; disregarded screams, hysterics, prayers, protestations, convulsions; made an appointment with the Vicomte for a meeting at the bois de Boulogne. Next morning I had the pleasure of encountering him; left a bullet in one of his poor, etiolated arms . . . and then thought I had done with the whole crew. (142)

The force, decision, and coolness of which Rochester boasts draws attention to the unreality of the whole scenario, as if he is checking off the Byronic hero list. There is parody here too yet again: his dispassionate enumeration of Céline's attempts to stop him, of her shallow passions, compact a long scene into precise stylized movements. The abridgement, then, has the effect of simplification into pure conventional lines, of stylizing the conventional scenario. If this were filmed, the editing would be staccato: we'd see Rochester's face at the window, Céline overacting, a shot being fired, and Rochester walking away. The vignette, framed as if by a window, evokes the stylized lines of an Aubrey Beardsley, actions performed in silhouette.

### **The Romance Pageantry of Paris**

Brontë embeds further meaning into this embedded narrative: the conventional yet sumptuously detailed story Rochester tells emerges as romance, which, like literary conventionality itself, makes up the core of *Jane Eyre*. The embedded Céline narrative both deploys and thematizes the romance dynamic through which idealism is communicated through material detail. Romance makes use of artistic conventionality (the formulas a Quixote knows so well and expects), which draws attention to the medium of art itself (and thus to its materiality), combining this with an idealized world view that shows the urge for transcendence of material reality. Romance thus thematizes the power of the worldly artistic creation to transcend the material circumstances of its creation, even if only in fantasy. That is, the conventionality of romance foregrounds form, and thus materiality, while signaling that this is the medium of transcendence.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> I draw here upon Beer's discussion of romance.

Further, such transcendence through the material is communicated by the romance's proliferation of sensual material detail, its glittering pageantry. The Céline narrative suggests this aspect of romance through its proliferation of ornament and commodities, physical descriptions that resemble, but that play a different role from, those in the novel of fashionable life. Brontë's aesthetic logic is here similar to Staël's in *Corinne*, where Catholic ornament and ritual are the means for transcendence. The material detail, then, acts within the Céline story as an expression of aesthetic longing. Such a logic of the meaningful surface is central to romance, as Gillian Beer notes: "If we are to understand the romance method we have to abandon the critical metaphors of perspective (with its suggestion of far and near) or depth (with its suggestion that what is deepest is most significant). Instead we are presented with a thronging, level world, held at a constant distance from us, colourful, full of detail . . . ." <sup>240</sup> One does not disregard the surface to reach a truer depth but rather the richness of meaning is evoked by the surface, by the rich proliferation of detail central to romance. The material richness of Céline's boudoir is then a figure of artistic longing, communicated from Brontë to Jane to the reader – the world of Paris street, hotel and balcony, ornate boudoir, a figure in "satin and jewels" acting out a lurid plot. What Williams says of the charades scenes, another site of romance pageantry, applies here: "[the charade's] unreality (reading like pure Angria) is part of its dramatic effect." <sup>241</sup> The Céline story is another fairly direct inscription of Angria into *Jane Eyre*. These evocations of Angria enable, as Williams also points out, the Quixotic fantasy of fan fiction, of the writer entering the text: "[in Jane Eyre, Brontë] converts her peeping-Tom style narrator of the juvenilia, into the protagonist and heroine . . . ." <sup>242</sup> Like Williams, I see in Brontë's scene of "high life" a repetition of the artificial world of Angria's "high life," itself arising from play with dolls. Brontë, in the voice of her "peeping-Tom" Charles Wellesley begins *High Life in Verdopolis* with, as Juliet Barker notes, "a defence of her love of the aristocratic way of life": "I like high life, I like its manners, its splendors, its luxuries, the beings which move in its enchanted sphere. . . . Let fools talk about the artificial, voluptuous, idle existences spun out by Dukes, Lords, Ladies, Knights & Squires of High degree." <sup>243</sup> Arvan-Andrews also quotes this paean to the "high life" in her essay on Brontë's use of the material richness of the annuals:

The Brontës possessed a number of gift books, whose chief selling point was their literary and artistic glorification of aristocratic beauty and silver-fork materialism. . . . the annuals were replete with exotic, often erotic subtexts. . . . Brontë studied details of fashionable dress by carefully sketching engravings of society beauties from the annuals: 'There was no extravagance of feathered head-dress, bunched ringlets, flowered corsages, and leg-of-mutton sleeves with which [Brontë] was not acquainted.' . . . copying the engravings in her pencil sketches and watercolors not only afforded her with the opportunity to

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<sup>240</sup> *The Romance*, 20-21.

<sup>241</sup> *Strange Way of Killing*, 171.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 166.

<sup>243</sup> Quoted in Barker.



study the highly ornamental modes of the 1820s and 1830s, but . . . the process also becomes translated in her prose descriptions of female protagonists.  
(264-5)

The "high life" of Angria emerges as the pageantry of romance, which is inscribed and deployed throughout *Jane Eyre*, though particularly powerfully in this miniaturized novel that could take place in Verdopolis rather than Paris.

The hot house atmosphere of Céline's boudoir is sensually rendered, with all the attention to material detail of romance. A sense of claustrophobia is evoked through the attention given to sensual detail, particularly scent (the flowers and perfume) and temperature (the "warm night"), and highlighted by Rochester's needing to open a window. The flowers themselves come from the artificial environment of the conservatory (itself as enclosed and stifling as Céline's boudoir), and the perfumes are artificial scent that redouble the odors in the room, thus suggesting they act as an emblem of the conventional redoubling and overdetermination of the scene. Rochester, adding to the emphatic and repetitive nature of the scene even tells us that he himself is "exaggerating"; the mirroring and redoubling work at the level of description and of narrative. A parallel to this night-scene seems to me found in Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes," an early site of Aestheticism. The rich commodities – "pastille perfume . . . a scent of musk and amber" – remind one of the multisensory delights, the rich feast and lush stained glass light, that Keats describes. Thus, the phrase "a scent of . . . amber," though literally referring to ambergris, seems like an instance of Keats's celebrated synaesthesia. Further, Blanche's shawl and the flower in her hair are also said to be amber colored, a unusual color that reminds us of Céline's perfume; Brontë can indulge a lush materiality through these anti-heroines.<sup>244</sup> Imlay's reading of Céline as Venus is again helpful here, particularly in that in this she surprisingly parallels Jane: "Rochester's 'grande passion' for her anticipates his feeling for Jane, and the appearance and creative ability of the girl confirm the resemblance. Céline . . . is slight and pale . . . with 'tiny feet,' by which Rochester recognizes her cloaked form" (24).<sup>245</sup> Imlay draws attention to Céline's status as artist, another way she is associated with the aesthetic. Jane's resemblance to Céline suggests more strongly her own sensuality and appreciation of ornament. While Jane prefers a minimalist "Quakerish" aesthetic – itself as stylized as Céline's gaudy fashion, with its consistent repetition of gray, brown, and black (and her simple "pearl ornament") – she expresses her own more lurid tendencies through her drawings and her more general visual imagination (communicated through her detailed

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<sup>244</sup> "[Blanche] was dressed in pure white; an amber-coloured scarf was passed over her shoulder and across her breast . . . . She wore an amber-coloured flower, too, in her hair; it contrasted well with the jetty mass of her hair" (159).

<sup>245</sup> Imlay reads Bertha as the primary Venus figure, though she also sees her as various earth goddesses.

Critics have also written about the parallel between Jane and Rochester's mistresses, and she herself remembers the Céline story when she is tempted to run away with him to a small villa in France. For a discussion of Rochester's women within a context of Victorian discourses on sexuality and prostitution, see Kate Washington's "Rochester's Mistresses: Marriage, Sex, and Economic Exchange in *Jane Eyre*," *Michigan Feminist Studies*, 12, (1997-98), 47-66.

descriptions).<sup>246</sup> Rochester describes the scene from the balcony, itself suggesting the balcony of a theater from where he could watch the self-consciously artificial scene. "It was moonlight and gas-light besides . . .": the repetition of the word light after both "moon" and "gas" not only adds to this doubling effect but also brings the natural and artificial together and lends this redoubled light to the scene, suffusing it with a rich glow.<sup>247</sup> Rochester is himself implicated in this aesthetic sensuality: while anticipating the pleasure of Céline's presence, he impatiently indulges in the luxury goods of a cigar and bon bons.

Rochester is the medium through which conventionality becomes aestheticized and sensuality idealized. Brontë uncovers and explores this formula's feminist significance, as it is also the means through which the female reader-writer gains access to what is figured as the realm of the aesthetic. This is why, then, the narrative is tied to the figure of the Byronic antihero. Jane's aestheticization of Rochester, a form of Byronmania, has been well established from the novel's original appearance, when critics mocked Brontë's exalted view of masculinity. The nineteenth century also understood Brontë's use of the Byronic figure as a figure of sexual and artistic power, however; it understood that the Byronic hero's mystery renders female fascination into a creative act. That early critics sensed this is demonstrated by their description of Rochester as both a demon lover (Andrew Lang notes that "Mr. Rochester is a modern Euhemerised version

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<sup>246</sup> Arvan-Andrews explores Brontë's interest in a plain aesthetic, a stylized fashion in its own right; as she notes, some Brontë heroines "style themselves as plain" (268). Arvan-Andrews sees this as Brontë's attempt at creating more complex subjectivities for her heroines, whom she starts to cast in the role of observer: "she . . . embarks on a significant new path in characterization: exploring the use of plain dress as a signal for uniqueness and intellect" (259). The main figure of the relatively plain heroine in the juvenilia is Elizabeth Hastings: "her plainly styled appearance signals her ability to observe and understand human behavior, forming the basis of her subjectivity" (269). Such plainness is also a form of fashion and attraction in itself, as Arvan-Andrews notes: "[Elizabeth Hastings's] lack of ornament makes her more attractive to Percy" and "Rochester finds Jane Eyre's neatness erotic" (273).

<sup>247</sup> Joseph Litvak has argued for the theatrical nature of *Jane Eyre* more generally, though his argument is that Brontë's novel tries to control and disavow such theatricality. Litvak is one of the few critics to write at some length on the Céline scene, however, and to think in more depth about how it works as a deployment of genre. Litvak focuses on the part in the scene in which Adèle's presence brings in the Gothic: the appearance of the "hag" of his "destiny," (which, as Litvak points out, is also an eruption of the theatrical into the novel via the *Macbeth* reference). Litvak argues that Adèle's interruption mixes the two registers, which the novel tries to keep separate, through the disciplining subjectivity of the governess Jane. While my own reading of the scene does not engage theories of narrative this closely, I would argue that such bleeding of genres into each other is part of Brontë's deployment of the Gothic, which, from *Otranto* on, encouraged such confusions and such metafictional moments. My own reading is particularly influenced by my emphasis on *Jane Eyre*'s status as a Gothic novel rather than as a Victorian novel of interiority, as Litvak reads it; that is, Gothic interiority is often signaled by an emphasis on surface. My reading of the novel within a Romantic and eighteenth-century tradition (the Gothic romance, but also romance more broadly, as well as sensibility) means that my terms are different. (Therefore, I would argue that the Foucauldian regime of surveillance and display that Litvak discusses in terms of theatricality was well understood and deployed by sensibility novelists.)

of the demon lover") and as a part of Jane herself: "Mr. Rochester is Jane without her principle, and supplemented by a strong, coarse, vigorous nature, moral and physical – hence their coherence."<sup>248</sup> More recent critics have developed this idea in exploring Brontë's use of male muses, representations of her own and her female characters' creativity. This form of reading-as-writing through the figure of the lover is explored early on in the novel of the female artist, most explicitly in Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins's *The Victim of Fancy* (1786) – focused on the earlier phenomenon of Werthermania – which I discuss in my Female Quixote chapter. The figure of the male muse, imagined as a demon lover, becomes codified as the Gothic Fatal Man in Radcliffe and Brontë and continues as integral to the Female Gothic mode today, as I show in my chapter on the Female Gothic film. My own work builds on such a reading, then, based on the placement of the Brontës within a Romantic tradition. The critical work that best develops this aspect of the novel is Imlay's, since her reading of Rochester as Eros accounts best for the combination of characteristics that cast him as the figure that enables the aesthetic woman. Imlay explains Rochester-as-Eros's association with "humour" (she mentions the relation to the satyr plays), "generosity" (his "cadeaux," as Imlay notes, p. 26), "warmth," and the arts more generally. Many of the characteristics that Imlay associates with Eros are also those of the Gothic, however, particularly as described by Ruskin. "Generosity," paired with "redundancy" (what it creates – the abundance of details that offers something to everyone), is a particularly important overlap.

