Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness

Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen

JENNY DAVIDSON

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HYPOCRISY AND THE POLITICS OF POLITENESS

In *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness*, Jenny Davidson considers the arguments that define hypocrisy as a moral and political virtue in its own right. She shows that these were arguments that thrived in the medium of eighteenth-century Britain's culture of politeness. In the debate about the balance between truthfulness and politeness, Davidson argues that eighteenth-century writers from Locke to Austen come down firmly on the side of politeness. This is the case even when it is associated with dissimulation or hypocrisy. These writers argue that the open profession of vice is far more dangerous for society than even the most glaring discrepancies between what people say in public and what they do in private. This book explores what happens when controversial arguments in favor of hypocrisy enter the mainstream, making it increasingly hard to tell the difference between hypocrisy and more obviously attractive qualities like modesty, self-control and tact.

JENNY DAVIDSON is Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. She has published articles in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* and *Studies in Romanticism.* She is the author of a novel, *Heredity* (2003).

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To my Scottish grandparents,
Thomas Davidson (1912–1995)
and
Beth Davidson (1911–1996)
in fond memory of their love of books and education

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INTRODUCTION

The revolution in manners in eighteenth-century prose

Very few people are willing to speak up for hypocrisy. As a rule, to use the word at all is to position oneself against it.[1] I am no more likely to identify myself as a hypocrite than I am to call myself a cannibal, although I may do either so long as I invoke a rhetoric of confession or conversion that separates my present identity from the past one I name and thereby disavow. When I call someone else a hypocrite, I point to a gap between what she says and what she does. I sometimes also attribute to the hypocrite a broader, more pervasive deceitfulness whose practice can include the insincerities associated with self-control and good manners. In the last case, if the mask of politeness is sufficiently flawless, I may find it difficult to distinguish the hypocrite from any other member of civil society. Indeed, if everyone suddenly stopped lubricating social interactions with politeness, the consequences for the institutions of daily life – families, schools, religious organizations, companies, governments – would likely be catastrophic.

Insofar as the charge of hypocrisy assumes a discontinuity between motive and action, the sophisticated hypocrite poses problems for conventional arguments about character and behavior.[2] The belief that close scrutiny will always expose the hypocrite's true self depends on the highly questionable assumption that any given individual can be considered simply as the sum of a set of words and deeds that represent an "authentic" self inside. What happens when the hypocrite puts on such a good act that her life cannot be distinguished in the smallest particular from that of the perfectly virtuous person? Perhaps fortunately, most hypocrites are unable to keep their real motives hidden behind the mask of virtue. On the contrary: hypocrites stand out, exposing themselves at every turn. A partial list of prominent fictional hypocrites includes Chaucer's Pardoner, Shakespeare's Iago, Milton's Satan, Molière's Tartuffe, Fielding's Blifil, Sheridan's Joseph Surface and Dickens's Uriah Heep.[3] At least in literature, and possibly in life as well, the individuals we think of as hypocrites experience a strong impulse

towards confession or self-exposure, and all of the characters I have named are compelled to anatomize their own hypocrisy in a complex play of self-loathing and self-aggrandizement. The hypocrite's often manipulative display of feelings that run the gamut from embarrassment to agony prompts some observers to defend the hypocrite, if not hypocrisy itself, by noting that hypocrisy exacts an immense psychic cost. For these observers, hypocrisy's offenses are mitigated by the psychological price the hypocrite pays. Another defense of hypocrisy invokes the paradox of the sincere hypocrite, whose imitation of virtue finally becomes second nature.[4] In each case, however, the intention is not so much to justify the practice of hypocrisy as to account for it by exposing the psychic machinery by which it operates.

My own intention is neither to examine the psychology of hypocrisy nor to dissect individual hypocrites, whether they be the tackers and trimmers of seventeenth-century political life or the unreliable narrators of novels such as Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915), Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989). Instead, I will consider a series of eighteenth-century arguments for hypocrisy as a moral and political virtue in its own right, arguments that thrived in the medium of what Lawrence Klein has called "the culture of politeness."[5] Recent accounts of eighteenth-century British political philosophy have emphasized the partial displacement of the liberal paradigm of rights and obligations by a paradigm of virtue and corruption. In the latter model, commerce operates by means of manners to define the characteristically modern virtue of politeness, which is often threatened by corruption, especially in conditions of patronage or dependence.[6] Although truthfulness continues to be valued, the identification of virtue with politeness renders the ideal of sincerity increasingly problematic, with the effect of polarizing truth and civility. Among the advocates of politeness are writers like Swift, Hume and Burke who make manners the basis of civilization. Their arguments for civility are sometimes so extreme, however, as to constitute outright defenses of hypocrisy, and hence become vulnerable to attack. While initially offering writers a provocative form in which to revise and critique popular assumptions about the relationship between virtue and politeness, the pro-hypocrisy argument subsequently (once the rise of manners is assured) goes underground. It is transformed in the process into a widely influential set of arguments about modesty, self-control and tact; thus redefined, hypocrisy and its affiliates (a cluster of related terms, including gallantry, manners and tact, all coming under the umbrella of politeness) assume a dominant position in nineteenth-century British writing.

By tracing the employment of the term "hypocrisy" in eighteenth-century discourse, I show the unique advantages offered by the concept of hypocrisy to writers who wish to make arguments about domination and dependence in a wide range of genres and modes. The first three chapters identify some characteristic fissures and self-contradictions in arguments for hypocrisy, examining closely a number of logical and rhetorical flaws that were noticed at the time by writers hostile to politeness. Civility's opponents tend to attack the forms of exclusion (often based on gender or class) on which civility as a premise depends. Chapters 1 and 2 pose a series of questions about texts by Locke, Swift, Mandeville, Hume and Chesterfield. What are the risks and rewards of defending hypocrisy? What does a successful argument in favor of hypocrisy look like? Must arguments for hypocrisy always remain ambivalent or self-defeating? Is hypocrisy the limit case for politeness? Does hypocrisy work best as a strategy of opposition or for maintaining the status quo? Why do discursive pressures around the question of hypocrisy so often explode into attacks on servants and women?

Chapter 3 addresses a pivotal moment in the history of politeness, when the revolution controversy of the 1790s pits Burke against a group of adversaries, including Wollstonecraft and Godwin, who substitute sincerity for Burke's chivalry and politeness. While Wollstonecraft offers one of the eighteenth century's most persuasive challenges to the ethos of politeness – a challenge framed in terms of gender, and one that is in many ways more sustainable than Godwin's wholesale attack on insincerity – I suggest that her call for a revolution in female manners remains ultimately compatible with a commitment to decency more often associated with Burke. Chapters 4 and 5 consider what the genre of the novel offers to writers interested in how women respond to the tension between the need to be truthful and the need to be polite. In the fourth chapter, I examine the *Pamela–Shamela* controversy of the 1740s, eighteenth-century Britain's most public and most fully worked-out debate on hypocrisy; in the fifth chapter, I turn to Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), teasing out of the novel the strands of an argument that justifies hypocrisy as a legitimate manifestation of female dependence. Despite its continuity with eighteenth-century discussions of female modesty, Austen's novel is surprising in its emphasis: at once incorporating and rejecting elements of the earlier literature of modesty, *Mansfield Park* reclaims tact and female reticence as forms of sociability that serve the interests both of women as a group and of society at large, while simultaneously pointing out their substantial cost to individual women.

My project offers a hybrid of two methodologies: cultural criticism, which operates by situating texts in a dense network of cultural practices

and artifacts, and rhetorical criticism, which proceeds by the close analysis of individual texts. I also aim to encourage conversation between two groups within the field of eighteenth-century studies. One of these is represented by the writings of the major historian of political thought, J. G. A. Pocock, and the work he has influenced in the fields of political theory, history, moral philosophy and literary criticism; the other, by Nancy Armstrong's influential 1987 book *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, the progenitor of a body of work on conduct literature that is often, though not always explicitly, shaped by Foucauldian concerns about sex and domination. Both groups are interested in power and language, yet while Pocock and his followers often seem unaware of the relevance of gender to eighteenth-century political writing, Armstrong and hers lack a vocabulary for talking about either the more traditional forms of political power or the uses (not necessarily oppressive) of manners. While historians of sensibility such as G. J. Barker-Benfield have begun to demonstrate the centrality of gender to eighteenth-century political writing, historians and literary scholars have been in some ways slow to respond to such insights (particularly as they affect how we think about the first half of the century).[7] Another way to describe the problem is to say that while Pocock, Quentin Skinner and others have opened up the history of political philosophy to manners without going on to ask related questions about gender, critical work on the novel in its relation to the literature of conduct tends to have the opposite problem, with questions of gender occluding or displacing the political in the ordinary sense of the word.[8] While Armstrong's avowed goal is to bring the cultural back in touch with the political, for instance, her fascination with the ways in which the novel allowed women to reconceive of politics as psychology leads her to ignore much of what the eighteenth century itself understood to be political.[9] In response to Armstrong's suggestion that "a modern, gendered form of subjectivity developed first as a feminine discourse in certain literature for women," I propose instead that eighteenth-century arguments about female modesty are already intertwined with and mutually dependent on arguments about politeness in the public sphere.[10]

In describing this critical configuration, I follow the lead of several literary scholars who have been especially attentive to the relationship between gender and politics during the long eighteenth century; I owe a particular debt to the work of Carol Kay, and to others (including Claudia Johnson) who have acted on Kay's insight that those who wish to consider the relationship between literature and the political should take gender into account.[11] There is a strong etymological connection between "politics" and "politeness," though the connotations of the first are far more often

negative ("politic" can mean scheming as well as judicious), and the plural noun "politics" serves to describe private as well as public machinations. "A curious Dilemma truly my Politics have run me into," observes Joseph Surface in *The School for Scandal* (1777). "Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a Point of gaining so very good a character – for it has led me into so many curs'd Rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last."[12] I propose that the language of politeness offers a powerful alternative to the language of subjectivity for describing the various political and psychological concessions made by men and women in the quest for integration into and representation within linguistic, cultural and political communities.

The thought-experiment I propose at the outset, then, is that hypocrisy be treated as morally neutral. Described by La Rochefoucauld as "the homage vice pays to virtue," hypocrisy is also sometimes defined as habit or second nature.[13] Arguments in favor of hypocrisy frequently appear in the guise of arguments about the force of habit. If hypocrisy simply means playing a part, might not the sufficient repetition of a given action allow the hypocrite a kind of functional sincerity? Regardless of an individual's initial motivation, habit can become second nature in contexts as various as religious observance, oaths of political allegiance, courtesy to a spouse and deference to a superior. In the *Rambler*, Johnson speculates that "even [the hypocrite] might be taught the excellency of virtue, by the necessity of seeming to be virtuous," and hopes to reclaim "the man of affectation" (not yet a confirmed hypocrite) when he finds "how little he is likely to gain by perpetual constraint, and incessant vigilance, and how much more securely he might make his way to esteem, by cultivating real, than displaying counterfeit qualities."[14] Johnson here builds on earlier eighteenth-century defenses of hypocrisy by Swift and others, quoted briefly below and discussed at greater length in chapter 1. The argument for habit as second nature extends into nineteenth-century moral and political writing from Burke and Wordsworth to William James, who quotes the Duke of Wellington's famous exclamation: "Habit a second nature! Habit is ten times nature."[15] Like Johnson, James identifies habit as an essential technique for self-fashioning: "to conquer undesirable emotional tendencies in ourselves, we must assiduously, and in the first instance cold-bloodedly, go through the *outward movements* of those contrary dispositions which we prefer to cultivate."[16] Nietzsche offers a similar, albeit a less prescriptive, argument when he attributes goodness to "the protracted dissimulation which [seeks] to appear as goodness" and says that "[w]hat is dissimulated for a long time at last becomes *nature*: dissimulation in the end sublimates

itself, and organs and instincts are the surprising fruit of the garden of hypocrisy."[17]

The first steps toward making hypocrisy acceptable are taken in the discourse of political science. While Francis Bacon defends dissimulation for its pragmatic value, Machiavelli makes such a strong claim for the political utility of hypocrisy that he leaves us unsure what to think of hypocrisy's consequences for ethics.[18] Each academic discipline offers a different vocabulary for talking about hypocrisy, a vocabulary that usually corresponds to a distinct ethical orientation. Philosophy's antagonism to hypocrisy goes back to Plato, but its preference for morals as opposed to manners is expressed especially memorably by Kant. "We are *civilized* – perhaps too much for our own good – in all sorts of social grace and decorum," he says. "But to consider ourselves as having reached *morality* – for that, much is lacking. The ideal of morality belongs to culture; its use for some simulacrum of morality in the love of honor and outward decorum constitutes mere civilization."[19] By polarizing manners and morals, philosophy as a discipline rejects the ideal of civilization to which the social sciences (thanks in part to their Enlightenment origins) are generally committed.

Sissela Bok introduces her uncompromising argument against dishonesty by noting that moral philosophers have paid strangely little attention to lying. While a more extensive body of work on deception can be found in psychology and political science, she objects to the fact that these disciplines "most often approach problems of deception in a merely descriptive or strategic manner."[20] What Bok begins to articulate here is a deep disciplinary divide. By its very constitution, moral philosophy wants to condemn lying absolutely, while both psychology and political science are more concerned with the tactics than the ethics of lying. This is even more true of sociology, especially that branch represented by the influential work of Erving Goffman, whose accounts of human behavior consistently invoke the framework of theatrical performance.[21] We are consequently put in the position of having to choose between two unsatisfactory alternatives: a philosophical vocabulary that is inherently antagonistic to hypocrisy and a sociological vocabulary to which hypocrisy is so integral that it offers no way of speaking about hypocrisy (as it were) from the outside.

When hypocrisy is not an "ordinary vice," in Judith Shklar's formulation, it can become an unspeakable virtue. Many defenses of hypocrisy begin by giving it an attractive alias: manners, civility, decorum, self-control, politeness. To defend hypocrisy under its own name means breaking a taboo, and a strong incentive is required to risk the outrage such a defense is likely to provoke. One incentive may simply be that of anticipating the

charge of an adversary: it is best to be the first one to say the word, as when Swift admits and thereby counters the charge "that the making Religion a necessary Step to Interest and Favour, might encrease Hypocrisy among us: And I readily believe it would."[22] I return repeatedly to the question of what happens when arguments for hypocrisy are explicitly articulated, using the instruments of literary criticism to probe different discourses on hypocrisy in satire, moral philosophy, political and educational writing and the novel.

There is an important difference between texts that name hypocrisy and dissimulation without disavowing them and texts that avow something very like hypocrisy under another name (chivalry, gallantry, politeness, self-restraint). Books on education are especially likely to be brazen about hypocrisy because it is a controversial but necessary element of an education in virtue. Designed to supply a repertoire of practical techniques for socializing actual children, educational manuals cannot afford to be euphemistic. The how-to aspect of the conduct book encourages openness about hypocrisy, insofar as hypocrisy offers a "good enough" approximation of virtue. Of course, ethics also has a how-to component, and the intimacy between ethics and etiquette is long-standing (it is hardly surprising that the subjects should share a single two-letter code in the Library of Congress system).[23] Both ethics and etiquette have a special relationship to practice: as Dale Carnegie says of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), "this is an *action* book."[24] Accordingly, I emphasize not disjunctions but continuities between different kinds of writing on manners, and each chapter attends to practical advice books as well as to political and philosophical arguments about insincerity. I remain attentive, however, to the special things that happen in language when writers defend the unspeakable, for while hypocrisy can sometimes be exonerated, particularly when it is redefined in terms of self-control, there is a presumption of guilt in the case that distinguishes hypocrisy from co-defendants such as manners and politeness.

The history of manners is to a great extent the history of the conduct book, as this prescriptive genre is where manners leave their most obvious traces.[25] A catalogue of the conduct books most influential in Britain from the Renaissance through the end of the eighteenth century includes Erasmus's *De civilitate morum puerilium* (1530), Elyot's *Boke Named the Governour* (1531), Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528) and Hoby's 1561 translation *The Courtier*, Della Casa's *Il Galateo* (1558), Lyly's *Euphues* (1584), Allestree's *Whole Duty of Man* (1658), Halifax's *Lady's New-Years-Gift, or, Advice to a Daughter* (1688), Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766),

Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1774) and Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son* (1774). The canon of the self-help book remains in many ways more constant than the literary canon. In a tradition going back beyond Chesterfield and Machiavelli to Cicero, writers as diverse as Samuel Smiles, Stephen Potter, Dale Carnegie, Miss Manners, Martha Stewart and the authors of *The Rules* have offered arguments about ethics in the form of specific prescriptions for behavior. The fact that the last writers are all female is not coincidental. An important part of the story I tell here is how and why the thing called "tact" should go from being stigmatized at the beginning of the eighteenth century as a vice associated with effete male French aristocrats to being embraced at the start of the nineteenth century as the domestic virtue that would enable British women to manage feelings in both the home and the nation, a linguistic and cultural transformation with lasting consequences not just for Victorian England but for contemporary American culture as well.

Manners – the social constraints that check the dictates of individual desire – represent a subtle but pervasive hypocrisy, a form of discipline that exacts certain penalties but also promises social and moral rewards. "Men are qualified for civil liberty," Burke says, "in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites."[26] Self-control is never synonymous with hypocrisy, of course, and Burke shares with his contemporaries Johnson and Burney a sincere wish to show that politeness and virtue are wholly compatible. In the context of arguments for self-restraint, England has always represented a special case – at least, that is, in the minds of the English, who are described by John Stuart Mill as "more than any other people, a product of civilisation and discipline."[27] Yet for all these eighteenth-century writers, the restraint of appetites calls up the specter of hypocrisy: while politeness and good manners can and should arise from the heart, they are also the product of years of discipline directed towards the suppression of true feeling. In response to the very general fear that manners are closely allied to hypocrisy, many of the writers treated in this study choose not to avoid but to embrace hypocrisy as a synonym for manners and strip the word in the process of much of its stigma.

Though many British writers are quick to embrace self-control as a virtue, a few decline to join the new consensus on politeness. Attacks on manners can target discipline as such – as when Godwin attacks politeness as a form of coercion – or merely focus on the tyrannies of convention – as when Johnson tells Boswell to "clear [his] *mind* of cant" ("You may *talk* as other people do: you may say to a man, 'Sir, I am your most humble servant.' You are *not* his most humble servant . . . You may *talk* in this manner; it

is a mode of talking in Society: but don't *think* foolishly").[28] Yet manners represent only one kind of dissimulation. Bok's *Lying* offers a litany of the insincerities that erode civic life, including white lies, excuses, justification, lies in a crisis, lies protecting professional peers or clients, lies for the public good, deceptive social science research, paternalistic lies and lies to the sick and dying. Bok is especially vexed by the problem of inflated letters of recommendation for students, as is Stephen L. Carter in his investigation of the competing claims of sincerity and benevolence.[29]

The eighteenth century had a different list of the most damaging forms of insincerity. The religious settlement of the Restoration had institutionalized in Britain a system whereby individuals employed in government were forced to swear regular loyalty oaths to church and state. The Corporation Act of 1661 excluded from municipal office all those unwilling to swear oaths of allegiance and supremacy and to take communion in the Church of England. This situation was compounded by the Test Act of 1673, which excluded Catholics and nonconformist Protestants from all public offices (both civil and military), and the second Test Act of 1678, which extended similar provisions to anyone sitting in Parliament, whether in the Lords or the Commons. The refusal to swear oaths had already emerged as a moral principle in several English Puritan sects during the years of the Revolution.[30] The imposition of loyalty oaths now rendered swearing doubly offensive. The government seemed not just to sanction but actively to reward hypocrisy, especially in the form of occasional conformity, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) as "a phrase applied after 1700 to the practice of persons who, in order to qualify themselves for office, in accordance with the Corporation and Test Acts, received the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and afterwards during their office were present at any dissenting meeting for worship" but known to some as "occasional Hypocrisy."[31] Both Anglicans and dissenters objected to the tendency of the Test Act to corrupt individuals by way of compromise and equivocation, and, in this context, it carries a conservative political charge to argue that habit is second nature – i.e., to say that swearing loyalty oaths on a regular basis makes a man loyal, as Lord Kames suggests in his *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781).[32]

What with those who swore oaths without meaning them and those who refused to swear at all on the principle that swearing debased truth, the problem of hypocrisy would come to be associated with several different forms of language: not just with the provisions of the Test Acts, which asked dissenters and Catholics to be hypocritical for their own advantage and for that of the government, but also with the oath more generally, as

a form of words in which meaning had become equivocal. As the debate about oaths suggests, eighteenth-century arguments against insincerity in language cover two quite different cases. One objection is to special forms of language, especially to the pressure-point of the oath; the other is to conventional forms of language and to the daily erosion of meaning consequent upon the use of expressions like "your most obedient and humble servant" in the subscription to a letter. Many dissenters objected to such apparently innocent conventions, singling out in addition the answer commonly made by a servant to an unwanted visitor that the master or mistress is "not at home." I will argue that the presence of servants in these two key examples of insincerity is significant, corroborating Paul Langford's observation that the eighteenth century's "story of politeness and commerce . . . is not least an account of the way in which the polite and commercial class dealt with its inferiors."[33] Many of the eighteenth century's anxieties about the ever-present threat of human deceitfulness, in other words, arise from an uncomfortable awareness of the corruption of free and open communication by a class system in which the interests of different groups are seen to be increasingly divergent.

