

**“Her panting heart beat measures of consent”: Women’s sexual agency in Eliza Haywood’s
Fiction**

Lucy Ellis

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in English Literature

Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

© Lucy Ellis, Ottawa, Canada, 2019

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Empire of the Father.....	17
Corruption in the court and the home.....	24
The father as lover.....	33
Chapter Two: The Semiotics of Consent.....	42
Body language: when beating hearts do the talking.....	46
Intersections of class and consent.....	56
Masquerade: consenting to the unknown.....	65
Owning women's consent: material gain and legal concerns.....	69
Chapter Three: Female Intimacies.....	74
Enabling rape: Haywood's emphasis on female betrayal.....	79
Seeking pleasure through female friendship.....	92
Queering the ending: female solace in exile.....	99
Conclusion.....	107
Bibliography.....	110

Abstract

Through her texts depicting amorous adventures, Eliza Haywood engages with critical, contemporary discussions about power relations and consent in both social and legal constructs. Her texts resist the boundary between the private domain of interpersonal relationships and the public domain of political relations. Rather, her fiction engages in a wide-reaching discourse that explores the interrelations between power, agency, consent, and education, and lays bare the ways in which societal roles and expectations are reinforced in damaging ways. This thesis aims to prove that Haywood's repetition of central motifs—including the continued tension between resisting and yielding to sexual pressure or temptation, and the line between seduction and rape—serves to question how these behaviours become normalized and naturalized. Through analyzing three categories of relationships—women and their fathers or guardians, women and their lovers, and women with other women—this thesis unpacks how women's agency is stifled by parental relationships, transferred to male lovers, and finally empowered by female intimacy.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, this thesis would not have happened without my supervisor, Dr. Sara Landreth. My introduction to Eliza Haywood occurred in her third year course on eighteenth-century novels. What followed—an inability to stop thinking about *Fantomina*, a fascination with Eliza Haywood, and a desire to spend a lot of time and effort thinking and writing about consent—is due to Sara’s enthusiasm and continued support.

Thank you for your patience over the past few years. A part-time thesis is not the easiest journey to undertake, and I truly appreciate how supportive and thought-provoking you have been throughout the process.

I am also indebted to loving parents and siblings. As the token arts child—the rest of the family being comprised of an oncologist, a nurse, an accountant, a mad scientist, an MSc, and a Psychology student—I felt free to pursue my passion. Thank you for keeping me on track with gentle questioning.

As a preview to my third chapter, I want to dedicate the longest and final section of thanks to my beloved female friends. Heather, Becca, and Steph, as my childhood friends, you have the distinct honour of having stuck with me through the best and worst times of my life. You are always in my heart. To Jas and Beth, our trio has given me strength and encouragement in times of doubt. Jas, I can’t imagine university without you. Thank you for every study session, every time you called me out for not working, every bottle of wine... To the English Bae—Mia, Kelsy, Kelsey, Kato, Rachel, Nicole, Vanessa, Steph, ABD, and Emma—if I ever need to concoct an elaborate plot to save myself from a bad situation... I know where to turn. Thank you for the study sessions, the late night Facebook messenger crowd-sourcing, the continued encouragement, and thank you most of all for your love of literature. There are few things that bring joy like excitedly yelling about a poem or a book or a piece of critical theory. To Jillaine and Dayna, two of my first friends at university, our conversations and debate practices expanded my worldview and my critical thinking. I’m so lucky to have met you. And to my newest bae, Alyssa, thank you for listening to my ideas and encouraging me through this part-time MA process. You’re an awesome friend.

Introduction

Eliza Haywood published her first novel, *Love in Excess*, in 1719. Amidst the intriguing tales of Count D'elmont's amorous adventures, Haywood explores critical themes of power relations and consent in both social and legal constructs. The text demonstrates how power over women is transferred from one man to another through the legal system, either by marriage or by testamentary guardianship. Haywood's popular novel, while seemingly conforming to typical aspects of the amorous romance genre, also contains underlying hints of an imperfect social structure wherein women's bodily signifiers are read through a cultural lens that gives men permission to take liberties that would otherwise be unacceptable. Further, *Love in Excess* lays bare the ways in which men teach and reinforce this cultural understanding to one another, perpetuating a system that devalues women's verbal consent and prioritizes male sexual gratification and control. Thirty-five years later, near the end of her career and her life, Haywood published *The Invisible Spy* in 1754. Recent scholarship has considered this work to be Haywood's meta-reflections on her own writing career, and on the various genres in which she engaged. As such, I will reference it throughout the thesis in order to chart Haywood's continued preoccupation with the interrelations between power, agency, consent, and education.

I analyze these themes primarily in relation to sexual narratives, but this thesis will examine the legal and philosophical contextual underpinnings behind them, and demonstrate that Haywood engaged in a wide-reaching socio-political discourse through her fiction. In my analysis, I retrospectively apply the second-wave feminist analysis of the inter-connectedness of the personal and the political. This thesis looks at the ways in which women's daily personal lives and relationships were both predicated on and contributed to social norms, and the ways in

which their ability to exert agency was steeped in their contemporary political situation. Further, amatory in the eighteenth century flourished in the “political culture organized around relations of dominance and subordination” (Bowers 128). Questions about ambiguous agency and coercion had a deeply political connotation for Haywood’s audience across party lines. Although her first text was published 30 years after King James II’s abdication, the political climate was still strongly influenced by those events. Tories challenged the language of abdication because it connoted that James had willingly abandoned his position as king; it suggested that he had consented to leave, rather than that he was forced to flee both by the Duke of Orange’s army arriving on England’s shores and the increasing English support for the invading forces (Bowers 132). Haywood’s partisan affiliation falls outside of the scope of this thesis, but regardless of her political leanings, her culture was steeped in discourse about coercion, consent, and power. This thesis will delve into the legal realities of Haywood’s England, with particular focus on the Court of Chancery. This court was meant to protect vulnerable populations, but showed itself to be more interested in defending property rights and primogeniture than in defending women.

This thesis follows in the tradition of scholars such as Kathryn King, Catherine Ingrassia, Helen Thompson, and others who emphasize the importance of taking the long view of Haywood’s career. Earlier decades of Haywood scholarship viewed her amatory fiction from the 1720s as less politically relevant than her more domestic or didactic texts from the 1740s and 1750s. However, the continuity, and in some cases mirroring of scenes, between Haywood’s earlier fiction and *The Invisible Spy* demonstrates that an attempt to produce a hard division between eras or periods of Haywood is a misleading endeavour. *The Invisible Spy* has also been relatively under-studied in Haywood scholarship, so I intend to emphasize this text’s philosophical significance. This thesis aims to prove that Haywood’s repetition of central

motifs—including the continued tension between resisting and yielding to sexual pressure or temptation, and the line between seduction and rape—serves to question how these behaviours become normalized and naturalized. Not only legal documents but also scenes of education become important in Haywood’s texts because they describe instances when cultural norms are explicitly on display and formally reproduced. In the *Female Spectator* (1744-1746), Haywood posits that female education—containing within it the societal expectations of femininity and womanhood—is the “almost sole Cause of all [women’s] Errors” (133). Poor education limits a woman’s ability to make rational choices in her best interest. Women’s faulty education is presented in almost conspiratorial terms when the persona of a male author of a letter to the editor argues, “Learning puts the Sexes too much on an Equality, it would destroy that implicit Obedience which it is necessary the Women should pay to our Command:—If once they have the Capacity of arguing with us, where would be our Authority!” (134-135). Male dominance is predicated and reliant upon female intellectual inferiority.

In analyzing scenes of seduction, I find Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic theory useful for understanding the complexities relating to reading consent from exterior signifiers such as actions and body language. Saussure’s linguistic sign is made of a “concept and a sound-image” (66) or, as he further defines the terms, the signified and the signifier (67). The relationship between the signifier and signified is “arbitrary” (67) in that it is based “on collective behavior, or—what amounts to the same thing—on convention” (68). There is nothing inherent in, for instance, the word *spy* that conjures up an image of an individual watching others without their knowledge, and yet, English-language speakers all understand it to be so. Centuries of common usage have fixed this meaning. That being said, it is still mutable, subject to gradual change as it

is exposed to both time and shifting cultural norms¹. In the case of seduction, such as during *Love in Excess*, Amena's "panting heart beat measures of consent, her heaving breast swell to be pressed by his, and every pulse confess a wish to yield" (Haywood 58). In this scene, Amena's body—her racing heart, heaving breast, and pulse—are signifiers. The signified, or related concept, is consent to sexual activity. There is nothing inherent about a beating heart that confesses a wish to yield. A racing pulse could also mean fear, platonic excitement, or physical exertion. However, when viewing the situation through the lens of convention, D'elmont understands the signifiers to mean yielding. He interprets her body through the semiotics of seduction understood by rakes, and pursues a sexual encounter as if she has expressed her consent. The crux of this theory, and the importance to this thesis, is that a language—in this case, the language of seduction—constitutes a system:

In this one aspect, language is not completely arbitrary but is ruled to some extent by logic; it is here also, however, that the inability of the masses to transform it becomes apparent. The system is a complex mechanism that can be grasped only through reflection; the very ones who use it daily are ignorant of it. We can conceive of a change only through the intervention of specialists, grammarians, logicians, etc (73).

The social system that reduces women's consent to bodily signifiers which can be easily misinterpreted, and that removes women's sexual agency through fear and shame, is ruled by a logic that is in place to preserve the subordination of women and the inheritance of male wealth. The system seems natural to those who participate in it; it is taught to them by their parents, guardians, tutors, and peers from early childhood. It is not until someone points out the artificiality and arbitrary construction of the system that it becomes clear that broader cultural phenomena are at work. Haywood's texts provide those scenes of clarification. While Haywood

¹ Consider the presumed nationality that a person might imagine if they hear the word *spy*. In a text about eighteenth-century London, the spy would likely be French. In recent publications about 21st-century London, the spy is more likely to be Russian. Regardless of the nationality, the core relationship between signifier and signified has not radically changed; it has mutated.

is not as explicitly a reformer as Mary Astell before her or Mary Wollstonecraft after her, her texts contain important critiques of society's treatment of female agency, and offer subversive alternatives. Through time and gradual cultural changes, it is possible to alter the relationship between the signifiers and the signified.

Haywood's narratives show how men deliberately manipulate and manufacture encounters to overwhelm women's senses so that "the heroine is diverted, not by a single thing, but by an environment that is dizzyingly plural" (Philips 75). This diversion, or distraction, renders women's minds unable to exert full control over their physical bodies. These instances serve a dual purpose, simultaneously showing how scenes of seduction are artificially constructed, and also demonstrating how women's passion is restrained by feelings of shame.² When a woman is able to forget, for even a moment, about the potential consequences of her so-called ruin, her mind ceases to control her bodily desires and she can embrace sexual ecstasy. However, the strict, virtuous code of conduct that she has been taught re-emerges to fill her with fear of societal repercussions. Haywood's narration walks through the process by which women are simultaneously taught to be virtuous and coquettish, and how men are taught to read consent in women's bodies, even and especially when they have vocally said no. This social education prioritizes the physical signifiers over the verbal in order to justify men pursuing their passion. Haywood's focus on education—both formal and social—suggests to her readership that these

² In *Novel Machines*, Joseph Drury contrasts (mostly) male libertine machines against the "emergent, typically female thinking machine" to analyze culpability; drawing on Hobbes, he argues that Haywood's texts embody the "argument that although people's actions are indeed entirely determined by external causes, they can still be held responsible for their actions so long as they are voluntary—that is, so long as they proceed from the will following a thought or deliberative process in the mind" (53). I do not agree that Haywood is entirely in accord with Hobbes; her repetition of similar scenes with fundamental differences would indicate that external appetites and aversions are not the sole cause of human action. However, I find Drury's critique of the ideology of the libertine machine very interesting. Drury articulates how libertines follow their passions unthinkingly because they do not fear consequences (68). By contrast, the female thinking machine uses thought as a "weapon of resistance against the libertine machine" (77) and employs deliberation to "delay the fatal action" (80). Haywood's heroines lose control over their bodies when they can no longer pause and think.

behaviours are not part of a natural order. Haywood further demonstrates that these actions are part of a system of behaviour—rather than the acts of one individual—through conspiratorial scenes where multiple characters plot how to violate a woman’s sexual agency. The effect of this broad network of male dominance is that a woman alone is likely to be mistreated. She does not have the same social capital or resources that a man has. In Haywood’s texts, an isolated woman easily falls prey, but a woman with a supportive female network is able to resist mistreatment and chart her own course. In *The City Jilt* (1726) and *The Invisible Spy*, Haywood shows the power of female friendship in subverting male dominance. In the former, Laphelia helps her intimate friend Glicera to successfully manipulate one man in order to exact financial revenge upon another who sexually betrayed her. In the latter, Florimel dresses in drag and enacts a plot to save Melanthe from being forced into a despicable marriage. These women do not compete with one another for male attention or favours; they avoid the foibles that patriarchal society encourages. Rather, they act based on love and mutual interest, supporting one another to achieve optimal outcomes.

While Saussure provides one avenue for analyzing seduction in Haywood, it is important to contextualize her writings in terms of the prevailing philosophical conversations of the eighteenth century. John Locke was immensely influential during this period. Haywood’s texts, and their underlying social critiques, can be understood as being in conversation with Locke’s theories of tacit consent, property of the person, and the division between political power and power within the family.³ For Locke, every man is “naturally free” until consenting to enter into

³ Jonathan Kramnick analyzes Haywood’s engagement with consent in two of her most famous works, *Love in Excess* and *Fantomina*. In the Lockean perspective, observing actions can provide knowledge of some mental states—consent—but not others, such as desire. Consent is unique because it cannot exist in isolation; “one consents as one is in relation with others” (Kramnick 171). People’s actions can both create and disclose states of mind (175), so consent becomes a matter of interpreting and reading other people’s behaviour (176). Male actors in Haywood therefore read consent off women’s bodies. Drury, however, articulates the logic employed by

Civil Society (Second Treatise, Sec 119). However, Locke acknowledges that the story of free individuals entering into a society is allegorical, rather than a true history of society. People are born into governed societies; their consent to be part of civil society is tacit. Locke therefore looks to distinguish how far that tacit consent binds men and submits them to “any Government, where he has made no Expressions of it at all. And to this I say, that every Man, that hath any Possession, or Enjoyment, of any part of the Dominions of any Government, doth thereby give his tacit Consent” and must obey the laws (Sect 119). Man accepts this submission in order to receive the benefits of a governed society, namely, the preservation of property, which Locke defines as lives, liberties, and estates (Sect 123). Feminist critics of Locke rightfully point out that he presents a “false universal” in his treaties: while his arguments are ostensibly about humanity, his theories are centred on males as the “norm or paradigm example of humanity” (Richardson “Classic Social Contractarians” 12). The position of women and minorities was not considered in-depth, and the reality was that women and non-white, non-landowning persons experienced consent and power differently than the males assumed in Locke’s position; “women are held to be ‘individuals’ as part of the social contract and yet are outside it” (Richardson “Selves” 93).

Locke also asserts that man has ownership over his person: “every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*” (Sect 27). While Locke’s analysis

philosophical libertines: “female modesty is not to be taken seriously as an authentic expression of virtue, nor should resistance in such circumstances be regarded as an indication that a woman does not consent to sex” (76). The argument behind tacit sexual consent does not account for the fact that men teach other men to interpret women’s actions in particular ways. Tacit sexual consent is inherently flawed by the underlying ideology and sexual double standard.

of the property of the person emphasizes the control that men have over themselves, and is the building block upon which he justifies their ownership over property, it also implies within it that a person is a “property that could be alienated” (Richardson “Classic Social Contractarians” 20). Locke argues against workers being able to sell themselves into slavery, but under this system, women enter into marriage and alienate a part of their personhood, relinquishing control over their lives and the wealth or possessions they may have; as Richardson explains, “women’s consent to marriage is necessary and yet under the doctrine of coverture, it took away further rights” (“Classic Social Contractarians” 82). Men cannot own other men, because all men are owned by God, but men can subordinate women because “Conjugal society is made by a voluntary Compact between Man and Woman” (Sect 78). The justification for women’s subordination is further enhanced by Locke’s constructed division between political power and power within the family:

When politics is defined narrowly as being concerned with the state it is easier to view power as something that operates in a top-down manner from the Sovereign command to the populous, through laws. When Locke views male dominance within the family as natural and as occurring in a distinct, private non-political realm, the operations of power within the home falls from sight within political theory. (Richardson “Classic Social Contractarians” 91)

Haywood’s texts implicitly reject this division. Her amatory and domestic fictions delve into the realm of politics through references to legal documents and contemporary issues. Under the ideology of *parens patriae*, the monarch was responsible for taking care of the people, especially the poor and the weak (Abramowicz 1346). However, there was an established tradition of delegating jurisdiction of those responsibilities to the Chancellor, and by extension, the Court of Chancery (Seymour 167). It functioned as a “court of conscience”, intended to solve the failings of common law (Nixon 51). Throughout her writing career, Haywood’s heroines were plagued with conflicts that theoretically could have been adjudicated by the Court of Chancery, but they

never apply to the court. The invisibility of the court is a notable absence, suggesting a lack of trust in the effectiveness of the court to perform its duties. This is poignant in *The Distress'd Orphan; or Love in a Madhouse* (1726), when a young woman is wrongfully declared mad and imprisoned by her greedy uncle for refusing to marry his son. As I discuss in detail in Chapter One, this text was published a year after a scandal rocked the Court of Chancery. For Haywood, domestic relations are inherently connected to the political structures surrounding them, and dividing the two realms is disingenuous. With the monarch figured as the father of the nation, and the Court of Chancery entrusted to uphold guardianship of the weak and vulnerable, Haywood's depictions of domestic abuse of authority by fathers and guardians takes on political weight. The family is the smallest microcosm of society; it is a reflection of the larger political reality that women face. Abuses within the family are both made possible by, and contribute to, the greater social construct of patriarchal power.

This thesis is structured around three broad categories of relationships: the hierarchical relationship between a woman and her father or guardian; the sexual relationship between a woman and her lover; and the intimate relationship between multiple women. Through these categories, I examine where power is derived from in these relationships. My first two chapters zero in on Haywood's critiques of the status quo, and how these relationships serve, for the most part, to stifle women. The third chapter delves into the disruptive and in some ways radical possibilities for an alternative model of creating and conceiving of relationships that share and distribute power more equally. Relationships between women lack the hierarchy and entrenched problems that women experience with men. Haywood shows quasi-utopian ideals of intimacy, trust, and respect between women, and relationships that are not predicated on one partner legally subsuming the other. As discussed earlier, I analyze segments of *The Invisible Spy* in

each chapter of this thesis as a touchstone to discuss how Haywood's ideas both evolve and maintain continuity over the course of her career. While she engages with the same topics, her critical lens towards the end of her career leans towards a more pessimistic outlook in a number of regards, such as paternal authority. *The Invisible Spy* is useful to this endeavour for three principal reasons. First, it was one of the last texts that Haywood published, so it grants insights into her thinking and priorities near the end of her career and her life. Second, the work is a collection of stories inside of a frame narrative, so it is rich in thematic diversity while containing numerous narratives that reflect earlier works. Third, and most important, *The Invisible Spy* has been figured as Haywood's "meditation on authorship in the time of politics, publicity and the emerging public sphere" (King "Political Biography" 193). Eve Tavor Bannet takes up King's argument, and the implicit call to action for scholars to pay more attention to *The Invisible Spy*, positing that Haywood used the text "to lay bare narrative devices that she had deployed in much of her amatory fiction... Haywood was making a polemical statement both about her own career and about the 'novel' at the end of her life" (143).

Explorabilis, the title's spy, is a deliberately slippery and gender-bending character that resists definition. Explorabilis enjoys this ambiguous position, boasting in the introduction: "where I am even a man or a woman, they will find it, after all their conjectures, as difficult to discover as the longitude" (2). For the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to Explorabilis using 'they' as a gender-neutral pronoun. However, there are many instances in the text when Explorabilis' behaviour is coded as male. For instance, the spy talks about their ease of access in male-dominated locations. The spy also plays out a father-guardian relationship with a young woman who is kept as his ward. The ambiguous gender and nature of the spy allows Haywood to present a variety of perspectives which are, at face value, neutral in terms of the biases associated

with either gender. As a fluid and non-binary character, the narrator is able to slip between traditionally male and female spaces with ease, interpreting the actions of everyone whom they watch.

The conceit of the frame narrative is that Explorabilis is an intimate friend of a magician. When the magician dies, he tells Explorabilis to go into his Closet of Curiosities and take whichever objects they desire. Explorabilis passes over a number of magical items—including, ironically, Salts of Meditation which “fixes the mind, and enables it to ponder justly on any subject that requires deliberation” (5)—and settles instead on two items: a belt of invisibility, and a tablet which “receives the impression of every word that is spoken” (6). Thus, Explorabilis is armed to become the perfect, nearly-omniscient narrator. They can enter any space undetected and can see the truth of human nature. When people are alone, their “unguarded attitudes” enable Explorabilis to make “certain discoveries of the inward workings of the human mind” (278). The project of accurately understanding and representing the inner workings of the mind—a narrator’s or character’s interiority—was of great concern to eighteenth-century authors; Samuel Richardson, for instance, used the epistolary form to advance this goal in *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748). So, Haywood’s employment of this frame narrative for her miscellany of short narratives would indicate that she is trying to uncover some degree of moral philosophical truth, to understand how people operate and relate to one another authentically and to represent moral philosophical principles with verisimilitude. Explorabilis also openly admits that they are trying to convince the reader of certain perspectives. They add moralizing and tantalizing introductions, conclusions, and summaries to the various narratives. Thus, the role of the author is not simply to report what is true, or to capture the essence of reality exactly as it is. An author is also continuously interpreting reality for a readership, and trying to convey particular perspectives

and ideologies in an entertaining manner. Haywood's texts are, at each stage of her career, keenly aware of their audience and of the potential effects that they could have upon readers. Explorabilis, as the spy, chooses at times to follow certain people over others because they think that one will result in more interesting outcomes. The editorial function of the author—deciding what goes into the story and what is left out—is filled with value-judgements and reflections upon which narratives will strike the best balance between entertainment and education. To this end, Explorabilis is explicitly didactic in their insistence on drawing lessons from each vignette.

In Chapter One, I analyze Haywood's depictions of fathers and guardians, the power that they wield over young women, and how those relationships shape the course of a woman's understanding of her agency and her ability to consent. Authority over women is transferred from one male figure to another; in this way, inability to express agency or consent in a parental relationship inhibits a woman's ability to meaningfully engage in consent in her future sexual relationships with male suitors and lovers. For Locke, the rights of parents over their child are founded in their duties to said child: "So little power does the bare act of begetting give a man over his issue; if all his care ends there, and this be all the title he hath to the name and authority of a father" ("Second Treatise" Sec 65). The relationship is reciprocal: parents are responsible for providing nourishment and education, and children are required to honour their parents. Although Locke claims that mothers have "an equal title" (52) in the power of parents over their children, the legal rights afforded to fathers, and the social application of this power, heavily favoured fathers up until the nineteenth century. Further, while Locke argues that fathers ought not abuse their authority or devolve into tyranny, he acknowledges that "it was easy, and almost natural for children, by a tacit, and scarce avoidable consent, to make way for the father's authority and government. They had been accustomed in their childhood to follow his direction"

(Sect 75). Haywood's novels highlight the dangers of tyrannical guardianship, and the lack of meaningful societal protection for female wards who lack the means to seek recourse. Even an idealistic vision of fatherhood presented in *The Female Spectator* contains within it a hint of violence and the underlying threat that a father poses to his daughter if she resists his will. In *The Distress'd Orphan*, Giraldo attempts to coerce Annilia into marrying his son, first through manipulation, then appealing to her sense of duty, and finally through violence. Giraldo was responsible for Annilia's education, which gives him an advantage over her; at first, she cannot conceive of disobeying him, because her ideological and intellectual framework for the world was devised by him. This relationship between guardians, education, and coercion is further complicated when the boundary between father and lover is collapsed. I contrast two examples from *Love in Excess* and *The Invisible Spy* to demonstrate that the father-lover figure is most toxic when he is in control of his ward's education.