Conventionality is aestheticized through stylization, through an exaggeration that paradoxically renders the familiar strange and uncanny – that is, akin to the Gothic. The Byronic figure, both conventional and Gothic, is thus a good medium for such a transformation. The formula here relies on the observation made by Beer: "[a]ll fiction has a way of looking like romance." (Indeed, all fiction was called romance as late as the mid-eighteenth century, as Beer notes.) That is, excessive literary conventionality signals we are in the realm of romance – that is, in a world that defines itself against the quotidian or domestic – and the Gothic is at the very end of such a spectrum, the quintessential romance. Within a Quixotic discourse, the romance has stood in for the aesthetic, and within a more specific Female Quixote discourse I trace in the dissertation, it has stood in for a world of feminist possibility allowed by the aesthetic. In *Jane Eyre*, which combines the Gothic interest in the realm of the aesthetic with a feminist interest in the figure of the artistic woman, the Byronic anti-hero, who partakes of all these discourses, emerges as an overdetermined figure for exploring their overlapping.<sup>249</sup> My

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<sup>248</sup> Lang from *Good Words*. Leslie Stephen makes a similar point later, but only to point out that Brontë writes mostly versions of herself. Thus he says: "Among the characters who are more or less mouthpieces of [Brontë's] particular sentiment we may reckon not only Lucy Snowe and Jane Eyre, but, to some extent, Shirley, and, even more decidedly, Rochester" (*Hours in a Library*, 1894, p. 22-3).

<sup>249</sup> Mario Praz's exploration in *The Romantic Agony* of the parallels between the *homme fatal*, central to Romanticism, and the *femme fatale*, central to Aestheticism, has been very helpful in my thinking. Feminist Gothic criticism has extended this analysis and shown the implication of such gendering. As Anne Williams shows in *The Art of Darkness*, the Fatal Man seems to suggest a female, or at least "feminized," subjectivity, in that he is constructed as the Other. Such a figure

reading of the Céline scene thus builds on a Romantic reading of the novel which sees Rochester as representing the aesthetic – that is, of Rochester as a kind of male muse, as Irene Tayler calls him.<sup>250</sup> But I wish to emphasize that such a construction is built on the long tradition of female connoisseurship, in which it is genre itself, the romance, that allows the definition of a female aesthetic identity that counters social restrictions. Rochester is thus both familiar (convention) and strange (the Gothic), sensual (the material details of romance) and ideal (romance transcendence). The Céline narrative acts to assert the reader's pleasurable mastery over convention, to express the reader's desire for the realm of the aesthetic indicated by the sensuality of the scene, and to enact that last act of estrangement by which the conventional becomes the strange and the aesthetic is ruptured from the real. As I shall develop below, Rochester's own interruptions and commentary on the scene of storytelling, and especially on Jane's status as privileged audience, will serve to make this familiar narrative strange. His ugliness, embedded within a scene of material luxury and beauty, will serve to mark the sense of aesthetic distance from this familiar scene, a distance that calls for a connoisseurial reader – in the scene stood in for by Jane.

The obvious aesthetic lesson of the Céline story seems at first to be primarily a rejection of conventionality. That is, the point of the scene seems to be that Jane's taste is superior to Céline's (and that of other society women) because she knows how to appreciate the unusual Rochester; the scene therefore seems to celebrate Jane's superior Gothic aesthetic. Such a lesson is repeated in the contrast between Rochester and St. John, who are alternately described in terms of Gothic versus classical aesthetics – Rochester seems to embody Ruskin's Gothic, down to his almost comical "grimaces," while St. John is repeatedly said to have classical features – and which casts out killing classicism fairly decisively.<sup>251</sup>

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of the male as Other is then easily harnessed for a feminist purpose, as in Radcliffe's novels of female psychology. As such, the Fatal Man literary device – which Williams traces from the Satan/Eve dyad (as refigures by Romanticism) to that of Gothic villain/virtuous orphan in classic Gothic and mysterious man/single woman in modern romance novels – has been central to explorations of female subjectivity and social position, including women's wish to participate in the (to them) forbidden realm of creation. I develop this point more thoroughly in my last chapter on the feminist uses of the Gothic in women's films. (Kari Lokke presented a paper at the 2012 NASSR looking at Barbauld's use of the Eve/Satan connection in her poetry on female artistic creativity and the imagined world of the ideal, which helped me realize the broad feminist Romantic use of the Fatal Man figure.)

<sup>250</sup> *Holy Ghosts*. Tayler traces Rochester's development from the juvenilia's Byronic anti-hero Zamorna.

<sup>251</sup> Brontë emphasizes Rochester's strange, excessive gestures: "He made a curious grimace, – one of his strange and equivocal demonstrations . . ." (223). Later in the same conversation, when Jane mentions needing to find another job once he marries Blanche, he indicates his inscrutable plans by similar means: "'In course!' he exclaimed, with a twang of voice and a distortion of features equally fantastic and ludicrous" (225). (Monsieur Paul is also given these Gothic characteristics.)

The element of the "ludicrous" is important to the Gothic, as Ruskin explains. It is also an important element for the Quixote figure, in which it represents both his obliviousness and

Rochester's Gothic strangeness, however, partakes of the larger conventionality of romance, so that it makes sense that he must be both conventional and strange and must combine the two aesthetics. That the scene is familiar in its Byronism establishes Rochester's conventionality, as I showed above. Further, however, the Céline narrative allows such a combination not only by contrasting Rochester's valorized ugliness to Céline's sphere of frivolity but by creating a charge from a juxtaposition of the two.<sup>252</sup> Rochester believes he is for Céline what he actually is for Jane, an "ugly" "idol": "He thought himself [Céline's] idol, ugly as he was: he believed, as he said, that she preferred his 'taille d'athlète' to the elegance of the Apollo Belvidere" (140). Jane later refers to Rochester as her "idol": "I could not, in those days, see God for his creature, of whom I had made an idol" (274). Rochester is thus both a strange figure that counters a traditional aesthetic – an "ugly" "idol" whose extreme aesthetic attracts extreme devotion – and the familiar demon lover figure recognized by critics. But his ugliness is purposely played up here both by contrast to Céline – a contrast that we can perhaps see better through the Venus and Vulcan reference – and by its association with the aesthetic saturation of the scene. In contrast to the "Gallic sylph," Rochester emerges as a "gnome," drawing our attention to the heightened terms of this vignette as well as to the power of contrast. (Céline and Jane are also being contrasted here, even as they emerge as simultaneously similar in some ways.) Rochester's ugliness, therefore, is part of the aesthetic overload of the scene, so that it acts in terms similar to those of the luxury goods on display. Céline, the figure of one kind of aesthetic excess, renders Rochester equally excessive, calling attention to his ugliness and referring to his "deformities," which she had earlier aestheticized into his "beauté mâle." That Céline and her lover focus on Rochester's ugliness as they themselves are the focus of his observation, and as Jane is herself focused on Rochester's recounting, serves to place his strange aesthetic at the center of the conventional scene. (Contemporary critics had noted Brontë's appeal to a decadent aesthetic of "abnormality" – most associated in the late 1840s with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – which casts Rochester and Jane as freaks.) Similarly, Rochester's self-satirizing description, which draws attention to his degradation and weakness, serves to paradoxically render his Byronic cynicism, a kind of conventional strength, more complete: "She was returning: of course my heart thumped with impatience against the iron rails I leant upon . . . . Bending over the balcony I was about to murmur, 'Mon Ange' – in a tone, of course, which should be audible to the ear of love alone . . . ." Like the figure of the clichéd lover, he awaits his beloved on a balcony, his heart of course beating against it. As he describes the scene of betrayal in retrospect, it is notable that Rochester actually draws attention to his own gullibility and performance of romantic clichés. The charge of the scene lies precisely in the contrast between his former embodying of such

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incompatibility with the social order. I think that we see this element in *Corinne*; it is very subtle, but it is magnified by Ellen Moers's reading in *Literary Women*, which sees the whole novel as based in narcissistic fantasy. I would argue that it is a marker of *Corinne*'s excess and originality, so that both the Gothic Rochester and the Quixote figure help us see the positive nature of such ludicrity.

<sup>252</sup> I would like to thank Hilary Schor for helping me develop and articulate the way "the language of beauty and ugliness of the Gothic" (as she put it) are used by Brontë within her exploration of aesthetics.

clichés and his present scoffing at their very cheesiness. By adding "of course" he means to reassure us that he only meant to whisper "Mon Ange," not say it fully aloud (which possibility evokes the embarrassing again), but it also suggests his belief in such secret communications. That he lets Jane participate in the cynical framing of such a scene serves to lend some of his detached glamour to her as listener. Rochester is extending his Byronic world-weariness to Jane herself; both can observe the amusing dissipation of society from a detached distance.<sup>253</sup>

Like Radcliffe in the Ludovico scene, then, Brontë too melds the world of embedded stylized narrative and diegetic reality, letting the atmosphere of an exotic otherworld infuse into Jane's surroundings as she listens: "I sat down, took out a cigar, – I will take one now, of you will excuse me.' Here ensued a pause, filled up by the producing and lighting of a cigar; having placed it on his lips and breathed a trail of Havannah incense on the freezing and sunless air, he went on . . ." The cigar smoke from the lurid story bleeds into Jane's reality, bringing some of its warmth and suggesting Rochester's infecting sensuality; the sensual pleasure Rochester experiences in waiting for Céline is mirrored by the sensuality of telling the story. And the very sensory abundance of the vignette contrasts powerfully with Jane's former privations. Like the "trail of Havannah incense on the freezing and sunless air," Rochester's story brings the exotic and sensual to a formerly-starved Jane.<sup>254</sup> That his stories seem to almost literally feed her, suggesting the way sensuality and the imagination are linked by Brontë, is noted by Sandra M. Gilbert, in an essay in which she considers the feminist uses of the lurid in *Jane Eyre*: "When [Rochester] confides to her what from any conventional Victorian perspective are the sexual improprieties in his past, she 'hears him talk with relish . . . ' . . . Indeed she explains 'my bodily health improved; I *gathered flesh and strength* (177; emphasis added by Gilbert)" (p. 366). Imlay would connect this to Rochester's role as Eros, who brings the vitality and variety of the world – figured as the multiplicity (and "infinity," as Beer notes) of romance – to a figure systematically deprived by a convergence of patriarchy with class strictures.

Further, the story transforms Jane too and renders her aesthetic in her role as listener, just as the reader is rendered an aesthetic subject through her recognition of conventions.

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<sup>253</sup> Litvak suggests something similar in his idea that Rochester is training Jane's interpretation of the scene. He argues that Rochester wishes Jane to downplay the scandalous nature of the scene so as to render her more completely a virtuous middle class domestic figure. I would argue that training her in detachment can also be seen as decadent. It is true, as Litvak notes, that Céline and her officer are ultimately rendered as boring – as Blanche herself is, as Litvak notes – but Jane's dismissal of society scandals as not exciting enough (in comparison to the decadence suggested by Rochester's ugliness) suggests that she is more sophisticated and scandalous than even the Parisian beau monde. As has been noted about Brontë's female observers, they seem scandalously unshockable; thus we see Lucy Snowe observe a whole gallery of corrupt figures with more of an aesthetic and psychological rather than moral gaze. Perhaps this explains Brontë's love of Thackeray's own amused gaze at dissipation. But Brontë does not simply satirize it all, but rather shows its romance fascination.

<sup>254</sup> These qualities are precisely those associated with the annuals, as Arvan-Andrews notes: "Brontë absorbed the sensuality and exoticism of Romantic images of women from the annuals" (270).

"Strange!" he exclaimed, suddenly starting again from the point.  
 "Strange that I should choose you for the confidant of all this, young lady:  
 passing strange that you should listen to me quietly, as if it were the  
 most usual thing in the world for a man like me to tell stories of his  
 opera-mistresses to a quaint, inexperienced girl like you! But the last  
 singularity explains the first, as I intimated once before: you, with your  
 gravity, considerateness, and caution were made to be the recipient of  
 secrets." (143)

The *Othello* reference suggests, of course, that much of Rochester's appeal is his worldliness and his exciting stories about the greater world, as Jane says herself. More so, Rochester's language is always aestheticized – as Imlay notes, "His whole cast of speech is largely a long poem (rich in Shakespearean quotations), which at times assumes tremendous intensity" (30) – so that he injects strangeness even as he names it. Being recognized as strange in her spectatorship, Jane here becomes a figure for the reader, as her ability to listen and understand promise her future secrets – that is, more exciting narrative. (Such a scene is echoed by Jane's later envy of Blanche for her ability to explore the abyss of mystery associated with Rochester, figured as the Gothic genre itself.) Rochester again draws attention to the story's conventionality: the plural, "stories of opera-mistresses," points to its generic quality – he only mentions one opera-mistress, but she is one of a well-known type. Yet this familiar tale is rendered strange by the circumstance of its telling – particularly the "quaint" nature of his auditor – and by Rochester's incantatory repetition of the word. Rochester oddly keeps interrupting his story to comment on the scenario, which serves to draw attention to storytelling itself. And his interruptions serve to introduce a more recognizably Gothic aesthetic – the tumultuous waters he sees in Jane's future, or his vision of the "hag" writing his destiny – into which he also writes in Jane. As Williams and others have noted, Jane is the figure of the writer enabled to enter the world she herself creates – Brontë entering Angria – and Rochester's inscribing of Jane into a similar narrative of passion (he predicts it for her future, but his very telling of the story already sets it into motion) is the ultimate literalization of fan fiction, in which the writer writes her own desire into the story.

