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"THE VOICE OF REASON": RATIONAL FEMINISM IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

"The Voice of Reason": Rational Feminism in Eighteenth-Century Literature

by Carolyn Dorow White

This dissertation discusses rational feminism as part of the eighteenth century's call for the improvement of the condition of women. Rational feminism is based on a belief in the rational capacity of women and the necessity of developing it. Criticism of the eighteenth century has often associated rational feminism with two key figures, Mary Astell (A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, 1694) and Mary Wollstonecraft (A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792), whose works form bookends enclosing the century. Other texts by Eliza Haywood, Sarah Fielding, and Charlotte Lennox demonstrate that rational feminism appears variously in the middle of the century. These novelistic forms suggest that as an expression of feminism, reason becomes separated from publicity and politics, and united with domesticity and marriage in the midcentury years.

Chapter one provides a critical, historical, and intellectual background for rational feminism as well as distinguishing between its manifestations in Astell and Wollstonecraft. Chapter two examines Haywood's Adventures of Eovaai. Princess of Ijaveo (1736), which portrays reason in a dichotomous relationship with the body and identifies this dichotomy as an artificial choice imposed by patriarchy whereby private and public roles for women become mutually exclusive. Chapter three argues that in Fielding's Governess: or, The Little Female Academy (1749), the body and publicity are dissociated from women. Reason comes into the home to produce rational motherhood as well as pleasure, which Haywood linked to the body. In
chapter four’s *The Female Quixote* (1752), Lennox makes reason a source of male heterosexual desire and the very basis of the companionate marriage. Lennox questions the terms of such marriage, which demands a specifically female form of rationality, just before Wollstonecraft embraces it as a locus of female rational fulfillment. The conclusion defines the project’s intervention in the use of reason as a concept and the historiography of feminism in the eighteenth century.
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PREFACE

This project, born out of the necessity of dissertation production faced by every graduate student but nourished by my own particular interests, meets a need to recognize diverse forms of feminism within the eighteenth century. As I labored to determine the course my dissertation ought to take, I began to focus on the rational feminism offered by Mary Astell in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* and Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. I investigated this feminism, only to find that critics had primarily located it in Astell, Wollstonecraft, and a few of their respective contemporaries. I then conceived two questions: Where had rational feminism gone in the middle of the eighteenth century? What would rational feminism look like if it were expressed in a genre other than the polemical tract? My dissertation offers answers to these questions in the hopes that my account of rational feminism will add to the repertoire of feminisms that critics currently identify and investigate throughout the century.

Studying fictional texts at midcentury, I discovered that rational feminism could manifest itself in a variety of ways. For Eliza Haywood in *The Adventures of Ovada*, *Princess of Ijaveo* (1736), it appears as a concern for female intellect and power inflected by the political concerns aroused by the tenure of Sir Robert Walpole as England’s prime minister. Sarah Fielding, writing *The Governess: Or, The Little Female Academy* in 1742, raises a standard of rational motherhood that engages mothers and daughters in intensive surveillance and literary activity. Charlotte Lennox’s 1752 *Female Quixote*
decrees the influence of male desire in courtship and marriage, which, she asserts, leaves women with debased forms of rationality. Like Astell and Wollstonecraft, these female writers did not always propose wholesale change for women, but they did question common characterizations of the female gender and the limitations imposed by patriarchy.

My work associating women and reason in eighteenth-century literature represents an important corrective in current criticism. With the ongoing recovery of many early century texts that are categorized as amatory fiction, such as those by Delariviere Manley and Eliza Haywood, the emphasis seems to have shifted to exploring ways that women protest their situation in their portrayals of sexuality. Replacing reason as an expression of feminism in the eighteenth century serves the end of historical accuracy. It also points up the contemporary bias against reason in feminist studies that has forestalled its investigation as a source of protest and power for historical women. I maintain that we can improve our practices as literary critics with feminist interests by recognizing and bypassing such biases.

Although this study is necessarily limited to the explication of a few texts, I hope that it provides a starting point for a better understanding of the use of reason by women in the nascent feminism of eighteenth-century literature.
CHAPTER ONE:
THE PLACE(S) OF RATIONAL FEMINISMS

In A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Part I (1694), Mary Astell invites her female readers to join together and form a “Happy Retreat,” an exclusively female seminary of devoted to educational and religious pursuits. She compares this retreat to Eden:

a Paradise [such] as your Mother Eve forfeited, where you shall feast on Pleasures, that do not like those of the World, disappoint your expectations, pall your Appetites, and by the disgust they give you, put you on the fruitless search after new Delights [...]. Here are no Serpents to deceive you, whilst you entertain your selves in these delicious Gardens. (19-20)

Astell figures her plan to introduce rationality into the lives of women as a return to prelapsarian days, before the serpent of sin tempted Eve to eat the apple. She insists that making rational activity the focus of female life will be beneficial, even to the point of lifting women above the concerns of the world. Astell’s expression of faith in reason as a viable means of improving female life can be qualified as rational feminism. To speak of rational feminism, the topic of this study, is to open up a number of questions, including definitions of terms such as “reason” and “rational feminism” and the place of rational feminism in twentieth-century accounts of the eighteenth century. This chapter considers these questions and offers an account of the diverse formulations of the rational feminist tradition that I identify in the writings of Astell, at the end of the seventeenth century, and Mary Wollstonecraft, at the end of the eighteenth century. Finally I consider discourses of female rationality found in educational writings of the eighteenth century to illustrate
common stereotypes and constructions with which Astell, Wollstonecraft, and the female writers I explore in the succeeding chapters of my study intersect.

Which "Reason"?

The term "rational feminism" has been retroactively applied to a few feminists, primarily at the ends of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who conjoined women and reason in an attempt to improve the female condition. Using the term "rational feminism" opens up a space of discursive plurality that allows for wide variation, in part due to the laxity with which its root word, "reason," can be used. John Locke sets forth a few usages in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) that obtained in the eighteenth century: "The Word Reason in the English Language has different Significations: sometimes it is taken for true, and clear Principles: Sometimes for clear, and fair deductions from those Principles: and sometimes for the Cause, and particularly the final Cause" (IV.xvii.§1). Locke himself moves forward with the following definition: "a Faculty in Man, That Faculty, whereby Man is supposed to be distinguished from Beasts. and wherein it is evident he much surpasses them" (IV.xvii.§1).¹ In order to create categories like "reason" and "rational feminism," twentieth-century critics have often found it necessary to flatten out the possibilities raised by such discursive variety. I allow for rather than dismissing the ambiguity of terms like "reason," "rational," and "rational feminism." I point to general tendencies that unite diverse uses of the terms under consideration, but I also encourage considerable variance, believing that such variance has contributed to the oversight of the category "rational feminism."
With these ends in mind, I loosely stipulate "reason" as the operations of the mind, specifically setting it against the operations of the body, as the texts of the eighteenth century often do. "Rationality" refers to the operations of reason while "rationalism" refers to the political or philosophical school influenced largely by Descartes. "Rational feminism" can be characterized as a fundamental skepticism about received truths concerning gender and rationality in society. I treat "rational feminism" as a type of argument for the improvement of the condition of women that appears in various manifestations that display some or all of the following characteristics: resistance to tradition: belief that the intellect is more important than the body and superior to sentiment: belief that woman can be educated if given the chance: and insistence on the propriety and necessity of education for women. This tradition employed the intellect to "[question] the sacredness of traditional patriarchal institutions and [expose] the sentimental falsifications that obscured their oppressive nature." much as Locke had done in Two Treatises of Government (Rogers 53). Rejecting tradition and sentiment, this type of feminism argued that the position of female sex ought to be determined by two truths: "that God had created women as rational beings with rational souls which he expected to be developed, and that men and women had equal rational abilities" (Smith, Reason's Disciples 12). In addition to using reason themselves, they portrayed it as a pleasurable and improving occupation, a preferable alternative to the inane preoccupations of society life (Smith, Reason's Disciples 65).

Rational feminism has been largely identified at the ends of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because it has been associated most frequently and with the greatest
intensity with Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, who, in turn, have been linked
together as the mainstays of the movement. In their surveys of feminism in the eighteenth
century, Katharine M. Rogers and Alice Browne have examined both Astell and
Wollstonecraft, explicitly pointing out the similarities in their work. This critical
attention has certainly contributed to our awareness of rational feminism in the Age of
Enlightenment: however, it has also largely contained that movement to Astell, at the
beginning, and Wollstonecraft, at the end of the eighteenth century. 5 Often critics,
especially those attempting to characterize feminism in the course of the century, figure
the mid-1700s as a space inhabited by sentiment and other, "more subtle and less
confrontational" expressions of feminism (Smith, Reason's Disciples 15). Rogers' 
Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England nicely exemplifies this tendency.
Chronologically organized, the study looks at Astell in its initial chapters and
Wollstonecraft in its final chapters; Rogers directly links the two as part of a "rational
feminist tradition" in her discussions (183). When she looks at midcentury feminism, she
considers feminist use of sentimentalism, concern with "feminine" issues (i.e., marriage,
courtship), and portrayals of "strong" female protagonists. Appeals to reason fall only
under the categories of Astell and Wollstonecraft, underscoring the impression that early
rationalism "fade[d] when faced with eighteenth century values that embraced
sentimentality and feeling rather than reason" and miraculously reemerged around the
time of the French Revolution as a corrective to such sentimentality (Smith 15).

I instead maintain that rational feminism persists throughout the eighteenth
century, albeit in constantly evolving forms in each of the cases that I examine. My
midcentury texts suggest that female writers did call upon rationality in feminist contexts. For instance, in Sarah Fielding’s conduct book, *The Governess: or, The Little Female Academy* (1749), Fielding clearly advocates logic over sentiment. Charlotte Lennox, in *The Female Quixote* (1752), takes up the same issues that concern Astell and Wollstonecraft: the education of women, romance vs. reason, the effect of environment on female development. Her protagonist’s “Reasoning” ability forms the center of the novel in the same way Don Quixote’s does for Cervantes (46). The marriage plot. Arabella’s union with Glenville, can only be resolved after a divine, the personification of “right reason,” argues Arabella out of her romantic notions. Texts like *The Governess* and *The Female Quixote* demand that we reconsider the ways in which women treat concepts of reason and the effect of associating women and rationality in the heart of the eighteenth century. Rather than being pushed out of the way by sentimentality, reason persists in the three midcentury texts that I take up in this study: first, as an embattled ideal for aristocratic women in Eliza Haywood’s *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (1736); next, as a controlling principle of the domestic sphere in Fielding’s conduct novel; and finally, as a principle of male heterosexual attraction in Lennox’s novel. My texts represent links joining Astell and Wollstonecraft that provide evidence that the reason-sentimentality binary obscures the subtle ways that reason reappears in feminist contexts that may or may not include sentimentalism or other movements.

Despite the evidence that rational feminism winds its way through eighteenth century, critical attention has been lacking due to the bias against reason in contemporary feminist ideology, which often asserts that the masculine bent of reason cannot be
eradicated. Writers like Genevieve Lloyd in The Man of Reason hold that reason cannot, because of its historical and traditional associations, be gender-neutral but is always masculine (Smith, "Intellectual Bases" 22). As a result, many feminists maintain, it is better to reject reason altogether and search for a means of expression and political change that springs from another source altogether. Feminists often argue that those who attempt to achieve feminist ends with the tools of rationality "are buying into a set of values that places men's moral, intellectual, and personal development at the center of human experience and defines it as universal" (Smith, "Intellectual Bases" 22). In response to the "maleness" and oppression of reason, French feminists like Luce Irigaray have turned to the body to find a "female" source of power and protest."

Because contemporary feminism largely resists reason, it is reluctant or unable to explore its deployment in early forms of feminism." My attempt to call attention to the role of rationality in nascent feminism is a recognition of the material particularity of the eighteenth century in history. Women in the Age of Reason had access to only a select set of discourses that could be used for liberatory purposes because of their meager education:

Feminist writers of the 1600s and 1700s were outside institutions of higher learning and were seldom systematically educated. They could attack, in strong language, the sexist bias of contemporary and past thinkers, but only from outside the age's institutionalized learning. They were outsiders denied the tools to raise such questions effectively, who faced a unified vision of women's less rational nature, on which foundation all restrictions against their aspirations rested.
A couple of centuries ago, women did not have educational options and battled for improvement of their condition by refuting the charge of irrationality, a fundamental basis of their gender-based subjection, and remedying female education. As Hilda L. Smith argues, today’s feminists are able to reject reason because their extensive higher learning has both prepared them to create discourses critiquing reason and given them “the position” to do so (“Intellectual Bases” 23). The charge, then, from contemporary feminism is that rational feminism does not allow women to break sufficiently from patriarchal ideology: in effect, that it is not “feminist” enough.

The implication here is that there can be more and less liberating feminisms. While eighteenth-century feminisms of a certain variety may fall outside contemporary expectations, I, with Smith, Perry, and others who have written on these topics, find value in restoring a historically specific form of feminism to our story of the development of such thought. For the purposes of this study, I define “feminism” as expressions of concern for the situation of women, particularly in relationship to men or as engineered by men, and/or efforts to ameliorate this condition by either improving women, or expanding or elevating their realms of activity. With this definition in place, I turn to an examination of the possibilities for rational feminism opened by Astell and Wollstonecraft, who many consider its primary figures.

Variations on Rational Feminism: Astell and Wollstonecraft

I use Astell and Wollstonecraft as exemplary rational feminists and focus on their respective texts, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* and *A Vindication of the Rights of*
Woman (1792). I choose these texts because offer the most sustained and thorough treatments of the condition of women through the lens of rationality in the eighteenth century; in addition, critics have treated them as cornerstones of rational feminism. Astell and Wollstonecraft are not the only rational feminists: indeed, each is surrounded chronologically by women writers voicing comparable concerns and proffering comparable solutions. To name a few names, Astell appears among Bathsheba Makin, Judith Drake, and Damaris Masham; Wollstonecraft, amidst Mary Hays and Priscilla Wakefield. By establishing Astell and Wollstonecraft as my foci, I am able to explore the outlines of rational feminism, employing them to illustrate its most characteristic traits. Unlike those I critique for establishing them as the backbone of rational feminism, I am also able, however, to assert explicitly that there are important deviations between the two that allow for permutations to appear midcentury that demonstrate the movement of rational feminism between them. I recognize strands of both that, when one tries to match the two authors to each other, tend to receive scant attention, making it difficult to recognize when midcentury texts appropriate and vary those strands for their own purposes.

Typical of rational feminists, Astell and Wollstonecraft share the argument that female rationality is equal to that of men, attributing perceived inequities between the sexes to the influence of environment. Prevailing stereotypes women in the eighteenth century asserted their overactive emotions, "simple, weak nature[. .] and faulty rational process" (Smith, "Intellectual Bases" 24). Many argued that women neither cared about intellectuality nor were capable of developing it. Astell and Wollstonecraft use
horticultural imagery to assert that women are seeds of potential planted in the soil of society, the composition of which is determined by men: if culture works upon nature to develop the reasoning faculty, then women are nature and men are culture. They claim that women have rational potential equal to that of men but have been planted in unhealthy soil and treated with negligence by the gardeners, namely men. Astell blames men for manipulating the environment so as to encourage the female product they in turn repudiate for its inferiorities:

The Incapacity [of women], if there be any, is acquired not natural [. . .]. The Soil is rich and would, if well cultivated, produce a noble Harvest, if then the Unskilful Managers not only permit, but encourage noxious Weeds, tho' we shall suffer by their Neglect, yet they ought not in justice to blame any but themselves, if they reap the Fruit of their own Folly. Women are from their very Infancy debar'd those Advantages, with the want of which, they are afterwards reproached, and nursed up in those Vices which will hereafter be upbraided to them. So partial are Men as to expect Brick where they afford no Straw: and so abundantly civil as to take care we shou'd make good that obliging Epithet of Ignorant. which out of an excess of good Manners, they are pleas'd to bestow on us! (10)

In this passage Astell's "Unskilful Managers" are men: the very men who continually decry the follies and failings of women are those that ensure the perpetuation of female ignorance and neglect. Astell positions these men in power, which they abuse by reinforcing female inferiority, by failing to "cultivate" the potential of women, by cultivating it wrongfully, and by asserting that it does not even exist. Women are posited
as undeveloped raw material, mere potentiality, at the mercy of men who have the power and knowledge to cultivate or not. Astell emphasizes that men serve their own interests in their roles as cultivators by stressing that they "reap." they gather in the results of their own sowing and tending, when the plant reaches maturity: the object of cultivation is to be productive for the planter, and it is to the planter's advantage to propagate the misconception that women are naturally inferior.

Similarly Wollstonecraft draws on horticultural imagery to point out, as does Astell at other moments, that male conceptions of femininity have been accepted by women themselves. Wollstonecraft concentrates, however, on how male sexual desire has caused women to pursue the false trappings of sensuality at the expense of the achievements of humanity:

The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state: for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty: and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season they ought to have arrived at maturity.—One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers: and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilized women of the present century, with a few
exceptions. are only anxious to inspire love. when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition. and by their abilities and virtues exact respect. (73)\(^1\)

She accuses men of having perverted nature, creating and sowing in “too rich a soil.” specifically to produce a purely ornamental plant designed to please their own inclinations. The “flaunting leaves,” aesthetic pleasures that, for Wollstonecraft, are actually signs of disease in women as a gender, and “fastidious eye” are consistent with Wollstonecraft’s denunciation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile* and its insistence on female deployment of sexual appeal for the gratification of male desire.\(^1\) Wollstonecraft resists exactly this construction of femininity repeatedly: the insistence on female sexuality, the body to the complete detriment of the mind, for the admiring eyes of men. She posits male desire as the cause of female “barren blooming,” which marks the cultivation of women for purely sensual existences; for Wollstonecraft, “fruitful blooming” would take place within the companionate marriage as rational motherhood rather than in the purely sensual heterosexual relationship she describes in the above passage. Like Astell, Wollstonecraft sees male ideology behind female acceptance of sexualized behavioral expectations and the weakness she perceives in the gender. Repeatedly she urges women to reject the male ideology that has offered them sexuality rather than humanity, believing that, given the chance, women could develop their intellects and exercise influence through virtue rather than sexuality.\(^1\) Certain that current “false system of education” would produce a change in female behavior. Wollstonecraft constructs women as capable of “nobler ambitions” and “respect” for their “abilities and virtues.”
Astell's and Wollstonecraft's concerns for female development in a male-dominated environment appear in all of the midcentury texts I consider. Haywood takes them both one step further, questioning reason itself as a force of masculinity and its construction in opposition to sexuality. Fielding attempts to elevate women by placing reason (albeit male reason) into their hands and charging them with governing themselves and their children rationally. Perhaps closest to the original concern of male manipulation of the environment is Lennox, who traces how female dependency allows female reason to become shaped by male desire.

Asserting the gender equality of intellect in the manners of Astell and Wollstonecraft represents an extension of the implications of both Cartesian and Lockean theories. In his primary philosophical works, *Discourse on Method* (1637) and *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1642), René Descartes asserts that all laid claim to "good sense" (Reiss 41), though perhaps some suffer at the hands of improper training: "the power of forming a good judgment and of distinguishing the true from the false, which is properly speaking what is called Good sense or Reason, is by nature equal in all men" (*Discourse on Method* 3). Descartes lays significant emphasis on method, which for him, is a series of relatively clear, replicable steps to truth; in doing so, he suggests the trainability of the human mind, leaving a space for women to argue that they too could receive and benefit from rational instruction (Lloyd 44-5). Rationalist thought, which grew largely out of the work of Descartes as well as Francis Bacon (Oakeshott 14), with its faith in Reason as a tool of revelation and progress provided similar fodder for feminism. Rationalism participates in the following characteristics: confidence in the
"power of Reason" and the access of all people to that power; autonomy of the mind; and rejection of "authority," "prejudice," and the "merely traditional" in favor of the "authority of reason" (Oakeshott 1-2). The progressive nature of rationalism and its opposition to received opinion fed feminism, as did the movement's stress on training the mind rather than "complete classical education" (Oakeshott 19), which was not available to women.¹⁶

Although Locke was an empiricist rather than an rationalist, he also convincingly argued all people were born with the capacity for rational activity, and that the key to intellectual development was environmental rather than biologically rooted in gender. Locke situated learning as a result of environment rather than natural ability, allowing for the argument that women could learn if given the chance. In An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), Locke denies the existence of innate ideas and links humans with their senses, the material world, and the workings of the individual mind. With his famous tabula rasa, Locke asserted the environmental origin of all ideas, which were essentially sensory perceptions stored in the brain. He considered knowledge to have its basis in experiences in the external world:

Let us then suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters, without any ideas: How comes it to be furnished? [...] Whence has it all the materials of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer, in one word. From Experience: In that, all our Knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our Observation employ'd either about external, sensible Objects: or about the internal Operations of our Minds, perceived and reflected on by
ourselves, is that, which supplies our Understandings with all the materials of thinking. (II.i.§2)

Locke's theories emphasized the operations of the untrained mind, thus allowing women equal access. While underscoring the importance of subjective sensation and reflection, he downplays the importance of formal schooling, received knowledge, and specialized forms of academic debate and discourse (i.e., maxims, syllogisms). He links formal argumentation and its techniques with sophistry rather than rationality: he identifies the use of syllogisms "in the Schools, where Men are allowed without Shame to deny the Agreement of Ideas, that do manifestly agree; or out of the Schools to those, who from thence have learned without shame to deny the connexion of Ideas, which even to themselves is visible" (IV.xvii.§4). Locke set the "native Faculty," or ability, of the brain against formal rationality:

But God has not been so sparing to Men to make them barely two-legged Creatures, and left it to Aristotle to make them Rational [. . .]. He has given them a Mind that can reason without being instructed in Methods of Syllogizing: The Understanding is not taught to reason by these Rules: it has a native Faculty to perceive the Coherence, or Incoherence of its Ideas [. . .]. (IV.xvii.§4)

Locke asserts a freedom from Aristotle and the classical tradition as a prerequisite to rational endeavor, an emancipation that enabled women to lay claim to serious rationality despite their lack of formal education.

As this description of Cartesian and Lockean philosophy intimates, their innovations allowed for serious intellectual labor to be moved out of the public sphere
and into the private. Overall Descartes constructs rational inquiry as a solitary activity involving retreating into and examining the contents of the individual brain. His method, which I already described as enabling for women because of its accessibility and replicability, involved isolating the self from the material world: “To-day, then, since very opportunely for the plan I have in view I have delivered my mind from every care [. . . ] and since I have procured for myself an assured leisure in a peaceable retirement, I shall at last seriously and freely address myself to the general upheaval of all my former opinions” (Meditations 59). His insistence on clarity and distinction as the grounds of persuasion diminished the need to learn specialized forms of argumentation and switched the focus “from the realm of public pedagogy and disputation—from public procedures of discourse, debate, and successful argument”) to the exercise of subjective judgment (Lloyd 43). Locke’s intake of sensory information, as well as the processes of comparing ideas, could also take place in private and needed a patient and purposeful mind rather than the instruction of specialized teachers: “Men then come to be furnished with fewer or more simple Ideas from without, according as the Objects. they converse with. afford greater or less variety: and from the Operation of their Minds within. according as they more or less reflect on them” (II.i.§7). Although in book IV (xx.§2) he points out that it may be difficult for lower-class men to gather ideas because they must engage in menial labor that prevents them from “convers[ing] with” a “greater [. . . ] variety” of “Objects” (Tuana 95), he does not posit gender as a barrier in itself to either gathering ideas or “reflect[ing]” on them.
By weakening the causal connection between traditional, male education and right reason, Locke and Descartes and the school's of philosophy that they represent allowed for women to move rationality into the home without having to claim that it was a denigrated form of reason. On this basis, Astell and Wollstonecraft attempted reconceptions of the domestic, private lives of women that reflect their differing rational feminisms\textsuperscript{17}: in brief, Astell writes from a “religious orientation” that leads her to privilege the spiritual rather than the material world, and Wollstonecraft works from an investment in “the rights of humankind” that prompts her to seek change in the material world (Janes 124-25). In A Serious Proposal, Astell envisions a “Religious Retirement” for women that will be devoted to the pursuit of learning and Christianity (18). Her plan suggests a complete, though “temporary” (Barney 51), withdrawal from the outside world to a seminary, which, though very much a surrogate domestic space, deviates from the familial home in significant ways, such as its exclusively female composition. Astell removes women from the world completely, “declar[ing] [. . .] independence from” it for women and their minds (Janes 125, 129). The women in her retreat will instruct themselves and each other in a loosely outlined curriculum that emphasizes languages, literature, and religion. She gestures toward life for women after their sojourn in the seminary, indicating that it will be a more satisfying life of familial duty well performed, but the seminary clearly represents the greatest fulfillment she can envision for women. Wollstonecraft focuses on transforming the home itself into the locus of rational motherhood and companionate marriage by educating women. Like Astell, Wollstonecraft makes no major curricular innovations when discussing female education, instead proposing that a thorough
education, comparable to that offered to boys, be made available to women. The implication of this move is not only to make rationality necessary for women so that they can raise children who benefit the nation as a whole with their thoughtful citizenship but also to construct rationality as something quotidian enough to be transferred within the domestic sphere. She tries to change the activities of the domestic sphere so that they are rational and change the importance of the sphere altogether so that society hinges upon it. Over the course of the century, I see my texts fixing women within the home with reason, situating it as a relational necessity for mother/wife rather than as a matter of personal fulfillment as it is in Astell: this change can also be perceived in Haywood, who begins her text with a protagonist who could be a rational queen and ends up a domesticated wife who needs reason significantly less.

In refashioning the domestic, both Astell and Wollstonecraft rely on the division between body and mind emerging from platonic and Cartesian philosophy. Astell rejects the body, making it clear that, for her, that the material world and empirical theories that rely on it hold out only illusory promises for actual change in the condition of women (Springborg xx). She instead sets out to establish another realm for women, an otherworldly realm that offers mastery of ideals and that she believes holds real value for women compared to the “Butter flies and Trifles” they are now offered by men and willingly accept out of ignorance (7). She portrays the corporeal world as falsely alluring and truthfully worthless, asking her readership to make the same valuation:

I therefore persuade my self, you will not be less kind to a Proposition that comes attended with a more certain and substantial Gain [. . . ]. Its aim is to fix that
Beauty, to make it lasting and permanent [...] by transferring it from a corruptible Body to an immortal Mind. An obliging Design, which wou’d procure them inward Beauty, to whom Nature has unkindly denied the outward; and not permit those Ladies who have comely Bodies, to tarnish their Glory with deformed Souls.

Astell asks women to recognize the actuality of the material world, especially the corporeal body, around which their existence now turns: it is “corruptible.” of no lasting value. She transfers female “Beauty” and “Glory” from bodies to “Souls”; similarly “deform[ity]” moves from the body to the soul. Astell wants her audience to revalue the body and mind, and then to select the “substantial Gain” offered by the “lasting and permanent,” the world of abstracts. Speaking of her seminary, Astell later declares, “this happy Society will be but one Body, whose Soul is love, animating and informing it, and perpetually breathing forth it self in flames of holy desires after GOD, and acts of Benevolence to each other” (27), completely transforming the body into collective spirit.

Descartes separated the mind and body in a way that allowed women to dissociate themselves from the “irrational” female body and qualify intellect as nongendered. His process of doubt led him to privilege the world of ideas rather than the world of sensation. In doing so, he “replaced medieval philosophers’ split between higher and lower parts of the soul with the mind/body split” and echoed early Plato (Lloyd 45).

Astell depicts the choice she offers the reader as rather simple: they can continue in an ephemeral, meaningless, and valueless life on the corporeal level, or they can exchange that existence for one of more eternal and actual value within the world of
ideas. The body-mind binary allows Astell to imagine a world completely outside the sensory; for Wollstonecraft, with her more "secular" orientation (Janes 124), the contention between the body and mind takes place constantly within the individual in the sensory world. In her writing, the binary is reflected more in her consistent fear that the sexualized body, its passions, and its appetites will overwhelm and dominate the rational self.¹⁹ Wollstonecraft takes Rousseau to task for creating a gendered chasm between the body and the mind. She charges him with allowing his sensuality to overcome his reason, indulging his desire to have a female creature to fulfill his corporeal needs rather than a companion of the mind. Addressing him and his followers, she asks.

Why must the female mind be tainted by coquetish arts to gratify the sensualist, and prevent love from subsiding into friendship, or compassionate tenderness, when there are not qualities on which friendship can be built? Let the honest heart shew itself, and reason teach passion to submit to necessity; or, let the dignified pursuit of virtue and knowledge raise the mind above those emotions which rather imbitter than sweeten the cup of life, when they are not restrained within due bounds. (100)

Wollstonecraft rejects Rousseau outright and his configuration of the male and female character because it primarily allots women the corporeal. She does not exactly reject the division between body and mind that Rousseau draws upon but rather tries to move women out of the body side of the equation into the mind.²⁰ She holds bodily desire as especially suspect because it threatens to impose arbitrary and absolute power over the mind, which she considers the source of all that is worthwhile to pursue in human
existence: “The eternal rule of right reason, virtue, and knowledge is the source of all progress, when humanity heeds it, rather than those desires that depart from it” (Reiss 46). Because she identifies the sources of progress in the mind and morality, she condemns current educational practices, which support feminine corporeality rather than intellectuality: “[I]n the education of women, the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment” (92).21

The elements of internal body-mind struggle that Wollstonecraft foregrounds recur at midcentury. Haywood begins her novel with the seeming clear-cut choices of Astell—deciding between the existence of the ideal or actual, but ends up questioning the terms of this binary. Fielding eliminates the body in the binary and offers the passions (uncontrollable emotions like envy) in its stead. Again Lennox only offers the body as a nostalgic, ridiculous choice, but she also questions reason as masculine.

Astell’s religious perspective leads her to emphasize change only for the individual woman, while Wollstonecraft’s orientation in the secular world and participation in the discourse of rights leads her to insist on change within society. Wollstonecraft insists on change for women due to her conviction that the progress of the nation as a whole depends on equality of situation for women. Her conviction is that society cannot go beyond the condition of a major group of its constituents: “Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge [and virtue:] for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice” (66). The connection she asserts between
women as a subgroup and society as a whole leads her to propose a revision of the status of women that is more thoroughgoing than Astell’s. Although Astell wants women to move outside the roles prescribed for them (Janes 122), she treats this as a matter of individual freedom that, incidentally, has some benefits for society at large, such as better mothers and fewer successful adventurers eloping with women of fortune. Her suggestions for reform are primarily intended for the service of religion and individual salvation rather than for enacting material change in society. Her concern is with individual women and the destinations of their souls:

Believe me. Ladies, this is the only Place worth contending for. you are neither better nor worse in your selves for going before, or coming after now. but you are really so much the better, by how much the higher your station is in an Orb of Glory. How can you be content to be in the World like Tulips in a Garden, to make a fine shew and be good for nothing; have all your Glories set in the Grave, or perhaps much sooner? (7)

Astell wishes to alter the “internal relationship of women to” the external world (Janes 127), bringing them to reject the material world altogether and set their sights above it. Astell shares a concern with individual rather than societal reform with Descartes. Indeed, in the Discourse on Method, Descartes goes out of his way to disavow any intention of social reform. Ruth Perry calls Cartesianism “a discipline predicated on retreat from the world”: it has no pretensions to change in the “material world” but the ideal world (Perry 479). The Cartesian interest in the individual dominates Astell’s proposal, resulting in a
plan that replaces "improved" women back in their traditional roles, which they are only to fulfill more fully, not differently.