Invoking the term *distinction* to describe a system of manners that divides the powerful from the powerless, Pierre Bourdieu argues that manners are a form of cultural domination: that "what some would mistakenly call *values*" are embedded "in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body – ways of walking or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking."[34] It is clear enough that manners are all about power. Samuel Smiles identifies the crucial test "by which a gentleman may be known," for instance, as his manner of "*exercis[ing] power* over those subordinate to him."[35] While I will suggest that hypocrisy is often secured in eighteenth-century writing by the exclusion of specific groups (women, servants) from the privilege of *being* hypocritical, however, this is not the whole story. Cultural criticism often lingers on the topic of domination, assuming that privilege equals hegemony and that the main work of criticism is to expose inequities. An important set of counter-arguments suggests that the relations between domination and dependence are far more complex, especially when it comes to hypocrisy, civility and politeness. While John F. Kasson's book on nineteenth-century American manners allows a token importance to "the virtues of civility," which he identifies as an important prerequisite for democratic society, he precludes any deeper exploration of the relationship between civility and democracy by emphasizing that "established codes of behavior have often served in unacknowledged ways as checks against a fully democratic order and in support of special interests,

institutions of privilege, and structures of domination."[36] Yet manners do not simply check or counter an otherwise "fully democratic" order. Civility is hard-wired into the eighteenth-century political discourse out of which the American state is constituted. In response to Judith Shklar's question – "how much frankness does democracy actually require?" – I will suggest that honesty and democracy are at once mutually dependent and mutually exclusive, and that contemporary American cultural and political commentators continue to wrestle with the consequences of this paradox.[37]

If defending hypocrisy at the beginning of the eighteenth century meant keeping it out of the hands of undesirables such as women and servants, the new legitimacy of manners as a political topos also offered crucial opportunities to the previously excluded. While servants as a group were largely unable to take advantage of the opportunity to pass across class lines and raise their collective status, women effectively leveraged themselves into a more powerful position by laying claim to what may be called (in my admittedly provocative terminology) the right to be hypocritical: to exert modesty, tact and self-control to a degree that men could or would not. Another way of putting this is to say that by the start of the nineteenth century, women were not merely allowed, but actively encouraged, to cultivate an unreadable quality in their relations with men and with society at large.

The claim that groups with different interests are opaque to one another applies as much to masters and servants as to men and women; in each case, those who are less powerful have one important advantage over their masters, that of being by far the more opaque.[38] In the case of servants, observing that they are largely unreadable to their masters does not necessarily imply sympathy for the servants' point of view: from Swift to Hazlitt, writers who treat the dissimulation of servants are chiefly concerned to protect masters from abuse.[39] The case of women is more complicated. One type of female insincerity had long been sanctioned in the form of modesty, an elaborate cultural construction whose artifice was very generally recognized even by those who endorsed it. Despite Wollstonecraft's arguments against modesty as a system of dissimulation, women at the beginning of the nineteenth century would manage successfully to reverse the moral valence of opacity. By the mid-nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill offers what is virtually a defense of women whose dealings with their husbands are characterized by insincerity (though his defense does not of course extend to women who "deceive" their husbands in the sexual sense). "The truth is," Mill says, "that the position of looking up to another is extremely unpropitious to complete sincerity and openness with him."[40]

However desirable openness might be (and Mill, like Wollstonecraft, certainly believes in sincerity), opacity is tactically far more advantageous. The modest heroines of the nineteenth-century novel, from Fanny Price to Esther Summerson and Lucy Snowe, are consistently placed in positions of servitude or subservience, allowing the novel as a genre to explore both the advantages and the costs of self-command and self-concealment for women in conditions of dependence.

The book is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1, "Hypocrisy and the servant problem," examines arguments by Locke, Swift and Mandeville that retain hypocrisy as an upper-class privilege only by excluding from the rubric of positive hypocrisy the self-interested and negative duplicity of the servant class. While diatribes against bad servants punctuate and render problematic many eighteenth-century arguments about virtue, I argue that servants do not finally pose an insurmountable problem for civility and that the problem of servants is successfully contained by these writers on manners.

Chapter 2, "Gallantry, adultery and the principles of politeness," begins by showing how Hume's use of the word "gallantry" as a synecdoche for civility renders him vulnerable to the attacks of reformers who question the assumptions about gender and power that underlie his commitment to politeness. In his essays, Hume addresses a female audience whose exclusion from the privileges of politeness poses an increasingly pressing threat to civility. Juxtaposing Hume's account of manners with the evidence of Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* (1774), whose reception provides a case study for testing Hume's theorization of gender and politeness, I show that women successfully appropriate the topic of manners in spite of the fact that the rhetoric of civility is seen to exclude female and working-class readers and writers. The successful transformation of Chesterfield's letters into popular pocket-sized etiquette books, anthologies of accomplishments which promise a predominantly female and middle- and lower-class readership access to male upper-class manners, represents both a natural (though possible unwelcome) sequel to Hume's conclusions about gender and civility and a pyrrhic victory for Chesterfield's model of politeness.

Chapter 3, "Revolutions in female manners," describes a three-way confrontation between Burke, Wollstonecraft and Godwin over the morality of manners. Wollstonecraft's rejection of gallantry and of the "system of dissimulation" propagated by conduct books for women remains the most compelling eighteenth-century challenge to the authority of civility, and Burke's arguments for chivalry and prejudice are seriously undermined by

Wollstonecraft's exposure of the relationship between civility and the subjection of women. The edges of this confrontation are blurred, however, by the concessions Wollstonecraft makes to decency and those Burke makes to sincerity. Valuing self-control as an essential basis for social and political community, Burke and Wollstonecraft use tact to finesse the gap between virtue and politeness; in this respect, both writers are at odds with Godwin, whose attack on politeness in all its forms repeatedly invokes the language and tropes of what I have called the servant problem. The redefinition of tact as a middle-class and predominantly female virtue, enabled in different ways by both Burke and Wollstonecraft, paves the way for hypocrisy's naturalization as tact, enshrined as a central value in nineteenth-century British writing.

In the second half of the book, I offer extended readings of two novels that explore the ways in which female dependency both exacerbates and mitigates the kinds of deceptiveness discussed in the previous chapters under the names of hypocrisy, gallantry, politeness, modesty and so on: Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740–1741) and Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), which returns to many of the issues defined by *Pamela*. Chapter 2 traces the development by writers of the Scottish Enlightenment of a vocabulary for talking about political virtue that mobilizes implicitly gendered terms like chivalry, gallantry and politeness without directly addressing the subject of women, except insofar as the treatment of women is supposed to reflect the level of civilization at large; Barker-Benfield has shown that the "culture of sensibility" defined a related language of virtue, overlapping with that of Hume, Ferguson and Robertson, but far more obviously shaped by the need to account for sexual difference and relations between the sexes. The novel constitutes yet another discourse of virtue, one informed by developments in political philosophy and by the theorization of sentiment and sociability, but approaching the topic of virtue by foregrounding a female protagonist. Chapter 4, "Hypocrisy and the novel 1: *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*," places Richardson's novel in the context of a longstanding debate about the morality of equivocation; I argue that in *Pamela*, Richardson explores the possibilities of an epistolary novel in which the safety of the main letter-writer depends on her being able to persuade her readers that she is not a hypocrite. Placing *Pamela* in the context of subsequent attacks and parodies, including Fielding's *Shamela* (1741) and his other writings on hypocrisy, I show that *Pamela* itself offers rich evidence about the tension between arguments for sincerity and arguments for dissimulation, a dynamic whose consequences for Richardson's fiction are both productive and self-defeating.

Chapter 5, "Hypocrisy and the novel II: A modest question about *Mansfield Park*," situates that novel's discourse on hypocrisy alongside arguments about self-command and concealment that are articulated more explicitly in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Emma* (1816). Together, these three novels revisit the questions about gender, power and deception that *Pamela* poses but leaves unresolved. Where Richardson oscillates in *Pamela* between endorsing an ethos of transparency and providing an elaborate defense of certain kinds of deception (on the grounds that they are justified by Pamela's peculiar circumstances), Austen answers related questions about power and deception by foregrounding the qualities of self-command and self-restraint, which temper hypocrisy into a more durable thing than the amalgam of sincerity and dissembling that Richardson attributes to Pamela. Both Pamela and Fanny Price, however, experience the psychological costs of self-concealment as well as its tactical advantages, and *Mansfield Park* shows with exceptional clarity the pains associated with what later generations would call repression.

In a brief coda entitled "Politeness and its costs," I consider several contemporary American explorations of the relationship between ethics and etiquette, tracing the outlines of a single cultural logic that connects two apparently disparate bodies of writing on manners: the neoconservative debate on civility and the self-help movement's opportunistic redefinition of politeness as an obstacle to communication between men and women. Those associated with each of these movements tend to invoke nineteenth-century writers as their chosen forebears, but the groundwork for such arguments was worked out in the body of eighteenth-century writing discussed here, whose analysis accordingly illuminates some of the most striking – and puzzling – features of contemporary conversations about manners and morals.

CHAPTER ONE

Hypocrisy and the servant problem

Not the least remarkable aspect of Jonathan Swift's defense of hypocrisy, the *Project for the Advancement of Religion* (1709), is the extent to which Swift foregrounds the very word hypocrisy.[1] Swift makes no attempt to downplay the most controversial aspects of his program for bestowing material rewards on virtue and its simulacra alike, and the rhetorical success of Swift's *Project* depends in a very real sense on his careful management of two terms. One of these is hypocrisy. The other is livery, a word whose signification in eighteenth-century discourse is curiously divided: used metaphorically, it offers a conventional analogy for appearances or surfaces, while its literal meaning is associated with an explosive set of arguments about the rights and duties of the servant class. As Swift puts it in the *Project*, "Hypocrisy is much more eligible than open Infidelity and Vice: It wears the Livery of Religion, it acknowledgeth her Authority, and is cautious of giving Scandal" (II.57). The phrase "the Livery of Religion" momentarily undermines Swift's positive argument for hypocrisy as the best approximation of virtue, introducing into his metaphor a key word in contemporary attacks on the behavior and morals of servants in livery.

The rhetorical instabilities that accompany the intrusion of anti-servant polemic into moral writing affect a wide range of texts produced and published at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The writers whose work this chapter discusses – primarily Swift, Bernard Mandeville and John Locke – share many assumptions about the importance of self-command to an education in manners, about the nature and obligations of sociability and about the threat posed to public virtue and polite culture by the existence of a numerous and increasingly vocal servant class. They differ, however, both in their willingness to name the unspeakable premises on which their arguments are based and in the level of rhetorical control they exert over those arguments. What distinguishes self-restraint from hypocrisy? How do good manners differ from other, less attractive, forms of dissimulation?

How persuasive can an approximation of virtue be, and is the impersonation of virtue – hypocrisy – ultimately damaging or beneficial to society?

Taken together, the answers that Locke, Swift and Mandeville formulate to these questions reveal the extent to which arguments about virtue and education – including the sometimes hypocritical approximations of virtue that educational manuals offer up in place of the real thing – depend on the successful management of a body of arguments about the manners of servants. Swift's allusion to these debates in the *Project* works as a surprisingly effective counterweight to his controversial defense of hypocrisy, and I will borrow language from several different works of Swift's as I develop the terms for my discussion of hypocrisy and the servant problem. I turn next from Swift to Mandeville, whose writings disturb his contemporaries in part because he articulates an argument about virtue and its identity with self-interest that they suspect to be true, but are generally unwilling to voice themselves. Mandeville's readiness to name hypocrisy as such, however, and to be more open than others about the inequalities on which polite society depends, cannot forestall the attacks of adversaries who find his invocations of bad servants unbalanced and assert that his obsession with servants' abusiveness discredits his sociological arguments. From Mandeville I return to the arguments about virtue and self-restraint offered some years earlier in Locke's widely influential *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), where diatribes about bad servants punctuate discussions of manners and hypocrisy, and I conclude by opening the discussion up to consider the consequences of the servant debate for later eighteenth-century writing.

The terms of my discussion throughout remain indebted to the language Swift offers in the *Project* for talking about hypocrisy. It is not just the extensive pamphlet literature on servants but Swift's own *Directions to Servants* (1745) that directs a battery of satire against servants in livery, identifying livery with not-so-secret insolence in a manner that would seem to subvert the *Project*'s case for wearing "the Livery of Religion." Once the *Project* and the *Directions* are situated in the context of early eighteenth-century attacks on bad servants by Locke, Defoe, Mandeville and others, however, the structural underpinnings of Swift's own argument in favor of hypocrisy become clearer. The presence of bad servants in arguments about virtue turns out to be not accidental but essential, and the evidence suggests that successful defenses of hypocrisy depend on a strategy of exclusion. Not just Swift, but Locke and Mandeville as well, are able to promote the kinds of hypocrisy that benefit society by rejecting what they depict as the destructive and self-interested dissimulation of the servant class.

On the surface, the *Project* has little in common with the *Directions*. While it touches on themes similar to those of Swift's other prose satires (including *A Tale of a Tub*, written around 1696 and published in 1704, and *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, written around the same time as the *Project*), the *Project* is harder to identify generically than either of these, though it has been described on occasion as an unsuccessful prose satire, a political polemic or a radical moral treatise. The satire of the *Directions* is far more straightforward. Published posthumously, this compilation of mock-advice is formally related not to Swift's moral writings but to his other major compilation on manners, *A Complete Collection of Polite and Ingenious Conversation*, accumulated over many years and published in 1738. Their mutual interest in livery, however, works as a hinge to connect the *Directions* to the *Project*. Johnson's *Dictionary* provides an eighteenth-century precedent for this cross-referencing of the word "livery" across Swift's writing. To illustrate the word "hypocrisy" (defined as "dissimulation with regard to the moral or religious character"), Johnson cites Swift's *Project*: "*Hypocrisy* is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice: it wears the livery of religion, and is cautious of giving scandal: nay, continued disguises are too great a constraint: men would leave off their vices, rather than undergo the toil of practising them in private."[2] And though the term "livery" appears in this passage, Johnson chooses to illustrate the word "livery" under its own heading not by the metaphorical usage of the *Project* but by a literal example from the *Directions to Servants*: "If your dinner miscarries, you were teized by the footmen coming into the kitchen; and to prove it true, throw a ladleful of broth on one or two of their *liveries*."

Reading the *Project* alongside the *Directions* offers a critical opportunity to illuminate Swift's main argument about hypocrisy by bringing back together his metaphorical and literal uses of the word livery. What light might Swift's attack on liveried servants in the *Directions* cast on his central argument for hypocrisy in the *Project*? Given the strong etymological connection between hypocrisy and part-playing – hypocrisy traditionally involves putting on a costume or a mask – and the existence of pairs of words like "custom" and "costume" or "habit" (a pattern of behavior) and "habit" (a suit of clothes), it seems plausible enough that the word "livery" should describe both a servant's dress and a habit that becomes a second nature. But even a quick survey of early eighteenth-century writing on servants reveals that livery's connotations are almost entirely negative. In fact, the rhetorical risk of giving the term livery a positive inflection corresponds quite closely to that of using the word hypocrisy itself in a favorable

sense. Swift's *Project* offers a version of the famous liar's paradox, the sincere defense of hypocrisy enacting a performative contradiction akin to the act of identifying oneself as a liar. Swift's defense of hypocrisy is hardly a simple argument about power and class, and the flexible positions of the *Project* are no more reducible to the terms of a patrician ideology than the transgressive energy of the *Directions*. Yet to use the word livery at all is to invoke a problematic discourse about deception and class relations, a discourse that I will explore here in order to trace the limits of Swift's argument for hypocrisy.

In his book on the role of servants in the realist tradition, Bruce Robbins describes "the surprising and (to one trained as a historical critic) annoying sameness of these formal manifestations of literary service."[3] This observation applies equally to the employment of the topos of the bad servant in moral writing, and I do not mean to imply either that the servant problem Swift describes is a new one or that his arguments about servants differ fundamentally from those of Mandeville, Defoe, Fielding and others. Yet it is important to account for the ways in which Swift – like Locke and Mandeville – finds servants both useful and problematic when he writes about virtue. Positive arguments for hypocrisy seem to be liable to a structural instability that Swift actually exploits when he claims that hypocrisy "wears the Livery of Religion." In the context of the *Project*, Swift's livery metaphor pays service to a related set of arguments against crudely self-interested forms of hypocrisy, allowing Swift very efficiently to acknowledge both the strengths and the weaknesses of his argument for hypocrisy. The success of the argument depends in turn on an act of rhetorical exclusion. Hypocrisy is allowed to be a good thing for certain elements of society only because servants are forbidden as a class to practice what may be called the beneficial forms of hypocrisy; in other words, Swift is able to retain hypocrisy as an upper-class privilege because he denies it as a right to the servant class.

I

Published in 1709, Swift's *Project for the Advancement of Religion* opens with a statement whose language is congruent with that of the projector. The con artist always promises that his own scheme is like no other, that it may be easily implemented and that he will remedy universal ills by means of a panacea that is both obvious and completely new. "Among all the Schemes offered to the Publick in this projecting Age," Swift writes,

I have observed, with some Displeasure, that there have never been any for the Improvement of Religion and Morals: Which, besides the Piety of the Design from the Consequences of such a Reformation in a future Life, would be the best natural Means for advancing the publick Felicity of the State, as well as the present Happiness of every Individual. For, as much as Faith and Morality are declined among us, I am altogether confident, they might, in a short Time, and with no very great Trouble, be raised to as high a Perfection, as Numbers are capable of receiving. Indeed, the Method is so easy and obvious, and some present Opportunities so good; that, in order to have this Project reduced to Practice, there seems to want nothing more than to put those in mind, who by their Honour, Duty, and Interest are chiefly concerned. (II.44–45)

Even a cursory glance at the closely contemporary and far more obviously satirical *Argument against abolishing Christianity* should alert readers to some dubious features of this argument. To claim that one's own project is exempt from the objections applying to schemes in general tends to elicit suspicion, not confidence. Moreover, rather than relying on the obvious benefits of his design in this world, Swift uses the distracting word "besides" to bracket a secondary argument about its payoff in the next. His parenthetical aside about "a future Life" thus undercuts the references that follow to "the publick Felicity of the State" and "the present Happiness of every Individual." The order of these claims is counter-intuitive: a more persuasive argument would probably build from the immediate consequence of the individual's present happiness, through the public good, to one's long-term benefit in the afterlife. The sentence that follows is even more characteristic of the classic scam: this projector is "altogether confident" that "in a short Time, and with no very great Trouble," his "easy and obvious" method will transform both religion and morals. If the method be so easy and obvious, the reader may ask, why has it not already been adopted?