In Chapter Two, I focus on the relationship between women and their lovers; this chapter seeks to identify and understand the sometimes subtle displays of violence that exist in male-female sexual relations, particularly in scenes of seduction. This chapter interrogates instances where consent is given and then withdrawn, misunderstood, or interpreted based on non-verbal signifiers. In many ways, there is a constant third participant in these sexual encounters: society. Haywood's female protagonists are caught navigating the conflict between socially instilled feelings of shame and the fear of social consequences and their sexual desires.⁴ This conflict is dramatized through the discrepancy in their verbal and non-verbal signifiers. In *Love in Excess*

⁴ For Drury, this deliberation is what makes Melliora "admirable from both the moral and the heroic point of view" since she resists "transgression while at the same time demonstrating that her desire to transgress is ultimately irresistible" (81). Melliora is a thinking machine. She is driven by her appetites but retains control over her will, and is thus "able to sustain her status as both an exemplary model of virtue and an authentically heroic lover" (81). Once more, the only reason why Melliora must restrain herself and deliberate is because of the social consequences which she would face if she succumbed thoughtlessly to her sexual appetites in the tradition of a libertine machine.

and *The Adventures of Natura* (1748), Haywood draws attention to the ways that a woman's body and mind often lead her in different directions, particularly when her senses are overwhelmed by other stimuli. These instances of consent—if they can be called that—will help to tease out Haywood's arguments about the ways that men with power read or assume consent from those who do not have it. Women's ability to assert their agency and have ownership over their consent also varies by class. In *Fantomina* (1725), I analyze how the anonymous protagonist adopts a progressive series of class structures along with her disguises; her contrasting levels of control and freedom in her sexual encounters demonstrates how class compounds existing inequality with relation to consent. While Haywood's early works, *Fantomina* and *The Masqueraders* (1724), are interested in how disguises and adopting a different persona can enable women to explore their sexuality, her later texts, *The Female Spectator* and *The Invisible Spy*, demonstrate the way that men use masquerade disguises to gain an advantage over women in increasingly violent ways. As always, Haywood's novels extend beyond the amatory into the realm of politics and the law. Her salacious fiction highlights discrepancies in the way that women and men can meaningfully engage in consent, and therefore meaningfully engage in society.

Finally, Chapter Three articulates an alternative, feminocentric vision for society. Haywood's texts show the power of female relationships to create lasting happiness and disrupt narratives of exile. The instances when Haywood presents harmful female relationships illustrate how destructive women can be when their worldview is shaped by competition for heterosexual marriage. This competition is not simply about desire; in the eighteenth century, women's economic livelihood and prospects for having a fulfilling life were largely predicated on finding a suitable husband. Women are therefore taught to compete with one another in deceptive and

ruinous ways in order to gain a competitive advantage in the marriage market; through this perverse incentive structure, they become complicit in a male-dominated social structure that limits women's agency. I trace the course of Betsy's various relationships with women in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) to demonstrate how female-female betrayal is directly connected to threats against Betsy's body; by contrast, forming strong relationships with women who are not compromised by patriarchal incentives leads to Betsy's ultimate happiness. Learning how to choose friends and relying upon true female allies are necessary to Betsy's ability to lead a fulfilling life. In this chapter, I engage with scholarship about female intimacy in the eighteenth century to demonstrate that women's relationships offered a beneficial alternative to the status quo, and therefore posed a threat: "women's friendships outside of marriage were free of the laws and hierarchies that governed marital relations and thus were potentially subversive of the social order that marriage as an institution was held to reinforce" (Wahl 158). I demonstrate how toxic heterosexuality poisons the strong friendship between Dalinda and Philecta in *The Masqueraders or Fatal Curiosity* (1724), and contrast that tragic ending to the empowering revenge fantasy, *The City Jilt* (1726), and the unceasing devotion between friends in *The Invisible Spy*. This latter text is also rich in queer implications, as Florimel dresses in drag and plays the role of lover to save her intimate friend. Finally, I apply Susan Lanser's framework for queer readings to find meaning in exile in *Fantomina* and *The British Recluse* (1722). Narratives ending in exile offered subversive possibilities of a strategic retreat into feminocentric space which disrupted the dichotomy that women's lives could end in either marriage or ruin.

My queer readings do not identify depictions of lesbianism in Haywood, although there are some suggestive passages that show a more-than-ordinary tenderness between women. Rather, I seek to demonstrate that female relationships in Haywood are political because they

play an essential role in women being able to exert their agency and retain control over their ability to consent. My first two chapters look at the relationships that place limits on women, or that contain within them legal and socially reproduced mechanisms for control. This thesis ends with an exploration of another path that women can take: a path that resists a patriarchal impulse to compete, and instead embraces relationships built on trust, love, and loyalty. There are still imbalances; for instance, in the *British Recluse*, Cleomira is the wealthier of the two women, and they live off of the remains of her fortune. However, this discrepancy of wealth does not create a discrepancy in their freedoms in their relationship. Women's relationships have the advantage of existing outside of the patriarchal hierarchy, and therefore avoid the problematic aspects that I discuss in the first two chapters.

Chapter One: The Empire of the Father

Eliza Haywood's texts are keenly interested in the way that paternal authority is imbued with potentially coercive power. From the beginning of her career with *Love in Excess* in 1719 to her final works in the 1750s, Haywood continually returns to examples of fathers, guardians, and father-figures who intimidate, abuse, coerce, and use manipulative tactics to extract consent from their wards. The rare examples of positive familial relations stand out in Haywood's oeuvre as visions of an idealized future that could be achieved if youth, particularly young women, received a better education and the freedom to make choices without coercion. Before delving into analysis of her texts, I will situate Haywood's writings in their historical context and examine the legal frameworks of mid-eighteenth century British family life, with particular focus on the relationship between fathers/guardians and female minors. A woman's first exposure to her social roles was most often within her family unit, in which she formed her identity as a daughter before developing sexual or other social identities. Thus, the framework for consent that was established within the family had long-lasting ramifications. This chapter argues that given the paternal authority of the king and the Court of Chancery, Haywood's critiques of paternal coercion and abuse of power in her amatory fiction take on heavy political weight: they are a simultaneous undermining of paternal authority, the ability of the Court of Chancery to fulfil its mandate to protect the weak and powerless, and the legitimacy of the idea of a benevolent paternal monarch. I will explore how Haywood treats the family unit as a microcosm for society at large. Broadly speaking, eighteenth-century social contract theorists posit that the state's authority to control subjects and remove some of their freedom is for the greater good; people tacitly consent to this contract by virtue of participating in society and receiving the

benefits of protection from the state, which is meant to act in their best interests.⁵ Haywood's texts demonstrate that the family structure is organized around a figure who holds all of the power—like the monarch—and who is meant to use that power for the good of his family; however, father figures and guardians frequently abuse their authority to further their self-interests. Thus, Haywood's critiques of this small social unit represent broader debates about the way that power is distributed in society.

Tiffany Potter, Kathryn King, Jennifer Hobgood, and Catherine Ingrassia discuss the development of feminocentric space, romance, alternative modes of social relations, and communities, respectively. Before I delve into the subversive power of female intimacy in Chapter Three, however, this chapter must first unpack how male influence and power was exercised in Haywood's texts. For the most part, Haywood's works are devoid of mothers and female guardians. While this trope lends itself to popular plotlines, it is also representative of the minimal legal rights of mothers in the eighteenth century. In his *Second Treatise* (1690), Locke begins Chapter VI "Of Paternal Power" with a critique of the difference between *paternal* and *parental* power. Paternal power "seems so to place the power of parents over their children wholly in the father, as if the mother had no share in it; whereas, if we consult reason or revelation, we shall find, she hath an equal title" (Sect 52). While reason might dictate that mothers should have an equal share of power over their children, reality showed otherwise. In

⁵ While there is not a single, unified tradition of the social contract, Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf, Locke, Rousseau and Kant searched "for philosophical foundations to moral and political obligation" (Boucher 13), and their theories were characterized largely by a "strong sense of will and voluntarism" which was rooted in medieval philosophy (12). Boucher et al describe the classic civil contractarians as being preoccupied with the "personality of the state"; they assumed "the subdivision of the world into smaller political units. The desire for security, in one guise or another, and improved material and cultural benefits, acts as the catalyst to transform a potentially hostile state of nature into multiple political units, the legitimacy of which is based upon authority and not force" (13).

critiquing this discrepancy, Locke imagines how parental authority would differ from the status quo of paternal authority:

...if this supposed absolute power over children had been called parental; and thereby have discovered, that it belonged to the mother too: for it will but very ill serve the turn of those men, who contend so much for the absolute power and authority of the fatherhood, as they call it, that the mother should have any share in it; and it would have but ill supported the monarchy they contend for, when by the very name it appeared, that that fundamental authority, from whence they would derive their government of a single person only, was not placed in one, but two persons jointly (Sect 53).

Fathers rule over their children as though they are monarchs because they believe themselves to be imbued with absolute authority. That absolute power would be moderated by the influence of a mother if authority over a child were considered in shared (parental) terms instead of hierarchical (paternal) terms. The logic of fatherhood's absolute power and authority is predicated on the unnatural stripping of maternal and parental rights. Child custody in the long eighteenth century belonged, with some specific exceptions, to fathers or testamentary guardians. These guardians were established by a father's will and could assume custody of the youth in question during the father's life or after his death. The historical narrative of the "empire of the father", put into words by William Blackstone in the eighteenth century, was later challenged by Caroline Norton during her "crusade for the creation of maternal custody rights" in 1839 (Abramowicz 1356).

While "empire of the father" has a certain totalitarian ring, Sara Abramowicz argues for a more nuanced view of the amount of power that fathers could wield; people could petition the Court of Chancery, which had the authority to override a father's rights in order to protect a minor. Cheryl Nixon describes the Chancery as the "court of conscience" which "asserted principles of equity" and ideally "ensures fairness by providing remedies to the failings of the common law" (51). As the legal conscience of the nation, the court was the last resort for women

or minors. While the court upheld that mothers had no inherent claim to custody over a child, mothers could petition it to gain visitation rights or custody if the father failed in his paternal duties (Abramowicz 1391). This failure was most frequently financial, but from 1804-1839, the Court of Chancery abrogated parental rights on numerous occasions for non-financial reasons. In one such case, a father lost custody of his child due to moral failings after he had an affair (1387-1389). Cases against fathers were difficult to win, to say the least, and were prohibitively expensive for a large portion of the population (Erickson 29).

While child custody laws developed over the course of the eighteenth century to enforce higher standards of duty on fathers and guardians alike, children did not have much protection from their fathers in Haywood's time. The family was relatively exempt from the state's oversight (Zomchick 13). Although Abramowicz demonstrates that a father or guardian's power was not absolute—it could be challenged and removed by the Court of Chancery—it remained the most pressing influence on a minor's life until he or she turned twenty-one. Nixon defines the three areas of power that the father-figure was able to exercise over a minor as custody, maintenance, and oversight of the minor's inheritance (Nixon 55). Abramowicz further breaks down these categories, defining the domains as marriage, education, religion, location, and visitation with other relatives (1375-1378). Although Abramowicz's categorization is not explicitly financial, the matter of estates and inheritance intersected with multiple of those categories. Locke argues that parental power “arises from that duty which is incumbent on them, to take care of their off-spring, during the imperfect state of childhood. To inform the mind, and govern the actions of their yet ignorant nonage, till reason shall take its place, and ease them of that trouble, is what the children want, and the parents are bound to” until such time as the child (son) “comes to the estate that made his father a freeman” (Sect 58). Thus, Locke sees the duty

of parents as caring for their children, educating them, and making decisions on their behalf. The end result of this education is for children, in particular male children, to be able to take care of their own estates and join society. Notably, for Locke, this duty of care is the source of parental authority; while parents have power over their children, there is still an element of reciprocity and obligation.

While a variety of factors influenced a minor's future, this chapter will pay particular attention to education and marriage. In the first case, education was a means of gaining control over youth by establishing norms for their behaviour. Providing education also instilled a powerful feeling of gratitude; this emotion appears plentifully in Haywood's texts in scenes of coercion and manipulation. Bad guardians could inflict significant damage upon both male and female minors, but young women were particularly vulnerable. In the second case, a poor or self-interested marriage arrangement seriously undermined a person's chance at success in later life. This was true, to an extent, for both men and women; marrying beneath one's social station meant a decrease in both wealth and class stability. Nevertheless, contemporary fiction, of which Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) was the most popular example, romanticized narratives of wealthy men marrying lower class but highly virtuous women. A man could theoretically marry a poor woman and still retain his fortune and social standing. A woman who did the same was less likely to enjoy the same fate. Cases of bad marriages, where a wealthy heiress was engaged to someone of significantly lesser wealth, were of greater concern to the Court of Chancery than cases involving lesser estates. These cases demonstrate the supreme importance of primogeniture, and the way that the courts were designed to propagate the class structure. For instance, in 1729, the Chancery ordered the imprisonment of a guardian who married his ward to his son because of the vast disparity in their fortunes (Abramowicz 1375). The intervention was

to protect the property that would be passed through her, rather than protecting the young woman herself.

The history of the Court of Chancery presents a rich field of context for Haywood because of the eventual development of legally enforced paternal obligations. While the most substantial changes in the law—those holding fathers to recognizable standards of duty—did not occur until the end of Haywood’s life in 1756, the cases brought before the Court of Chancery demonstrate society’s interest in formalizing familial roles and obligations (Abramowicz 1362). In an ideal civil society, the law shapes, empowers, and authorizes behaviour in ways that help to produce an “internally coherent and self-regulating subject, ready to claim the natural rights which belong by definition to a juridical subject” (Zomchick 2).⁶ Locke’s vision of freedom was not that every person could do as they please; rather, freedom is “a liberty to dispose, and order as he lists, his person, actions, possessions, and his whole property, within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary will of another, but freely follow his own” (Sect 57). Freedom is about having reasonable access to choices, and being able to act without undue external pressure. Locke’s definition pertained primarily to men, as women were restricted in their liberties beyond the letter of the law through mechanisms of coercion and societal expectations that limited their choices. The law imbued men with power (Zomchick 8), and this power was frequently used in the subjugation of women. So, while the Court of Chancery could intervene in some extreme cases, the institution formally recognized and authorized the societal norm of a father’s dominion over his daughter. Paternal rights were also layered: fathers had rights over their children by birth, but they could grant those rights to a

⁶ It should be noted that Zomchick’s perspective in his book, *Family and the law in eighteenth-century fiction: The public conscience in the private sphere* (1993), is somewhat skewed by a lack of gendered analysis. The book offers deep analysis of six novels, all of which were written by male authors. While there are some acknowledgements of feminist theory and critiques of the legal status of women in the period, his analysis is largely based on the position of property-owning males.

guardian through a will, and that will could be upheld or overturned by the Court of Chancery, which also had the power to appoint a guardian. This occurred either when a father failed to name a testamentary guardian, or when the court found a guardian unsuitable due to a failure of duties. By enforcing these duties, the Court of Chancery established the legal framework for what was expected of guardians, and, in later rulings, of fathers (Abramowicz 1362). The law in its best version “intervenes to punish social malefactors” (Zomchick 10), but that punishment requires the institution to demarcate a person’s actions as wrong. The Court of Chancery was the official check on guardians’ rights and privileges, but the question of its efficacy is another matter entirely.

The Court of Chancery’s own power was derived from an ultimate sense of guardianship: *parens patriae* (Abramowicz 1346). The monarch was responsible for protecting the poor and weak, but the monarchy had a long-established practice of delegating jurisdiction over those responsibilities to the Chancellor, and by extension, to the Court of Chancery (Seymour 167). John Seymour quotes Lord Somers, Lord Chancellor, who stated in the 1696 case *Falkland v Bertie*, “In this court there were several things that belonged to the King as Pater patriae, and fell under the care and direction of this court, as charities, infants, idiots, lunatics, etc.,” (167). While Seymour presents an optimistic view of the court’s “benevolent discretion” (173) in these cases, the crux of the legal proceedings came down to property. Neither infants nor mentally disabled people could properly manage estates. It was thus the imperative of the court either to take over that responsibility, or to ensure that the individual was in the care of a suitable guardian. Horwitz and Polden emphasize that only the courts of equity could “provide adequate remedies for a number of estate-related problems—among them, the capacity to make ongoing provision for the maintenance of minor legatees until they came of age” (39). The Court of Chancery, although

expensive and slow at processing cases, was the best chance that a complainant had to obtain an authoritative settlement of his or her disputes (32). Given the financial barriers, cultural norms and biases of the judges, and lengthy proceedings, this does not paint a particularly hopeful picture for women seeking the redress of grievances.

Corruption in the court and the home

Public perception of these shortcomings was heightened by the Chancery scandal of 1724/1725, in which the Lord Chancellor was impeached after allegations of fraud. Edmund Heward's article, "The Early History of the Court Funds", gives a detailed account of the scandal. Masters at the Court of Chancery took entire estates under their administration during court proceedings (54). The rationale was that during a dispute over an estate, the opposing parties could not be trusted to manage it responsibly. It was held in trust by a master of the court until a final decision was made; masters "were given charge of all title deeds and other original documents placed in their care by the Lord Chancellor" (47). The masters invested the money from court proceedings—such as when the court ordered the sale of trust property, or there was a public auction—and they kept the earned interest (48). Thus, there was a financial incentive for the masters to take estates into their trust and draw out the proceedings in order to maximize the interest that could be earned. The issue rose to a head due to compounding factors: corruption in the court and the crash of the South Sea Bubble. Master Fleetwood Dormer lost £31,799 in 1720 (46). In 1721, the Master of the Rolls "refused to leave any money in the hands of the masters," and Lord Macclesfield, Lord Chancellor, was left trying to rein in the issue (48). There were more deficiencies in the masters' accounts in the following years, and a Privy Council committee was established in November 1724 to investigate the matter. The findings were damning: the masters had conducted many of these deals without filing reports, and there were substantial

deficiencies. Horwitz and Polden analyzed the types of cases that passed through Chancery in 1735-38 and found that 47% of the printed law reports were about estates (36). While they do not have the figure for 1720-1725, it was probably a similar proportion. Estate cases were significant for the Court of Chancery, and were also the most significant issue for wards under the power of a testamentary guardian. This scandal “dominated the press” and damaged public trust in the court (King “Political Biography” 35).⁷ Lord Macclesfield was impeached in February 1725, and on May 27, 1725, he was found guilty and fined £30,000 (Heward 50).

Haywood’s fiction in the year following this scandal focused almost obsessively on wealth and guardianship. Susan Paterson Glover frames this “dramatic shift” from the more explicitly sexual novels a few years previously as a matter of possession and property (142). Specifically, I am interested in Haywood’s 1726 focus on property, estates, wills, and guardians. The combination of the lingering effects of the South Sea scandal and the Chancery scandal created a perfect storm for Haywood. Both cases demonstrated the prevalence of selfish and predatory behaviour in seats of power. The connections between the financial and legal scandals also highlights the way that female wards were, in many ways, treated as property or became “correlatives for the land” (Paterson 134). A woman’s body and life were intrinsically tied to the estates to which she was an heiress; access to those estates was granted through the possession of female bodies. When social systems that were meant to protect women—both the financial system designed to promote and protect wealth, and the legal system created to ensure equity and act as a legal conscience—suffered systematic failures, Haywood’s heroines turned to other means to secure themselves.

⁷ Kathryn King devotes a chapter of her *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* (2012) to Haywood’s *Memoirs of a Certain Island* (1725), and its damning satire of the greed and corruption that was brought to light during the Chancery scandal.

I would like to examine the long-term effect of it through comparing Haywood's texts from 1719 (before the scandal), 1726 (immediately after), and into the 1740s and 1750s to understand longer term trends. I argue that the difference in Haywood's treatment of guardians from before the Chancery scandal to after the Chancellor's impeachment demonstrates an increased skepticism towards guardians and male authority. Certainly, *The Distress'd Orphan; or Love in a Madhouse* (1726) portrays the utter failure of society to protect female wards. Haywood's oppressive guardians do not vanish, however, with the 1720s; they follow her career into the 1750s. These guardians stand in stark contrast to the flawed but charming Count D'elmont of *Love in Excess*. In *The Distress'd Orphan*, Annilia's parents die when she is a young child and her uncle Giraldo becomes her guardian. He provides her with a traditionally masculine education: she has the same tutors as her male cousin Horatio, and she learns a variety of languages as well as "the more ordinary Accomplishments of her Sex" (Haywood 27). While Giraldo initially champions her education out of a generous desire to see Annilia flourish—she is described as having a "Genius rare to be found in a Person of her Sex"—he soon develops ulterior motives (27). Annilia is heiress to a large fortune, and hence Giraldo hopes to marry her to his son (28). Giraldo's approach is multi-pronged. He initially uses subtle manipulation to enhance the cousins' affection for one another. When that fails, Giraldo resorts to overt coercion, and eventually to physical violence.

His tactics differ for the two youths. He threatens his son, Horatio, saying, "you would not sure incur my Displeasure by refusing me that Proof of your Obedience" (28), and reminds Annilia "of the Obligations she had to him for the Care he had taken of her Education" (29). He expects not only that his son will obey his authority, but also that his young female ward will show gratitude for the privilege of receiving a formal education. Her education makes her

remarkable and sets her above her peers, and hence she is now in Giraldo's debt. Giraldo wields these emotional weapons to create his desired results: after hesitation and reservation, the two agree to marry. Their responses demonstrate the source of Giraldo's power over their respective wills. Horatio says that since it was Giraldo's "pleasure he should do so, he would comply without Reluctance," (28) and Annilia says that she will "submit with readiness, having learnt thus much from my Studies, that I shall never be able to know so well what is best for me, as those do, from whom I received that Knowledge which I have" (30). She accepts the premise of his argument: she must obey him because he has given her an education. In a sense, Giraldo maintains ownership over her knowledge and her capacity to reason. Since knowledge is such a fundamental component of Annilia's identity and personhood, she cannot help but submit to Giraldo and, by extension, to his son. Her education has not given her a framework to consider any option other than obedience. I will further discuss education as a means of control in *The Invisible Spy* (1754) below.

Similar to the masters of Chancery, who were supposed to act in the best interests of the vulnerable, Giraldo is not inherently bad or malevolent. He sees potential in Annilia and facilitates her developing intellect, and he wants what is best for his son: a marriage to a wealthy woman. In many ways, his motivations are understandable, even to modern readers. He starts with a soft-power approach, talking to both Horatio and Annilia about how happy the pair would be together, and how they already love and respect each other (31). It could have been a successful marriage built on mutual respect. The problems arise when Annilia resists his authority and falls in love with Colonel Marathon (32). After a series of encounters, Giraldo suspects that Annilia loves someone else and will refuse to marry Horatio (39). In the face of his ward defying his authority, and at the prospect of losing control over her fortune, Giraldo turns to

a seemingly desperate measure: he confines Annilia in her chambers, and then has her confined in a madhouse. Symbolically, Giraldo uses Annilia's father's legal will to trap her. Giraldo invites Annilia to go to his closet to distract her while her room is being transformed into a prison, saying "I will give you leave to peruse the Writings of your Estate, and the last Testament of your dying Father" (47). Haywood explicitly connects the ensuing confinement to the will, saying that Annilia was "detain'd...in reading the Papers" (47).