Astell's relative indifference to societal change and emphasis on the individual results in a feminism I see repeated midcentury. While Haywood and Lennox offer a general critique of the female situation, Fielding concentrates on improving the individual within traditional roles. This conservatism makes her feminism more difficult to recognize despite the fact that overall she offers women an elevated role and certain freedoms of intellect.

Astell and Wollstonecraft's differing orientations to change in the surrounding world can in part be explained by their varying class orientations. Perhaps Astell could urge women to turn themselves to the world of abstractions because she was addressing the aristocratic lady who could be sure that her material existence did not need her attention. Astell's plan basically offers the ideal of the learned lady that had persisted for some centuries prior and was exemplified by a number of notable women in the second half of the seventeenth century (i.e., Mary Chudleigh, Sarah Fyge Egerton, Bathsua Makin, etc.)¹ to a more widespread audience: she does not want this role assumed by only a few aristocratic women but by as many as possible. Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, directly addresses herself to middle-class women. While her theories definitely have liberal and liberating implications, they also fit nicely into the later century's fix on domesticity and insistence upon putting women within the household. Granted Wollstonecraft tries to transform the household and elevate it, connecting it to the welfare
of the nation overall but with only a small deviation, her theories could appear strikingly like those of more conservative writers of the later century.

The progression from seclusion from the world, aristocratic privilege, to fixing the rational female in the domestic, middle-class ideal, allows for wide variance in between Astell and Wollstonecraft. My midcentury texts follow this progression: Haywood, dealing with an aristocratic protagonist who still can choose a public role, at least early in the text; Fielding, who brings reason firmly into the home, where mothers and daughters are firmly enclosed; and Lennox, who invokes female publicity as an outmoded ridiculous option that nevertheless reveals what women, domesticated by male reason, have lost.

**Education Fitting a Woman**

As the examples of Astell and Wollstonecraft show, arguing that women were rational generally led to citing a need for some sort of action (hence Astell’s proposal), and that action usually involved education to allow that rationality free and full expression. As Martin states in regard to Wollstonecraft’s beliefs, “The exercise of reason requires, in turn, that knowledge and understanding be cultivated” (72-3). Education was situated as the proper response to recognizing the reality of female rationality. Critics such as Nancy Armstrong and Mary Poovey have laid a thorough foundation for assessing the conditions and attitudes that women faced during the eighteenth century. Their work has emphasized the increasingly narrow sphere of female activity as women were relegated to the domestic sphere, as well as the pressure on women to enact virtue and morality. While their studies supply important background
for anyone writing about women’s issues during the century. I do not want to recapitulate their work: instead, I focus on issues that relate to rationality and, by extension, education. First I explain eighteenth-century views concerning female rationality, and then I outline the societal pressures that shaped the way female rationality was molded and expressed, including a consideration of the pressures exerted on rationality expressed through female authorship. To accomplish these tasks, I explicate conduct tracts, which offer the century’s most characteristic attempts to categorize, explain, and order female education. By establishing some of the primary characteristics of such literature, I illuminate the discourse with which my midcentury texts engage when offering commentary on female rationality.

The humanist tradition, which linked together education and social function, shaped the exercise of female rationality within educational frameworks. This tradition, emerging out of Plato, sought to produce male citizens who could usefully serve the state in governmental and other capacities; to that end, men were educated at universities and preparatory schools that were well established by the eighteenth century. Female education, however, remained largely amorphous and neglected into the eighteenth century. Smith, speaking about the Elizabethan era, explains the gap between male and female education in terms of the humanist legacy:

A primary reason for this discrepancy was that humanist education was in large part pragmatic, concerned that intellectual training was to be related to social role. [...] The problem for women, of course, was that there was no logical end for their humanist training. [...] The strongest humanist educational emphasis was
that training was to be related to social action, and since men’s and women’s 
spheres of activity sharply diverged, so should their learning.

(Reason’s Disciples. 40)

The difficulty defining the female role except against the male role brought about an 
unsystematic approach to their education that emphasized moral qualities such as chastity 
and piety over scholastic curricula (Smith 41-53).

Eighteenth-century women of the middle and upper classes were generally 
educated at home, by a governess or parent, or at boarding schools, which increased in 
number during the century and were frequently derided in conduct books as little other 
than breeding grounds for sexual promiscuity, mistaken aspirations of social rise, and an 
improper interest in physical “accomplishments.” The lack of structure in female 
education meant that the individual was at the mercy of her family, its beliefs, and 
resources, which explains, in part, the large number of educational tracts, mostly 
appearing at the end of the century, that try to outline a female curricula. Such tracts 
stress derivative familiarization with topics rather than original abstract thought and have 
a surprising emphasis on physical achievement despite protestations that these are really 
not rational activities. They routinely eliminate Latin and Greek from the female realm. 
an important exclusion because it was the backbone of the male classical education. 
considered essential to preparing men for the civic life. Women are instead offered works 
in translation and English literature as substitutes. For instance, Hester Chapone in her 
Letters on the Improvement of Mind (1773) recommends “for a gentlewoman” instruction 
in “reading, dancing, French, Italian, being able to write legibly and work simple math:
drawing and music.” She does not recommend the learned languages or “abstruse sciences” for women, commenting “the labour and time which they require are generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments—the real knowledge which they supply is not essential” (190-1). Chapone then goes on to specify what is worth female attention: “additions to fancy or understanding, ideas for yourself or to bring up in conversation” (191), topics that contribute to the female role in relationship with others, as a primarily social creature. In 1792 (the same year as Wollstonecraft’s Vindication) Clara Reeve proposed a school with the following curriculum: “learning grammatically the French, English, and Italian languages; the belles-lettres; the use of the globes, history; music, dancing, singing, drawing, and painting; every useful and fashionable kind of needle-work; books, threads, tapes, needles, and every other necessary” (186). The list of physical accomplishments here seems to take over the study of more scholastic disciplines. These were used to attract men and were the mainstay of boarding school education, or at least many educational writers, in their diatribes against boarding schools, would have you think so. Despite this rhetoric, accomplishments, and physical skills such as drawing, dancing, and playing, were emphasized throughout the century (Poovey 29). One notices, however, despite the stated intention to supply information about female education, writers repeatedly spent little time outlining an actual curriculum and a great deal of time emphasizing the importance of specific moral qualities and urging women to adopt practices that foster them.

Educational plans formulated around gender distinctions persist throughout the century despite the growing dispersion of Locke’s educational ideas. By late in the
century, almost all educational writers make at least a nod to Locke and Rousseau (generally as a lesser derivative of Locke), crediting them with opening the doors for parents to realize the impressionability from the youngest ages of their children. Although they recognize and give credence to the theory of the blank slate, and a few take that to the extent that female and male minds have equal rational capacity (i.e., Catharine Macaulay [Browne 135]), most still assert a difference in degree between female and male rational ability and/or assert that it is necessary for these rational abilities to be developed differently to accommodate pre-existing differences between the roles that men and women play in society.

Women were commonly attributed with qualities of intellect that excluded concentrated, abstract thinking (Browne 110). Educational writers generally qualified their abilities so that they were concentrated in areas that had social applications. For instance, Hester Chapone, writing in 1773 and following a common stereotype, identifies imagination as the faculty women usually most excel in. stating that “when properly cultivated, it becomes the source of all that is most charming in society” (193). Her valuation of imagination causes her to recommend poetry for female study. In the writing of Thomas Gisborne in 1797, the female mind and its qualities blend with their social applications, the kind of “charm” that Chapone advocates, so as to become almost inseparable:

It is accordingly manifest, that, in sprightliness and vivacity, in quickness of perception, in fertility of invention, in powers adapted to unbend the brow of the learned, to refresh the over-laboured faculties of the wise, and to diffuse.
throughout the family circle. the enlivening and endearing smile of cheerfulness.

the superiority of the female mind is unrivalled. (22)

Gisborne initially describes female intellectual faculties in terms that recall Chapone and then quickly moves into making these faculties relational, the seemingly natural complement of the more serious male mind that does the real labor of the family while his perfectly matched wife takes care of the emotional realm. In the following passage.

Gisborne, who strives “to ascertain,” reinforce, and correct “the characteristic impressions which the Creator has stamped on the female mind” (15), asserts that it is wrong not to follow the natural shape of the female mind in its education, and charges those engaging in female education with taking special care to prevent the cultivation of errors that females are particularly prone to:

An attempt to efface the discriminating features which the hand of God has impressed on the mind, is in every case impossible to accomplish; and would be in every case, were it practicable, the height of folly and presumption. To efface those of the female mind, would be to deprive women of their distinguishing excellences. But to anticipate the mistakes, to restrain the excesses, to guard against the unwarrantable passions, which originate in the very source whence those excellencies flow, is to confer on the workmanship of God the culture and care which he intended that it should receive from the hand of man. (39)

Gisborne identifies differences between the male and female minds and sees the role of education as fostering and correcting “female” tendencies in women. The logical conclusion of his assertions is that there is a distinct female education unlike that for men.
which serves the purposes of training women to be the kind of helpmeets that he
describes in the first passage I quoted. He particularly describes the female mind as
susceptible to "excesses" and "passions," another common stereotype.

The stated priority in many plans of female education was instilling virtue and the
ability to control the passions: although this was also an important goal of men as citizens
in an increasingly democratic realm, the prevailing stereotype of women as liable to lose
control to their voracious appetites means that instilling virtue becomes almost the sole
end, in many cases, of female education. Locke listed it as his primary goal in Some
Thoughts on Education, a guide for the education of boys (Barney 39). In that text he
names self-control as an important product of the educational process: "[T]he great
principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man is able to
deny himself his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow that reason
directs as best though the appetite lean the other way" (Education 25).39 The difference is
that plans of female education substitute moral training for any kind of curricular content
or truly trying to develop the intellect.

The need for control and self-discipline results both from political changes in
England and the new possibilities raised by political theorists such as Locke. Following
on the Civil War and Revolution in the seventeenth century, there was a great deal of fear
regarding uncontrolled emotion and its potentially socially disruptive effects.
Additionally, the old order of traditional loyalty and obedience to monarch instituted by
patriarchal political theory was deconstructed, leaving instead a more contract theory of
government, which placed the emphasis upon the individual. His consent to be governed.
and his ability to control his desires and participate in a contractual government in which it is necessary to give up the freedoms of Locke’s state of nature for other freedom. particularly the freedoms associated with property. As Utay Singh Mehta describes it, the ideal citizens that Locke describes in his *Second Treatise*, when the state of nature has been abandoned for contractual rule, lack “any semblance of the transgressive vitality that characterized them in their natural state. Instead we find them leveled out, carefully/regulated, and utterly devoid of ‘overweening passions’ and ‘arbitrary desires’” (Mehta 164-5). It is necessary to control passion and overwhelming emotion to make Locke’s type of government work. Mehta also describes how Locke’s *tabula rasa* theory, which abolished the notion of innate ideas, created an anxiety reflected in the rest of his writing about how to control a child born without any internal controls. This may be reflected in “the aim” Barney identifies in eighteenth-century “educational writing” of “negotiat[ing] a provisional alliance between the contending values of individual autonomy and social discipline”; additionally he maintains that in early novels “the increased emphasis on either of these principles [freedom or control] immediately involves—or provokes—the other’s importance as a salutary antidote” (13).

One of the limiting factors on female education was the supposed horror attached to the opposition between developed rationality and femininity. As Fordyce says (1766), anticipating his female readership’s reluctance to engage in learning, “perhaps my little friend is afraid. lest the men should suspect her of being what the world styles in derision a Learned Lady.” (297). Although he wants to convince women to engage in learning more than they do currently, he goes on to emphasize the dangers of female pedantry and
how men hate it. Hester Chapone says, "The danger of pedantry and presumption in a woman, of her exciting envy in one sex and jealousy in the other—of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the severity and preciseness of a scholar, would be. I own, sufficient to frighten me from the ambition of seeing my girl remarkable for learning" (190-1). Even Astell is quick to reassure her readers that women under her plan will not become pedantic, thus a threat to men, but more virtuous. Clara Reeve's limitation on female learning is expressed in terms of aesthetics (1792): "It is not necessary for women to be doctors of theology, professors of arts and sciences, or philosophers. There is a degree of knowledge that may become every station in life: but there is a line of beauty in this, as in every thing else, and all beyond it is curvature and deformity" (195-6).

As these examples from educational treatises demonstrate, reason plays a complex role in relationship to women throughout the century, one that rational feminists approached with hope and others with trepidation. I approach this relationship primarily from the perspective of the novel, and similar conflicts appear within this context.

Reason acts as a thematic concern in relationship to women within the novel. The association of novels and women, of course, generated a great deal of concern during the eighteenth century: as Nancy Armstrong says of conduct books for young ladies. "It was understood that novels were not male writing, for they were often written by women. Yet the mere mention of novels and romances was invariably a prelude to warning that represented such writing as a form of seduction" (Armstrong 105-6). Such seduction, according to the rhetoric surrounding the novel, could take a variety of forms: inflammation of the imagination, misleading the girl about reality, arousing the sexual
passions, inserting grandiose visions of her own importance into the girl’s mind, and encouraging overwhelming sentimentality. Reason often represented the antidote of each of these tendencies. It formed the other half of binaries involving imagination, emotion, and sexual desire. Binaries that work within and among novels. A particular novel, such as Haywood’s *Adventures of Eovaai*, may oppose sexual passion with reason, or, in the case of Fielding’s *Governess*, sentiment might be opposed with reason. On the other hand, a romance might provoke a novel offering reason as a corrective influence on women. In each of those cases, the anxiety surrounding female reading practices keeps reason circulating in relationship with women throughout the century. Mitzi Myers sums up the dual nature of literature in the eighteenth century (particularly the end of the century): “Reading was described as remedy, as nourishment, as a sort of mental exercise, as a new way of seeing and shaping the world, but it was also poison, drug, intoxicant, the madness of living entirely in the illusory world of one’s imagination, unable to cope with actuality because of fiction-induced false expectations” (119). This divided nature of the novel and its association with women necessitated the return of reason as a factor in the equation at least from time to time. I propose that because the novel occupied this specific position as a literary form, it had to keep concerning itself with the relationship between women and reason throughout the century.

In this dissertation, I set out to trace this concern in novelistic forms through the midcentury: Eliza Haywood’s *Adventures of Eovaai*, *Princess of Ijaveo* (1736), Sarah Fielding’s *Governess: or, The Little Female Academy* (1749), and Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752). I delineate the ways in which midcentury texts by women
take up issues traditionally associated with rational feminism. I demonstrate that the legacy of rational feminism may change shape, operate in different genres, and serve different purposes, and that it is not displaced by discourses like sentimentalism. I identify the following progression: Haywood portrays reason in a dichotomous relationship with the body and identifies this dichotomy as an artificial choice imposed by patriarchy whereby private and public roles for women become mutually exclusive. In Fielding’s *Governess*, the body and its public manifestation are dissociated from women. Reason comes into the home to produce rational motherhood as well as pleasure, which Haywood associated with the body. Finally in Lennox’s *Female Quixote*, reason becomes a source of male heterosexual desire, the very basis of the companionate marriage. Lennox questions the terms of the companionate marriage, which demands a specifically female form of rationality, just before Wollstonecraft embraces it as a locus of female rational fulfillment.
Notes

I quote this moment in Locke's Essay to illustrate that even he, whom many would turn to as an authority on "reason," recognizes its plurality of meaning in common usage and must take care to define the term in his particular context. I recognize that more precise definitions of Lockean reason emerge throughout the Essay, particularly, as Louis E. Loeb reminds us in From Descartes to Hume: Continental Metaphysics and the Development of Modern Philosophy, as the operations of deduction and intuition in producing knowledge (36-62). I wish to retain the heterogeneity of this discursive moment in Locke rather than a more precise definition in order to release reason in its various forms in the midcentury texts I examine in this study.

In the following chapters, I define reason according to its presentation in each individual text.

I will discuss rationalism at more length further into the chapter. Where necessary in the body of the dissertation, I will specify when referring specifically to rationalism as a philosophical or political tradition.

Katharine M. Rogers and Alice Browne use the term "rational feminism" to refer to the general belief that "[w]omen are as rational as men and should be educated equally" (Browne 2). They apply rational feminism as a label rather loosely to Astell, Wollstonecraft, and others (i.e., Browne 100, 157; Rogers 183). Hilda L. Smith repeatedly refers to the seventeenth-century women in her study as rationalist and feminist but does not put the terms together (i.e., 6, 11). Others refer to Astell as a feminist and a rationalist because of the influence Cartesian philosophy had on her work
(i.e., Smith [Reason’s Disciples] and Ruth Perry), and still others name Wollstonecraft a feminist concerned with female rationality (i.e., Anca Vasapoulos. Orin N. C. Wang).

A few women who write in the same vein as Astell and Wollstonecraft have received critical attention: I do not mean to suggest that these two are absolutely isolated. In particular, the text Woman Not Inferior to Man or. A Short and Modest Vindication of the Natural Right of the Fair-Sex to a Perfect Equality of Power. Dignity, and Esteem with the Men, published in 1739 by “Sophia. a person of quality.” has received some critical attention. This critical attention strengthens my argument that we need to look for different forms of rational feminism, for this text has undoubtedly received attention due its status as a polemical/educational tract, like those of Astell and Wollstonecraft.

Perhaps because of the feminist push to associate the feminine with pleasure and sexuality, critics have focused recently on subversive forms of sexuality rather then exploring rationality as a feminist expression. This is especially notable in the current recovery of Eliza Haywood. Aphra Behn, and other authors associated with prenovelistic forms (i.e., amatory fiction).

Other critics rehearse the objections raised by feminists against rational feminism before going on to discuss the movement as an expression of feminism (i.e., Smith in “Intellectual Bases” and Perry): however, they do not posit a connection between this resistance and the relative inattention to this movement as I do.

In speaking of expanding realms of activity as a form of feminism, I follow Regina Janes (122).
In his discussion this passage, Richard A. Barney characterizes Astell as “comment[ing] on women’s natural abilities, despite men’s lack of assistance” (72).

I quote from Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler’s edition of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman as it appears in vol. 5 of The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1989). By editorial policy, Todd and Butler use brackets and footnotes to indicate variations from the final edition Wollstonecraft checked in her lifetime. I omit these apparatuses so as not to detract from my purpose, which is not textual comparison but explication.

Wollstonecraft addresses Rousseau primarily pp. 147-62.

The problem, of course, is that in her desire to liberate women, Wollstonecraft basically proffers masculinity as humanity without developing a nongendered alternative. For an example of this critique, see Timothy J. Reiss, who writes, “When Wollstonecraft rejected ‘sickly delicacy’ in favor of ‘simple unadorned truth,’ and ‘false sentiment’ for ‘natural emotions,’ seeking an education to prepare ‘a rational and immortal being for a nobler field of action’ [...] she was choosing the traditional female/male sets of oppositions” (42-3).

Women who generated and perpetuated rational feminism, particularly Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, selected from a number of intellectual and philosophical sources. Astell, for instance, drew from Antoine Arnauld, Pierre Nicole, and Nicolas Malebranche (Springborg xxiv-xxv); Wollstonecraft was heavily influenced by the French philosophes, especially Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and their discourse of individual rights. I focus on Descartes and Locke in particular because their markings can be
consistently identified in the work of Astell and Wollstonecraft. As the founders of Continental idealism and British empiricism, they represent the essential principles of each philosophical school. Their works carried great weight during the eighteenth century, a period of intense concentration on the possibilities and complications of empiricism. Perhaps most importantly, as the work of contemporary critics has clarified, the theories of Descartes and Locke opened up rational activity for women in new, albeit sometimes differing, ways.

14 Descartes did not explicitly consider the relationship between women and his theories in Discourse on Method and Meditations, as his use of the gendered “all men” in the above quote indicates. Other writings reveal his concern for women (Lloyd 44), and his work certainly opened a door through which women could pass.

15 I capitalize “Reason” here, as Michael Oakeshott does, to indicate that I am referring to it in its specific construction by Cartesian rationalism.

16 Oakeshott discusses seventeenth-century rationalism pp. 1-19.

17 Timothy J. Reiss says that Astell urges women toward “charity and piety, improving [their] status as wife and mother, and revalorizing the private sphere in general” (12). I identify this revalorization with Wollstonecraft as well.

18 Barney (75: 259), Catherine Gallagher (34-38), and Carol Barash (55-58: 67-69) explore Astell’s creation of another realm, an otherworldly world, for women as creating an empire over which the woman can rule absolutely.

19 As Martin points out (38-69), Rousseau in Emile perpetuates a sort of Cartesian divide by attributing the qualities of body and mind, sensuality and intellectuality, to the
female and male sex respectively. In his construction, since Sophia is completely dependent upon Emile, only whole in union with him, because she lacks all but the most rudimentary intellectuality and must be instructed and led by men, primarily her husband. Martin does admit that the split Rousseau creates between the sexes technically means that both Emile and Sophia are dependent on each other for full humanity, but she points out that in practical terms, Sophia is much more dependent for survival upon Emile (64-65).

20 This is the argument of Reiss, as cited above.

21 Wollstonecraft’s fear of passion echoes that of Locke, who although he emphasized the material world and the idiosyncrasy of the individual response to the sensory world, plainly saw the deleterious consequences of leaving the body undisciplined. Locke’s philosophical theories were presented in a practical manner in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693), and this work dwells on the control of the individual to make him a virtuous citizen due to the threat that the individuality that Locke has unleashed in the Essay (Mehta 1-36).

22 Janes states, “It is the other-worldly bent of her thought that both permits the expression of so uncompromising a demand for feminine independence and collaborates with her social and political views to prevent a demand for change in this world” (130).

23 The aristocratic tradition of the learned lady is described in detail by Myra Reynolds in her study. In summarizing Bathsua Makin’s attitude toward women and education in 1673 (as expressed in An Essay to Revive the Antient Tradition of Gentlewomen), Reynolds encapsulates neatly the learned lady tradition: “Education
belongs only to the Christian maid, to the maid of excellent mind, to the maid of wealth and leisure. A woman's education is for her own development and pleasure and for the service of her family. Any social, public, utilitarian use of it is not for a woman contemplated.” (283).

24 Although education and rationality certainly are not the same thing, I concern myself in this chapter with education because it serves as both the impetus for arguing that women have rational capacity equal to or comparable to that of men and as a reflection of what was actually believed about female rationality (i.e., the curricula proposed for women reflect the capacities that were attributed to them).

25 I refer those who want a thorough discussion of the topic of the condition of women in all its nuances throughout the eighteenth century to those sources.

26 Chapone discusses this pp. 187-191.

27 Nancy Armstrong argues in *Desire and Domestic Fiction* that the middle-class woman replaced her aristocratic counterpart in cultural hegemony in the course of the eighteenth century. With that process of replacement comes rhetoric against the display of the aristocratic female body. Armstrong claims that public appearances actually cheapened the middle-class female (71, 76). Armstrong seems to be referring to actual public appearances, for though rhetoric against bodily display regularly occurs in conduct books of the eighteenth century, so do plans to teach women the accomplishments, including dancing and music, which would involve display—though presumably in the context of the private home.
Armstrong comments. "After reading several dozen or more conduct books, one is struck with a sense of their emptiness—a lack of what we today consider 'real' information about the female subject and the object world that she is supposed to occupy." (60). She then goes on to discuss how these tracts inculcate values such as frugality and chastity. My point is similar although I am using the term "educational" rather than "conduct" tract. The line between them is very tenuous at this time.

Mehta quotes this passage to argue for the prominence of self-discipline in Lockeian pedagogy (134).
CHAPTER TWO:

*Adventures of Eovaai: Learned or Licentious Lady?*

Mary Astell’s *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* urges women to renounce the body and pursue rationality, drawing on the Cartesian binary that is reflected in the two privileges historically associated with her aristocratic audience: learning and libertinism. This binary informs the themes and generic form of Eliza Haywood’s 1736 *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijave*o. Eovaai, a princess, must select either mind or body much as Astell asks of her reader, but the conclusion of the novel, which locates Eovaai primarily as a wife in the domestic sphere, ultimately assigns her neither learning nor libertinism but produces middle-class domesticity.

With the mind-body binary, Haywood’s novel inextricably unites politics, nascent feminism, and literary production. *Adventures*, in part a satire on Sir Robert Walpole, assumes the critical stance of the Opposition, which strictly maintained the Cartesian binary that they accused Walpole of blurring. They charged Walpole of ignoring reason and allowing his passions, which they portrayed as love of power, sex, and money, to determine his public policy. Siding with the Opposition, Haywood adopts their standard of a strict separation between the civic realm and the body and its appetites, which were to be contained in the domestic. She chooses, however, to critique Walpole through a female monarch, which raises the issues of the relationship between women, the mind-body binary, and power. Haywood examines the rationality offered to women by Astell and the aristocratic tradition in which she and the Opposition participate, questioning the terms upon which that rationality is offered and the sacrifices of bodily pleasure and
power it requires. This exploration of politics and feminism takes place in an allegory that grafts the characteristics of the domestic novel onto amatory fiction. On the level of genre, Haywood stages a resistance to surrendering the body and the power and pleasure it provides by relying on the amatory mode to drive the plot and titillate her readers. Her commitment to anti-Walpole politics, however, requires her to abandon the body, a move signaled by the novel’s conclusion in the domestic mode: a wedding that places Eovaai firmly within the home with neither body nor mind. In the end, Haywood allows her political stance to overcome her feminist concern for relinquishing the body but leaves her readers with a vivid example of the power of amatory fiction.

The resolution of her novel, which locates Eovaai as a fairly traditional wife to Adelhu, signifies that neither aristocratic learning nor libertinism can, at this time, allow women to escape middle-class domesticity. In what follows, I trace Haywood’s delineation of how these paradigms fail women and the interventions of patriarchy that ensure their failure. I often use the terms suggested by Hélène Cixous and Lacanian psychoanalysis because of their compatibility with the struggle between body, mind, and patriarchy that I identify in the text. I begin by considering the learned lady as offered to Eovaai, constructing it as an oedipal demand placed by patriarchal power. I identify a critique of male reason in the scholarly footnotes and apparatus that Haywood’s appends to the text; I further maintain that in the figure of the Chinese editor, Haywood offers a corrective vision of nongendered reason. I then turn to the libertine, tracing Eovaai’s gains and losses as pure body and the law’s ultimate intolerance for the bodily disorder she represents. I argue in my last section that Haywood illustrates how rationality forces
into generic homogeneity all the forms that predated the novel, such as amatory fiction and romance, into the domestic novel, which constructs the most important event in a woman's life as a nonevent, the resistance of seduction that allows for happy marriage and an unimpeded patriarchal lineage and inheritance. She shows that the novel enacts the end of certain types of literary productivity by women with its abrupt resolution. She sees the body, a popular *topos* for her in earlier literature, being pushed aside in favor of middle-class standards of taste, behavior, and literature.

**Preserving the Jewel: Male Reason and the Female Body**

The particular moment of *The Adventures of Eovaai* in political history brought to the public a debate about the possibilities of appetite overwhelming reason, the classical basis of the public sphere, for two reasons. First, in 1736, Sir Robert Walpole had been in power for fifteen years. Under his leadership, he and the Whigs had established a stranglehold on power, posing a threat to the limits on absolute power that had been instituted during the Glorious Revolution. The Whigs were associated with ending absolute monarchy and replacing it with monarchy limited by a constitution that gave greater power to Parliament. In the early eighteenth century, however, they used a combination of the Septennial Act, which required elections only every seven years, and patronage to amass nearly absolute power in the hands of Parliament and governmental ministers. The public particularly vilified Walpole, who used his position for great personal gain, and he was the subject of numerous literary attacks that characterized him as possessed by limitless appetites for power, money, and sex (Beasley 415).

Furthermore, as Walpole's ascendancy indicated, a new political animal was emerging:
the commercial man, one whose influence on government emerged from monetary interaction with it rather than land gained through heredity. The Opposition, basically the landed party that sided against Walpole, characterized the commercial man as incapable of unbiased public activity, believing that his seemingly insatiable appetites prevented him from truly rational activity (Pocock 111-17).

In Adventures, Haywood uses political allegory to address the symbolic investment in femininity in the opposition of these two political groups. She satirizes Walpole in the figure of Ochihatou, the prime minister of Hypostafa, while King Eojaeu, ruler of Ijaveo and Eovaai's father, represents the principles of the Opposition that formed in response to his perceived abuses. In their guiding political philosophies, Eojaeu and Ochihatou offer Eovaai the options of learned lady and libertine. Ruled by Eojaeu, Ijaveo is a paradise that recalls Eden: the country exists in harmony and economic security. Eojaeu rules by principles of moderation and places concern for the welfare of the governed over personal gains of power or wealth. Shortly after he dies and she assumes the throne, Eovaai strays from Eojaeu's practices and is nearly seduced, sexually and politically, by Ochihatou, a figure of uncontrolled greed, lasciviousness, and physical grotesquerie (Beasley 422-23). In contrast to her father's "reasonable" principles, Ochihatou preaches the pleasures of arbitrary power, self-interest, and hunger for power to Eovaai. Just before Ochihatou sleeps with her, a moment that would mark the complete renunciation of Eojaeu's teachings, Eovaai is whisked away by an emissary of the gods, Halafamai (or Truth), who reveals to her Ochihatou's physical deformity and vice, which he has hidden with his magic. After visiting Ochihatou's opponents in
Hypostafa and the leaders of a neighboring republic. Eovaai is returned to Ijaveo by supernatural machinations: there she is returned to the throne and discovers her rightful mate. Prince Adelhu, who ruled her country in her absence according to her father’s beliefs. Eovaai knows she is meant to marry Adelhu because he has the jewel that fits in the necklace that her father gave her; thus, Adelhu acts as a stand-in for Eovaai’s father, chosen and approved by Eojaeu. Eovaai eventually chooses her father over Ochihatou, a form of rationality over the body, and constitutionalism over arbitrary power. Because Adelhu turns out to be the long-lost prince of Hypostafa, at the end of the narrative, “the scepters of Hypostafa and Ijaveo [are] united in the persons of Adelhu and Eovaai” and under a government of limited monarchy (166). Haywood’s text combines a number of forms, including amatory fiction, political allegory, and oriental romance.