The symptoms of language that arouse the reader's suspicion can hardly be accounted for by the assumption that the *Project*'s primary mode is ironic, since critics have found it extremely difficult to sustain a reading of the *Project* as a straightforward satire. Their interpretations either emphasize the pamphlet's morality at the expense of its satire, or vice versa.[4] Caught in this bind, Irvin Ehrenpreis calls the *Project* "both the finest and the flattest of Swift's essays on religion and morality" and suggests that it "reflects so shallow and banal an intellect that some acute scholars have thought it a parody."[5] Contemporary critical assessments were no less equivocal. While one of Swift's Tory colleagues thought that a copy should be given to Queen

Anne and claimed to be "entirely of opinion, that Her Majestys reading of the book of the Project for the increase of Morality and Piety, may be of very great use to that end," the *Tatler* mentions nothing about the pamphlet's utility, calling attention instead to the author's "Good Breeding" ("the Man writes much like a Gentleman, and goes to Heav'n with a very good Mien").[6] The list of apparently incompatible qualities attributed to the *Project* does not stop here. Samuel Johnson writes in the *Life of Swift* that the *Project* is "formed with great purity of intention."[7] But Thomas Sheridan notes that in spite of the fact that the pamphlet is apparently "written by some disinterested hand, from no other principle but a due regard to religion and morality," a closer examination reveals "that nothing could be more directly, though covertly, aimed at the destruction of the power of the Whigs."[8] The *Project* is accordingly supposed to be pure, disinterested and gentlemanly; partial, political and expedient; even, perhaps, tyrannical and totalitarian (David Nokes charges that "Robespierre himself could not have formulated a more thoroughgoing apparatus for ensuring the tyranny of virtue").[9] Yet how can it possibly be all of these things at once?

Swift's main tactic in the *Project* is to perform a strategic displacement of morals into manners. The text substitutes the relative for the absolute in a rhetorical move that would subsequently become associated with Burke, whose writings allow manners to do the work of morals by means of habit, custom and prejudice. J. G. A. Pocock and others have shown the centrality of the concept of manners to eighteenth-century political writing, and a society that constitutes manners as a critical term for understanding political virtue may be privately tempted to celebrate hypocrisy as a leading value.[10] Many of the rhetorical oddities of the *Project* can be directly attributed to the tension between its all-or-nothing commitment to morality and its readiness to substitute manners for morals. The pamphlet is obliged to reconcile its own absolute condemnation of certain offenses with its qualified endorsement of a morality based on compromise. Elsewhere, Swift presents compromise in a less flattering aspect: the speaker of the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity* hopes that "no Reader imagines [him] so weak to stand up in the Defence of *real* Christianity . . . since every candid Reader will easily understand my Discourse to be intended only in Defence of *nominal* Christianity; the other having been for some Time wholly laid aside by general Consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present Schemes of Wealth and Power" (*Works*, II.27–28, original emphasis). The *Project*'s argument that even the appearance of virtue is preferable to open vice also shares something with the clothes philosophy of *A Tale of a Tub*, whose narrator suggests that "Religion [is] a *Cloak*" and "the outward Dress must

needs be the Soul" (*Works*, 1.47–48, original emphasis); in the *Tale*, however, the narrator's belief that "so far preferable is that Wisdom, which converses about the Surface, to that pretended Philosophy which enters into the Depth of Things" implies a level of self-deception scarcely preferable to the grotesque dissection of insides he pretends to disavow (1.109).

What price must an argument that supports compromise pay for the sacrifice of integrity? In the opening section of the *Project*, Swift deplores the lack of decorum in contemporary society. Men "never go about, as in former Times, to hide or palliate their Vices," he says; "but expose them freely to View, like any other common Occurrences of Life, without the least Reproach from the World, or themselves" (11.45). The substitution of indifference for decorum is not confined to men: "Women of tainted Reputations find the same Countenance and Reception in all publick Places, with those of the nicest Virtue, who pay, and receive Visits from them, without any Manner of Scruple" (11.46). Swift takes this "to be of most pernicious Consequence":

> It looks like a Sort of compounding between Virtue and Vice; as if a Woman were allowed to be vicious, provided she be not profligate: As if there were a certain Point where Gallantry ends, and Infamy begins; or that an Hundred criminal Amours were not as pardonable as Half a Score.

Swift deplores the "Sort of compounding between Virtue and Vice" involved in the application of numbers to morality. Against this relative morality, Swift enforces an absolute equivalence of vice and profligacy. Gallantry and infamy cannot be separated, and in this case at the very least, "Half a Score" sexual transgressions are as unpardonable as "an Hundred."

The problem here for Swift's main argument is that while the satirical animus of this passage is directed against compromise ("a Sort of compounding"), the *Project* as a whole endorses compromise as the next best thing to virtue. If "Virtue and Conduct" are primarily tools with which to preserve reputation, how can Swift assert an absolute distinction between virtue and vice? Swift attempts to contain the aftershock of this contradiction by returning to the essay's main purpose: the discovery of "an effectual Remedy" for the present sad state of affairs (11.47). Moral reform will become effective, he says, only when it adopts the standard of self-interest, an argument that recalls the similar point made by Swift's friend and political ally Bolingbroke, who recommends in *The Idea of a Patriot King* (1738, 1749) that "by rendering publick Virtue, and real Capacity, the sole Means of acquiring any degree of Power or Profit in the State, [the Patriot King] will set the Passions of their Hearts on the Side of Liberty

and good Government."[11] Even virtue may become fashionable once it is made a qualification for professional advancement:

> There is no Quality so contrary to any Nature, which Men cannot affect, and put on upon Occasion, in order to serve an Interest, or gratify a prevailing Passion: The proudest Man will personate Humility, the morosest learn to flatter, the laziest will be sedulous and active, where he is in pursuit of what he hath much at Heart: How ready therefore would most Men be to step into the Paths of Virtue and Piety, if they infallibly led to Favour and Fortune? (II.50)

The passage of the Corporation and Test Acts had already rendered public affirmations of orthodoxy necessary for many kinds of professional advancement.[12] In this context, Swift's argument for the impersonation of virtue looks quite controversial. Perhaps the most quixotic element of the passage, however, is its problematic use of the adverb "infallibly." How will this projector manage to reduce the vagaries of advancement to a regular set of steps?

Throughout this section of the *Project*, Swift emphasizes the practical nature of his plan, insisting that all his proposals "are such, as come within the Reach of the Administration" (II.56). He also argues that the proposal is unanswerable, in a passage that becomes the crux of the *Project*:

> Neither am I aware of any Objections to be raised against what I have advanced; unless it should be thought, that the making Religion a necessary Step to Interest and Favour, might encrease Hypocrisy among us: And I readily believe it would. But if One in Twenty should be brought over to true Piety by this, or the like Methods, and the other Nineteen be only Hypocrites, the Advantage would still be great. Besides, Hypocrisy is much more eligible than open Infidelity and Vice: It wears the Livery of Religion, it acknowledgeth her Authority, and is cautious of giving Scandal. (II.57)

The persuasive force of this passage lies in Swift's provocative redefinition of hypocrisy. Swift allows the charge of hypocrisy, admitting it through the back door by putting it in the mouth of an imaginary opponent. He then undermines that charge by calling hypocrisy "much more eligible" than the vices whose expression it suppresses, as though hypocrisy has been found the best candidate for a place within the prevailing system of patronage. The next question here is whether Swift's redefinition of hypocrisy can be sustained. The "yes, but" formulation he uses to describe the benefits that will accrue from his proposal is traditionally a weak one. It also introduces a claim whose rhetorical pitch oscillates too fast. The presence of a specific number – here, "One in Twenty" – often signals in Swift's writing a turn towards satire, and while the intention in this case is evidently serious, the

opposition between one virtuous man and nineteen hypocrites sets into play a certain comic effect.[13] Another potential problem for readers of the *Project* is that the methods Swift has already outlined include measures of censorship about which he is rather disastrously explicit (ii.55–56). The inconspicuous phrase "by this, or the like Methods" (a phrase omitted by Johnson from his citation for "hypocrite" in the *Dictionary*, which invokes this passage) thus seems to threaten an ominous extension of power into the unspeakable.[14] If the phrase is euphemistic, how far might not these acts of repression extend?

Most important, what are we to make of the figure of hypocrisy as a servant in livery, the interests of religion close to its heart? Contemporary writing about servants suggests that Swift's use of this particular metaphor is extremely risky.[15] As soon as the phenomenon of the livery servant is born, writers of plays and pamphlets isolate the tendency of livery to mask insolence beneath subservience. In general, livery signifies not just a set of clothes, but a uniform that expresses the wearer's allegiance to a particular master. The French word *livrer* from which the English *livery* is derived, however, means both to entrust and to betray, and the contradictory tendency of servants in livery to represent both loyalty and treachery follows this double etymology.[16] The servant temporarily entrusted with his master's authority is all too likely to abuse, if not actively to betray, it. The *OED* shows that as soon as the word livery becomes current, it picks up the connotation of hypocrisy in its crudest form: a self-interested duplicity on the part of both the individual servant and the class of servants in general that threatens what Defoe calls "the great law of subordination." As a symbol, livery is thus more effectively used by adversaries of the system of masters and servants than by those who wish to maintain it.[17] Opponents to servitude find in livery an extremely effective symbol of oppression, as when Frantz Fanon writes (as late as 1952) that "Le nègre doit, qu'il le veuille ou non, endosser la livrée que lui a faite le Blanc."[18] In such a context, livery is clearly a bad thing, an emblem of servitude whose negative connotations may be admitted precisely because servitude is about to be thrown off altogether.

Even in a cultural context which accepts servitude with few reservations, however, the word "livery" retains a strong link to deception. In the *Directions*, Swift's satirical instructions about how to cause mayhem in the master's household, the narrator tells the groom that he is "the Servant upon whom Care of [his] Master's Honour in all Journies entirely depends": "Your Breast is the sole Repository of it," the narrator insists. Every penny spent on the road raises the master's character, and for this reason (if for

no other) "his Reputation ought to be dear to you" (XIII.46). Furthermore, the groom should "deal with those who will be the most liberal" to him, "for Service being no Inheritance, you ought not to let slip any lawful and customary Perquisite."[19] Care for the master's reputation can be reduced, however, to care for one's own livery:

> A Master ought always to love his Groom, to put him into a handsome Livery, and to allow him a Silver-laced Hat. When you are in this Equipage, all the Honours he receives on the Road are owing to you alone: That he is not turned out of the Way by every Carrier, is caused by the Civility he receives at second Hand from the Respect paid to your Livery. (XIII.50–51)

The order of things here is turned upside down. From the servant's point of view, respect paid to his livery produces civility at second-hand for his master. Yet the most alarming thing about this reversal is that it exaggerates rather than subverts an existing norm. Footmen and grooms in handsome livery do in fact increase a master's standing in the world.[20] This passage reveals the extent to which servants in livery reduce honor to its lowest common denominator, exposing status as a crude matter of display. A primary concern of the *Directions* is to expose the monstrous and self-interested nature of servants' arguments for a morality of appearances. Yet how does the groom's concern for appearances ultimately differ from the *Project*'s plea for an interested hypocrisy?

II

One very different though closely contemporary discussion of livery may clarify what is at stake in both the *Project* and the *Directions*. Support for servitude is not exclusively expressed by members of the class of masters. Individual servants sometimes write to endorse this system of values as well; most prominent among these is the "footman poet" Robert Dodsley, whose *Servitude* was published in 1729. Dodsley is a native informant, so to speak, from the servants' quarters. Facing the extraordinary volume of contemporary anti-servant polemic, he is concerned to redeem the word "livery" from its current debasement:

> Submission next must an Admittance find,
> The humble Liv'ry of a Servant's Mind;
> By which we ought to be distinguish'd more,
> Than by the Liveries on our Bodies wore.[21]

Dodsley's response to attacks on servants is to redefine their distinguishing characteristic. Servants in livery may sometimes be insubordinate, he admits. Yet submission should be the true (because interior) livery of the good (because humble) servant's mind: the prescription sounds almost wistful, as though servants will hardly be distinguished by their humility any time soon. With the patronage of Pope and others, Dodsley became first a bookseller and then a publisher, and when the manuscript of the *Directions to Servants* surfaced after Swift's death, it was very naturally Dodsley who published it.

In a letter, Swift wrote of an earlier draft of the *Directions*, "I may call it the Whole Duty of Servants, in about twenty several Stations."[22] This mock-title links the *Directions* to the popular Anglican devotional work *The Whole Duty of Man* (1657); the stations of servants are satirically equated here with the stations of the cross. How seriously does Swift take the text's didactic intentions? In a 1739 letter, he complains that "I cannot find a manuscript I wrote, called Directions for Servants, which I thought was very useful, as well as humorous."[23] Useful for the servants? Or for their masters, alerted now to the destructive tactics of their employees and enabled thereby to circumvent them? The equivocal status of the *Directions* is illuminated by a quotation from Maria Edgeworth, who refers with surprising frequency to the *Directions to Servants*.[24] Edgeworth's treatise *Professional Education* (1809), co-authored with her father, contains a long footnote on the tone and purpose of Swift's *Directions*. While it is difficult to imagine that anyone could have taken the *Directions* literally, this is exactly the charge against which the Edgeworths preemptively defend it. They link Swift's *Directions* with Machiavelli's *Prince*, identifying both as works of "sober irony" and suggesting that each text "may have done harm to some, and must have excited the indignation of others, who were so stupid as to understand it literally."[25] However useful the work may be to masters, in other words, it can only be useful to servants contemplating acts of destruction.

Are servants usually identified with their masters, or do their identities more often cut against those of their employers? Servants clearly benefit from the reputation of their masters in terms of increased prestige, and one subset of Swift's directions urges servants to manipulate the cant of the master's honor for ends that are both self-interested and interested on behalf of servants as a group. Servants who lay waste to their masters' property assert the interest of one class against another, barely troubling to conceal their insubordination beneath the empty rhetoric of honor.

The narrator of the *Directions* insists on the compatibility of these two conflicting obligations, but it is clear which really predominates:

> Take all Tradesmens Parts against your Master, and when you are sent to buy any Thing, never offer to cheapen it, but generously pay the full Demand. This is highly for your Master's Honour; and may be some Shillings in your Pocket; and you are to consider, if your Master hath paid too much, he can better afford the Loss than a poor Tradesman. (xiii.8–9)

First comes "your Master's Honour," and only then does the narrator mention the self-interested desire to put "some Shillings in your Pocket." The over-expenditure is always justified in advance, on the grounds that it promotes the master's honor. Indeed, the master makes himself especially vulnerable when he allows a servant cash in hand, with all the independence that confers, as another instruction shows:

> If you are sent with ready Money to buy any Thing at a Shop, and happen at that Time to be out of Pocket (which is very usual) sink the Money and take up the Goods on your Master's Account. This is for the Honour of your Master and yourself; for he becomes a Man of Credit at your Recommendation. (xiii.13)

The cant here is that the servant vouches for the master as "a Man of Credit." In this case, however, the argument is double-edged. The servant's power to make or break his master's reputation is a matter of fact as well as of satire, and would remain a source of considerable anxiety throughout the eighteenth century.[26]

Under the heading "RULES that concern All SERVANTS in general," Swift's narrator lays out the obligations of servants to their colleagues. "If you see your Master wronged by any of your Fellow-servants, be sure to conceal it, for fear of being called a Tell-tale," he says: "However, there is one Exception, in case of a favourite Servant, who is justly hated by the whole Family; who therefore are bound in Prudence to lay all the Faults they can upon the Favourite" (xiii.7). The obligation to fellow servants overrides that to the master, and this exception only goes to prove the rule. Not only is he or she rated above other servants by the master, a "favourite servant" also by implication rates the master over the other servants, and is thus "justly hated by the whole Family" – "Family" meaning neither the master's family, nor the household as a whole, but rather the family of servants. Prudence in turn prompts the colleagues of a favorite servant to undermine his or her privileged status. In fact, the hierarchy inside a household reproduces in miniature the social world outside the house; while Swift is careful never to reduce relations between master and servants to a simple metaphor, he variously uses the relationship elsewhere as a

synecdoche for the relations between king, court and country and as a way of writing more generally about England and Ireland, men and women or any other pair of groups whose interests seem both diametrically opposed and thoroughly implicated with one another.

Servants are especially likely to share their masters' prejudices. "If an humble Companion, a Chaplain, a Tutor, or a dependent Cousin happen to be at Table, whom you find to be little regarded by the Master, and the Company," the butler is told, ". . . it must be the Business of you and the Footman, to follow the Example of your Betters, by treating him many Degrees worse than any of the rest" (xiii.18). The master's wealthier guests, on the other hand, are of the utmost importance to the butler.

> If a Gentleman dines often with your Master, and gives you nothing when he goes away, you may use several Methods to shew him some Marks of your Displeasure, and quicken his Memory: If he calls for Bread or Drink you may pretend not to hear, or send it to another who called after him: If he asks for Wine, let him stay awhile, and then send him Small-beer; give him always foul Glasses; send him a Spoon when he wants a Knife; wink at the Footman to leave him without a Plate: By these, and the like Expedients, you may probably be a better Man by half a Crown before he leaves the House, provided you watch an Opportunity of standing by when he is going. (xiii.25)

While "vails" or tips formed a regular part of a servant's income, vails-giving would become increasingly unpopular with the employer class over the course of the century.[27] Livery servants who extorted contributions from guests in the form of vails were seen as disrupting social intercourse, especially when they insulted and mistreated those who were unwilling or unable to pay. Even worse, by allowing guests to supply vails, Jonas Hanway argued at the middle of the century, masters undercut their own authority and "[sowed] the seeds of contempt of superiors."[28] The cook and the butler are particularly likely to assume a debased version of aristocratic values, according to Swift's *Directions*, since they identify themselves as heads of the family. "If you live in a rich Family, roasting and boiling are below the Dignity of your Office, and which it becomes you to be ignorant of," the cook is told; "therefore leave that Work wholly to the Kitchen Wench, for fear of disgracing the Family you live in" (xiii.28). The cook is also encouraged to cut corners under the pretext of exaggerating the family's gentility: "a lump of Soot . . . will give the Soup a high *French* Taste," and butter melted into oil may be sent up without a qualm, "for Oil is a genteeler Sauce than Butter" (xiii.30).