There is debate over how often madhouses were used for this purpose—containing disobedient or inconvenient women—during the eighteenth century, but private madhouses in England were unregulated until 1774 (Foyster 45). Given the corruption in state institutions, it is highly plausible that the private sector was also corrupt. Haywood makes precisely that claim in her text: "for a good Gratification, the Doors would be open as well for those whom it was necessary, for the Interest of their Friends, to be made Mad" (49). One of the foremost reasons for confining a woman to a madhouse was concern that she could no longer manage her affairs; thus, it makes sense that they primarily housed people of higher ranking families (Houston 312). In this regard, Annilia fits the mould. Houston argues that the prominent fictional accounts of wrongful incarceration were intended to expose injustices and larger societal issues, rather than give a factual and historical representation of the times (316). By contrast, Foyster argues that women were more likely to be wrongfully accused of madness and confined than their male counterparts (54). Both scholars agree that men and women were incarcerated at similar rates; the difference for Foyster is that there were more writs of habeas corpus issued through the courts to try to free women who were being held captive by a husband for reasons other than madness (49). While there were trials and court orders for people to be incarcerated in public institutions, the issue of unregulated, privately-owned madhouses complicates the picture. It is

highly possible that these institutions, like the one illustrated in *Love in A Madhouse*, were corrupt enough to accept a patient without official legal or medical documentation for the right price. We lack historical records from many of these institutions because they were privately owned, so it is difficult to form an accurate picture of the reasons for incarceration. It is likely that fictional accounts such as Haywood's exaggerated the issue of imprisonment for the purpose of sensationalism and storytelling; however, we cannot ignore the existence of historical accounts of women whose family members sought court orders to release them from madhouses after they were wrongfully imprisoned by their husbands⁸.

Love in A Madhouse slightly reverses this trope. Rather than a family member rescuing a woman from her spiteful husband, this story has a suitor rescue his lover from her greedy and vindictive guardian. The Court of Chancery, meant to be the defender of infants, idiots, and lunatics, is not involved in Annilia's escape. The law has no bearing on her uncle's efforts to steal her inheritance. Since she is confined to the madhouse, he effectively has control over her estate, much as he would have if she had conformed to his will and married Horatio. Annilia is saved by her lover whose goodness, persistence, and devotion reaches mythical proportions. Colonel Marathon is introduced in the text as a "young Hero" (32). His name calls forth the ancient Greek myth of Pheidippides, who ran from Athens to Sparta before the famous battle of Marathon (Christensen, Nielsen, and Shwartz 148-149). Colonel Marathon's equivalent journey is comprised of his relentless search for Annilia after she is confined, and his self-imprisonment that enables him to rescue her. When the legal system fails Annilia, only a hero of legendary proportions is able to save her. The allusions to epic myths point to the fictional nature of the

⁸ See Elizabeth Foyster's "'At the Limits of Liberty: Married Women and Confinement in Eighteenth-Century England'" for disturbing case studies of women's confinement. In one instance, Mary Sherard "told the church courts how, prior to [her husband's] attempts to confine her to a madhouse, her husband had repeatedly beaten her to make her sign over her jointure to him" (47). Confinement was a tool of control and alleged reform.

account. Haywood's narrative suggests that men such as Colonel Marathon do not exist outside the pages of a novel. Giraldo, by contrast, is a much more realistic character; he is a man slowly poisoned by a desire for wealth who recognizes his power in the legal system and decides to take advantage of it. He also makes use of the power of his word against the word of a female minor. When he decrees that Annilia is mad, it is taken as truth.

Not all families in Haywood's oeuvre are coercive and controlling. For instance, in Book III of the *Female Spectator* (1744), Euphrosine's father respects her distaste for her suitor, and her siblings are ready to defend her if the father tries to force the marriage (38-39). Many of the situations described in the *Female Spectator* constitute an act of proto-feminist myth-making that "forges images of a social order more suitable for women than the one in which they now live" (King "Political Biography" 122). The hyperbolic story of the "excellent father" and the loving siblings who demonstrate "so uncommon a Testimony of fraternal Affection" (Haywood "Female Spectator" 39) is followed by a more general moral lesson about the value of a loving family (40). This frames the brief story as a kind of utopian fable; the demonstrated respect for the daughter's agency clashes against the corruption in Haywood's amatory fiction. That being said, the existence of siblings ready to defend their sister belies the underlying problem: even a beloved daughter was at risk of having her father impose his will upon her. The siblings gather outside of the room, ready to protect their sister because they fear that the father will use force against her. Even a mythical vision has hints of danger for women as its subtext.

In *The Invisible Spy*, Murcio tries to force his daughter Melanthe to marry Conrade, whom she does not love. This is a common motif in eighteenth-century fiction, as when Betsy Thoughtless' brothers try to pressure her into marriage. Murcio unleashes the full might of

paternal authority when he engages his daughter to the elderly, but wealthy, man. After promising Melanthe's hand in marriage, he returns home and writes to her:

be not you less thankful to Heaven for so unhop'd a blessing than I am; nor, on any foolish pretences, either slight, or seem to slight, the good presented to you.—If you consider the vast advantages of this match, a disparity of years can be no objection : I say thus much, because I would convince your reason, not enforce your action ; for I should be sorry to find myself obliged to make use of the authority I have over you in a thing which you ought, and I hope will receive with the same satisfaction I propose it: —know, however, that I have already agreed on every thing for your marriage... I send this on purpose to prepare you to behave towards him in a proper manner, and as it is the absolute command of him who is, Your affectionate father. (131)

This letter shows the cruel authority that a father can wield. Murcio does not hide his threats to his daughter; the amount of money in question is too important to leave to chance, and he fears backing out of the agreement. Melanthe's consent is completely assumed by her father. She is absent, and therefore voiceless, in the original engagement. Murcio pretends to hesitate in using his paternal authority, saying that he does not want to be obliged to force Melanthe to submit, but the entire letter is a reminder of his control. Even his statements claiming that he wants to use reason instead of force function as threats, as they highlight the ease with which he can turn to force if reason does not work. Murcio signs off the letter as an "affectionate father", attempting to mask the undertones of violence and menace in his words. Or perhaps, in his mind, paternal affection means strict discipline that forces his daughter to conform to his idea of what is best for her. Notably, Melanthe has no mother to defend her. Florimel, her intimate friend, creates an elaborate plot that eventually frees her from the engagement, and Melanthe is married to Dorimon, a young and handsome man for whom she has genuine affection. The story has an almost fairy tale ending: Florimel and Melanthe explain their deception, and all of the men accept that it was for the best. Everyone is happy, including Conrade who ends up without a wife. The men recognize Florimel's wisdom and their earlier rashness. Florimel, Melanthe, and

Melanthe's trusty maid form a female community able to resist unjust and oppressive paternal force. *The Invisible Spy*'s narrator suggests that when women are granted the agency to make their own choices, and these choices are accepted and legitimized by the authority inherent in the paternal figure, then everyone in the family ends up happier. I will return to this story in Chapter Three to unpack the queer possibilities that exist in Florimel and Melanthe's powerful female friendship.

Yet, this happy conclusion is in the minority. For the most part in Haywood's works, fathers indulge their sons and control their daughters. While it is true that children of either gender were at risk of being disinherited, sons had a greater ability to secure their own livelihood. They also faced fewer threats of sexual violence and less damage to their reputation if they were cast out of their home for disobedience. While Haywood's texts predominantly focussed on women and female-centric romance, *The Adventures of Natura* (1748) has a reckless and impulsive male protagonist. Natura can seemingly do anything against his father's wishes and continue to fulfill the role of the prodigal son. More than that, Natura's father puts himself into great debt to protect his son from his foolish mistakes. Natura signs a secret marriage contract with a prostitute (37), lies to his uncle to borrow money (41), borrows money under his father's name (42), runs away from his father's house (46), and keeps company with "none but gamesters, rakes, and sharpers, falling into all manner of dissolution" (50). He is terrified of facing the consequences of his actions, so he chooses to become a vagabond instead. His father, afflicted by his son's disappearance, goes to great lengths to find him and bring him home. In their tender reconciliation, he says, "I am still a *father*, if you can be a *son*" (56). However kind the other fathers in Haywood's writings may be, none are so forgiving that they welcome a

daughter back into their graces after she signs a binding contract against their will, nor do they scour the city and ask her to come home.

It is perhaps not surprising that Haywood establishes that there is a double standard for parenting sons and daughters. What is more significant is how Haywood suggests that this double standard has serious implications for a woman's ability to consent. When a daughter considers whether or not to obey her father and consent to his choice of marriage, her calculus and thought processes are inherently changed by the fact that denying her father could result in her ruin. No matter how kind the father, the threat of being physically confined, disowned, or disinherited is ever-present by the mere fact of his paternal authority. This power was affirmed in both the legal and social realm, and as such, it was difficult to escape or maneuver around. In Haywood's texts, women make use of wit, charm, virtue, and knowledge to assert their agency with father-figures, but knowledge is often controlled by him.

The father as lover

Haywood's concern about paternal power over female minors is striking in cases where the roles of father and lover collapse into each other. These instances demonstrate how easily patriarchal power can be transferred from one male authority to the next. The dominance of a father is granted to a husband, and the woman's ability to consent to this transfer of authority is significantly limited. This section will compare two examples from either end of Haywood's career: *Love in Excess* and *The Invisible Spy*. In *Love in Excess* and Book One of *The Invisible Spy*, a guardian uses his authority to seduce his young, vulnerable ward. In both cases, the heroines are raised in relative social isolation. What is interesting is that Melliora and D'elmont's relationship in *Love in Excess* is treated as a love match, whereas the episode of the unfortunate Alinda in *The Invisible Spy* is a tragedy. One reason for the discrepancy could be Haywood's

reaction to the Chancery scandal. She shows little trust in the institution of guardianship after that episode. Another point of comparison is the education that the young women receive.

Haywood's texts are deeply concerned with women's education and the connection between education—whether it be religious, formal, or social—and a woman's ability to consent, as well as the way that her consent is read.

In *Love in Excess*, Melliora is educated in a monastery, where she was kept “intirely unacquainted with the gayeties of a court, or the conversation of the beau monde” (91). Her formal education is thorough. She reads the classics, can discuss complex philosophical ideas, and is confident in her intelligence. Importantly, Haywood emphasizes that Melliora receives her formal education *before* she receives a social education. She is grounded in literature and religion before she interacts with the corruption of the upper-class social sphere. In many ways, this order of education protects Melliora. She is not indoctrinated with unwritten social rules about the proper, coquettish way for a young woman to interact with a potential suitor.

Haywood's concerns about education echo the arguments raised by Mary Astell thirty years earlier in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694). For Astell, women's nature “is spoil'd, instead of being improv'd at first,” in stark contrast to men's education. She continues to detail the ways that women are “nurs'd up in Ignorance and Vanity; and are taught to be Proud and Petulent, Delicate and Fantastik, Humourour and Inconstant” (61). Women are not inherently coquettish; their tutelage is tainted by a social system that teaches them to play a certain role and then subsequently blames them for that behaviour. Melliora, then, received the benefit of being educated outside of that system. Her education enables her to maintain her integrity and safeguard her virtue in the face of D'elmont's advances. Further, since she was educated before she came under his guardianship, she is not bound by feelings of gratitude for her knowledge.

Although Melliora is not intellectually vulnerable to the Count, she is still under his power as his ward. On his deathbed, Monsieur Frankville transfers his authority over Melliora to Count D'elmont, saying: "my last command to thee shall be to oblige thee to endeavour to deserve the favours [D'elmont] is pleased to do us in accepting thee for —" (86). Frankville's speech is cut off before he can formally declare the terms of Melliora's relationship and obligations to D'elmont. The text implies that Frankville wanted Melliora to obey D'elmont as an authoritative, paternal figure. However, Haywood's texts revel in ambiguity. Frankville dies before being able to complete his commandment. The relationship between Melliora and D'elmont is left undefined. That provides an opening for Melliora to imagine that there was "a possibility of calling the charming person that stood before her, by a name more tender than that of guardian" (86). The feeling is mutual: the two strangers find perfection in each other, and a love affair is born. However, Frankville's ambiguity leaves Melliora in an impossible position. She has been commanded to "oblige" D'elmont, but obliging him in becoming his mistress goes against her fundamental moral beliefs. Furthermore, it would expose her to ruin. She is doubly bound by love and commandment, and struggles for the rest of the narrative to fight against both.

Melliora is both emotionally and physically vulnerable to D'elmont. As his ward, she is not free to make her own choices about her movements: she cannot decide to leave his house and escape back to the monastery. Even in a locked room, she is not free from his physical intrusions. She has no space to call her own, no arena where she is outside of his sphere of influence. D'elmont takes advantage of his dominance in order to pursue his romantic endeavours. In D'elmont's words, his passion for Melliora holds the "fond affection of parents, — brothers, — husbands, — lovers, all comprised in one!" (89). D'elmont labels his affection with every category of male authority over a woman: as a father, a brother, a husband, and a lover. The only

way that he can make sense of his intense emotions is to assume every role of male dominance over Melliora. What is interesting is that D'elmont himself cannot find the line where one role ends and another begins. Each one bleeds into the other in his mind, until he is left playing all of them at various points in the novel. D'elmont is not limited by his ability to shift the terms of his relationship with Melliora. If anything, he is emboldened by the flexibility and uses the advantages of each identity to get closer to his ward, particularly when she explicitly rebukes his sexual advances.

Therein lays the aspect of their relationship that is perhaps most disturbing to a twenty-first century reader: where is Melliora's consent? Throughout the text, Haywood engages with two notions of consent: verbal and non-verbal. As will become common in many of her later texts, Haywood questions whether tacit consent can be understood and received through non-verbal signifiers. In the beginning of their relationship, Melliora and D'elmont try to conceal their passion for each other. Initially, D'elmont does this out of "too much gratitude for the memory of Monsieur Frankville" (90). He limits his own behaviour out of respect for another paternal figure, demonstrating deference to male authority. However, even this has limits. Melliora and D'elmont engage in both simulation and dissimulation to disguise their feelings. They amplify their outward presentation of grief about the loss of Frankville, and try to hide their passion. While they are initially successful in deceiving D'elmont's wife, Alovysa, they cannot deceive each other: "every look of his, for he had eyes that need no interpreter, gave her intelligence of his heart, and the confusion which the understanding those looks gave her, sufficiently told him how sensible she was of 'em" (105). The narrator frames the beginning of their relationship as a mutual understanding that is conveyed through the eyes alone; their connection is strong enough that they can communicate through non-verbal means. These early

passages establish a precedent. Melliora and D'elmont both try to contain their affection, and both can understand the other's desires without words. The only remaining obstacle, aside from D'elmont's wife, is Melliora's conviction.

She experiences powerful, passionate emotions, but she is unwilling to act upon them for fear of ruining her reputation and therefore her life. Her confusion in that regard stems from the conflict between her inner desires and the way that she will be judged by society. Her ability to consent is limited by her fear of the repercussions. This confusion extends to a fundamental confusion about her role in her relationship with D'elmont: is she a daughter, a mistress, or a potential wife? Melliora cannot move between these categories with the ease that D'elmont displays. After the first time that D'elmont physically accosts Melliora, she tries to retreat from him and return to the monastery. D'elmont stops her from leaving him by using "the authority of a guardian, and the entreaties of a friend" (115). As a guardian, he has the legal power to stop Melliora from leaving his estate. He has control over her physical location and movements, as well as a host of other unstated aspects of her financial wellbeing. He employs the tools of a guardian to advance his position as a suitor, and uses the identity of a friend to cover his less-than-noble intentions. Melliora's various identities do not offer her the same adaptive abilities. As either daughter or lover, she does not possess the power to leave his house against his will. One notable absence from their saga is the discussion of an estate. D'elmont has no financial interest in Melliora. While he uses his position as guardian to manipulate who she will marry, it is not a means of acquiring wealth; he desires the possession of her body. Despite the power imbalances and the repeated attempts to assault Melliora, their relationship is treated as a love story. When they finally marry at the end of the novel, the narrative celebrates their union.

By contrast, the depiction of a guardian-ward sexual relationship in *The Invisible Spy* is entirely condemned; it is a tragic tale of abuse and coercion that results in Alinda's death, and it is centred on wealth. Alinda, as it happens, is also motherless. As an heiress to a large fortune, her father is fiercely protective about whose company she can keep. The narrative is Alinda's autobiography, a manuscript saved from the flames by the ever-curious Explorabilis; as such, it is skewed by her perceptions. She frames her father's overbearing behaviour in terms of his "over anxiety" for her welfare and his strong desire to see his daughter "blaze forth in all the pomp of quality" (47) of her station. Yet, a skeptical reader must ask: is he blinded by love of his daughter or love of his estate and legacy? If Alinda falls in love and marries beneath her class, then the estate will pass down to a man of lower status. The father removes his daughter from the city and denies her a proper education because he fears that mingling with the general population will lead to the downfall of his estate. Alinda is stifled: "I was suffered to go to no school, tho' there was a great one very near us: —never stirred beyond the precincts of our garden walls: —went not to church, because there it would have been impossible for me not to see and be seen: —no company visited us" (48). She is deprived of formal, religious, and social education. Her father gives her books, but they are only romances and old plays. Brought up in isolation, Alinda is defenceless against a predatory guardian. Her story points to a failure of parenting, and also a failure of society. While the court systems were concerned with inheritance and ensuring the proper transferral of estates, parental obligations and children's rights in terms of education were non-existent. Women's education was entirely up to the discretion of the parent, and that resulted in substantial harms for women.

When Le Bris, a forty-seven year old, becomes Alinda's tutor, her father tells her that she "must submit [herself] to his directions... and in every thing treat him with the greatest respect

and reverence” (50). Alinda’s father transfers his paternal authority to Le Bris. With that, Le Bris takes control of Alinda’s education and her life. Although she is initially unhappy with his “dominion” over her, her obedience to her father obliges her to obey Le Bris (51). The more that he teaches her, the more that she develops feelings for him. Uncertain of the line between love for a father and something more, Alinda is innocently open about her emotions with Le Bris (52). The roles of father and lover converge, and the thirteen-year old Alinda falls into his trap. The narrative saves this surprise—her extreme youth—until after Le Bris kisses Alinda for the first time (54). This shocking revelation prompts instant re-evaluation. Even those readers who are suspicious of the reliability of the narrative, which is after all Alinda’s first-person defence of the poor decisions that resulted in her ruin, can see the power imbalance in this relationship. Even if the young Alinda plays the coquette with her tutor and then later regrets the consequences of her action, it is still reprehensible that a man thirty years her senior sexually groomed a child. In the pages that follow, Le Bris emotionally manipulates Alinda and extracts a promise that she will always keep him by her side. Le Bris argues that his claim to Alinda’s affection supersedes her father’s: “you are only his daughter by nature, but you are mine by affection; —you are the child of my soul, and therefore ought to love me better” (56). Alinda’s father transferred his paternal authority to Le Bris to instruct his daughter; that authority becomes mutated until Le Bris holds more power over the girl than her biological father. Immediately after this speech, Le Bris sexually assaults Alinda and fondles her breasts. He blends together the paternal and the sexual, borrowing the authority from the former to advance his claims on the latter. Whereas D’elmont and Melliora’s passion was mutual and breathless, barely contained by their sense of decorum, Alinda recounts her youth in shame, protesting to the reader that she did not know any better, and that she would have stopped him if she had understood what it meant.

Alinda is truly ruined when she signs a contract with Le Bris: she will forfeit half her fortune if she marries without his consent (58). In many ways, he demonstrates all of the powers of a testamentary guardian that Abramowicz describes as the Court of Chancery's framework of guardianship: control over a ward's marriage, education, religion, location, and visitation with other relatives. Le Bris effectively controls all of the domains of Alinda's life, and uses those domains to render her powerless. Her consent to the contract is rushed and forced. Le Bris has a lawyer waiting at the house when he springs the trap on the unsuspecting girl (59). After years of mental conditioning have convinced her that Le Bris is her only means of education and advancement, and after Le Bris supersedes the ultimate authority of her father, Alinda's only option is to sign. With this contract, Le Bris effectively takes control of the rest of her life. Alinda, however, is only 17 years old at this point. She is legally still a minor, and would not have been able to sign a binding contract. Le Bris's control over her, therefore, is largely mental. She does not know her legal rights and is not able to argue against the validity of the contract. As such, she thinks that she is trapped. If she complies with the terms of the agreement, Le Bris possesses control over her body, marriage, future, and identity. If she violates it, she believes that she will lose half of her estate, and that she would need to confess to her future husband how foolish she had been, and risk losing his respect and love. Alinda's adulthood is marred by tragedy, and she dies asking only for pity.

In 1756, the year of Haywood's death, the Court of Chancery extended its regulations on testamentary guardians to fathers themselves (Abramowicz 1362). Over the course of her career, Haywood maintained a keen interest in the relationship between a guardian's treatment of his ward and her estate. The ability of a ward to consent in these relationships—whether that consent was to a legal agreement, a marriage arrangement, or in the case of the father-lovers, a sexual

encounter—was marred by paternal authority. The threats that these men could wield were seemingly insurmountable: confinement, pronouncement of madness, physical violence, poverty, and ruin. The one social institution that was meant to solve for these issues was ineffective and in itself corrupt. How could a young woman trust the Court of Chancery to protect her against a predatory guardian when the court had an incentive to take hold of her estate for financial gain? Further, how could a ward successfully argue her case in court if her access to legal knowledge was blocked by the very person against whom she fought? Haywood consistently returns to education as something that must be reformed in society, and these stories of paternal abuse of power highlight why it matters so intensely. Haywood also repeats the motif of the absent or dead mother, which gave way to unchecked male authority and power. In the few instances of indulgent or respectful fathers, other actors intervened in the situation; without the brilliant Florimel, Melanthe would have been doomed to a loveless marriage with a man far older than herself, entirely under his command. These narratives question the legitimacy of male authority and demonstrate how female agency is compromised and threatened beginning even in childhood. For Haywood, the transference of authority from one male to another complicated a woman's ability to consent in sexual circumstances. In the next chapter, I explore women's relationships with their lovers, and the fundamental challenges of reading tacit consent from non-verbal signifiers.

Chapter Two: The Semiotics of Consent

Over the past few years, the rise of the #MeToo movement sparked renewed interest in what it means to consent in the twenty-first century. Across all swaths of society, people have come forward to reveal abuse by Hollywood executives, politicians, public figures, coaches, and Tinder dates alike, bearing witness to the extent to which consent has been violated and poorly understood. *Time* called the Silence Breakers the 2017 “Person of the Year”, noting how women “have started a revolution of refusal, gathering strength by the day... CEOs have been fired, moguls toppled, icons disgraced” (Zacharek, Dockterman, and Edwards). Section 273.2 (1) of the *Criminal Code* of Canada defines sexual consent as “the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question.” The following subsection details five circumstances under which consent cannot be obtained: if consent was given on behalf of another person; if an individual is incapable of consenting; if an individual abuses a position of trust or authority; if a person “expresses, by words or conduct” their lack of consent; or if they revoke their consent to continue. This list is non-exhaustive, but represents situations which have been frequently encountered in the justice system. The *Criminal Code* goes on to say that “recklessness or wilful blindness” are not a defence for the accused. Consent must be clear, voluntary, and continuous. And yet, the counter-movement to #MeToo argues that the pendulum has swung too far, asking whether women claim sexual assault when they actually mean regret. The backlash to the movement exposes discomfort with central aspects of consent; can people change their mind about consent, and is there a way to accurately understand consent without verbal confirmation? Take, for example, the Aziz Ansari controversy. In the original account, published on *Babe.net*, the woman said that she “used verbal and non-verbal cues to indicate how uncomfortable and distressed she was” about Ansari’s repeated sexual advances (Way).

Two days later, a *New York Times* op-ed responded sarcastically: “Put in other words: I am angry that you weren’t able to read my mind... If you are hanging out naked with a man, it’s safe to assume he is going to try to have sex with you” (Weiss). The legal definition of consent is explicit, but the persistent nature of these conversations is indicative of a seemingly fundamental lack of understanding. Somewhere between the written words of the law and the physical, sexual acts in which people partake, there is a gap. There is confusion about how exactly to determine consent, when precisely it happens, and how it can be understood. This confusion is perpetuated by culture, whether deliberately or sub-consciously.