As king and guardian of limited monarchy (Beasley 422) which portrays reason in a dichotomous relationship with the body and identifies this dichotomy as an artificial choice imposed by patriarchy whereby private and public roles for women become mutually exclusive. Eojaeu stands for a belief in the traditional division of mind and body along the lines proposed by Plato and later picked up by Descartes in his strict division between body and mind. As J. G. A. Pocock outlines, eighteenth-century thinking, coming from a heritage deeply influenced by classical tradition, separated what took place in the home from what took place in the public sphere. Landed property had traditional ideas of the oikos (household, personal property in the form of an estate) allowing rational, disinterested (in the sense of having no vested interest) participation in the cives (the political sphere, government). What took place in the former could be physical and
personal, but what took place in the latter had to be mental, reasonable, and related to the
good of the community overall. With this separation comes a denigration of the material
world in general and a relegation of woman to that world.⁴

This political tradition literalizes the oedipal complex, which, according to Lacan,
does not allow entrance into the realm of the Law of the Father, that realm ordered by
laws and language, until one has surrendered the freedom of polymorphous sexuality. In
both this political system and psychoanalytic theory, the body and mind are opposed to
each other, and sacrifices are demanded in one realm in order to experience the other.
The oedipal complex’s injunction against sexual activity offers, in exchange for celibacy,
the safety and integrity of the phallus, the promise of later sexual activity; and entrance
into the realm of law, order, and language.⁵

Eojaeu stands as both father and Father. Not only is he Eovaai’s father and father
of the nation as its king, he has a strong connection to both Adam and the gods, whose
actions he can determine in advance.⁶ He educates Eovaai and instructs her in the art of
governance. In the manner of a Patriot, another name for Walpole’s Opposition, he
-teaches her to avoid “the false Lustre of Arbitrary Power,” to be mindful of “the Good of
the Multitudes beneath you,” and to obey the law lest she lose her “Claim to their
Obedience” (53; Beasley 422). He preaches to her a philosophy inflected by platonic and
Christian ideals that insists on a strict division and hierarchy exist between the material
and metaphysical worlds:

his [. . .] Care was to instruct her in the Mysteries of Religion and Philosophy.

that, whatever should befall, she might have so just an Indifference for all
terrestrial Things, and so entire a Dependance on her future Inheritance in that World above the Stars, as neither to be too much elevated or dejected at any Accident below.

Eojæu’s efforts, the efforts of patriarchy, to create a strict division between the body and mind represent an effort to preserve the male political sphere from the threat of appetite. Implicit here is that beauty, body, power, and anything corporeal are of negligible importance while abstractions, metaphysics, and service of virtue amount to everything. Eojæu is trying to create a strict division between two different sets of values and to communicate to his daughter that only one has meaning, to keep them entirely separate in her mind so that she will pursue one and forget about the other.

Eojæu’s efforts to separate Eovai from other women and thus divorce her from the body and wed her to the mind, which here is associated with religion, philosophy, and virtue, reflect an offering of rationality that requires a division between body and mind and accompanying rejection of the body, its powers, and its pleasures. Eojæu perceives the task of equipping Eovai to participate in the public sphere as masculinizing her in essential ways:

He employed no Masters expert in the Arts of Singing, Dancing, Playing on the Musick, or any other the like Modes of accomplishing young Ladies [. . .] there was nothing of which he so much endeavour’d to keep her in Ignorance as her own Charms. To this end, he suffer’d her to converse but little with her own Sex, and strictly forbad those of the other, to mention Beauty, or any Endowment of
the Body, as things deserving Praise: the Virtues of the Mind were what he
labour'd to inculcate, and therefore took all possible care to render amiable to her.

(53)

In this passage, the body and mind are strictly segregated and aligned with females and
males, respectively, and the division between the two is maintained with the careful
vigilance of patriarchy, here represented by the King Eojaeu. Eojaeu controls
ideology, dismisses the value of the body altogether, refusing to allow Eovaai to talk to
women and censoring the speech of men, who are "strictly forbad [...] to mention
Beauty, or any Endowment of the Body, as things deserving Praise." This reveals the
preconditions of the rational public sphere: the body must be completely eliminated,
particularly the female body. Developing reason and virtue, then, means denying the
body, removing Eovaai from the rest of her gender and bringing her into the company of
men, whose interests will presumably be more abstract and philosophical. Men here
protect the public sphere by keeping the body, particularly the female body, out.
presumably because the entrance of the female body would also cause their bodies to
become sexed by contact.

The explicit regard for learning and rationality expressed in Adventures is not to
be ignored. Haywood presents Eojaeu as an admirable figure, in alliance with the politics
and morals she sanctions. She similarly presents Eovaai as capable of the rationality and
learning endorsed by her father: the text portrays her as distinctive and superior among
women as a result of her developed mental ability. She is an exceptional, even
exceptionally desirable, woman. This does not erase, however. Haywood's recognition of
the terms rationality and patriarchy impose on femininity. As the form of reason Eojaeu offers his daughter is bound by the necessity of surrendering the body, so is it bound by the limitations in scope patriarchy imposes. The king tries to separate Eovaai from the body and its pleasures, substituting instead "mental" virtues: however, he uses "his power to form her Mind" to limit the range of Eovaai's mental activities. Eojaeu instructs Eovaai by lecturing her on his principles of good government: each day she must repeat back to him all that he taught her the previous day "with what Remarks she had been able to make upon it" (54). Eovaai does have room to exercise her rational capacity, but this space is determined by her father and his opinions. She is to repeat back to him what he teaches her with "Remarks": to elaborate, really, not raise questions or points of disagreement. Thus patriarchy invites her into rational activity and determines the terms on which it takes place.

These terms are spelled out distinctly when Eojaeu gives his daughter a carcanet, a necklace with a gemstone, on his deathbed. The carcanet joins the restrictions on the body and the restrictions on scope that are part of the rationality offered to women. These conditions are presented in the injunction of Eojaeu, who links the preservation of the jewel directly to the preservation of the nation:

This, if you preserve entire, and in its present Purity and Brightness, will avert the most malevolent Aspect of the Stars, and even the inveterate and incessant Attempts of the fiery Ypres themselves; and defend you, and the Nations under you, in all the Dangers with which you are threatened. [. . .] Remember that what ought to be infinitely dearer to you than your Life, your eternal Fame, and the
Happiness of all the Millions you are born to rule, depend on the Conservation of it. (55-56)

The language of “Purity,” “eternal Fame,” and “Conservation” surrounding the “jewel,” a common metaphor for female chastity, clearly aligns it with Eovaai’s virginity. Eojaeu, backed by the gods, implicitly commands Eovaai to forego her body for the good of her country. Although he has presumably educated Eovaai to rely on her intellect and rationality in order to lead Ijaveo in peace and prosperity, he uses jewel to contain her sexuality with threats, reminders of the potential havoc that will come should she betray her rationality. The charge to take care of the jewel represents a “Command” delivered by Eovaai’s father that originates with the family’s “Patron” god, Aiou, who made and entrusted it to the ruling family (55). Eojaeu misrepresents the jewel as a sort of talisman that has the power to keep the nation from all harm. As the second paragraph of the text tells us, Eojaeu knows through his contact with the supernatural “that with his Life would end the Felicity of his Subjects, or at least suffer a long and terrible Interruption” (52). In fact, then, his charge to Eovaai is unnecessary, a superfluity stated in hyperbolic terms (“the very fate of the nation rests on your virginity”) that reveals more about the perception of an overwhelming need to control the rapacious female body than about a connection between the jewel and the well-being of the nation. This misrepresentation also shows the unwillingness of patriarchy to admit the limits of law: in other words, Eojaeu pretends, with his explanation to Eovaai, that she can control destiny just as she can control her body, when in fact supernatural events and the power of the body make neither possible. His injunction’s return to the body reveals its influence within the
patriarchal system despite the system’s attempts to omit it altogether. The very ferocity with which the body must be regulated shows its power.

While the jewel enforces patriarchal control over female sexuality and seems to offer in exchange law and order, it carries overtones of phallic control of knowledge. The minute Eovaai begins to wonder about the jewel, to express “Curiosity” about how it works (57), she loses it:

As she was one day sitting alone in her Garden, ruminating on the last Words of her Father, and the strict Injunction laid on her concerning the Carcanet [...] she took it from her Breast: she examin’ed it over and over, and the more she did so, the more her Curiosity encreased: She [...] cou’d not conceive how it shou’d be of so much consequence to her Happiness as she had been told: and perceiving some mystic Characters engraved on the Inside, which yet were seen through the Clearness of the Stone, she resolv’d to consult all the learned Men of her Kingdom, for the Interpretation. [...] She continued still pondering on the mysterious Words, flatter’d perhaps with the Imagination, that her own Ingenuity would enable her to unfold the Meaning, when, to her inexpressible Amazement, the Jewel drop’d from the cemented Gold. (57)

Here Eovaai questions, in a sense arouses, her dormant sexuality as represented in the jewel. Her contemplation of the jewel is an act of prohibited self-indulgence that we could even call self-gratification.” particularly given its sexual implications: “she examin’ed [the carcanet] over and over, and the more she did so, the more her Curiosity encreased.” This passage emphasizes the link between sexual awakening and intellectual
arousal, both of which threaten to go beyond patriarchal limits. As Eovaai handles and studies the jewel, her questions about it and its power increase. Though the suggestion that Eovaai even ventured to contemplate translating herself is tempered with a "perhaps," the text leaves the impression that this is exactly what Eovaai is being punished for: intellectual presumption. The object of her contemplation, the obscure writing on the jewel, which comes from a god, must remain beyond her reach, for to translate it would be to unlock the hidden, divine source of power that legitimates her father's authority over her and her body. She would then have immediate access to language and law, those things that form her father's basis for authority over her.

Haywood's critique points at the fact that in becoming rational, women will give up the body; at the same time, men will control the extent and form of their rationality.

The jewel stands as a fetish that indicates the patriarchal attempt to subject Eovaai to the oedipal complex, which at once limits her access to her own body and places the conditions of the Law of the Father upon the exercise of rationality. According to Freud and Lacan, the fetish is a material object chosen by a man and associated by him with a woman. For him, the fetish stands in for the missing phallus, allowing the man to avoid looking into the abyss, as it were: facing the "castrated" state of woman, who lacks the penis (for Lacan, the phallus). The man attaches disproportionate, usually sexual, importance to the object. In the case of Eovaai, the jewel, imposed upon her by the father, implicates her in the oedipal complex. According to Freud, women fit uneasily in the oedipal complex because the threat of castration is not applicable and therefore cannot be used to coerce compliance with the Law of the Father (Grosz 69). This reading often
leads to the assumption that women are less tied to law, society, and the superego. By
giving her the jewel, a stand-in phallus, Eojaeu attempts to place her firmly within the
limitations of the oedipal complex, which requires relinquishment of the body
temporarily in the service of the law and its demands. He denies her both the body and
unrestrained rationality in the interests of the Law of the Father, which (he implies) will
keep the kingdom peaceably as long as Eovaaï keeps it intact. It does not appear that
Eojaeu gives Eovaaï the jewel in order to stave off the realization that she is lacking
(possesses the lack) but in order to fill that lack so that the threat of castration can be
reinstated, ultimately allowing the [F]ather further control over her. This enables Eojaeu
to reject the possibility that some other order, something other than law and patriarchally
approved rationality, could rule the nation at the same time he enforces that law. 9 I assert
here that female virtue coalesces as a vehicle through which law can be imposed upon
women: in other words, if the law can be forced upon men by the threat of castration, law
can and is imposed upon women by the threat of the disastrous consequences of the loss
of virtue. The promise for women is not inclusion in the power-making capacity of
patriarchy but just male acceptance. Virtue in this text intimately unites both intellect and
sexual: they are bound together, the limitations on each constricting women but
ultimately leading to disaster if violated. 10

The prohibitions surrounding the jewel, from a God/Father and designating areas
of forbidden inquiry, both physical and intellectual, obviously recalls the forbidden fruit
in the Garden of Eden. As Eve was, Eovaaï is punished for her “sin.” She loses the
jewel: she and Ijaveo descend into a postlapsarian state, which is signaled by clouds and
thunder, portents of disaster, and she is expelled from Ijaveo itself. A footnote on the passage detailing Eovaai's loss of the jewel questions whether women are truly capable of intellectual endeavor:

The Commentator will needs have it, that these Words [''flatter'd perhaps with the Imagination, that her own Ingenuity would enable her to unfold the Meaning''] imply a Vanity, or kind of Self-sufficiency in Eovaai; and infers from thence, that it's an Error to trust Women with too much Learning; as the Brain in that Sex being of a very delicate texture renders them, for the most part, incapable of making solid Reflections, or comparing the little they can possibly arrive at the knowledge of, with the Infinity of what is beyond their reach. (57)

He juxtaposes the "very delicate texture" of female brains with the need to make "solid Reflections," emphasizing the feminine nature of their brains and the essentially male nature of mental activity. The reference to the "very delicate texture" of female brains echoes strains of biological determinism circulating in the early eighteenth century that asserted women were fundamentally different than men in the physiological composition of their brain matter and thus less capable of exerting their mental faculties (Todd xiii). The thrust of the commentator's diatribe is again establishing a sharp division between the genders and their roles in intellectual endeavor. His observation that "it's an Error to trust Women with too much Learning" establishes men as the gatekeepers of knowledge, controlling female access to learning, reasserting that how much knowledge is let out is a matter of judgment for men. What women ought to use their brains for, then, is realizing the extent of their ignorance.
The Masculinization of Reason: The Cabal and the Editor

In the preceding section, I maintained that Haywood critiques the reason offered to Eovaai by exposing its origin in patriarchal ideas and control. Haywood depicts that the reason offered to Eovaai by her father carries specific limitations that construct her as inferior to and controlled by men in the rational sphere. My conclusion that Haywood would expose the male bias of a system of rationality such as that endorsed by Astell is further supported by the scholarly apparatus that she attaches to Adventures.

Adapting the premise of the hidden manuscript (Wilputte 28), Haywood provides the text with an editor who affixes a preface and footnotes that translate foreign words, explain cultural practices that occur in the text, and sample the centuries of "learned" commentary on the story of Eovaai. This apparatus serves as an example of male reason in practice, and I assert that it is the locus of much of Haywood's critique of a certain type of rationality as exclusive of women and the body, ineffective, and misogynistic. I identify Haywood's creation of a private language and the assumption of the subject position of the editor as an alternative to male reason.

The editor of the text, a Chinese man, positions the text for his English audience as foreign and rational. He describes how an ancient wise emperor who was eager "to encourage Virtue, and a Desire of Knowledge[,] [. . .] Learning and Purity of Manners" assembled a "Cabal" of "Philosophers of all Nations" to translate from "[t]he Language of Nature," the original human language, the recorded history of China (50). This recovery project yielded the story of Eovaai, the editor tells us, and he presents it to his English audience in gratitude for their kindness to him during his visit. The editor shapes
the text by adding annotations throughout the text. Under the pretext of explaining

cultural practices or providing translations for foreign words, he shapes our
interpretations as readers. As the narrative unfolds, the editor cites a variety of past
readings of the text in his footnotes, all by males.

Though the editor initially presents the cabal as formidable scholars, he subtly
undermines their authority, ultimately undercutting the male pretense of learning. In
the preface, he describes the Cabal as “the most Eminent Philosophers of all Nations”
(50), adding the detail that they worked twenty-seven months on the project and only
translated three pieces. Although this alone does not seem like a questioning of their
ability, the footnotes that the editor disperses through the body of the text reveal the sorts
of issues that consumed their time and do cast doubt on their eminence. For instance,
they cannot decide how to translate “Oozoff,” the name of the republic that Eovaai visits:
“The Interpretation of this Name engag’d the Cabal in a Dispute which took up five
Moons. Some wou’d have it Wisdom, but the Majority were of opinion that Impartiality
came nearer the Meaning” (108 n). The clear implication is that the two terms are
synonymous or should both be included, but the cabal spends months arguing for one
over the other.

The editor’s practices also illustrate that the cabal’s rationality objectifies and
exoticizes women. He juxtaposes footnotes that deal with factual matters, such as the
cultural practices of Iljaveo or the correct translations of words, with those that use the
behavior of Eovaai or other female characters as the basis for conclusions about the
female sex as a whole. This opens up women as an objective field of inquiry, making
them something foreign to the reader that needs to be understood by specific explanation. It mimics the anthropological urge of the editor in defining words and unfamiliar cultural practices, setting up women as an "other" subset of humanity. By this practice, women are denied the subject position.

The editor opens up the cabal to ridicule because of their extreme alienation from their own bodies. They are also portrayed as stumped by women over the issue of female sexual desire:

The Cabal were at a loss for the Authors Meaning in this Expression [that Eovaai was "beginning to feel such Emotions" in regard to Ochihatou that would cause her discomfort]; and having consulted the Ladies about it, were assured by them that the Sex is wholly free from any Inquietudes of that nature. As it would be unmannerly to doubt their Veracity in this Point, we must either believe it Malice in the Historian, or that the Women of those times were of Constitutions very different from the present. (92 n)

The cabal are so divorced from physical experience, particularly the sort of physical experience that would bring them into contact with women, in their devotion to philosophy (which is actually linguistics—being able to translate the ancient languages). They must ask to see if women experience sexual arousal. The text seems to ridicule them for turning sexuality into an area for objective intellectual inquiry. There is something comical as well about the detour these learned men take into tracing female sexuality: although these men are the first to condemn curiosity (especially "womanish" curiosity) and the inability to control corporeality, they pursue this hint of sex with an
enthusiasm that suggests the sexual satisfaction of the pursuit of knowledge. Their industrious inquiries indicate a prurient interest that provides some titillation and sexual satisfaction. The description of the cabal’s inquiries also mocks their naive belief in the negative answers that women supply: the text seems to laugh at anyone who would actually believe that women do not respond sexually. Finally, the text seems to smile along with the women, who, acknowledging the demands of propriety, maintain that they do not have sexual feelings. These women demonstrate the power, fearful from the male perspective, that women have to dissipulate about their desire and during sexual activity due to the lack of phallus. While Freud and Lacan would designate this as lamentable weakness, Haywood suggests the disruptive power it bestows on women to trump male inquiry. In this case, female sexual desire is able to elude male intellectuality because it is hidden and outside empirical experience.

The footnotes’ tend to substitute one woman for the whole sex, a suspect inductive, empirical process that the editor exposes by including those notes. For instance, when Eovaai first succumbs to Ochihatou’s emphasis on the body, the Commentator (as one male voice is designated repeatedly) quickly claims that she indicates a propensity toward vanity, a failure of the entire sex. He portrays reason, in the form of education, as an ineffective and temporary mask for the female desire to be the phallus:

This Passage [implying that Eovaai easily feel to the temptation of despite her father’s teachings] gives the Commentator an Opportunity of exerting his usual Severity: He makes a long Dissertation to prove Vanity is so much a Part of
Woman, that tho' Precepts of Education may prevent its Appearance for a time, it will sooner or later burst into a Blaze; and often, on the most trifling Encouragement. (73 n)

The Commentator is eager to assert that women's primarily physical orientation is inherent and therefore inevitable. The Commentator's choice of "burst into a Blaze" indicates the uncontrollable, fierce, and passionate nature of female vanity. Its response seems out of proportion, its "burst" not commensurate with "trifling Encouragement": the out-of-proportion response exonerates men from blame in the process and makes women look even more irrational, uncontrollable, and unpredictable.

The Commentator displays an intense hatred of woman, a hatred so strong that by the end of the text, he is almost frothing at the mouth and clearly very irrational. The "long Dissertation" quoted above (the editor often stresses the length and "severity" of such outbreaks) only leads to increasingly harsh invective. His most severe reaction occurs near the text's end, when he responds to Eovaai's decision to use the perspective given her by the goddess Halafamai to watch Atamadoul and Ochihatou having sex: "The Commentator employs no less than three whole Pages in the most bitter Invecitives on this Propensity, which, he will have it, is only natural to Womankind" (135 n). Here the editor even eliminates the actual diatribe, leaving the impression that the Commentator responds without reason and in complete disproportion to a rather petty stimuli. He needs little prompting to return continually to his favorite misogynistic themes.

The editor also stands in for Haywood herself (Wilputte 28), who originally published this text anonymously in 1736, only adding her name to its title page with its
second publication in 1741. The Chinese editor's position as a foreigner, a "feminized" foreigner due to his association with the East, his status as a cultural outsider, one categorizing with the anthropological urge (position often identified with women), also the subservient position implied by his offering of the text to the audience, one who is on the outside and must look in on events as they unfold, parallels Haywood's own position as a woman in a patriarchal culture (Wilputte 28). The editor urges the reader to "divest himself of the Prejudice of Education" so that he may believe that accuracy of the narrative, which relativizes Western history by insisting that the world is much older than the West maintains, that the story of Genesis does not recount the actual origin of the world, that it once was an entirely different geographical configuration, that once space travel was possible, all kinds of fantastic elements (48). The editor is also often the source of culturally relativistic statements regarding women. For instance, when he cites the Commentator who attacks Eovaai for intellectual presumption when she questions the jewels, the editor states that he may not have felt that way "had he been honour'd with the Acquaintance of some European Ladies" (57 n): additionally, when the editor tells the story of Atamadoul, whom the footnotes call an "antiquated Coquet" and there identify "the Character [...] of her whole Sex" (125 n), he quickly points out that since there are no such women at present, the comments must be true only of ancient women.¹⁴

While the editor's remarks are often ironic (as when he speaks about the lack of present-day coquets) and cast doubt upon the actual value of women in his contemporary London, they are also often relativizing, countering the tendency to make universal statements across time that ignore the differences that national origin and time make. The
editor underscores the possibility of introducing error by making universalizing statements about women. He asks us to realize that cultural specifics create subsets of women that must be compared to any attempt to create a general category of “woman.” It is this sort of rationality that I think Haywood endorses: that by the outsider, who is able to step outside the accepted and see things as relatively constructed. She wants a reason that can hang in suspense, in a sort of irony, recognizing that two equally possible options exist, that there will be different conclusions, and that they are contingent upon individual subject position. She endorses a reason that does not seek for universals, as Descartes did, but for something contingent and personal.

Haywood also subverts male reason through her manipulation of language. The issue of translation is an important one in the text, as it has been in the discussion we have traced thus far. The function of the oedipal complex, particularly as theorized by Lacan, is to bring the child into the realm of the symbol, which is the realm of both language and the law (Grosz 67-74); this is the point of Cixous’ fable of the Chinese emperor and his wives, who are brought out of laughter (pleasure) into military language of oral symbols by the man who threatens to decapitate them (42). According to Lacan, the child gives up the pleasures of union with the mother in order to enter the father’s world, which is law and language (Grosz 67-74). In literal ways, this was made true in eighteenth-century life and its separation of oikos and civis. Although both men and women learned English, of course, only men learned Latin, which was a sort of mark of reason: “The teaching of Latin to boys thus marked the boundaries between the private world of the family, in which the vernacular was used, and the external world of learning.
to which males had access" (Lloyd 44). Conduct books generally distinguish between ancient languages, such as Latin and Greek, as part of the male curriculum, while the female curriculum, if it included foreign languages, would include modern languages such as French and Italian.  

The mastery of ancient languages was a mark of superiority that men held up over women. This is indicated by the "mystic Characters engraven on the Inside" of Eovaai's jewel that she is not allowed to translate. The learned men of the kingdom hold up a barrier between her and full entry into the world of learning, logic, and language. Eovaai, however, is excluded from the god-man chain of knowledge that would allow her access to this original language. In a self-perpetuating cycle, language serves as the basis of female estrangement from knowledge here, and Haywood protests being locked away from the language of men and power, the language of learning that would allow her to discuss politics (power) authoritatively.

While Haywood illustrates Eovaai's exclusion from this realm, the inferior order of reason she is offered that has been constructed by men, she subverts the logic of language, using the premise of the oriental manuscript as carte blanche to create her own language. The narrative is sprinkled with words from the fictional cultures Haywood pretends to be documenting, from proper names such as "Eovaai" and "Yxmitia" to "Alhahuza" and "Oozoff," to nouns like "Todo" (Hypotafan coin) and "Ypres" (evil spirits). Some names, like "Todo," a very small coin that brings to mind "much to do about nothing," imply a sly joke that alert readers will catch. Such names suggest that there is a secret code that could unlock them: in the tradition of political allegory, we imagine that we might be able to rearrange the letters and reveal the identity of the "true
life" person for whom the character is meant to stand in. "Eovaai." which I identify by its sound with "Eve." is an exception in its decipherability. Despite one's best efforts, most names resist any kind of interpretation, and they even resist pronunciation. The lay reader is left frustratingly dependent upon Haywood for translations. much as women must rely on men when they are left in the position of miseducation that Haywood sees them in. Haywood also puts herself in a position of power by claiming a proximity to "[t]he Language of Nature" (xiv). the language spoken at the creation of the world (which the Chinese date far before Adam). With decentering moves such as this one. Haywood models a reason further removed from traditional male authority, one that is inclusive and open to truths (not truth) from sources outside hegemonic power.

The Jewel Lost: The Lady Libertine

Alongside Haywood's consideration of the mind and Opposition principles as they apply to women sits her consideration of women in combination with the body and Walpole. Having been removed from the realm of learning due to her unsanctioned inquiry into the jewel and sexuality. Eovaai is moved to the court of Hypostafa. over which Ochihatou reigns. and presented with the opportunity to become a libertine (Wilputte 33). A crucial change has taken place at court, however. that makes the novel reject that option for Eovaai. In the Hypostafan court. corporeality is associated. explicitly. with relinquishing reason and wielding arbitrary power. which is set against to law and order: in addition, it is associated with the rising commercial class's consumerism and greed. equally threatening to the cives. Eovaai's sexuality is thus dangerous and must be controlled by domesticity.
After being ejected from her father's good graces, Eovaai is drawn under the influence of Ochihatou, the prime minister of Hypostafa who has usurped control from its rightful king in the service of his own “natural Pride, his Lust, [and] his exorbitant Ambition” (63). Haywood specifies that, like Walpole (Beasley 422), Ochihatou “was born of a mean Extraction” (62), situating him firmly outside the aristocratic tradition. Under his guidance, however, the court of Hypostafa has been established as a space of corporeal abandonment stereotypically associated with aristocracy (of, say, court life under the Stuarts): self-interest and material gain, bacchanalian feasts that are accompanied by sexual indulgence, and elegant clothing. The court he has established can be seen as the opposite of Eojaeu’s court and Astell’s monastery: the fulfillment of the body side of the Cartesian chasm to the complete neglect of the rational side. Haywood depicts Ochihatou as manipulating Eovaai into pursuing his side of the Cartesian split. Although Eojaeu persistently directed his daughter’s attention to her mind rather than her body, Ochihatou appeals directly and repeatedly to her corporeality and vanity. His servants, while helping Eovaai to bed, significantly a bed with a mirrored canopy, in his palace further his seduction plan by forcing her to recognize her body part by part:

[T]hey proceeded to the most gross Flattery of her Beauty: and laying her on the Bed, the Canopy of which was lined with Looking-Glass: Cast up your Eyes, most lovely Princess, said one of them, and behold a Sight more worthy the Admiration, even of yourself, than any thing this sumptuous Palace, or the whole World can shew.—Your own heavenly Person.—Ah. what a ravishing
Proportion!—What fine-turned Limbs!—How formed for Love is every Part!—

What Legs!—What Arms!—What Breasts! (72)

The itemizing of body parts reduces Eovaai to nothing but body, almost a heap of
“Limbs,” reversing Eojaeu’s efforts to make her nothing but mind. This deconstruction
of Eovaai’s body seems a preparation for her construction of herself in a new role, that of
being the phallus, the object of desire, and gaining her power through her sexuality rather
than through entry into the symbolic. In this passage she has adopted a new ego ideal, the
one that Ochihatou preferred: an image of herself as nothing but body. The absorption
with physical appearances is, as both Lacan and Freud describe, a symptom or sign of
being the object rather than the subject of desire. At that moment, she begins to see
herself as the servant did: as a sexualized body.¹⁷ With the addition of fine clothing the
next morning, Eovaai’s conversion to complete sensuality, her rejection of her father’s
moderation and self-denial, is accomplished: “She now, for the first time, considered the
Perfections of her Person: She view’d herself with pleasure [. . .] and from this moment,
assumed an innate Vanity, and outward Haughtiness, to which hitherto she had been a
perfect Stranger” (72-73).

Indeed, Eovaai’s discovery of her body, vanity, and the power involved in being
the phallus rather than having the phallus (which would require her to submit to the terms
of the oedipal complex and, by most psychoanalytic accounts, is not possible for women
in any case) returns her to a state of sensual pursuit similar to that in the preoedipal stage.
In the terms provided by Cixous, she has been decapitated; in fact, she has lost the crown
of Ijaveo and has been evicted from the realm of law and logic over which her father
presided. She has also, however, come to wield power over Ochihatou by accepting his physical construction of her, for she knows the power of sexual desire and can, to a certain extent, manipulate him. By tracing the exchange of reason for power, Haywood sets the two against each other, implying that power of a certain type, particularly corporeal, is not always compatible with reason. Haywood makes it clear that in attempting to wield the type of power and control produced by sexuality, Eovaai makes herself subject to that power and control. After a court feast and passionate dancing, Ochihatou brings Eovaai out to his garden, a profusion of trees and flowers that Haywood describes with delicious detail. and lectures her on the privilege of high station. He even offers her “absolute” power as “Queen of [his] Soul [. . .] as well as of the adoring Nations” (76). gradually “debilitat[ing] her Reason, and lull[ing] asleep all Principles of Virtue in her Mind” (76). Eovaai abruptly abandons all her ties to virtue and reason together:

_Eovaai, in an Instant, became so wholly abandoned to this pernicious Doctrine, that she thought all the Time lost, which she had spent in endeavouring to subdue her Passions. [. . .] Not all the principles of Religion and Morality, given her by Eojaeu, not a long Habitude of Virtue, nor the natural Modesty of her Sex. had the power to stem the Torrent of Libertinism. that now o´er-whelm´d her Soul. (77)_

This flood of “Libertinism” mimics a sexual release, a sort of orgasm over the “Soul” that marks Eovaai’s willingness to submit to Ochihatou’s seduction. Her words, “[F]rom henceforth I renounce all Rules but those prescribed by my own Will----all Law. but Inclination” (77-78), mark a definitive regression from the law of the (F)ather to the will
and inclination with which the preoedipal child attempts to manipulate and control the mother-child relationship. Ironically, at the point when Eovaai perceives herself to be choosing most freely, she is unwittingly bowing to the law of sensuality and another patriarchal figure who wishes to control her body and mind. At this moment, when Eovaai is prepared to commit herself to ruling and being ruled by the body, she is prevented by divine intervention. A governmental advisor suddenly interrupts Ochihatou on official business, and Halafamai (again, Truth) arrives, gives Eovaai a magic perspective (telescope) through which she can see Ochihatou's actual physical deformity, and whisks her away from the Hypostafan court. She meets a Hypostafan patriot who reveals to her the abuses of Ochihatou's rule on the rest of the kingdom and reiterates Ejaue's principles of limited rule. Threatened by Ochihatou's pursuit, she travels to Oozoff, a bordering republic, and is further persuaded by a prominent leader of that country that she should adhere to her father's principles. This divine intervention is the text's indication that libertinism simply cannot be an option for Eovaai: it is rejected by the text's need to oppose Walpole and side with reason and against the body. Unless lawlessness is to reign, Eovaai must be subjected to order, forced to comply with the conditions of the oedipal complex and subject to the law that it represents.