The chapter giving directions to the footman is fuller than any of the others. "I have a true Veneration for your Office," says the narrator, "because

I had once the Honour to be one of your Order, which I foolishly left by demeaning myself with accepting an Employment in the Custom-house" (xiii.34). Those who hold government office are inferior types of the footman, who is "the fine Gentleman of the Family" and even "sometimes a Pattern of Dress to [his] Master" (xiii.33). The footman "understand[s] Men and Manners" and may rise readily by getting a good command in the army or by marrying the master's daughter. But he must not advance himself at the expense of his colleagues. As the narrator instructs the footman, "Be not proud in Prosperity": "Pay your Contributions duly to your late Brothers the Cadets" (xiii.43–44). Neither should the footman be governed by ordinary moral scruples:

> When your Master and Lady are talking together in their Bed-chamber, and you have some Suspicion that you or your Fellow-servants are concerned in what they say, listen at the Door for the publick Good of all the Servants, and join all to take proper Measures for preventing any Innovations that may hurt the Community. (xiii.43)

The vocabulary of "preventing . . . Innovations" for the sake of the "Community" once again alerts the reader's suspicion. The language of contract theory is appropriated here by servants for self-interested and socially destructive motives. It is not only male servants who perform this act of rhetorical hostility. Female servants also justify their abuses in the language of political obligation. If mistresses will insist on locking up their tea and sugar caddies, thereby blocking free access for servants, they must accept the consequences: servants have a right to "relieve" themselves, even to the extent of making "a false Key, which is a Point both difficult and dangerous to compass; but, as to the Circumstance of Honesty in procuring one, I am under no Doubt, when your Mistress gives you so just a Provocation, by refusing you an ancient and legal Perquisite" (xiii.57). The "ancient and legal Perquisite" must be retained by any means, so that the waiting-maid becomes in this case a Lockean apologist for revolution on a small scale, justifying her morally dubious actions in the language of rights. (In the *Drapier's Letters*, Swift applies the subversive language of rights in a serious cause; to the extent that Swift applies the master–servant paradigm to relations between England and Ireland, moreover, it should be clear that he does not only or always speak for the master.)

The footman's two most prominent roles are those of labor organizer and sexual aggressor – because he apes the manners and dress of a gentleman, he threatens the chastity of the master's daughter and wife.[29] The footman has two ways to improve his condition; his solidarity with his colleagues in a

prototype of the modern labor union is a companion strategy to the threat he poses as seducer to the sexual integrity of the upper-class household.[30] With a little care the footman may pass for a gentleman:

> Chuse a Service, if you can, where your Livery Colours are least tawdry and distinguishing: Green and Yellow immediately betray your Office, and so do all Kinds of Lace, except Silver, which will hardly fall to your Share, unless with a Duke, or some Prodigal just come to his Estate. The Colours you ought to wish for, are Blue, or Filemot, turned up with Red; which with a borrowed Sword, a borrowed Air, your Master's Linen, and a natural and improved Confidence, will give you what Title you please, where you are not known. (xiii.41)

The footman's manners could take him as far as the army: "value not now and then a Kicking, or a Caning; for your Insolence will at last turn to good Account; and from wearing a Livery, you may probably soon carry a Pair of Colours" (xiii.43). The satirical point is that while footmen are morally despicable, the tactics they put to work in their present calling are precisely the same qualities that procure advancement in the army or at court.

The introduction to *Polite Conversation* deals explicitly with the risks that face all conduct manuals, even parodic ones. Swift anticipates the objection that it may be dangerous to provide other classes with the secrets of upper-class conversation:

> It may be objected, that the Publication of my Book, may, in a long Course of Time, prostitute this noble Art to mean and vulgar People. But, I answer; that it is not so easily acquired, as a few ignorant Pretenders may imagine. A Footman can swear; but he cannot swear like a Lord. He can swear as often: But, can he swear with equal Delicacy, Propriety, and Judgment? No certainly; unless he be a Lad of superior Parts, of good Memory, a diligent Observer, one who hath a skilful Ear, some knowledge in Musick, and an Exact Taste; which hardly falls to the Share of one in a thousand among that Fraternity, in as high Favour as they now stand with their Ladies; neither, perhaps hath one Footman in six, so fine a Genius, as to relish and apply those exalted Sentences comprised in this Volume. (iv.112)

The subversiveness of Swift's irony here results not just from his decision to make the manner in which one swears the criterion for social distinction, but from the critique of supposedly aristocratic manners this choice implies. A skilful footman *can* in fact "swear like a Lord . . . with equal Delicacy, Propriety, and Judgment," insofar as both lowly and aristocratic swearing are already indelicate, improper and ill-judged. It is no more likely that anybody would use *Polite Conversation* as a witty manual of dinner-party repartee than that he or she should seize on the *Directions* as a training-manual for servants, though the text might hold some useful ideas both for masters who wish to avert certain kinds of fraud and for servants who want

to become household terrorists. The Edgeworths' anxiety about potential misreadings of Swift's *Directions* suggests, however, that even an obviously satirical conduct book may be in some danger of being taken seriously. In this sense, the possibility that the *Directions* might be appropriated by destructive servants is built into the text by Swift himself, who imagines servants as ruthlessly subverting or turning on its head the cant of aristocratic honor, a rhetoric thereby revealed to be as base, self-interested and class-bound as its parodic double below-stairs.

Swift wrote a number of directions to his own servants, all more or less in earnest. "The Duty of Servants at Inns" covers much the same ground as the *Directions to the Groom* and is just as precise in its instructions (XIII.163–65). "Laws for the Dean's Servants" enumerates the fines and forfeits exacted for various offenses: servants must not be drunk, must not leave the house without notice to the Dean and must not secretly "be abroad together when the Dean is from home," or they shall pay a forfeit out of their wages (XIII.161–62). The rules are generally designed to keep the servants sober and under their master's surveillance. (I do not use the word surveillance lightly: Laetitia Pilkington's account of one dinner party at the Deanery has Swift sitting "at the Head of his Table opposite to a great Pier Glass, under which was a Marble Side-board, so that he could see in the Glass whatever the Servants did at it."[31]) The conclusion of Swift's "Laws" sounds desperate to rule out equivocations or exceptions, as though written by one who understands too well the threat posed to lawful government by the notion of consent put forward in Locke's *Second Treatise*: "Whatever other laws the Dean shall think fit to make, at any time to come, for the government of his servants, and forfeitures for neglect or disobedience, all the servants shall be bound to submit to" (XIII.162). Thus a body of "Laws," "Rules" or "Directions" is all that stands between order and chaos.

III

No doubt Swift enjoyed his skirmishes with the household help. Consider this testimonial, written by Swift for a former servant who asked him for a reference: "WHEREAS the bearer served me the space of one year, during which time he was an *idler* and a *drunkard*; I then discharged him as such; but how far his having been five years at sea may have mended his manners, I leave to the penetration of those who may hereafter chuse to employ him."[32] The tone of the *Directions* is also perversely exuberant, though, on a more serious note, there is a great deal of evidence for Swift's emotional connection to certain of his servants: the tablet he raised to his favorite servant

Saunders McGee in St. Patrick's Cathedral, for instance, or the fact of his servants' refusal to turn Swift in as author of the *Drapier's Letters* in spite of the bounty placed on his head by the government.[33] Yet for Swift, servants continue to pose a problem on the level of both argument and metaphor. The trope of the mismanaged household is prominent throughout Swift's political writings.[34] His arguments in favor of civility are often accompanied by diatribes against the irremediably uncouth, whose presence in society at once threatens and paradoxically secures ideals of social behavior. The momentary destabilization of the *Project*'s argument for hypocrisy by the introduction of the term livery is effectively arrested by the forward impulse of Swift's rhetoric. As it turns out, describing hypocrisy as "the Livery of Religion" is a private joke for those in the know (in this case, just about everybody, given the universal loathing for servants in livery). If hypocrisy is a bad thing, livery is even worse, and Swift will get away with hypocrisy because he casts off livery without reservation once the metaphor has served his purpose. Swift thus successfully defends hypocrisy by a policy of strategic containment, excoriating the threat posed by the subversive and self-interested hypocrisy of the lower classes even as he endorses the virtue of a society based on manners.

Insofar as Swift successfully contains the local disruption which the problematic word "livery" introduces into his central argument for hypocrisy, what is the servant problem of this chapter's title? The servant problem (more fairly described as the problem masters perceived with regard to their servants) erupts into a great many eighteenth-century arguments about virtue. Swift is clearly not alone in his preoccupation with bad servants. Educational theorists from Locke to Edgeworth would put on hold a main argument about virtue to indulge in diatribes against bad servants, digressions that are often extremely distracting. In fact, other arguments for virtue are somewhat less successful than Swift's at isolating hypocrisy within protective layers of paradox. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, for one, Locke insists that children are "wholly, if possible" to be kept from conversation with servants, and this is only the initial salvo against bad servants, who crop up to pose problems under many different headings in Locke's educational treatise.[35] Mandeville's *Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools* (1723) is punctuated by exactly the same kind of attack on servants that interrupts Locke's thoughts on education, digressions so conspicuous that one of Mandeville's more vituperative adversaries seized on them as a rhetorical weakness: "But how comes all this Severity on Footmen to make a Part of his *Essay upon Charity Schools*?"[36] The evidence of these texts suggests that a diatribe against servants is not merely an incidental

digression from a tightly focused moral argument, but that servants pose for eighteenth-century moral writing an organic problem on the level of content, a problem that presents itself in turn as a disruption of rhetorical register. At the most basic level, the presence of all-too-real servants in a discourse about morality, virtue or education suggests a kind of rhetorical failure.

Swift's resolution of the paradox of good hypocrisy involves dividing society into two unequal groups, one of which is allowed to be hypocritical so long as the other is not. While hypocrisy is more commonly perceived as a disjunction between motive and action within a single individual, the problem of hypocrisy is resolved in this case at the level of society. Both Swift and his contemporary Mandeville are interested in the social psychology of hypocrisy, though where Swift's irony sometimes obscures or undercuts his most shocking conclusions, so that they can never be fully decoded, Mandeville usually mobilizes satire in order to pound home his most penetrating points. Once virtue and religion are made requisite to preferment, Swift concludes at the end of the *Project*, "our Duty, by becoming our Interest, would take Root in our Natures" (II.59). This insight about how individual dispositions are to be constrained and modified prompts in Swift not just broad social prescriptions, like the methods recommended in the *Project*, but internal rules about self-control, often with a religious emphasis. For Swift, the impulses of human nature must constantly be checked. In his attack on free-thinking, which he identifies as a low-church euphemism for libertinism, Swift distinguishes madness from sanity by stating that while the madman speaks whatever comes to mind, the rational man "only express[es] such thoughts, as his judgment direct[s] him to chuse, leaving the rest to die away in his memory."[37] Given that thoughts prompt both words and actions, he continues, they "ought to be kept under the strictest regulation." In this sense, one's thoughts are more like bad servants than not.

Mandeville isolates a similar problem, albeit with different emphasis, in "A Search into the Nature of Society," observing that since thoughts are "free and uncontroul'd" while action is "confin'd," "it is impossible we could be sociable Creatures without Hypocrisy": "since we cannot prevent the Ideas that are continually arising within us," he continues, "all Civil Commerce would be lost, if by Art and prudent Dissimulation we had not learn'd to hide and stifle them."[38] Unlike Swift's, Mandeville's phrasing (particularly the provocative term "prudent Dissimulation") foregrounds the frightening possibility – one which haunted most eighteenth-century writing on manners – that all forms of self-control are akin to hypocrisy.

Locke's educational writings offer a useful context for Mandeville's comments on the socialization of children (both men were physicians, and it is inconceivable that Mandeville would not have known Locke's work well). Locke more than once observes that strength of mind, as of body, "lies chiefly in being able to endure Hardships": "And the great Principle and Foundation of all Vertue and Worth, is placed in this, That a Man is able to *deny himself* his own Desires, cross his own Inclinations, and purely follow what Reason directs as best, tho' the appetite lean the other way."[39] Locke's Calvinist-inflected doctrine of self-denial and Swift's belief that all thoughts must be strictly regulated are homologous, I would argue, to Mandeville's deadpan endorsement of hypocrisy as the lynchpin of sociability, despite obvious differences with regard to both rhetorical tactics and ethical ends. Mandeville's challenging invocation of hypocrisy is characteristic of his argumentative style, which makes extravagant use of terms most writers on morals prefer to avoid, stripping them of their negative connotations in order to expose the psychological and political mechanisms that account for the behavior of individuals in groups. Mandeville typically takes a more or less acceptable idea and reduces it to absurdity:

> In all Civil Societies Men are taught insensibly to be Hypocrites from their Cradles, no body dares to own that he gets by Publick Calamities, or even by the Loss of Private Persons. The Sexton would be stoned should he wish openly for the Death of the Parishioners, tho' every body knew that he had nothing else to live upon. (1.349)

By presenting such an extreme case, Mandeville at once exposes and defamiliarizes the ordinary relationship of hypocrisy to self-interest.

Given that we often hide or suppress thoughts and motives because we think they will reflect badly on us (and the distinction between concealment and "genuine" restraint of antisocial impulses comes to seem increasingly arbitrary over the course of Locke's writings on education), Mandeville's self-appointed task is to articulate those unspeakable assumptions. While the subtitle of *The Fable of the Bees* paradoxically equates private vices with public benefits, the paradox is subsequently and repeatedly collapsed by the redefinition of individual vices as social virtues: "It is Shame and Education that contains [sic] the Seeds of all Politeness" (1.72). Like pride, hypocrisy is a private vice that easily becomes a public virtue. In Mandeville's prosperous though grumbling hive, "All Trades and Places knew some Cheat, / No Calling was without Deceit" (1.20). In itself, Mandeville suggests, deceit is entirely admissible; the problem is that each individual wants simultaneously to conceal his own deceits and to expose those of others. Mandeville's

solution is to argue that we can and must endorse other people's deceptions, just as we take our own deceptions for granted. Because transparency is socially destructive and opacity socially useful, hypocrisy serves the general cause of prosperity.

Hypocrisy characterizes every aspect of Mandeville's world, not least as a component of an education in manners. "[T]he Tricks made use of by the Women that would teach Children to be mannerly" include "extravagant Praises [that] would by any one, above the Capacity of an Infant, be call'd fulsome Flatteries, and, if you will, abominable Lies," Mandeville says, because experience shows that flattery is the most effective way of getting a child to behave (1.53). But hypocrisy is more than simply an instrument of education. It is also absolutely necessary for smoothing relations between groups with divergent interests. In the case of men and women, this means that men must conceal sexual desire behind the cloak of politeness:

> If a Man should tell a Woman, that he could like no body so well to propagate his Species upon, as her self, and that he found a violent Desire that Moment to go about it, and accordingly offer'd to lay hold of her for that purpose; the Consequence would be, that he would be call'd a Brute, the Woman would run away, and himself never be admitted in any civil Company . . . But a Man need not conquer his Passions, it is sufficient that he conceals them. Virtue bids us subdue, but good Breeding only requires we should hide our Appetites.[40]

As in Swift's *Project*, interest prompts men to hide rather than actually to subdue destructive appetites, and Swift and Mandeville are equally interested in the extent to which the habits of good breeding induce something that ultimately cannot be distinguished from virtue. Mandeville's opposition between "Virtue" and "good Breeding," in other words, is highly opportunistic, insofar as there is no effective difference in the real world between subduing and merely hiding appetites. My broader point is that once such arguments gain sufficient currency, backed up by arguments about habituation that are less obviously controversial but still subversive in their implications, even those eighteenth-century writers most unequivocally committed to the cause of virtue have an increasingly hard time sustaining the distinction between manners as hypocrisy and manners as the expression of true feeling. This is a central problem for Richardson, whose attempts to resolve apparent contradictions between virtue and politeness will be discussed in chapter 4.

For Mandeville, breeding (an eighteenth-century synonym for education, though the word's biological connotations are rarely entirely suppressed) offers a more than adequate approximation of virtue. By

substituting "good Breeding" for "Virtue," of course, Mandeville identifies the hiding of appetites as a gentleman's habit, and Mandeville is more willing than Swift to articulate the exclusions by which society constitutes itself. His justification of hypocrisy as a way of educating children to be mannerly, for instance, applies only to the population's upper stratum, and he insists that the manners of the well-bred are secured by the existence of another class of people, a class more or less innocent of politeness. The avowed purpose of *An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools* is "to prove the Necessity there is for a certain Portion of Ignorance in a well-order'd Society" (1.322). This counter-intuitive argument for ignorance attacks a constellation of popular ideologies clustered around the word charity. Influenced by the psychology of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) as well as his *Thoughts Concerning Education*, the founders of the early eighteenth-century charity-school movement were reformers anxious to establish social discipline and enforce the great law of subordination.[41] Thanks to their commitment to conducting charity according to rational methods, promoters of the movement emphasized not the education of the poor, for nobody considered that a sound economic prospect, but the social discipline the schools could enforce, a discipline that by making children "tractable and submissive" would train them to become "Honest and Industrious Servants."[42]

Mandeville takes a very different view of the schools. His primary grievance is economic. Charity breeds dependence, he says, and if his own attack thwarts the flow of alms to charity-schools, so much the better: "Charity, where it is too extensive, seldom fails of promoting Sloth and Idleness, and is good for little in the Commonwealth but to breed Drones and destroy Industry" (1.267). Indeed, the specific target of Mandeville's animus is "that kind of Distraction the Nation has labour'd under for some time, the Enthusiastick Passion for Charity-Schools" (1.268). He objects to the effects of charity-schools not just on those they are meant to discipline but on the benefactors who run them, who gratify their desire for power by becoming small-scale parish tyrants. Mandeville's first tactic in the battle against the schools, however, is to define charity out of existence. Most contemporary theories of human nature account for charity as the transfer of self-love from oneself to another, Mandeville observes, but a more rigorous definition would exclude all actions motivated by self-interest from the category of charity. After such a redefinition, it becomes clear that the gifts men give to the poor in order to gain a reputation for generosity are propelled not by the virtue of charity but by the vice of self-interest: "Pride and Vanity have built more Hospitals than all the Virtues together" (1.261).

Mandeville's attack on charity-schools is twofold. On the one hand, he suggests that the schools give charity-children an unfair advantage over the children of tradesmen and the deserving poor; on the other, he opposes education for the poor under any terms whatsoever. Mandeville treats with scorn the popular consensus that "Children that are taught the Principles of Religion and can read the Word of God, have a greater Opportunity to improve in Virtue and good Morality, and must certainly be more civiliz'd than others, that are suffer'd to run at random and have no body to look after them" (1.268). Advocates of the schools claim to believe that "when the Children of the Poor receive a better Education, the Society will in a few Years reap the Benefit of it, and the Nation be clear'd of so many Miscreants as now this great City and all the Country about it are fill'd with." Mandeville's tactic in the *Essay* is to show that such an idea is desperately naïve – that certain members of the population are destined to become "Thieves and Pick-pockets, . . . Felons and other Criminals" (1.268), and that education, rather than counteracting inequity, simply compounds it.

Manners do not belong to everybody, the *Essay* suggests, but are rather the prerogative of a relatively small subset of society. When Mandeville abhors "the Manners and Civility that by Charity-Schools are to be grafted into the Poor of the Nation" (1.269), his choice of the word "grafted" reveals how artificial he considers such a hybrid to be. Even if manners should be deemed a necessary part of the education of the lower classes, Mandeville points out, a charity-school is hardly the place to learn good manners: "Boys there may be taught to pull off their Caps promiscuously to all they meet, unless it be a Beggar: But that they should acquire in it any Civility beyond that I can't conceive" (1.270). Moreover, "nothing is less requisite [than education] in the Laborious Poor": "It is not Compliments we want of them, but their Work and Assiduity." The "Civility" and "Compliments" that charity-school advocates misguidedly wish to instill in the poor belong to an ethos characterized at least in part by its exclusivity, one that by definition cannot be extended indiscriminately to all the members of a society. Civility is to this extent anti-democratic, although democracy depends on civility, and its survival is contingent on its coexistence with ignorance, which Mandeville calls "a necessary Ingredient in the Mixture of Civil Society" (1.292).

Mandeville identifies the reciprocal relation between ignorance and civility as a natural consequence of the division of labor. The more civilized or polite a man becomes, "the greater will be the variety of Labour required to make him easy" (1.286); and however pleasant this may be for the polite individual himself, his lifestyle depends on the hard work of increasing numbers of laborers who should not be encouraged to harbor ideas above

their station. "If such People there must be, as no great Nation can be happy without vast Numbers of them," Mandeville asks, "would not a Wise Legislature cultivate the Breed of them with all imaginable Care, and provide against their Scarcity as he would prevent the Scarcity of Provision it self?" (1.287). This means withholding from the poor everything that makes them less fit for a lifetime of hard physical labor. "Reading, Writing and Arithmetick, are very necessary to those, whose Business require such Qualifications," Mandeville admits, "but where People's livelihood has no dependence on these Arts, they are very pernicious to the Poor, who are forc'd to get their Daily Bread by their Daily Labour" (1.288). Because going to school is so much less taxing than going to work, even a little education unfits people for employment.