Rochester, then, like any Radcliffian Gothic villain, is the ultimate entry-point to the world of the aesthetic for the heroine. So it is not surprising that his stories would be both Jane's, and the reader's, access to aesthetic overload. Jane suggests the aestheticism Rochester allows when she explains her jealousy of Blanche's future unlimited access to Rochester: "I thought Miss Ingram happy, because one day she might look into the abyss at her leisure, explore its secrets and analyze their nature" (188). The word "leisure" suggests that though Rochester is the Gothic – the abyss – he is also a commodified Gothic; there is a certain indolence associated with the thrill he allows one to indulge. The relationship to the Gothic this passage sets up is that of a jaded aesthete: one does not recoil or become energized on looking into the abyss, but rather lingers on its mysteries, almost in the way of a Wildean character. We are told that Jane has "a turn . . . for analysis," and her reading of Rochester has a critical edge (she likes to study character, she says), but her gaze lingers not simply on Rochester but on the pleasures of the

literary.<sup>255</sup> At the same time, such a Gothic aesthetic is later described in terms not of stasis but of disjointed narrative, suggesting the outlines of romance, more vivid for being fragmented: "I used to rush into strange dreams at night [Jane says of her time at Moor House]: dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy – dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance, I still again and again met Mr. Rochester, always at some exciting crisis" (367). While Jane has a "sense" of "loving him, being loved by him" in these dreams, her sense of happiness is intertwined with what sounds like an entire larger plot of "adventure." That is, as in the longing for "adventure" that first seems to produce Rochester, as Williams notes, so here too he is only part of a larger plot of intrigue in which Jane herself takes the major role. Such a plot too focuses on narrative action rather than on resolution, challenging the idea that the novel works toward a containment into a Bildungsroman. As in the *Lady's Magazine*, romance guarantees a Quixotic withdrawal from the world of social pressures, including that of socialization.

### **Conclusion: Embracing Convention and Rejecting the Higher Calling of Bildungsroman**

In this chapter, then, as in my entire dissertation, I aim to bring together an aesthetics-focused approach to the Gothic, as developed currently by figures like Emma Clery, with a feminist reading. While feminist criticism has been one of the most influential approaches to the Gothic, it has not taken into enough account the long history of aesthetics which undergirds the mode. What I propose as being at stake in focusing on the Céline scene is not only a reconsideration of the feminist implications of romance connoisseurship, then, but also a reconsideration of how we read the novel itself, particularly its status as a Bildungsroman. Even a critic like Carol Bock, who is, like me, interested in countering the purely "confessional" aspects of the novel and focusing on the self-conscious act of "storytelling" central to Brontë's work, reads the novel as Jane's growth as a storyteller. In contrast, I wish to emphasize the static nature of the novel and of Jane herself, a dynamic associated with sensibility, in which the heroine does not

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<sup>255</sup> In relating her pleasure in listening to her friend Mary Ann Wilson at Lowood, Jane says: "She had a turn for narrative, I for analysis" (78).

Blanche is, as has often been noted, including by Williams, a version of the exotic mistress and competitor to Jane. All these mistresses fail with Rochester because they are conventional, much as that conventionality serves to make Rochester into the Byronic figure he is. Yet her conventionality is not self-reflexive the way Jane's is; that is, Blanche "repeats phrases from books," which represents a form of degraded conventionality. Céline's conventionality is only rendered aesthetic because it is filtered through Jane's (and the reader's) connoisseurial vision; we understand Céline as a literary figure even within the world of the novel. Blanche, on the other hand, is used by Brontë to off-set the sense that Jane's appreciation of Rochester is also only conventional Byronism. (Meg Harris Williams also notes this.) That is, the novel flatters Jane by suggesting that her own Byronism is much more sophisticated than its conventional iteration. Blanche, then, plays the role of the sensibility anti-heroine, whose aesthetic enthusiasm is a way to win distinction – in this case, to win a rich husband. Her very showiness and status – one that would be used against a Female Quixote in an anti-Female Quixote work – are precisely the wrong kind of performance. What it advertises is a lack of artistic receptivity that is so celebrated in Jane, and also in the reader of the novel, who can participate in an appreciation of Brontë's deployment of literary conventions.



change to adapt to the world but is rather "rewarded" for not changing. Pamela, well understood as a precursor to Jane Eyre, consolidates such a dynamic: she has nothing to learn because the world will justify her original feelings. That Jane was read in sensibility terms is clear from Elizabeth Rigby's infamous review, in which she sees Jane as an even slyer Shamela. Rigby's review is within the long tradition of anti-romance satirists who see idealism as only a more subtle, and more cynical, form of materialism. Jane emerges as even more disturbing to Rigby, however, since she does not even make a concession to societal views on women's attractiveness, and wins Rochester despite the traditional attractions and modesty of a Pamela; she therefore crosses both class and gender boundaries. In contrast, Rigby praises the easier to understand Becky Sharp, a more typical femme fatale (though she is not conventionally pretty either). Bock and others refer to Jane's status as a Scheherazade figure – an idea best explored by Nancy Workman, who argues that Jane achieves power over Rochester by changing his mind about woman's nature – which should already signal that Jane will not change, but will rather change the world around her.<sup>256</sup> I thus agree with Gilbert and Gubar's emphasis on Rochester's transformation rather than Jane's. Though their reading is foundational for Gothic criticism, and has influenced me greatly, I do not follow them in pursuing the significance of Rochester's taming only because that suggests a teleological view I do not see as the main thrust of the novel. I therefore argue that focusing on the novel's supposed rejection of fiery romance for a more tamed Victorian "realism" mischaracterizes its power, and especially its feminist significance, by allying feminine power with domesticity. After all, Jane is ready to return to Rochester before she knows that he has been chastened, suggesting she had been right all along in her valorization of him over other possibilities the novel offers.<sup>257</sup>

The novel therefore presents the final investment in materiality – Jane's refusal of St. John's privations – as the paradoxically idealistic position. The aesthetic sensuality embodied in Rochester is, then, much like the stylistic conventionality of romance: a rejection of worldliness that is figured through materiality. In this, again, Rochester plays the role that Catholicism-as-aesthetic plays in *Corinne*, which also makes the case for the transcendent power of convention (there figured as aesthetic ritual), associated with the female artist. Indeed, Rochester has been read as a Catholic figure, much like Brontë's explicitly Catholic Monsieur Paul, and this is because he is associated with a sensual aesthetic that is culturally represented by Catholicism.<sup>258</sup> Brontë imagines within Britain

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<sup>256</sup> "Scheherazade at Thornfield"

<sup>257</sup> Sandra Gilbert notes this too.

<sup>258</sup> Kathleen Vejvoda's "Idolatry in *Jane Eyre*" traces the way Rochester is figured as Catholic and Jane's love as a form of idolatry associated with Catholicism. Vejvoda argues shrewdly and convincingly that Jane's idolizing of Rochester is mitigated by her seeing his faults (signified by his scars), so that it represents a better form of idolatry than the "socially sanctioned" one that St. John offers. Vejvoda's careful and acute reading has helped me better see the parallels between Brontë and Staël in that both use Catholicism to represent a sensual aesthetic that is also freeing to women. (Vejvoda even argues that Eliza's choice to become a nun can be seen as her feminist bid for freedom and power.)

I do not deal in detail with the end of the novel, however, precisely because I wish to take the stress away from its conclusion and its Bildungsroman status. The role of Bertha is likewise

– rather than outside Britain, as Staël does – a world of the aesthetic, the world of Eros as Imlay explains, which is a world in which the aesthetic woman can thrive. In this, then, I would stress Kari Lokke's reading of *Corinne*, which sees Corinne's "enthusiasm"

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complex, and though I do not have room here to analyze it, I generally agree with Gilbert and Gubar's idea that Bertha is not an aspect of Jane that she must overcome but that is actually integral to her personality. The celebrated construction of Jane's "subjectivity," central to the feminist approach I also take, has been powerfully critiqued by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," particularly in its complicity with an imperialist framework. Spivak shows the similarity between Jane's project of feminist individuation and St. John's in that both are based on a construction of the colonial Other in ways that benefit their own self-definition: just as St. John, the figure of the missionary, must define Indians as in need of liberation to secure his own heroic position so Jane must define Bertha as less than human (as also not possessing a full subjectivity) to secure a feminist marriage (which also, as Spivak shows, exalts her subjectivity by allying it to social power). As Spivak helps us see, Brontë suggests that Jane's spiritual marriage, the basis of the creed of feminism she energizes, is rendered as parallel to, and more important than, any other kind of mission. Such a celebration of her own "better" form of subjectivity, however, is based on again creating a hierarchy based on the abasement of another kind of woman. (I realize that Spivak is more interested in how such a missionary view of the world relates to an imperialist framework, but I think it applies more generally to an unquestioned celebration of a feminist subjectivity that is nevertheless embedded in its own society's limitations and prejudices.) I would argue, however, that Brontë is fairly explicit about Jane's own class anxieties and about her own fear that she could resemble Bertha; one of her questions to Rochester is if he would do the same to her if she were mad, showing she identifies with a woman who parallels her in every way. Jane says she knows that Rochester's kindness to her is balanced by his injustice to others; Brontë seems to me unusually aware of her own attraction to a form of "justice" for herself that is not a universal form of justice. At the same time, even the early Rochester is defined by Bertha, not only because she constitutes his necessary guilty secret but also because she makes his courtship of Jane, as her supposed opposite, more urgent. (That is, he needed the explicitly fiery Bertha to appreciate the appeal of a more subdued form of that passion in Jane.) Further, Jane defines herself in opposition to Céline much as she does with Bertha – in effect "using" her, as Spivak accuses Jane/Brontë/the feminist reader of doing with Bertha. My reading, however, also sees as much identification between Jane and Céline as contrast, as I can only begin to explain here; the sensuality that surrounds Céline is also craved by Jane, no matter how much her aesthetic is usually more Quaker minimalist (itself highly aestheticized and eroticized). Jane wishes to join Rochester in his illicit French villa throughout her stay with St. John and returns to him before she knows he has been chastened.

I also agree with Spivak that Bertha is in a sense necessary for Jane's rise to power; it is not only that Rochester appreciates Jane as opposed to Bertha, but that the secret of Bertha weakens Rochester's position. At the same time, Pamela works without a similar figure of contrast, or, rather, that figure – of the interested, corrupt, and unchaste woman – exists only in Mr. B's mind. As such, Nancy Workman's reading, which sees Jane as Scheherazade rather than the passive Cinderella, works best here: it is the role of Jane to teach Rochester about the value of women. The story of the Little Match Girl, whose fate of freezing to death Jane barely escapes, should also be a larger part of the conversation about *Jane Eyre* and fairy tales. Certainly, Jane's envious, longing watching of Rochester and Miss Ingram, which echo her earlier banishment from the Reed fire, are a version of that same story. Andersen's story was contemporaneous with *Jane Eyre*, however, so it is not that Brontë would have read it but that both authors are writing about similar themes. as Brontë's

countering Oswald's killing "duty." While I have stressed the power of Corinne's melancholy, and the positive power of the novel's tragedy – Corinne's self-willed death is a rebellion as powerful as Jane's refusal to die – I agree with Lokke that the tradition of the aesthetic woman embraces the power of aesthetic pleasure that would be denied by the ascetic heroic lover. Brontë's comfortable ending, then, which seems to reject a more rebellious stance – seeming to wish to join the social order rather than destroy it, as Terry Eagleton has rightly argued – is in its own way rebellious in its very offering women the fantasy they want. Gilbert offers a similar reading in a post-*Madwoman in the Attic* essay in which she considers whether the feminist readings of *Jane Eyre* do not overlook the very feminist power of Jane's wish for conventional things, most of all for romantic passion. While Gilbert, in an effort to undo the condescending dismissal of readers who value the novel's powerful depiction of romantic love, looks at Brontë's feminist treatment of female sexuality, I would argue that we could similarly draw upon the insights of feminist critics like Janice Radway, who try to rethink the condescension towards artistic conventionality more broadly. Thus, Bock has argued that the entire novel is Brontë's capitulation to the market – after her supposedly more authentically Brontëan *Professor* was rejected – but I would argue that this is only another misunderstanding of the conventional history the Female Quixote has tried to dignify and vindicate. Embracing the powerful conventionality of *Jane Eyre*, then – "the old romantic treasure," as Andrew Lang calls it – can thus be figured as a rebellious act akin to rejecting St. John's supposedly higher calling.<sup>259</sup>

The refusal to read the novel as a Bildungsroman is my own utopian critical urge to emphasize the utopian thrust of the novel's romance, which sees not chastening and compromise but validation and fulfillment. This "fulfillment" is not, however, simply that which feminism sees in utopian romance – the patriarch brought over to the woman's control – though the ending of the novel offers one of the most famous of such scenes. And it is not just the pleasure in conventional forms of happiness, romantic love and physical comfort, which constitutes the romance plenitude of the novel (which Eagleton sees as countering its revolutionary elements), as Gilbert argues, thought that is also part of its power. (Imlay's idea that Eros, the principle of pleasure rather than pain, triumphs, is supported by Jane's choice of Rochester over St. John.) In terms of my argument, however, what is at stake is genre, and the pleasures of conventionality (upheld by the

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<sup>259</sup> Irene Tayler, who traces Brontë's use of the Fatal Man as male muse from her juvenilia on (the figure of Zamorna) reads Brontë's rejection of St. John as a rejection of artistic ambition, which is then reasserted in the novel's ending with St. John's words. I argue that the ending is as ironic as the celebrated one of *Wuthering Heights*, in that St. John's words, like Lockwood's, only serve to discredit him further. That is, his relentless wish for death is cast as a more generally destructive force that Jane has been fighting throughout the novel. (Gilbert also reads the ending this way, seeing St. John's self-banishment and death as the rejection of "the repressive principle.") His destructive asceticism seems to me cast as the very opposite of the aesthetic principles of the novel. I agree with critics who see Helen Burns's mysticism and martyrdom – she is compared to a martyr and to a hero when she risks her own punishment to comfort Jane – as the positive counter to St. John's vain martyrdom. That Jane's assessment of Helen is made in childhood, and not amended by her adult self, only serves to support the rightness of her childhood vision. Jerome Beaty sees this privileging of the early Jane as a "misreading," though a useful and necessary one, since the novel is finally revealed as a "Providential text." (*Jane Eyre Cubed: The Three Dimensions of the Text*).

marriage ending, the most conventional of all). What the Céline scene I focus on embeds in the novel is the ever renewing pleasure of aesthetic desire. Such aesthetic desire transforms a purposely conventional and thus seemingly naive scene – a scene that would show up as knowing satire in *Vanity Fair*, the contemporaneous novel that draws upon the silver-fork genre – into a demonstration of the power of the reader-writer. (Certainly, satire is its own form of literary pleasure – its vision as patterned, its discourse as organized, as that of romance – but it does not register as the stylization that we see in romance.) An entire system of conventions that underlies the novel in the mid-nineteenth century is condensed – the oversaturation of the scene suggests such powerful condensation, as if the pleasure of conventions were distilled like Céline's overpowering perfume – into a list mastered by a knowing reader and deployed by a desiring writer.