The novel resolves itself by taking away from Eovaai the possibilities of being either the learned lady or the libertine. When she is delivered back to Ijaveo (granted, by the machinations of Ochihatou), Ejaue and the gods determine her choice of husband. In fact, Ejaue and the gods determine her choice of a husband: Eovaai knows she is to marry Adelhu because he is the owner of the jewel that she lost, and it fits in the carcanet
that she still has. When she sees the jewel fit into place, a moment of phallic fulfillment, she immediately offers Adelhu her kingdom: “as a Part of the Happiness you were promis’d with me. take the Kingdom of Ijaveo” (164), essentially offering up the dowry her father provided her. The last sentence of the text, which describes “the Scepters of Hypostasa and Ijaveo being united in the Persons of Adelhu and Eovai” (166), indicates Adelhu’s new dominance over Eovai as the focus of the text. Eovai never resumes sole control of her kingdom; instead, she is resituated as a wife in the domestic realm, where her husband can regulate her body and her mind as her father once did. Significantly, the last lines of the novel reinstate patriarchal authority, not just through marriage but through the reunion of Adelhu and his father. Haywood closes the novel by telling us that the “pious Adelhu,” after marrying Eovai, immediately takes her to see his father, from whom he has been estranged by Ochihatou for many years. Where once we had the father-daughter lineage of Eojaeu and Eovai, we now have the reinstated patriarchal lineage of Oeros. Adelhu’s father: Adelhu; and Eovai. Thus the novel and its concluding marriage seems to restore order in two different kingdoms and avoid the horror (appetite) of a woman on the throne. With the destruction of Ochihatou, reason is able to reign, along with order (stability, and limited rather than arbitrary power). In any case, the concluding order does not include Eovai on the throne acting rationally. She has no need to exercise her rationality or learn more about ruling, for it is made clear that her husband ruled her nation perfectly in her absence.

Neither, however, does the text allow Eovai the body. Eovai’s desire for Adelhu determines that she marry him even before she finds that he has the jewel:
Reason, had she been more the Mistress of it, then she was at present, had not the power of extricating her from this Labyrinth of Perplexity.----She knew no what she ought to do; but found too well for her Peace of Mind what she must do:--She felt she loved, and loved to that degree, that to live without him would be a Misery greater than in all her Sufferings she had ever before had any notion of.

(155)

Marriage is figured as the containment of this desire; in addition, we still see operative the division between body and mind. Sexual desire performs an important role in this text, for it makes it necessary for Eovaai to submit herself to a husband: if she did not feel sexual desire, she would not consent to marrying Adelhu and giving control of her kingdom over to him. Because of sexual desire, Eovaai’s reason becomes subject both to her body and to Adelhu, to whom she offers it when she becomes his wife.

Eovaai’s fate at the end of the novel is very bourgeois and anticipates the resolution of female fate in the domestic novel, which would soon supersede other prose fiction. Eovaai’s fate, her containment in the oikos, resembles that of the middle class because she has to surrender both body and mind in the identity of wife. Haywood winds up seizing very middle-class values and applying them to the aristocratic female body as a way of complying with her Opposition politics. In so doing, she foreshadows the increased attention that would go to controlling female appetite as a way of enabling men to unleash avariciousness in an increasingly capitalistic marketplace (Armstrong 89-90).
Generic Resistance

As my argument has established thus far, Haywood stages the struggle between the body and mind, between Walpole and the Opposition, within the arenas of politics and feminism: this struggle pervades the realm of literary genre with the text's grafting of elements of the domestic novel onto amatory fiction. While Haywood's conclusion in the domestic novel reflects a qualified allegiance to reason and the containment of the body for the public interest. Haywood's deployment of the amatory mode indicates her valuation of the body, its powers, and its pleasures, which she is reluctant to surrender as a woman who is offered reason only under the terms dictated by patriarchy.

Adventures' publication date, 1736, represents a precipitous moment in literary history, the verge of the transition from heterogeneous, prenovelistic forms to the emergence and eventual hegemony of the early domestic novel. Literary critics often identify 1740, which marks the publication of Samuel Richardson's Pamela and is just four years after Adventures, as the significant dividing line. In the initial decades of the century, prose fiction often drew from the influence of romance, secret histories, roman à clef, and other forms that rely upon the body, the supernatural, and the scandalous for material. The sexual mingled freely with the political and was used to satirical purposes in the works of such writers, men and woman, as Delarivere Manley. With the emergence of the domestic novel, sexual and political topics were gradually forced from prose fiction, and social mores excluded women writers in particular from engaging with such material. Pamela signifies the growing consolidation of genre and gender, as Rachel Carnell puts it, 'the obvious overlap between novelistic discourse and politics gradually
diminished" (200). Novels were to deal with the supposedly apolitical domestic, and women, though previously publishing in a wide variety of forms, including scandal chronicles, roman a clef, amatory fiction, and romance, were expected to produce novels and not “masculine.” political literature such as the periodical (Carnell 200). To simplify, women were given reign over the novel, sentimentality, and morality at the cost of generic variety and explicit engagement with the body. The generic variety of Adventures positions it as Janus-faced, looking backward with its elements of romance, travelogue, spy narrative, secret history, and political allegory, and forward with elements of the domestic novel. I contend that the ending of Haywood’s text, Eovaai’s marriage to Adelhu and her concomitant offering of her kingdom to her husband, anticipates the domestic novel in its conventional ending with matrimony and submission. The abrupt ending the novel reaches when male reason is reasserted and marriage is inevitable (the marriage endorsed and, indeed, prearranged by the father) only highlights the productivity of the body and the supernatural, which are both irrational elements.20 In the text and emphasize what is being given up by exiling them.

Critics who have attempted to define what constitutes the novel as a distinct generic category, such as Ian Watt and J. Paul Hunter, have identified verisimilitude, or realism, as one of its primary features. In other words, the principles of the domestic novel (that which organizes it and makes it work) demand that law exist: laws of cause and effect are in place, and the actions of the character result in effects that drive the plot. Although critics of Ian Watt recognize that the novel is not as realistic as it has been described (they often cite the wonderful coincidences that drive the novels of Henry
Fielding), we know that the plot must be driven by certain laws. The novel is usually defined, by contemporary critics as well as those writing in the eighteenth century, against prose fiction like the romance, which (it is said) features improbable characters, settings and events. These texts allow for the intervention of otherworldly forces like magic and divine action to determine plot as well as the “probable” results of character activity.

In Haywood’s text, elements of the supernatural drive the plot and are extremely productive: adventures that recall the romance in their fantastic and episodic nature produce further plot activity as well as reading pleasure (the pleasure of the text is generated here). The plot could not even begin without Ochihatou’s lawlessness, and it ends when the threat to reason is eliminated. For instance, the transgression of reason often produces pleasure in the text. When Eovaai decides to abandon her father’s principles of rationality and sleep with Ochihatou, we get a fabulously sensual description of the garden in which it takes place as well as the couple’s mounting physical passion for each other. The vicarious pleasure of the text mounts as well. At the moment that she is about to yield to him, an advisor interrupts and calls Ochihatou away on state business. The text is also interrupted by the accompanying intertext, the story of virtue in distress: Yxmilia, the princess of a foreign nation, has been kidnapped and held captive to a man who will not let her marry the prince of her choice, and out of greed as well as passion for her, he demands that she marry him instead. This altercation has produced an international conflict including war, and the people siding against Yxmilia are depicted as yielding to irrational passions (a tautology in this text). So we have all this description, all of this textual pleasure, produced by violations of reason, including the forthcoming
intervention by the goddess. Truth, on Evoaai’s behalf. The goddess’s intervention impels Evoaai to leave Hypostafa, and even that produces more plot. According to the commentators, one of the times that Evoaai most violates reason is when she uses the telescope that Truth uses to watch Ochihatou and Atamadou have sex, a use to which Truth did not mean her to put the telescope. This, another violation of the laws of reason, produces one of the more pleasurable parts of the text, when the audience gets to enjoy the voyeuristic thrill of seeing someone else have sex from the comfort of their reading chairs. This thrill has to be relinquished in the text’s final pages. Evoaai turns from the heroine of the amatory piece to that of the domestic piece in her close brush with seduction, which in an earlier piece of fiction would have been her downfall, but here she has to remain chaste so that we can get the (nearly, and Haywood winks at us at this point) perfect ending of the domestic novel on the last page.

The Law of the Father takes over from the kind of chaotic, inchoate literature that Haywood produces throughout most of the text. Throughout most of the novel, we see the possibilities of literature that does not follow the rules of reason and realism, and is preoedipal in giving pleasure gratuitously, with no rhyme or reason. We get voyeuristic glimpses, for instance, of people having sex. Whenever Ochihatou appears, and he is associated with magic and violation of natural laws, the plot moves along. He is obliterated when made subject to Adlehu (representative of the father), reason, and there the plot stops. The Law of the Father is also represented by male critics who began, around the time of Adventures, to worry about the effect of imaginative literature on the female libido in particular. Authoritative sources like Samuel Johnson and Samuel
Richardson began to change the very fabric of the novel by insisting that it serve the purposes of virtue rather than the libido.

Haywood underscores the operations of the Law of the Father that close off certain generic possibilities and shut down female literary productivity (fertility, reproductivity controlled by the father: women as writers cannot produce whatever they want because they are being controlled by the Law of the Father). At the end of the novel, she complies with this pressure and is pushed into the domestic novel. She is propelled out of her categorization as “reigning mistress of the amatory novella” (Schofield 17) into a space where she no longer has authority and power. The text opposes authority and reason, and Haywood evidences a reluctance to surrender authority, that which she derives from her association with the body as a woman writer. She sees women writers being forced to give up the body, over which they are assumed to have some sort of power, and enter into the realm of a sort of reason, where they will always be second in power and controlled by men. I maintain that the novel models a type of reason that is more indirect, that uses forms of irrationality, including the body to make the case for reason. Haywood is trying to argue that the two do not have to be distinct.

Conclusion

Haywood’s web of political, feminist, and literary concerns places her in an uneasy relationship with the body and mind. Suspicious of the body in her anti-Walpole stance, she values reason and the virtuous life it enables. Eovaai’s example demonstrates Haywood’s faith that women can and should exercise rationality: Haywood questions, however, the terms with which patriarchy mediates the relationship between women and
reason. In her analysis of male reason, she identifies its exclusive and misogynistic inclination. elements that contribute to her hesitation to offer it without reservation to women, as Astell would. The elements of pleasure and power that Haywood identifies with the body further prevent her from choosing reason for women without qualification. The critique of male reason that Adventures of Eovaai sets forth includes a model of a female rationality, one that inclusive, relativizing, and incorporates the body as a persuasive force. In effect, Haywood tries to deconstruct the Cartesian binary and replace it with an integrated form of rational corporealism.

With the increasing pressure on learning and libertinism applied by the rising middle class during the eighteenth century, Haywood turned to more conventional literary forms that worked within domesticity. Her last novel, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (1752), is quite conservative in its message of domestic virtue: Betsy, the protagonist, is only required to control her body, preserving her virtue (which means only chastity here) before and after marriage. In my next chapter, I take up a text that also locates women firmly in the domestic: Sarah Fielding’s Governess. Unlike Haywood’s Adventures or Betsy Thoughtless, however, Fielding’s text brings reason and pleasure with women into the home.
Notes

1 As I do, Wilputte argues that issues of gender and politics parallel each other in Haywood’s text: “[The text] displaces contemporary politics onto a grid of sexual conflicts [. . .]” (27). She draws on Ros Ballaster, who draws together sex, politics, and genre as I do in her study of amatory fiction: “[Women’s amatory plots] attempt to articulate sexual and political interest simultaneously, with reference both to the struggle for a specifically female authority in sexual and party political representation and to the more general struggle to resolve ethical and epistemological crises in the social order through narrative form” (16; qtd. in Wilputte 27).

2 I draw on Jerry C. Beasley, “Portraits of a Monster: Robert Walpole and Early English Prose Fiction,” and the section entitled “Historical Background” in Earla Wilputte’s introduction to the 1999 Adventures of Eovaii (12-16) for this description of the political situation that surrounded Haywood’s text. Both mention Pocock and the light that his ideas of political conflict in the era shed on this situation, as well as Eovaii’s alliance with Opposition ideals (Beasley 41; Wilputte 14). For more detailed treatments, see those sources.

1 Schofield recognizes the Edenic overtones to the novel: “The Adventures of Eovaii. Princess of Ijaveo begins in a never-never land of pre-Edenic splendor [. . .]. The Edenlike atmosphere is soon shattered, however, as the selfish desires of men for money and power erupt” (78-9).
4 Pocock discusses the conceptions of *oikos, cives*, and the threat Whiggism and commercialism presented to them in chapters six and eleven of *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (103-23; 215-310). Genevieve Lloyd traces the results of Cartesian philosophy, which creates a material realm and relegates women to it (48-50); Nancy Tuana makes a similar critique (36-42). I am combining this critique with politics in this passage.


6 If Eovaai is Eve, her father is the closest thing the text has to offer to an Adam. Note the switch here: what is a married couple in Genesis becomes a father and daughter. This reinforces my reading that Adelhu stands in for the father when he marries Eovaai. Haywood conveys that the marriage market as it is constructed in the eighteenth century essentially requires women to marry their fathers, for they marry the man of their father’s choice and then act as conduits for property transfer between father and husband.

7 I thank Louise Penner for identifying this moment as masturbatory.

8 My discussion of the fetish comes from the section entitled “The Penis and the Phallus” in chapter five of Grosz’s text (116-22) and excerpts of “Unsuitable Substitutes for the Sexual Object—Fetishism” from Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (249-50).

9 Lacan would call this disavowal, which involves both recognition and “denial of perception,” in this case of female castration (Grosz 118).
In this reading of the threats imposed by patriarchy to control the disruptive female body and mind in *Adventures*, I follow Cixous’ description of this process, particularly her emphasis upon its violence or force (42-3).

I discuss the editorial apparatus of the text, including footnotes, in the next section.

Wilputte addresses Haywood’s undercutting of the commentators and “learned men”: “As the voices in the footnotes multiply[,] [. . .] the notes become argumentative, contradictory, and lacking in authority” (28-9). She also describes the Commentator as “misogynistic” (29).

The text itself explores human nature in general, and the footnotes explore female nature. There is no specific exploration of male nature.

It is often difficult to discern the degree of irony in the editor’s comments on European women. The latter comment, that antiquated coquets no longer exist, can definitely be considered ironic, but the former comment is less clear. In any case, the editor underscores the possibility of introducing error by making universalizing statements about women. He asks us to realize that cultural specifics create subsets of women that must be compared to any attempt to create a general category of “woman.”

See my discussion of the female curriculum in the section “Education Fitting a Woman” in chapter one.

By offering an alternative to the Western account of time and the beginning of the world, Haywood relativizes what patriarchy presents as orthodox truth. This move
illustrates the feminine threat to received knowledge—that of rewriting from the perspective of the disenfranchised and Other.

17 Wilputte identifies Eovaai’s sojourn in the Hypostafan court as a time of aristocratic display, the kind Nancy Armstrong maintains was displaced by middle-class values (33).

18 The text makes clear by Ochihatou’s later threats of rape and his near success in carrying them out that physical strength, an attribute in which men usually bear an advantage, can always overcome the power women have in their ability to produce sexual desire in men.

19 For more on the plurality of associations with gardens, including their link with Eden, in the amatory fiction tradition, see April London, “Placing the Female: The Metonymic Garden in Amatory and Pious Narrative, 1700-1740.”

20 Schofield calls the ending of the novel “the triumphing of the rational powers over the irrational” (80), meaning that Ochihatou’s magic powers are defeated. Mitzi Myers discusses how fairy tales have elements “imaginative excesses” that are opposed to rationality (118). I similarly identify the supernatural elements of the romance as “irrational.”

21 Schofield supplies a passage from James Sterling in 1725 that indicates Haywood’s authority in this genre: he calls her “Heav’n’s bright Minister on High. / Command[ing] the throbbing Breast, and wat’ry Eye” (“To Mrs. Eliza Haywood, On her Writings” qtd. in Schofield 17).
CHAPTER THREE:

THE VOICE OF REASON IN THE HOME: SARAH FIELDING'S GOVERNESS

The conclusion of Eliza Haywood’s Adventures of Eovaai domesticates the aristocratic woman, severing her traditional ties with learning and libertinism as it moves Eovaai out of a prominent role in the public sphere into the role of Adelthu’s wife in the private sphere. Within the home Eovaai’s passions are contained, and her mind appears negligibly necessary. Thirteen years after Adventures Sarah Fielding brings reason into the home with her Governess; or, The Little Female Academy (1749) for the women and girls who are, for her, firmly ensconced there. Haywood figures reason in opposition to the body and pleasure; Fielding also utilizes the mind-body binary, but she shifts the location of pleasure to the exercise of reason. In the household Fielding delineates reason defines, produces, and reproduces female pleasure. Her fictional girls’ school represents a domestic space in which rational motherhood is modeled and practiced. In positing the role of woman as enlightened maternity, Fielding elaborates on undertones in Astell and anticipates Wollstonecraft, both of whom identify better childrearing practices as one of the primary benefits of developing the rational capacity of women. Unlike Astell and Wollstonecraft, however, Fielding details the day-to-day procedure of raising children. She turns mothering into a reasonable and pleasurable process, qualifying the female retirement from public life into the domestic as preference rather than coercion. In this chapter, I argue that in The Governess Fielding creates a model rational household in which pleasure is derived from a number of properly feminine sources. Initially I trace the form, type, and sources of Fielding’s particular rationality.
emphasizing its masculine foundation and domesticating messages. I then identify the means through which this reason is developed and deployed: literary activity and surveillance, both of which provide mother and children with gratification. Finally I position rationality as the regulator of the household economy of pleasure. While I see Fielding's construction of a rational domesticity and maternity as efforts to provide women with substantive, valued, and socially acceptable work and to develop their rationality rather than passions or emotions, I critique her plan for adopting an essential male reason and using it to secure women within middle-class domesticity.

**Listening and Speaking: The Voice of Reason**

_The Governess_ weaves a concern for literary activity, reason, and domesticity into a delicate web that reveals a plan for reconfiguring the home around rationality. Unusual because it is a conduct novel for young girls and their mothers to read together. Fielding's text is a complex work that incorporates a wide variety of textual genres. Its overarching narrative tells the story of nine prepubescent girls under the care of Mrs. Teachum, a wise and vigilant governess who models rational maternity, at her boarding school, the students of which function much as her children. The novel opens with the girls' unfeeminine brawl over a basket of apples, which sets up the remainder of the narrative as the process of rehabilitating the fallen girls and establishing an edenic, harmonious existence at the school. Teachum and Jenny Peace, the oldest student who fills the role of mother-in-training, lead the girls in converting to reason, which, instead of religion, is featured as the key to a good and happy life, a process that restores their femininity and is accomplished by the exchanging of stories, letters, fables, and fairy
tales, all of which are included as intertexts. Each girl’s renewal, her dedication to reason and the new life it brings, is marked by her public confession before the other girls of a past life of sin and indiscretion. The text ends when Jenny Peace leaves the academy to live with her aunt, who has returned from overseas; peace thrives in the school, where Jenny’s name need only be invoked to set wayward girls’ once more upon the straight and narrow path of reason.

Rationality in *The Governess* takes a distinct outline that I. following the repeated language of the text, will call “the Voice of Reason.” The origin and properties of the voice are best laid forth by examining “The Princess HEBE: A Fairy-Tale,” one of the intertexts in which it plays a prominent role. The tale, which Jenny Peace reads to the assembly of little scholars, relates the story of the fairy Sybella and her visitors, the queen of Tonga and her daughter, Hebe. The queen and princess have been forced out of their kingdom after the king’s murder. Sybella, a product of paternal instruction, voices reason to the visitors as she relates her history: her story reveals the penetration of the domestic, female space by reason that has its origin in the patriarchal domain of husbands and fathers.

Sybella’s message is one of exchange: the pleasures of the public sphere and power for the pleasures of the domestic sphere and virtue. She is uniquely qualified to instruct the queen and Hebe, for she too has been forced from her castle home, in her case by her passionate sister, after the death of her father. Much like Eovaa, Sybella recounts being instructed by her father, who began teaching her “as soon as [she] was old enough to hearken to Reason” (81). This “Reason” consists mainly of domesticating messages.
Sybella's father tells her that "the greatest Blessing in this World" is "a calm and
contented Mind" (82), not beauty, power, wealth, or position, and that "Strength and
Constancy of Mind enough to bear any Injuries" will enable her to maintain happiness
(81). Both messages preach passivity, "bear[ing] any Injuries" rather than working to
avert or avenge them. While Sybella is not encouraged to act on her own behalf, she is to
exercise virtue on behalf of others on a limited scale; her father encourages domestic
charity, giving her the "daily [Lesson] [...] that [she] should never omit any one Day of
[her] Life endeavouring to be as serviceable as [she] possibly could to any Person in
Distress" (85).

Sybella's father provides her the means to escape the public life and retire into
privacy and domesticity. Again as in the case of Eovaai, he gives Sybella a magical gift
on his deathbed: he presents her with a wand that will provide her with the necessities of
life. He instructs Sybella to escape her evil sister after his death by fleeing the castle and
living in the depths of a wood. When Sybella follows these commands, the wand causes
"a plain neat House" to be established in a womblike clearing in a forest that she calls
"Placid Grove" (78; 85). In return for her obedience and dedication to the Voice of
Reason, the father's phallic wand erects a domestic space for the young fairy, a protected
retreat that can only be penetrated by the father. At Placid Grove, Sybella learns and
becomes a proselyte for the message that living in nearly complete seclusion—occupying
oneself with only the occasional opportunity of charity and being taken care of by the
father/husband (no matter how simply)—is preferable to a more public, eventful life. She
is perfectly content, while her sister, who now lives in the castle with riches, amusement, power, and continual company, is unhappy.

Sybella, informed by her father’s Voice of Reason, has come to value domesticity over publicity, but the queen must learn this lesson. In her error, she grieves her loss of public life:

The Queen [. . .] for some time incessantly wept at the dismal Thought, that the Princess seemed now, by this Reverse of Fate, to be for ever excluded all Hopes of being seated on her Father’s Throne [. . .]. She could not divert her Thoughts from the Palace from which she had been driven, to fix them on any other Object: nor would her Grief suffer her to reflect, that it was possible for the Princess to be happy without a Crown. (78-79)

As this passage reveals, the queen is mistaken, causing herself unnecessary grief, because she does not believe that she or her daughter can be happy in the simple, secluded life that Sybella lives. The queen must give up the idea that her daughter should find the meaning in her life by acceding to her father’s throne, to playing the father’s role and wielding phallic power, prestige, and position. Only when she begins to recognize the superiority of Sybella’s lifestyle, which consists of nearly complete seclusion interrupted occasionally by the appearance of “Person[s] in Distress” (85), does Fielding portray her as listening to reason:

At length. Time. the great Cure of all Ills, in some measure abated her Sorrows [. . .]. She could not avoid seeing, that her little Hostess enjoyed as perfect a State of Happiness. as is possible to attain in this World: That she was free from anxious
Cares, undisturbed by restless Passions, and Mistress of all Things that could be of any Use to make Life easy or agreeable. [...] She [...] began even to be convinced, that [Hebe's] future Life might be spent in calm Content and Pleasure.

(79)

Only when her emotions decrease in intensity can the queen see reason: her emotions literally blind her. Reason reveals to her that Sybella's life, which is defined more by what it lacks (i.e., passions, cares) than what it actually has (a vague "agreeability"). The wand from Sybella's father magically supplies the little household with everything they need. What the queen must learn, then, is that true happiness, the best life for women, is within the domestic carceral, provided by her husband/father. Fielding constructs the exchange that Evaai makes, the aristocratic claim to power and public life for middle-class domesticity, appear mandated by reason.

When the queen ceases grieving and begins to see the advantages of Sybella's situation. Sybella declares that "the Voice of Reason had gained [...] Power over the Queen" and is enabled to tell her the story of her own journey to the forest. Paternal edict prevented her from doing so when the queen was under sway to "Passion" (79):

my Father added also this Command, that I should never endeavour doing any farther Good to those, whom Adversity had not taught to hearken to the Voice of Reason, enough to enable them to conquer their Passions, as not to think themselves miserable in a safe Retreat from Noise and Confusion. This was the Reason I could not gratify you in relating the History of my Life, whilst you gave
Way to raging Passions, which only serve to blind your Eyes, and shut your Ears from Truth. (85-6)

In this passage, inappropriate emotions, so designated by patriarchy, are figured as forming a block to the channels of the senses that would reveal the truth, the eyes and ears. This sounds very Lockean, but the truth would not be formulated by the input of the senses but perceived. In other words, the input of the senses amounts to tuning in to the Voice of Reason and gaining access to its predetermined message, in this case, that "a safe Retreat from Noise and Confusion" is preferable to ruling a kingdom or living in a castle. In fact, reason seems to serve here as the underpinning of the middle-class domestic situation." As in Haywood, reason and the passions are again figured in opposition to each other, with reason serving as the rightful victor over emotion (again, as predetermined by patriarchy) and as the consoler during adversity and as the proper lesson to be learned during adversity. Patriarchy also designates the girl's duty as clearing her heart/mind (and the text is notable for describing emotions as though they clutter the mind) so that she can hear the Voice of Reason. If the woman or girl fails to convert to reason, she cannot receive the full benefits of patriarchal power: since the queen and Hebe do convert. Sybella is allowed to exercise her father's power on their behalf and grant the queen a wish.

As the role of Sybella's father in the text might suggest, women do not speak with the Voice of Reason in The Governess: they mouth patriarchal utterances that have been pre-approved as reason. Moral maxims, almost invariably of a feminizing and domesticating nature, are scattered throughout the text as reason, as incontrovertible truth
with which the girls must agree. For instance, the “reasonable” girl accepts that
“[G]oodness and happiness always coexist in the same breast” and “if Duty and
Inclination ever clash, the latter must cede to the former” (16, 20). While these maxims
are spoken by mothers or maternal figures in most cases, they originate with male figures
who linger around the edges of the text, offering patriarchal approval of the contents. The
text opens by clarifying that Teachum met with her husband’s approval, specifying that
her authority finds its basis in his wisdom and careful instruction (Vallone. Crisis 63):
“Mr. Teachum was a very sensible Man, and took great Delight in improving his Wife. [. . .] in
his last Illness [. . .] he expressed great Satisfaction in the Thought of leaving his
Children to the Care of so prudent a Mother” (2).9 Teachum’s endorsement by her
husband is paralleled by the endorsement of Fielding as author by Mr. Poyntz.10
Although Fielding dedicates her text to Mrs. Poyntz, in an effort to legitimize it that
occurs in the last couple sentences of the dedication, she suddenly unmaskes Mr. Poyntz as
overseer of the project: “this Scheme was, in a manner, directed by Mr. Poyntz. And here
I beg Pardon, for indulging my Vanity so far, as not to conceal, that the Execution of it
has, in some measure, met with His and Your Approbation” (dedication). After a lengthy
encomium on Mrs. Poyntz, Fielding switches to “His and Your Approbation,” revealing
what she has hidden to this point, that she needs to garner male support to prove that she,
too, is echoing the Voice of Reason as she undertakes the education of mothers and
daughters. She represents herself as an emissary of male reason, which saturates this text
otherwise written by women for women. Mrs. Poyntz is actually of secondary
importance.
In Fielding’s *Governess*, domestic spaces, whether Sybella’s womblike clearing in the forest, Teachum’s boarding school, or the text itself, are repeatedly figured as enclosed spaces that are penetrated by male reason. Likewise the girls’ ears and mouths are penetrated, leaving them to hear and speak with the male Voice of Reason. When accepted by women, the Voice of Reason creates a bourgeois home that differs from its description in the work of Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Armstrong. Habermas and Armstrong describe a feminine space characterized primarily by affect that serves to differentiate it from the public sphere and to relieve the male economic agent. The home is defined in opposition to the public sphere and its activities, including the exercise of reason. By contrast, Fielding depicts the home as continually surrounded and occupied by the father and/or the voice that speaks his reason: indeed, the mothers and wives in her text are eager to import reason into their mothering activities, to use the vocabulary of reason to teach femininity and domesticity. Even the use of reproducible moral maxims suggests a move to reduce mothering to a rational process, to suggest, perhaps, that a daughter will become a productive wife/mother if the right words are spoken in the right order. Fielding’s importation of reason underscores a need to question the construction of the domestic sphere as affective, which has contributed to critical oversight of the use of reason by women at midcentury. Once we as critics see women moved into the home, we need to follow them in to see how they appropriate and modify reason.

In this text, Fielding preaches and perpetuates reason by associating it with controlled pleasure. In the next section, I discuss how *The Governess* models literary activity as rational and pleasurable. The girls entertain each other and are entertained and
instructed by stories they exchange with each other and Teachum. The pleasure thus engendered is kept within acceptable limits by principles of reason.

**Reason and Genre: Textual Education**

Fielding writes *The Governess*, which models literature as a significant mode of home education, in the middle of a century that expressed its suspicion regarding the combination of women and fiction repeatedly. In 1694, Mary Astell spoke disparagingly of the value of "Plays and Romances" as educational materials: "How can she be furnished with any solid Principles whose very Instructors are Froth and emptiness?" (13). The concern with regulating female exposure to literature becomes more pronounced as the eighteenth century progresses until in its last two decades (Myers 119). In 1773, Hester Chapone’s conduct treatise reluctantly includes reading as part of the female curriculum, recommending conversation as a better form of instruction but recognizing literature as a necessary evil (191-2). In 1799, Hannah More asserted that novels and romances were a French conspiracy to undermine the British nation by corrupting its women (44).

Unlike these writers, Fielding endorses a wide generic variety for female reading by incorporating a plurality of them into her conduct novel. She is concerned with teaching the method and purposes of proper reading, both of which, when practiced, appear to make it appropriate for women to read nearly without restriction. Fielding warns her young readers against reading improperly in her preface (Wilner 309):

> When your run thro’ Numbers of Books, only for the sake of saying, you have read them, without making any Advantage of the Knowlege got thereby,
remember this Saying, "That at Head, like a House, when crammed too full, and no regular Order observed in the placing what is there, is only littered instead of being furnished." (vii)

With this domestic metaphor, Fielding expresses her concern for the girl who does not know how to read for her own "Advantage": the group reading sessions that the girls in the academy share model how reason can be used to turn reading to advantage by turning texts into utility and leading the girl to self-examination. Fielding also suggests how the rational mother can use reading and textual production and circulation among her charges, activities she portrays as pleasurable, to regulate and monitor their moral and rational progress.

Fielding presents narrative as an appropriate amusement (indeed, one of few amusements in the academy) for young girls: they spend their free time each day eagerly exchanging stories. Fielding also insists, however, that the pleasure of narrative ultimately be converted into utility, which takes the shape of moral maxims: reason accomplishes the containment of pleasure by utility, and the girls' ability to make this conversion indicates their mastery of reason. As Teachum tells them, "'I am very much pleased when you are innocently amused; and yet I would have you consider seriously enough of what you read, to draw such Morals from your Books, as may influence your future Practice'" (106). Jenny Peace, of course, reiterates her governess's strictures: "Miss Jenny desired them to consider the Moral of the Story, and what Use they might make of it, instead of contending which was the prettiest Part" (43). Both push the girls to put pleasure to use, which is specifically designated as morality: Jenny's urging to turn
away from aesthetics (what's "pretty") to utility can be further read as a message that the little girls should seek to make themselves more moral and useful rather than attractive. By insisting on utility, Fielding situates literature, often characterized as frivolous in the eighteenth century, an integral part of female education.