The consequences of educating the poor are especially dire in the case of servants. Mandeville suggests that education causes servants to over-value themselves:

> When Obsequiousness and mean Services are required, we shall always observe that they are never so chearfully nor so heartily perform'd as from Inferiors to Superiors; I mean Inferiors not only in Riches and Quality, but likewise in Knowledge and Understanding. A Servant can have no unfeign'd Respect for his Master, as soon as he has Sense enough to find out that he serves a Fool. (1.289)

This passage makes only a moderate claim for the master's merit, since it is the master's very mediocrity that necessitates keeping the servants beneath him profoundly ignorant. Mandeville's argument against education is thus at once a pragmatic response to and a *reductio ad absurdum* of the widely perceived problem of servants' insubordination. If all are to be educated, Mandeville asks, who will do the work of servants? The answer is obvious: "No Body will do the dirty slavish Work, that can help it. I don't discommend them; but . . . the People of the meanest Rank know too much to be serviceable to us" (1.302). Those servants who "know too much to be serviceable to us" in turn divert their energies from service to subversion, costing the nation millions in waste.

Servants are not simply a random subsection of the laboring classes, though they are sometimes treated as such. They present in exacerbated form the general tensions of the class system, interacting with their masters in a proximity that renders masters irritable and servants aggressively unproductive. Even the most paternalistic writers cannot persuade themselves that servants embody social values at their best; servants are perceived to be a problem by writers across the entire conceivable political spectrum, and servants' interactions with masters are consistently characterized (according to

those masters) by a self-interested duplicity and by an insidious tendency to imitate or take on as protective coloring their masters' habits. One symptom of what the eighteenth century understood to be the servant problem, for instance, is that servants wore far more expensive clothes than their laboring peers.[43] Charity-school children who showed pride in their uniforms seem to have been reprimanded; as Isaac Watts wrote, "There is no ground for charity children to grow vain and proud of their rayment [sic] when it is but a sort of livery."[44] By asserting that charity children wear "a sort of livery," Watts and the supporters of the schools adopt a Christian rhetoric of submission and humility, a language that has the potential to deform individuals in the manner captured by Dickens in the character of Uriah Heep.

Mandeville's argument against charity-schools takes advantage of the servant problem for his own contrarian ends. The misbehavior of servants provides the most obvious reason why the poor should not be educated. Of all the servants, Mandeville's least favorite is the footman, whose manners allow him to impersonate a man of good breeding. Indeed, masters are all too often taken in by footmen's address. Even footmen who "are Guilty of all these Vices, Whoring, Drinking, Quarreling, . . . shall have all their Faults overlook'd and bore with, because they are Men of good Mien and humble Address that know how to wait on Gentlemen; which is an unpardonable Folly in Masters and generally ends in the Ruin of Servants" (1.303). Masters are self-destructively attracted to those servants who imitate them down to their very vices, and the master's indulgence in turn ruins the footman, who will inevitably over-value himself:

> every thing in the House is his Perquisite, and he won't stay with you unless his Vails are sufficient to maintain a midling Family; and tho' you had taken him from the Dunghil, out of an Hospital, or a Prison, you shall never keep him longer than he can make of his Place what in his high Estimation of himself he shall think he deserves; nay, the best and most civiliz'd, that never were Saucy and Impertinent, will leave the most indulgent Master, and, to get handsomely away, frame fifty Excuses, and tell downright Lies, as soon as they can mend themselves. (1.303)

Even the "most civiliz'd" footman is vain, manipulative, wasteful and ultimately self-destructive, always willing to sacrifice a good position in the name of rights and perquisites. These sentences mark out the limits of Mandeville's doctrine of private vices and public benefits. While the self-interest of the merchant class may be socially useful, that of servants is always socially destructive; the servant who insists on his "Perquisite" wields the language of rights against the class above him.

Building on the trope of education around which the *Essay on Charity* is constructed, Mandeville describes the iniquity of the gentlemen's eating-houses that footmen often frequent by calling them "the Academies for Footmen, where Publick Lectures are daily read on all Sciences of low Debauchery by the experienc'd Professors of them, and Students are instructed in above Seven Hundred illiberal Arts, how to Cheat, Impose upon, and find out the blind side of their Masters, with so much Application, that in a few Years they become Graduates in Iniquity" (1.304). (Almost the worst thing Mandeville can say about a place or an institution is that it is like a school.) The attack on charity-schools becomes the occasion for a more general warning against making education overly accessible or extending the ideal of civility too far. These diatribes against servants are fascinating, but why does Mandeville need to talk so much about footmen in order to make his point about charity? Many contemporary attacks on Mandeville express perplexity at his style of argument. The critic Blewitt says that Mandeville "has a peculiar art to be very inconsistent, to shift Sides in his Objections, to assert direct Contraries, and still be as wrong as ever."[45] Yet the "wrong" quality of Mandeville's arguments does not mean that they are easy to refute. Blewitt offers an extended criticism of Mandeville's diatribes against servants:

> But how comes all this Severity upon Footmen to make a Part of his *Essay upon Charity Schools*? Is it owing to Charity Schools that Footmen are generally *Rogues*, that *if they are honest, half of them* are *Sots*, that others are *quarrelsome* and *spoil their Cloaths*; that *those who are good-natured are generally sad Whoremasters, that are ever running after the Wenches, and spoil all the Maid Servants they come near*? If these are the Effects of Charity Schools, they will be thought very strong Objections against them by all – but those who think *private Vices publick Benefits*.[46]

Blewitt may be right to ask what footmen have to do with charity-schools, and his rhetorical strategy here is to reclaim Mandeville's own witty reinterpretation of the phrase "private vices." Mandeville himself never quite spells out the connection between the two, though the *Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools* suggests that footmen are living proof of the dangerous consequences of providing an education in civility to the lower classes.

As though conscious of the scale of his servant digression, Mandeville returns at the end of the *Essay* to rhetorically safer ground, the issue of party politics, pointing out that both parties "aim at nothing so much in Charity-Schools, as to strengthen their Party."[47] The Tories want to confirm their institutional stronghold and further strengthen the established clergy, perhaps even to restore the Stuart monarchy; the Whigs and dissenters who

independently support the schools hope to erode the power of the Anglican clergy over the laity by teaching individual members of the lower classes to read and write. Mandeville disapproves of both goals. Yet his objection is not to liberty as such but to the opportunistic enlistment of the lower classes in the political machinations of an oligarchy. Just because he opposes education, he insists, does not mean that he takes a position against liberty: "Liberty and Property I hope may remain secured, and yet the Poor be better employ'd than they are, tho' their Children should wear out their Clothes by useful Labour, and blacken them with Country Dirt for something, instead of tearing them off their Backs at play, and dawbing them with Ink for nothing" (1.318). The *Essay* insists finally that despite Blewitt's accusation of irrelevance, the problem of servants is central to British liberalism, and Mandeville devotes a great deal of energy to exposing the dependence of a supposedly free society on the labor of an ignorant underclass, articulating in the process some implications of Lockean liberalism about which Locke himself maintains a discreet silence.

IV

> "But how little you think of the rightful umbleness of a person in my station, Master Copperfield! Father and me was both brought up at a foundation school for boys; and mother, she was likewise brought up at a public, sort of charitable, establishment. They taught us all a deal of umbleness – not much else that I know of, from morning to night. We was to be umble to this person, and umble to that; and to pull off our caps here, and to make bows there; and always to know our place, and abase ourselves before our betters. And we had such a lot of betters! . . . 'Be umble, Uriah,' says father to me, 'and you'll get on. It was what was always being dinned into you and me at school; it's what goes down best. Be umble,' says father, 'and you'll do!' And really it ain't done bad!"
>
> Dickens, *The Personal History of David Copperfield* (1849–50), ch. 39

It is superficially incomprehensible that Locke's name should be invoked by the founders of charity-schools to describe their educational goals, for Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* would seem to be preoccupied with the threat posed to upper-class children by even the most minimal contact with domestic servants. A large proportion of his precepts insist on the importance of building a kind of *cordon sanitaire* between the two groups. Writing about how children are to behave in company, for instance, in the passage quoted briefly above, Locke describes a "great inconvenience which

Children receive from the ill Examples, which they meet with amongst the meaner Servants":

> They are wholly, if possible, to be kept from such Conversation: For the contagion of these ill precedents, both in Civility and Vertue, horribly infects Children, as often as they come within reach of it. They frequently learn from unbred or debauched Servants such Language, untowardly Tricks and Vices, as otherwise they possibly would be ignorant of all their lives. (126–27)

The metaphors of infection and contagion used here suggest that the health of society itself may depend on keeping children away from the servants. A striking feature of this outburst is Locke's equivocal use of the qualifiers "if possible" and "possibly." It is certainly *not* possible for Locke's audience to keep children wholly from the company of servants; moreover, it is disputable whether a child preserved from such contagion would indeed remain free of vice in maturity. For these reasons, the word "possibly" concedes too much, drawing attention to the contingent nature of its own claim.

Not all Locke's outbursts against servants are so qualified. Children must be kept from strong drink, Locke insists (against the conventional wisdom of the day), "[t]here being nothing that lays a surer Foundation of Mischief, both to Body and Mind, than Children's being used to *Strong Drink*; especially, to drink in private, *with the Servants*" (96). Strong drink is not the only unhealthy substance associated with servants, and any contact with servants threatens children's mental as well as their physical health. Hoping to sequester the child from the irrational in all its forms, Locke consistently associates irrationality with servants. In the case of fairy tales, for instance, the danger of the fantastic can scarcely be distinguished from the threat posed by the servant. Locke wants the child to be kept "from all Impressions and Notions of *Sprites* and *Goblins*, or any fearful Apprehensions in the dark":

> This he will be in danger of from the indiscretion of Servants, whose usual Method it is to awe Children, and keep them in subjection, by telling them of *Raw-Head* and *Bloody Bones*, and such other Names, as carry with them the Idea's [sic] of some thing terrible and hurtful, which they have reason to be afraid of, when alone, especially in the dark. (196)

Locke fears that servants will wield the irrational as an instrument of domination and thereby cause permanent damage to the minds of their charges, preventing these children from achieving full membership in the club of Enlightenment rationality. Terror, violence, the uncanny: all these enter into Locke's *Thoughts* around the servant problem.

If educating children requires many concessions to expedience, writing well about education demands an equally difficult compromise between theory and practice. To be useful, a book about education must be both principled and explicit. The practical motive often requires manuals of education to articulate ideas and arguments that other genres prefer to leave to the imagination. Written for a real parent educating real children, the *Thoughts Concerning Education* must recommend practical strategies alongside its pedagogical concepts.[48] It is not enough to identify self-denial as "the great Principle and Foundation of all Vertue and Worth"; the book must also lay out a concrete program for how to teach children to "subject [their desires] to the Rules and Restraints of Reason" (103, 105). Beating is disallowed as punishment, just as money, clothes and food are disallowed as rewards; by emphasizing corporal pain and pleasure, Locke observes, "Such a sort of *slavish Discipline* makes a *slavish Temper*," and while the child "submits, and dissembles Obedience, whilst the fear of the Rod hangs over him," he afterwards "gives the greater scope to his natural Inclination; which by this way is not at all altered, but on the contrary heightned [sic] and increased in him; and after such restraint, breaks out usually with the more violence."[49] Yet Locke observes that contemporary educational practice relies all too heavily on such techniques: "if we look into the common Management of Children, we shall have reason to wonder, in the great Dissoluteness of Manners which the World complains of, that there are any Foot-steps at all left of Virtue" (105).

Given this sorry state of affairs, how are children to be governed? Locke grants that "*Reward* and *Punishment*, are the only Motives to a rational Creature" (115), but suggests that parents need to reconceive the system of penalties and incentives as they are currently administered. Praise is a better incentive than sweetmeats, Locke says, and coldness a better deterrent than a beating:

> The *Rewards* and *Punishments* then, whereby we should keep Children in order, *are* quite of another kind; and of that force, that when we can get them once to work, the business, I think, is done, and the difficulty is over. *Esteem* and *Disgrace* are, of all others, the most powerful incentives to the Mind, when once it is brought to relish them. (115–16)

In spite of Locke's assertion that the business is done, however, a substantial difficulty remains. Locke has already made a crucial concession when he allows there to be no motives stronger than reward and punishment, making virtue a matter of establishing suitable incentives.[50] In this sense, he has given up a great deal before the child's education even begins.

Rather than working towards a better definition of the word virtue – one that might infuse self-denial into the love of reputation, for instance, in order to stabilize the element of self-interest – Locke next responds to the pressures that constrict virtue into an ever smaller compass by breaking out of the discourse of educational theory. Having identified the rewards of esteem and disgrace as powerful incentives, he interrupts his analysis to attend to a more practical consideration:

> The great Difficulty here, is, I imagine, from the Folly and Perverseness of Servants, who are hardly to be hinder'd from crossing herein the Design of the Father and Mother. Children, discountenanced by their Parents for any Fault, find usually a Refuge and Relief in the Caresses of those foolish Flatterers, who thereby undo whatever the Parents endeavour to establish. When the Father or Mother looks sowre on the Child, every Body else should put on the same Coldness to him, and no Body give him Countenance; till Forgiveness asked, and a Reformation of his Fault, has set him right again, and restored him to his former Credit. If this were constantly observed, I guess there would be little need of Blows, or Chiding . . . But how this Inconvenience from Servants is to be remedied, I must leave to Parents Care and Consideration. Only I think it of great Importance; And that they are very happy, who can get discreet People about their Children. (117)

A kind of philosophical pressure evidently builds up in the *Thoughts Concerning Education* around the problem of virtue. Moving towards an assertion that self-interested or hypocritical approximations of virtue can be maintained in the place of virtue, the text, rather than attempting to work out the latent paradox, explodes into language in the form of an attack on servants.

It would be difficult to overstate the influence of Locke's *Thoughts* on eighteenth-century educational theory and practice. In Richardson's sequel to *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740–41), to give a literary example, Mr. B. makes Pamela a present of Locke's treatise after the birth of their son, asking for a written commentary.[51] Six long letters of Pamela's thoughts follow. Given Pamela's resume, Locke's observations on servants would seem to pose an embarrassing problem. Is Mr. B.'s gift an act of love or an act of hostility? But Pamela addresses Locke's positions on servants with all her usual good sense (letter LV). She points out that it is unrealistic to keep children entirely away from servants, suggesting that "it will be a *surer*, as well as a more *laudable* Method, to insist upon the regular Behaviour of the whole Family, than to expect the Child, and its immediate Attendant or Tutor, should be the only good ones in it" (IV.344). By her superior example, Pamela has already reformed Mr. B.'s servants, and her analysis of the process of reformation is remarkably similar to that of Swift's *Project*.

(Given Richardson's dislike for the moral writings of Swift and Bolingbroke, it is ironic that Pamela should endorse a position so similar to theirs.[52]) "We all know of how much Force the Example of Superiors is to Inferiors," she says:

> . . . For let but the Land be blest with a pious and religious Prince, who makes it a Rule with him to countenance and promote none but Men of Virtue and Probity; and, to put the Case still stronger, let such an one even succeed to the most libertine Reign, wherein the Manners of the People have seem'd to be wholly deprav'd; yet a wonderful Change will be immediately effected. The flagitious Livers will be chas'd away, or reform'd; or at least will think it their Duty, or their *Interest*, which is a stronger Tie with such, to *appear* reform'd; and not a Man will seek for the Favour or Countenance of his Prince, but by laudable Pretences, or by worthy Actions. (IV.345)

Parents themselves must first behave well; servants will follow. Finally Pamela evades the challenge of Locke's antagonism to servants by invoking another of Locke's pieces of advice: that parents must "'accustom [children] to Civility in their Language and Deportment towards their Inferiors, and the meaner sort of People, particularly Servants'" (IV.348). She thus redefines the servant problem as a problem in children's manners, whereby children's ability to be civil to servants is an important test of their character, their education and their class identity.

The preoccupation with bad servants as both the most pressing threat to virtue and, paradoxically, its best security was an important part of the intellectual legacy received by those who approached questions about virtue and its dangerous double hypocrisy in the later eighteenth century. Richardson is virtually alone among polite eighteenth-century authors in his sympathy for good servants (and his novels certainly set good servants against others who are astonishingly bad, though even these are often redeemed in the final volume). The Edgeworths, for instance, express opinions about servants that sound remarkably similar to those of Locke: "It has passed into a common maxim with all who reflect, and even with all who speak upon the subject of education, that 'it is the worst thing in the world to leave children with servants.'"[53] Like Locke, Maria Edgeworth perceives in servants a threat to children's rationality, and her novel *Harrington* works out an argument similar to that of the *Thoughts Concerning Education*.[54] Servants pose for the Edgeworths a threat to truthfulness as well: "Servants must have no communication with children, if you wish to teach them the habit of speaking truth," they write in *Practical Education*. "The education, and custom, and situation of servants, are at present such, that it is morally impossible to depend upon their veracity in their intercourse

with children."[55] Even the Edgeworths' comments on servants are not so surprising, perhaps, as Mary Wollstonecraft's verdict: "Servants are, in general, ignorant and cunning . . . We cannot make our servants wise or good, but we may teach them to be decent and orderly; and order leads to some degree of morality."[56] The tone of such a pronouncement is suspiciously vehement. Between Locke, Wollstonecraft and the Edgeworths, none of these writers is able to remain rational on the topic of servants. Tonal uncertainty is a characteristic consequence of the eruption of the servant problem into the discourse on virtue, and Thomas Hardy's underrated servant novel *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) offers a suitable end point for this discussion.[57] Hardy's brilliant heroine Ethelberta, born into the rural peasantry but now masquerading as a fine lady, has hired her own family to pose as her household retinue. When a society lady asks Ethelberta for her "theory on the vexed question of servant-government," she gets a ready answer. "I have thought of the matter often," Ethelberta says. "I think the best plan would be for somebody to write a pamphlet, 'The Shortest Way with the Servants,' just as there was once written a terribly stinging one, 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,' which had a great effect." Her interlocutress is perplexed by this answer: "I have always understood that that was written by a dissenter as a satire upon the Church?" "Ah – so it was," Ethelberta answers: "but the example will do to illustrate my meaning."

Ethelberta's response remains opaque. Her employment of her own family (including her father as butler) puts her in an anomalous position, and the novel makes much of Ethelberta's failure to govern her servants effectively. Just as Defoe's *Shortest Way*, written to satirize the government's policies against dissenters, was mistaken by contemporary readers for straight political polemic rather than satire, so "the vexed question of servant-government" produces a curiously equivocal body of writing. Exclusions on the grounds of class or of gender seem to be built into the very structure of eighteenth-century liberal thought, as well as into that of liberalism's affiliates sentiment, sociability and civility. Yet servants can never be kept entirely out of the discussion, and those who wish to defend hypocrisy as an adequate approximation of virtue experience ongoing difficulties in subduing or repressing the disruptive material associated with the servant problem.