Eighteenth-century writers struggled with these questions, even as they acknowledged that consent was at the bedrock of society. Many of Haywood’s amatory fictions and tales of seduction live in the grey zone of sexual consent. Katherine Binhammer calls seduction stories the story of “women’s failed knowledge of the heart” (“Seduction Narrative” 1), noting how these stories were repeated almost obsessively across the century. Haywood returns to seduction and ambiguous consent in almost every one of her texts. For Binhammer, this repetition “reflects the absence, rather than the presence, of a dominant ideology that would constrict female desire” because each seduction is different (“Seduction Narrative” 2). While there are similarities and repeated motifs across Haywood’s works, and she demonstrates a continued interest in women’s sexual agency, there are always differences. This repetition with a difference enables Haywood to interrogate different ways that men and women engage in seduction and consent.

This chapter will delve into what consent meant in an eighteenth-century context, how Haywood experiments with competing claims of what it means to consent, and how the power for women to consent is, in many ways, limited by social conventions and structures. This chapter begins with a philosophical examination of consent, and then moves to case studies in

Haywood's texts across her long career. I conclude with an examination of women's property rights to understand how women's legal consent was limited in the period. The ability to consent impacted a woman across multiple domains of her life, including the familial relations discussed in Chapter One, and the sexual and financial matters discussed in this chapter. One aspect of Haywood's oeuvre that this chapter seeks to unpack is the conflict between social education and the fear of social consequences—which usually manifests in the powerful emotion of shame—and women's sexual desire. Haywood draws attention to the ways that a woman's body and mind often lead her in different directions; the shared language that she uses to describe scenes of both seduction and rape shows the underlying violence of power relations in courtship. This chapter will discuss instances of rape, as well as focus on interactions where consent is given and then withdrawn, misunderstood, or interpreted based on non-verbal signifiers. These instances of consent—if they can be called that—will help to tease out the arguments that Haywood makes about the ways that men read or assume consent from women who do not possess full control over its expression. As I have previously examined, Haywood's novels extend beyond the amatory into the realm of politics and the law. Her salacious fiction highlights discrepancies in the way that women can meaningfully engage in consent, and therefore meaningfully engage in society.

Jonathan Kramnick's *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (2010) traces the development of what it means to be an agent and wield agency throughout the eighteenth century. In the 1710s, Anthony Collins and Samuel Clarke posited two competing conceptions of agency: “agents either bring principles to relations with other agents, and so constitute a larger civil order, or this order pre-exists and structures encounters between agents, and so provides a sort of template in which intentions and desires become intelligible to whomever is having them”

(Kramnick 47). In the first worldview, argued by Clarke, morality comes from within, and intentions have no power independent of the agent who has them. For Collins, the mind has no innate content; ideas therefore come from the exterior world (42). Later, in the 1730s and 40s, David Hume also looked to the world external to the self to understand causation; agency “ought to be situated within the particular circumstances and occasions of social life” (48-49). Hume further argued that we can only understand cause and effect when we see patterns of certain types of things happening multiple times and producing certain types of outcomes (51). I argue that Haywood’s novels subscribe more to this external model of agency. Her characters are shaped by the circumstances and the social world around them. Their agency, or lack thereof, can only be understood when situated in context and the shame that they risk encountering when, because of social rituals of courtship and seduction, their sexual partners misread their bodily signifiers as consent. As men perceive certain actions to be part of an established chain of cause and effect, they assume women’s unspoken consent. Haywood’s repetition of these scenes establishes the patterns by which we can analyze the external factors and social structures at play.

Unspoken, or tacit consent, was critical to John Locke’s theory of the social contract. Chapter One was interested in the macro-level of Locke’s social contract theory and the power imbalance between guardians (the state) and their wards (individual people). This chapter will delve into tacit consent on a more individual scale, as it underpins many of the ambiguities that Haywood examines in her fiction. Kramnick uses the idea of money to explain tacit consent. When someone purchases an item, they tacitly consent to the idea that money is worth a certain amount. They never sign a contract saying that they agree that 21 shillings is worth one guinea, but people in society accept that fact as true. However, the tacit consent does not end there;

“once we consent to the value of money, we also consent to a society of unequal wealth and power... [O]ne’s behaviour reveals a tacit consent to forms of exchanges and systems of inequality and so validates both” (Kramnick 173). As Kramnick argues, when people participate in an economic exchange, they do not just consent to give a shilling for a particular item. They also tacitly consent to the way that the economic system is set up, to the systems of oppression that make capitalism function, and to the inequality of wealth that is inherent in the system. In this way, participation in the system makes a person complicit. Tacit consent therefore has a number of implications for sexual consent. As this chapter will discuss, a woman faces potential shame and ruin when a man assumes that she consents because she has displayed particular physical signifiers through her actions or inactions, but further than that, a woman’s very participation in the game of courtship and seduction entails her tacit consent in the way that the system is constructed. That system is stacked against her and prevents her from wielding her consent in meaningful ways. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1700), Locke argues that “Liberty ’tis plain consists in a Power to do, or not to do; to do, or forbear doing as we will” (Chapter II, 56). In other words, a defining aspect of human freedom is being able to give or withhold one’s consent. Yet, that power is limited for women in the long eighteenth century.

Body language: when beating hearts do the talking

Amid breathless scenes of unruly desire, intercut with dashes to heighten the passion and intensity of the moment, Haywood’s texts question to what degree non-verbal or tacit consent can be understood. I return to *Love in Excess* (1719) and analyze it through a different lens; unlike in Chapter One, I now look at D’elmont’s game of seduction irrespective of his role as a

paternal figure. D'elmont reads bodily consent in two of his lovers: Amena and Melliora. Both heroines display real, sexual desire for D'elmont, although they can only express desire when they are not fully conscious. In the eighteenth century, body was often “equated with feminine passion, whereas mind was equated with masculine reason” (Harrow 6). While Sharon Harrow demonstrates how Haywood’s texts complicate and sometimes invert that relationship, the key scenes of seduction in *Love in Excess* reinforce it: Amena’s body responds to the sensual garden atmosphere and Melliora’s desire breaches through her carefully constructed boundaries while she sleeps. In both cases, an outside intrusion is the only thing that stops D'elmont from pursuing the encounter further and “obtaining the person” (51) of these women. Although the women’s desire is extremely strong, they are concerned about the social consequences—the “censure of the world” (53)—if they engage in an illicit encounter with a rake. These scenes suggest that their bodies pursue a desire that their minds refuse to contemplate. Or rather, Amena and Melliora’s bodies follow their hearts, whereas their minds are constrained by societal expectations, and are held in check by reason and fear. When their mental state is weakened—either by lust or unconsciousness—then the body’s desires push through to the surface. D'elmont is only too happy to read the physical signifiers of consent and ignore the previous verbal cues.

D'elmont convinces Amena to leave the safety of her father’s house and go with him to a garden. The scene is extravagant, with the garden almost coming alive in sensual description. In her chapter “Lapses of Concentration” in *Distraction* (2016), Natalie M. Phillips discusses Betsy Thoughtless’ slips in situational awareness due to cognitive overload. As Betsy’s mind races to take in all of the stimuli around her, she misses the threats to her virtue and reputation that she should have noticed. That same phenomenon is present in *Love in Excess*, as “the heroine is diverted, not by a single thing, but by an environment that is dizzyingly plural” (Phillips 75). The

environment is not an accident, but rather the product of D'elmont's deliberate strategy. The physical sensations and Amena's own passion are too much to resist: "he found her panting heart beat measures of consent, her heaving breast swell to be pressed by his, and every pulse confess a wish to yield; her spirits all dissolved sunk in lethargy of love, her snowy arms unknowing grasped his neck, her lips met his half way, and trembled at the touch; in fine, there was but a moment betwixt her and ruine" (58). This passage is focalized through D'elmont's point of view, emphasizing the way that he interprets the physical elements of her body to represent her underlying emotional and mental states.

The consummation of their mutual desire is interrupted when Amena's maid arrives to warn the pair that they are close to being caught by Amena's father. With that, Amena's mind regains control of her body, and she realizes the danger that she is in. Her thoughts are "wholly taken up with her approaching shame" as she vows "she would rather die" than be caught in such a compromised situation (59). This passage, read in isolation from everything earlier in the story, would appear to be an uncomplicatedly consensual erotic encounter. She presses towards D'elmont, grasps his neck, and meets his lips; sexual release is delayed by outside intrusion. However, there is more to this scene than just the physical elements. It was preceded by Amena's attempts to have D'elmont declare his love in a formal and socially acceptable way (55). Amena was not initially a willing participant in the garden outing. She was tricked into leaving her home and brought into a situation which D'elmont knew would overwhelm her senses. Amena was also betrayed by her serving maid; Anaret is a "mercenary" (52) accomplice in D'elmont's plot. The scene in the garden, rather than being an expression of unbridled passion, is a carefully scripted attempt to possess Amena's body. As soon as Amena escapes from the overwhelming passion of the moment, she reflects upon the consequences and is terrified. As I discuss below,

this same phenomenon happens in *Fantomina* (1725), but the latter narrative pushes the sexual encounter further because there is no interruption.

Amena does not get to vocalize her consent. One reading of her silence is that she is so overcome by desire that she cannot speak. Her body overrides her brain and is able to tune out her social conditioning. In other words, Amena would have gladly entered into sexual relations with D'elmont sooner if she had not been afraid of the shame and ruin that were associated with losing her virginity outside of marriage. Another reading is that D'elmont fundamentally misunderstands her consent. This passage is focalized through his perspective, so it is largely about his interpretation of the encounter. He reads consent in her racing pulse and panting breaths, but Amena only went with D'elmont to the garden because he made her afraid of being caught by her father and convinced her that this location would be safer. In this reading, D'elmont sees the signifiers that he wants to see, ignores Amena's previous resistance, and almost rapes her.

The interpretation hinges on a fundamental question of whether mental states or physical actions are more relevant to consent. Locke grappled with this query. In order to know whether someone consents, a person has to know what he or she is thinking, but the only way to understand what someone is thinking is to observe his or her actions (Kramnick 169). Consent cannot exist in isolation: "one consents *as* one is in relations with others" (171). In this view, D'elmont reads consent in Amena's body based on her actions in the current moment. The tone of *Love in Excess* shows pity for Amena as she is seduced, but the narrative does not cast D'elmont as a villain. Despite his flaws, he is the romantic hero. He is not punished for his "adventure" (59) with Amena, and there is no suggestion in the text that he violates her. Her downfall comes more from the social condemnation of her feelings than from sexual aggression

on his part. Thus, while it is clear that he manipulates the situation, the novel also forgives him for his transgressions, and treats his amour in the garden with Amena as a sexual adventure rather than a violation. In this scene, the text acknowledges the primordial nature of physical signifiers. Throughout the text, D'elmont is a charming and sensual figure who draws out women's sexual passion, no matter how hard they try to fight it. There is little doubt that Amena would have pursued the encounter if she were not 1) terrified of retribution from her father and 2) afraid of facing "the censure of the world" and the cruel reaction of her peers.

The conflict between internal desire and external pressure is intensified in D'elmont and Melliora's relationship. Chapter One was interested in their relationship as guardian and ward. This chapter is interested in the way that Melliora and D'elmont grapple with their dilemma in opposite ways. Melliora attempts to retreat—to a convent, to her room, and to herself—whereas D'elmont attacks and pursues, encouraged by his friend. Melliora resists when he grabs hold of her and flees to her chamber, troubled; "she now no longer doubted the Count's passion, and trembled with the apprehension of what he might in time be prompted to; but when she reflected how dear that person she had so much cause to fear, was to her, she thought her self, at once the most unfortunate and most guilty of her sex" (102). The multiple clauses in this sentence represent Melliora's racing mind as she tries to untangle her own conflicted emotions. She has foresight into the lengths that the count will go to "enjoy" her. She is afraid of what he might do if she continues to hold herself away from him, but despite her fear, she loves him. Melliora internalizes the shame that she knows will fall upon her if she acts on her love: she thinks of herself as guilty. Even though Melliora's fear outweighs her affection and she resists D'elmont's advances, she is nevertheless overwhelmed by him.

As it happens, her fear is justified. The Baron advises D'elmont to take Melliora by force, saying, "A little resolution on your side would make her all yours – Women are taught by custom to deny what most they covet, and to seem angry when they are best pleased" (113-114). While D'elmont initially protests—"Would it not be pity... even if she should consent, to ruin so much sweetness?"—the two men decide that "Melliora should fall sacrifice to love" (114). With a few calculated sentences, the Baron convinces D'elmont that he should have Melliora, because her physical signifiers betray her attraction. The fact that the two men need to have this conversation is suspect; it draws attention to the artificiality of their logic, as well as to the way that cultural systems are reproduced and reinforced. D'elmont may have already had this notion in his head, but hearing his friend propose a plan validates it. This is one step in the cycle of misunderstood consent: just as women are educated by other women to be coy, men educate other men to read women's bodies in certain ways. They deliberately reinforce the belief that female resistance and anger are only a cover for underlying passion because it exculpates them and gives them permission to take what they want, when they want it. And yet, Haywood indicates that there is some truth in the Baron's words: "women are taught by custom to deny what most they covet." Women are taught to deny sexual pleasure until they are married, which causes a disconnect between their bodies and their minds. The Baron and D'elmont, however, refuse to contemplate the negative consequences that their actions would have on Melliora, and on women writ large.

Shortly after this conversation, D'elmont breaks into Melliora's room in the night. Just as the garden atmosphere breaks down Amena's resolve, Melliora's passion is freed while she sleeps: "Whatever dominion, honour and virtue may have over our waking thoughts, 'tis certain that they fly from the closed eyes... Desire, with watchful diligence repelled, returns with greater violence in unguarded sleep" (116). The narrator claims that passion grows stronger in the

dream-state since there is nothing to control it. The dreaming and waking world collapse into each other. As Melliora has sensual dreams about the Count, he leans down to kiss her. She throws her arms around him, crying: “Oh D’elmont, cease, cease to charm, to such a height – Life cannot bear these raptures... O! too, too lovely Count – extatick ruiner! (116)” The short exclamations and bursts are orgasmic. The raw sensuality is too much for D’elmont to resist, and he takes hold of her. The dream is shattered. Melliora awakens, confused and alarmed. As she realizes what is happening, she begs to be released and equates her virtue with her life.

D’elmont’s response illustrates just how deeply ingrained his codes of proper masculine behaviour are. Melliora pleads, “unless you wish to see me dead, a victim to your cruel fatal passion, I beg you to desist”, to which D’elmont replies: “what, when I have thee thus! Thus, naked in my arms, trembling, defenceless, yielding, panting with equal wishes, thy love confest, and every thought, desire! What could’st though think if I should leave thee? How justly would’st thou scorn my easie tameness; my dullness, unworthy of the name of lover, or even of man!” (117). In twenty-first century terms, D’elmont has internalized a toxic ideal of masculinity that prioritizes sexual prowess, strength, and aggression. If he lets this opportunity go, he fears that he will be less of a man. This fear is reinforced by the Baron’s earlier behaviour. The Baron laughed at D’elmont for not taking advantage of Melliora when he had the chance. D’elmont is afraid not only of what other men will think, but also of how Melliora will later perceive him. Influenced by the Baron’s philosophy, D’elmont thinks that underneath her refusal, Melliora actually wants him to enjoy her. It is an idea familiar and frustrating to twenty-first century readers: the notion that a woman “wanted it” or “was asking for it⁹.” Despite the desperately

⁹ Twenty-first century women have taken to social media and popular culture to resist the idea of “asking for it”, compiling lists detailing the different times when women’s clothing was taken as their consent and used to justify

clear verbal “no”, D’elmont cannot forget the memory of the physical “yes”. The only thing that prevents a rape from occurring is a knock at the door, which forces D’elmont to flee the scene to escape detection.

Haywood further problematizes non-verbal consent in *The Adventures of Natura* (1748). In this novel, a young woman is also removed from her usual mental state during a sexual encounter, but here, Haywood’s narrator presents the encounter as more of an assault than the unconscious fulfillment of longstanding desire. Natura enters a private box at the opera. By chance, there is already a beautiful woman seated there. She is so enthralled by the music that she does not notice him enter, and he pauses, “feasting his eyes” on her (70). The woman has the curtains closed; she thought that she was sealed away from prying eyes, but instead finds herself a direct object of Natura’s invasive gaze. The introduction cements the power dynamic between them. In some ways, the text blames the atmosphere of the opera for the sexual assault to follow. While discussing *Fantomina* and *Betsy Thoughtless*, Emily Anderson talks about how prostitutes used theatrical performances as “a backdrop for [their] performance of seduction, a ritual into which both parties enter with set expectations; while flirtatious banter provides variety, the conclusion is predetermined” (6). The location is entrenched in ideas of performance and ritual viewing. While she consumes the art, Natura consumes her.

The association of prostitution, flirtation, and seduction with the theatre and the opera colours Natura’s impressions of the encounter. Natura embodies the “male tendency to read a woman by her context” (Anderson 6), and the lady is deeply affected by her environment: “Both the music, and the words, seemed intended to lull the soul into a forgetfulness of all beside, and

sexual assault. See Rachel Lubitz’s 2016 article, “Here Are 9 Times Clothing Was Blamed for Sexual Assault – Rather Than the Obvious.”

fill it only with soft ideas: —it had at least this effect upon the lady” (Haywood 71). While she is carried away by the music—much like Amena was carried away by the sensuality of the garden—the narrative questions how much control Natura retains over his consciousness, introducing the possibility that he only “pretended to be” under the spell of the music. This suggestion is intensified when the lady, overcome by passion for the music, throws her arms over Natura’s neck: “he spoke not a word, but was not so absorbed in the gratification of one faculty, as to let slip the gratification of the others: —he seized the lucky moment...in this total absence of mind, stole himself, as it were, in the possession of a bliss” (71). When women’s senses are assaulted by beautiful music or nature, their control over their bodies seems to decrease. Men, however, retain their presence of mind and take advantage of the incapacitation.¹⁰ When the music stops and she is no longer enchanted by its thrall, the unnamed woman comes to her senses. Natura claims that he simply read her bodily signifiers, but there is also a suggestion that he was less enchanted by the music than she was. With that power imbalance, his actions become predatory, and his justification lies solely in his sex: “he must either have been *more*, or *less*, than *man*, to have behaved otherwise than he did” (72). Natura’s actions are tied to his assumptions of masculinity, once more showing the way that social expectations of masculinity were connected to sexual aggression. He takes advantage of the woman’s semi-conscious state and then does not understand why she is upset and why she feels violated.

In discussing Haywood’s use of the sublime, Kathryn King calls the episode one of Haywood’s “most outrageous scenes of passionate transport... in which a genteel woman... is so

¹⁰ This example initially seems at odds with Drury’s argument that the libertine machine in Haywood is “unable to weigh contending passions and capable only of direct motion towards the objects of his desire” (67). However, I believe that Haywood points to the artificiality of the logic of the libertine machine in this scene. Natura attempts to justify his actions by arguing that he was not in control; he could not have resisted the temptation of the woman before him. The suggestion, however, that he has time to pause and reflect upon what he is about to do, and then he deliberately decides to steal possession of his bliss, suggests that he is conscious of the fact that his actions will be harmful, but he proceeds anyways in order to satisfy his appetite.

carried out of herself by the music that she engages, unknowingly, in coital union with the protagonist, Natura” (“Pious Mrs. Haywood” 200-201). What makes this scene stand out—what makes it outrageous—is that the woman did not previously know Natura or have feelings for him. Her actions were not based on repressed passion for him, specifically. The question becomes, then, how was the music so powerful as to induce such a strong reaction from her? One clue is in the woman’s status: after the encounter, Natura learns that she was “in the first month of her marriage... and had the reputation of a woman of strict virtue” (72). The narrator assures the reader that based on the lady’s character, the false step “was no more on her part than a surprize on the senses, in which the mind was not consulted” (72). The lengths to which the narrator goes to convince the reader that this lady is not guilty are interesting. On the one hand, it vindicates her and argues for leniency on the part of the reader. On the other, it raises a question about the mental state of newly married women, and how they respond to passionate encounters. Binhammer devotes a chapter of her book about seduction novels to married women, arguing that seduction “is central to married women’s stories, even though they are no longer naive and therefore they shouldn’t be able to be seduced anymore” (72). The fascination with seduction, she argues, stems from a cultural anxiety “about how women can know when their heart’s choices are the right ones” (106). The married woman is both allowed and expected to engage in sexual activity with her spouse. After years of containing and fiercely protecting her virginity and her virtue—of denying what she most covets—she enters into a new phase of sexual experience. In Haywood’s fictions, young, unmarried women constantly fight off seduction attempts from their suitors. They develop a particular set of skills to control the men around them and protect themselves, and they practice these skills as they learn from their own experiences and the experiences of women around them. However, once they are married, they do not need to

think about these skill sets to the same degree. As a newly married young woman who is for the first time in her life no longer abstaining from sex, the unnamed Lady, once under the thrall of the music and the spectacle, is all the more vulnerable to Natura's advances. Moreover, Haywood's narrator suggests that this Lady maintains her "virtue" and is not technically guilty of adultery because her mind—which would have presumably been able to tell the difference between her husband and a strange man at the opera—"was not consulted" in her body's passive acceptance of Natura's assault.

Intersections of class and consent

The previous section examined texts in which a woman's senses are overwhelmed by an exceptional environment. In those instances, the environment acts upon the woman and grants the man an advantage. By contrast, the protagonist in *Fantomina* deliberately chooses her environment and her appearance in her interactions with Beauplaisir, but is nevertheless disempowered in their first sexual encounter. As she learns and adapts, she gains greater sexual agency throughout the text. Although environmental factors play a role in how these situations take place, the more influential factor is the social status of her persona. Throughout the novella, she works through a sort of thought experiment about who has more sexual agency: lower- or upper-class women? The protagonist's initial assumption is that lower-class women have more freedom. She sees prostitutes at the playhouse and is overcome by curiosity about them because they seem to possess a freedom that she is denied. She soon learns that the freedom to act in public comes at the cost of agency in private.

The unnamed heroine¹¹, as many of Haywood's protagonists, is motivated at first by insatiable curiosity. This motif returns frequently in Haywood and features prominently in *The Invisible Spy* (1754). Through these overly curious characters, Haywood investigates what drives human behaviour. The intense desire to understand the other—for Fantomina, she wants to know “in what Manner these Creatures were address'd” (41)—mirrors the reader's desire to understand the characters in the novel, and perhaps understand their peers and themselves. On the first night of her disguise, Fantomina experiences free conversation with Beauplaisir. They interact on “equal” albeit misleading terms: infinitely charmed with each other, they “pass'd their time all the play with an equal Satisfaction” (43). The heroine's enjoyment of witty conversation and flirtation is brought to an abrupt halt when she is confronted with the reality of the situation at the end of the night. Beauplaisir, believing her to be a prostitute, expects to have sex. With quick thinking, she extracts herself from the situation, but she is enamoured with him. Haywood's amatory imagery is in full force, as Fantomina “languish'd, she almost dy'd for another Opportunity of conversing with him... Strange and unaccountable were the Whimsies she was possess'd of, —wild and incoherent her desires,—unfix'd and undetermin'd her Resolutions” (44). The breathless prose is characteristic of Haywood, with critics reading “this kind of discourse as a specifically feminine mode of speech signalled by the inadequacy of language to represent female experience” (Harrow 280). The breaks in the form of the em-dash show how her mind races, bounding from one emotion to the next, conflicted between what she knows she ought to do, and what she desires. Logically, she knows that it is a bad idea to see him again, but she cannot resist.

¹¹ For simplicity's sake, I will refer to her as Fantomina, since we never learn her real name.