Fielding demonstrates for her audience reason's role in disciplining the text when it displays "irrationality." Logic converts whatever literature is under consideration from the level of narrative/plot pleasure to the metaphorical level of symbol and extrapolated meaning. When Teachum and Jenny discuss a story with giants and magic that Jenny has read to the girls, the governess models for her how to make the text subject to reason:

"A very good Moral may indeed be drawn from the Whole, and likewise from almost every Part of it: and as you had this Story from your Mamma, I doubt not but you are very well qualified to make the proper Remarks yourself upon the Moral of it to your Companions. But here let me observe to you (which I would have you communicate to your little Friends) that Giants, Magic, Fairies, and all Sorts of supernatural Assistances in a Story, are introduced only to amuse and divert: For a Giant is called so only to express a Man of great Power; and the magic Fillet round the Statue was intended only to shew you, that by Patience you will overcome all Difficulties. Therefore by no means let the Notion of Giants or Magic dwell upon your Minds." (41)

Teachum's words provide a guide to the wheat and the chaff of the story, dividing it into elements that purely amuse and are therefore dispensable and elements that amuse but can be converted into something useful (collapsed into a kernel, a portable piece of wisdom
like "by Patience you will overcome all Difficulties," another feminizing message).\textsuperscript{14}

Note that where Haywood was content to leave her jewel as an uninterpreted symbol, Fielding controls her text to the extent of interpreting for her readers, making sure that they get the "rational" reading of it. It is not enough, then, for the girls to listen to an innocent and amusing story, but they must learn how to convert pleasurable elements into symbols of real-life objects, then to manipulate them into messages of truths and virtues that can be used in daily living. Teachum asserts that the girls must adopt this attitude in order to have ""the Disposition of Mind not to be hurt by"" fiction, presumably by the pleasurable escape from reality it offers.\textsuperscript{15}

When Teachum comes upon the girls after they have been listening to Jenny read them a play, she models again the containment of textual pleasure by utility, this time demonstrating specific reading techniques the girls can practice on their own. She informs her students that she believes in exposing them to a wide variety of literature, including drama (a particularly suspect category, as the text's anxiety makes clear), so that they ""will neglect and despise what is light and useless, whilst [they]'ll imprint on [their] Minds every useful Lesson that is to be drawn from [plays]"" (117). Teachum tests her students to ""see whether [they] gave the proper Attention to"" the play (117): she asks for a volunteer to summarize it, making sure that the little girl remembers to recount the virtues and vices of the female characters and their resulting marriages. Reflecting the concern that Fielding expresses in the preface for reading without purpose or method, Teachum instructs the girls to practice retelling stories such as this one, stating, ""for nothing so strongly imprint[s] any-thing on the Memory as such a Repetition"" (110).
She expects each text and its withdrawn moral to take a fixed place in the "furnishing" of the girl's mind. In this instance, Teachum gauges Jenny's moral progress and conformity with the Voice of Reason by requiring her to identify the play's moral (which, predictably, is "that Folly, Wickedness, and Misery, all Three, as constantly dwell together, as Wisdom, Virtue, and Happiness do" [121: Wilner 310]); satisfied with Jenny's answer, she demonstrates how each part of the play can be interpreted as reinforcing that moral and therefore useful and necessary. Teachum thus models the process of working on the text, bringing it into conformity with the Voice of Reason, which in turn legitimizes what would otherwise be free-floating and ungovernable pleasure engendered between the girl and text privately in a one-to-one setting.

While Teachum trains the girls in exercising the text, in making the text work for their purposes, she simultaneously employs literature to instill standards of taste and economy in her charges. As she examines Jenny's fairy tale, she takes the opportunity to help Jenny recognize elements of unacceptable writing styles. Teachum warns Jenny against "'high sounding Language'" and "'supernatural Contrivances,'" urging her to use realism as an ideal instead: "'if the Story is well written, the common Course of Things would produce the same Incidents, without the help of fairies'" (107). Her pronouncements attempt to displace the aristocratic forms that involve magic and lack of rationalism in the middle-class girl's taste (Myers 119). Teachum explicitly warns against "'being carried away, by these high-flown Things [inflated language, magic], from that Simplicity of Taste and Manners which it is my chief Study to inculcate'" (41). This emphasis on household economy, simplicity in taste, and utility recalls the qualities
associated with the middle-class woman by Armstrong. With this inculcation of middle-class virtues and standards, I see Fielding continuing the process that Haywood gestured toward in Adventures with its resolution in the middle-class marriage typical of the novel: the use of literature for women to promote middle-class values of behavior and sexuality.\textsuperscript{16} I also see Fielding turning female rationalism from learning (in the tradition of the learned lady) or the sort of engagement with intellectual issues described by Astell into a sort of household pragmatism.

The danger of excess emotional pleasure unbounded by reason is plainly represented in the girls' initial reaction to the play.\textsuperscript{17} The girls are lingering in libidinal responses that serve no practical purpose: "they had wiped their Eyes, and were rejoicing at the Turn of the End of the Play, in favour of the Characters with which they were most pleased" (116). Jenny is observing the girls' responses and feeling pleased that they match hers. Teachum, asking the girls questions about the play to see "whether [they] give the proper attention to what [they] have heard" (117), converts this scene of emotional outlet into the work of exercising reason upon the text to uncover the "useful Lessons that it offers the attentive reader." Although the girls' emotional responses illustrate their basic affinity with virtue as they celebrate the reward given to "good" characters, Teachum again pushes them to assert rationality and pragmatism. With her questions and moral explication of the play, Teachum converts this scene of emotional outlet into the work of exercising reason upon the text to uncover the Voice of Reason. She serves as a phallic penetration of the prelinguistic unity with the mother (the arbor standing as another womblike setting), demanding that the girls separate themselves from
their sentimentality and produce an appropriately disciplined, clearly verbalized, analytical response. The threat of uncontrolled emotion is explored in a number of The Governess's intertexts: in one instance, a mother's grief prevents her from educating her daughter, and in another, Jenny's grief threatens her obedience to her mother and relationship with her brother, on whom she may someday be dependent. The need to control emotion by recognizing its inappropriate inroads into the execution of "Duty," obedience, and a hospitable home makes reading an important exercise in reigning in unleashed emotion.18

By monitoring the girls' responses to literature, Teachum demonstrates narrative's role in the pedagogical plan as a gauge of the girls' conformity to the Voice of Reason. The group reading sessions allow the girls' growing restraint over their emotions to be monitored by Jenny and Teachum. For instance, shortly after the fight over the apples, Jenny tells them the story of the giants and leads a related discussion. Not yet committed to virtue, the girls turn the discussion into a competition "to prove they could make just Remarks on" the story, resulting in "an Argument" (42-3). Jenny is alarmed and narrowly averts "another Quarrel" (43). By the time Jenny shares the story of Princess Hebe, the girls are more established in the ways of virtue and reason, and Jenny can "[see] them so much altered in their Manner of talking to each other":

Many and various were the Remarks made by Miss Jenny's Hearers on the Story she had read to them. But now they were so confirmed in Goodness, and every one was so settled in her Affection for her Companions, that, instead of being
angry at any Opposition that was made to their Judgments, every one spoke her
Opinion with the utmost Mildness. (106)

The "Mildness" Jenny notes in the girls seems to be a sign that they are willing to
surrender their interpretations for the sake of the community's peace, a clear change in
their reading practices. When they discuss texts together. Teachum's interpretation
(offered by Jenny Peace) is presented as the "correct" interpretation, the Voice of Reason.
and the girls are to accept this rather than insisting on their own opinions. By one of the
last intertexts, the play, Jenny observes that the girls respond in near unity and their
responses match hers, which are the model: "they were most of them affected just in the
same manner, and with the same Parts of the Play as had before affected her" (116).
Their agreement indicates that they are climbing the heights of the novel's moral
trajectory.

The girls' work on interpreting texts is mirrored in their interpretation of
themselves: they display their conversion to rationality for Teachum not only in their
reaction to texts but in the production of individual confessions. Some of the girls show
their dedication to virtue by exchanging "improving" stories, but each girl, according to
the scheme proposed by Jenny at the text's outset, must make herself completely known
to her schoolmates by offering up a confession (Burdan 10). The confessions follow a
fairly rote form, involving an admission of a past vice (i.e., envy, overfondness, vanity:
each usually traceable to mistaken parenting [Burdan 11]) that matches the girl's humour
name and a recognition of new happiness and peace since Jenny's intervention following
their quarrel. As they listen to each other's histories and stories, they develop the skill of
"reading [. . .] their own lives" and of producing the proper confessional narrative, which turns into a textual proof for Teachum of their changed ways (Downs-Miers 32). At the end of each girl’s confession, Jenny writes it down, collecting all so that they may be presented to Teachum according to her request. Teachum judges their work at self-improvement on two grounds, forthrightness and conformity in style:

Mrs. Teachum, when she had perused them, was much pleased: and said that she perceived, by the manner in which her Scholars had related their Lives, how much they were in Earnest in their Design of Amendment. "For (continued she) they have all confessed their Faults without Reserve: and the untowardly Bent of their Minds, which so strongly appeared before the Quarrel, has not broke out in these their little Histories: but, on the contrary, they all seem, according to their Capacities, to have endeavoured to imitate your Stile, in the Account you gave of your own Life." (128-9)

As Judith Burdan points out, confession as a "homogeniz[ing]" effect, reducing the subjectivity the girl gains in the process of speaking her name, the story of her namesake vice, to an indistinguishable narrative of virtue (12)19: indeed, the reformation here appears to be just that—re-forming "the untowardly Bent of their Minds" into a single mold. The girl’s mastery of this genre, however, signals her agreement with the Voice of Reason: in fact, the confession of past irrationality becomes necessary to prove current rationality. Jenny tells Sukey Jennett, "‘Nothing will shew your Sense so much, as to own that you have been in the Wrong’" (9), but in The Governess, nothing shows sense but producing the confessional narrative.
Confession becomes a privileged genre in *The Governess*. Although the girls trade narratives throughout the text, these stories come from relatives or friends: the girls only produce original narratives with the confession. The other stories frequently work to prompt or facilitate confession, which I believe is due to confession’s utilitarian nature. It works to order the girl’s mind, dividing it clearly into such categories as “before” and “after,” “virtue” and “vice.”

The confessional narrative and the intertexts exchanged by the academy’s students situate literature across generic boundaries as a primary mode of developing and displaying reason. Fielding empowers women, particularly women writers, because she justifies an engagement with literature within the domestic sphere. She models the maternal production and circulation of texts as “natural” and beneficial, saturated with the male Voice of Reason though they may be. The domestic space Fielding creates includes, embraces, the quasi-public activity of textual production, circulation, and discussion, in the service of turning the pleasure thus engendered into reason and utility.

Literary activity in Fielding’s text is recommended for girls both because it will prove rationally and morally beneficial with proper surveillance and because it allows for more surveillance opportunities. Significantly, though, Fielding turns a very individual act, one feared at the time for its individuality, into a communal, supervised activity, and in so doing, she establishes a literary public sphere within the household. Her account of the activities of this domestic literary realm undercuts Habermas’ assumption that the public sphere is totally liberatory. for Fielding (unwittingly, I believe) shows that communal literary activity produces consensus, sometimes coercively. Additionally,
Fielding opens up the domestic sphere, making it subject to external scrutiny, by insisting upon the importance of reason and rational motherhood.

**Reasonable Surveillance**

As my account of literary activity in *The Governess* has suggested, surveillance is frequently a concomitant to textual consumption and production, an indication of the central role of surveillance in rational motherhood. The overwhelming importance of the Voice of Reason in governing the domestic sphere justifies motherhood that relies on surveillance and demands daughters that will willingly open themselves to scrutiny in order to provide evidence of their rationality. In emphasizing parental vigilance in raising children, Fielding follows the trend of the times, which was set by John Locke when he published his extensive outline of his educational system, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, in 1693. Locke initiated an important change in the parenting paradigm from "corporal punishment" to "psychological management"; in his insistence on the importance of knowing the individual child in order to customize his (and for Locke, it is *his*) education. Locke describes methods that recall ""panopticonism"" (Burdan 8):

> He, therefore, that is about children should well study their natures and aptitudes and see, by often trials, what turn they easily take and what becomes them, observe what their native stock is, how it may be improved, and what it is fit for; he should consider what they want, whether they be capable of having it wrought into them by industry and incorporated there by practice, and whether it be worthwhile to endeavor it. (*Education*, 41)
In other words, the parent is to keep a continual eye on the child, as if he or she were a scientific experiment and the results were continually being recorded, and continually to judge the child. As Burdan states it. "To be truly effective, according to Locke, these disciplinary methods must be operated through the parents’ constant, invisible observation and manipulation" (8). The particularity of the gaze that Locke recommends, its power to identify, individualize, and produce knowledge about the pedagogical subject in the name of discipline, recalls the corrective gaze exercised by the disciplinarian in Foucault’s panopticon.20

Burdan and others have directly traced the emphasis placed upon observation in The Governess to the influence on educational theories wielded by Locke’s Some Thoughts. They specifically assert that Fielding incorporates Locke’s theories in a program for the bourgeois parents of the daughters he ignored in his own writing (Burdan 8). Fielding produces a text that returns obsessively to the issue of who is watching whom in the name of reason and carefully conjoins pleasure to practices of disciplinary surveillance.21 Watching the girls, keeping them under the disciplining eye, is immediately represented as an important part of Teachum’s success as the mistress of a boarding school: the text clearly states that because Teachum “was resolved to take no more Scholars than she could have an Eye to herself,” she is a better governess than others (2).22 We see Teachum monitoring how, when, and where she watches the girls at her school, including regulating whether or not the girls know at a particular moment that she is watching them. When she decides not to observe them firsthand, she uses Jenny as her eyes, training her in watching and evaluating her peers so that she can give “an exact
Account" of the girls' activities so "that [Teachum] might judge from thence how far they might be trusted" (40). In this way, although Teachum remains removed from view and the girls are unaware of Jenny's reports, the girls are rendered fully subject to her disciplinary gaze. The watching goes on, however, in the eyes of the narrator, who positions herself as a third-person observer of all the activities at Teachum's school: Mr. Poyntz, who oversees the text; and the young reader, who looks over the narrator's shoulder at the story while her mother seems poised over her shoulder, monitoring her reading. The insistence on reason seems to open up the domestic sphere to normalizing scrutiny in much the same way that Foucault claims confession—and then psychiatry and psychotherapy—does: Fielding implies that mothers need this scrutiny, as did other conduct tracts of this time (Burdan 9). Their willingness to "imitate" indicates their desire to change, and the status of Jenny's establishes her moral superiority.

Fielding demonstrates for this audience how supervision ensures that the girls' textual encounters will be beneficial rather than harmful. In The Governess, the girls read as a group, never alone, usually with one girl reading or telling her story to the others out loud. They are constantly under the supervision of Teachum, whether directly or indirectly through Jenny, whom Teachum appoints to "preside over" the girls and report on their activities (23). This surveillance guarantees that the girls draw the correct interpretations from their texts: for instance, after Jenny reads the girls a fairy story, she leads them in a discussion designed to reveal its moral. The "Moral," of course, is preset, and Jenny, who has received it from Teachum, eventually tells them what it is: that "'Happiness'" only arrives from "'Goodness'" and "'that by the Assistance of Patience"
you may overcome all Difficulties” (43–4). As the girls progress on their moral
trajectory, internalizing Teachum’s precepts, they are able to act as controls on each
other. They discuss all of the stories they share, guiding each other away from
idiosyncratic and possibly “wrong” interpretations. This surveillance, both by mother-
figures and each other, means that the reading audience at home is also, in effect,
supervised and led to the approved textual interpretation. Fielding’s creation of a reading
community, in actuality a Foucauldian surveillance system, answers the eighteenth-
century fear, expressed in texts like *The Female Quixote*, of reading as a solitary activity
that isolates the individual and produces mistaken ideas about reality (Myers 119). The
surveillance level seems to go up when the girls tackle a particularly suspect genre, such
as a play or the fairy tale. Fielding makes reading a safe activity, one that does not
threaten femininity or domesticity, by turning it into a communal act where texts are
largely oral and interpretation is always mediated.

Fielding portrays the academy as a success when, as a result of the panopticon, its
pupils internalize the behavior-regulating precepts offered by their elders and act
accordingly. For instance, the girls’ outing to a dairy marks their new collective status as
“good girls” because they behave as though Teachum is there watching them even when
they are alone (Burdan 11). As Jenny declares, “‘[O]ur good Governess’ Instructions are
of more Force with us, than to lose all their Effect when we are out of her Presence’”
(130). Similarly, only when Jenny has absorbed all of Teachum’s precepts, even an
appropriate doubt of her own ability to choose rightly when she hasn’t been instructed
"by someone wiser than herself" (21: Wilner 309), is she able to leave the school and live with her aunt. Fielding thus presents control and subordination under the guise of reason.

The emphasis on reason, which can only be reinforced and instilled through consistent surveillance, makes it possible to insist that the girl (as Jenny, the gazer in training, proves.) render herself completely accessible to the gaze at all times as proof of her reason and of her virtue. In part, The Governess makes Teachum's boarding school exemplary by only portraying the girls when they are meeting altogether, outside in the arbor, available for public viewing at a single glance. There is no chance that any of the girls are gathering in groups of two or three, shutting the door, and getting into mischief while leaving Teachum on the other side. At a glance, all charges are present and accounted for. Fielding implies that this is the way to control girls—to keep them easily in view, watching each other and being watched.23 Jenny, who proves herself the consummate watcher,24 is also the ideal girl because her countenance reveals all at a glance:

To give any Description of her Eyes beyond the Colour and Size, which was perfectly the Medium, would be impossible: except by saying they were expressive of every-thing that is amiable and good: For thro’ them might be read every single Thought of the Mind: from whence they had such a Brightness and Cheerfulness, as seemed to cast a Lustre over her whole Face. (15)

She has no privacy, expressing her innermost thoughts and dispersing pleasure to the observer with her physiognomy. As Burdan points out, each girl who confesses also becomes more physically transparent, revealing the secrets of her psychology on her face:
such transparency is the goal of the text (10-11). The girls are encouraged to make
themselves completely known to each other, especially through confession: it is presented
as a pleasurable amusement, and Jenny praises each of them when they offer their stories.
In addition, Teachum, who judges their stories specifically by how much they reveal,
rewards them with the final trip to the dairy for telling all about themselves.

These practices of surveillance and confession threaten the mother with complete
exposure. In other words, as each girl's story reveals, her faults can be directly traced to
the actions of her parents or the servants into whose care she was entrusted. For
instance, Henny Fret relates that her past fault was jealousy, to which she was encouraged
by the family servants. Her initial physical appearance reflects her vice and humor name;
the informed, rational parent (someone like Teachum) might even be able to look at her
and scrutinize her household, but after she tells her story (and the child brought to reason
by Teachum seems especially enabled to identify how she was spoiled), her parents will
be as much under scrutiny as she is. Children become walking texts not only written by
the mother during "reform[ation]," as Burdan suggests (11), but in which one can read the
faulty mother, a threat that seems designed to make mothers more concerned with vigilant
parenting.

In addition, the emphasis on reason involves the mother in time-consuming
work/not-work (supervising children) in a way that justifies her access to reason and her
reassignment to the private sphere. In Desire and Domestic Fiction. Nancy Armstrong
maintains that one of the most basic changes in the eighteenth century for women was
their removal from the public sphere, particularly from productive labor, and the
cultivation of them as specialists in domestic surveillance. Armstrong describes the new middle-class ideal of femininity, explicitly domestic femininity, in terms of surveillance over self and the domestic sphere, a pivotal surveillance in forming and maintaining the new middle-class value of restraint and moderation in refined living: "So conceived, self-regulation became a form of labor that was superior to labor" (Armstrong 81). Armstrong describes a woman who is obliged to control the self and its desires as well as the potential excesses of the household and its members (including staff). Clearly Fielding also portrays a woman who must control feeling, who must regulate passion and keep all emotion within a field of appropriate intensity; however, she specifically brings reason into the picture, something Armstrong neither mentions or accounts for. and Fielding also provides surveillance with the object of producing rational children that reflect well on the family. In a sense, Fielding's linking of reason and self-regulation and the proper upbringing of children is revolutionary, for it justifies, even necessitates, a connection between women and reason that might otherwise be looked askance upon. It makes motherhood a skilled (surveillance and evaluatory skills necessary) occupation that consumes all of the mother's time, eliminating a need for leaving the house or other work.

Surveillance serves as the basis of the will to knowledge that impels the confessions that the little girls offer each other as a form of innocent amusement and the source of maternal pleasure. Both Teachum and Jenny are portrayed as finding pleasure in watching the little girls ("Mrs. Teachum, who had been taking a Walk in the Garden, turned into the Arbour to delight herself with the View of her little School united in
Harmony and Love" [73]), and even though that pleasure is associated with deriving
delight from the girls' own delight, it becomes a secondhand pleasure dependent upon a
sort of secret spying. Fielding recognizes that she is verging on endorsing maternal
spying as a pleasure, mere curiosity fulfillment, when she denies that Teachum engages
Jenny as her informer for personal reasons:

Mrs. Teachum had a great Inclination to hear the History of the Lives of all her
little Scholars: But the thought, that her Presence at those Relations might be a
Balk to the Narration, as perhaps they might be ashamed freely to confess their
past Faults before her; and therefore, that she might not be any Bar in this Case to
the Freedom of their Speech, and yet might be acquainted with their Stories (tho'
this was not merely a vain Curiosity, but a Desire, by this means, to know their
different Dispositions). she called Miss Jenny Peace in to her Parlour after Dinner,
and told her "She would have her get the Lives of her Companions in Writing, and
bring them to her." (47)

The recognition here that curiosity must be denied as a motivation reveals how thinly
justified Teachum's need for thorough knowledge actually is: how important can
knowing the girls' various dispositions be? And what purpose will that serve? If
Teachum has a reason for listening to their confessions, surely the other girls and the
readers at home are satisfying their curiosity when they read the lives of these little girls.
Once Fielding sets up the domestic as a space of surveillance, it seems hard to control it,
and it seems to perpetuate itself, perpetuating the impression that there is some sort of
intrinsic good in knowing each little girl as thoroughly as possible (Foucault would say the will to knowledge gets out of control).

**Reason and the Economy of Pleasure**

As the control of narrative pleasure by reasonable surveillance indicates, rationality governs the circulation, sources, and reproduction of pleasure in the domestic sphere. The Voice of Reason creates and regulates an economy of pleasure within private life, asserting "the 'reasonableness' of personal 'gain' through peaceful submission to others" (Vallone. *Disciplines* 47). Teachum and Jenny use logic to convince the girls that the true nature of pleasure consists largely of duty, virtue, and finding pleasure in others' pleasure. This construction places pleasure in the realm of intellect rather than sensation (particularly corporeality), as Haywood would have it, and makes it something that can be systematically pursued within a limited realm of activity. While Haywood associates the pursuit of pleasure with the body and a sacrifice of rationality, Fielding associates pleasure with rationality and a sacrifice of the body.

The controlled give-and-take that Fielding calls "pleasure" in *The Governess* emerges as a matter of rational education in Jenny's conversation with Sukey Jennett regarding the initial contention over the apples. As she tries to convince Sukey to relinquish her stubborn pride and become the first girl to apologize, Jenny seeks to change Sukey's estimation of gain and loss. Jenny repeatedly asks, "'Now pray, Miss Sukey, tell me. What did you get by your Contention and Quarrel about that foolish Apple?"' (7: my emphasis). It is in Jenny's insistence that virtue and self-service go hand in hand that Fielding's dedication to "enlightened self-interest" emerges (Armstrong 89).
This philosophy maintains that self-interest is more natural than beneficence, leading to the conclusion that beneficence ought to be encouraged by tying it to personal gain. Whereas Eovaai's fall through the apple, her contemplation of the jewel, is figured by Haywood as a violation of limits on rationality and sexuality. Sukey's is figured as failing to recognize rationally where her own interest lies. Initially Sukey refuses to listen to Jenny's "Truth" (8), maintaining the satisfaction of knowing that she had a legitimate right to the apple and that she has "too much Spirit to be imposed on" by the other girls (8): she believes that revenge represents her greatest pleasure and avoids the pain of admitting herself at fault. Jenny, however, insists that Sukey has misevaluated the pleasure economy:

"[I]nstead of tormenting yourself all Night in laying Plots to revenge yourself, I would have you employ this one Night in thinking of what I have said. Nothing will shew your Sense so much, as to own that you have been in the Wrong. Nor will any-thing prove a right Spirit so much, as to confess your Fault. All the Misses will be your Friends, and perhaps follow your Example. Then you will have the Pleasure of having caused the Quiet of the whole School: your Governess will love you; and you will be at Peace in your Mind, and never have any more foolish Quarrels, in which you all get nothing but Blows and Uneasiness."

(9)

In this carefully rationalized system, revenge becomes self-torture, admission of fault proves essential rectitude, the love of others brings satisfaction that more than compensates for a measure of self-sacrifice, and so on. Jenny proposes a simple swapping of behavior that will lead to loss for behavior that will lead to all sorts of
personal gain (in effect, forms of pleasure). She constructs pleasure for the girls at the school as well as the readers at home. Each trade she endorses requires that Sukey change her system of values so that she considers new behaviors sources of pleasure and old behaviors sources of pain. The new behaviors Miss Jenny proposes involve subscription to obedience, submission to the needs and desires of others, and relinquishment of the assertion and needs of the self.\(^{26}\) It is important to see, however, that Jenny does not propose giving up all concern for the self, but believing that the good of the self is inseparable from the good of others, that true pursuit of pleasure therefore means pursuing others' pleasure. As Nanny Spruce puts it at the end of her confession, ""[T]he only way to be pleased is to endeavour to please others."") (113).

Reason having defined that pleasure lies in satisfying others, the domestic sphere becomes a self-sustaining pleasure unit in which ego boundaries dissolve and vicarious satisfaction abounds. Teachum, ""delight[s] in pleasing"" her charges or even in watching their pleasure (3): this is why, for instance, she decides to treat them to a basket of apples. The maternal narrator professes that she ""delight[s] in giving [her] little Readers every Pleasure that is in [her] Power"" and will therefore provide physical descriptions of each of the academy's students (15). The mother, then, is to be at once the source of pleasure for her children and recipient of theirs. Part of the lesson of Jenny's exemplary past life is that, unlike Henny Fret, she was able to derive pleasure from her brother's:

""I believe no Child ever spent her Time more agreeably than I did: for I not only enjoyed my own Pleasures, but also those of others. And when my Brother was carried abroad, and I was left at home, that he was pleased, made me full Amends
for the Loss of any Diversion. The Contentions between us (where our Parent's Commands did not interfere) were always exerted in Endeavours each to prefer the other's Pleasures to our own.” (18-9)

Jenny and her brother demonstrate rational sibling peace achieved through shared pleasure. The possibility of gender jealousy is at once suggested, through the reference male activity “abroad.” in the public sphere, that is denied to Jenny as a girl in the domestic sphere, but she is able to deflect this jealousy by accessing her brother's gratification. In order to convince her peers of the immense personal gain they could realize if they only followed her reasoning, Jenny outlines her method of pleasure proliferation for them:

"Now if you will use as many Endeavours to love, as you have hitherto done to hate each other, you will find, that every one amongst you, whenever you have any-thing given you, will have double, nay, I may say. Eight times (as there are Eight of you) the Pleasure, in considering that your Companions are happy." (12)

Eight times the pleasure—logical exponential growth—if only the girl can ignore ego enough to consider others as she does herself. The Voice of Reason seems instrumental in establishing an economy of pleasure that allows the girl or her mother to live a very passive and perhaps deprived life but to have "pleasure" because she can locate it in other people and their experiences and advantages (a sort of redistribution of pleasure that makes sure that no one person can ever really claim deprivation because there is always pleasure somewhere else that one can access).
Proper reason also ensures that the female, the respite of the domestic sphere, remains a source of pleasure for the male. The daughter (and mother) are expected to exercise rational effort at controlling emotion so that it does not block out the Voice of Reason, virtue, and obedience. Jenny learns this message from her mother after she indulges in what her mother considers excessive grief upon losing her favorite cat.17 Her mother makes it her obligation to give up her feelings:

“If, therefore, you give way to this Melancholy, how will you be able to perform your Duty towards me, in cheerfully obeying my Commands, and endeavouring, by your lively Prattle, and innocent Gaiety of Heart, to be my Companion and Delight. Nor will you be fit to converse with your Brother, whom [...] I have endeavoured to educate in such a manner, that I hope he will be a Father to you [Jenny’s biological father is dead], if you deserve his Love and Protection. In short, if you do not keep Command enough of yourself [...] you will be unfit for all the social Offices of Life, and be despised by all those whose Regard and Love is worth your seeking.” (20-1)

Although Mrs. Peace asserts that it is Jenny’s “duty” to be a source of delight for her (Vallone, Crisis 63), plainly the real threat is that she will be left without a male protector if she is unable to control her emotions to the male standard. Even further, Mrs. Peace suggests that men would be entirely justified in refusing her “Love and Protection” if she cannot become a more rational creature. The marriage contract thus seems clear: if the household is maintained as a place of controlled pleasure, the women inside will be supported by the men who venture to the outside.
Conclusion

As this exchange suggests, the relationship that Fielding draws between reason and pleasure reinforces the idea that women need look no further than the home for happiness, particularly if they wish to be thought of as reasonable. Her insistence on easily identifiable personal gain (pleasure) and loss (pain) based on compliance with the Voice of Reason (virtue, obedience) effectively moves the rational activity of the economic public sphere into the private sphere. She asserts that the home, traditionally the locus of emotion and morality, can be run according to the logical principles of personal profit that regulate economics. Although she imports principles of gain and loss from the public sphere, she does so only to reinforce the idea that woman can and should be happy within the domestic sphere: her assessment of personal gain with logic seems designed to provide concrete evidence that women and home fit together.

Because I identify these operations of reason within the household, I read Fielding’s domestic sphere in a way that complicates the constructions of Habermas and Armstrong. Fielding inserts reason in the household on the same level of religion, as the apple story and conversion narratives make clear. In doing so, she opens the house to the standards of reason used in the public sphere, at least theoretically, to regulate economics and politics, a move unanticipated by Habermas’ account of the private sphere. She works to reduce motherhood to reason, to make it a logical yet pleasurable process that necessitates a rational mother of the type envisioned by Astell and, later, Wollstonecraft. Prompted by the dictates of reason, this mother becomes productive, engaged in the pleasurable labor of surveillance, which results in distinct products:
rational and virtuous daughters (who will turn into rational mothers, and so on)\textsuperscript{29}. Armstrong describes the wife/mother engaged in nonproductive surveillance, a continual process of watching herself and her household staff (75-81). Fielding elevates women by providing them with an active and essential role in producing productive, rational children, anticipating Wollstonecraft’s specific argument that rational motherhood is necessary to supply the nation with good citizens. Fielding’s mother enjoys her mothering because of the pleasure its rationality, expressed in surveillance and literary activity, offers. Her employment of literary activity as a maternal tool illustrates both her confidence in women to exercise reason upon a wide variety of texts despite contemporary stereotypes and extends the range of acceptable reading material for women. She uses another tool of the public sphere, group literary discussions of texts, in her domestic sphere to neutralize potential harmful effects of certain texts.