Such a focus on romance conventionality counters the developmental model of the Bildungsroman in many ways. Most of these have been explored by critics who stress the power of romance more broadly and the valorization of the utopianism of romance over the compromise of realism and the normalizing power of the Bildungsroman. My own reading also stresses *Jane Eyre's* status as romance as well as the Quixotic reading-writing I have been exploring in this dissertation. Such Quixotism is associated with an "immature," or not fully socialized, subjectivity that prefers the "Romantic intensity" and conventional patterns of romance. More so, however, such a reading tries to read unteleologically, preserving the wandering and "flat" nature of romance. Such a reading thinks of the novel in terms of powerful moments and set-pieces, much like Jane's jagged dreams, as much as in terms of a linear, "Providential" structure, as Beaty argues is finally revealed. Beaty's own reading actually reveals the power of such immediate reading. In his *Misreading Jane Eyre*, he performs a virtuoso structural reading that looks at all the avenues opened up by the novel before one must be chosen. One of his most powerful suggestions, for instance, is that there is a parallel vampirism plot followed by Brontë from Mason's attack to Jane's vision of the "foul German spectre, the vampyre," a suggestion only dismissed by the wedding day revelations. Beaty shows how Brontë draws upon vampiric conventions – from, for instance, John Polidori's Byronic text "The Vampyre," which Beaty shows is subtly referenced in the novel – to render the story one of possibly supernatural horror for at least a few chapters. While this avenue is closed by Brontë, its suggestion remains as part of the heteroglossic pleasure of the novel. Lang calls these conventional and sensationalistic currents in Brontë "the old romantic treasure," which "never weary us in the proper hands" (239).

To focus on moments in the novel, then, on set pieces that aim to energize and focus readerly pleasure is therefore to keep open the kind of perpetual enjoyment Catherine imagined in reading *Udolpho* forever. It would seem that such conventional and "flat" novels would not make for good rereading, so that once the wonder is gone so is the interest. Yet it is notable that Catherine is not disappointed by the ending of *Udolpho*, as we know some readers – most famously Coleridge – were. Its atmosphere still lingers for Catherine, so that, while chastened for the moment and accepting that midland Britain is safe, she still dreams that such strange things could be in other lands. Like Rose from Brontë's *Shirley*, the figure of Gothic desire in Moers's *Literary Women*, and like Lennox's Arabella, Catherine holds on to the desire of romance, its sense of plenitude, by thinking about the vastness and mystery of the world. My own reading therefore rebels against critical analyses like those by Bock which aim to uncover an

increasingly more masterful Jane, or even those by feminist critics who try to uncover a more chastened Rochester. Such readings, which try to account for the developments of the novel, nevertheless seem to also misread its power, which is activated as much by every chapter leading up to the ending. My own reading, then, has not tried to "explain" the novel as much as to uncover its potent activation of conventionality.<sup>260</sup> The Céline scene both satisfies a knowing reader, an Andrew Lang who sees in it a masterful handling of conventions, and a new and naive one who is discovering the pleasures of Byronism, which Brontë can activate so powerfully. The Céline scene, then, enacts and preserves the reader within the text – a reader whose own Bildung may culminate in becoming a writer, but who simultaneously preserves within that structure the pure pleasures of reading.

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<sup>260</sup> My own very close attention to an emblematic section of the novel is influenced by Stephen Booth's practice of ultra-close reading as a way to uncover the aesthetic experience of the reader. Beaty also performs such a reading in *Misreading Jane Eyre*.

## Chapter 5:

### The Final Girl as Female Quixote: The Career-Woman-in-Peril Thriller and the Endurance of the Feminist Uses of the Gothic

I conclude the dissertation by looking at the enduring legacy of the gendered dynamics of connoisseurship, and of its relationship to the Gothic, in our own cultural moment. While critics have shown the importance of the Gothic novel to both women's cultural and literary history and to modern feminism, they have not looked at closely at the legacy of the Gothic and its relationship to gender in film, particularly in the horror film. What has been particularly overlooked is the role of female horror spectatorship as a type of aesthetic engagement with feminist implications, a strange omission given the focus on the female reader. As Carol Clover's discussion of the charges of misogyny launched at the horror film suggests – though she herself does not draw these historical parallels – the idea that women are threatened by art mirrors the fears over the relationship between the modern romance and female readers in the 1790s. In both cases, the imagined figure of the woman is a passive representation – the naive reader, the victimized nameless character on screen – rather than an active critic of what she reads, a strong heroine that is the center of the film. As in the history I have been tracing from Molière to Romantic-era satires on the Female Quixote and on, the woman acts in horror film criticism as a force for rendering the ideal material as a way to deny the idealism of the aesthetic. The way this works in the discourse on horror film is that the depicted victimization of women, a part of the Gothic from its inception, is often used out of context to argue that the genre itself is misogynistic. Clover has argued that this is a feminist tactic for drawing attention to the power disparity entrenched in culture, which leads to the systematic victimization of women, but I would argue that it can also be used cynically, or at least misguidedly, by both feminists and anti-feminists as a distraction from the real systematic threats and material problems of women. Clover has countered this literalization by arguing that the final girl is a male figure, and while I agree with much of her reading, I ask: what about the female spectator? Clover and most other scholars do not address female horror film spectatorship because they argue it is in the minority, largely outweighed by male viewership. Even if this were true – and perhaps it was during the period addressed by these critics – this also suggests to me that women were excluded from this aesthetic arena, one that, as Hills suggests, relies on a connoisseurial stance. In this chapter I argue that the dynamics I have been tracing from the seventeenth century on, and which particularly consolidated in the Romantic period, when the romance came to stand in for the aesthetic more generally, continues into the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and helps explain the growth of a film subgenre that continues the legacy of the Female Quixote.

A new subgenre in film thrillers has emerged in the last thirty years that challenges current theories on the relationship between female spectatorship, female subjectivity, and genre: what I dub the career-woman-in-peril thriller.<sup>261</sup> Jonathan

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<sup>261</sup> I have not seen these films categorized in the particular way I am categorizing them here nor have I seen this term used in criticism. However, Linda Ruth Williams's excellent *The Erotic Thriller in Contemporary Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005) discusses many of these films and categorizes them as erotic thrillers. She also discusses the importance of film noir and the Female Gothic to the erotic thriller, and her work has been very influential in my

Demme's 1991 *The Silence of the Lambs* is the most famous example, but the subgenre extends from major works like David Mamet's *House of Games* (1987) and Jane Campion's *In the Cut* (2003) to B-movies like Sondra Locke's *Impulse* (1990) and Richard Shepard's *Oxygen* (1999). In these films, a woman on her own searches for love and professional success as she makes her way in the alternately frightening and exhilarating male world, a world whose danger is symbolized by the figure of the serial killer. The woman at the center of these films is coded as transgressive, and her transgression is symbolized by her fascination with a possibly criminal man who is both Other and her double. The heroine's career has symbolic meaning, as her investigation of the mystery man is connected to an investigation of her own subjectivity. She is always a detective of some kind, usually a police officer (as in *Blue Steel* [Kathryn Bigelow, 1990], *Impulse*, *Oxygen*, *Taking Lives* [D. J. Caruso, 2004], *Murder by Numbers* [Barbet Schroeder, 2003], *The Silence of the Lambs*) but sometimes another kind of "detective" such as a journalist (*Call Me* [Sollace Mitchell, 1988], *Perfect Stranger* [James Foley,

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thinking. Yvonne Tasker has also identified the emergence and importance of the female detective in 80s and 90s Hollywood films in *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 1998). (Though Tasker does not make the connection to the Female Gothic tradition, she too sees these films as narratives of female self-discovery couched as stories of sexual exploration.) Thus, Tasker has also pointed to the symbolism surrounding women's jobs in 80s and 90s films, and my discussion of the importance of the career woman figure is indebted to her analysis. Tasker sees the figure of the prostitute behind all these representations, while I see the figure of the investigating Female Gothic heroine. But Tasker uses the figure of the prostitute to make a point I too wish to make: these women are moving in the thrilling and dangerous male sphere. Tasker says: "The role of prostitute/'streetwalker' allows female characters not only to inhabit urban space but to flaunt it . . . and, perhaps, to exhibit the 'toughness' through which working-class masculinities are regularly symbolized (though just as often to be inscribed as victim/corpse)," 5. She sums up: "[the prostitute] asserts herself within spaces from which other women are excluded," 5. Yet there are some crucial differences in the way we see these heroines, which is partly influenced by our focus: Tasker analyzes a large range of 80s and 90s films, and I only look at a small subgenre I see as directly carrying on the Female Gothic tradition. However, Tasker's discussion of the transgressive quality of these heroines and its connection to their uneasy relationship to traditional femininity has been very influential on my analysis. Tasker argues: "The developing involvement of women in cinematic crime genres . . . has not been by any means straightforward, often conflating the transgression of conventional norms or behaviour with criminality," 92. Furthermore, Tasker too comments on the doubling between the detective and the criminal: "questions of desire and sexuality are foregrounded in these narratives which enact a process of investigation defined by a lack of distance between hunter and hunted," 105. After finishing this chapter, I came across another book that looks at the female detective in Hollywood: Helen Hanson's *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007). Hanson also studies the deployment of the noir and Female Gothic genres in the depiction of female subjectivity in film and also connects the deployment of these genres to the history of women in the workforce. An important difference between our approaches is that Hanson is not concerned with these films' relationship to the horror genre (which includes the Female Gothic but also goes beyond it), while I think it is crucial to our understanding of how genre and spectatorship work that these women's films are also horror films of a sort. Hanson alludes to the literary Female Gothic but does not root her reading of these films in the novels and theory on this genre the way I do.

2007]), writer (*In the Cut*), psychologist (*House of Games*, *Never Talk to Strangers* [Peter Hall, 1995]), lawyer (*Jagged Edge* [Richard Marquand, 1985]), *Guilty as Sin* [Sidney Lumet, 1993]), or anthropologist (*Candyman* [Bernard Rose, 1992]). In many of these films, the heroine's ambivalent connection to the male world, with its potential for greater freedom and its threat of violence, is further signaled by her ambivalent connection to her father. She often inherits her career and sense of self from her father or a father figure, but her relationship to him is mirrored in her relationship to the criminal man, thereby showing both the problems and the possibilities of being a woman who identifies with her father both professionally and emotionally.

These thrillers are both women's films *and* horror films. They in fact belong to the genre that encompasses both these categories: the Female Gothic. While the term "Female Gothic" was coined in the 1970s by feminist critic Ellen Moers to mean any Gothic novel written by a woman, it is now more generally used for any Gothic work that explores female subjectivity via the affect of fear.<sup>262</sup> Most critics also agree that the Female Gothic was invented in the 1790s by Ann Radcliffe, who, in her most important works, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1796), set up one of the templates for this genre: "Ann Radcliffe firmly set the Gothic in one of the ways it would go ever after: a novel in which the central figure is a young woman who is simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine."<sup>263</sup> Most importantly for my argument, Radcliffe's brand of Gothic explores the female experience (both psychological and social) through the use of fear as an artistic element. Though many later Female Gothic writers were to make use of fear to explore femininity, it is Radcliffe's template that has been most influential to popular works in the Female Gothic mode. At the core of the Radcliffean model is the heroine's relationship with an attractive and dangerous man (who is often doubled by the heroine's father), and it is this model that was further developed influentially by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and that forms the template for the most popular Female Gothic narratives of the twentieth century. In her influential 1978 essay "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality," Cynthia Griffin Wolff argues that Radcliffe captured something inherent in female sexuality in her creation of a heroine fascinated by a dangerous lover.<sup>264</sup> Though I agree with Wolff's emphasis on the importance of the dangerous lover figure, I argue that the Radcliffean dynamic is not concerned with sexuality alone but is rather a complex exploration of female subjectivity and female social roles, hence its endurance and popularity. Furthermore, the career-woman-in-peril thriller was invented at a time when women were entering the workforce in large numbers and were thus engaging the public world, coded as male, hence this genre's

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<sup>262</sup> Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Oxford UP, 1977), 90.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 91. The Radcliffean heroine, as I will argue here, is similar to what Carol Clover, in *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), calls the slasher film "female victim-hero," 54. Clover argues that this figure explores male subjectivity, since, she says, most horror film spectators are men – a claim she supports only anecdotally.