CHAPTER TWO

Gallantry, adultery and the principles of politeness

Those who favor manners often prefer not to admit that the word politeness itself may be found controversial. Politeness can be synonymous with civility, tact or decorum, all terms whose valence is generally positive. But mid-eighteenth-century British writing lacks a consensus on politeness. When supporters of politeness use the word civility, for instance, their opponents are quick to redefine civility as hypocrisy and to condemn it on moral grounds. The word politeness proves equally vulnerable to the process of hostile redefinition. An easy way to refute an argument for politeness is to argue that politeness is a euphemism for something more insidious: politeness means tact, and tact equals lying; politeness means gallantry, and gallantry equals adultery. The anxieties that permeate mid-eighteenth-century Britain's conversations about politeness coalesce around the question of whether a polite education is equivalent to enshrining hypocrisy, as some adversaries charge, or whether politeness can be protected from contamination by its close analogue dissimulation. Where Swift, Mandeville and Locke associated civility's most obvious problems with the question of whether it should be extended to all social classes (particularly the class of servants), however, writers over the decades that followed would come increasingly to believe that gender posed far more pressing questions than class for the ethos of politeness. The writers of mid-eighteenth-century Britain ask a series of questions about women, politeness and insincerity. Can politeness safely be extended to women as a group, or do women simply facilitate and/or benefit from the advancement of masculine politeness? Insofar as politeness constitutes a culture of concealment, are the socially sanctioned forms of deception more or less acceptable when practiced by men or by women? Are men to be held to a higher standard of openness in their interactions with other men than with women, or does politeness preclude sincerity in all interactions? Finally, are the principles of politeness thoroughly discredited by their association with gallantry (and by extension with adultery), or can politeness be redeemed as socially beneficial?

The evidence this chapter considers is drawn from two different public controversies about politeness. First of all, I discuss several essays published by David Hume in the late 1730s and early 1740s, extracting from them a vocabulary for talking about women and politeness. Examining the place for women that is created both thematically and structurally in these essays, which are directed (rhetorically, at least) to a female audience, I look especially closely at Hume's essay "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," placing its advocacy of gallantry within the context of the progress theory of the Scottish Enlightenment. After tracing the history of gallantry through later eighteenth-century progress theory, with the goal of identifying the troublesome spawn of the fraternization of civility with a highly sexualized gallantry, I turn to another important episode in the story of eighteenth-century Britain's love–hate relationship with politeness: the remarkable controversy surrounding the posthumous publication of the letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, in the 1770s, and the complex reconfiguration of attitudes towards hypocrisy that ensued.

Gallantry is a crucial term in the vocabularies of Hume and Chesterfield, both of whom rely on the word very much at their own risk. The word is poised between two different definitions. Both writers want gallantry to mean "[c]ourtship; refined address to women"; pulling against this, however, is the word's alternate definition as "[v]icious love; lewdness; debauchery."[1] In part as a consequence of the ways they choose to use the word gallantry, both writers find it impossible in practice to escape the charge that they recommend adultery, as their critics seize on the term's potential instability of meaning and push the word towards its least favorable construction. In spite of their generational difference (though they both lived until the mid-1770s, Chesterfield was born in 1694 and Hume in 1711), their very different intellectual temperaments and the fact that they are not commonly treated together, Hume and Chesterfield have much in common. Both were well-known francophiles connected with the diplomatic service and responsible for controversial publications: Hume for a scandalous series of challenges to religious and political orthodoxy, Chesterfield for the posthumously published volumes of letters to his illegitimate son whose teachings prompted Johnson's famous judgment about "the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master."[2] Hume and Chesterfield also share an unusually strong commitment to decorum, a virtue they both associate with the classical rather than the Christian tradition: each writer traces his own intellectual genealogy back to Cicero, Hume expressing a wish "to take my Catalogue of Virtues from *Cicero's Offices*, not from the

Whole Duty of Man," and Chesterfield citing Cicero on decorum to his son before the boy is even old enough to read.[3] Most substantive of all, Hume and Chesterfield both defend politeness in terms that cause hostile readers to lump them together as being responsible for defending hypocrisy, however different their premises and particulars.

I do not want to overstate the similarity: Hume is engaged in a more complex rhetorical game than Chesterfield, in part because Chesterfield's letters were not written for publication. But both writers' works are attacked and parodied in part because they accentuate the likeness between politeness and hypocrisy, their defenses of manners always seen to be teetering on the edge of the abyss of hypocrisy. Some readers feel that the reputation for controversy is somewhat mitigated in Chesterfield's case by the fact of the letters' posthumous publication and somewhat exacerbated in Hume's case by the sheer number of controversial books he published (and the deliberateness with which he seems to bait his readers). Other readers think the opposite: that Chesterfield's offenses are more heedless and therefore more culpable. One ardent defender of Hume's, for instance, tries to redeem the philosopher by contrasting his life and morals to those of the now universally despised Chesterfield. In his *Apology for the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq. With a parallel between him and the late Lord Chesterfield* (1777), Courtney Melmoth insists that "Avowed Atheism itself, is not half so bad, as concealed deception" and concludes

> that the Earl of Chesterfield's heart and head, were both unable to bear any sort of parallel, with the head and heart of David Hume. The one is the Author of a system which seems to have been pillaged from the Dancing-master, the Perfumer, and the Devil: the other pursues a philosophy, which, with all its exceptions, gives countenance neither to the follies of a coxcomb, nor the meanness, and mischief of a hypocrite – a wretch, which, in the course of these pages, hath been marked with singular reprobation; and above all other hypocrites, one that, in a kind of moral masquerade dress, perpetrates every baseness, and passes upon the world as a *mighty good Christian creature*.[4]

The problem with Melmoth's sacrifice of Chesterfield in aid of Hume is that Hume and Chesterfield have too much in common. If Chesterfield's philosophy gives countenance to hypocrisy, so does Hume's, albeit for somewhat different reasons, and rather than saving Hume from the charge of hypocrisy, as he intends, Melmoth's comparison brings down both authors.

A detailed exploration of the background of assumptions and associations that link gallantry, adultery and hypocrisy will begin to reveal why antagonistic readers of Hume and Chesterfield choose in both cases to challenge arguments that seem to defend hypocrisy by identifying them as being

in favor of adultery. The textual evidence shows that attacks on politeness often work by substituting less attractive synonyms for key words like gallantry; sharing a commitment to an ethos of politeness, both Hume and Chesterfield endorse gallantry, an endorsement in turn willfully misread by their critics as an indemnification of adultery. One satirical summary of Hume's position on manners puts into his mouth these prescriptions: "That adultery must be practised, if men would obtain all the advantages of life; that, if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous; and that, if practised secretly and frequently, it would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all."[5] The accusation is at once unfair and quite apt, as its popular currency suggests. Under a barrage of similar accusations during the *Douglas* controversy of 1756–57 – in which the Edinburgh performance of John Home's romantic tragedy of that name provoked violent attacks on the play's supporters, including David Hume, Adam Smith and many others – Hume even adopts the adultery topos himself: "I believe I shall write no more History," he says in a letter to a friend; "but proceed directly to attack the Lord's Prayer & the ten Commandments . . . and to recommend Suicide & Adultery."[6] Chesterfield's hostile readers are if anything more likely than Hume's to charge him with reversing conventional moral orthodoxies: during the controversy surrounding the publication of the letters in 1774, Chesterfield is accused of substituting for the seventh commandment his own "new precept, 'Thou *shalt* commit adultery.'"[7]

For both Chesterfield and Hume, gallantry turns out to be more than simply a significant if controversial instance of politeness. Each writer also uses the term gallantry to articulate ideas about dissimulation that are inseparable from the forms of politeness they endorse. Hume seems to suggest that adultery is acceptable so long as it is discreetly conducted and that gallantry and civilization are mutually dependent; his unusually self-aware usage of the word gallantry as a synecdoche for civility, however, renders him vulnerable to attack by reformers who question the assumptions about gender and power that underpin his commitment to politeness. Chesterfield's enthusiasm for the sexual encounters that he calls gallantries is only one manifestation of a broader argument in favor of concealment, secrecy and dissimulation with which he simultaneously feminizes male behavior and targets women as prime candidates for deception. For female readers, Hume's essays and Chesterfield's letters are as a consequence at once appealing and problematic. While Hume theorizes the problem of female readership without fully embracing the prospect, Chesterfield's letters, although written originally for a private male audience of one, ultimately offer female readers a surprising opportunity to capitalize on the role for women that

is built into the ethos of civility by appropriating manners for themselves. The publication and reception history of Chesterfield's writings thus offers an unusually clear medium in which to follow the fate of Hume's concept of civility, especially with regard to eighteenth-century formulations of the part politeness plays in relationships between men and women.[8]

The degradation of gallantry into adultery is not the only transformation of politeness that will be treated here. Even as opponents redescribe politeness, first as gallantry and subsequently as adultery, a related (though less obviously hostile) process of redefinition transforms politeness into manners in the more trivial sense. Politeness thus becomes what we now call etiquette, a word that only enters common English usage in the era of Hume and Chesterfield. Previously the term *étiquette* had been simply a French loan-word (literally, "label" or "ticket") that referred specifically to the protocols of life at court. Over the course of the second half of the eighteenth century, the word etiquette comes to describe the collection of sundry little accomplishments that begin to be acquired by the genteel middle classes. The phrase "Sundry Little Accomplishments" is borrowed from John Trusler's widely distributed anthology *Principles of Politeness*, one of many immensely popular pocket-sized editions that reorganize Chesterfield's advice under separate headings for the convenient use of a middle- and lower-class audience.[9] Many popular revisions of Chesterfield's letters eliminate altogether the most ideologically charged activities (dissimulation, lying, gallantry, adultery), while retaining accomplishments like carving and the proper use of the tooth-pick that seem to be ideologically neutral. Neutral they are not, however: transformed from a problematic conduct manual into a popular series of increasingly specific guides to etiquette (from *Principles of Politeness* all the way to *The Honours of the Table* and *The Whole Art of Carving*), Chesterfield's letters make politeness newly accessible to a large female and middle- and lower-class readership.[10] These readers challenge Chesterfield's elitism and reject his overt arguments for dissimulation even as they embrace and naturalize his argument that morality is chiefly a matter of appearances. They are finally able to reclaim the ideal of politeness, purged now of its associations with insincerity, sexual deviance and male libertinism, for Britain's female middle class.

I

In "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" (1742), Hume argues that the key difference between ancient and modern manners is that the ancients lacked "that polite deference and respect, which civility obliges

us either to express or counterfeit towards the persons with whom we converse."[11] Hume is not concerned here with whether the deference associated with civility is real or simulated, and indeed such a discrimination is virtually impossible to make. He wants instead to defend the social and cultural virtues of "polite deference and respect," unpacking the psychology and politics of deference (including its production in conditions that make counterfeiting very likely) in order not to condemn but to endorse it. While he allows that the current refinement of manners may be attributed to gallantry and that gallantry is "the natural produce of courts and monarchies," Hume also insists that "[the passion of gallantry] is *natural* in the highest degree" (131). He leaves his audience in no doubt as to the biological imperative: affection between the sexes, he says, "is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives."

Hume builds on this observation when he makes the even more provocative claim that "gallantry is as *generous* as it is *natural*" (132). What he means will become clearer in the sentences that follow, which spell out what Hume does *not* mean to say about gallantry:

> To correct such gross vices, as lead us to commit real injury on others, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education. Where *that* is not attended to, in some degree, no human society can subsist. But in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good-manners have been invented, and have carried the matter somewhat farther.

Is "the matter" of gallantry simply sex? Or is it something less tangible? In this context, both "conversation" and "intercourse" are sexually suggestive. In conjunction with his provocative reassignment of positive connotations to the word gallantry, Hume's rather coy language here paradoxically forces the lewder sense of the word gallantry into view. Invoking both refined courtship and the possibility of extramarital sex, Hume nudges forward the possibility that we can have it both ways, anticipating (though never entirely preempting) the attacks of readers with adultery on the brain.

In the passage that follows, Hume accounts for gallantry by the logic not of politeness but of psychology, whose rules are supposed to apply without regard to gender. While every human mind has propensities to certain vices or passions, he says, refined breeding teaches men "to throw the biass [sic] on the opposite side" (132). Gallantry's effects on men are generally favorable for the same reason that excessive pride often makes a man more, not less, likely to treat others with deference:

> Gallantry is nothing but an instance of the same generous attention. As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority, by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry. (133)

Hume is surprisingly explicit here about the power relations on which civility depends. He has already allowed gallantry a causal role in the creation of modern deference. Now the essay explodes any illusions the reader might retain about the disinterestedness of qualities like civility, respect and complaisance. These things are necessary and good, Hume suggests, but they are also deeply *interested*, implicated in a system of power whose real nature is only hidden as a matter of courtesy.

The essay's final statement about women is a gesture of generous triumph:

> What better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency? (134)

While this rhetorical question asks for assent, however, it is not exactly Hume's last word on the subject. The original essay contains an afterthought, deleted in the 1768 edition as well as in the 1777 edition that serves as copy-text for the most widely available paperback edition of the *Essays*, in which Hume retracts this point and denies any personal desire for the company of women. His endorsement of female company as a school for manners is severely qualified in this version by the proviso that "my own particular choice rather leads me to prefer the company of a few select companions, with whom I can, calmly and peaceably, enjoy the feast of reason."[12] Hume's "feast of reason" necessarily excludes women, in spite of the high value he puts on "gaiety and politeness."

Hume is acutely aware of his own mixed audience of men and women, an awareness thematized in several of the essays. In "Of Essay-Writing," for instance, Hume distinguishes between two groups that he calls the learned and the conversible and suggests that the undue separation of these groups has "a very bad Influence both on Books and Company" (534). A principal goal of the genre of the essay is to narrow the gap between the

learned and the conversible, and Hume designates himself here "a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation" (535). Within this conceit of government, Hume addresses himself explicitly "to the Fair Sex, who are the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation." Women are especially valuable readers, Hume says, because they "are much better Judges of all polite Writing than Men of the same Degree of Understanding," and on this basis, he asks them to "concur heartily in that Union I have projected betwixt the learned and conversible Worlds" (536–37). Yet Hume does not seem to have been satisfied with the nature of this projected union (which might be described without much violence to Hume's language as a sexual congress). "Of Essay-Writing" appeared only once in print before Hume withdrew it from the *Essays*.[13] Carol Kay suggests that the "typical address to 'the ladies'" used by the *Spectator* as well as by the essay more generally "should probably be understood primarily as a signal to men who read it," but that "even a symbolic invitation to participation can encourage actual participation."[14] Hume's substitution of a female reader for a male one is sometimes provisional, often conjectural and always conflicted, and the passages quoted above show how central Hume's simultaneous attraction to and ambivalence about a female audience is to the longer essay "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences."

Hume's argument about gallantry has the virtue of being both subtle and surprising in its honesty about the violence that motivates men's deference to women. The argument in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" is far more nuanced than many other discussions of gallantry, a typical example of which occurs in an anonymous poem titled *The Progress of Gallantry* (1774), whose playful mock-heroic couplets minimize any challenge to social orthodoxy. The title's prominent inclusion of the word *progress* pokes fun at the dominance within the newly defined social sciences of "progress theory," the idea that society advances through regular developmental stages from barbarism to civilization. Yet the poem seems to endorse some of progress theory's less attractive corollaries. The title page displays an epigraph from John Gregory's *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man* (1765): "The attachment between the Sexes is a natural principle; which forms, in a considerable degree, the happiness of human life." Gregory's *Comparative View* is in many ways characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment's progress theory; its express goal is to consider "the progressive stages of society" from barbarism to civilization (in the last of which "politeness of manners comes to be the cloak of

dissimulation" [xviii]), and bring together "the peculiar advantages of these several stages."[15] Gregory's argument also has a disciplinary component; a professor of medicine at Edinburgh University and a friend and colleague of Hume, Lord Kames, Hugh Blair and others, Gregory is perhaps best known as the author of the extremely popular female conduct book called *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774). Progress theory is very readily applied to the situation of women, insofar as it already allows women the constitutive role in a modern society characterized by politeness. The *Comparative View* is both an opportunistic popularization and a canny practical application of progress theory to the problem of gender. Gregory believes that women "are designed to soften our hearts and polish our manners" (118), and his fundamental assumption is that the domestic must be sequestered from the public. While he argues that we cannot "treat Women as we do Children" if we want them to be adequate friends and companions for men, he also insists that this will not be accomplished by women "leaving their own natural characters and assuming ours . . . The greatest glory of Women lies in private and domestic life, as friends, wives, and mothers" (116–17).

Like Gregory's *Comparative View*, *The Progress of Gallantry* takes an openly (and sometimes offensively) didactic stance. Arguing that gallantry has an extremely beneficial effect on male manners, the poem's point is that male readers must be "Taught to prefer domestic bliss / To the false harlot's venal kiss."[16] Inveighing against "lawless love," the poem implies that the main point of gallantry (like female modesty) is to keep marriage sexually exciting:

> Yet Hymen's self, true choice of joy,
> Th' experienc'd know in time may cloy,
> If not by prudent care directed,
> If decent forms are once neglected.
> Kind offices must now supply
> The place of youth and novelty;
> Let *Gallantry* subsist thro' life,
> And as a Lover court your Wife.
>
> (20–21)

The pseudo-Ciceronian emphasis here on "decent forms" and "[k]ind offices" is belied by the innuendo, which suggests that decency is valuable chiefly as a sexual stimulant. The contradiction on which the poem insists, then, is that gallantry, in spite of the threat it seems to pose from the outside, must be included within the marriage contract if marriage is to thrive. Without being nearly so explicit as Hume about the power

relations on which gallantry depends, the following lines of the poem offer the husband gallantry as a tool for disciplining his wife:

> Should Fancy sometimes lead to roam,
> Confine her not too much at home;
> Her Love tho' center'd all in you,
> Her charms let all with freedom view.
> With public shews she'll glut her eyes,
> And soon the vain parade despise.
> *Forbidden* pleasures are more sweet;
> But Honey cloys when *freely* eat. (21)

These lines oddly collapse the fact of men looking at the lady with the lady's own act of looking at men as she gluts her eyes with "public shews." The "vain parade" of the next line is accordingly both what she sees *and* what she does, and the narrator recommends a role for the husband that seems uncomfortably close to that of a pimp.

The discussion of gallantry in the anonymous *Letters on Love, Marriage and Adultery* (1789) shares Hume's preoccupation with the "gradations from brutality to considerable knowledge and civilization," suggesting that the circumstance that best marks such gradations is "the treatment of women, . . . [which] may be denominated the moral thermometer."[17] When "[m]odern gallantry" (alternately described as "romantic principles or manners") is registered on the moral thermometer, however, the author of the *Letters on Love* finds gallantry a poor substitute for love based on reason or utility (48, 59, 57). The *Letters* in fact reject sentimental love altogether, identifying "gallantry, intrigue and debauchery" as merely "a kind of indemnification" (what we might call an outlet) in cases where nature (in other words, sexual desire) is opposed or inhibited by "laws, prejudices, and customs" (63). This attack on gallantry thus entails a critique of the ideal of civilization itself. Such an attack (like the contemporary arguments of Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft) involves realigning the terms of the politeness debate. Civilization is no longer an unqualified good, and reason or rationality is reclaimed by and for women in order to offset the corrupt and prejudiced sentiments associated with gallantry and politeness. While this critique of gallantry belongs properly to the late 1780s and 1790s, it owes a great deal to the terms of the debate set by Hume and others in the 1740s. It is also indebted to the very public controversy following the publication of Chesterfield's letters in 1774, to which I now turn.