The rape in *Fantomina* is one of the most puzzling and disconcerting scenes in Haywood's oeuvre. Some scholars, like Margaret Case Croskery, call it a rape, black and white. Emily Anderson calls it a rape, but she waits a curiously long amount of time to declare it as such; she spends a page talking about the performance and desire inherent in the subsequent seductions before she returns back to this first encounter. Even then, she glances over it. Helen Thompson also seems to gloss over it, moving quickly onto the later scenes of sexual exploration and agency. Thompson summarizes the events as such: "she is seduced by the rake Beauplaisir and under the name *Fantomina* becomes his mistress" ("Plotting Materialism" 199). Others, like Kramnick, try to find meaning in the ambiguity. Kramnick posits three interpretations of what happens: 1) *Fantomina* never consented and Beauplaisir entirely misunderstands the signs; 2) *Fantomina* consented to a certain point but withdraws it; and/or 3) "she is unable to separate her will from the world it inhabits and wants what she doesn't want" (187). Here, I explore the implications of this third interpretation. Like *Amena* and *Melliora* before her, *Fantomina* is filled with "wild and incoherent" (44) desire, but she is constrained by the social consequences of her actions. The threat of future damages impedes her will and her ability to consent. As each line in this scene is significant, I will here analyze a longer passage in detail:

It was in vain; she would have retracted the Encouragement she had given: —In vain she endeavoured to delay, till the next Meeting, the fulfilling of his Wishes: —She had now gone too far to retreat: —He was bold; —he was resolute: She fearful, —confus'd, altogether unprepar'd to resist in such Encounters, and rendered more so, by the extreme Liking she had to him. —Shok'd, however, at the Apprehension of really losing her Honour, she struggled all she could, and was just going to reveal the whole Secret of her Name and Quality, when the Thoughts of the Liberty he had taken with her, and those he still continued to prosecute, prevented her, with representing the Danger of being expos'd, and the whole Affair made a Theme for publick Ridicule... In fine, she was undone (46).

The central conflict and the seduction are built around misreading signifiers. Binhammer argues that "seduction narratives tell the story of a woman's struggle to decode the new semiotics of

courtship and love” (“Seduction Narratives” 6), but Haywood also tells the story of men’s interaction with those new semiotics. Those unwritten social rules of coquettish behaviour influence men just as much as women, with the significant difference that they embolden men to take forceful action. Fantomina misreads the situation when she thinks that she can control Beauplaisir’s desire. Beauplaisir misreads the signifiers and thinks that Fantomina is a high-class prostitute rather than an aristocratic woman. His boldness and resolution is contrasted against her earlier state of being unfix’d and undetermin’d. He also misreads her resistance as coyness. Women were conditioned to be coy, and therefore men expected them to resist. Fantomina’s last-minute hesitation plays into this cultural script.

In this scene, the momentum of the seduction narrative seems inevitable, as shown by the repetition of the phrase “in vain.” Furthermore, the length of the sentences mirrors the pacing of the scene. The short staccato phrases, “He was bold; —he was resolute: She fearful”, increase the intensity of the moment. While earlier staccato phrases and em-dashes indicate being overcome figuratively by the passions, here they represent Fantomina being overcome physically by Beauplaisir. Fantomina’s identity is almost erased in the grammar of the phrases. Whereas descriptions of Beauplaisir’s mental state are complete sentences, using the verb “was”, Fantomina becomes absorbed into the mental states: “She fearful, —confus’d, altogether unprepar’d to resist... Shok’d”. In each of these descriptions, Haywood drops the usage of the verb “to be”. This rushes along the pace of the action and shows how Fantomina loses control over her own body, becoming fully encompassed in these emotions. The first phrase to follow the grammatical structure of “She was XX” is “she was undone” at the end of the rape. In this moment, Fantomina is briefly reduced to being a fallen woman. There is also an uncomfortable element of complicity. Fantomina pushed the encounter too far. It was her choice to meet

Beauplaisir a second time. From the moment that she made that choice, even if she thought that she would be able to control the situation, the outcome was fixed. In this way, Haywood's novella seems to follow the established, tragic trajectory of seduction stories in the eighteenth century.

The classification of the encounter as a rape is complicated by the middle of the passage. There are two lines in particular that give me pause. First, she was "*unprepar'd* to resist in such Encounters, and *rendered more so, by the extreme Liking she had to him* [my italics for emphasis]" (46). She is physically and intellectually attracted to Beauplaisir. She is also deeply curious and quite naïve. The verb "unprepar'd" calls to mind that Fantomina was not mentally prepared to resist because she did not think that she would need to; she did not have her mental guard up, so to speak. A woman guarding her virtue would have been more cognizant of the signs that led to this moment, whereas Fantomina believed that she was in control, and would not need to defend herself. That brings us to the second complication in this passage. Fantomina only struggles against Beauplaisir when she is "Shok'd... at the Apprehension of really losing her Honour." She is afraid of the shame that will be forced upon her if she consents. In a sense, she is not free to give or withdraw consent. Even if she were fully aware from the outset of her own desire to have sex with Beauplaisir, she is bound by social expectations; those socially enforced rules make the choice for her. In some later eighteenth-century texts, like Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), shame is a potentially productive emotion for social education. For Burney's young heroine, feeling shame helps to instil social values. By contrast, the fear of shame in this scene stops Fantomina from revealing her true identity, and eliminates the possibility of a different outcome: what would have happened if he knew her real status? I argue that Beauplaisir does not anticipate the ruthless, conniving, and manipulative Lovelace from *Clarissa* (1748).

Similarly, he does not prefigure the forceful and dogged Mr. B from *Pamela* (1740). Rather, Beauplaisir is a man who meets an incredibly witty and beautiful prostitute, and he feels remorse after the rape when he understands that she is not a prostitute. In this way, Haywood's narrator suggests that there was a chance that he would have listened, and that Fantomina's "no" would have been respected if it were backed up by the weight of her "Name and Quality", in a similar fashion to an episode with Betsy Thoughtless decades later¹². She was not able to vocalize that "no" because she was too afraid of the public ridicule. Haywood suggests that Fantomina believes it was better to be raped than it was to be exposed to censure.

This encounter exposes, of course, discrepancies in the ways that consent was understood and acknowledged based on social stature: lower-class women faced considerable danger from wealthy, predatory men. A "no" from a lower-class woman was not heard as "no." The famous trial of Francis Charteris in 1730 was a press sensation because it was such an outlier in this regard. Colonel Francis Charteris was charged with the capital crime of raping Ann Bond, a serving girl (Simpson 29-30). The case was notable because he was sentenced to death, although he was later pardoned (34). Simpson argues that, although the case may seem like an indication that the justice system was functioning as it was meant to—protecting the weak and punishing the guilty—the Charteris case only became so notorious because the Colonel was a known rake, gambler, and disgrace to his social class. He was not a typical aristocratic gentleman, and therefore was an easy figure to demonize in court. Ann Bond, on the other hand, was supported by a gentlewoman and had good references on her side. Laurie Edelstein details the difficulty

¹² Compare this incident to a near-rape in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Betsy rides in a coach with a libertine who thinks that she is a prostitute. When he advances on her, she struggles violently against him. He chides her for putting on "airs" and "affected coyness" (239). It is only when Betsy declares that she is "of a family of some consideration in the world" and is "blest with a fortune" (240) that the man believes her virtue, ceases his attack, and begs for her forgiveness. Haywood suggests that female resistance needs to be paired with status and wealth in order to be taken seriously by men.

that eighteenth-century women faced in bringing forward rape charges, including the gruelling trial system, costs associated with the legal proceedings, and the fact that magistrates had the discretion not to send a case to a grand jury. Further, Edelstein's research shows how, much like twenty-first century rape trials, the defendant's strategy was frequently to tarnish the woman's reputation and accuse her of bringing up false charges due to malicious intent. A woman had to publicly recount every detail of the assault, exposing her to "great publicity... incalculable shame and embarrassment" (364). A woman also had to prove a high threshold of force, with some magistrates arguing that there had to be evidence of penetration or emission (364-365). Women from all classes faced immense difficulty in finding legal recourse for rape in this system, but it was especially difficult for women in the lower classes.

Despite the complexities of their first sexual experience—or perhaps because of them—Fantomina endeavours to see Beauplaisir again. She soon realizes her limited power as a prostitute (and the fickle nature of male affection), and she successively adopts a higher and higher social class with each disguise. From Fantomina the prostitute, to Celia the serving girl, to the widow Bloomer, to the masked Incognita, she gains in social capital and is better able to set the conditions by which Beauplaisir thinks he seduces her. She also modifies the terms of the seduction, at first finding pleasure in being "sweetly forc'd" (51), and later enjoying the "Height of all their mutual Raptures" (65) while in disguise. I am persuaded by Emily Anderson's analysis that trying to find the heroine's "true identity" beneath her masks is a misleading project. Her identity is constructed through her self-conscious performances. Her emotions, although performed, are still real (1-2). As Anderson explains, "Her consistent ability to perform means that she repeatedly creates a space in which she may express her emotions... by repeating performances, the heroine creates the space to assert and reassert the face of female desire" (3).

There is also a degree of consistency in her personhood that is Lockean. Locke draws a distinction between the physical man (in this case, using the term “man” to refer to people writ large, rather than males) and personhood, which is “a kind of self, supported by consciousness” (Kramnick 87). Even though the physical atoms might change over time, “a single life has a continuous existence” in consciousness (88). Although Fantomina changes her physical appearance and takes on different personas, there is a continuation of her consciousness, reflected in her continuing interest in Beauplaisir.

As the novel continues, Fantomina engages in a carefully constructed ritual. Viewing the act of seduction through the lens of structuralized ritualization theory provides insight into how cultural meanings and symbolism are imbued into repeated actions. Ritualized practices are “significant sources of meanings that people utilize as they construct their own cognitive schemas,” but these practices are also derived from external forces (Knottnerus 24). For Fantomina, those external forces include the expectation that women should remain virtuous and virginal until marriage, and defend their virtue with rigour. Knottnerus highlights the irony of “social behaviour that the reproduction of social structures occurs even when it may not be in the interest of people and the groups they are members of” (15). In Fantomina’s case, she takes pleasure in the ritualization of being seduced and submitting herself sexually to Beauplaisir. However, the relationship between ritual and individual cognition goes in two directions; people are shaped by their surrounding culture, but are also able to change it by using “the symbolic and social resources they are exposed to in their construction of new behavioural patterns” (16). Fantomina takes a ritualized social practice—yielding to seduction—and gradually re-shapes it into something that brings her increasing amounts of pleasure. Each iteration of the ritual has slight differences, and those differences mark her efforts to re-claim control and gratification

from this act. Thus, she “demonstrates women’s capacity to manipulate and control the signs by which her social, economic and sexual position as woman is perceived and constructed” and she uses it to her sexual advantage (Potter “Language” 176).

While the differences in each sexual encounter demonstrate a change in Fantomina’s perspective on how she can acquire sexual pleasure, I think that it is important to note the effect of class on her ability to express her desires and engage meaningfully in consent. Whereas Celia the serving girl is “half-yielding and half-reluctant” (53) when she first seduces Beauplaisir, the widow Bloomer talks passionately about love and then conveniently faints into his arms when they stop at an inn (57), and Incognita recognizes that “it would have been a ridiculous Piece of Affectation in her to have seem’d coy in complying with what she herself had been the first in desiring: She yielded without even a Shew of Reluctance” (65). This final persona “circumvents enforced affectation, the embodiment of femininity’s proscribed desire” (Thompson “Plotting Materialism” 207). Incognita is able to fully embrace the desire that the heroine has felt from the beginning of the story. She attempts to erase her identity—putting on a literal mask as well as a metaphorical one—and briefly escapes from the socially constructed narratives of her sexuality. Her society expects “women to be passive objects of male desire” (Potter “Language” 181), but Incognita is deliberate and active in orchestrating and participating in this encounter. At this moment, she “has no fear, but only pleasure from her schemes” (181). She is equal to Beauplaisir, as they experience “mutual raptures” (Haywood 65). Beauplaisir’s enjoyment is not diminished by her forwardness. He also breaks free of the seduction ritual. Incognita does not need to perform the coy and bashful virgin or the fainting widow in order for him to find her attractive. She does not need to simulate a challenge. Incognita reframes sexuality so that it is not

a battle of wills between men and women. This encounter is about mutual satisfaction orchestrated by female desire.

Masquerade: consenting to the unknown

Haywood's interest in what it means to consent while in disguise was not limited to *Fantomina*. The phenomenon examined in that text—a young woman exploring her sexuality through disguises—was already present in society in the form of the masquerade. In her introduction to *The Masqueraders, or Fatal Curiosity* (1724), Tiffany Potter describes the masquerade as “both the site of the requisite seductions and dramatic confusion, and also the source of dramatic resolution and women's empowerment” (4). Haywood's texts were part of a broader social debate. Potter notes that there was a substantial amount of public literature and debate being circulated in the 1720s about the moralist danger of the masquerade. While Haywood's early texts show an interest in the masquerade as enabling sexual exploration, by the end of her career, her texts reveal cynicism about how this power is wielded, and by whom. Although the masquerade provided women “with a gateway to otherwise unknowable freedoms... the social structures surrounding it remained unchanged, rendering women vulnerable to serious consequences” (Potter “The Masqueraders” 7).

The Masqueraders opens with an amorous scene of mutual satisfaction: Dorimenus and Dalinda meet each other at the masquerade, experience attraction for one another, and spend the night in “uncommon Rapture” (71). Dalinda is a widow of a “nature pretty amorous” (70) who “liv'd wholly independent of the Favour of any Relation whatever” (71), so there is no discussion of shame or lost virtue. She controls her finances and owns her overt sexuality. The two engage in the ritual of seduction, with Dorimenus using all of the arts of “melting Tendernesses” until Dalinda consents. It seems almost utopian; despite being a known rake,

Dorimenes devotes himself entirely to Dalinda. In the dizzying, passionate atmosphere of the masquerade, these two lovers find what appears to be a perfect match. The remainder of the text delves into betrayal and inconstancy: motivated by intense curiosity, Dalinda's best friend Philecta falls in love with Dorimenes. After a brief adventure, Dorimenes leaves town and marries another woman. Although the romance does not last, the masquerade in this text is still a scene of consensual amour. In a reversal of later texts, Philecta deceives Dorimenes when she conspires to meet him at a masquerade dressed in Dalinda's costume. She reveals her identity before it is too late, and their passion is not consummated until later in the text. This trope—confused identity at the masquerade—does not come to full fruition in this text: Dorimenes eventually spends the night with the woman that he intended to meet.

The same cannot be said for the masquerades in *The Female Spectator* (1744) and *The Invisible Spy*. These texts present far more pessimistic narratives, wherein a young, naïve woman goes to a masquerade and accidentally leaves with the wrong man, putting her virtue and her life in dire danger. In *The Female Spectator*, Erminia and her brother go to the masquerade for the first time together. As their family is not from London, they do not understand the dangers of such a night. The siblings quickly become overwhelmed by the distractions of the “promiscuous assembly; the strange habits, the hurry, the confusion quite distracted their attention” (44). Phillips analyzes Haywood's syntax for moments when the multiplied “environmental stimuli... produce a sensory cacophony so layered that a slip becomes inevitable” (77). Everything is new at the masquerade; unaccustomed to London's fast-paced social world, the siblings are overwhelmed by all of the sensory experience. Separated from her brother, Erminia is left with strangers with whom she does not wish to associate. When she sees her brother's costume, she rushes towards the man and asks him to take her home (44). The rake, who happens to be

wearing the same costume as Erminia's brother, does not reveal his identity. He takes advantage of the situation, brings Erminia to his house, and rapes her. Disturbingly, "the more averse and shocked she seemed at the rude behaviour with which he immediately began to treat her, the more were his desires inflamed" (45). In this scene, female distress causes male arousal; this is not an instance of misinterpreting her signifiers, but a cruel and sadistic attack. In the aftermath, he is ruthless and calculating in his efforts to hide his crime, putting a blindfold on the girl and driving her to a different location so that she will not be able to identify him (46).

In Volume II of *The Invisible Spy*, Matilda is also raped after a masquerade when she mistakes a stranger for her husband, Alexis. There are two very notable differences in these instances. First, the encounter in *The Female Spectator* is based on chance. The predatory man takes advantage of Erminia's situation and her desperation to leave the masquerade. She approaches him and he withholds information about his identity. By contrast, the assailant in *The Invisible Spy* deliberately deceives Matilda. She recounts her horror, saying, "he told me he had his eye upon me from the first moment I came in, and when he saw you left me, ran and procured a Domine as like yours as he could get, in hopes that I might be, as, alas ! I really was, deceived by that fatal habit" (96). The stranger waits until she is alone, approaches her in a disguise like her husband's, and takes her to a house to assault her. The premeditated calculation of the attack matches the damning indictment of the masquerade in the beginning of the chapter: "Among all the numerous modes which the wantonness of luxury has of late years introduced into this kingdom for destroying of time, I know of none more fatal to the virtue and reputation of the female sex than masquerades" (Volume II, 80).

The severity of consequences is the second major difference. Erminia's family is empathetic and understanding. Days after the rape, her long-time suitor comes to see her, learns

what happened, and after reflection, assures her family that “as his love for Erminia was chiefly founded on her virtue, an act of force could not be esteemed any breach of it, and [he] was still ready to marry her, if she would consent” (50). Erminia’s suitor and family still consider her to be virtuous because they know that it was not her fault; their anger is directed solely at the rapist. Further, the lover directly asks Erminia for her consent to marry. His goodness and sense of honour is contrasted tragically with Erminia’s refusal. Even though her suitor professes his love, she cannot bring herself to marry him when she considers the “shame of being his, in the condition she was” (50). She internalizes the shame of the rape and retreats to her aunt’s house in the country. Her family and suitor, although sad, respect her decision and mourn the loss of her company, while extolling her virtues. A decade later, Haywood writes a very different tale in *The Invisible Spy*: Alexis spends the night thinking about his wife’s rape and “finding it a thing inconsistent with his honour to suffer her to remain in town after what had happened, he resolved to send her immediately into the country” (99). The blame for the rape is placed on Matilda’s shoulders; her husband questions why she did not protest more when the masked man took her to a strange house¹³. He is more concerned for his own reputation than for his wife. After being raped, her agency is further taken from her when she is exiled. This final masquerade narrative in the *Invisible Spy* is rendered all the more unsettling due to the frame narrative. Explorabilis bears witness to the events at the masquerade—they watch Matilda leave with the blue Domine—but they do not tell Alexis the full truth. From a mutually satisfying, passionate encounter to a violent abduction, rape, and exile, Haywood’s narratives present a pessimistic evolution of the

¹³ A prominent Canadian legal case from 2014 illustrates the continuation of this pervasive ideology. Judge Robin Camp asked a rape complainant why she did not resist by keeping her legs together. The accused was found not guilty. After complaints to the Canadian Judicial Council and extensive public scrutiny, Robin Camp resigned as a judge on March 9, 2017. The case was one factor that prompted interim leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Rona Ambrose, to introduce legislation requiring Canadian judges to take mandatory training on consent and sexual assault. The case received extensive coverage in Canadian and international media including CBC, Canadian Press, Globe and Mail, the Independent, Global News, and more.

masquerade. This trajectory is similar to that of father-lovers, from the happy marriage of D'elmont and his ward Melliora to the tragic life and death of the unfortunate Alinda. The amorous possibilities of seduction and love in non-traditional environments are darkened by narratives of cruelty and of deliberate efforts to undermine women's sexual agency.

Owning women's consent: material gain and legal concerns

At the same time as Haywood's texts were questioning the underlying assumptions about women's sexual agency and consent, new understandings of women's legal consent in relation to property were challenging eighteenth-century marital norms. While the following terms are notoriously complicated and contested, for the purposes of my chapter, I will use the definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. We will understand "dower" to mean "the portion of a deceased husband's estate which the law allows to his widow for her life"; "Jointure" as "a sole estate limited to the wife, being a 'competent livelihood of freehold for the wife of lands and tenements, to take effect upon the death of the husband for the life of the wife at least'; and "pin money" as "a (usually annual) sum allotted to a woman for clothing and other personal expenses; *esp.* such an allowance provided for a wife's private expenditure" (OED). Susan Staves' book *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (1990) traces the downfall of dower rights—a widow automatically gaining one-third of her late husband's real property over the course of his life—and the rise of jointure and other forms of married women's separate property¹⁴. Although these adaptations were presented as equitable for women, Staves drives at the underlying ideology of the changes. Women had too much power with dower rights; as eighteenth-century society increasingly viewed the alienability of property as integral to the idea

¹⁴ The history of these words is relevant to Stave's argument. The first entries for dower, jointure, and pin money are as follows: 1292, 1451, and 1640. The forms of married women's separate property that became more popular in the eighteenth century were relatively new concepts compared to the dower.

of ownership and property itself, dower rights posed a threat to the capitalist system (32). Jointure, of lesser value than dower, gave women enough financial stability to survive, but “not enough to exercise the power that comes with a significant accumulation of property” (35). If a woman accepted jointure as part of the marriage settlement before her marriage, she lost her dower rights (50). Further, these marriage settlements were negotiated by fathers and male relatives on behalf of the woman, and those men’s interests were not always aligned with the woman’s (117). Theoretically, if a husband settled jointure on his wife during their marriage, at his death, she had the option to claim her original dower rights instead (121). In practice, there were structural and social barriers that prevented her from making that choice. What constituted a jointure reasonable enough to bar dower shifted over the course of the century as the legal system tried, and often failed, to make cohesive rulings over increasingly complex cases of property (109). However, the underlying assumption that enabled dower rights to be systematically broken down was that women, as rational actors, consented to forfeit their dower rights for oftentimes less valuable jointure settlements. This contract ideology is predicated on a woman consenting to waive her rights, but what is missing is whether or not she actually did consent.

Missing from the court decisions are the myriad factors that influence a woman’s consent: coercion, abuse, societal programming, the mental and emotional toll of going against common practice, and so on (112-116). There was some recognition of how husbands could influence their wives and “kiss or kick” them to sign over control of their separate estates, but overall, society was not willing to engage with the question of whether women were actually consenting to losing their dower rights in favour of lesser settlements. In one case, when a woman took her husband to court over withheld pin money in arrears, Lord Chancellor

Macclesfield (whose disgraced career I discussed in Chapter One) ruled that since she did not ask for it earlier, she had consented to not earn it. Further, when the woman argued that she was afraid of her husband, Lord Chancellor Macclesfield said that she should have trusted her trustees to protect her, and she should have appealed to them to demand the pin money on her behalf (142). Macclesfield's ruling reveals the underlying biases in the legal system. There were barriers for women to even engage the courts to fight for their financial rights, and once they did, the exclusively male judges viewed cases through a patriarchal lens. To Macclesfield, the woman's silence was taken for her implicit consent and agreement to the arrangement, and he failed to understand the pressure, coercion, and threats that would have prevented this woman from appealing to her trustees for recourse—that is, if her trustees even would have acted on her behalf. This unwillingness to consider all of the factors that lead women to consent to unfavourable situations cuts to the heart of a number of Haywood's texts. Her heroines find themselves in situations across the spectrum of consent, from scenes of violent rape to the more common, softer forms of coercion with unbridled desire from both parties. Their lovers kiss them out of their virginity, perhaps their most valuable property.

Women in this period were subject to a number of legal roadblocks to consent. First and foremost, once a woman married, she was considered less than autonomous under coverture, which Joanne Bailey calls the “legal fiction that a husband and wife were one person” (351). Susan Staves is more blunt, saying that a woman was “fundamentally unable to consent” under coverture (121). A *feme covert* could make purchases on her husband's credit, but access to credit could be taken away with relative ease (Bailey 356). The husband controlled the finances of the house and the legal matters were under his name. While this came with an unintended benefit—women could not be sued by their creditors because any debt that they accrued was

their husband's problem—for the most part, women had little say in determining their lives from a legal perspective. Husbands could also file a writ of habeus corpus and summon errant wives to their side if women tried to escape them. Women could counter-sue for cruelty and try to escape their husband's grip, but the underlying legal assumption was that men had the right to determine where their wives were. This was not just a social protocol: it was enforced by the courts. These are matters which show the slipperiness of the distinction between private and public concerns. The public courts were an avenue for private marital disputes, with either party resorting to the legal system to enact changes in desperate situations. What is perhaps most distressing to our twenty-first-century understandings of consent is the fact that eighteenth-century husbands could sue their wives for conjugal rights in the ecclesiastical court (Staves 163). In other words, a woman had no legal right to withhold sex from her husband: once she was married, her consent in almost all of her affairs was taken as given by him.