<sup>264</sup> Wolff, *Modern Language Studies* 9:3 (Autumn 1979), 99.



focus on women's fascination with, and fear of, men.<sup>265</sup> As I will argue, the career-woman-in-peril thrillers follow the Radcliffean suggestion that the daughter's relationship with the father mirrors her relationship with the dangerous man and that both relationships allow her access to the greater opportunities of the male world. In classic Female Gothic form, then, career-woman-in-peril thrillers stage an exploration of female fantasy via the heroine's (and female spectator's) engagement with the affect of fear and thus challenge the leading views on female spectatorship and the horror genre, particularly those put forth by influential critics Carol Clover, Barbara Creed, and Isabel Cristina Pinedo.

The emblematic scene of the career-woman-in-peril thriller is this: a woman, alone in her apartment, goes to the refrigerator and gets a beer, takes a big swig, and then sits down to her work, always an investigation of some kind. Seen through the window is the dark city, with its mysterious lights and muffled noise. And in the city, a criminal is on the loose.<sup>266</sup> In its purest form it is found in Philip Kaufman's *Twisted* (2004): we see the heroine, Jessica (Ashley Judd), sit down in the evenings in her big city apartment with crime scene photos and a bottle of wine. Everything in the scene is symbolic: the alcohol suggests that this woman has the freedom traditionally accorded to men, but it also hints at a tendency toward self-destruction; the focus on the woman's involvement in the investigation suggests that the audience should invest in her point of view and that her thought process is the focus; the dark city suggests infinite possibilities, both for adventure and danger. The iconography comes from several places: the Female Gothic, kept alive in twentieth-century popular culture by writers like Victoria Holt and Mary Stewart; from the single-girl-in-the-city genre (one thinks of Helen Gurley Brown's 1962 *Sex and the Single Girl*) that thrived in the 60s and 70s; from film noir; and, finally, from the slasher films that were to become so popular in the 70s and 80s.<sup>267</sup> Differing from the

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<sup>265</sup> Hanson makes a similar point about 40s films: "The increase in female clerical workers coincided with distinct modifications in how Hollywood imagined female figures in the crime and mystery film," 17. Yet it is clear that full potential of the working woman in a world of men was not exploited by thrillers until the 1970s.

<sup>266</sup> If this sounds like a scene from *Sex and the City* (1998-2004), that is because all that show needs to become a career-woman-in-peril-thriller is a serial killer to symbolize all the anxieties and self-contradictory yearnings of its single women; even Carrie's job as a relationship investigator fits in with the pattern of the detective heroine. Williams also makes the connection between *Sex and the City* and female-centered thrillers, 156. Furthermore, as Betsy Israel shows in her history of the single woman, *Bachelor Girls: 100 Years of Breaking the Rules – A Social History of Living Single* (New York: Perennial, 2003), the apartment window with a view toward the exciting city is an important part of single girl iconography, 206. The image of a woman gazing out a window is also used to represent female subjectivity in the Female Gothic more generally.

<sup>267</sup> One notable example of an early working-woman film is Jean Negulesco's melodrama *The Best of Everything* (1959, based on Rona Jaffe's 1958 bestseller). Tasker also argues for the hybrid nature of the female-detective film (and the importance of horror and film noir in the equation): "The crime films discussed in this chapter are informed by a variety of generic roots which include police procedurals, legal drama, soft pornography, *film noir*, and horror," 92.

Female Gothic woman-in-peril thrillers of the previous decades – Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca* (1940) and *Suspicion* (1941), *Gaslight* (George Cukor, 1944), *Rosemary’s Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968) – this is the story of the single woman; she fears not her husband but the entire patriarchal world she must encounter in her work-a-day life.<sup>268</sup> But, like all Radcliffean heroines, this woman thrives on fear; here, fear is not so much a marker of her subordinate position in a male world but of her willingness to engage this world head on and to engage the dark and dangerous aspects of herself.

### The Origins of the Career-Woman-in-Peril Thriller

Knowing that the career-woman-in-peril thriller is rooted in a two-hundred-year-old female genre will more easily explain its particular appeal to modern women and its rise in the 1970s. The foundational Female Gothic text is Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, a novel which engages the eighteenth-century interests in pleasurable fear and female subjectivity. As Moers argues, this novel set up a template that could be revived by 1970s feminism. The heroine of *Udolpho*, Emily, is a "single girl," – that is, a stock eighteenth-century orphan figure – in a patriarchal world. As Moers implies, this means that she could have adventures denied to married women.<sup>269</sup> However, before Emily is thrown into the world alone to solve life-threatening mysteries, she is given steady training by her father, the figure to whom she is closest and whom she most resembles. Here we see an influential prototype of the heroine who identifies with her father, a figure that becomes central to late twentieth-century female-centered thrillers.<sup>270</sup> Emily’s identification with her father is also connected to a kind of positive immaturity; that is, the Female Gothic heroine, it is subtly suggested, refuses adult femininity because she rejects the limitations that accompany it. As Moers suggests via her discussion of the "tomboy" and of "traveling heroinism," younger women can have adventures that older women, who are expected to marry and responsibly run a household, cannot. Emily’s other crucial relationship in the novel is to Montoni, the Gothic villain whose mysterious and dangerous aura stimulates her imagination. Anne Williams notes that this construction of the male as Other implies a female point of view and, following Mario Praz’s identification of such a figure in Romantic literature, calls this archetype of the

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<sup>268</sup> *In a Lonely Place* (Nicholas Ray, 1950) is an interesting case in that the threatened heroine is a single working woman, but she is de facto married to the Humphrey Bogart character and the focus is on their relationship.

<sup>269</sup> Moers, 126.

<sup>270</sup> Tasker says: "It is a cliché of Hollywood cinema, pulp fictions and psychoanalysis that tomboys or active heroines somehow identify with their fathers. In action films, the heroine is presented . . . as taking over/inheriting her father’s position," p. 102. But a consideration of the Female Gothic roots of this cliché is needed to understand its enduring power and its problems. Indeed, the importance of the father figure to the Radcliffean Gothic paradigm is supported by the fact that it appears in the hugely popular mid-twentieth-century Female Gothic novels of – to name one example – Victoria Holt. In "Victoria Holt’s Gothic Romances" *A Structuralist Inquiry*, *The Female Gothic*, ed. Juliann E. Fleenor (Montreal: Eden Press, 1983), Barbara Bowman says: "The ideal father figure in the romances is crucial in relation to the heroine. Often the heroine is either without a mother or the mother’s personality is a very vague one, ill-defined and uninspiring," 71.

Female Gothic the Fatal Man.<sup>271</sup> Radcliffe's novel suggests that women can access the sublime, the eighteenth-century term for visionary horror, via their engagement with the male sphere of danger, personified by Fatal Man Montoni. Montoni is also Emily's uncle; he is thus, as Moers points out, her father's dark double. When Emily's beloved father dies, then, her emotional focus is unsurprisingly transferred to Montoni, who, as the principle of aggressive male energy, is both Emily's conduit to the sublime and, because of his psychological and physical power over her, also a force of oppression. The archetype of the Fatal Man becomes a staple of the Female Gothic and thrives in the twentieth-century imagination through both supermarket fiction and more literary feminist works. While the figure of the Fatal Man seems to evoke clichéd female fantasies about men who are both dangerous and secretly sensitive – fantasies promising both adventure and safety, as feminist Gothic critic Michelle Massé notes – a consideration of Radcliffe's work reminds us that what this figure enables for female viewers is the exploration of their ambivalent attitudes toward femininity and their involvement in a patriarchal world.<sup>272</sup>

Following the 1938 publication of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, and its 1940 adaptation by Hitchcock, Radcliffean Gothic came to the screen in full force, resulting in a cluster of films that is widely recognized as a notable expression of the Female Gothic on film.<sup>273</sup> But several historical and artistic developments in the 1970s and early 80s converge and give rise to the genre I call the career-woman-in-peril thriller (henceforward CWPT), a highly transformed and updated version of the Female Gothic, specifically the Radcliffean branch of this genre. First and foremost, it takes the fact of women's actually going into the workforce en masse, particularly into traditionally male jobs, to make the career woman into a film staple. Furthermore, it makes sense that it is in the 1970s, the decade in which feminist critics rediscovered the Gothic, that the Female Gothic is updated for the modern woman. The text that does this, and which becomes the basis for all future CWPTs, is Judith Rossner's 1975 *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, filmed in 1977 by Richard Brooks. Cynthia Griffin Wolff notices this development at the time and writes "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality" in 1979 comparing *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* with *Udolpho*, presciently noting how important Radcliffean Gothic still is for the modern woman's narrative. Wolff argues that both texts explore the darker aspects of female subjectivity, and specifically female sexuality, through the devices of threatening yet exciting spaces – Gothic castle and big city – and

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<sup>271</sup> Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 141. See Mario Praz's discussion in his 1930 (translated in 1933) work *The Romantic Agony* (New York: Oxford, 1991).

<sup>272</sup> Massé, quoting Jessica Benjamin, says: "[The masochistic Gothic heroine's] later, dominant lover will mirror both relations and 'actually provides a dual solution, containment *and* excitement, the holding environment and the road to freedom – the joint features of both the ideal mother and father,' (120). Thus, even within the confines of masochism, the girl simultaneously seeks security *and* freedom," *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 46

<sup>273</sup> See, for instance, Mary Ann Doane's discussion of what she calls "paranoid woman's films" in *The Desire to Desire: the Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

frightening but exciting Fatal Men. She then claims that *Mr. Goodbar* – which ends with the protagonist, Theresa, being killed by one of the strangers she picks up for a one night stand – shows the masochistic nature of female fantasy as it now exists. Finally, Wolff calls for women to create more positive models of female selfhood and sexuality.<sup>274</sup> What I will argue, however, is that such a reading of this text and those it inspires does not do justice to the various layers of symbolism and meaning in the genre. The sexual experimentation that Theresa undertakes suggests a dangerous and painful journey of self-discovery. Wolff also overlooks Radcliffe's construction of the Female Gothic heroine as father-identified (though this element is not taken up in *Mr. Goodbar*) and thus a figure with some ease in the male world. Each CWPT in the thirty years following *Mr. Goodbar* stresses different aspects of this Female Gothic journey and each offers a slightly different take on the core conflicts being worked out by the heroines and, by extension, the female viewers.

### **The First Career-Woman-in-Peril Thrillers and the Female Gothic as Female Fantasy**

While *Mr. Goodbar* advances Radcliffean Gothic by updating the heroine and the locale, the potential of the genre for modern film is not fully exploited until the introduction of noir and slasher film elements. As the term Fatal Man suggests, the gender dynamics in Radcliffean Gothic resemble those of film noir with the sexes reversed.<sup>275</sup> In noir, a male detective of dubious morality and self-destructive tendencies gets romantically involved with a femme fatale who is both Other and his double. This dynamic is perhaps best represented in Paul Verhoeven's neo-noir *Basic Instinct* (1992), which is, as Linda Ruth Williams argues in *The Erotic Thriller in Contemporary Cinema*, a synthesis of psychosexual noir themes. Verhoeven explicitly sets up the overtly amoral Catherine (Sharon Stone) and the covertly so Nick (Michael Douglas) as doubles. Nick is drawn to Catherine, even as he fears her, because she openly expresses the violent and sexual impulses that he himself sublimates through his work as a cop. The characteristics of the noir antihero match up with those of the Radcliffean heroine: the hard-living style of the noir antihero becomes the heroine's wish to tap into the sublime through danger, most obviously embodied in the Fatal Man. Additionally, noir, like the Gothic, uses setting symbolically: the noir city, like the sublime natural landscape created by Radcliffe, is a place of terror and adventure. The neo-noirs of the 80s and 90s, then, are opportune places for the Female Gothic to emerge, explaining why Joe Eszterhas wrote both *Basic Instinct* and *Jagged Edge* (1985), perhaps the first real CWPT.

Eszterhas is important to the development of the CWPT because of his association with the subgenre of thrillers to which most CWPTs belong: the erotic thriller. As Williams shows in her study of this subgenre, the erotic thriller incorporates many

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<sup>274</sup> Wolff, 111.

<sup>275</sup> Murray Smith also makes this point in connection to *Deception* (Irving Rapper, 1946): "The film's interest lies in its unstable position between two popular generic forms of the Forties, two forms which are in a sense the inverse of each other- the *film noir* and the female gothic," (quoted in Hanson, 42).

genres: noir (most importantly), the Gothic, pornography, and horror. For the purposes of my argument, the most important aspect of noir taken up in erotic thrillers is the doubling between the antihero and criminal. As Williams explains, "Any number of erotic thrillers feature attraction, sex and clearly drawn similarities between criminal (or suspect) and his or her pursuer/detective/victim."<sup>276</sup> In a section titled "Female Point of View and the *Homme Fatal*," Williams points out that many erotic thrillers focus on a woman investigating a possible homme fatal and makes the connection to the Female Gothic film: "[the homme fatal] provides the basis for a shift in generic emphasis and influence, from the characteristic male-focused point of view of *noir* to a female sympathy which looks more like 1940s female Gothic."<sup>277</sup> Furthermore, Williams notes that *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* is one of the earliest erotic thrillers and calls it a "sexual-quest film," her term for a movie which connects the heroine's psychological journey to an exploration of her sexuality. But, as I have been arguing, the exploration of women's psychology and social position through their sexuality is not a new phenomenon; it was, as Nancy Miller has argued, an aspect of much eighteenth-century literature, found in writers from Defoe to Richardson.<sup>278</sup> Radcliffe follows in this tradition and sets up the template that could be made more sexually explicit in modern erotic thrillers.