Despite the ways in which Fielding uses reason to modify the domestic sphere, the relationship she creates between women and reason reinforces the status quo in many ways. It keeps women, for instance, happy in their homes and within the boundaries prescribed by patriarchy. It is used in the service of virtue and to control illicit emotions, a common employment of female rationality, as Alice Browne argues (i.e., 112). Although Fielding allows women access to reason, it is a qualified step forward because of the shape that her variety of reason, which supports subordination and traditional female virtues, takes.

Fielding, however, celebrates rather than mourning reason’s penetration into the private sphere—she does not try to separate the home as the space of affect, but to
transform it by contact with the public sphere. In her promulgation of surveillance, she anticipates Clara Reeve, who, in her 1792 Plans of Education (published the same year as Wollstonecraft’s Vindication), wrote. “There is no education for daughters equal to that which they receive under the eye of a good mother, who herself gives, or superintends it, according to her degree and situation” (46). Fielding would merely add that the mother should engage in rational surveillance—and that she would enjoy it.
Notes

1 Astell and Wollstonecraft were not alone in establishing motherhood as an important justification for female education: Alice Browne discusses a more general recognition of the needs of the "rational mother" in the eighteenth century (112-13). Lissette Ferlet Carpenter also establishes Fielding as a "link" between Astell and Wollstonecraft at the ends of the century.

2 Downs-Miers remarks on "Fielding's emphasis on demonstrating the process of teaching" (32). I would change "teaching" to "mothering." Although the eighteenth-century abounds in conduct literature for young girls, texts like Fielding's, which actually provide a replicable process for mothering, are highly unusual at midcentury. Burdan sees them flourishing in the later century (12).

3 Downs-Miers devotes much of "For Betty and the Little Female Academy: A Book of Their Own" to establishing Fielding's text as a novel, specifically a children's novel. Judith Burdan describes Fielding's novel as "intended for both daughters and mothers": the text delineates "the ways in which girls and young women could and should behave" and supplies a "disciplinary" model for mothers (12).

4 Burdan calls the fight over the apples "perhaps symbolic" (10); I maintain that it is.

5 Vallone (Crisis 63) and Burdan (11) recognize Teachum as a "surrogate" mother and Jenny as her assistant or as another maternal figure. I specifically denominate Jenny as mother-in-training.
One might argue that the domesticating messages I have highlighted in the fairy tale are countered by the return of Hebe and her mother to public life when Hebe takes the throne. I would point out, however, that the two leave Placid Grove only after they have learned and express explicitly that the “private Life” (105) is preferable to the public, and because the opportunity of ruling virtuously contains the opportunity to do good to many more than one can in the home (and that someone else might not choose to use the opportunity to do good works), which is an extension of domestic principles established by the father to the public sphere.

Lynne Vallone maintains that the primacy of Jenny Peace’s mother as a source of instruction for the academy indicates the superiority of “the (reasonable) maternal” over the “(inadequate) paternal,” which she sees emerging through Teachum from her dead husband (Disciplines 47; see 46-49 for a fuller discussion). I would assert that although the text’s “wisdom” frequently looks as though it comes from the mouths and experiences of mothers, the text’s liminal men control the pivotal Voice of Reason. In the specific case of Mrs. Peace, I contend that her wisdom amounts to her knowledge of the accommodations necessary to rise to the male standard of reasonable behavior. I make this conclusion based on Mrs. Peace’s concern that Jenny use reason to make herself compatible with her brother in case she is dependent upon him in adult life, a concern I discuss later in the chapter.

Wilner recognizes the presence of maxims in the text and their domesticating nature (310).

Vallone also quotes part of the passage from Fielding (2) that I have (Crisis 63).
Vallone identifies the potential sources of maternal wisdom in the text as Teachum and Jenny Peace: though she discusses the mother-daughter construction frequently established by writers of conduct books, she does not identify Fielding in a maternal relationship with her reading audience as I do (Crisis 63: Disciplines 46).

Habermas discusses the emotional ties of the private sphere in the section of chapter two entitled “The Bourgeois Family and the Institutionalization of a Privateness Oriented to an Audience” (43-51); he comments, “the ideas of freedom, love, and cultivation of the person that grew out of the experiences of the conjugal family’s private sphere were surely more than just ideology” (48). In her second chapter, “The Rise of the Domestic Woman” (59-95), Armstrong describes the gendered separation of spheres that carefully balanced male capitalistic activity in the public sphere with female sentiment and morality in the home.

Downs-Miers points out how the practice of reading becomes self-reflective: “The Governess is a story of little girls learning to read, through the reading of books, their own lives” (32).

As Arlene Fish Wilner argues, the girls are taught to subordinate the pleasure of the text, “the imaginative or adventurous elements in the stories” (310), to the moral and its use value, or “appli[cation] to everyday situations” (309). Downs-Miers asserts that Teachum “explains the proper way of reading stories: to find the moral” (31-32).

Teachum’s comments on various intertexts include how to interpret style: in this case, she reminds Jenny not to be “carried away, by these high-flown Things, from that Simplicity of Taste and Manners which it is my chief Study to inculcate” (41).
Literature, then, becomes an opportunity to teach middle-class domestic taste, the kind of
taste that Armstrong maintains empowers the domestic woman of the middle-class at the end of the century.

15 Myers discusses the later century's skepticism of certain reading materials, especially fairy tales, for girls: she emphasizes that literature threatened to interpose itself between the female reader and reality (118-19). Here Teachum battles this inability or unwillingness to live in the real world.

16 Armstrong discusses the replacement of the aristocratic with the middle-class woman and her values extensively, especially in her second chapter (cited above). Wilner discusses how the themes and morals of The Governess dismiss aristocracy and promote the middle-class (312-9). She does not, however, extend her comments to literary genres as I do.

17 Myers identifies excessive emotion as a danger associated with the conjunction of women and reading (119).

18 See the more full discussion of Jenny's grief over the death of her cat below.

19 Burdan comments. "[T]he girls, who before their confessions are presented as differentiated individuals, are transformed in the end to a set of acceptable behaviors and appearances" (12).

20 Burdan makes the connection between the description of disciplinary methods in Foucault's Discipline and Punish and Lockeian educational theory (8). She argues. "[W]e see that disciplinary observation, couched in terms of benevolent, personalized guidance, forms the basis of the educational regime which Fielding demonstrates in the
course of her narrative" (10). I draw from and elaborate on Burdan’s argument in what follows. Foucault’s discussion of surveillance is primarily in part three, chapters two and three of *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (170-94; 195-228).

21 Burdan also cites this passage when discussing Teachum as a model governess who practices surveillance (10).

22 Conduct books for girls are riddled with suspicion regarding boarding schools. seemingly out of fear that inappropriate (sometimes sexualized, as in Wollstonecraft [197-99; 235-37]) activities will take place because of a careless matron. Fielding implicitly addresses this issue by consistently bringing her girls (largely presexualized) into a single group, outdoors, under constant watch.

23 Burdan calls Jenny “Mrs. Teachum’s supplementary instructress and her second pair of eyes” (11).

24 Vallone discusses this incident as one in which Jenny “learn[s] from her mother to regulate her passions so as not to interfere with her duty as a cheerful and obedient child” (*Crisis* 63). She does not identify the role of reason in moderating the passions or the importance of preserving the domestic sphere as a source of male pleasure.

25 Vallone refers to the insufficient “mother[ing]” in the text (*Crisis* 64).

26 In *Disciplines of Virtue*, Vallone argues that Jenny asserts “the ‘reasonableness’ of personal ‘gain’ through peaceful submission to others” in her conversation with Sukey (47). She cites a different passage, however, and does not explore her claim at length.

27 Vallone discusses this incident as one in which Jenny “learn[s] from her mother to regulate her passions so as not to interfere with her duty as a cheerful and obedient
child” (Crisis 63). She does not identify the importance of preserving the domestic
sphere as a source of male pleasure.

Burdan points out the expectation that motherhood reproduce itself: “[P]roper
maternal supervision could, and should, infinitely produce the conditions of its them
flourishing in the late century (12). Reproduction: good mothers raise good mothers, who
in turn raise good mothers” (10).
CHAPTER FOUR:

MALE DESIRE AND FEMALE REASON: SHAPING THE WIFE IN THE FEMALE QUIXOTE

[All frequent excursions from home, and all conversations likely to excite a desire of such excursions, are to be avoided carefully.]¹

This blunt edict to parents of girls appears in François Fénelon’s Treatise on the Education of Daughters, which was translated into English from the French in 1721 and reprinted in Charlotte Lennox’s serial The Lady’s Museum (1760-1). Like Fielding’s Governess, the Treatise encourages parents to intervene actively to mold the characters of their daughters and reflects the eighteenth century’s heightened attention to individualized childrearing, which, in part, resulted from the writings of Locke and other educational theorists. Fénelon, who was widely cited as an authority in female childrearing throughout the century and indeed speaks as the Law of the Father, implies the necessity of manipulating female desire, in this case with discourse, to keep women in the domestic sphere. Parents are to control the conversations to which their daughters have access so that they will not want to travel away from home; such control undoubtedly means keeping girls in a degree of ignorance regarding the world around them. With its employment of the quixote figure, Charlotte Lennox’s The Female Quixote (1752) indicates a concern with the formation of female desire through the circumscription that Fénelon recommends of verbal and physical forays into the public sphere. Lennox creates a protagonist whose unrestrained desires for freedom to traverse the boundary between public and private both geographically and discursively is figured as irrationality, even insanity, caused by miseducation. As a character with idiosyncratic
speech and travels. Arabella shares two of the distinguishing features of quixote figures. A Cervantes-inspired character in a later work comments, "I have been called the modern Don Quixote, on account of the eccentricity of my rambles, or the singularity which [others] conceive themselves to discover in my conversation and manner." Traveling and conversing mark the quixotic figure as well as educational discourse aimed at women; for this reason, they form the focus of my study of reason in *The Female Quixote*.

Although *The Female Quixote* shares with *The Governess* a concern with reason and its cultivation in the home. Lennox turns her attention from Fielding's mothers and young daughters to young women and the issues of rationality, courtship, and marriage that they face. For Fielding as well as Lennox, reading plays a pivotal role in female intellectual development. Fielding figures reading as a disciplinary, rational activity that is drawn into the private sphere by women and made to serve the ends of domesticity. Lennox also adapts forms of reason from the public sphere to serve purposes of the private sphere, but for her, reading that is not tempered by experience in the material world constitutes a hindrance to reason. In this chapter, I position *The Female Quixote*'s construction of reason as an educational problem: Fielding also considered reason within the context of education, but Lennox considers reason as a function of courtship and marriage in a system informed by male desire. Lennox exposes and questions female rationality as the basis of the companionate marriage because she sees it as shaped and controlled by men. Lennox uses travel and conversation, the identifying features of the quixote figure, to comment on both the impediments imposed by patriarchy that prevent women from "the free Use of all [the] noble Powers of Reason" (382). The restrictions
Lennox identifies on female travel, which serve the interests of preserving female virtue, subject them to irrationality because they interfere with empirical learning. The travel that does take place in the novel is therapeutic travel, designed and supervised by men to turn the protagonist into a marriageable woman. In part, this therapeutic travel is intended to produce rationality that can be enacted in appropriately female conversation and can serve as the basis of male heterosexual desire. The restrictions on conversation are designed to foster heterosexual desire and thus leave women with debased versions of reason.

Lennox figures Arabella’s insanity as an educational problem resulting from her father’s, and, by extension, patriarchy’s, configuration of her environment. In the section that follows, I explore the causal connection between education and insanity by looking at the theories of John Locke: I then illustrate the controls on Arabella’s movements that inhibit her education and the therapeutic travel designed by her suitor to correct it. In the section entitled “Conversation as Symptom,” I explore female conversation as a display of reason. I first explore the ideals of female rational conversation established in conduct writing from Lennox’s The Lady’s Museum, and I then demonstrate the threat Arabella poses to the companionate marriage by deviating from these norms. I assert that Lennox objects to the contrived forms of reason demanded by the companionate marriage. In the section “Conversation as Cure,” I explicate Arabella’s conversion to reason/sanity as a marked divergence from empiricism that Lennox employs to underscore the masculine authority that directs the pretense of empirical learning for women.

Because I am asserting that the companionate marriage is at issue in The Female Quixote, it is helpful to review its emergence in the eighteenth century. In Desire and
Domestic Fiction. Nancy Armstrong describes the replacement of aristocratic desire with middle-class desire in proper femininity in eighteenth-century conduct literature: “These authors portrayed aristocratic women along with those who harbored aristocratic pretensions as the very embodiments of corrupted desire, namely desire that sought its gratification in economic and political terms” (60). Instead, maintains Armstrong, conduct discourse offered women desire for the companionate marriage and dominion over the domestic sphere of morality, taste, and affect. My argument regarding female reason and conversation complements Armstrong’s. I contend that female rationality, once a part of aristocratic life, had to be gradually adapted in the course of the century in order to remain acceptable; the narrative of the companionate marriage proved useful in this respect. This narrative changed the basis for marriage from sexual desire to some sort of esteem based upon inner character, which I assert includes a specially constructed rationality, at the same time establishing desire for such a marriage as natural to women (Armstrong 59-95). The novel makes it clear that companionate marriage, the union of a man and his wife “in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind” (Lennox 383), is at issue. Lennox repeatedly insists that Arabella’s fortune and beauty are not enough to bring about her union with Glanville: marriage can happen and the novel can end only at the point that Arabella renounces her delusions and becomes an agreeable conversational partner and respectable, virtuous woman for Glanville. The novel exposes how education is shaped by men in the interests of companionate marriage by repeatedly delaying the marriage until the educational issues have been fixed, thus bringing a “rational” Arabella to choose Glanville.

Insanity, Education, and Environment
Arabella faces the charge of irrationality, even insanity, throughout The Female Quixote. Lennox’s novel tells the story of Arabella, a young lady immersed in rural isolation by her father, the Marquis, who, embittered by his experiences at court, has misanthropically retired from public life. The Marquis educates Arabella himself and allows her free reign over his library, which contains a “great Store of Romances [. . .] not in the original French, but very bad Translations” (7). Although she shows great intellectual promise, Arabella spends all of her time reading these romances, and, having little contact with the world outside her father’s estate, grows to believe that her books represent reality. Once her father proposes Glanville as her suitor and she refuses on grounds that the arrangement does not meet romance standards, the novel becomes a series of “adventures” that reveal the extent of her devotion to her books and chronicle Glanville’s quest to cure and marry her. Ultimately Glanville takes her to London and Bath as a means of restoring her sanity. This journey works, but not because Arabella gains a greater exposure to the world. Rather, after she attempts to escape an imagined rape, the conversation of a learned “divine” brings her to accept Glanville’s proposal, which marks her cure. Lennox implies that the two proceed to live happily on the estate and in the patriarchal legacy left by Arabella’s father.

As an educator and father, the Marquis has the power to control her environment and the association of ideas. His failure, which reveals the traditional goal of female education, is compliance in marriage. These are problems with education that Lennox identifies within the private sphere, leading her to reject it as the definitive locus for female education that Fénelon makes. Lennox’s portrayal of Arabella’s particular
“disorder of mind” echoes Locke’s theories in such a way as to suggest her critique of the female dependence on male education using the theory of the association of ideas.

In eighteenth-century terms Arabella’s irrationality can be called the mistaken association of ideas. Lennox specifies that Arabella’s literary diet has caused her to join together concepts and appropriate behavior based on their portrayals in romance:

Heroism. romantick Heroism. was deeply rooted in her Heart: it was her Habit of thinking, a Principle imbib’d from Education. She could not separate her Ideas of Glory. Virtue. Courage. Generosity. and Honour. from the false Representations of them in the Actions [. . .] of the imaginary Heroes. (329)

Because of these “false Representations.” Arabella believes, for instance, that “virtue” means refusing to speak to a man without the presence of her female attendants, and that “glory” and “courage” are exemplified when a suitor carries on a war in the name of his beloved. Because beautiful women always have lovers, some who want to abduct them, in romances, and she sees her beautiful reflection in the mirror, she interprets all men around her as potential suitors and/or abductors. Like Arabella, eighteenth-century quixotes generally subscribed to “rational empiricism” (Motooka. Age 4). Arabella’s logical processes make it clear that her raw materials for reason, not her mode of reasoning, are at fault. Arabella merely draws upon interpretive schemata from romances rather than the material world and interprets events accordingly. Unlike Cervantes’ Don Quixote, who actually sees a noble steed rather than Rosinata and a beautiful damsel rather than Dulcinea, Arabella’s senses accurately communicate her surroundings to her brain (Motooka. Age 5-6). These associations of ideas would work
well in a society of people that shared them, but the other characters generally have not read or do not value romances: they cannot or will not associate ideas as Arabella does.

Lennox's Arabella qualifies as a distinctly eighteenth-century quixote because her "insanity" emerges from miseducation. The eighteenth-century conception of the quixote figure had evolved from Cervantes' early seventeenth-century original in such a way that it allowed for the interpretation of its particular insanity as miseducation. In the first years of the eighteenth century, "quixotes were loathed as tyrants, enthusiasts and cultural innovators: they were reviled as instigators of undesirable political upheaval" (Motooka, Age 133). Those who espoused rights for women were often styled quixotic by their opponents. With the political stability created with distance from the Revolution, it became possible to conceive of quixotes as "lovable eccentrics" rather than dangerous radicals (Knowles 286). According to Edwin B. Knowles, this shift was also enabled by literary portrayals of quixotes as deviant from accepted norms of rationality in one particular and isolated area, such as romances, and quite reasonable, even admirable, in other arenas. Constricted insanity was considered a commonality shared by humanity (282). As Locke, uniting the ideas of widespread but discrete irrationality, puts it, "there is scarce a Man [...] that if he should always on all occasions argue or do as in some cases he constantly does, would not be thought fitter for Bedlam, than Civil Conversation" (Essay II.xxxiii.§4). Locke deflates insanity by giving it the pedestrian form of "opposition to reason," or irrationality (Essay Essay II.xxxiii.§4: DePorte 23). Thus the quixote had become an object of amusement and affection rather than a figure of political radicalism by the time of Lennox's appropriation. At mid-eighteenth
century, the quixote figure presented a productive locus for exploring emerging educational theories: miseducation offers an occasion for humor, but uneasy humor.

Locke identifies the association of ideas, which he introduced and made a common concern in educational writing, as a likely cause of insanity (II.xxxiii. §4): he constructs control of the association of ideas as a parental responsibility (DePorte 24: Wright 111). He exemplifies the association of ideas with illustrations, such as the man who can only dance in the presence of a certain trunk because he learned with that trunk in the room, and another man who becomes nauseous at the mention of honey because he once overindulged and made himself sick. For Locke, the difficulty of preserving sanity lies in identifying those ideas that rightfully belong together, a job he gives to reason:

Some of our *ideus* have a natural Correspondence and Connexion one with another: It is the Office and Excellency of our Reason to trace these, and hold them together in that Union and Correspondence which is founded in their peculiar Beings. Besides this there is another Connexion of *ideus* wholly owing to Chance or Custom: *ideus* that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some Mens Minds. that *tis very hard to separate them [. . . ].

*(Essay II.xxxiii. §5)*

Locke posits reason as the gardeners of the mind, weeding out the associations of ideas "owing to Chance or Custom" and tending the "natural" connections of ideas and individuality. He suggests that ideas have essences, "peculiar Beings," that reason can somehow identify; however, "chance or custom" presents threats to the proper operation of the mind. The phrase "Chance or Custom" gestures toward both the purely idiosyncratic and the merely customary, suggesting that a return to the "natural" is an
antidote for both. As William Walker suggests, Locke often genders chance and custom female and places them inside the household, specifically the nursery. He otherwise uses male pronouns in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, implying that the male world of rationality resides outside the feminine world of the home (55-72). With this in mind, the "natural," which preserves rationality, seems to take the shape of that which is socially sanctioned by men, those with ideological power, and applied to others. Societal opinion, particularly male opinion, forms a check on individual thought processes. Herein lies the root of Arabella's problem, for she is isolated from society and the books she has to supply the place of human interaction are romances, representatives of a disempowered gynocentric literary tradition. Her rationality is left to be shaped by a man who has an interest in her marriage.

Locke's theory of the association of ideas significantly changed eighteenth-century childrearing practices, bringing about a new focus on the individual and continual surveillance. Locke defines the tutor's role as policing the child's mind, specifically remaining vigilant about the "Connexion of Ideas":

I take notice of [this] for another purpose. (viz.) that those who have Children, or the charge of their Education, would think it worth their while diligently to watch, and carefully to prevent the undue Connexion of Ideas in the Minds of young People. This is the time most susceptible of lasting Impressions, and [.] those which relate more peculiarly to the Mind, and terminate in the Understanding, or Passions, have been much less heeded than the thing deserves.

(Essay II.xxxiii.§8)
In the case of the child, Locke appoints the parent or guardian as reason (presumably in place of the child’s undeveloped reason), who, by ceaseless surveillance, uses some type of external measure to decide which connections of ideas are unwarranted and prevents the young, impressionable (literally, in Locke’s theories) child from receiving the “wrong” ideas. Constant vigilance over a child by a responsible adult is the only way to prevent the undue connection of ideas. For Locke asserts that once the connection is established firmly, even reason cannot successfully oppose it (Essay II.xxxiii.§13).¹⁰

Lennox specifies both that Arabella has extraordinary intellectual capacity and that its development depends solely upon the Marquis. As Locke recommends, he plays a firsthand role in Arabella’s childhood education (Barney 260).

At Four Years of Age he took her from under the Direction of the Nurses and Woman appointed to attend her, and permitted her to receive no Part of her Education from another, which he was capable of giving her himself. He taught her to read and write in a very few Months’ and, as she grew older, finding in her an uncommon Quickness of Aprehension, and an Understanding capable of great Improvements, he resolved to cultivate so promising a Genius with the utmost Care: and, as he frequently, in the Rapture of paternal Fondness, expressed himself, render her Mind as beautiful as her Person was lovely. [...] She soon became a perfect Mistress of the French and Italian Languages under the care of her Father: and is not to be doubted, but she would have made a great Proficiency in all useful Knowledge, had not her whole Time been taken up by another Study.

(6-7)
Arabella’s “Genius” is “cultivate[d]” according to “the Marquis’s rapturous enthusiasm” (Barney 261), or his uncontrolled passion for a “beautiful” “Mind.” When he notices that Arabella likes to read, her grants her free reign over his library merely because her predilection pleases him. The library, of course, includes the romances of Arabella’s mother, and Arabella consumes them without constraint or supervision. The father’s “enthusiasm seems to have made him a ‘fond’ parent in the worse sense that Locke describes that condition: his fondness has created an indulgent neglect of the most serious aspects of her instruction” (Barney 261). From the beginning Arabella’s education relies on men and their passions.

The Marquis controls Arabella’s surroundings so that she is likely to draw upon romances for her associations of ideas. Arabella grows to maturity in an extremely isolated rural environment. She lives in a “perfect Retirement” (7), and the Marquis only occasionally allows her the freedom to attend the local church (8). She spends nearly all of her time on her father’s estate, which has been “laid out in a Manner peculiar to [the Marquis’] Taste: The most laborious Endeavours of Art had been used to make it appear like the beautiful Product of wild, uncultivated nature”: it is an “Epitome of Arcadia” (6). Arabella lives in a romance-inflected reality created by her father (Doody xx); it is unlikely to counter the mistaken notions about the world that she has drawn from her mother’s books (Motooka, Age 130).

In fact, romances supply the lacks in what Margaret Doody calls the “pastoral” environment (xx). They represent Arabella’s escape from her physical and social constraints:
The surprising Adventures with which they were filled, proved a most pleasing Entertainment to a young Lady, who was wholly secluded from the World; who had no other Diversion, but ranging like a Nymph through Gardens, or, to say better, the Woods and Lawns in which she was inclosed; and who had no other Conversation but that of a grave and melancholy Father, or her own Attendants.

The language here underscores Arabella’s physical confinement by rejecting the romantic interpretation of her situation. “ranging like a Nymph through Gardens,” for the more accurate (“to say better”) “ranging [. . .] the Woods and Lawns in which she was inclosed” (my emphasis). The “Adventures” “fill[ing]” romance recalls the novel’s subtitle, *The Adventures of Arabella*, and suggests that Arabella seeks that which is explicitly excluded from her world: freedom to see the world. Evidently Arabella’s books also compensate for the deficiency of conversation in her surroundings. Conversation plays an important educational and socializing role in Locke’s theories: the Marquis’s failure to prevent romance from assuming the place of conversation fosters Arabella’s foible.

The Marquis allows Arabella’s association of ideas to accumulate without intervention until she refuses to marry Glanville, his chosen suitor and heir. Although “adventures” that lead up to Glanville’s arrival in the plot amply demonstrate for the reader that Arabella’s books have effected her views of reality, her father overlooks or fondly dismisses her irregularities. He diagnoses a mental disorder, a “distract[ion]” resulting from “foolish Books” (55), only when Arabella disobeys his wishes regarding marriage. Arabella’s irrationality thus becomes a problem of marriage and subscription
to the Law of the Father: the disruptions she poses in these arenas prompt patriarchy, her father and Glanville, to seek a cure. The Marquis attempts to cure by claiming his right, as father, to absolute obedience. He responds to her rejection of Glanville’s offer, “I am surprised at your treatment of a Man whom, after all, if ever you intend to obey me, you must consent to marry” (54). Informed about “heroic Disobedience” on the parts of heroines forced by parents to undertake marriage against their wills, Arabella speaks of marriage in the terms of romance as well as Lockean citizenship, stating “that she would always obey him in all just and reasonable Things; and, being persuaded that he would never attempt to lay any Force upon her Inclinations, she would endeavour to make them conformable to his” (27). She claims the prerogative to “obey” according to the justice and rationality of her father, implying that the application of “Force upon her Inclinations” would not meet those criteria. Arabella and her father disagree over constructions of marriage.11 The former espousing a priority on choice, and the latter on obedience. Because of this disagreement, the Marquis, the Law of the Father, labels Arabella insane.12

The novel rejects the Marquis’ outdated construction of marriage by arranging his sudden death early in the novel. His will leaves her free to marry as she chooses, and although Sir Charles Glanville, her guardian, threatens to “press her to perform the Marquis’s Will.” Glanville insists that Arabella be left to choose freely, telling his father. “[N]ever attempt to lay any Constraint upon my Cousin in an Affair of this Nature” (64). Although Glanville and Arabella evidently share a belief in the kind of consent upon which the companionate marriage finds its foundation, her insanity still poses a marital problem, though now one of a different order. Based as it is on consent and mutual
fulfillment. Companionate marriage requires that its partners have the capacity to give both. In addition, Arabella still believes that marriage must "thought such an Event ought to be brought about with an infinite deal of Trouble" (heroic exploits) and cannot be founded on the lack of obvious incompatibility (27). Patriarchy must enact Arabella's cure so that companionate marriage can be upheld as a model; however, due to the empirical origins of her beliefs, her cure must be performed by exposing her to the world at large. For propriety's sake, she must be accompanied by men, and the men who do attempt her cure have their own interests at heart. The completion of the marriage between Arabella and Glanville allows for the Marquis's estate to pass, intact, into Glanville's possession.

While rational feminists such as Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft used Lockean educational theories to claim a vital role for women in raising children, a role that allowed them to claim female education as a necessity, in Lennox's hands, Lockean theory becomes a way to indict the men who control the environment to which women are exposed. Lennox recognizes that women are dangerously dependent on others, those who have access to their "blank slate" from childhood, for their education. Judith Dorn Depuydt, referring to the Marquis' specific control of Arabella's "material" world, "trace[s] her misperceptions to decisions made by one man, her father" and states that "Lennox . . . argue[s] the need to arrange the material conditions of life for the wellbeing and education of young women. (83). Inside the home, fathers (representing the Law of the Father) may educate their daughters according to their own whims, thus perpetuating them, and with an eye to compliance in marriage. In the next section, I argue that Lennox extends this critique to assert that because of the demands of female propriety, the
need to have unblemished chastity to achieve marriage. Adult women are made dependent on men, as a child is on its parent, in ways that shape their rationality.

"Frequent Excursions from Home": Female Quixotism and Travel

As the voice of the Father, Fénelon establishes the parent inside the home as the ideal shaper of female education. Lennox questions the results of leaving women in the home, made dependent upon the father, who may not himself be ruled by reason. For Arabella, left in this position, the need develops to travel as an antidote for the irrationality induced by her father’s isolation. Lennox creates two critiques of travel as a cure for Arabella’s insanity: first, that socially acceptable travel for women is inextricably linked to sexuality; the second, that the demands of virtue place women in the hands of men, who can still shape their minds by manipulating the environment. Both of these critiques are linked to a problem related to empiricism for women that Lennox identifies: the difficulty of wielding the empirical gaze while maintaining a position as object of the male sexualized gaze.

Arabella’s chance to learn more about the outside world and cure her madness depends upon men who are interested in preserving her value on the marriage market—in preserving her virtue in actuality and appearance without allowing her desires to operate independently and choose a suitor other than Glanville. The answer they propose for her insanity is a controlled travel typical of middle-class women of the day: trips to London and Bath that are supposed to substitute for seeing the world. These trips are designed by Glanville to restore Arabella’s reason while preserving her propriety and thus her status as a woman eligible for the companionate marriage. Lennox prevents this therapeutic travel from curing Arabella, reserving that role to a formal debate between Arabella and a
clergyman that lays bare the power behind patriarchy that allows it to determine the shape of female rationality.

The novel holds up traveling as a way of gaining essential knowledge about the world. Many different characters attribute Arabella’s irrationality to her seclusion. In general, these characters are also convinced that curing Arabella can only be accomplished by making her see other places and meet a greater variety of people; in short, her cure is to consist of re-education through travel and conversation. The more knowing, savvy characters in the novel, those who are allowed to judge Arabella’s sanity, have visited more places than Arabella. She is always surrounded by people who have experience in a much wider arena: for instance, Mr. Hervey arrives in the country from London, Glanville from the Grand Tour, her father (of course) has experience in court. Charlotte Glanville is portrayed as having experience in the customs of Bath and London, and Sir Charles Glanville has been in the service. In the age of empiricism, travel was a significant opportunity for learning, a chance to see other cultures and landscapes firsthand and form comparative judgments. Traveling was very popular, even to the point that the Grand Tour became an institutional finish for the young man’s education. The Grand Tour was not offered to women, however, unless after marriage had provided her with a husband to safeguard her virtue: the culmination of female education (such as it was) was societal debut, which marked entry into the marriage market.

Lennox, adopting Cervantes’ Don Quixote as her model, centralizes the problem of female travel. She situates Arabella as a female picara and, in so doing, sets up a conflict between her gender and the picaresque as a genre. This tradition depicts continual movement and physical freedom to move about the countryside, commenting as
an outsider on societal practices (Davidson 179). Putting a female character in such a position, of course, strains the form, emphasizing that movement and freedom are the very things which women in a patriarchal society cannot have: one produces a novel of the form defined by freedom and introduces into it a character limited by societal expectations of femininity. By adopting the picaresque form, Lennox arouses in the reader expectations that Arabella will launch out into the sort of adventures typified by Tom Jones and Joseph Andrews. When she offers the tantalizing partial fulfillment of these expectations, or fulfills them in an unanticipated way, she draws attention to the disparity between the demands of the genre and the ability of her heroine, a “realistic” eighteenth-century female, to fulfill them.