I argue that Haywood's texts must be read in concert with her legal and economic context in order to understand the underlying implications of her fiction. Haywood's preoccupation with contracts, legal consent, and financial dependence as recurring themes in her amatory fiction creates an explicit connection between the way that women interact with larger social structures, and the way that they interact with lovers and husbands. A woman's difficulty in engaging meaningfully in consent in her sexual relationship cannot be abstracted or disconnected from her social setting. The courts systematically changed and degraded women's property rights over the course of the century, and as women were faced with a new economic reality, they were also faced with a social structure that created and perpetuated a sexual double standard. Haywood's texts, however, move beyond critiques of power imbalances and flawed social systems. Haywood's narratives offer imaginative possibilities of alternative models of sexual agency and

consent, often framed in feminocentric communities and plots. The final chapter will delve into these moments of resistance and queerness, finding hope amidst Haywood's representations of eighteenth-century impingements on female agency.

Chapter Three: Female Intimacies

The previous two chapters have explored relationships between women and authoritative guardians and women and their lovers, as well as the complicated overlap of those two categories. This chapter looks at relationships between women themselves, and performs a queer reading of Haywood's texts. Of all the topics in this project, friendship might appear to be the least politically charged, and yet the discourse of friendship in the eighteenth century was wrapped in centuries of political nuance. Friendship—specifically, the ideal of male friendship—was at the formation of the development of the public sphere (Carnell 199). This version of friendship called upon centuries of political philosophy that imbued male bonds with virtue, justice, and reason. Founded in Aristotelian ideals, this vision of friendship was based on reciprocity, preserving each other's prosperity and safety, and leading one another from error (Nawrot 122). Nawrot argues that friendship parallels Locke's social contract, as individuals agree to enter into a community, hinged on a shared trust of the mutual benefits (121). This configuration consolidated male power as men formed strong bonds and alliances beyond familial ties.

Women were excluded from this definition of friendship, and this exclusion was similar to that barring them from the full benefits of the social contract. Haywood pushes back against these limitations through complex depictions of women's friendship. These representations are both constructive and critical as Haywood employs a variety of narrative techniques to demonstrate two related ideas: first, that women are culturally excluded from the benefits of female friendship; and second, that women are empowered and better able to pursue happiness in their lives when they have a foundation of strong, female intimacy. She returns to female friendships in tandem with her explorations of consent and seduction. In many instances, the two

topics are inextricable from one another, as destructive female relationships disempower women and lead them to be assaulted, whereas supportive female relationships enable women to voice their consent and exercise their agency.

Susan Lanser further explores female intimacy as a classed act, and argues that “female friendship emerged through women’s agency as a powerful resource in the struggle for autonomy and authority” (“Befriending the body” 180). Haywood’s continuous exploration of female bonds contains within it an argument about the primacy of female relationships in eighteenth-century life. These relationships are essential to forming a healthy public sphere. By placing emphasis on women’s friendship, Haywood “challenged the foundations of a political public sphere dependent on an image of bourgeois, Anglican, male-only friendship” (Carnell 211). This challenge occurs across her long career in both the content of her works, and also in the form. Take, for instance, the premise of *The Female Spectator*. In a “gendered reversal of Addison and Steele’s title and eidolon” (Pollock 147), the women who comprise the voice of the *Female Spectator* act in unison and harmony. Their insights are based on the perspectives of women from different class backgrounds, coming together to form a community and present their ideas to the world. Haywood weaves a narrative tapestry of women’s communal voice, and in so doing, is able to create a version of the public sphere which is accessible to, and created largely for, women. Haywood’s challenge to the norm exists in the very formation of her periodical.

In her fiction, Haywood returns frequently to instances of women who betray other women in specifically sexual or consent-related matters. These women conspire with men to violate other women, using their intimate relationships with the victims to further the betrayal. These women are often more scathingly described than the men who actually perpetrate the

sexual violation, which could lead the reader to wonder if Haywood is employing a higher standard for a woman's behaviour than for a man's. In this perspective, it is possible to argue that Haywood has adopted society's preferential treatment of men, and that she is less critical of their bad behaviour. On the one hand, she has, to a certain degree, internalized misogyny and places more blame on women than she does on men. On the other hand, when we examine the circumstances of each of these betrayals, the women who are implicated are caught in a variety of social and economic structures that inform their actions. Women in Haywood's novels do not simply betray other women's consent because they are spiteful or vindictive; they frequently act out of desperation and economic incentives, or they have so thoroughly bought into a social ideology that prioritizes marriage as the only means of a woman living a fulfilling life, that they see other women's happiness as a threat to their own, and therefore act out against their rivals to preserve their own futures.

Haywood exposes the underlying issues that cause women to violate the natural impulse to form friendships and bonds, revealing that many aspects of the patriarchal social structure are designed to keep women in competition with each other. If women are encouraged to fight amongst themselves, then they cannot form strong, cohesive bonds that rival men's powerful friendships. Their lack of meaningful relationships therefore becomes an important contrivance for maintaining the status quo of power relations. Scholars of lesbian history and female intimacy such as Catherine Craft-Fairchild and Susan Lanser have noted that the lack of legal statutes or official documentation preventing female homosexual relations is not, in fact, indicative of the fact that female-female intimate relationships did not exist in the eighteenth

century.¹⁵ Rather, these relationships were deliberately minimized and ignored because they represented a threat to bourgeois, domestic ideology. The lack of legal statutes was also not a sign of tolerance “of sapphic practices but a fear of acknowledging and articulating them” (Craft-Fairchild “Indeterminacy” 409). The “cultural fear of female-female erotic unions” (408) stemmed, in part, from anxiety that if women decided to have relationships with each other, then they would not be available to provide reproductive capability necessary to further male inheritance. In Valerie Traub’s study, “by the end of the 18th century, cultural anxieties about sexual relations between women had become inextricably connected to fears about the collapse of a capitalist patriarchy that was dependent upon the participation of women in its reproductive economy” (177). The deliberate undermining and minimizing of female-female intimate relationships goes hand in hand with the creation of social systems that either prevent women from forming meaningful friendships, or encourage them to see each other as rivals rather than allies. If erotic female relationships threaten cultural norms, so too do intimate female friendships.

Haywood’s texts therefore serve a pedagogic and political function in showing positive and negative examples of female relationships. Through depictions of betrayal, Haywood can teach women to unlearn the behaviours that set them against one another. By ridiculing and deriding the women who both betray other women’s trust and negate their consent, Haywood

¹⁵ The term lesbian is anachronistic for the eighteenth century. The modern notion of lesbianism is built upon seeing identity and sexual orientation as intertwined, but these categories were not employed or enforced in the same ways in this period. Lillian Faderman uses the term “romantic friendship” but I agree with Susan Wahl that “The concept of “romantic friendship” has also proved problematic because it so easily lends itself to a depreciation of female intimacy, allowing critics not only to efface any sexual or erotic aspects of women’s relationships but to avoid treating any relation between women as a bond that warrant serious attention” (6). Wahl advocates for the term ‘female intimacy’, which encompasses “a nexus of relations not limited to sexual practice but also including social and economic ties that can operate within or cross the boundaries of heterosexual institutions such as marriage and prostitution in order to demarcate and analyze kinds of female experience that have remained largely unexplored within critical discourse” (9).

signposts an alternate route: women can be steadfast friends who protect each other from predatory men and who help each other to express their consent in meaningful ways. These scorned betrayals come in a variety of social settings. From the ruthless mother in *Anti-Pamela* (1741) taking advantage of her daughter's beauty and charm to secure her own finances, to maids using their access to their lady for monetary gain, to jealous rivals, women in Haywood's works transgress numerous norms of proper ties between women. Haywood strongly contrasts these instances with cases in which women form strong bonds and work toward a common goal, succeeding because of their love and devotion to each other. Some of her works offer even more radical possibilities as women retreat away from patriarchal society into feminocentric spaces and relationships. Even in moments of exile, there is a sense of resistance against societal norms and a possibility of leading more fulfilling and happy lives that are directed by their own willpower.

In this chapter, I will apply queer readings to Haywood's texts to understand these alternative perspectives and the political ramifications that they entail. Berlant and Warner understand the study of queer social practices as trying to unsettle the privileged position of the heterosexual couple, as well as unsettling "the project of normalization that has made heterosexuality hegemonic—as well as those material practices that, though not explicitly sexual, are implicated in the hierarchies of property and propriety that we will describe as heteronormative" (548). As Lanser further discusses, it was in the eighteenth century that these hierarchies started to be consolidated "into heteronormative principles that underwrote national identities" ("Of Closed Doors" 274). This heteronormativity was built on a collection of "institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that made heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged" (Berlant and

Wanrer 548). The dominance of this social narrative, and the way that it was propagated through legal, cultural, and religious structures, ensures that it was accepted as normal. However, the formation of an ideology or a structure of heteronormativity allows space for alternative readings of relationships and queer possibilities in the eighteenth century. It was a period of flux. One of the challenges of trying to read queer spaces and queer possibilities is that the legacy of heteronormativity has influenced scholarship and the way that we perceive actions and relations in previous eras. Scholars like Lanser, King, and Ingrassia call on us to move past heteronormative readings. Lanser offers a five point methodology to queer readings: 1) integrate lives that do not fit predictable heteronormative patterns; 2) refuse to amalgamate those data to a heterosexual norm; 3) recognize same-sex relations within conventionally heteronormative spaces; 4) expose conventional practices as heteronormative; and 5) consider unsuccessful heterosexual formations as resistant (“Of Closed Doors” 284). Below, I utilize this methodology in my own attempt to move past heteronormative readings in Haywood’s *The Invisible Spy*, *Fantomina*, *The City Jilt*, and *The British Recluse*.

Enabling rape: Haywood’s emphasis on female betrayal

While the *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) has been well-examined by scholars in terms of Betsy as a reformed coquette—and what that means for a now debunked history of Haywood progressing from a salacious amatory writer to a more reformed writer/woman herself¹⁶—I suggest that an equally crucial didactic message emerges from the progression of

¹⁶In *The Dunciad* (1728), Alexander Pope includes a mocking scene of Haywood with sagging breasts and two illegitimate children. She is the prize for a pissing contest between publishers (King “Political Biography” 28). Haywood published prolifically in the 1720s, and then turned towards the stage in the 1730s. However, her move away from publishing was, in the past, attributed to fear of further criticism (King 194). Haywood’s shift from amatory fiction to more domestic fiction and longer, more didactic texts such as the *Female Spectator* was interpreted by an earlier generation of scholars as evidence of a reformed Haywood, who experienced a mid-career “conversion which turned the steamy subversive of the amatory and scandal fictions into a polite votary of

Betsy's female relationships. By the end of the novel, she has learned valuable lessons about vanity and virtue, but she has also learned how to choose and depend upon her greatest allies: female friends. Throughout the novel, as Betsy indulges her coquettish vanity and enjoys the admiration of prospective suitors, she is also seduced by false female friends.

As Betsy navigates through a series of courtships fraught with danger, there is a common element in almost every scene of near-rape: the predatory male has a female accomplice. Dawn Nawrot calls this the "ultimate betrayal" of female friendship, depicting "a violent and profound violation of the female victim's body, her trust, her consent and, ultimately, her status as a subject" (120). Flora leaves the room and in doing so, leaves Betsy alone with the gentleman-commoner (Haywood 72). Miss Forward convinces Betsy to go to the play with her, which leads to Betsy being mistaken for a prostitute and almost violated (239). Mrs. Modely compels Betsy to go to Frederick Finer's room and leaves her alone with him, after which he tries to rape her (425). The unnamed consort of Lord –, Mr. Munden's patron, also leaves the room, knowing full well that Lord–'s intentions with Betsy are dishonourable (547). In each of these instances, the other woman is an active participant in Betsy being left vulnerable to the predatory male's actions. At first glance, these actions seem to indict female transgressive behaviour. Women seem to act out of spite or self-interest, and almost bring about terrible consequences for Betsy. However, each betraying woman is under a unique set of circumstances with a common root cause: she is also a victim to the patriarchal systems at play. While Jennings argues that women in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* "are almost exclusively and entirely defined by their relation to men" (40), I argue that the development of worthy female relationships is also of primary concern in the text. Jennings critiques the way that Betsy "is forced into a fiction of

virtue... The story these days is about Haywood's undiminished creative energies in the post-*Dunciad* period and the continuities that link Haywood early and late" (King 195).

femininity that disallows the pleasure she formerly could take in herself” (40). However, I argue that she learns to find pleasure in and exert her agency through female companionship.

In the first instance, Flora’s worldview is compromised by the zero-sum calculations of the mid-eighteenth-century marriage market. Due to common practices of primogeniture, the number of eligible male bachelors was finite. The issue was compounded by the fact that women were reliant upon men for financial stability. Finding a suitable husband was not just a task to ensure happiness: it was a matter of survival. For each suitor that Betsy attracts with her charms, there is one less suitor available to Flora. For each man that Betsy repels with intensity, there is one less suitor around the house with whom Flora might engage. This system favours Betsy’s charms and good looks, as well as her inheritance. Flora cannot compete with her on the terms by which the marriage market operates, so she is driven to petty schemes and treacherous behaviour. What could have been an innocent mistake—leaving the room without audibly indicating to Betsy that she was going—is cast in a new light once the narrative reveals the degree to which Flora is willing to plot and betray. Her deceptive nature is underscored in the ironic tone of the narrator’s comment that, “if she did [call out to Betsy], it was in such a low voice, that the other did not hear her” (72). No one forces Flora to betray Betsy, but she is deeply motivated and influenced by her mother and her society. She has seen her mother’s precarious financial position, dependent upon the goodwill of a man. She knows that her only chance of maintaining her current lifestyle is through an advantageous marriage. Yet, at every turn, she is outshone by Betsy. Hence, Flora becomes a somewhat sympathetic character despite her transgressions against Betsy.

Miss Forward is also driven by economic incentives. Hers are even more explicitly laid out than Flora’s. Miss Forward is dependent upon prostitution to avoid destitution. When she

invites Betsy and the two men back to her rooms after the play, she hopes to earn a new client (236-237). Betsy becomes an unfortunate casualty in her attempts to secure a financial transaction. While Miss Forward ought to have warned Betsy, or told the men that Betsy was not available sexually, doing so would have compromised her own ability to pursue her economic self-interest. Further, her situation is the direct result of being abandoned by an unfaithful lover, who used her for pleasure and then discarded her. Miss Forward's role in Betsy's near-rape is passive; she lets Betsy leave with the man, but this violates the nature of their friendship. They grew up together, and as the elder of the pair of friends, Miss Forward was a role model to Betsy. She should be protective, but instead allows Betsy to enter into a dangerous situation. In both Flora and Miss Forward, Haywood shows how economic pressures on women cause them to act in ways that go against the natural order of friendship. Betsy is almost violated due to the overarching financial structures that influence her friends' behaviours.

In Mrs. Modely's case, the prevailing factor is class. Frederick Fineer presents himself as a very wealthy, aristocratic man. Mrs. Modely, having no way to verify his claims, believes his pomp and therefore introduces him to Betsy, saying that he was from "one of the best families in Cornwall; that he had a great estate in possession, and another in reversion, and, besides, was the next of kin to a coronet; that he kept company with nothing but lords and dukes, and that they were always courting his company" (321). As a lower-class woman, Modely has no networks of friends or means of verifying his identity. She trusts the outward signifiers that he displays and reads them in accordance with her cultural understanding of class and wealth. Before ever meeting him, Betsy is successfully manipulated by this deception, and starts to imagine herself married to this supposed lord (321). Fineer's ability to deceive both Modely and Betsy shows their gullibility, but also demonstrates the pre-eminence of class and wealth in the marriage

market. Fineer also deploys the tropes of romance novels in his deception. Pretending to die for love, he convinces Mrs. Modely that he has attempted suicide and must see Betsy before he dies in order to save his soul: “he will not pray, nor be prayed for, — nor confess his sins, — nor say he is sorry for what he has done, — nor do any thing that is right, till he has seen you” (421). He uses Mrs. Modely’s susceptibility to the hierarchical nature of class as well as cultural tropes to influence her behaviour. She is so distraught by what has happened that she follows his commands and brings Betsy to his bedside. Swept up by the intensity of the situation, Mrs. Modely becomes part of the scheme to emotionally coerce Betsy into marriage. Mrs. Modely also suspiciously leaves the room and locks the door right before Fineer jumps out of his bed and tries to rape Betsy (424).

The most explicit evidence of how patriarchal power ensnares women to work against one another is in the case of Lord —. He contrives a scheme to get Betsy alone at his house. The evening starts with a small gathering consisting of Betsy, the Lord, Mr. Munden, and an unnamed woman who pretends to be a female relative. Once he disposes of Mr. Munden, Lord — has his servant give a letter to the woman, alleging that her mother is sick. The letter is, of course, part of a scheme to isolate Betsy and “get an opportunity of employing the whole battery of his rhetoric against the virtue he was impatient to triumph over” (547). Haywood uses images of warfare tactics; the act of battery was a “succession of heavy blows inflicted upon the walls of a city or fortress by means of artillery; bombardment” (OED “battery”). Lord — is preparing for a violent assault against Betsy’s virtue; contriving for the other people to leave the room is the first step in attempting to weaken her defences and isolate her from help. The gravity of his Lordship’s social status and financial means adds to the power that he wields. The woman is compliant in the feint because of her status. She is “no more than a cast-off mistress of his

lordship's, but having her dependence entirely upon him, was obliged to submit in every thing to his will, and become an assistant to those pleasures with others which she could no longer afford him in her own person" (547). The woman's position is pitiable. She is simultaneously cast off and kept as a pawn. After being his Lordship's mistress, she does not have other options for economic viability or marriage. She is past her prime age of beauty, and has presumably lost her reputation as a result of her illicit relationship with the Lord. Trapped by her circumstances and dependent "entirely upon him", the only choice that seems viable is to assist him in his assault on other young women (547). In this scene, female willpower is entirely subsumed by the male, and is made to act against the interests of other women.

The final female betrayal is somewhat different from the others. In this instance, Betsy is not threatened with rape due to the actions or inactions of a woman embedded in male predatory designs, but her will and agency are still compromised by another woman's actions. Betsy's meeting with Mademoiselle de Roquelair is especially significant, because it is the first time in the novel that Betsy is seduced by someone else's good looks and charms¹⁷. Betsy, who by this point in the narrative has scorned a multitude of suitors and has begun to learn the dangers of indulging in vanity, and who has had ample evidence of the power of her own beauty, is struck by the beauty of another woman. Betsy does not experience any other first impressions like this one in the novel. Even Mr. Truworth passed by her notice in their first encounter. While almost every man in the novel has been immediately taken aback by Betsy, she has never succumbed to the same emotions in return; she has maintained cool indifference. In this instance, the

¹⁷ I find myself intrigued by the similarity in name between Mademoiselle de Roquelair and the title character of *The Travels And Adventures Of Mademoiselle De Richelieu* (1743). The work was published in London, and while I cannot be sure that Haywood read it, I think that it is reasonable to believe that she would have been aware of other popular, amorous fiction on the market during her life. Mlle de Richelieu dresses in drag and develops an intimate relationship with a woman named Arabella which is rich in Sapphic imagery (Craft-Fairchild 424). In their first meeting, there is something almost suggestive about Betsy's infatuation with Mlle de Roquelair that recalls the tender exaltations of the earlier text.

circumstances are reversed. She hears a woman singing at the mercer's and expresses her "more than ordinary pleasure in hearing her" (533). Betsy is enthralled. She needs to see the woman who sings so beautifully. When the mercer takes her into the other room, she is struck by the woman's beauty: "There was something in this lady that attracted her in a peculiar manner; she took as much delight in hearing her talk as she had done in hearing her sing; she longed to be of the number of her acquaintance, and made her several overtures that way" (534). Betsy responds to the unknown woman the way that almost every other man in the story has responded to her. Overcome by curiosity, she asks about the woman's history, her name, and where she is staying. Betsy's attraction weakens her judgement.

When Mlle. de Roquelair arrives in the middle of the night to Betsy's house, she takes her in without hesitation. Before telling her story, Mlle. de Roquelair asks Betsy to "summon all your goodness to forgive the frailties of youth and inadvertency, and to pity the sad consequences which sometimes attend the pride of flattered beauty, and vain desire of ambition" (570). The speech affects Betsy deeply as she recognizes the vices in herself that she has recently renounced. Betsy's infatuation with Mlle. de Roquelair could be read as narcissistic; the only person whose physical presence can awe Betsy is the person who reminds her most of herself. She is the only equal of Betsy's beauty, and her temper seems to mirror that of the protagonist. Betsy has deceived herself throughout the novel; this interaction is her final test. Betsy easily sees through the holes in Mlle. de Roquelair's narrative, but it does not protect her from the damage that follows (574). As the novel proceeds to the climax, Mr. Munden proves himself to be the most base and cruel of husbands. He takes Mlle. de Roquelair as his mistress. Betsy cannot remain in the same house with her, and she is forced to flee to her family for protection (590). Infuriated, Mr. Munden threatens Betsy with the full force of male authority, held up by

the law: a writ of habeus corpus. Speaking to Mr. Markland, Betsy's lawyer, Mr. Munden claims that he can avoid the mess of a public dispute and trial "by procuring a warrant from the lord chief justice to force her immediately home" (599). His threat embodies the full force of his ideology: a wife belongs to her husband in body and spirit. Mr. Munden is willing to use the violence of the law to force Betsy back into his house, after he has betrayed her by keeping a mistress. In all of this, Mlle. de Roquelair is presented as a wanton seducer, serially moving from wealthy male to wealthy male, unable or unwilling to remain faithful to any of them. She is Betsy's foil, the kind of woman that Betsy could have become if she had let her vanity overwhelm her good nature and her virtue. She is the product of an education in coquetry that teaches women to use their good looks to deceive and to privilege economic advantage above all else.

Emily Anderson argues that Betsy's "persistent refusal to understand how men interpret women in the eighteenth century contains subversive capabilities" (6) because Betsy continually misses the signs that men are trying to seduce her until it is too late. The repetition of Betsy almost being raped, and her continued belief that she is free to control the situation through her power as a coquette, exposes "the social institutions and economic conditions that shape women's lives as repressive and hostile to expressions of female power" (Anderson 6). I take this argument further, and include Betsy's repeated refusal to condemn the women who betray her. Even after a number of women have been accomplices to a near-rape, she does not lose faith in female friendship. Instead, she finds forgiveness in her heart for Miss Forward, and seeks to develop deeper bonds with the women who have been truthful: Miss Mabel and Mrs. Trusty. Her repeated attempts to forge relationships with women, even after so many near-disastrous scenes, shows how deeply meaningful and powerful these relationships are.

Miss Mabel and Mrs. Trusty enter Betsy's life at the beginning of the narrative, but she holds herself at a distance from them. She does not understand the value of their friendship until she is in desperate need. They provide a balanced narrative of womanhood that neither embraces coquetry nor fully submits to ownership by a husband. When Betsy leaves Mr. Munden, she turns to Miss Mabel (now the married Mrs. Loveit) to pass judgement on her actions. Mabel Loveit validates Betsy, replying that "though she was extremely sorry for the occasion, yet she thought if she had acted otherwise, it would have been an injustice not only to herself, but to all wives in general, by setting them an example of submitting to things required of them neither by law nor nature" (595). Mabel, represented earlier in the text as a prude, encourages Betsy to stand up for herself, and rejects the notion that Mr. Munden owns Betsy or is entitled to use her however he pleases. In her view, Mr. Munden has broken the marriage contract, and therefore Betsy does not owe him her loyalty. Even though she consented to be his wife, she did not consent to be abused in such a manner. Hearing this affirmation from "a lady of her known scrupulous disposition, made Mrs. Munden not doubt but she would be equally absolved by Lady Trusty and her brother Frank" (595). Betsy's close female companions in the end of the novel have her best interests in mind. Their actions enable the final conclusion of Betsy's happiness: her marriage with Mr. Truworth. It is only when Betsy renounces the company of false friends that she has the chance to experience true happiness. She retreats to the country estate of Mr. Markland's sister-in-law, and in the protection of that good and noble woman, she is able to fully express her love for Mr. Truworth. She looks at his portrait in the garden and is overcome by love and regret for how she behaved (605-607). She can be honest with herself because she feels safe. Thus, the novel shows the power of benevolent female friendship. Good friends defend each other's honour and protect their safety, but women's friendship is under constant assault by

societal pressures to see other women as competition or become complicit with patriarchal schemes in order to obtain financial security.