Slasher films, the last influence on CWPTs, are actually rooted in the Gothic and adopt some of its conventions, so their popularity in the 70s and 80s helps create the CWPT. Williams discusses the influence that slasher films exert on the erotic thriller and points specifically to the importance of the relationship between the heroine and the Fatal Man: "Films like *Guilty as Sin* [which I consider a CWPT] are more like thriller versions of Carol Clover's 'final girl' horror films, driven by a central female protagonist who . . . outsmarts the dark and deadly male."<sup>279</sup> Williams then nicely sums up the various genres that create the "investigative heroine" of certain erotic thrillers: "The erotic thriller's female investigative heroine is then a hybrid figure, part *noirish* detective woman, part horror final-girl, dominating the film's primary point of view and eliciting sympathies appropriate to both hero and quester."<sup>280</sup> While the protagonists of slashers tend to be pre-career women – most are adolescent girls – they are clearly Female Gothic heroines; the virginal heroine of slashers that Carol Clover has dubbed the Final Girl is essentially the Female Gothic sensitive orphan (a certain version of the Female Quixote) updated. Though the Final Girl seems far-removed from the sexually adventurous modern-Gothic heroine of *Mr. Goodbar* or the hard-living woman based on the noir antihero, she also transgresses traditional gender-roles – as Clover has shown, she is coded masculine – and her transgression is emphasized through her doubling of the monster. Clover says: "[The Final Girl] is the Girl Scout, the bookworm, the mechanic. Unlike her friends . . . she is

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<sup>276</sup> Williams, 33.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>278</sup> See Miller's *The Heroine's Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722-1782* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1980.

<sup>279</sup> Williams, 127.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, 128.

not sexually active . . . although she is always smaller and weaker than the killer, she grapples with him energetically and convincingly. The Final Girl is boyish, in a word."<sup>281</sup> I would argue, however, that the Final Girl's masculine traits are easily explained by the history of the Female Gothic heroine: like Emily in *Udolpho*, the Final Girl retains her pre-adolescent male-identification as a form of rebellion against the constraints of adult femininity.<sup>282</sup> Indeed, the Final Girl has deep roots in eighteenth-century sensibility literature, from which the Female Gothic evolves. Sensibility texts often feature a female type Janet Todd calls "the powerful virgin;" she is a heroine who, following the sensibility doctrine, survives and even thrives in a corrupt world because of her integrity.<sup>283</sup> Thus, the Final Girl's virginity symbolizes her separation from the world, and thus her questioning of the status quo, as much as Theresa's promiscuity. Most importantly for my argument, however, slashers explore the Final Girl's subjectivity via her fear, as do all Female Gothic narratives.

*Jagged Edge* focuses on a female lawyer, Teddy (Glenn Close), who falls for the man she defends, Jack (Jeff Bridges), accused, fittingly, of having killed his wife. The story is typically Female Gothic, except that the heroine's ambivalence about the man is here dramatized through her career. The symbolism is obvious: the man is "on trial" and the relationship between lawyer and client mimics the tense relationship between the sexes. While *Jagged Edge* is influenced mostly by noir and classic Female Gothic, the first scene of the film is, Williams shows, influenced by slashers: "It opens, like John Carpenter's *Halloween*, with an unknown killer, whose point of view we share, enacting a sex-murder."<sup>284</sup> The masculine name of the heroine, which Clover shows to be one of the conventions of slashers, further suggests the influence of contemporary horror films on the CWPT. Clover's argument about slashers applies here in so far as *Jagged Edge* does make it easy for male viewers to identify with the less-traditionally-feminine heroine. *Jagged Edge* is clearly engaging the female spectator, however, via its Female Gothic themes. More than *Mr. Goodbar*, *Jagged Edge* portrays the city and the working world as threatening because masculine, and its dangerous appeal is symbolized by Fatal Man Jack. Teddy in fact becomes an amateur detective as she investigates Jack, who, it is hinted, may be a manipulative *homme fatal*. And, in a scene that was to launch a CWPT cliché – found from the much-later thriller *Taking Lives* to the television series *Veronica Mars* (2004-2007) – she discovers his guilt, and becomes his target, right after one of

<sup>281</sup> *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, 49-50.

<sup>282</sup> Laura Mulvey makes the same point - that a male-identified film heroine represents the freedom of pre-adult femininity – in her essay on female spectatorship "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,'" in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. ed. E. Ann Kaplan (New York: Routledge, 1990). Mulvey first quotes Freud's view on the male-identification of the girl: "'In females, too, the striving to be masculine is ego – syntonetic at a certain period – namely in the phallic phase, before the development of femininity sets in,'" p. 25. She then argues that *Duel in the Sun*'s Pearl accesses this freedom through her relationship with Lewt: "Lewt . . . offers sexual passion, not based on maturity but on a regressive, boy/girl mixture of rivalry and play. With Lewt, Pearl can be a tomboy (riding swimming, shooting)," p. 32.

<sup>283</sup> Janet Todd, *Sensibility*, 114.

<sup>284</sup> Williams, 152.

their sexual encounters. Given Eszterhas's cynicism, it is not surprising that this first real CWPT does subtly suggest that women's attraction to Fatal Men is a form of masochism. Ironically, Eszterhas, whose work is often dubbed misogynistic, is here in tune with feminist Gothic critics who similarly expose the Female Gothic ideology as reactionary in its suggestion that seemingly bad men are misunderstood and can be appropriated for feminist purposes.<sup>285</sup> One such critic is Joanna Russ, who, in her discussion of "Modern Gothics," explains that the popularity of these narratives is based on their depiction of an anxiety-producing aspect of female lives: the need to always "read" others, particularly men. As she explains, in a patriarchal world, women's well-being depends on "reading" men correctly.<sup>286</sup> Russ argues that Gothics romanticize this necessary and anxiety-producing aspect of women's lives by featuring a heroine who is torn between an attractive and powerful man who may or may not be a criminal and a gentler but less attractive man; she calls these figures the "Super-Male" and "Shadow Male," respectively. Russ says of the Super-Male: "The Heroine is vehemently attracted to him and usually just as vehemently repelled or frightened – she is not sure of her feelings for him, his feelings for her, and whether he 1) loves her; 2) hates her; 3) is using her; or 4) is trying to kill her."<sup>287</sup> The Super-Male, Russ explains, is always vindicated, while the Shadow Male turns out to be a criminal, and Russ interprets this as women's need to believe that male aggression and violence are an expression of love. *Jagged Edge* does not include a Shadow Male on whom the blame is thrust, but rather plays against the Gothic fantasy and reveals Super-Male Jack as guilty. The film's rejection of the common female fantasy thus renders it in tune with the ideas of feminist critics such as Russ, Modleski, and Massé; they too exhort women to see their fantasies about bad men as the masochism or self-delusion that it is. *Jagged Edge* does not emphasize the doubling of heroine and Fatal Man, but it does pick up on the one aspect of the Female Gothic that was to become extremely important to future CWPTs: the heroine's relationship to her father.

As in many later CWPTs, Teddy's law-related career has been inherited from her father, who was a cop. Herein we have the seed for the policewoman heroines to come. Additionally, Teddy's most important relationship is to her mentor (Robert Loggia) and surrogate father, an alcoholic investigator who still harbors guilt for his role in withholding evidence that convicted a defendant (something in which Teddy also participated).<sup>288</sup> Also anticipating future CWPTs, the father figure is an ambiguous

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<sup>285</sup> In *Loving with a Vengeance* (Hamden; Archon, 1982), Tania Modleski argues that this is a common female fantasy deployed in female popular culture. Massé similarly exposes the ideology of the Female Gothic in *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic*, arguing that Gothic novels appeal to women's socially-constructed masochistic fantasies even as some of these texts help women understand and work through these self-damaging attitudes.

<sup>286</sup> Joanna Russ, "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me and I Think It's My Husband: The Modern Gothic," 31-56.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>288</sup> This father daughter relationship is also seen in Sidney Lumet's 1993 *Guilty as Sin*, which has the same premise as *Jagged Edge*. Here the father figure (played by Jack Warden, an actor who looks a bit like Robert Loggia, further cementing the intertextuality) makes his relationship to the

character (mirroring the mysterious and ambiguous Fatal Man); he is both ultimately powerful and deeply flawed, both a figure of highest idealism and of corruption. Teddy's position in relation to her surrogate father is the position of all career-women heroines: he represents everything she believes in but also everything she must overcome in herself if she is to succeed. This seems strikingly at odds with the common notion that it is the son rather than the daughter who is supposed to identify with and rival the father. Just as in *Udolpho* Emily is educated by her father and is thus given access to the male world, so too do these career women enter the male sphere via their fathers; in *Jagged Edge*, Teddy was inspired to enter the legal profession by her cop father and is now assisted in it by her surrogate father (also a detective). Though *Jagged Edge* is a Female Gothic narrative, it ultimately rejects many of the genre's fantasies, most importantly the idea that the Fatal Man is simply misunderstood by all except the heroine. Though Teddy eventually realizes Jack's true nature (though only by accident) and defends herself against him, she is emotionally shattered. Fittingly, just at the moment that Teddy kills Jack, her mentor appears and comforts her by assuring her that Jack is "trash"; the implication is that she should not trust anyone but her father. While refusing the onus of adult womanhood is usually liberating in the Female Gothic – Moers points out pre-marriage heroines can have adventures, and I would extend this to the symbolically immature Final Girls – the ending of *Jagged Edge* leaves us with a woman unable to trust men or herself.

It is striking that a sensationalist Hollywood film whose message is essentially that women need to let go of their bad boy fantasies is shortly followed by a more cerebral film that suggests the same thing: David Mamet's *House of Games* (1987). The Fatal Man of this film is a con man who uses the heroine's fascination with the masculine world he represents – he knows he can symbolically transfer the masculine power of aggression and rebellion to her – to his advantage. Like *Jagged Edge*, *House of Games* takes a cynical attitude toward women's Gothic longings: it shows the limitations and delusions inherent in female fascination with male aggression and criminality rather than examining the creative role it plays in female self-definition.<sup>289</sup> *Jagged Edge*, *House of Games*, and *Taking Lives* all belong to a subset of CWPTs in which the woman is characterized as naïve and easily manipulated by the criminal. It makes sense that the male writers and directors of these films and certain feminist critics have similar views on female fantasy: both groups are condescending about women's attraction to Fatal Men and thus to fear. There is an undoubted pleasure in the fantasy-testing aspect of these films: women can perhaps gain a more critical perspective on the way fear may be harnessed by patriarchy and work through their own attractions to masochism. At the same time, as I suggested above, these films hint at more subtle fantasies and a more complex role for fear, and it is these aspects that are developed in the CWPTs that I will discuss in the rest of this chapter.

### **The Policewoman Thrillers and the Legacy of the Father**

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heroine explicit when he reveals that he would have been her father had not her mother turned him down so many times.

<sup>289</sup> A striking difference between the films is that while *JE*'s Teddy has the usual father figure mentor, *The House of Games*'s heroine has a female mentor.



The policewoman thrillers make up another distinct subset within the CWPT, and they take up particular themes: the parallel between woman and monster and the relevance of the father in this connection. Thomas Harris's novel *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) is the first and most influential text in this subgenre. Harris's innovation is to build a modern thriller on the foundation of an eighteenth-century Female Gothic novel. At the center of the drama is the relationship between Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), the special heroine who adored her father and the Fatal Man, serial killer Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins). Clarice, like *Udolpho*'s Emily, identifies with her father, who is, as many critics have noted, doubled by her various male mentors, including Hannibal, the mentor who most allows her access to the sublime. Though Harris brilliantly updates the Gothic heroine/Fatal Man/father figure formula, it is really Demme's 1991 film adaptation that plays up the Female Gothic aspects of the scenario. Demme makes frequent use of subjective camera and thus brings the Female Gothic focus on female subjectivity to film in a particularly powerful way. Even more than their innovations in the genre, what Harris and Demme are able to do so well is to construct a particularly effective iteration of a group of themes already circulating in popular culture. For instance, two films contemporaneous with *Silence*, *Blue Steel* (1990) and *Impulse* (1990), actually anticipate many of the troubled-policewoman films to follow even more closely, though they are not as powerful cinematically as *Silence*. More than *Silence*, these films bring together the sexually experimental heroine of *Mr. Goodbar* with the investigating career woman of *Jagged Edge* and *House of Games* to create a woman who pushes even farther into the male world. However, it is actually a slightly later film, Philip Kaufman's *Twisted* (2004), which brings together all the elements of this CWPT sub-subgenre in the most telling way.