Arabella fantasizes about travel when she detects abduction plots laid by men around her: she wants to travel in the manner of the romance heroines that she has read about, many of whom have traveled to far-off lands and had exciting adventures. Arabella’s discourse of travel, which focuses on abduction, brands her as irrational yet simultaneously reveals how inadequate the available forms of travel are for her purposes. Arabella’s repeatedly fantasizes about abduction: this imagined threat allows her to break out of her confinement in domesticity and start on “travels” that are aborted by the men who seek her out in hopes of securing her virtue. Her two attempts to escape in the novel, both of which result from her fears of abduction (the first, her suspicions of Glanville and Edmund: the second, her apprehensions of men along the river near Richmond), at once indicate her desire to break free and the male control that frustrates her desire. Arabella repeatedly expresses fear that she will be abducted by a lover in the manner illustrated by her romances or that she will be imprisoned somewhere. Her
fears provide her with the license she needs to run for freedom or the material for a fantasy of travel/abduction (such as in the case of the Valley of Tempe), but her continual containment, whether it be in the interests of safety or propriety, by men, particularly the man who wants to marry her, reveal her gender and the need to preserve virtue as obstacles.

When she does get to travel to Bath, her initial reaction indicates that she imagines empirical learning as one result of abduction: abduction represents the chance to see something, something much more grandiose and interesting than Bath and the domestic scenes her male relative offer her. As she approaches the city, its situation, "with the Amphitheatrical View of the Hills around it" (259), reminds Arabella of the description of the Valley of Tempe in a romance. Arabella remarks to Glanville and her uncle that if she were to travel to Macedonia, she would make it a point to visit this sight, which she insists is "so celebrated by all the Poets and Historians" (260). Glanville and Sir Charles respond with condescending disbelief that Arabella would have reason or inclination to travel that far: Sir Charles specifically plays the patriarchal card, calling attention to his claim over her as a male relation: "I hope my Niece does not propose to go thither" (260: emphasis mine). Arabella replies that she will not see Macedonia.

Not unless I am forcibly carried thither [..] but I do determine, if that Misfortune should ever happen to me, that I would, if possible, visit the Valley of Tempe [..]. And may I not be carried into Macedonia by a Similitude of Destiny with that of a great many beautiful Princesses, who, though born in the most distant Quarters of the World, chanced to meet at one time in the City of Alexandria, and related their Miraculous Adventures to each other? (261)
Arabella eagerly turns her imagined abduction into a sightseeing tour, a chance to familiarize herself with the world; this vision in part explains her recurring abduction fantasies/fears. Normal, eighteenth-century life for a woman may not present the opportunity to see the Valley of Tempe (going to Bath will have to serve as a more pedestrian substitute), but abduction has offered other women the opportunity to visit the exotic, far-flung reaches of the world. "Adventures" of this sort, however, are denied eighteenth-century women: as the Countess later explains to Arabella, "a Beauty in this [Age] could not pass thro' the Hand of several different Ravishers, without bringing an Imputation on her Chastity" (328). Her words point out that what was once accepted as evidence of a woman's value, the desire of others for her, is now interpreted as her uncontrolled sexual desire. The exposure to the world afforded by abduction is socially unacceptable, but that is the only way that Arabella can imagine herself setting off on a globetrotting, empirical tour of the world.

Instead Arabella's outings are always mundane, controlled, and often take on the overtones of courtship. By substituting patently domestic outings such as a trip by carriage to see local horse races, a fox hunt on the Marquis's estate, and the well-worn path to Bath and London for romance adventures. Lennox emphasizes the constructed nature of Arabella's life in comparison with the princesses she so much admires. The disparity between Arabella's real, mundane "adventures" and her imagined ones comment on the limits of empiricism for women under the requirements of propriety. In *Tom Jones*, an escape from a sexual advance would form the beginning of a marvelous trek to London. In *The Female Quixote*, by stark contrast, when Arabella tries to flee, indicating a desire for freedom to see the world, her journey is ended abruptly by male
concern for her virtue. When her father orders her to marry Glanville, she immediately plans to flee the protection/incarceration of his house in a gesture that indicates she wants to leave the boundaries of her father’s world. She bolts to freedom upon suspecting that Glanville is conspiring with Edmund, the gardener, to abduct her. Glanville chases and finds her, but she resists his persuasion to return home, expressing fear that she will become imprisoned there: “But who can assure me [. . .] that I shall not, by returning home, enter voluntarily into my Prison? The same Treachery which made the Palace of Candace the Place of her Confinement, may turn the Castle of Arabella into her Jayl.”

(106). Although Arabella’s words emerge from a romance-inflected understanding of the events around her and are an exaggeration of the literal conditions in which she lives, she unwittingly puts a name to the estate where she has lived thus far: prison (Depuydt 81). one tended by men who fear any blot on her virtue and therefore control her movement, or travel, closely.

As inheritor of the Marquis’ patriarchal power over Arabella, Glanville plans and directs a more domestic form of travel, what I am calling therapeutic travel, in an effort to cure Arabella by exposing her to more of the world: presumably his presence will protect her virtue. He tries to counteract “the Whims Romances had put into her Head” with “a better Knowledge of Life and Manners” (339-40): to this end, he arranges for Arabella to travel to Bath and London with him, his father, and his sister. Glanville’s answer, his “cure” for Arabella’s irrationality, is to take her on a trip to Bath and London that resembles a debut, or symbolic entrance into the marriage market (in the manner of Evelina Anville’s trip to Bristol and London in Burney’s Evelina or Catherine Moreland’s trip to Bath in Austen’s Northanger Abbey). This conventional form of travel
is carefully controlled by patriarchy to serve the purposes of courtship and marriage. Glanville recognizes the cure-courtship aspect of her appearance in public and particularly anticipates the potential negative effects of allowing her to appear in the eyes of the public.

Entry into the marriage market presents a delicate balance act of "seeing and being seen," for too much exposure the young lady and made her look sexually compromised. There is a sort of economy of exposure in which too much will result in no marriage, as will too little, but the exact right amount will bring on a profitable union. Conduct books of the century, the Law of the Father, are full of admonitions aimed at young women that discourage young women and their parents from bringing young women into society at a premature age, too often when they reach the right age, and from liking town too much. For instance, in *Plans of Education* (1792), Clara Reeve states the problem quite simply while blaming parents for bringing their daughters out too early: "They are seen too much, and too often, and made cheap in the eyes of men. I fear it much oftener promotes celibacy than marriage" (189). Reeve's words bring into focus that the purpose for bringing a woman into public view at all is to please a man, to bring about a good marriage match. She reflects the fear that familiarity with a woman will produce disgust (rejection and thus celibacy) rather than desire (marriage). In "The Trifler," a recurring feature of Lennox's periodical *The Lady's Museum* (1760-1), the narrator comments disapprovingly on women who spend all their time in public:

Beauty, like the majesty of kings, weakens its influence when familiarised to common view. The face that may be seen every morning at auctions, at public breakfastings, and in crowded walks: every evening at assemblies, at the play, the
opera, or some other fashionable scene of pleasure, soon loses the charm of novelty, and effaces the impression it first made. (83)

The synecdochal reference to "[t]he face" reinforces the impression that women are a collection of body parts that, in order to retain their special appeal, must be carefully and consciously managed. This rhetoric is to convince women, in the mode of Fénelon, that staying at home is actually preferable. This move to cloister women, to protect their virtue and desirability, represents a problem for empirical learning, for experiencing life firsthand.

Glanville limits Arabella's public exposure both to preserve her virtue, which, ironically, has been put more at risk due to her isolation by the Marquis (her interest in romance constantly indicates her sexuality publicly), and to limit her choice in suitors. Initially Glanville recognizes that her isolation gives him an advantage as suitor and delays curing her. Early in the novel, he does not press Arabella to go to London as persistently as he could because "he feared that, when she appeared in the World, her Beauty and Fortune would attract a Croud of Admirers, among whom, it was probable, she would find some one more agreeable to her Taste than himself" (65). He anticipates that he might lose his position as primary suitor (and compromise his economic interests) if he takes steps to allow Arabella to see the world and engage in empirical learning. He only makes up his mind to take her to Bath when he becomes convinced it is the cure necessary for marriage: "Mr. Glanville, who thought the Solitude she lived in, confirmed her in her absurd and ridiculous Notions, desired his Father to press her to go to London" (254). At this point, he further manipulates Arabella's environment to control her cure and virtue. For instance, he actively solicits the Countess, who was infatuated with
romances in her youth but has given them up to assume a respectable life in marriage. To visit Arabella and talk her out of her mistaken notions. When she appears in public and begins discussing her romances or displaying “princess behavior,” he immediately tries to change the subject or take her home. In the assembly room at Bath, she engages in conversation with Mr. Tinsel, a gossip, and tries to correct his ideas of “history” with the narratives of glory that romances offer. Her harangue, dealing as it does with romance, broaches the subject of relations between the sexes in a public setting, and the crowd gathers around, “desirous of hearing that the strange Lady was saying so loud” (278). Glanville immediately forecloses this chance for Arabella to learn more about the world: “fearing Arabella would expose herself still farther, [he] whisper’d to his Sister to get her away as if possible” (278). His concern for Arabella’s virtue outweighs his determination to bring her to reason: the trio return home.

Public exposures at Bath and London, moments of near scandal that cast doubt upon Arabella’s virtue, threaten her with confinement that will prevent any further empirical journeys. While Arabella expresses curiosity about the attractions here and in London, Glanville is constantly trying to control what the public can see about her. Her public follies tend to take the form of sexually inappropriate behavior (i.e., accusing Mr. Selvin of having designs on her person). and general knowledge of her mistakes would make her seem unfit for marriage. The trip to Vauxhall represents the most serious of her public exposures. Here she immediately attracts attention based upon her appearance, first by her idiosyncratic dress and then by her beauty: “For her Veil falling back in her Hurry, she did not mind to replace it, and the Charms of her Face, join’d to the Majesty of her Person, and Singularity of her Dress, attracting every Person’s Attention and
Respect” (335). Arabella then mistakes a prostitute for a kidnapped maiden in distress. and Glanville’s comments reveals that this is an issue of display of sexually improper behavior: “Are you mad, Madam, said he in a Whisper, to make all this Rout about a Prostitute? Do you see how everybody stares at you? What will they think—For Heav’n’s sake let us be gone” (336). This is the most severe reaction Glanville has to any of her adventures; he even resolves not to take her out into public anymore until she is cured. This is the dilemma of virtue and rationality, however: Arabella must be taken into public to be cured empirically, but such exposure threatens her virtue.

Lennox places Arabella in the position of child to Glanville’s parent. First her father controls the writing on her blank slate; then Glanville, in the interests of “curing” her and rendering her marriageable, takes over as father. His therapeutic travel, which manipulates Arabella’s surroundings in order to manipulate her reason, parallels the type of parental intervention Locke recommends to the vigilant parent. Lennox protests against a father-daughter hierarchy being imposed upon an adult woman in a courtship relationship. She illustrates that Glanville’s and patriarchy’s interest in preserving Arabella’s virtue overcomes her claim on empirical learning; in effect, Lennox asserts that female rationality is at the mercy of male construction. In The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer, Mary Poovey states, “Because of the need to protect their virtue, [middle-class women] were advised to acquire knowledge only indirectly” (27). Lennox uncovers the male ideology that controls this indirect knowledge and creates a dependent female rationality.
Female Rationality in Conversation

Thus far most of the criticism dealing with the issue of conversation in the novel has focused on the type of miscommunication that takes place due to the varying associations individuals have with the same word. The novel, which follows Lockean concerns about language much as Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* does, lends itself to this type of critique. For instance, Arabella questions her cousin Charlotte about her “history,” and reduces her to tears because Charlotte thinks she is trying to get her to admit that she has been allowing men freedoms with her; in fact, Arabella is only inviting Charlotte to participate in “princess” discourse.18

Yet all this attention to the Lockean implications and overtones to Arabella’s linguistic usage fails to consider conversation as an outgrowth of rationality in the eighteenth century. It was at this time that conversational skills emerged as an essential product of proper female education: “many conduct-book authors seemed to feel a woman’s education amounted to little more than instilling good reading habits and cultivating conversational skills” (Armstrong 91). Conversation was also linked closely with reading materials, which, it was assumed, would supply the substance of conversation. During this period, conduct literature puts conversation in a problematic position as both a form of public display and the product, indeed the proof, of the proper female education. Conduct books for women during this time tend to discourage physical display. Repeatedly their authors oppose curricula that focus on developing virtuosity in painting, music, or dancing: such curricula are characterized as training the body to the neglect of the mind. Nancy Armstrong and others identify the ideological shift away from female display toward invisible “qualities of mind” as part of the increasing
influence of the middle class and the wane of the aristocracy. As my examination of conduct literature and *The Female Quixote* reveals, the exercise of female rationality through conversation was legitimated and limited by placing it within the framework of the "natural" desire that women have for men and constructing it as a diminished form of male rationality.

The female rationality produced by therapeutic travel in *The Female Quixote* is, in part, intended to be displayed in female conversation that serves as the basis of male desire and thus the companionate marriage. In this section, I use conduct literature included in Lennox's *Lady's Museum* to outline ideals of female rational conversation in the eighteenth century. I choose these texts because of they are typical of the time period and are directly associated with Lennox, who as editor of *The Lady's Museum* presumably has some familiarity with their precepts. I maintain that in *The Female Quixote*, Arabella violates conversational mandates for women because, following the prompts of romance, she refuses to enact rational conversation in a way that is accepted and preached in the conduct books of the day. Arabella's violations reveal Lennox's concern about the debased versions of reason women must accept in the interests of the companionate marriage. Speaking as the Law of the Father in the conduct tract, which demands a certain amount of conformity for sales, authority, and approval, she cannot speak as she does in the novel, which allows for a plurality of meanings to take shape. The novelistic form allows Lennox to comment with layers of indirection and ambiguity as well serving as a genre in which women were more acceptably able to question their position in society. It was a "female" form. The restrictions on conversation are designed to foster heterosexual desire and leave women with debased versions of reason.
This conduct literature reveals the containment of female rationality through the manipulation of conversation in the eighteenth century. My examination of conduct texts shows them in the process of transferring the attraction between the sexes from physical to mental: their rendering of the allure of the educated woman in visual, visceral language marks the attempt to replace the attractions of the physical realm with those of the mental. In this exchange, women are attributed with the desire to participate in "male" discourse as a means of achieving and sustaining the companionate marriage. The aristocratic display of female knowledge is thus redeemed as middle-class conversation, a girder of the private sphere. The rhetoric surrounding conversation controls female inquiry by positing it as subordinate to female heterosexual desire; placing it within the context of sociability, which ensures that men will monitor and normalize rational activity; and characterizing it as a domestic activity, something that can and should take place in the home. In effect, then, the companionate marriage requires rational women, though women of a certain type of rationality.

Before I turn exclusively to the texts in The Lady's Museum, I would like to use a brief sampling of eighteenth-century texts to delineate the stereotypes of female conversation against which Lennox's texts are working. Eighteenth-century texts often characterize female discourse as trivial, uninteresting, and dangerously close to sinful. Astell decries "that froth and impertinence, that Censure and Pragmaticalness, with which Feminine Conversations so much abound" (38). The male author of "Of the Studies Proper for Ladies" maintains that it consists of "the barren funds of fashionable trifles, the news of the day, and hackneyed compliments" (Lady's Museum 15). Hester Chapone berates women for "calling in slander to enliven the tedious insipidity of conversation"
and identifies their "ignorance" as the cause of such folly (191). Such discourse regarding female conversation confirms the traditional connection between women and the transitory, inconsequential, and material considerations of life while asserting that such exchanges are only appealing to women (Warren 376)—women, furthermore, that these texts depict as ill-bred and educated. Conduct books create a need to reform female conversation.

I now turn to the conduct literature of The Lady's Museum, which contains several features concerned with female education. The author of "Of the Studies Proper for Women,"1 one such feature, places bounds on female conversation by manipulating the distinction between "female" and "male" conversation. The text tries to create female desire to participate in "male" discourse by prevailing upon their assumed (and textually created) desire for the power to evoke and sustain sexual interest from men. Bases his whole justification for female learning on the prolonged power to attract men that "learned" conversation provides women:

By often beholding a beautiful face, the impression it first made on us soon wears away. When the woman whose person we admire is incapable of pleasing us by her conversation, languor and satiety, soon triumph over the taste we had for her charms; hence arises the inconstancy with which we are so often reproached: it is that barrenness of ideas which we find in women that renders men unfaithful.

(10)

The author's first statement, that repeated exposure to beauty lessens its attractions, is one frequently found in conduct/educational tracts and works to displace the aristocratic emphasis on appearances. In this instance, the author substitutes oral for physical
attraction: the allure of sex is replaced with that of conversation. Men experience “languor and satiety” as a result of cumulative exposure to female bodies, not from verbal exchanges. The male’s resulting “inconstancy” is justified by the female’s intellectual “barrenness.” which implies some kind of female failure or defect that interferes with male need. While attributing male sexual infidelity to female intellectual deficiency, the passage also manages to constructs men as inherently intellectual, too easily dissatisfied with the pleasures of the flesh, and women as inherently physical. The writer feels sure, however, that conversation of the proper type will produce a more secure attraction between the sexes that will lead to domestic security—security against infidelity—for women and allow men to act in their true character. Female rationality is thus being used to secure the stability of the private realm.

Women will draw men into this conversational space that is both public and private with men’s ideas, in “light” form, recycled through female voices. Educational literature throughout the century insists that women turn largely to male writings to develop their intellect; the rhetoric of “Studies Proper” is particularly helpful in illustrating how this process is supposed to work. The author begins by positioning women in men in separate conversational spaces due to the alleged shortcomings of female knowledge: “The more they [women] shall enlarge their notions, the more subjects of conversation will be found between them and us, and the more sprightly and affecting will that conversation be” (10). His words imply that if men and women move within two different and separated spheres of conversation, women must move into that of men if there is to be a shared conversational space. As he continues to detail how
women can expand their mental repertoire by "collect[ing] ideas" from men. this becomes even more clear:

There is but one way to make it [conversation] more varied and more interesting. If ladies of the first rank would condescend to form their taste upon our best authors. and collect ideas from their useful writings. conversation would take another cast [...] men of sense and learning would then frequent their assemblies. and form a circle more worthy of the name of good company. (15)

The author encourages women to study natural philosophy. history. music. the arts. and "our best authors." all fields that are dominated by men (romances are. of course. decried). so that they can regurgitate the ideas they consume. He later states even more bluntly that women "must endeavour to improve their natural talents by study. and the conversation of men of letters" (16; my emphasis). They are not to bother themselves with any form of abstract learning or theology. anything that might entail controversy or developing logical argument. In effect. they are to become "empty repositories" for pre-existing ideas. The author claims that women who follow his advice "will unite in themselves all the advantages of both sexes" (16). suggesting that the physical allure of femininity will be joined with the mental allure of masculinity. The mental allure of masculinity. this masculine fund of knowledge. though. is the element that will fix men in their attraction to women. They are drawn to reproductions of themselves.

As "Studies Proper" reveals. authors situate an assumed female desire for male sexual attention as a motivation for pursuing greater learning; however. they also use desire to form and limit this learning. "Studies Proper" subordinates female desire for learning to desire for men, portraying the former solely as a function of the latter. and is
therefore able to dictate specific materials for female education. Other conduct texts posit the necessity of educating women to make them generally more pleasant in company. For instance, the anonymous author of “Philosophy for the Ladies” in Lennox’s *Lady’s Museum* prefaces his essay with reassurances that his curriculum will be socially lubricating rather than inhibiting. His words seek to qualify female rationality:

> our wish is to render the ladies though learned not pedantic, conversable rather than scientific. we shall avoid entering into any of those minutiae or diving into those depths of literature, which may make their study dry to themselves, or occasion its becoming tiresome to others. (130)

The “pedantic,” the “scientific,” the “tiresome”: all are eliminated from his plans and thus excised from the realm of feminine knowledge. The author succeeds in setting certain types of intellectual inquiry in opposition to femininity in the name of sociability. The limitations on education effectively ensure that men will have unquestioned superiority in the conversational arena at all times, for women are rendered generalists who have familiarity with only a portion of the male knowledge available.

In his *Treatise on the Education of Daughters*, Fénelon dismisses conversation as an unacceptable display and limits women based on their weaknesses as a sex. He warns parents against allowing their daughters “of a fine genius” to engage without restraint in debate or discussion (845).

> for if we do not take not care, they, in their vivacity, are apt to intermeddle, to talk on most things, to give their opinion on subjects disproportioned to this capacity: at other times to affect a listlessness out of pure delicacy. A young lady should not talk but as occasion requires. and then with an air of doubt and
deference: nay, as to subjects out of the reach of women in general, she should not speak upon them at all, though well informed. For what if her memory be never so good? what if she has vivacity, a pleasant turn of speech, a faculty of conversing with ease and gracefulness? All these qualities will be in common to her, and many others of her sex, far from being sensible women, and in themselves despicable. Instead of this, let her endeavour after an exact and steady conduct [. . . ] this quality, so rare to be found, will sufficiently distinguish her.

(846)

He sees the learned woman as a potentially disruptive figure in society that must be controlled. Fénélon implies that women seek to show their wit and to display something that will “distinguish” themselves from other women: he does not imply that they want to engage in actual intellectual activity through conversation. His phrasing in this passage casts female rational activity as inherently private, something to be kept as a secret aspect of female subjectivity rather than displayed as a commodity for public acknowledgment. For the distinction that conversation can bring, he substitutes the internal, more invisible quality of “exact and steady conduct,” suggesting that women can earn recognition precisely by avoiding behaviors that might make others notice them. Far from making herself remarkable in conversation, it seems, she will only increase the perception that she is like “many others of her sex” who lack sensibility and are “despicable.” Fénélon asserts that the weaknesses of women as a sex must restrain the exceptional woman in rational conversation.

Leland F. Warren argues, “Behind the descriptions of or formulas for women’s conversation lurks the implication that women are to talk in their own way in order to
help prove that there is another kind of talk, carried on by men, that can engage reality” (377). I would modify Warren’s statement, arguing that the conduct book formulae for female conversation from Lennox’s Lady’s Museum do not only strive to distinguish between male and female conversation. They also labor to declare a shared territory in which heterosexual attraction can be nurtured and sustained. In terms of content, female conversation is a lesser version of male conversation calculated to forge a secure connection for rational, and thus sustained, relations between the sexes. The ongoing concern for female display further qualifies acceptable forms of female conversation, preferring those that are relational and reaffirm the rational superiority of men. Lennox draws on these conduct-book mandates in The Female Quixote, using Arabella’s violations of them to show the restrictions they place on female rationality in the interests of the companionate marriage.

Conversation as Symptom

All along Glanville desires Arabella as a rational partner. much as conduct discourse intimates he should:

her Beauty had made a deep impression on his Heart: He admired the Strength of her Understanding: her lively Wit: the Sweetness of her Temper: and a Thousand amiable Qualities which distinguished her from the rest of her Sex: Her Follies. when opposed to all those Charms of Mind and Person. seemed inconsiderable and weak. (116-7)

Lennox enumerates at length the qualities of mind and character that rise Arabella to distinction above the rabble. the unremarkable “rest of [the] Sex...” Although she is beautiful. Glanville finds himself drawn to her “Mind” (which precedes her “Person” at
the end of the passage). “Understanding,” and “lively Wit.” Arabella and Glanville prove themselves worthy of each other by their fondness for discussion:

Mr. Glanville [. . .] took up the Discourse: and turning it upon the Grecian History. engrossed [Arabella’s] Conversation for two Hours. wholly to himself. while Miss Glanville (to whom all they said was quite unintelligible) diverted herself with humming a Tune. and tinkling her Cousins’ Harpsichord: which proved no Interruption to the more rational Entertainment of her Brother and Arabella. (83)

The topic. Greek history. is right from an educational manual. and Charlotte Glanville is there in the background as contrast. performing the purely physical act of playing a musical instrument. the textbook example of a negligible “accomplishment.” Glanville and Arabella have tastes for “more rational Entertainment.” Like conduct literature. The Female Quixote transfers the language of sexual pleasure to conversation. Glanville is “charm’d into an Extacy” when Arabella offers a “sensible Speech” (304). and upon her cure. he “fancied to himself the most ravishing Delight from conversing with his lovely Cousin. now recovered to the free Use of all her noble Powers of Reason” (382). “Extacy” and “ravishing Delight” configure Glanville’s attraction for Arabella as mental. aroused in her conversation. rather than principally physical.

Yet Arabella’s attraction for Glanville cannot persuade her surrender her desires for other types of conversation that are not conduct book material. As her every encounter with other women makes clear. Arabella wants to engage in an exchange of romance narratives among females. an exchange she sees valorized in the literary legacy of her mother. When she presses Charlotte Glanville or the Countess to share her
"history," she is emulating the paradigm found in her books, trying to recreate the female community she sees there. Arabella sees the possibility for this female community as part of heroic adventures, even abduction: "And may I not be carried into Macedonia by a Similitude of Destiny with that of a great many beautiful Princesses. who [...] chanced to meet at one time in the City of Alexandria, and related their Miraculous Adventures to each other?" (261). Lennox evokes a discourse that is both feminine and valued, the direct opposite of the degraded female conversation described in conduct books. With romance discourse branded as irrational, the conversational bonds between women have been cut, as Arabella’s situation makes clear. Throughout the novel, Arabella desires the exchange of histories with other worthy women but is unable to find them; what’s more, the Countess assures her, worthy women no longer have histories or adventures to recount: she tells Arabella, "The Word Adventures carries in it so free and licentious a Sound in the Apprehensions of People at this Period of Time, that it can hardly with Propriety be apply’d to those few and natural incidents which compose the History of a Woman of Honour" (327). The Countess assures Arabella that the story of her life can be summarized in just a few sentences, all of which are typical of most "other Women of the same Rank, who have a moderate Share of Sense, Prudence and Virtue" (327): she was born, educated, and married happily according to her parents’ direction and her "own Inclination" (327). Women have no stories to tell each other, for they are all the same: in fact, it is not clear what the Countess would discuss with Arabella if she did not have the patriarchal charge to "cure" her of her conversational disorder.

Arabella’s encounter with Miss Groves reveals how women are unable to find common ground of discourse:
The Young Lady [Miss Groves], tho' perfectly versed in the Modes of Town-Breeding, and nothing-meaning Ceremony, was at a Loss how to make proper Returns to the Civilities of Arabella: The native Elegance and Simplicity of her Manners were accompanied with so much real Benevolence of Heart, such insinuating Tenderness, and Graces so irresistible, that she was quite oppressed with them: and, having spent most of her Time between her Toilet and Quadrille, was so little qualified for partaking a Conversation so refined as Arabella's, that her Discourse appeared quite tedious to her, since it was neither upon Fashions, Assemblies, Cards, or Scandal. (68)

Although Arabella's talk appears superior and more "refined" than Miss Groves' town gossip of "Fashions, Assemblies, Cards, or Scandal," the disparity between their discourse indicates their inability to form a common bond.\textsuperscript{22} The difficulty, as Lennox presents it, is the irreconcilable nature of their discourses, romance and gossip. One appears irrational, the other trivial. Without further education, Miss Groves cannot talk to Arabella, but further education, conduct books make clear, is supposed to change their conversation to something totally other than the female discourse Arabella wants\textsuperscript{23}, which is Miss Groves' history. Arabella is supposed to desire male conversation, the improving conversation that Hester Chapone endorses and involves the repetition of facts from patriarchal discourse: Lennox seems to suggest that neither conduct-book discourse, nor gossip, nor romance will unite actual women. She implies that another discourse must be generated, one that does not distort female rationality, for that task.

When Arabella meets with men, be it Glanville or Sir George, rather than stimulating their attraction to her by calling upon masculine material for conversation,
she assumes a pre-existing desire for her and attempts to instruct them in the form this
desire should take (heroic exploits) with reference to romances. This literature supplies
the place of the readings in history, geography, and natural philosophy recommended by
educational tracts: they are the “repository of ideas” from which Arabella draws. She
refuses to share a conversational space with Glanville, instead creating and dominating
her own romantic space. Her domination of conversation in the novel casts her in the
figure of the pedantic woman.24 She repeatedly tries to instruct those around her, whether
it be Glanville, when she sets him the task of reading some of her favorite romances and
tries to follow up his reading with a discussion to reinforce the lesson: Charlotte, when
she instructs her on the nature of the Olympic Games; or Lucy, her maid, when she
advises her on the contents and structure of a lady’s “history” to be presented in
company. Arabella’s conversational sallies into the romantic usually reduce those around
her to the role of interlocutors or to expressions of wonder/frustration: in any case, they
usually leave her with clear control.

Arabella’s refusal to conform to common vocabulary usage can be qualified as a
symptom of pedanticism. Locke says that words are no person’s personal possession and
that,

they must [. . .] take care to apply their Words, as near as may be, to such Ideas as
common use has annexed them to. [. . .] The proper signification and use of
Terms is best to be learned from those, who in their Writings and Discourses,
appear to have had the clearest Notions, and apply’d to them their Terms with the
exactest choice and fitness. (Essay III.xi.§11)
Locke’s definition cannot resolve the problem of linguistic usage that it addresses. It relies on some prior knowledge of linguistic meaning or subjective judgment to determine whose writings and discourses are to have an authoritative effect on linguistic usage. In all likelihood, however, these linguistic authorities would be male because “their Writings and Discourses” assumed a more prominent position in the public sphere. Conduct literature for women frequently asserts the importance of precise language and urges a similar course of study to ensure exactitude of expression. Arabella refuses to consult these authoritative works or people, instead trying to make the rest of the world conform to her linguistic usage, which amounts to her associations with words like “conversation,” “honor,” and “obedience.” Lucy’s perplexity at translating Arabella’s vocabulary points up her communicative anomaly. Lucy represents a diminished (in social class) version of Arabella and a Mrs. Malaprop.25 the other characters feel free to ridicule her openly, something they cannot do to Arabella. Arabella defies conversational expectations for women that they follow rather than lead the conversation, and that they use conversation to attract men through what amounts to a charming willingness to be instructed. She does not put her rationality into the right form. Engaging in conversation about romances or emerging from romances is categorized in Arabella’s society as irrational, or even insane.26

Though conduct literature describes ideal conversation as occurring within the privacy of the domestic sphere, Arabella’s speech consistently places her in a position of publicity. As Laurie Langbauer states, “[T]he effect [of romances on Arabella’s sexual image] goes against what is seen as the very essence of woman, who should be silent, submissive, invisible. Arabella believes instead that a lady’s reputation depends “upon
the Noise and Bustle she makes in the World’” (91). Glanville and Sir Charles are constantly worrying about the impression she will make on others with her distinctive manner of speaking. Like a codependent trying to control an embarrassing alcoholic, Glanville is always trying to control the conversation to prevent Arabella from “exposing herself,” as he does in the episode with Mr. Tinsel above. When at all possible, he turns the conversation to topics such as those suggested by conduct books: perhaps “the medicinal Virtue of the Springs, the Oeconomy of the Baths, the Nature of the Diversions, and such other Topics, as the Objects around them furnished” (263) or “Grecian History” (83). Arabella turns conversation into an opportunity for display that she eagerly seizes: she does not use it to foster and sustain heterosexual attraction.