Haywood delves more explicitly into her condemnation of women that compromise other women's consent in *The Invisible Spy*. This story is notable because of the frame narrative. At the beginning or end of each episode in *The Invisible Spy*, Explorabilis tends to provide the reader with the moral lesson. In the case of Corsica and Emilia, Explorabilis starts the tale with a warning about false friends, claiming that a woman who has "thrown off all regard for her own honour... will rather have recourse to all the wicked artifices she may be mistress of, to cast a shade over that brightness which would render her own deformity more conspicuous" (Volume II, 149). Explorabilis assigns pure spite as the motivation for women's betrayal of their friends: a woman who has lost her reputation and good name will try to ruin her friend's reputation so that she does not look as bad in comparison. It is a cruel and artificial view of friendship, one that again buys into the zero-sum nature of the marriage market, and rates a woman's value only in comparison to other women of similar age and status.

In *The Invisible Spy*, Corsica is a former "female rake" (150) and her friend Emilia is possessed of "sprightly wit... good humour and affability" (151). The two women are recognized beauties, and their friendship is defined by an "excessive fondness" (150). Emilia is blind to Corsica's poor reputation; "innocently wanton, and indolently gay, she saw not the danger to which she exposed her person and reputation" (152). In many ways, Emilia is like Betsy; she is "choked up with the natural levities of youth, and the modish exercises of the age" (152). The parallels between the two women are intensified in scenes of their almost-ruin. After singing, dancing, and music, "Miss Betsy ran to a window to take breath, and get a little air; her partner followed" (71). In *The Invisible Spy*, published a few years later, Emilia "ran hastily to the

window and threw up the sash, in order to hear the several instruments more distinctly; Palamede follow'd" (163). Haywood is notable for her repetition with a difference. In both instances, a woman ends up alone in a room with a libertine after her friend quietly leaves the room with another man. In the case of Flora and Betsy, one can presume that Flora takes advantage of the situation, but without any foreknowledge that it would happen. In *The Invisible Spy*, the entire situation is premeditated. Corsica plotted with the two men to ensure that the four young lovers would be alone in the house for the night. Explorabilis's narrative lens suggests that Corsica has deliberately stirred Palamede's passion and left her friend to be raped. Haywood's text, however, also points to another, strikingly different, possibility. Corsica does not show any ill will or vile intent towards her friend. She and her lover, Favonius, tease Palamede about his affection for Emilia, and reveal that Emilia also has strong affection for him, saying, "I have heard her say a thousand times over, I believe, that you are, without exception, the prettiest fellow in the whole town" (156). Corsica knows that Emilia is attracted to Palamede. Corsica has also found happiness in following her own passions and sexual desires. So, it makes sense that she believes that Emilia is holding herself back from sexual happiness because she is trapped by her concern for virtue. Corsica argues, "what is innocence, what is virtue, what is honour, when oppos'd to love and inclination?" (155). She creates the plot to have the four lovers alone in a strange house overnight not because she wants her friend to be violated and "to cast a shade over that brightness which would render her own deformity more conspicuous", but because she thinks that Emilia harbours a deep and tender passion, and she wants all four of them to indulge in the gratification of their mutual desires. The narration and moralizing at the beginning of the tale establishes Corsica as a villain before she has committed any wrongdoings against her friend. Once more, it establishes a framework for viewing female relationships as fickle and fragile,

where women are willing to put each other in danger for their own self-interest. That vision of reality is not justified by what Corsica actually says, or even by what happens.

There are multiple instances in *The Invisible Spy* where Haywood shows Explorabilis to be unreliable as a narrator. Explorabilis claims that they have perfect knowledge of people because they can follow them wherever they go, and listen into private conversations. All of Explorabilis' judgements are supposedly based on the truth of people's nature, which is exposed when people are alone. However, Haywood leaves room for alternate readings that are skeptical towards the spy's interpretations, because they are not simply relating facts as they are. Explorabilis' actions are tainted by their insatiable curiosity, which leads them to act in selfish ways. For instance, Explorabilis is shown to be almost callous while they watch a young woman and a predatory officer: "Tho I had not the least doubt but that the young wife of the grenadier would become a prey to the vicious inclination of her seducer, yet I had the curiosity to see in what manner she would behave on the full discovery of his designs upon her" (252). Explorabilis follows the pair to see how the young woman will react to being assaulted. They hope that her virtue will endure and expresses happiness when she successfully fights off her assailant, but they never consider intervening on her behalf. It is more important to observe events than it is to protect her. In Chapter Two, I analyzed an assault during a masquerade in which Explorabilis also fails to uphold moral standards. They know that Matilda is entirely innocent but do not divulge to Alexis that they were at the masquerade and saw it happen. As a figure whose role is to observe and bear witness to the truth, the spy is proven to be flawed, selective in what they report, and driven by self-interests. These character flaws put distance between Haywood the author and the narrative frame of the text, and urge the reader to question Explorabilis' judgement.

Returning to Corsica's plot, Emilia responds so severely against Palamede's advances, and even threatens to end her own life, that he realizes how poorly he judged the situation. He reverts to being an honourable suitor, and the narrative leads the reader to believe that the two will live happily together. Emilia and Corsica's relationship is ruined, but the other male conspirator, Favonius, continues to live happily without any change or consequence. Corsica, by contrast, "bites her lips whenever the name of Emilia is mention'd... and all she says on that score serves only to shew more plainly her own bad heart" (172). Explorabilis concludes the story, once more, with their own narrative and summarization of events. Their interpretation of Corsica's behaviour is that she is angry that her friend was not violated and shamed, but Haywood's narrative allows for the possibility that her signs of distress are due to regret over the loss of a close friendship due to miscommunication. It was wrong of Corsica to trick Emilia into staying the night with the two men, but the motivations that Explorabilis assigns to Corsica are not justified by her speech. Explorabilis's rush to judgement demonstrates how even a keen observer of human nature can be led astray by negative cultural stereotypes that insist that female friendships are driven primarily by spite and competition.

Haywood's repeated depictions of women who violate the bonds of friendship serve to show how unnatural and disadvantageous such betrayals are. Her female characters cannot succeed or find happiness through betraying one another; they are better able to exert their agency when they work together. In condemning their actions and laying bare the motivations and ideology at work behind them, Haywood shows how women can become complicit in patriarchal systems that are harmful overall. I read Haywood's focus on this complicity as an implicit call to action, a negative example for women to disavow so that they can recognize these patterns of behaviour as not only disadvantageous to other women, but also to themselves. In

each of these cases, the women who betray others are punished. Flora has a brief affair with Mr. Truworth and is then discarded (400) and sent to Jamaica in exile with her mother (523). Miss Forward is sent to debtors' jail after her lovers abandon her (478). Mlle. de Roquelair is similarly used and dismissed by Mr. Munden (600). Corsica is left friendless and unhappy. When women participate—or are even perceived to participate—in male-dominated ideology, they also become the victims.

Seeking pleasure through female friendship

Haywood does not only use negative examples to make her argument about the importance of female friendships. Her works also celebrate women who support and love each other, enabling them to exercise their consent and be empowered in their relations with men. Supported by a true friend, a woman is better able to demand respect and proper treatment. She is more likely to exercise choice and have the upper hand when she encounters men. These relationships are complicated by hints of intimacy and affection which go beyond the normative bonds of female friendship. As I discussed above, scholars have pointed out the difficulties of mapping a continuous history of lesbianism onto the eighteenth century. Rather than focusing on homosexual desire, I examine these poignant and powerful moments of female intimacy in Haywood's novels to understand the advantages that women gain from forging strong bonds with one another. I read these constructive examples as didactic. Haywood urges readers to seek out positive female relationships and to recognize the pitfalls of destructive and competitive behaviours.

My emphasis on female intimacy as opposed to sexual activity and transgression is influenced by Wahl, who analyses how "attitudes towards female intimacy were affected by

developing ideology of domesticity” (11). Cultural knowledge of female homosexuality and female intimacy was an “open secret” by the beginning of the century (140). As Katherine Binhammer argues, scholars who wrestle with the challenge of “making visible the invisible” are therefore going in the wrong direction (“Singular Propensity” 471). Same-sex desire between women was in the public view in eighteenth-century literature, from pornography to sentimental novels. Erotic materials in the period are rife with scenes of female flagellation, from the abbess whipping a young student to women growing bored with their husbands and whipping each other (“Singular Propensity” 481). These pornographic stories were, for the most part, written by men in the interest of titillating other men, or were used to degrade and attack the public reputation of aristocratic women. These pornographic works belittle actual female intimacy, turning it into a caricature. The reason for the diminishment, Wahl and others argue, is the threat that these intimate relationships posed: “women’s friendships outside of marriage were free of the laws and hierarchies that governed marital relations and thus were potentially subversive of the social order that marriage as an institution was held to reinforce” (Wahl 158).

Haywood’s texts demonstrate the potentially destructive nature of heterosexual passion, undermining the logic of stability that heterosexual marriage propagates. Take, for instance, *The Masqueraders, or Fatal Curiosity* (1724). The previous chapter examined this novella in terms of its celebration of sex. The almost utopian relationship is destroyed by jealousy, but the force and genesis of that jealousy is directly related to the passion of heterosexual relations. Thus, what could be read as a simple tale of female rivalry also contains within it a critique of how heterosexual relationships degrade and disrupt female bonds, leading to worse outcomes for women. The two women are close friends, and Dalinda describes her love affair to Philecta in passionate detail. Haywood, using characteristic amatory em-dashes and short, ejaculatory

phrases, narrates the encounter as such: “she no sooner parted from his Embraces, than she flew to her fair Friend, gave her the whole History of what had pass’d between them—repeated every tender Word he spoke... describ’d his Looks—his melting Pressures—his Ardours!—his Impatiencies!—his Extasies!—his Languishments... assur’d her, that each Enjoyment but increased Desire” (73). Dalinda is breathless; her exultations continue and continue, building in intensity as Haywood adds exclamation points and shortens the phrases. It is as though Dalinda re-lives the sexual pleasure by describing it to her friend. They share an erotic moment through their conversation, which “provides a satisfaction equal to if not greater than the originating experience” (Ingrassia “Queering” 14). In this moment, each woman experiences bliss, but Philecta’s pleasure is marred by her previous encounters with heterosexuality; she has been “deceiv’d... with Professions of much the same nature” (73) and after experiencing “a vast deal of Pain, at last, set free her Mind from a Passion which had been so destructive to her Peace” (74). Philecta had turned her back on heterosexual relationships, and finds satisfaction in her female friendships instead. It is only through the expression of female sexual pleasure that her own sexual desires are re-awoken.

Dalinda exclaims how “different [Dorimemus] was from other Lovers!—how much beyond his Sex!” (73) and Philecta is overcome by curiosity to meet him. She is conflicted by two opposing inner forces. The first is still deeply skeptical about men, and shows a protective instinct for her friend. She does not want Dalinda to be hurt in the same way that she was, so she seeks to find out more information about this allegedly reformed lover. The second impulse is much darker: she wants to claim Dorimemus for herself and experience the passion firsthand. Her natural loyalty to her friend clashes against a self-interested heterosexual curiosity. What follows is the destruction of Dalinda and Dorimemus’ relationship as well as Dalinda and Philecta’s

friendship. Each misfortune that befalls these characters raises the same questions: what if Philecta had not been jaded by repeated negative encounters with men? What if Dorimenus had actually remained constant? Most of all, what if Philecta and Dalinda had been able to revel in pleasurable, passionate discourse without the intrusion of the third party male?

While the heterosexual dynamic in *The Masqueraders* drives a wedge between female bonds, *The City Jilt* (1726) demonstrates how “female homosocial relationships can advance the manipulation” of said dynamic to women’s advantage, particularly in economic considerations (Ingrassia “Queering” 14). *The City Jilt* is an indulgent female revenge fantasy that corrects some of the mistakes that Dalinda and Philecta make¹⁸. Glicera is passionately in love with Melladore, who promises to marry her. He impregnates her and then abandons her. Conventionally, this would be where the story ends; however, these are just the opening pages of *The City Jilt*. What follows is a path of vengeance and comedic justice, leading to Melladore’s ruin and Glicera’s happiness. Her felicity is due to the support of her intimate friend, Laphelia. Laphelia is a perfect ally, convincing the old Alderman Grubguard to do a number of humiliating things, spend his money on Glicera, and eventually hand over the mortgage to Melladore’s debts. Notably, Laphelia is much more active throughout the middle of the story than Glicera. While the Alderman courts Glicera, it is Laphelia who speaks to him persuasively, stirs up his passion for Glicera, and convinces him time and again to continue his pursuit. The middle of the narrative is less interested in the actions of the title character, the City Jilt, than it is in the loyalty

¹⁸ Glicera’s speeches at the end of the narrative drip with vicious scorn towards the Alderman Grubguard. This is one scene where Haywood unleashes a different type of female language, one designed to wound: Glicera demeans Grubguard for presuming that he could have claimed her sexually: “thou Wretch! Worn out with Diseases, bow’d down even to the Grave with Age... how canst thou, durst thou, think of Sin, when every moment thou hast before thy Eyes unceasing Monitors of thy approaching Fate?...I rais’d thy hopes to make thy Fall from them at once more shocking... Go home, therefore, and resolve if possible to be honest” (99-100). Grubguard dies soon after from a combination of his old age, infirmities, and mortification. Women’s language literally has the power to end an unworthy life.

and love of her friend. Her flawless execution is also a continuous demonstration of female wit triumphing over male dullness. The Alderman can be so easily duped because he thinks that Laphelia and Glicera will eventually conform to societal narratives and expected behaviours. He is convinced that he only needs to perform the tasks asked of him, and he will eventually be in “full possession of what he had so long been labouring to obtain” (97-98). He cannot conceptualize that the two women have a different script and a different rulebook. They are able to so effectively manipulate him because he is limited by his own expectations of how they ought to behave.

While the text talks about the humorous enjoyment that the two women gain from these encounters—“nothing could afford greater Diversion to them both” (81)—Laphelia’s primary motive for her actions is her love of her friend. She helps Glicera to pursue vengeance on the male sex, but more than that, she enables her to achieve economic independence. In gaining Melladore’s mortgage, Glicera gains financial power. Laphelia is integral to the success of the scheme, convincing the Alderman to give up the mortgage and assuaging his fears (98). She is also a witness on the legal document (99). In every way, she empowers her friend to accomplish her goals, ensuring that she always remains in control of the situation and is never hurt or betrayed like she was by Melladore. Laphelia is a guardian, a confidante, and a legal aide. While the narrative is hyperbolic, it shows the potential of women prioritizing their bonds with one another over their relationships with men. Their female friendship empowers them in the way that patriarchal relationships and male friendships usually empower men (Ingrassia “Queering” 14). Laphelia and Glicera even live together for a time in a house that had previously belonged to Melladore (103). Despite being sexually ruined at the beginning of the narrative, Glicera ends the story in joy: “Few persons continue to live in greater Reputation, or more endeavour by good

Actions to obliterate the memory of their past Mismanagement, than does this Fair Jilt” (103). It is a fantasy of second chances and taking one’s fate into one’s own hands. Glicera was not, in fact, ruined by premarital sex with Melladore. She was not ruined when he abandoned her. She was not ruined when she played the part of the jilt and entertained a number of suitors. Glicera exemplifies those of Haywood’s heroines who “triumph by surviving their ordeals and actively redeeming their virtue after their seductions” (Hultquist 147). That survival was only made possible through female support. Further, while the ending suggests that she tries, in some way, to atone for her bad behaviour, there is no mention of the word *shame*. Glicera might try to “obliterate the memory” by doing good deeds, but she is not ashamed of what she did, either with Melladore or the Alderman. She has moral and financial closure, and the narrative completely supports her actions, justifying them “when one considers the Necessities she was under, and the Provocations she received from that ungrateful Sex” (103). While other of Haywood’s works show empathy and sympathy for women who are tricked or betrayed, this novella stands out in its unabashed praise for Glicera.

Haywood continued to represent female allies going to extreme lengths to support a friend in her later fiction. I briefly examined Florimel and Melanthe’s friendship from *The Invisible Spy* in Chapter One. Here, I return to their story in greater detail. Florimel was the “most beloved and intimate companion Melanthe had” (Vol I, 132). She finds Melanthe devastated as she reads the letter from her father ordering her to marry the aged and undesirable Conrade. Melanthe is in despair, at first saying that nothing can be done, and then saying that she would “rather starve or beg” (134) than marry. She is so shaken by the letter from her father that she almost gives up on her life and happiness. Florimel’s intervention saves her friend, and she devises a plan to make Conrade give up his suit: “I shall put on a suit of my brother’s cloaths,

and do not doubt but that when I am dress'd, and equipp'd in all my accoutrements, I shall be a figure handsome enough to make an old man jealous" (135). To save her friend from the advances of an old man, Florimel will pretend to seduce her.

She dresses in drag and convincingly adopts masculine behaviour. Florimel is even prepared to physically fight for her friend, saying that she will wear a sword in case she is accosted by Conrade while sneaking into Florimel's room at night. Florimel wears her disguise so well that Conrade takes her for a "man of fashion" (145). Ula Lukszo Klein, in discussing eighteenth-century female cross-dressers, talks about the metaphorical "beards" that women adopted to solidify their masculine appearance (120). Drawing on twenty-first century understandings of gay men who pretend to be in relationships with women in order to present as heterosexual, Klein looks at female cross-dressers who were found attractive by other women. Conrade cannot see Florimel's smooth face, and so he cannot detect that she lacks a literal beard, but the spectre of Melanthe's sexual attraction to the pretended suitor, including the note that is conveniently dropped for Conrade to find, makes Florimel's masculinity convincing. The hint of female desire enables her performance of masculinity.

The ease with which she adopts the role of lover opens the doors to a queer reading of their intimate relationship. Even when Melanthe accepts Florimel's brother's wedding proposal, she does so in terms of her feelings for his sister: "I love the sister too well to have any aversion to the brother" (156). Marrying Dorimon will bring her even closer to Florimel, so she accepts. The brother and sister were previously interchangeable in their physical appearance, as Conrade mistook Florimel for Dorimon. Now, they are interchangeable in the marriage agreement, as Melanthe accepts the proposal not for Dorimon's merit, but for her love of her female friend. Florimel even attends them after their wedding, and is instrumental in reconciling Melanthe with

her father (158). Florimel adopts a number of roles in this adventure, taking up the place of the gallant young suitor, the peacemaker, and the loyal friend. She ensures that her close friend will not end up in a forced marriage with an old man whom she cannot love, and faces off against the tyrannical power of a father who is so consumed by acquiring wealth that he was willing to force his daughter into a mercenary marriage.

Explorabilis uses their editorial function to extol Florimel's virtue and wit, defending her against any accusation of impropriety. Her cross-dressing is accepted by the men in the story because it ends up serving the purpose of creating a heterosexual marriage union. However, the undercurrent of intimacy and eroticism of Florimel sneaking into Melanthe's bedroom, and acting the role of a lover, remains present in the text. Wahl argues that heterosexual marriage does not negate the possibility of queer relationships, saying that she does not "view marriage as an absolute heterosexual category that cancels the possibility of homoerotic attachments but as a discursive category in which heterosexuality is strongly linked to reproductive sexuality but not to sexual identity per se" (9). Melanthe and Florimel both marry men by the end of their narrative, but those marriages do not preclude the continuation of either their friendship or their intimacy. Marriage was largely a transaction of wealth and assets and a means of continuing family inheritance through the production of heirs. Florimel and Melanthe being married in no way limits the possibilities that their intimacy could hold.

Queering the ending: female solace in exile

Many of the texts discussed in this chapter thus far have ended in marriage. This section applies queer readings to female exiles, and asks how Haywood's texts challenge heteronormative assumptions of eighteenth-century relationships. Throughout the 1720s,

Haywood produced an extraordinary amount of amatory fiction. Her stories demonstrate a deep interest in “the power dynamic of men – and women – in private life where, as the plots of the early amatory fiction repeatedly demonstrate, the sexual power of men over women *is* cloyed by possession... in seduction-driven plots featuring the heterosexual pair, she lays bare abuses of power on one side... and thoughtless credulity and susceptibility to fantasy on the other” (King “Political Biography” 9). King emphasizes the degree to which the early 1720s fiction was largely centred on the heterosexual couple. However, within that period, Haywood’s works contain a number of subversive alternatives to heterosexual marriage and relationships. This section will look at two of Haywood’s amatory fictions, *Fantomina* (1724) and *The British Recluse; or, the Secret History or Cleomira, Suppos’d Dead* (1722), in order to argue that instances of exile and reclusion from society contained subversive possibilities that disrupted the dichotomy of either marriage or ruin as the conclusion for women’s lives. While exposing abuses of power was a primary theme to which Haywood returned, and which previous chapters of this thesis have spent considerable time examining, I would like to focus on the queer possibilities that exist in her amatory fiction.

The project of heteronormativity is to reinforce and normalize the status quo. A large component of that involves marriage and inheritance. While the heroine in *Fantomina* pursues Beauplaisir and attempts numerous times to engage his affections, she does not talk about marriage. The young lady in *Fantomina* “not only transgresses but actively disrupts the status quo” (Ingrassia “Queering” 15). Working outside of the bounds of the heteronormative project, she pursues her own desires and wishes to once more experience the “Height of Transport she enjoyed when the agreeable Beauplaisir kneel’d at her Feet, imploring her first Favours” (Haywood 51). *Fantomina* is enthralled with Beauplaisir; her passion is derived from both sexual

gratification and the satisfaction she enjoys when she possesses power over him. While her pursuit is monogamous in nature—she only desires Beauplaisir, and does not pursue other lovers—her continuously changing personas disrupt the stability of monogamy. She displays feminine constancy, which is not, “for Haywood, simply devotion to an object: it signals a desire for repetition of the unrepeatable” (Thompson “Plotting Materialism” 201). A woman cannot physically lose her virginity to the same man multiple times, but Fantomina constructs new identities so that she can experience the same phenomenon. She recognizes that the first instance of seduction brings about the most intense passions, and designs “once more to engage him, to hear him sigh, to see him languish, to feel the strenuous Pressures of his eager Arms, to be compelled, to be sweetly forc’d to what she wished with equal Ardour” (51). She does not use these sexual advances to further a marriage plot, but instead seeks out pleasure for its own worth, and in the process, she implicitly rejects the notion that women’s sexuality can only exist inside the marriage bed for the purpose of procreation. Marriage, one of the goals of the heteronormative project, limits certain of a woman’s actions; thus, “the absence of a marriage-ending is not retributive: matrimony is not, nor should it be, the proper resolution of Fantomina’s story” (Craft “Reworking” 831). Fantomina operates outside of those limits, finding enjoyment in the aspects of heterosexual behaviour that she chooses without succumbing to the system at large.