Kaufman has claimed that he had imagined *Twisted* as a noir in the Dashiell Hammett tradition.<sup>290</sup> As we have seen from previous CWPTs, however, noirs with female protagonists often end up becoming Female Gothic texts. The plot could not be more Radcliffean and thus nicely illustrates how the Female Gothic structure speaks to modern women's concerns. The policewoman heroine, Jessica, is an orphan whose cop father had gone on a killing spree when she was a child that ended with his killing her mother and then himself. Jessica was raised by his partner, John Mills (Samuel L. Jackson), who is her surrogate father and mentor. As the film begins, she is celebrating her promotion, received in part because she captured a killer single-handedly. *Twisted*, then, begins where *Silence* ends, suggesting the intertextual nature of the CWPTs; individual films in the genre speak to each other, and the viewer can thus weigh various resolutions offered to the conflicts the films address. Thus it makes sense that one of the first things Mills says to Jessica is: "You remind me so much of your father. Your daddy would've been proud of you." This is, of course, exactly what Crawford, Clarice's mentor, tells her when she graduates. The inheritance model is clear: the daughter is the child who carries on the father's legacy, both good and bad.<sup>291</sup> The modern feminist heroine is the girl who somehow ends up in the place of the son and is allowed into the privileged male sphere; however, this entry into a still foreign and often hostile space brings with it the thrilling fear of trespassing. Jessica's skills are also an inheritance from

<sup>290</sup> DVD commentary, "Special Collector's Edition," distributed by Paramount Pictures, 2004.

<sup>291</sup> Tasker also notes this pattern in female-cop films, 102.

her Female Gothic heroine forebears: the Gothic heroine's extreme sensitivity to the environment becomes the police woman's uncanny perceptive ability. Mills regularly gives Jessica perception tests – thus, he has her close her eyes and describe her surroundings in detail, which she does with astounding precision – and we see how the impressionability of the Gothic heroine has become the female cop's greatest asset.<sup>292</sup> Yet Jessica also feels a need to rebel against the father. As she leaves her promotion party, Mills advises her to go home, but she goes to a bar and picks up a man instead. Here the detective heroine is merged with the sexually adventurous one, though the suggestion is that her promiscuity is pathological.

The scene following the one-night stand explains the basis of what the film constructs as Jessica's essential sadness. She is shown coming home to her lonely apartment and pouring herself a drink, thus further suggesting both her freedom and her self-destructive Female Gothic restlessness. She then acts very much in the Female Gothic tradition of the heroine haunted by her past: she retrieves a box of mementos, her connection to her parents. Jessica seems very girlish as she opens her box of treasures; she even pulls out a toy which she hugs in a regressive gesture. Jessica's transformation into a vulnerable girl who misses her childhood and her parents is meant to show her inherent immaturity; it is as if she is still a child and the segregation of roles that happens in adolescence – when girls can no longer identify with the father – never happened for her. This, of course, reminds us of her affinities with the Final Girl and with the tomboy heroine described by Mulvey. (The heroine of Sondra Locke's *Impulse* is strikingly coded very similarly: we see her repeatedly playing with a snow globe, and her boss sneers at one point: "Just a child at heart?" This snow globe is akin to the Female Gothic heroine's window, into which she stares as she daydreams.) We see Jessica looking at pictures of her parents and the iconography is strikingly Radcliffean. In early Female Gothic novels, following Radcliffe, the heroine often wears an idealized portrait of her mother on a necklace. In the photograph we see of Jessica's mother, she has long hair and a soft, stereotypically feminine look and is gazing downward demurely. The father's portrait, however, is much more charged: it is a police crime photo, taken after his killing spree, in which he is lying dead in a pool of blood. The father's legacy is much more ambiguous than that of the mother: he represents authority, criminality, and victimization (a weakness that allows the daughter to flourish). The photograph is also Radcliffean in a way we do not realize until later. While in *Udolpho* the heroine upholds her father's legacy by fighting to hold on to his property, in an earlier Radcliffe novel, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), the heroine is actually involved in solving her father's murder. In a scene that was to become iconic, the heroine of *The Romance of the Forest* finds an incomplete manuscript in one of the ruins she is exploring which tells the story of a man unjustly imprisoned and killed, who, she later discovers, was in fact her father. Jessica's crime scene photograph of her father is the incomplete found manuscript she must

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<sup>292</sup> This theme is particularly stressed in the CWPT *Taking Lives*: the heroine actually lies down in the crime scene, closes her eyes, and attempts to absorb the subtle clues left behind by the killer. She also eats and takes baths surrounded by crime scene photos, further showing her comfort and closeness to violence and, thus, the criminal.

decipher to clear her father's name; the fantasy, again, is that the heroine will gain the male power of the father by doing that which he could not do.

Though Jessica does solve the ancestral crime by the end of the film and proves her father's innocence, for most of the film we believe him a criminal. The convention whereby the transgressive heroine has a transgressive father figure is found in many CWPTs, most obviously in *The Silence of the Lambs*. In "Murder and Mentorship: Advancement in the Silence of the Lambs," Bruce Robbins explains the logic behind this: "Perhaps a woman needs a criminal for her mentor, and perhaps no one but a criminal will do, because of the intense moral ambiguity, from a woman's perspective, in the idea of rising into a professional world that is still very much patriarchal."<sup>293</sup> I think Robbins gets right at what is happening in CWPTs: the heroine's affinity with crime is related to her own transgression in being a woman in a man's world, and, as Robbins suggests, only another transgressive figure can help her. The suggestion is that only a transgressive father could raise a daughter who acts outside traditional gender roles. Furthermore, the heroine's criminal father, like the Fatal Man, allows her access to male aggression.<sup>294</sup> This parallel is made explicit when the killer Jessica had arrested tells her "You're me." Jessica not only drinks too much and has anonymous sex, but she also transgresses female norms in that she cannot control her temper, severely beating up both a criminal and an aggressive ex-boyfriend. She is also styled to look tough and conventionally masculine: she has short hair and usually wears dark jeans and a leather jacket. *Twisted* takes the identification between heroine and killer even further when it suggests that she herself may be a serial killer: all her lovers, from the men she pick up in bars to her male coworkers, are eventually found dead. But this possible criminality does not protect Jessica; women's ambivalence about the male world means that the Female Gothic heroine fears the men in her life and fears herself as well. Thus, *Twisted*, in the more general woman-in-peril tradition, also offers various male suspects who may pose a threat to Jessica. The question is, as Kaufman puts it in the DVD commentary: "Is it her or is it after her?"<sup>295</sup> This doubling between heroine and criminal is presented in an especially striking manner in a dream sequence in which Jessica is explicitly predator instead of prey. We see Jessica following a man down a dark alley, seemingly stalking him. The film highlights this gender reversal as the man Jessica is following (the same man she had

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<sup>293</sup> Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship," 88.

<sup>294</sup> In *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), Isabel Cristina Pinedo makes the point that women enjoy seeing horror films partly because they enjoy seeing the Final Girl's aggression, 84-6. I discuss Pinedo's argument below.

<sup>295</sup> The 1995 CWPT *Never Talk to Strangers* has the same twist: while we think that the psychologist heroine is being stalked by the killer, it turns out that she herself is the killer. The Fatal Man has been internalized to a remarkably literal degree here. The recent CWPT, *Perfect Stranger*, also follows this formula: though several possible Fatal Men are set up to menace the journalist heroine, we find out she herself is the killer. As in *Never Talk to Strangers*, the explanation centers on an abusive father. The similarity in the titles suggests the genre's intertextuality and the common interest in using the concept of identification with the aggressor – the stranger is both the male Other and a part of oneself – as a way to explore women's ambivalent attitudes toward male aggression.

picked up at a bar earlier and who ended up dead) has long hair, which contrasts Jessica's short hair. Jessica also swaggers, while the man walks in a more tentative manner. She dreams that she shoots the man, who is then replaced by other men in her life, all of whom she kills. Jessica is masculine in that she is identified with her criminal father, but she is also feminine in that her own criminality is implicitly rooted in her feminine anger at men. The film further incorporates Female Gothic elements in that Jessica passes out every night after drinking and wakes up each time to an announcement of a new murder. Most Gothic heroines faint, which is a sign of their great sensitivity, but the suggestion here is that Gothic changes in consciousness are associated with crime; Jessica may transform into a "madwoman in the attic" (Gilbert and Gubar's name for the angry alter-ego of the Female Gothic heroine) at night.

The primary Fatal Man in *Twisted* is Jessica's partner, Mike (Andy Garcia), and the ambiguous way in which he is presented suggests her ambivalent attitude toward men. Mike is set up as a suspect from the beginning. At the same time, he is the gentle suitor figure; he cooks for Jessica and offers her a relationship for which the film suggests she is not ready. The resolution to Jessica's problems is ultimately related to her father: she solves the case and figures out that the actual criminal is Mills, her father's friend and her surrogate father.<sup>296</sup> This is, again, in the Radcliffean tradition, where the murderer almost inevitably ends up being the heroine's uncle who, jealous of the father, kills him and steals his inheritance and his wife. Mills too is revealed as a Female Gothic Fatal Man, having loved Jessica's mother but killing her for her promiscuity and then framing her husband for the murder. Continuing his sinister protectiveness, it is he who has been killing all of Jessica's lovers. The psychoanalytic dynamics could not be more obvious: the father kills off the daughter's suitors because they threaten his own power over her; the father is as much tyrant as mentor.<sup>297</sup> Jessica must thus kill her surrogate (bad) father and clear the father's name by exonerating her real (good) father so she can end up with the suitor figure, Mike. This is a reversal of *Jagged Edge*, where the daughter kills the suitor and ends up with the father. While Jessica may be free from the oppressive influence of the father, she is now also symbolically an adult woman; this suggests a Final Girl maturation narrative that is distinctively female and counters Clover's idea that slasher-inspired films stage male maturation. But being an adult woman also brings its own oppression – the suggestion is that Jessica is no longer troubled and can now settle down to a more traditional lifestyle with Mike – showing that the father's legacy is a

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<sup>296</sup> Tasker discusses an older movie, *Backstreet Justice* (1993), which also fits the CWPT pattern and has the same plot device regarding the father. (Like the Gothic novels upon which they are partly based, the CWPTs are heavily intertextual; in fact, the plot device of the usurping stepfather was to become a cliché of later Gothic novels.) Tasker does not comment on the significance of this plot device, only pointing to the ambiguity corresponding to the father role: "the father haunts the narrative, but precisely what he signifies is uncertain," 103.

<sup>297</sup> A policewoman CWPT that explores the legacy of the father in some depth is *Oxygen*. The heroine, Maddy (also a Final Girl-like name), uses masochism as a form of (ironic) rebellion against the legacy of her dead father, who had been mercilessly exacting. The Fatal Man eventually forces her to admit that her masochism is a form of transgression through which she finds freedom.

respite from this oppressive move into the adult world and is thus associated with liberation as well as oppression.

### **The Sublimity of Female Desire: *In the Cut* and *Candyman***

While the policewoman films work out some of the implications of the heroine's fascination with, and fear of, the male world through the doubling of heroine and Fatal Man and through the ambiguous legacy of the father, they generally imply that the heroine's fascination with transgression is a psychological problem she must overcome.<sup>298</sup> However, two less-mainstream CWPTs, Jane Campion's *In the Cut* (2003), based on Susanna Moore's 1995 novel of the same name, and Bernard Rose's *Candyman* (1992), based on Clive Barker's short story "The Forbidden," suggest that the heroine's seemingly masochistic attraction to fear is a creative wish to push her own subjectivity to the limits and thus to cross the boundaries set on women. These films are further similar in that they stress the importance of the sublime environment – the big city, which is also the home of the Fatal Man – in their exploration of female subjectivity. The heroine of *In the Cut*, Frannie (Meg Ryan), is a teacher and writer doing research on urban male slang: like the heroine of *House of Games*, she is an anthropologist in the aggressive and dangerous world of men. The slang, which tends to mix violence (particularly that aimed at women) and sex, is a symbol of this masculinity, and Frannie wishes to appropriate it for women by studying it and, thus, controlling it.<sup>299</sup> The male world of the police figures in this CWPT as well, since some of the most misogynistic slang is used by policemen, and the possible Fatal Man, Malloy (Mark Ruffalo), is in fact a cop. The other male territory is the city. Campion has explained that she wished *In the Cut* to look like the films of the 70s, and the cinematography does indeed remind one of *Taxi Driver's* New York – a city of night and nightlife, with neon lights blazing advertisements for pornography.<sup>300</sup> Frannie's sister (Jennifer Jason Leigh), who is even more adventurous, actually lives above a strip-club: the suggestion is that, like Frannie, she wants to keep that which could potentially threaten women close, in an act of defiance and attempted control. Frannie too feels close to the city and welcomes its menace and mystery: she walks around as if dazed by its power, mesmerized by every gritty detail. She records every urban nuance as if it all has special meaning just for her, and, in this world of female subjectivity, it does: the poetry in transit she reads on the subway speaks to her in its symbolic language about the longing she feels. The film's poster is particularly effective in suggesting the complexity of Campion's exploration of female subjectivity, as it twists an image that would at first seem to suggest a male point of view. It depicts a variation on a scene from the film: Frannie is seen, in the rearview mirror of a car, walking down a big city street, while the hand of an unseen man is adjusting the mirror, presumably to get a better look at her. This point of view is akin to that of the serial killer in slashers, as it shows an unseen man watching a woman, and so suggests the danger the

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<sup>298</sup> One important exception is Harris's novel *Hannibal* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1999), which ends with the heroine allying herself with the criminal.

<sup>299</sup> This fascination with the male sphere is actually enacted by the author Susanna Moore; her ability to understand and write about this male world is a badge of honor.