II

Chesterfield's extensive correspondence with his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope, begun in the late 1730s and continuing until Philip's death in 1768, was never intended for publication. To prepare his son for what he hoped would be a high-flying diplomatic career, Chesterfield (himself the grandson of Lord Halifax, whose *Advice to a Daughter* [1688] was written for Chesterfield's mother) offered in the letters a battery of advice and instruction by which Philip Stanhope for the most part failed to profit. Unable (by temperament or by choice) to acquire the graces that Chesterfield labored to impart, Philip Stanhope did not rise as expected in the diplomatic service, though this may have been due less to his own social awkwardness than to the combined effects of his illegitimacy and George III's settled dislike for his father. Despite Chesterfield's evident desire to micro-manage every aspect of his son's life, Stanhope in his early twenties met and secretly married a young woman named Eugenia Peters, the illegitimate daughter of an Irish gentleman, described by one observer as "plain almost to ugliness" although possessing "the most careful education, and . . . all the choicest accomplishments of her sex."[18] While Philip and Eugenia Stanhope's marriage remained generally secret until Philip's early death in 1768, and the standard twentieth-century accounts suggest that Chesterfield learned only afterwards of the existence of his daughter-in-law and two grandsons, Christopher Mayo's remarkable recent editorial work on Chesterfield's letters demonstrates that Chesterfield was aware of his son's family, but that when Eugenia Stanhope came to edit the letters, she consistently suppressed passages and letters "in a conscious effort to erase herself from the text."[19] When Chesterfield died in 1773, his will caused much gossip: while providing for the two grandsons, he left Eugenia Stanhope nothing.

Faced with the problem of how to support herself following this very public slap in the face, the widow seems to have realized that her primary asset was the enormous collection of letters written by Chesterfield to her husband. During his lifetime, Chesterfield had been well known as a diplomat and arbiter of fashion, and the correspondence was accordingly considered a hot literary property. The publisher James Dodsley paid Eugenia Stanhope fifteen hundred guineas for the copyright and then looked about for a respectable literary man to put his imprimatur to the letters. Offered the position of editor, however, first Edward Gibbon and then Horace Walpole turned it down for fear of offending the Stanhope family, and it fell finally to Eugenia Stanhope to edit the letters herself. The trustees

of Chesterfield's will sought an injunction against publication (Eugenia Stanhope's desire to publish may have been perceived by them as a gesture not simply of opportunism but of revenge), but when the case was heard in Chancery, the court advised the executors to permit publication so long as they read the collection, which had already been printed, and found the letters unexceptionable. They did so, in one of the more consequential misapprehensions of literary history, and the letters were published in two quarto volumes at a price of two guineas.[20]

The publication of the letters had a far more negative impact on Chesterfield's reputation than the trustees could possibly have foreseen. It seemed that people had never read anything so shocking in their lives: the language of the criticism is virtually apocalyptic. The clergyman Thomas Hunter calls Chesterfield's letters "*An entire Code of Hypocrisy and Dissimulation*" and condemns Chesterfield for telling his son to lead "a life of dissimulation, of hypocrisy, of ceremony, of compliment, of flattery and servility; . . . – a life aspiring after nothing higher than the caresses of a mistress, or the friendship and favours of a court."[21] In the *Remarks on the Late Earl of Chesterfield's Letters to his Son*, William Crawford suggests that if Chesterfield's principles should prevail more generally, the consequences would be fatal: "The laws would be deprived of their salutary power, the tenderest, the dearest ties of humanity would be violated, dissoluteness of morals would usurp the place of decency and good manners, and the British Empire, the glory among the nations, would be shaken to its very centre."[22] (Given that the year is 1776, the British Empire is already being "shaken to its very centre," and the fact of the American revolution may have contributed to Crawford's hysteria.) These pamphlets are by no means unique; the vituperativeness (not to mention the sheer volume) of anti-Chesterfield polemic is extraordinary by any measure.

Most of the polemical responses to Chesterfield's *Letters* (many written by members of the clergy) formulate three main objections. Their first and easiest target is Eugenia Stanhope's preface, which advertises the letters as "a compleat system of Education."[23] How can the system be complete, critics ask, given Chesterfield's omission of religion from the topics he discusses? The other favorite targets are Chesterfield's defense of dissimulation – discussed below – and his insistence that all women are immoral. Almost all the readers object in particular to "*the unjust character given of the fair sex, and the still more unjust treatment of them* recommended by the noble letter-writer," as one writer puts it, exemplified by Chesterfield's habit of encouraging his son to commit adultery (or to pursue gallantries, in Chesterfield's language) with married women.[24]

The charge which Chesterfield might have anticipated and against which he partly defends himself concerns the letters' relative neglect of religion.[25] "I have seldom or never written to you upon the subject of religion and morality," he reminds his son in one letter, but this is because he prefers to leave such topics to his son's tutor (IV.1481). Instead of writing about religion and morality, Chesterfield says, he will "confine [himself], in this letter, to the decency, the utility, and the necessity, of scrupulously preserving the appearances of both" (IV.1482). The language of appearances draws attention to itself, leaching the meaning out of the word "decency," itself in suspicious proximity here to utility and necessity. Chesterfield's avowed preference for morality over religion does not preclude all respect for the latter, which he calls "a collateral security, at least, to virtue." Eugenia Stanhope would respond explicitly in a later "Postscript to the Advertisement" to the other two objections, those concerning dissimulation and "gallantry with married women."[26] Yet the published text of the letters resists such cleaning-up, providing more than enough evidence to convict their author of immorality.

In general, Chesterfield is unusually explicit about topics more often left to the imagination. He believes in what he calls the "*versatile ingenium*" (III.1025): "A man of the world must, like the chameleon, be able to take every different hue, which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary complaisance, for it relates only to manners, and not to morals," he says (IV.1249). The problem for Chesterfield's readers is that in his model, manners encroach so far into the field of morals that they leave no core of character uncorrupted. The chameleonic individual he favors is perceived by many readers to be absolutely amoral, a creature of address rather than integrity. Moreover, the passage is only one of many in which Chesterfield favors concealment. His favorite maxim is "*volto sciolto* and *pensieri stretti*" (the countenance open, the thoughts restrained), a phrase on which he hangs many of the arguments for deception that would shock the younger generations who became the readers of his letters. After the recommendation of an open countenance and closed thoughts, the companion argument Chesterfield submits in favor of honesty sounds less ethical than tactical: "if you seem mysterious with others," he tells his son, "they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing" (IV.1248). The idea is to combine "a frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent and reserved interior; to be upon your own guard, and yet, by a seeming natural openness, to put people off theirs." Chesterfield is primarily interested in appearances, as his repeated use of the words "seem" and "seeming" in these passages suggests. At least in the paranoid milieu of the diplomatic service, Chesterfield implies, the words "frank, open, and ingenuous" have lost much of their

meaning: all they describe is a physiological approximation of the qualities they once denoted. Chesterfield believes that living in the world requires increasingly sophisticated forms of self-interest, including a self-interested hypocrisy that looks just like openness. Dissimulation is essential for the pursuit of self-interest, and Chesterfield justifies dissimulation both on the grounds of self-protection and in the interest of leveling the playing-field: "Depend upon it, nine in ten of every company you are in will avail themselves of every indiscreet and unguarded expression of yours, if they can turn it to their own advantage. A prudent reserve is therefore necessary as a seeming openness is prudent."

Chesterfield is well aware that such arguments are likely to be misconstrued. In a later discussion of the same maxim ("*volto sciolto . . .*"), he is even more emphatic about the provocative nature of his argument:

> It may be objected, that I am now recommending dissimulation to you; I both own and justify it. It has been long said, *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*; I go still farther, and say, that without some dissimulation no business can be carried on at all. It is *simulation* that is false, mean, and criminal: that is the cunning which Lord Bacon calls crooked or left-handed wisdom, and which is never made use of but by those who have not true wisdom. And the same great man says, that dissimulation is only to hide our own cards; whereas simulation is put on in order to look into other people's.[27]

Chesterfield's disclaimer at the start of the passage echoes other defenses of hypocrisy, including Swift's surprising swerve in the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*: "Neither am I aware of any Objections to be raised against what I have advanced; unless it should be thought, that the making Religion a necessary Step to Interest and Favour, might encrease Hypocrisy among us: And I readily believe it would."[28] In just such a manner does Chesterfield admit the objection to dissimulation and then turn it into a point of pride: "I both own and justify it." Chesterfield identifies dissimulation here as an essential accessory of common business. His attempt in the next sentence to fortify his defense of dissimulation by clearly distinguishing it from simulation, however, sounds more self-serving. If dissimulation is so useful on a daily basis, cannot simulation be justified on occasion? Indeed, can there be any significant difference between the two terms? Chesterfield's argument is further weakened by his own unwillingness to admit that lying is ever necessary. In the essay "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," to which Chesterfield alludes here, Francis Bacon treats self-concealment as a matter not of absolute distinctions but of degrees, describing a continuum from openness to secrecy across four stages: "The best Composition, and Temperature is, to have *Opennesse* in Fame and Opinion; *Secrecy* in Habit;

Dissimulation in seasonable use; And a Power to faigne, if there be no Remedy."[29] Unlike Bacon, whose frank discriminations make his argument persuasive, Chesterfield condemns lying absolutely ("I really know nothing more criminal, more mean, and more ridiculous, than lying" [III.1007]) and tells his son that "strict truth . . . is not only your duty, but your interest; as a proof of which, you may always observe, that the greatest fools are the greatest liars."[30] Yet Chesterfield enforces this distinction between dissimulation and simulation only at a very high price for the consistency of his argument, never really showing the reader how "strict truth" is to be reconciled with "dissimulation."

If all social interactions are touched by dissimulation, those between men and women are even more thoroughly saturated with deception. In a passage that becomes a crux for many attacks on the *Letters*, Chesterfield suggests that men may manipulate women even more easily than they manipulate other men:

> Women, who are either indisputably beautiful, or indisputably ugly, are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity, are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly, thinks herself handsome; but, not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful and the more obliged to the few who tell her so; whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty, only as her due; but wants to shine, and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for her but her understanding, which is consequently (and probably in more senses than one) her weak side. But these are secrets which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex; on the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the great world, must be gallant, polite, and attentive to please the women. (IV.1209–10)

The style and content of this passage make it somewhat more understandable why Chesterfield's contemporary readers should have found his advice so offensive. This is clearly completely awful. But why do we cringe? It is not simply because of what Chesterfield says; it is as much due to how he says it. While Chesterfield expresses these thoughts with some care, they lack the decisive style of a maxim in the manner of La Rochefoucauld. One aspect of this passage's offensiveness is not entirely Chesterfield's fault, since he is careful to present this account of female psychology as a secret between himself and his son. His confidential tone makes the passage sound creepy to readers in the position of eavesdropping on the private conversation between father and son (and it is certainly possible that the original recipient of the letters found it distasteful as well).

Chesterfield's poor opinion of women's virtue means that he sees no reason at all for treating them as moral entities in the first place. He asserts that when a man deals with a woman, all the rules of morality shift. Women are easily flattered, he says elsewhere, by "a seeming regard for their understandings, a seeming desire of, and deference for, their advice, together with a seeming confidence in their moral virtues" (IV.1354). This show of regard, deference and confidence is merely a matter of appearances, and Chesterfield's repetition of the word "seeming" undermines the very politeness he seeks to recommend. Regard and deference are so attenuated here as to have become almost meaningless. With regard to interactions with women, in fact, Chesterfield even lifts his general ban on lying: "Here dissimulation is very often necessary, and even simulation sometimes allowable; which, as it pleases them, may be useful to you, and is injurious to nobody." The problem with making an exception for simulation in men's dealings with women is that men's treatment of women is the crucial test (the "moral thermometer," in the phrase of the *Letters on Love, Marriage, and Adultery*) for an ethos of politeness, just as the relationship between masters and servants (or, worse, between masters and slaves) is the moral thermometer for rights-based liberalism. In spite of his general insistence on truthfulness, then, Chesterfield exempts men from telling the truth to women, allowing men to lie to women because women don't count as moral beings. This piece of advice is very widely interpreted as a lapse not just in morals, but in manners as well: Chesterfield fails here to live up to the ideology of politeness with which he is so strongly identified.

The corollary of Chesterfield's argument about gender and truth is unexpected, and goes against the grain of the conventional valorization of female chastity (think of the fervor for female "virtue" expressed in the writing of a middle-class contemporary such as Samuel Richardson, who was born only five years after Chesterfield, in 1689). Chesterfield believes the virtue of truthfulness to be far more essential to a man than chastity to a woman:

> It is most certain, that the reputation of chastity is not so necessary for a woman, as that of veracity is for a man; and with reason; for it is possible for a woman to be virtuous, though not strictly chaste; but it is not possible for a man to be virtuous without strict veracity. The slips of the poor women are sometimes mere bodily frailties; but a lie in a man is a vice of the mind, and of the heart. For God's sake, be scrupulously jealous of the purity of your moral character; keep it immaculate, unblemished, unsullied; and it will be unsuspected. Defamation and calumny never attack, where there is no weak place; they magnify, but they do not create. (IV.1486)

Chesterfield's argument here includes two important premises. First, he makes an explicit comparison between men's veracity and women's chastity, identifying the former as being by far the more important. Second, he relies on an implicit opposition between virtue and reputation, emphasizing the reputation of purity over purity itself. Indeed, Chesterfield here ostentatiously restricts himself to the language of reputation. A reputation for purity may or may not be more valuable than actual purity, but finally the two must always be collapsed into one: precisely because it is impossible to distinguish the immaculate from the unsuspected, it is moot to ask which is more valuable.

The strangest feature of the passage may be the force with which Chesterfield dismisses female chastity. The hyperbole that conventional language saves for woman's purity is consistently marshaled by Chesterfield all on the side of the man: "Your moral character must be not only pure, but, like Cæsar's wife, unsuspected. The least speck or blemish upon it is fatal" (IV.1482). He repeats the sentiment in a later letter: "A man's moral character is a more delicate thing than a woman's reputation of chastity. A slip or two may possibly be forgiven her, and her character may be clarified by subsequent and continued good conduct; but a man's moral character once tainted, is irreparably destroyed" (IV.1657). (We might well ask, though, what Chesterfield would have written to a conjectural illegitimate daughter – or if he would have written to her at all.) To clarify the implications of Chesterfield's willingness to apply a model of probability to female conduct (to forgive a few slips if the tenor of the woman's conduct remains moral), I will return briefly to Hume's discussions of concealment and women's chastity. Across all of Hume's writings, arguments about sociability and hypocrisy have intimate relations with adultery. It is not simply that rhetorical continuities between civility and gallantry make improper sex a limit case for politeness; Hume's epistemology also touches on questions of gender, and adultery serves as a nodal point in both the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40) and the *Enquiries* (1748).[31] In the *Treatise*, Hume introduces adultery as a test case in the superficially unrelated context of a philosophical argument about probability:

There are many particulars in the point of honour both of men and women, whose violations, when open and avow'd, the world never excuses, but which it is more apt to overlook, when the appearances are sav'd, and the transgression is secret and conceal'd. Even those, who know with equal certainty, that the fault is committed, pardon it more easily, when the proofs seem in some measure oblique and equivocal, than when they are direct and undeniable.[32]

Hypocrisy here has become not just a fact of life but a practical good, or at the very least something that Hume recommends to adulterers and to their neighbors as well. In this passage, Hume seems to favor the decorous acceptance of transgressive conduct – so long as transgression takes place behind closed doors, where it can have no significant consequences for society at large. This position is related to Hume's more general preference for the principle of trust over formal promises or contracts, whose need to be expressed explicitly tends to degrade social relations. Hume accounts for the dramatic difference between "*open* and *conceal'd* violations of the laws of honour" (152) by invoking a theory of probability.[33] A single flagrant offense is more threatening than a large but equivocal body of circumstantial signs, Hume says, because "in the first case the sign, from which we infer the blameable action, is single, and suffices alone to be the foundation of our reasoning and judgment; whereas in the latter the signs are numerous, and decide little or nothing when alone and unaccompany'd with many minute circumstances, which are almost imperceptible" (152). A single and united reasoning is far more convincing to the human eye than a conglomeration of details, since in the latter case "[t]he labour of the thought disturbs the regular progress of the sentiments" (153): in this assertion, however, Hume diverges radically from the conventional wisdom of the time about signs.

The conclusions Hume draws from the specific case of sexual transgression are applied in turn to the more general question of secrecy and openness. By extending the principle that many small signs are less convincing than one large one, Hume also confirms the observation that the world "*more easily excuses a person in acting than in talking contrary to the decorum of his profession and character*": "A fault in words is commonly more open and distinct than one in actions, which admit of many palliating excuses, and decide not so clearly concerning the intention and views of the actor."[34] This is not very far from a direct endorsement of hypocrisy. The point is that immoral actions, so long as they are discreetly managed, count for very little, even in the always problematic case of women's sexual fidelity. A contradiction between words and actions is negligible, Hume says, so long as a person's words support the decorum of his or her character.

Like many arguments in the *Treatise*, this line of reasoning is both controversial and counter-intuitive. Suggesting that Hume is well aware of the problems posed for his system by a sexual double standard, Carol Kay has argued that he "used the requirement of chastity and modesty for women to illustrate particularly artificial and non-utilitarian aspects of natural-seeming rule systems."[35] In spite of Hume's insistence on finding

numerous small signs of transgression less persuasive than a single open violation, after all, he writes in the great age of circumstantial evidence, an age, too, in which even the smallest breach of propriety could cost a woman her reputation.[36] Does Hume really extend to women the protection of concealment and obliquity? Hume's discussion of chastity in the *Treatise* emphasizes the conventional nature of both chastity and female modesty.[37] His analysis of the psychology of concealment seems ultimately to subvert itself, oscillating between two poles on sex and concealment. In the *Enquiry*, Hume reverses his statement about women's sexual fidelity, stating that "[t]he smallest failure is here sufficient to blast her character."[38] (This is by far the more conventional argument, a popular version of which can be found in Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* [1799], where More asks woman to "restrain herself" by taking into account "the important doctrine of consequences; . . . the lesser but more habitual corruptions make up by their number, what they may seem to come short of by their weight."[39]) The apparent polarization of these two accounts of chastity and female reputation suggests a kind of equivocation about the ethics of concealment, whose contradictory formulations remain especially problematic in the case of adultery.

Where Hume in the *Treatise* (though not in the *Enquiry*) subversively applies the same rule to woman's sexual transgression as to any other instance of concealment, Chesterfield seems simply not to care enough about women's virtue to take it seriously. Chesterfield's libertine dismissiveness about women's chastity is distinctly out of touch with the increasingly evangelical morality of the 1770s and 1780s. Chesterfield telling his son that he refuses to "pay for whores, and their never-failing consequences, surgeons" and that a young man has no excuse for using a prostitute "in such a place as Paris especially, where gallantry is both the profession and the practice of every woman of fashion" (IV.1606); Chesterfield directing his son to have an affair with a married Parisian woman and telling him that "[f]or an attachment, I should prefer [Madame Dupin] to *la petite Blot*; and, for a mere gallantry, I should prefer *la petite Blot* to her; so that they are consistent, *et l'une n'empêche pas l'autre*" (IV.1732): these are the instructions that led Johnson and others to identify Chesterfield's morals as those of a whore.

Most offensively of all, perhaps, Chesterfield consistently maintains that while whores are cheap and disreputable, the sexual transgressions of women of fashion are redeemed by the fact that they are expensive and modish. The absurdity of such a distinction is targeted by Horace Walpole in his Shamelaesque parody of Chesterfield's letters, a satire whose governing

conceit is the replacement of father and son with mother and daughter. As Walpole's preface says, in mock-presentation of the reasons for extending Chesterfield's morals from men to women, "Gallantry in both [sexes] is genteel; and an affair with Mr. F— may be as creditable as one with madame de Blot."[40] As if Chesterfield's original prescriptions were not outrageous enough, Walpole applies them to women in order to show how really immoral (and clumsy and tactless) such rules actually are. In fact, the reception of Chesterfield's letters would rapidly become a major cultural event, and in the pages that follow I will examine the responses of Chesterfield's readers in some detail, using the tools of the literary critic to sound rhetorical registers and evaluate arguments around the topics of concealment and sincerity, particularly with regard to women and servants.