At the end of the narrative, Fantomina’s machinations come to light. She gives birth to a daughter and must reveal her disguise to her mother and to Beauplaisir. In a relatively rare moment for Haywood, the father figure is absent, and the mother is the authority figure. The mother sends “her to a Monastery in France, the Abbess of which had been her particular Friend” (71). This ending is unique neither to Haywood nor to this novella. Exile is the frequent response

to female transgression in eighteenth-century literature. The exile is sometimes to a remote location in the countryside, often with a distant relative. In the case of Fantomina, she is sent to a monastery in France. Ingrassia calls this a “strategic (re)turn to a feminocentric community” (“Queering” 16). The monastery is a female-only space that operates outside of the bounds of heteronormative society. The idea that women in segregated spaces, such as a convent or a school, might engage in sexual behaviour with one another was well established by the end of the seventeenth century (Traub 173). Potter speculates that Haywood “depends upon the tradition of religiocentric French pornography... for a tacit implication of continuing sexual and intellectual independence in France” (“Language” 182). Fantomina’s exile therefore contains erotic potential as well as the prospect of a different kind of education. The geographic location of the monastery is significant. While English law is marked by relative invisibility of female-female intimacy, France saw a rise in prosecution of women for sodomy in the eighteenth century (Traub 22). Further, a “staple of pornographic literature” in the period was depictions of female homosexuality wherein an older woman “initiates a young girl into the practices of autoerotic and lesbian sex” (Traub 38). Haywood’s inclusion of the fact that the Abbess and the Mother were “particular” friends seems to suggest the possibility of erotic intimacy between them.

Thus, after Fantomina has continuously pursued her erotic desires and adapted her identity to a variety of situations, she is sent to a female-only space in a country actively concerned with the threat of female sexual relationships, where the leader of the community is a woman who had previously maintained an intimate relationship with another woman. The young woman, adept at adapting to circumstances and altering her behaviour to charm others, will live in this female-only space, removed from heteronormative society. Further, both she and her

mother refuse Beauplaisir's offer when he says that he can take custody of the infant girl and raise her. Beauplaisir's offer is generous and chivalrous, but the two women reject him. With that act, they also reject the legal bias towards male custody and guardianship. It is unclear whether the daughter will go with her mother to the monastery, or stay with the grandmother, but either way, she remains in the custody of a woman. As I discussed in Chapter One, this is unusual. Women did not gain the advantage in child custody arrangements until over a century after this novella. Thus, Haywood's insistence on matriarchal guardianship is in itself subversive.

While the exile in *Fantomina* is enforced by her mother, Cleomira and Belinda's retreat from society in *The British Recluse* is presented as a choice. The reaction to their exile reveals the social discomfort and anxiety about women who do not fulfil their expected roles in society. In the beginning of the narrative, when Belinda hopes to learn more about the elusive Recluse, a strange man calls her choice an "obstinate and peevish Resignation of all the Pleasures of Life," going on to say that it is "not only impracticable, but also unnatural" (3). He reacts strongly against the idea of a woman choosing to live outside of the usual norms of heteronormative society, finding her transgression distasteful and unnatural. He further tries to dismiss the legitimacy of her choice and turn the Recluse into an object of derision rather than a person of curiosity for another charming, beautiful young woman. The landlady has told the public that the Recluse is a beautiful young woman, but the man claims, "if the Truth were known, I dare swear is some wither'd Hag, past the Use of Pleasures, and keeps herself in private, lest her Countenance should terrify" (4). He tries to contain the queer and subversive potential of the Recluse by minimizing her appeal and agency. It is unthinkable to him that a beautiful young woman could choose to remove herself from society and live for a year by herself. The only way that he can make sense of her reclusiveness is to imagine that she is old and haggard; by his

reasoning, the only plausible cause of a woman's choosing to live alone is that she has no value to men. His attempts to further isolate and humiliate the Recluse are unsuccessful. Belinda is not thwarted by his anxiety, but is rather further intrigued by the mysterious woman.

When they first meet, "each found, at first Sight, so much to admire in the other, that it kept both from speaking for some Moments" (9). They are in awe of each other, struck unable to speak. The language used to describe their meeting recalls the language of lovers catching eyes for the first time. They quickly develop a deep intimacy that is heightened through sharing their erotic tales, and that intimacy is intensified when they express their pain and languishment. The interruptions to the interior narratives come as the women comfort one another for their continued anguish over their betrayals. Binhammer traces a connection between the erotics of pain found in female pornographic material in the eighteenth century—female self-flagellation, abbesses whipping students, etc.—to the "sweet sensations of pain" found in sentimental novels ("Singular Propensity" 483). In analyzing Mary Wollstonecraft, Binhammer describes how the "woman of feeling in the novel of sensibility cries her way to a suffering so exquisite that it teeters on the brink of erotic excess, and when those tears are shed for another woman... pain's pleasurable erotics are once again aligned with female same-sex desire" ("Singular Propensity" 484). In order to gain access to Cleomira, Belinda asks the landlady to explain to her that she wants to "mingle my Tears with hers" (7). The premise of their relationship is sharing pain; the mingling of tears is the first act of building intimacy. As Cleomira and Belinda share their stories, they experience the erotic stimulation of explaining their desire as well as their pain. This shared suffering brings them closer to one another.

The novel demonstrates "emotional connections between women and, equally important, create[s] structural alternatives to their heteronormative positioning" (Ingrassia "Queering" 12).

After sharing their stories of betrayal and realizing that they were both in love with the same villainous man—known throughout their stories as Lysander, Courtal, and finally, Bellamy—the two women become such close friends that “they were scarce a Moment asunder: Belinda quitted her Chamber, being desir’d by the Recluse to take Part of her Bed” (137). Their emotional intimacy develops into physical intimacy, and the two women decide to abandon the world and live together in a house seventy miles from London, “where they still live in a perfect Tranquility, happy in the real Friendship of each other, despising the uncertain Pleasures, and free from all the Hurries and Disquiets which attend the Gaieties of the Town” (138). The tranquility of female friendship is contrasted to the uncertainty of male affection. Female intimacy is a strong and lasting bond that does not quickly diminish. Whereas Lysander/Courtal/Bellamy grew tired of each conquest and promptly moved onto the next, female intimacy is marked by its duration and stability. Further, given that the two women live in quiet peace and forego the expensive pleasures of the town, they can support themselves financially with the remaining fifteen hundred pounds of Clemoria’s fortune, which is being carefully managed by her faithful nurse.

While the unnamed man in the beginning of the text called the Recluse “impracticable”, the two women are actually able to produce a sustainable model for living in happy partnership outside of the constraints of heteronormativity. The fact of their sharing a bed and living together is tantalizing—how far does the queer reading of female intimacy go? Even without staking a claim that the two women become lovers, this novel still holds radical queer possibilities for forging a world outside of the status quo. Returning to Lanser’s methodology, their lives and their happiness are clearly outside of the heteronormative paradigm, with or without a sexual element to their intimacy. Furthermore, the narrative ends on the insistence that their withdrawal

from society “is the Effect of Choice.” Unlike a marriage determined by male relatives, or a mother deciding to take her daughter into the country and hide her from the world, or parents banishing their daughters to a monastery, or a husband forcing his wife to sit in silence while he courts a mistress, this relationship and this way of life is built on both parties’ consent. This element of choice grants Cleomira and Belinda a further degree of comfort and happiness than what they would have been able to achieve if they had remained in society. Heteronormative society offers loveless marriages, mercenary husbands, and faithless men. Cleomira and Belinda choose another path: they choose intimate companionship, trust, and mutual affection.

Conclusion

This thesis was conceived in the wake of the 2015 *Deschamps Report* which brought a reckoning to the Canadian Armed Forces. Justice Marie Deschamps categorically described an overly sexualized culture that had resulted in sexual harassment and misconduct in Canada's military. The institution faced deep scrutiny from both within and without, and began the process of reformation through the implementation of Operation HONOUR. Throughout my time researching and writing this thesis, the #MeToo and Times Up movements have swept across the globe. In every sphere of life, survivors of sexual assault are coming to the forefront of national discourse to tell their stories and shed light on people—particularly those in positions of authority—who have abused their power. The Globe and Mail's 2017 *Unfounded* report exposed how Canadian police had, in many ways, failed to uphold justice for women by ignoring their reports without adequate justification or investigation. The Government of Canada's *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* is due to table its final report in 2019; over the past few years, the mainstream media has finally started to recognize and tell the stories of these missing and murdered women. The tide is rising; sexual assault and sexual violence are topics of everyday conversation. Young adults across the country chant "consent is sexy" at their undergraduate orientation/frosh/101 week events. The prevailing mindset is shifting to believing survivors instead of accusing them of "asking for it" or provoking their attackers. The contemporary discourse seems to be the most open and transparent that it has ever been. And yet, a man accused of attempted rape was nominated to serve as a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States of America, by a president who was elected despite having

been recorded boasting: “I just start kissing them... I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it. You can do anything... Grab ‘em by the pussy. You can do anything.”¹⁹

What stood out most conducting research and reading primary texts for this thesis was how familiar it all was: the abuse of power, women being shamed for sexual desire, problematic education, and men telling other men to go for it, because nice guys finish last. What is most remarkable about Eliza Haywood grappling with questions about consent is how strikingly relevant the main contentions are in the twenty-first century. It is not difficult to make her works relatable. Even the now infamous contemporary reaction to Haywood—Alexander Pope smearing her reputation in his poetry²⁰—strikes a chord with modern audiences. The process of publicly shaming women for daring to thrive in typically-male dominated spheres was fully displayed during the 2014 #GamerGate phenomenon; female gamers were harassed online and had their private lives put on display in an effort to shame them into submission. In drawing these parallels, I do not wish to suggest that Haywood was explicitly feminist. Calling an eighteenth-century author a feminist would be anachronistic; the movement did not exist in the way that we understand it during the period. And yet, the topics that Haywood returns to again and again in her writings have undercurrents which we can certainly call proto-feminist. Her exposure of the unnatural-ness of social structures—demonstrated in the way that she deconstructs them and shows them to be taught and artificially constructed—calls into question the social order of her day.

¹⁹ The story was broken by the Washington Post when they gained the Access Hollywood tape. It was widely reported on before the presidential election in 2016, and re-emerged as a site of controversy in 2017 when Trump suggested that the tape was not authentic.

²⁰ Kathryn King calls Pope’s portrayal of Eliza Haywood in *The Dunciad* “the product of... inventive malice” (“Political Biography 5). Pope depicted “a fore-buttocked Eliza with sagging breasts and ‘babes of love’ at her waist”, which largely contributed to a long-standing narrative and portrayal of Eliza Haywood as an author with a “sexually scandalous past and two illegitimate children” (5).

The cultural context during the time in which I researched and wrote this thesis has been rich in inspiration. The state of the academic field has also been stimulating. This thesis examined ten of Haywood's texts; that represents only about one-sixth of her total oeuvre. While some of the texts in this thesis—*Love in Excess*, *Betsy Thoughtless*, *The Female Spectator*, and *Fantomina*—have been frequently studied and cited since the initial bloom in Haywood scholarship in the 1970s, a significant portion of her work remains under-studied. This decade has been a rewarding time to be part of Haywood scholarship. From Kathryn King's ground breaking *Political Biography* in 2012, to the 2014 *A Special Issue on New Approaches to Eliza Haywood: The Political Biography and Beyond* published in the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, to the 2019 Purdue Conference "Eliza Haywood: 300 Years of Love in Excess", perhaps the first international conference to be solely dedicated to the legacy of this prolific writer, actress, publisher, and political figure, there has been a burst of momentum in Haywood studies in the past ten years. There is still much to discover in her texts, and I trust that future students and scholars will find her body of work as rich, complex, and fascinating as I do.

Bibliography

- Abramowicz, Sarah. "English Child Custody Law, 1660-1839: The Origins of Judicial Intervention in Paternal Custody." *Columbia Law Review*, vol. 99, no. 5, 1999, pp. 1344–1392.
- Anderson, Emily Hodgson. "Performing the Passions in Eliza Haywood's 'Fantomina' and 'Miss Betsy Thoughtless.'" *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2005, pp. 1–15.
- Bailey, Joanne. "Favoured or Oppressed? Married Women, Property and Coverture in England, 1660-1800." *Continuity and Change*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2002, pp. 351–372.
- "battery, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/16256. Accessed 4 August 2018.
- Binhammer, Katherine. *The Seduction Narrative in Britain, 1747-1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- "The "Singular Propensity" of Sensibility's Extremities: Female Same-Sex Desire and the Eroticization of Pain in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Culture." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 9 no. 4, 2003, pp. 471-498.
- Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1998, pp. 547–566. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1344178.
- Boucher, David, et al. *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bowers, Toni. "Seduction Narratives and Tory Experience in Augustan England." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 40, no. 2, Summer 1999, pp. 128-154.
- Brenner, Alletta. "Resisting Simple Dichotomies: Critiquing Narratives of Victims, Perpetrators, and Harm in Feminist Theories of Rape." *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2013, pp. 503–568.

Canada. Department of Justice. Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46).

Campbell, Ann. "Clandestine Marriage and Frances Burney's Critique of Matrimony in Cecilia."

Eighteenth-Century Life, vol. 37, no. 2, Spring 2013, pp. 85-103.

Carnell, Rachel. "It's Not Easy Being Green: Gender and Friendship in Eliza Haywood's Political

Periodicals.(Politics of Friendship)." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1998, pp.

199–214.

Christensen, Dirk Lund, et al. "Herodotos and Hemerodromoi: Pheidippides' Run from Athens to

Sparta in 490 BC from Historical and Physiological Perspectives." *Hermes*, vol. 137, no.

2, 2009, pp. 148–169.

Craft, Catherine A. "Reworking Male Models: Aphra Behn's "Fair Vow-Breaker," Eliza

Haywood's "Fantomina," and Charlotte Lennox's "Female Quixote"" *The Modern*

Language Review 86, no. 4 (1991): 821–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3732539>.

Craft-Fairchild, Catherine. "Sexual and Textual Indeterminacy: Eighteenth-Century English and

Representations of Sapphism." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2006,

pp. 408–431.

Croskery, Margaret C. "Masquing Desire: The Politics of Passion in Eliza Haywood's

Fantomina." *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*.

Edited by Kirsten T. Saxton, and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio. UP of Kentucky, 2000.

Curran, Stuart. "Dynamics of Female Friendship in the Later Eighteenth Century." *Nineteenth-*

Century Contexts, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, pp. 221–239.

"dower, n.2." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2018,

www.oed.com/view/Entry/57190.

- Drury, Joseph. *Novel Machines: Technology and Narrative Form in Enlightenment Britain*. Oxford University Press. First ed, 2017.
- Edelstein, Laurie. "An Accusation Easily to Be Made? Rape and Malicious Prosecution in Eighteenth-Century England." *The American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1998, pp. 351–390.
- Erickson, Amy Louise. "Common Law versus Common Practice: the Use of Marriage Settlements in Early Modern England." *Economic History Review*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1990, pp. 21–39.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. 1st ed., Morrow. 1981.
- Foyster, Elizabeth. "At the Limits of Liberty: Married Women and Confinement in Eighteenth-Century England." *Continuity and Change*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2002, pp. 39–62.
- "Parenting Was for Life, Not Just for Childhood: The Role of Parents in the Married Lives of Their Children in Early Modern England." *History*, vol. 86, no. 283, 2001, pp. 313–327.
- Giles, Heidi. "Resolving the Institution of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Courtship Novels." *Rocky Mountain Review*, vol. 66, no. 1, 2012, pp. 76–82.
- Glover, Susan Patterson. *Engendering Legitimacy: Law, Property, and Early Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. Bucknell University Press, 2006.
- Harris, Mary Beth. "Upsetting the Balance: Exposing the Myth of Masculine Virtue and Desire in Eliza Haywood's *Philidore and Placentia*." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2017, pp. 195–218.

Harrow, Sharon. "Having Text: Desire and Language in Haywood's *Love in Excess* and *The Distressed Orphan*." *Eighteenth - Century Fiction*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2009, pp. 279–308.

Harvey, Karen. *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Haywood, Eliza. *Fantomina and Other Works*. Edited by Alexander Pettit, Margaret Case Croskery, and Anna C. Patchias, Broadview, 2004.

--- *Life's Progress Through the Passions; or, The Adventures of Natura*. Printed by T. Gardner London, M,DCC,XLVIII.[1748]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, www.gale.com/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online.

--- *Love in Excess*. Edited by David Oaklead, Broadview, 1994.

--- *Selections from The Female Spectator*. Edited by Patricia Meyer Spacks, Oxford University Press, 1999.

--- *The British recluse: or, the secret history of Cleomira, suppos'd dead. A novel. By Mrs. Eliza Haywood, Author of Love in Excess; or, the Fatal Enquiry. 1722. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, www.gale.com/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online

--- *The City Jilt*. Edited by Earla A. Wilputte. Michigan State University Press. 1996

--- *The Distress'd Orphan*. Edited by Earla A. Wilputte. Michigan State University Press. 1996

--- *The Female Spectator*. London, M.DCC.LXVI. [1766]. Volume 1. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. www.gale.com/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online.

--- *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Edited by Christine Blouch. Broadview Press, 1998.

- *The Invisible [sic] Spy. By Explorabilis. In Two Volumes. ...* Vol. 1, printed for H. Gardner, 1773. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, www.gale.com/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online.
- *The Masqueraders, or Fatal Curiosity*. Edited by Tiffany Potter. University of Toronto Press. 2015
- Hobgood, Jennifer. "'I Will Sign, but It Shall Be in Flames': Eliza Haywood's Critique of Contract." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2004, pp. 72–101.
- Houston, R. A. "Madness and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century." *Social History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2002, pp. 309–326.
- Horwitz, Henry, and Patrick Polden. "Continuity or Change in the Court of Chancery in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries?" *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1996, pp. 24-57
- Hultquist, Aleksandra. "Haywood's Re-Appropriation of the Amatory Heroine in Betsy Thoughtless." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 85, no. 1 2, 2006, pp. 141–165.
- Ingrassia, Catherine. "Fashioning Female Authorship in Eliza Haywood's 'The Tea-Table.'" *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1998, pp. 287–304.
- "Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long Eighteenth Century." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, Spring 2012, pp. 146-153.
- "'Queering' Eliza Haywood." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, Fall 2014, pp. 9-24.
- Jennings, Kristine. "The Signs of a Woman: Femininity as Fiction in The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless." *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. 47, no. 2, Fall 2014, pp. 39-58.

"jointure, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2018,
www.oed.com/view/Entry/101563.

King, Kathryn R. *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*. Routledge, 2012.

--- "Female Agency and Feminocentric Romance. (Essay Review)." *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2000, pp. 56–65.

--- "The Pious Mrs. Haywood; or, Thoughts on Epistles for the Ladies (1748-1750)." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, Fall 2014, pp. 187-208.

Klein, Ula Lukszo. "Eighteenth-Century Female Cross-Dressers and Their Beards." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2016, pp. 119–143.

Knottnerus, J. David. *Ritual as a Missing Link: Sociology, Structural Ritualization Theory and Research*. 2016.

Kramnick, Jonathan Brody. *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson*. Stanford University Press, 2010.

Kvande, Marta. "The Outsider Narrator in Eliza Haywood's Political Novels." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 43, no. 3, Summer, 2003, pp. 625-643.

Lanser, Susan. "Befriending the Body: Female Intimacies as Class Acts." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1998, pp. 179–198.

--- "Of Closed Doors and Open Hatches: Heteronormative Plots in Eighteenth-Century (Women's) Studies." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 53, no. 3, Fall 2012, 273-290.

Latimer, Bonnie. "Apprehensions of Contro'l':The Familial Politics of Marriage, Choice and Consent in *Sir Charles Grandison*." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1-19.

Locke, John. "Second Treatise of Government." *Project Gutenberg*. 1690.

- "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding". Nidditch, Peter H., ed. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke*. Oxford Scholarly Editions Online.
- Lubey, Kathleen. "Eliza Haywood's Amatory Aesthetic." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3, Spring 2006, pp. 309-322
- Morrison, Leslie. "Serialized Identities and the Novelistic Character in Eliza Haywood's Fantomina and Anti-Pamela." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2017, pp. 25-44.
- Nawrot, Dawn A. "'Nothing but Violent Methods Will Do': Heterosexual rape and the violation of female friendship." *Interpreting Sexual Violence, 1660-1800*, edited by Anne Greenfield. Pickering and Chatto 2013, pp 119-129.
- Nixon, Cheryl. "Regulating the Unstable Family: Eliza Haywood's Fiction and the Development of Family Law." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, Fall 2014, pp. 49-78.
- O'Driscoll, Sally. "Outlaw Readings: Beyond Queer Theory." *Signs*, vol 22, no. 1, Autumn 1996, pp. 30-51.
- Phillips, Nathalie. *Distraction: Problems of Attention in Eighteenth-Century Literature*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.
- "pin money, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/144258.
- Pollock, Anthony. *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1775*. Routledge, 2009.
- Potter, Tiffany. "The Language of Feminised Sexuality: Gendered Voice in Eliza Haywood's Love in Excess and Fantomina." *Women's Writing*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2003, pp. 169–186.
- Probert, Rebecca. "Common-Law Marriage: Myths and Misunderstandings`," *Child and Family Law Quarterly* vol. 20, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1-22.

- “Control over Marriage in England and Wales, 1753—1823: The Clandestine Marriages Act of 1753 in Context.” *Law and History Review*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2009, pp. 413–450.
- Richardson, Janice. *Selves, Persons, Individuals: Philosophical Perspectives on Women and Legal Obligations*. Routledge, 2016.
- *The Classic Social Contractarians: Critical Perspectives from Contemporary Feminist Philosophy and Law*. Routledge, 2016.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited by Perry Meisel, and Haun Saussy, Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Simard, D. "The Question of Sexual Consent: Between Individual Liberty and Human Dignity." *Sexologies* vol 24, no. 3, 2015, 2015, pp. 65-69.
- Simpson, Antony E. “Popular Perceptions of Rape as a Capital Crime in Eighteenth-Century England: The Press and the Trial of Francis Charteris in the Old Bailey, February 1730.” *Law and History Review*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2004, pp. 27–70.
- Seymour, John. “Parens Patriae and Wardship Powers: Their Nature and Origins.” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1994, pp. 159–188.
- Staves, Susan. “‘The Liberty of a She-Subject of England’: Rights Rhetoric and the Female Thucydides.” *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1989, pp. 161–183.
- *Married Women’s Separate Property in England, 1660-1833*. Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Stahl, Jan M. "Violence, Female Friendship, and the Education of the Heroine in Mary Davys’s The Reform’d Coquet." *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. 47 no. 2, 2014, pp. 23-38.

- Swenson, Rivka. "Optics, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Gaze: Looking at Eliza Haywood's "AntiPamela"." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 51, no. ½, Spring/Summer 2010, 27-43.
- Taylor, Barbara. "Feminism and Enlightened Religious Discourses." *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*. Ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Pp 410–415.
- Thompson, Helen. "Betsy Thoughtless and the Persistence of Coquettish Volition." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring-Summer 2004, 102-126.
- "In "Idea", a thousand nameless Joys": Secondary Qualities in Arnauld, Locke, and Haywood's "Lasselia"." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 48, no. 3, Fall 2007, 225-243.
- "Plotting Materialism: W. Charleton's 'The Ephesian Matron', E. Haywood's 'Fantomina', and Feminine Consistency". *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol 35, no 2, Winter 2002, 195-214.
- Traub, Valerie. "The Rewards of Lesbian History (Book Review)." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1999, pp. 363–394.
- Wahl, Elizabeth Susan. *Invisible relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Way, Katie. "I went on a date with Aziz Ansari. It turned into the worst night of my life." *Babe.net*. January 13, 2018, <https://babe.net/2018/01/13/aziz-ansari-28355>
- Weiss, Bari. "Aziz Ansari is Guilty. Of Not Being a Mind Reader." *New York Times*. January 15, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/15/opinion/aziz-ansari-babe-sexual-harassment.html>

- Weiss Smith, Courtney. "Political Individuals and Providential Nature in Locke and Pope." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, vol. 52, no. 3, Summer 2012, 609-629.
- Wikborg, Eleanor. *The Lover as Father Figure in Eighteenth-Century Women's Fiction*. University Press of Florida, 2002.
- Wright, Nicole M. "'Willing Victims'?: Disavowed Consent and Formal Deviance in Fielding's *Amelia*." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 58 no. 4, 2017, pp. 469-487.
- Zacharek, Stephanie, et al. "TIME Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers." *Time*, Time, 6 Dec. 2017, time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2017-silence-breakers/.
- Zomchick, John P. *Family and the law in eighteenth-century fiction: The public conscience in the private sphere*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.