<sup>300</sup> The DVD is the "Uncut Director's Edition," distributed by Sony Pictures, 2004.

unseen and therefore all-pervading presence of the Fatal Man represents for the single woman in the city. Yet the image also suggests a female fantasy, as if a woman could watch herself being covertly watched. In this case, the Fatal Man is a fantasy figure, and thus necessarily anonymous, who exists to enable the figure of the woman who is courageous enough to brave big city dangers.

As in all CWPTs, however, the most important symbol is that of the serial killer preying on women in the city, and the danger he symbolizes is inextricably coupled with Frannie's subjectivity from the beginning. As in traditional woman-in-peril thrillers, he could be any of the men around Frannie: her strange ex-boyfriend, her serial-killer obsessed student, or the attractively crass police officer with whom she has begun an affair. But like the policewoman CWPTs, *In the Cut* suggests he is even closer to Frannie: he is part of her and what she desires. The film highlights this idea with a subplot about a student obsessed with serial killer John Wayne Gacy. He tells Frannie of Gacy: "He was a victim of desire." Frannie's often reckless actions are, of course, also driven by desire. Further, Campion suggests the close connection between Frannie's boundless desire and violence: sexual acts are akin to murder (for example, Frannie and Malloy first have sex after Frannie has been attacked in an alley, and both are aroused by reenacting the mugging) and murder has an almost sensual intimacy (Frannie, for instance, asks Malloy to describe the murders in detail and she dwells on the words and the images). But the film does not suggest that this is all the internalized masochism of a woman living in a patriarchal society, and Moore specifically addresses this interpretation in the novel, when Frannie declares "I am no masochist. I know that."<sup>301</sup> Rather, *In the Cut* is claiming the sublime for women by claiming extreme feelings for women. Perhaps this can be explained best by a pronouncement from another controversial feminist contemporary of Moore's, Camille Paglia. Thus, as she has it in one of her epigrams: "There is no female Mozart because there is no female Jack the Ripper."<sup>302</sup> Paglia here arrives right at the heart of women's fascination with serial killers – that is, with what serial killers symbolize – in these films. The cultural assumption is that women cannot be excessive, and it is this excess that the Fatal Man allows the heroine to access. While Moore's novel ends with a purposely excessive scene which re-imagines *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* – in that the heroine is killed but this is imagined as a daring refusal to compromise with the world and as a courageous wish to face the worst female fears – Campion's film ends with the heroine killing the killer. The change to the ending resembles that made for the adaptation of Harris's *Hannibal* (Ridley Scott, 2001): while both novels leave the heroines with the monsters, the films adaptations rescue them by allowing them to defeat these monsters. Campion's ending is thus more normative than Moore's in that the killer is shot by Frannie, his next intended victim, and conclusion which fits mainstream ideas of female empowerment and softens Moore's purposefully taboo-challenging vision. It thus takes *Candyman*, a film that fully engages the horror genre, to truly flesh out the implications of the Female Gothic appropriation of the sublime for female fantasy.

*Candyman* takes one of the core ideas of *In the Cut* – that women's entry into the sublime is achieved via imaginative excess, usually associated with the masculine – and

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<sup>301</sup> Moore, *In the Cut*, 188.

<sup>302</sup> *Sexual Personae*, 247.

literalizes it through horror conventions, a way to escape the bounds of realism still clinging to *Campion's* film. The heroine, Helen (Virginia Madsen), is, like Frannie, a scholar of the urban, and thus the film gives her the symbolic job of anthropologist. She studies urban legends, particularly those about Candyman (Tony Todd), a supernatural figure with a hook-hand who is said to be responsible for killings in a housing project in Chicago. One of the ways the film shows Helen's Gothic involvement in landscape is through her fascination with the ornate graffiti in the housing projects. Graffiti resembles another Gothic motif: hieroglyphics. The intricacy and mystery of graffiti suggests a two-dimensional labyrinth, into which Helen feels transported through her gaze. Graffiti also acts as a mysterious signifier, lending it the imagination-stimulating quality of the sublime. Thus, the graffiti in *Candyman* plays the same role that the poetry-in-transit does in *In the Cut*: both are suggestive signs the heroines begin to take as personal messages which speak to them of their dangerous journeys.<sup>303</sup> Helen's subjectivity is repeatedly stressed in the film, as Rose focuses in on her eyes as she looks at graffiti or listens to horrific stories about Candyman. Because she is so receptive, Helen, like Frannie, begins to feel dazed by the landscape and, like Jessica in *Twisted*, has repeated lapses in consciousness during which she may turn criminal. Helen's Gothic-heroine receptivity allows Candyman to possess her and put her in trances, out of which she wakes up surrounded by, and thus blamed for, his crimes. Thus, heroine and monster are once again doubled, with Helen eventually becoming the monster, thus rendering explicit what has been implicit in most CWPTs.

While *Candyman* seems to support Creed's and Pinedo's claims that women enjoy horror films in part because the genre allows women to be violent and monstrosity powerful, the film actually suggests something more subtle: Candyman's monstrosity represents excess and is thus a portal to the sublime. While it seems that Helen is appropriating Candyman's phallic power – overtly represented by his hook-hand, which Helen literally inherits at the end of the film – she is more importantly appropriating the imaginative power he represents. The film implies the connection between transgression and transcendence in Candyman's comment to Helen: "What do the good know except what the bad teach them by their excesses?" This pronouncement is echoed by Barker, who describes his own life as an artist in Romantic terms: he has always followed his muse, which led him to the misunderstood horror genre. He sums up his hard-won artistic philosophy thus: "I was always going to be a maker of extreme things." It is this access to the extreme that women are denied and that is thus symbolized by masculinity. Indeed, the fact that the female fascination and identification with the Fatal Man is most clearly literalized in a horror film is especially appropriate, as the horror genre is that which is excessive in our culture and thus most associated with a male audience.

It is thus telling that it is a critic who identifies horror spectatorship as feminine, Camille Paglia once again, who pinpoints some of the fascination of the CWPT for the female audience with her ideas about the male imagination and criminality. The controversial stance held by Paglia is that the aggressive and uncontrollable male libido is at the root of all innovation, and that women can be geniuses only in so far as they tap into this energy. While Paglia's view is in some ways in keeping with the old misogynistic idea that only men have the divine spark, there are ways in which this

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<sup>303</sup> Frannie says: "I have become so paranoid in the last month that I believe that the Poetry in Motion placards are messages for me," 156.

seemingly anti-feminist view can be appropriated for feminism and is being thus appropriated by the CWPTs. This aggrandizement of men in some senses transforms them into symbols and thus suggests a female point of view (as Anne Williams claims about the entire Fatal Man archetype). What Paglia, Clover, Creed, and Pinedo are in fact all reacting to is a strand of second wave feminism which portrays women as constantly threatened by male violence and the male libido.<sup>304</sup> Clover argues that it is the feminist stake in this belief that blinds critics to the obvious nuances of the horror film: "The reason, then, for the critical eloquence on the subject of male sadism is that it holds the gender bottom line. And the reason for the virtual silence in horror film criticism and for the blank spot in film theory on the possibility of male masochism is that to broach that is . . . to unsettle what is apparently our ultimate gender story."<sup>305</sup> Though Clover's argument that the male audience of horror films is identifying with the heroine rather than the killer has changed scholarly understanding of the genre, her analysis limits itself to male viewers, who, she claims, make up the majority of the horror audience. What Clover overlooks, though, is that one's attraction to a certain genre is not only based in the psychological conflicts it addresses but is as much an aspect of socialization as any other behavior. It is still taboo for women to openly enjoy entertainment that is explicitly violent or sexual. This, then, explains the appeal of the CWPT inheritance model for women: a woman can more easily enter the male sphere via her father, and this is as true in sports fandom or horror film connoisseurship as in business or politics. While Clover stresses the male psychodrama, Creed tries to claim power for women in the horror film by showing how the feminine is itself represented as monstrous and threatening.<sup>306</sup> This, of course, also suggests a masculine point of view, which ultimately Otherizes women, though through an attempt to empower them. Furthermore, as I have argued here, the masculine is just as often depicted as monstrous in horror films, thus implying a female perspective. Pinedo, one of the only critics to focus on female subjectivity in horror films, argues that horror allows women to indulge that which is most forbidden to them: anger and violence. But this is too literal an interpretation of a highly symbolic genre. The female spectator's involvement with fear is much more complex, as my analysis of the various CWPTs has shown. Despite the complexity of an audience's interaction with any text, one of the strongest appeals the CWPT has for women is its imagining of the real

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<sup>304</sup> I should clarify by saying that Paglia also thinks women are threatened by the male libido; she claims, after all "Feminism keeps saying the sexes are the same. It keeps telling women they can do anything, go anywhere, say anything, wear anything. No, they can't. Women will always be in sexual danger," "Rape and Modern Sex War," 50. But she considers this an inevitable part of the thrill of sexual difference: "We cannot regulate male sexuality. The uncontrollable aspect of male sexuality is part of what makes sex interesting," "The Rape Debate Continued," *Sex, Art, and American Culture*, 63. Paglia sounds very much like *In the Cut*'s Frannie as she describes the thrill she experiences as a woman venturing into what she sees considers male territory: "The sexes are at war with each other. . . . You can be attacked on a dark street. Does that mean we should never go into dark streets? Part of my excitement as a college student in the Sixties was coming out of the very protective Fifties. I was wandering those dark streets understanding that not only could I be raped, I could be killed," 65.

<sup>305</sup> Clover, 227.

<sup>306</sup> *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 2003.



world as masculine and therefore both possibly hostile and excitingly challenging. At the same time, as women get increased access to the male world, the formula will have to change; the glamour of male power will dissipate once men are no longer symbols of a forbidden sphere.

Today's women have grown up with the horror movies Clover and Pinedo had to defend from feminist critics, and they thus no longer seem so threatening. Indeed, it seems to me that young women have already claimed some of this more sexual or violent entertainment. "Final Girl" is now the title of a horror blog written by a woman, Stacie Ponder, and her humor and enthusiasm for the genre undercuts any sense that the 70s and 80s horror films she covers could be threatening to women.<sup>307</sup> Even more telling, perhaps, is the fact that one of the most beloved film characters of recent times, Juno (from the film of the same title), is a fan of horror director Dario Argento. But what I have tried to show in this essay is that women were engaging supposedly excessive, and thus supposedly masculine, entertainment all along. Though female critics and artists seek to increase the female imaginative sphere, in real world terms there has been a backlash against the supposed phenomenon of women acting like men – having casual sex, putting off relationships to concentrate on a career, drinking – and several books and articles have appeared in the last decade which express ambivalence about (or even openly condemn) this equalizing tendency.<sup>308</sup> Perhaps it is the continued insistence of a separate sphere for men and women that keeps the CWPT vital into the twenty-first century.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> [finalgirl.blogspot.com](http://finalgirl.blogspot.com)

<sup>308</sup> See for instance Laura Session Stepp's 2007 *Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love, and Lose at Both* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007).

<sup>309</sup> The female detective thriller seem to maintains its popularity and is currently thriving on television – *Crossing Jordan*, *Veronica Mars*, and *Saving Grace* all have elements of the policewoman CWPT.

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## Filmography

*Basic Instinct*. Dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1992.  
*The Best of Everything*. Dir. Jean Negulesco, 1959.  
*Blue Steel*. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow, 1990.  
*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. 1997-2003  
*Call Me*. Dir. Sollace Mitchell, 1988.  
*Candyman*. Dir. Bernard Rose, 1992.  
*Crossing Jordan*. 2001-present.  
*Double Indemnity*. Dir. Billy Wilder, 1944.  
*Embrace of the Vampire*. Dir. Anne Goursaud, 1995.  
*Gaslight*. Dir. George Cukor, 1944.  
*Guilty as Sin*. Dir. Sidney Lumet, 1993.  
*Halloween*. Dir. John Carpenter, 1978.  
*Hannibal*. Dir. Ridley Scott, 2001.  
*House of Games*. Dir. David Mamet, 1987.  
*Impulse*. Dir. Sandra Locke, 1990.  
*In the Cut*. Dir. Jane Campion, 2003.  
*Jagged Edge*. Dir. Richard Marquand, 1985.  
*Juno*. Dir. Jason Reitman, 2007.  
*Looking for Mr. Goodbar*. Dir. Richard Brooks, 1977.  
*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. 1970-7.  
*Murder by Numbers*. Dir. Barbet Schroeder, 2002.  
*My Brother's Keeper*. Dir. John Badham, 2002.  
*Never Talk to Strangers*. Dir. Peter Hall, 1995.  
*A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Dir. Wes Craven, 1984.  
*Oxygen*. Dir. Richard Shepard, 1999.  
*Perfect Stranger*. Dir. James Foley, 2007.  
*Rebecca*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1940.  
*Rosemary's Baby*. Dir. Roman Polanski, 1968.  
*Saving Grace*. 2007-present.  
*Sex and the City*. 1998-2004  
*The Silence of the Lambs*. Dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991.  
*Suspicion*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1941.  
*Taking Lives*. Dir. D. J. Caruso, 2004.  
*Taxi Driver*. Dir. Martin Scorsese, 1977.  
*To Die For*. Dir. Gus Van Sant, 1995.  
*Twisted*. Dir. Philip Kaufman, 2004.  
*Veronica Mars*. 2004-present.