In the discursive world Arabella calls forth, gender hierarchy is reversed through deployment of subject material. Arabella repeatedly returns the discussion to topics that adulate women and which they would be expected to master. When Glanville and Sir George mock her topics, she responds, “What Subjects afford Matter for more pleasing Variety of Conversation, than those of Beauty and Love? Can we speak of any Object so capable of delighting as Beauty, or of any Passion of the Mind more sublime and pleasing than Love?” (149). Sir Charles and Sir George express their contempt for men who would engage in this type of conversation. characterizing them as effeminate. Masculinity is to be performed as use of rationality upon specific topics. and these fall outside the realm of romances. Therefore Arabella must change her patterns of conversation.

Arabella’s aberration, then. can be summarized as her desire to engage in conversation with women on feminine topics (she is quite content. it seems to use this as
a substitute for any kind of interaction with men, who should, according to her thinking, be occupied with courageous deeds); her pedanticism, which constructs her as superior rather than inferior in social situations; and her penchant for display. These traits identify her with the aristocratic woman, and the novel enacts her cure by enforcing the code of the middle-class woman. The divine's cure takes place through the assertion of masculine conversational authority. The divine is the one male in the novel who can talk Arabella into silence. He convinces her that she cannot be her own intellectual authority and must yield to learned men, instilling in her a diffidence regarding her own abilities and a conviction that female display is an expression of inappropriate sexuality.

**Conversation as Cure**

The novel seeks to cure Arabella by making her conversable; it suggests that forms of unreason must be banished from her speech and replaced with approved rational subjects that she can share with Glanville. She must relinquish the position of pedant and allow Glanville to assume a position of superiority in conversational space. Arabella's cure ultimately does not take place through modes of empiricism; a more intimate, firsthand knowledge of the world and its inhabitants. Instead male authority, embodied in the divine (clergyman) who enters the text after Arabella "escapes" an imagined rape by jumping into a river, discursively persuades her of her gender-based inability to formulate true impressions of the world. The escape necessitates Arabella's cure, for it writes sexual desire on her body in the form the fever she contracts from swimming in the river. In her conviction that a man following her intends rape, she publicly reveals knowledge of her own sexual desirability, which in turn proclaims her sexual desire. The text constructs this moment of sexual revelation as the height of Arabella's irrationality
and its threat to her virtue, immediately staging an intervention to cure Arabella: such irrationality cannot be tolerated.

The divine engages Arabella in a debate governed by the rules of scholastic argumentation in order to recover her rationality. This formalized argumentation emerges as a distinct change in the novel’s rhetorical mode novel and marks the introduction of authority as the basis of knowledge as opposed to Locke’s empiricism. In part, the divine bases his argument against Arabella’s beloved romances on their lack of verisimilitude: he says that they have no “Resemblance to Truth” (378). After listening to him assert that “real life” contains no such adventures as those found in romances, Arabella begs to differ based on her own experiences:

I cannot imagine, Sir, said she, that you intend to deceive me, and therefore I am inclined to believe that you are yourself mistaken, and that your Application to Learning has hindered you from that Acquaintance with the World, in which these Authors excelled. I have not long conversed in Public, yet I have found that Life is subject to many Accidents. (379)

Here Arabella counters the divine’s argument by insisting that he has not had enough encounters with the “real world,” that his empirical basis is faulty. “Acquaintance with the World,” or empirical knowledge of the world, becomes the issue in this debate. The divine proceeds to answer this objection, asserting that he has extensive experience in the world that uniquely qualifies him as a judge:

your Ladyship must suffer me to decide, in some Measure authoritatively,

whether Life is truly described in those Books; the Likeness of a Picture can only be determined by a Knowledge of the Original. You have yet had little
Opportunity of knowing the Ways of Mankind, which cannot be learned but from Experience, and of which the highest Understanding, and the lowest, must enter the World in equal Ignorance. I have lived long in a public Character, and have thought it my Duty to study those whom I have undertaken to admonish or instruct. I have never been so rich as to affright Men into Disguise and Concealment, nor so poor as to be kept at a Distance too great for accurate Observation. I therefore presume to tell your Ladyship, with great Confidence, that your Writers have instituted a World of their own, and that nothing is more different from a human Being, than Heroes or Heroines. (379-80)

The divine, as a man, has been able to experience life in “a public Character,” which Arabella, a woman, cannot, and based on his experience, he claims the authority to impose on Arabella his interpretation of the world. Because of his authority, then, based on his position of observation that sounds so godlike and that Arabella’s gender prevents her from assuming, she accepts his argument that romances lack verisimilitude.

As the divine works to persuade Arabella, she in large measure decides to take his word based on his authority and character, which allow her to conclude that he has no reason for lying to her about romance. She takes the same step that Descartes does when he bases his conclusion that corporeal objects really exist and are not figments of his deluded brain because God has given him “a very great inclination to believe that [“ideas of sensible things”] are conveyed to me by corporeal objects” (Meditations 101).

Because “God is not a deceiver,” an assertion about God’s character and perfection that is necessary to get Descartes out of the state of radical doubt he has cast himself into at the start of Meditations. Descartes is able to believe that the corporeal world actually exists
and is not a projection of his own consciousness. The assertion that "God is not a
deceiver" is pivotal to his argument and occurs with increasing frequency as he works to
prove logically that the corporeal world around him actually does exist (*Mediations*, i.e.,
84. 101. 108). In her return to "reason," Arabella concedes to the divine, an earthly
stand-in for God, because, she concludes, "you have no Intention to deceive me" (378), a
statement she repeats twice. The divine dissuades Arabella from her previous views
largely because his character and authority, which lead her to accepting his experience
and interpretations of the world in place of her own. This conversion makes a transition
to a more Cartesian system of reason for women, in which innate ideas are instead
general truths supplied by men from which women may operate rationally. The need for
empiricism is thus reduced drastically.

The novel ends with Arabella properly contained, in her own chamber, apologizing
to Glanville and agreeing to marry him. Her abandonment of firsthand empiricism and of
romance, both in the name of preserving her virtue, indicates the masculine ideology
that shapes female reason, bringing it into conformity with its own interpretations of the
world. Female empiricism must remain a controlled endeavor to preserve female virtue:
male authority, seemingly in godlike form, takes the place of free-reign female
empiricism. The need for female travel is removed if women can accept male authority
in place of empirical knowledge, and the strictest of virtue can thus be preserved.

The divine's cure also establishes Arabella as the inferior partner in discourse
with Glanville. Arabella's final speech of the novel, which is marked by an air of
submission unprecedented in her conversation in the novel, serves as evidence of her cure
but also undermines its terms. As she declares her willingness to marry Glanville,
romance terms are surprisingly abundant:

she beheld [Glanville] with a Look of mingled Tenderness and Modesty. To give
you myself, said she with all my remaining Imperfections, is making you but a
poor Present in return for the Obligations your generous Affection has laid me
under to you; yet since I am so happy as to be desired for a Partner for Life by a
Man of your Sense and Honour, I will endeavour to make myself as worthy as I
am able of such a favourable Distinction. (383)

Although the "Modesty" noted here marks a reformation in Arabella, she employs
language recalling the terms from romance discourse that once raised male objection.
The language of "Obligation," "favorable Distinction," "[worth]" directly echoes that she
calls upon earlier in the novel to convince her father that Glanville is not worthy of her
hand in marriage (41-2). In that speech, Arabella insists that Glanville must complete a
chivalrous deed to "[merit] [her] Esteem" and "oblige [her] to reward him with [her]
Affection" (42). At the conclusion of the novel, the gender roles are reversed: Arabella
receives distinction by Glanville's choice, and she must make herself worthy of him.

Glanville's definition of marriage holds sway: her consent is based on "Affection" and
the "Obligation" it creates, not on chivalrous deeds. "Sense and Honour" are associated,
not "Honour" and heroic activity. Romance terms are still in operation: they have merely
become associated with patriarchal viewpoints. With this final deployment of romance
terms in the service of patriarchal ideology, Lennox asserts that romance itself is not the
problem in the novel. It is the power structure that it models, which elevates women over
men. In the final scene, Arabella's romantic conversation is cast as rational rather than
irrational because it is used to declare her recognition of past error and decision to marry Glanville, a decision prompted by a recognition of her own inferiority in the patriarchal order.

**Conclusion**

Lennox's critique of the rationality that women are allowed by men recalls that of Eliza Haywood and anticipates that of Mary Wollstonecraft. In her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft uses Locke's theory of the association of ideas as the basis for her critique of the isolated, domestic lives that was typical for women. Although her essay appears almost half a century after Lennox's novel, the two share a concern with association of ideas and female seclusion that justifies bringing Wollstonecraft to bear here. Adding the consideration of gender that Locke overlooks, Wollstonecraft asserts that women are more susceptible to mistakenly associating ideas because they are isolated and manipulated by men and the marital institution:

So ductile is the understanding, and yet so stubborn, that the association which depend on adventitious circumstances, during the period that the body takes to arrive at maturity, can seldom be disentangled by reason. [...] This habitual slavery, to first impressions, has a more baneful effect on the female than the male character, because business and other dry employments of the understanding, tend to deaden the feelings and break associations that do violence to reason. But females, who are made women when they are mere children, and brought back to childhood when they ought to leave the go-cart for ever, have not sufficient strength of mind to efface the superinductions of art that have smothered nature.
Wollstonecraft draws a connection between emotion and mistaken associations of ideas, positing that greater contact with the world and necessity of using reason will guard the mind against insanity. Like Locke, she posits a distinction between nature and art, and suggests that the individual’s ability to distinguish between the two is vital to a proper association of ideas. Wollstonecraft, however, asserts a crucial difference between the day to day surroundings of men and woman, adding to Locke. She suggests that early impressions for a female amount to “superinductions of art,” the artifices of femininity constructed by men.

Unlike Lennox, however, Wollstonecraft believes in the power of the companionate marriage: *Vindication* bases much of its appeal for the development of female rationality on the possibility of happier marriages founded upon mutual respect and compatibility of the minds. Wollstonecraft’s argument implies that if society at large, particularly its male members, desire companionate marriage with enough intensity, they will “free” female rationality, allowing it more attention and development. Forty years before *Vindication*, Lennox displays doubt that female rationality can be freed. In her analysis, the need for the companionate marriage, with its virtuous wife endowed with a uniquely feminine rationality to complement her husband’s “real” rationality, is an obstacle to women and full rationality. Lennox’s hesitation marks the resistance to a middle-class ideal replacing an aristocratic one: by the time of Wollstonecraft, the companionate marriage was more firmly entrenched and the most logical sphere for her to work out an argument necessitating female rationality.

The need to cure Arabella to suit her for companionate marriage leads to a number of oblique critiques on patriarchal power. The very fact that Arabella does not
want the exact same configuration of companionate marriage that Glanville does suggests that a "sane" desire for such a marriage is implanted by patriarchy itself. Companionate marriage requires a certain type of rationality, and patriarchy chooses and shapes that rationality, often for its own advantage. Additionally, not only do men get to design the cure for insanity, essentially shaping Arabella, they get to decide when "sane" is sane enough for marriage—they construct sanity. The question continually arises during the novel: should Arabella be married, or is she more qualified for an institution? Sir Charles often considers this question: "Sir Charles, who had several Times been in doubt whether Arabella was not really disorder'd in her Senses: upon Miss Glanville's Account of her Behaviour at the Gardens, concluded she was absolutely mad, and held a short Debate with himself. Whether he ought not to bring a Commission of Lunacy against her, rather than marry her to his Son" (339-40). On another occasion, he weighs her marriage into his family in terms of public humiliation versus financial gain, telling his son.

"[N]otwithstanding the immediate Fortune she will bring you, I should be sorry to have a Daughter-in-law, for whom I should blush as often as she opens her Mouth" (64). Each of these statements consciously weigh the effect of insanity on marriage, especially when money is at stake, and while they dismiss the desirability of marriage until Arabella is cured, they actually intimate that sanity is optional. The marriage could, in fact, take place before her cure if men decided that it ought to, and this possibility looms over the novel's plot, along with the reader's knowledge that Sir Charles has the power to dispose of Arabella against her will in either marriage or an insane asylum.

The sharp dichotomy between these two choices reveals just how constricted the options are for women, and how much the definition of reason relies upon men, who are
able to shape women for marriage or declare them insane because they do not conform to ideals of "feminine rationality" that form the basis of companionate marriage. These men also assert the importance of virtue, which inhibits independent, empirical learning by women. Lennox questions the courtship and marriage practices that leave women with debased forms of reason.
Notes

1 Fénelon 631. Lennox does not specify which translation she uses in her serial, only stating that the text is “translated by a Friend of the Author of the Museum” (294).

2 Quoted in Small, p. 115. Spoken by Captain John Farrago in Modern Chivalry, containing the Adventures of a Captain, and Teague O’Regan. His Servant by H. H. Brackenridge, 1793-1805, in America.

3 Arabella’s insanity has generally been attributed to the Marquis’ decision to keep her in isolation, his educational methods, and the reading of romances; it has not been described as the association of ideas.

4 “Her romantic beliefs may be extraordinary, but they develop under and rely upon the very ordinary intellectual method of empiricism” (Motooka, “Coming” 257).

5 For a full discussion of quixotes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Stuart M. Tave (140-63), Edwin B. Knowles, and Wendy Motooka (Age).

6 Locke also credits imagination with a role in madness. Imagination can draw convincingly real representations of reality in place of memory, which works from actually encountered experience, and madness: this is significant because Arabella’s infatuation with romances and its effect on her perception of the world is often described as a “disorder” of the imagination. Glanville notes “the ridiculous Whims [romances have] created in her Imagination” (50); the Countess fixes Arabella’s “Singularity of [.. .] Notions” as being an interaction of her reading and her environment, a result of “her Studies, her Retirment, her Ignorance of the World, and her lively Imagination” (Lennox 323). According to Locke, imagination may present an alternate reality that posits false
grounds for reasoning: in other words, though the reasoning faculty may still be working fine, the grounds upon which it is working are false, and the individual may fall prey to madness (Deporte 21). Arabella, who has had a great quantity of experience with books and little experience with reality, is particularly vulnerable to the workings of imagination. Thought it must be pointed out that women in general were seen as particularly susceptible to imagination.

7 Walker specifically addresses Locke's situation of the woman at the moment of the child's "unnatural" association of ideas" (59).

8 Depuydt sees this process at work on Arabella (67).

9 I have discussed this at length in chapter three on Sarah Fielding.

10 Uday Singh Mehta discusses Locke's pedagogy, especially its insistence on the manipulating the details of the child's instruction (127-31), in precisely the terms of foreclosing difference: "[M]y point is to show how in Lockean rationality and the means for its inculcation, such as his pedagogy, function to close off forms of individual self-expression, to raise barriers against the eccentric: they are deployed to construct, consolidate, and impose a norm of 'normality'" (11).

11 Doody suggests the difference between Arabella's and the Marquis's ideas of marriage, tracing them to romances: "Through reading her romances, Arabella frees herself from fearing, or even seeing, the dangers of her position in relation to the paternal inheritance. She conceals from herself the sad truth, that she is a pawn in the game of property, by reading books in which women are of great importance" (xxi). She does not
contrast the Marquis’s and Glanville’s constructions of marriage or discuss the
companionsate marriage, as I do.

12 Depuydt argues, “The principle condition that Arabella must meet in order to be
included in the community [of common sense] is her agreement that marriage to the
suitor her father proposes makes good sense” (73).

13 Davidson makes this point with reference to the 1801 American novel Female
Quixotism by Tabitha Tenny. She comments, “Tenney’s genius is to tie the form that
most emphasizes freedom from society back to limitation (read: female limitation) and
society (read: patriarchal society)” (186). Depuydt refers directly to Arabella’s “domestic
‘adventures’” compared to Don Quixote’s presumably more real adventures (63).

14 In their attention to the sexual subtexts of Arabella’s romance-induced
fantasies, and the gendered subtexts of the struggle between history and romance, critics
have failed to look for other desires that Arabella indicates or satisfies in her reading.
Critics have rightly posited romances as a sort of psychic escape for Arabella, a way she
can escape the realities of life as a woman in patriarchal culture. Doody exemplifies this
reading: “It is through assuming the power the romances offer that Arabella can
command a space, assert a woman’s right to ‘a room of one’s own,’ and take upon herself
the power to control the movements and behaviour of others” (xxv). Such critics have
explored how subscription to romance conventions empowers Arabella in her
relationships with others, but they have not adequately addressed how romance reading
suggests her desire “to control” her own “movements” in addition to those “of others.”
Here I identify the same interaction of fantasy/fear that several critics have noted in Arabella’s identifications of potential rape or declarations of love.

Depuydt also identifies Arabella’s eagerness to escape the Marquis’ “confine ment” but sees it as a search for adventure (81); I identify a significant component of wanting to see the world in the desire for adventure.

It is helpful to compare Arabella to Samuel Richardson’s Clarissa Harlowe as Joseph F. Bartolomeo has done. Bartolomeo points out that while Clarissa is tricked into leaving her father’s house, and only after much paternal abuse, Arabella, at a much smaller provocation, tries “to justify” her decision to run away with reference to romance (164: 165-5). The comparison between the two heroines underscores Arabella’s eagerness for physical freedom.

For critics who examine the linguistic problems the novel presents from this perspective, see Langbauer (75-6) and Wojciech Nowicki.

Patricia Springborg adds the following note to “Pragmaticalness”:
“Officioiusness, meddlesomeness, opionativeness, dogmatism; practical or utilitarian quality; (OED)” (63, n 221).

This is an anonymous text; however, the speaker assumes a male voice.

Among others, Laurie Langbauer and Leland F. Warren identify romance’s ability to forge ties between women and Lennox’s critique of the patriarchal system that negates romantic discourse (Langbauer 89; Warren 372).

I verge on Warren’s argument that The Female Quixote offers two options for women through its manipulation of discourse and gender: immersion in the mundane
realities of everyday domestic life or a separation from these details in a “self-isolating discourse” of irrationality (376: 378).

23 Here I echo Warren’s argument that to cure Arabella is to change her and make her unexceptional; thus, Warren maintains, Glanville “delay[s]” the cure (370).

24 Critics have been quick to identify Arabella as a romance-addled reader but have failed to identify her with the figure of the pedantic woman.

25 Another Malaprop figure appears in Lennox’s serial novel, The History of Harriot and Sophia, which appears in The Lady’s Museum.

26 Depuydt comments, “Group agreement determines the domain of language use that can be called ‘rational’” (76), adding, “Arabella identifies the marks of the romance genre as a sign of sense” (77).

27 Arabella desires the divine’s good opinion of her virtue: “The Silence of Man who loves to praise is a Censure sufficiently severe [. . . ]. May it never happen that you should be unwilling to mention the Name of Arabella. I hope wherever Corruption prevails in the World, to live in it with Virtue, or, if I find myself too much endanger’d, to retire from it with Innocence” (380). This indicates her acceptance of a new standard of virtue. At the end of the novel, she effectively “retire[s],” indicating the only real choice for a woman of virtue.

28 Virginia Sapiro identifies David Hartley as one of the “sources of Wollstonecraft’s cognitive psychology” (53): given his work on the association of ideas, it is fair to say that he, as well as Locke, is influential here.
Although the novel poses objections to companionate marriage, I believe that it still represents it as the best possible alternative for women. Lennox is merely unwilling to accept it as an unqualified good, one free of patriarchal taint, for women.
CONCLUSION

The three midcentury texts that I have analyzed in this dissertation illustrate forms that rational feminism took in between the years in which Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft were writing. I have traced a certain path between these two recognized feminists with a variety of stops along the way, stops that indicate the concerns that developed, and sometimes faded and diminished, as the century progressed.

The earliest text, Eliza Haywood’s *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo*, indicates a desire to see women exercise rationality and concomitant virtue but a fear that choosing reason on patriarchy’s terms will result in a loss of power and pleasure, which Haywood associates with the body. A few years later, Sarah Fielding’s *Governess* is unconcerned with the body and public roles for women; instead, it seeks to transform the private sphere with reason, surveillance, and literary activity, all of which are made pleasurable and reproducible. For Fielding, the mother serves a re-productive role different than that we usually expect: she is to produce children but also rationality, literature, and pleasure. In a sense, Lennox’s *Female Quixote* circles back to Haywood at the same time it anticipates the focus on the companionate marriage in Wollstonecraft. Lennox makes Arabella an admirable woman because of her uncommon mind but then questions how that mind is molded by male desire and the need to contain women in the private sphere. Lennox views the companionate marriage much more skeptically than Wollstonecraft because she does not believe that patriarchy will truly allow women to develop rationally and become the equals of men. She sees patriarchy exercising its ideological muscle to determine what constitutes female rationality in a way that is detrimental. Lennox also takes up Haywood’s concern with desire, but for her, it cannot
be expressed in that amatory mode. She must hint at Arabella’s sexuality by reconfiguring it as a textual desire, an inordinate fondness for romances. Fielding displaces the body altogether, dealing with preadolescent girls who can be trained to replace desire with reason before they enter the marriage market.

Another way to frame my discussion of these midcentury texts is with reference to the classical separation of *oikos* and *cives*. Each of my authors has tried to negotiate the boundaries between the home and public sphere, traditionally the loci of the affective body and the objective mind, respectively. In some senses, both Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Armstrong have relied on this concept to characterize the eighteenth century and its literature. My readings suggest that female writers questioned these distinctions, often trying to blur them altogether. For instance, Haywood insists on the power of the body in the public sphere, and Fielding transforms the private sphere by insisting on reason and literary activity in the private sphere. Lennox questions the constraints of virtue that limit female exposure to the public and inhibit empirical learning. These women struggled to keep the private-public distinction fluid, each sensing that otherwise they would lose a connection to reason, power, and/or claims for the dignity of the sex.

The three texts in this study challenge the private-public distinction with diverse manifestations of reason. Haywood consistently associates reason with politics and control of individual appetite. In her satire on Sir Robert Walpole, reason becomes a principle for defining and guiding behavior in reference to the *cives*. Once she removes women from the political sphere with the marriage arranged for Eovaai, she has a difficult time imagining what reason might look like in relationship to women. With her domestic rationality, Fielding creates a reason that resembles a pre-existing set of moral
truths that govern individual behavior and provide access to pleasure. For Lennox, rationality and sanity become virtually interchangeable through the Lockean idea of the association of ideas. Because the association of ideas as a form of insanity involves the application of societal norms to individual behavior. Lennox raises questions about the cultural constraints placed upon the exercise of reason by women, particularly within the framework of courtship and marriage. As we review these appropriations of reason, we can see that while we might be able to relate them to formal treatments of reason in sources such as Descartes and Locke, these women were drawing upon reason more generally as a term of great cultural capital yet equally great elasticity, much like “family values” today.

The heterogeneous methods of appropriating and applying reason that I identify at midcentury exemplify reason’s resistance to definitional control. Contemporary discussions of reason in the eighteenth century frequently rely upon connotations the term assumes in the contexts of philosophy and politics. Referring to Locke’s political writings, C. B. Macpherson defines it in two ways: first, as the subscription to natural law; and second, subsequent to the emergence of money and inequitable relations among men, as “an ability to calculate what course of action is required to safeguard unequal property [...] found only in those who have accumulated some property” (xix). Habermas picks up on the latter definition of reason in his treatment of the public sphere, and it finds a sort of parallel in J. G. A. Pocock’s discussion of classical republicanism in Virtue, Commerce, and History. In the philosophical arena, Louis E. Loeb sees reason primarily as the actions of intuition and deduction that Descartes and Locke identify in the logical processes (39). Others approaching reason in the eighteenth century from a
philosophical context also focus on Locke and Descartes, key figures in that period, and thus are mainly interested in the difference between rationalism, empiricism, and their differing attitudes toward the material world. The women writers I have examined in this century indicate that reason resists definitional or contextual control. They use the term in ways that our backgrounds in politics or philosophy can help us understand, but they adapt it to their own purposes. They remind us that we can try to contain reason, to understand it, by looking through the perspectives of philosophy and politics: however, as a weighty term, one accorded tremendous value but understood so variously within the century, it must be approached within the particular context that it appears rather than by trying to impose control from without. To force a specific set of definitions on reason is to contain it as we want, when it was perhaps the very largesse of the term that allowed it to be used by protofeminists in fictional contexts. If we insist upon seeing reason only through the lens of philosophy or politics, we will continue to be drawn to "rational feminists" such as Astell and Wollstonecraft, whose interest in and familiarity with such discourse is readily apparent and well documented. I additionally assert that if we allow reason to resist definitional control, we resist masculine ideology as critics and allow the female writers under consideration to do the same. If we insist on applying the conceptual frameworks laid out by philosophers and political scientists, who have primarily considered their male sources who concerned themselves with the male-dominated public sphere, we are not engaging in sufficiently resistant feminist praxis. We must also recognize the reality that formal definitions of reason do not always determine how it is used in other cultural discourses that influence writers.
As my study illustrates, however, we need to approach reason on the terms within which an individual text presents it in order to avoid privileging authors as “rational feminists” because they display a particularly nuanced understanding of the term as it was used in philosophical or political discourse. Because the many connotations of reason suggest that it was used in various ways that were perhaps inflected but not determined by valorized discourses like those of Locke and Descartes, we must be willing to look for “rational feminism” in texts by women who appear to be using the term as they wish to define it, not as it has been defined for them in “authoritative” discourses.

I believe that looking for rational feminism outside the polemical tract has contributed to the variety in its form that I have identified. Having explored texts by Haywood, Fielding, and Lennox, I can suggest what rational feminism looks like in novelistic contexts. It appears as a thematization of reason and its connection with women in narratives dealing with women in a variety of contexts, including politics, courtship, marriage, motherhood, and girlhood. Rational feminism within fictional contexts is also interested in the process by which women are given access to reason and the type of reason to which they are exposed. Complementing the faith I see in reason on behalf of these writers who want to use reason to liberate women, I see a certain skepticism about it as an entity shaped and controlled by men. This faith in reason combined with skepticism is perhaps possible within novelistic discourse because of the plurality and self-reflexivity that the form allows as opposed to the polemical tract, which must, if it is to persuade, control or eliminate deconstructive impulses within itself. I would therefore conclude that there is a construction and deconstruction of reason taking
place in at least two of the fictional contexts (Haywood and Lennox) I looked at that is not possible or present within the tracts of Astell and Wollstonecraft.

My identification of these appropriations of reason at midcentury, a space often voided of such appeals by those studying eighteenth-century feminism, contributes to historiography of this period. The studies of Katharine M. Rogers, Alice Browne, and others have done much in sketching the forms of feminist expression, particularly rational feminism, in the eighteenth century. Working in the same vein of tracing feminism in the eighteenth century with historical accuracy, my work extends the concept of rational feminism to midcentury in fictional rather than polemical contexts. That rational feminism appears outside the ends of the century and in fictional contexts reminds us to allow eighteenth-century to be as protean as many admit it is. Regina Janes goes so far as to reject the term "feminism" altogether for this period, insisting "there was no movement, no concerted demand for change in the political or economic sphere" (121).

While I keep the term feminism as characterized in my initial chapter, I find that it, like reason, appears variously. The case of rational feminism reminds us to keep the loose and emergent nature of eighteenth-century feminism before us as a reminder to remain vigilant in looking for strains of feminist expression to change shape and appear in unexpected places. My work also prompts us to hesitate when dividing forms of feminism into chronological arrangements. Initial descriptions of the century in terms of chronological appearances of certain forms of feminism have given us a basic structure by which to figure the eighteenth century. As we continue to recover texts by women and add to our awareness of feminisms throughout the century, however, we will do well to question those structures and ask, as in the case of rational feminism, where a
particular feminist expression goes when it is unaccounted for in accounts of the century. We are at the stage now when a "revisionist" history of feminism in the eighteenth century can be attempted, a luxury enabled by many female scholars who have applied their labors generously in this area. This study on rational feminism suggests that we ought to investigate a variety of genres and variations of terms like "reason" to get a full sense of particular types of feminist expression, and that we ought to hesitate before identifying "traditions" in early feminism.

I have filled in some of the gaps in rational feminism between Astell and Wollstonecraft, but others still remain. The limitations of this dissertation open the way for further study of eighteenth-century fictional texts and their use of reason in the interests of feminism. Such studies might concentrate on the way that concern with female reason shaped the developing novel throughout the century. Because of the eighteenth century's suspicion regarding the novel and its influence over the female imagination, the novel as a generic form inherently raises questions about female rationality. Fielding's novel uses reason to legitimate forms like the fairy tale and bestial allegory and to raise objections about "inflated" and excessive literary styles. It seems that the realistic novel steps in as a "rational," and therefore more acceptable, form during the century.

Another direction for future study would involve using these eighteenth-century applications of reason to intervene in contemporary debates about the employment of rationality for feminist purposes and the oppressive, masculine nature of reason. My efforts to point out how women called on rationality in feminists contexts historically might be used in conjunction with or as a supplement to projects such as Karen Green
sets forth in *The Woman of Reason: Feminism, Humanism, and Political Thought*. She takes on the goal of defining, with reference to past texts, a “feminist humanist” tradition that does not completely depart from traditional “male” humanism but lacks some of the attributes that disqualify its use by women. As she describes her work as “an attempt to supplement the critical movement of feminism, which has pointed to the limitations of the masculine conceptualization of rationality, by providing a genealogy of feminist rationality. [. . .] What I hope to demonstrate is that there are significant differences between the feminist and masculinist humanist traditions which make the first a less problematic basis for contemporary feminism than has recently been assumed” (23). Green seeks to restore the “rational” but also “embodied and emotional being” that she identifies in “the writings of feminists humanists” to the consciousness of current feminisms (26). Haywood’s simultaneous faith in and questioning of reason as male, including her constructive of an alternative, female reason, as well as Lennox’s insistence on the effect of societal convention on reason feed into scholarship like Green’s, which attempts to deconstruct humanism, with its strong emphasis on rationality, as a monolithic structure that always imposes masculine reason.

As an additional complement to the work I have already completed, a study of rational feminism in the hands of male writers might be undertaken. Alice Browne’s *The Eighteenth-Century Feminist Mind* provides examples of male conduct-book writers, but most of those emphasize the limits or special (and inferior) nature of the female mind. Future work could take up fictional work by men that offers a feminist perspective on the relationship between women and reason. Such studies would be careful to allow reason to mean variously and to delineate the ways that it changes shape in male hands. It may
also be helpful to examine portrayals of the relationship between men and reason in 
fictional and nonfictional contexts to reveal any differences between them; such 
differences could be compared with the ways that the relationship between women and 
reason changes in such contexts.

In sum, then, I have used these midcentury texts by Haywood, Fielding, and 
Lennox to open the pathway of rational feminism between Astell and Wollstonecraft and 
to clear some stops along the way. A more detailed map of rational feminism in the 
eighteenth century remains to be drawn.
WORKS CITED

Primary Texts:


**Secondary Texts:**


---. “Coming to a Bad End: Sentimentalism, Hermeneutics, and The Female Quixote.”