III

Some time passed before the full heinousness of Chesterfield's collection struck all his readers. The executors had read through both volumes, after all, without finding anything so objectionable as to halt publication. Their inability to anticipate the problems that would actually follow suggests that this moment indeed marks a turning-point in the history of politeness. The rise during the 1780s of what the economic historian Boyd Hilton has called "an upper middle-class consciousness," characterized by a dominant ethos of professionalism and a moral tone of "genteel respectability," has been linked to the increasing influence of the evangelical movement.[41] Whatever the underlying cause, the 1780s saw in Britain a marked shift towards moral and religious conservatism, compounded in the 1790s by the wave of political reaction that began in response to events in France and swelled throughout the decade.

In the early days following the publication of Chesterfield's letters – long enough after publication for their immense popularity to have become clear, but not long enough for critics to have had time to articulate their insuperable objections – authors and publishers at all levels raced to cash in on the Chesterfield phenomenon. Typical of the bottom end of the spectrum is a collection called *Lord Chesterfield's Witticisms*, a compendium of old and new riddles (more often old) that includes a catechism of what can only be called "Chesterfield jokes" ("Why was [Lord Chesterfield] like a distiller's shop? Because he was full of *spirits*").[42] Other writers choose to versify Chesterfield's choicer pieces of advice; though blaming Eugenia Stanhope for publishing the *Letters*, these poems tend to avoid criticizing their morality (or lack thereof). Most of them fail to single out any

of the issues – religion, women, dissimulation – around which the prose attacks would coalesce, and their main goal is to poke fun at the minuteness of Chesterfield's instructions about clean nails, toothpicks and other sundries.[43]

At least in the early stages of the letters' reception, Eugenia Stanhope offered a more attractive target for abuse than Chesterfield himself. Chesterfield was titled, illustrious, wealthy and recently deceased; Eugenia Stanhope had none of these protections. Many of the early pamphlet attacks hold Eugenia Stanhope entirely accountable for the *Letters*, displacing onto her more vulnerable person the principal violation of decorum. *Free and Impartial Remarks upon the Letters* carries an ironic dedication to Eugenia Stanhope and holds that any decent woman would have known that the passages about women "should have been suppressed."[44] Chesterfield himself would have revised the letters before putting them before "the public eye," this pamphlet continues, as the sentiments contained in them were only "comunicate[d] [sic] with the greatest secrecy to his son." While the pamphlet certainly blames Chesterfield for recommending dissimulation, lying and adultery, then, its avowed goal is to hold Eugenia Stanhope accountable for all the consequences of publication and to persuade her to edit the letters more stringently for subsequent editions.

On a similar note, *An Apology for Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope* turns out predictably to be not an apology but a direct attack, and the author (self-identified as "an Amateur du Bon Ton") follows the same strategy of exonerating Chesterfield (or at least mitigating his offenses) by lambasting Eugenia Stanhope:

> Animated by an ardent desire to serve your country, and to emancipate us from the restraints and prejudices that have hitherto fettered our unpolished minds, you have generously exposed to our view those sublime mysteries, which have been carefully concealed from us by our governors; you have given us again to eat of the fatal fruit of the tree of knowledge; and have withdrawn from our eyes the veil which covered even the nakedness of your own sex.[45]

By publishing the *Letters*, Eugenia Stanhope reenacts Eve's sin, a sin compounded by her treacherous exposure of female psychology. The author's hostility towards Eugenia Stanhope is undoubtedly increased rather than mitigated by the fact of her sex. In the *Letters*, Chesterfield had instructed his son to "keep inviolably" the secret of how to manage women if he "would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex" (IV.1210); although the Orpheus metaphor is violent, the register remains playful. The language of the *Apology* escalates to a higher pitch. As an attack on the kind

of emancipation from restraint that is associated with Rousseau and his followers, this passage also manages to anticipate certain key words of Burke's attack on the French revolutionaries.[46] It is a peculiarity of the cultural configuration of late eighteenth-century Britain that a somewhat backward-looking advice manual written by a quasi-libertine aristocrat should be perceived as sharing some qualities of the radical attack on convention in a book such as Rousseau's *Nouvelle Eloïse*. How does Chesterfield's ultra-refined system of courtly manners come to stand in the same place as the revolutionary proposal to strip away manners and leave only the naked truth?

One answer to this question is that both systems of thought reveal things better left hidden, breaching in the process certain crucial socially sanctioned hypocrisies. This is no less true of Chesterfield's system than of Rousseau's, in spite of Chesterfield's commitment to dissimulation. Another possible answer emerges from an attack on the *Letters* that quite explicitly tackles the problem of class. *The Pupil of Pleasure* argues that one of the worst consequences of aristocratic debauchery is the effect it has on the servants. Courtney Melmoth (the radical apologist whose pamphlet defending Hume at Chesterfield's expense is quoted at the beginning of this chapter) offers many of the same criticisms of Chesterfield as the rest of the pamphlet literature. He accepts the "general stigma upon these Letters . . . , that they are calculated to recommend deceit, and to conceal the most destructive hypocrisy, under the smiling aspect, plausible exterior, fair-seeming sentiments, and a complacent flexibility."[47] The "essence" of Chesterfield's system, according to Melmoth, is a nasty amalgam of deception and self-interest: "do whatever you think proper: whatever fancy, passion, whim, or wickedness, suggest, only command your countenance, check your temper, and throw before your heart and bosom the shield of Dissimulation, and snatch it – shield it – enjoy it" (ix). Melmoth's chief departure from the rest of the pamphlet literature concerns not the content but the mode of his argument: he promises to expose the real tendency of the letters by putting them into the hands of the hero of a novel.[48]

Melmoth's hero is Philip Sedley, an aspiring rake who lives by a set of maxims drawn from Chesterfield; indeed, when he is killed at the end of the novel by the outraged brother of one of the young women he has seduced, a list of these twelve maxims is found in his pocket. The last item – "Be every thing, to every body" (II.247) – corresponds to Chesterfield's "*versatile ingenium*," a phrase used by Melmoth for the title-page epigraph, though it also echoes Paul's well-known and troubling claim in I Corinthians 9: 22 that "I have become all things to all people." The chief end to which Sedley's

hypocrisy is directed is the seduction of as many women as possible, and sex with married women is his favorite pastime. His theory of adultery is drawn from Chesterfield, though with an even more self-interested twist: "My system, not only demands that I should preserve the fact *private*, but the reputation of both the man and the woman, *unsuspected*" (I.112). This is of course so that each woman he seduces will believe herself to be alone in his affections. While Sedley gives his married mistress a carefully marked-up copy of Chesterfield to quiet her scruples, Sedley's friend and correspondent Thornton is even more cunning: he keeps his copy of Chesterfield hidden from the woman he hopes to seduce, on the grounds that "when a woman is *told the secret* of her seduction, she will naturally be upon her guard against the seducer" (I.185).

One of *The Pupil of Pleasure*'s most successful sallies is the character of Sedley's servant, who follows his master in everything. Even as Sedley writes to Thornton of his stratagems, so Sedley's footman Thomas provides for his metropolitan counterpart Timothy a similar account of his own dealings. Thomas is especially outraged when Sedley (of all people) makes him marry the young girl he has debauched: "I have as great a right to do roguish things with a *good grace*, as my master," he insists (I.141). Thomas reads Chesterfield on the sly while his master is away from his room; when Sedley catches him with the relevant volumes in hand, however, he is very hypocritically appalled and kicks his footman on the breech. He subsequently blocks the footman's access to Chesterfield by keeping his own copy under lock and key. Even a degenerate creature like Sedley knows that Chesterfield's maxims should not govern the behavior of the servant class. But as the footman writes to his more virtuous fellow-servant, this will shortly be no longer an obstacle: "I see, by the newspapers which come down here, his Lordship's *good things* are all collected together, in a little snug volume, that a man, upon any exigences [sic], may pop either into his pocket, his bosom, his breeches, or elsewhere, as occasion requires" (I.141). The availability of cheap editions of the letters is particularly abhorrent, the novel argues; it offends even Sedley, who is shocked by very little but believes nonetheless that the sacred volumes of Chesterfield were "never meant to be polluted by the eye of a footman" (I.143). Reading Chesterfield puts socially destructive ideas into servants' heads.

It is characteristic of the bad footman, as chapter I has suggested, to identify himself as an expert on etiquette. Thomas soon alerts Timothy of his intention to publish his own letters as a system of instruction and to write treatises on tooth-picking, nail-cutting, carving and other essential accomplishments (II.214–18). By allowing the servant the same system of

manners and morals his master lives by, Melmoth exposes a basic flaw in Chesterfield's system. It is not an acceptable system for all men; neither should it be extended to any women whatsoever. It is fatally exclusive. The good servant Timothy responds to Thomas's list of the etiquette books he hopes to write with a better canon of books for Sunday evening reading: the Bible, "a Whole Duty of Man, Farriery Made Easy, and The Servants Guide" (II.227). Yet the list itself has an old-fashioned ring. The clock can hardly be put back: after reading Chesterfield, who has time for *Farriery Made Easy*, let alone *The Whole Duty of Man*? Just as Horace Walpole exposes the immorality of Chesterfield's system by extending it to women, so Melmoth puts Chesterfield in the hands of a servant and shows that nothing good will come of it.

While the idea that an aristocratic morality should stand or fall on the basis of whether it could be safely extended to excluded groups like women and servants was no longer an entirely new one, neither was it so old as to have become *de rigueur*. Neither Swift nor Chesterfield, for instance, would necessarily have condemned a system of manners for its failure to be generalizable to all classes, nor would they have rejected the idea that certain codes of manners are appropriate only for a privileged few. During the 1760s and 1770s, however, Britain's elite found it increasingly difficult to justify some previously sanctioned practices, especially those practices clustered around aristocratic libertinism. Writers with dramatically opposed political and religious agendas unite during this period to call for a higher standard of aristocratic behavior. Moralists including Samuel Richardson, Hannah More and Thomas Gisborne thus emphasize not the privileges but the obligations of men and women in the upper classes of society. The cleric Thomas Hunter objects to Chesterfield's morality precisely on account of his aristocratic hauteur: "simulation and dissimulation, or a well-conducted hypocrisy, is prescribed as . . . equally or more effectual to captivate and ensnare mankind, than simple virtue, which a courtier might think too prudish and pedantic a quality to make any figure in the character and composition of a fine gentleman."[49] The values of the fine gentleman are exposed in turn as worthless: "You may fight your man, or debauch your woman, if she is but of quality; and nothing in all this amiss, while you conform to the fashion and taste of the world."

Other writers charge Chesterfield himself with breaching aristocratic etiquette. Perhaps the most effective line of attack on Chesterfield is to accuse him of having bad manners. In March 1775, the *Gentleman's Magazine* printed a short parody called "*Lord* Chesterfield's *Creed*," described

as "*A New Office of Initiation for all Youths of the superior Class.*" Chesterfield's creed is as follows:

I believe that hypocrisy, fornication, and adultery, are within the lines of morality; that a woman may be honourable, when she has lost her honour, and virtuous when she has lost her virtue . . . This, and whatever else is necessary to obtain my own ends, and bring me into repute, I resolve to follow; and to avoid all moral offences, such as scratching my head before company, spitting upon the floor, and omitting to pick up a lady's fan.[50]

Where Chesterfield had redefined morals in terms of manners as a matter of principle, this parody insists on the absurdity of such a redefinition. The use of the phrase "moral offenses" to describe breaches of etiquette undermines Chesterfield's morals *and* his manners, reinstating instead a wit that disdains the minutiae of etiquette. Yet etiquette remains an inexhaustible topic of interest even to those readers profoundly alienated by Chesterfield's moral carelessness.

While the list of "moral offences" provided here is relatively brief, longer catalogs in contemporary satires almost always include Chesterfield's prescriptions for clean nails and proper tooth-picks. An even more common target for satire is Chesterfield's brief comment about how to carve a joint of meat. This short passage in the *Letters* drew a surprising amount of fire:

Since I am upon little things, I must mention another, which, though little enough in itself, yet, as it occurs at least once in every day, deserves some attention: I mean carving. Do you use yourself to carve *adroitly* and genteely, without hacking half an hour across a bone, without bespattering the company with the sauce, and without overturning the glasses into your neighbours' pockets? These awkwardnesses are extremely disagreeable, and, if often repeated, bring ridicule. They are very easily avoided by a little attention and use. (IV.1224–25, original emphasis)

Almost all the writers who respond to Chesterfield pick up this passage in one form or another. *The Fine Gentleman's Etiquette* versifies the advice on carving without modifying it much:

On carving, a hint I shall venture to give,
Attention it claims, ev'ry day that you live:
Do you carve with *adroitness*, the truth prithee own,
Without hacking, at least half an hour cross a bone:
Or spatt'ring the sauce in your company's faces,
And into their pockets o'erturning the glasses[?][51]

In *The Pupil of Pleasure*, Melmoth uses carving as a synecdoche for other evils: thus the foolish Harriet Homespun is no longer attracted to her worthy but ill-mannered husband Horace when she sees that Sedley, while

carving, "hits the mark as dexterously as a surgeon" (I.58). And a treatise entitled "The Art of Carving" is described by Sedley's footman Thomas as "the most elaborate of all my works" (II.217–18). The anonymous author of *Chesterfield Travestie* (1808) uses a related conceit to expose the absurdity of giving advice about carving: "Some people very foolishly observe, that when carved for, it is but civil to take whatever is offered! No such thing. Always make a difficulty, saying you like some part better; it gives additional trouble, and of course shews the carver to better advantage."[52]

The elaborate treatment of carving is representative of a general eighteenth-century trend towards the professionalization of gentility. European conduct literature had a long and honorable tradition of taking carving seriously.[53] Yet all books about manners run the risk of becoming pedantic. Talking too much about manners is its own kind of bad manners. Swift condemns "pedantry in manners" ("Pedantry is properly the overrating any kind of knowledge we pretend to. And if that kind of knowledge be a trifle in itself, the pedantry is the greater"), calling "fidlers, dancing-masters, heralds, masters of the ceremony, *&c.* . . . greater pedants, than LIPSIUS, or the elder SCALIGER."[54] Swift's implication is that manners become more, not less, specialized as one descends the social scale. (Pierre Bourdieu also treats the tension between pedantic and effortlessly elegant manners as a question of class.[55]) Pedantry – alternately defined as the professionalization or over-specialization of manners – offers a very convenient criterion for distinguishing conduct books from books concerned primarily with etiquette (the minutiae, not the principles of good manners). Carving is a particularly pedantic skill to emphasize, as Thomas the footman's intention to write an "elaborate" treatise on the matter suggests.

Andrew St George has attributed the rise of genteel respectability as a concern for both men and women to the late eighteenth century's growing ethos of professionalism, associated with both bureaucratic reform and the evangelical movement.[56] In an atmosphere that encourages self-improvement, publishers are quick to capitalize on the demand for increasingly specific books to instruct readers in the particulars of gentility.[57] In such a cultural milieu, cheap editions of Chesterfield's letters tend to make his advice more, not less pedantic. They are designed for middle- and working-class audiences who will not otherwise have access to the array of detail that has to be mastered by anyone who hopes to pass for an aristocrat. Relevant passages from Chesterfield are rearranged and organized in these inexpensive editions under clear headings, any lacunae filled with supplementary advice from other sources to make the book a truly complete manual of advice. To turn the letters into a complete system of education, in other words, canny

editors add not religion (the book's most notable omission, according to the first wave of criticism) but an exhaustive catalog of aristocratic skills, tastes and preferences. This phenomenon remains all too familiar, as attested to by our own enthusiastic consumption of self-help and etiquette books.

One of the most popular anthologies of Chesterfield's letters was edited by John Trusler. *Principles of Politeness* is designed as a cheap school-book, to be used both for the content of its arguments on manners and as an exemplar of style. The book seems to have been meant for both boys and girls. One early American edition reprints, alongside the excerpts from Chesterfield, Gregory's *Father's Legacy to his Daughters*; with this addition, or so the introduction promises, the book becomes "a system of polite and moral instruction for both sexes," full of unexceptionable advice collected under easily referenced heads.[58] (Gregory's *Father's Legacy* contains the advice about how women "are always to *seem* to be this and that" which Mary Wollstonecraft despises as a "system of dissimulation."[59]) Trusler's goals are "to make Lord Chesterfield useful to every class of youth; to lay that instruction before them, which they with difficulty must have found amidst a heap of other matter; in a word, to give the very essence of his letters, and at a tenth part of the *price* those letters sell for."[60] Nothing is "too frivolous to be mentioned." Moreover, as suggested above, Trusler consistently addresses an audience of young women; another of his compilations is devoted to table manners and the art of carving, with an appendix on marketing directions whose presence within the same covers suggests that the volume targets a female audience.[61]

It is always problematic to draw conclusions about readership from the limited evidence that survives, but most of the other inexpensive and unauthorized editions of Chesterfield seem to have an equally strong commitment to reaching a female audience. One pocket-sized volume called *The American Chesterfield* (1827) incorporates much of Trusler's edition of Chesterfield; carving is included, as always, in the list of "Sundry Little Accomplishments," but the book also contains a whole new section called "The Art of Carving."[62] The first part of the introductory paragraph is printed verbatim from Chesterfield, but the sentence as it is given in this later section changes halfway through to something quite different:

> We are always in pain for a man, who, instead of cutting up a fowl genteely, is hacking for half an hour across a bone, greasing himself, and bespattering the company with the sauce; *but where the master or mistress of a table, dissects a bird with ease and grace, or serves her guests with such parts as are best flavoured, and most esteemed, they are not only well thought of, but admired.*[63]

The first part of the passage remains more or less as Chesterfield wrote it. After the semi-colon, however, the author introduces the phrase "a master or mistress," and by the next clause the possessive pronoun "her" implies that the book is really talking about a woman. The retreat to the safe pronoun "they" in the last part of the sentence shows that this grammatical equivocation was used in gender-ambiguous situations long before the twentieth century.

IV

The attacks cited in this chapter are not always fair to Chesterfield, who explains quite clearly the grounds for his belief in the instrumental advantages of manners: "Good manners are, to particular societies, what good morals are to society in general; their cement and their security" (IV.1429). This is equally true of ceremonies, which, Chesterfield says, "are in themselves very silly things," but are also "the outworks of manners and decency, which would be too often broken in upon, if it were not for that defence, which keeps the enemy at a proper distance."[64] His arguments are certainly convincing enough for his letters to have remained surprisingly popular. The patterns of preference suggest that they appeal particularly to groups that have been traditionally excluded from social and political power. In the introduction to one recent anthology of Chesterfield's sayings, the popular novelist Catherine Cookson describes Chesterfield as her single most important mentor. After coming across a reference to Chesterfield in a romance by Elinor Glyn, Cookson says, she went to the public library for the first time in her life and discovered in Chesterfield an invaluable and exhaustive guide to the manners of the upper classes.[65]

From the nineteenth century on, the name Chesterfield has been attached to a wide range of desirable objects to which the upwardly mobile might aspire: sofas, overcoats, cigarettes and so on. The origin of the name of the heavily upholstered sofa called the chesterfield remains in dispute, but while its coil-spring deep-buttoned upholstery was only developed in 1830 and it is unlikely to have been named directly for the fourth earl, it continues to be associated with the figure of Chesterfield.[66] The name also has a life of its own in popular culture, as in this fictional instance of London criminal slang: "Phil said he wanted to sledgehammer the valued account customer's kneecaps or do a 'chesterfield' on his back with an industrial stapler."[67] The portability of Chesterfield's name is impressive but also suspect; the Philadelphia-brewed beer called Lord Chesterfield Ale, for

instance, whose label features an eighteenth-century gentleman in wig and frock-coat, promotes Chesterfield's exclusivity to a mass market.

By 1793, Chesterfield's example had come to provide especially damning evidence of the abuse of aristocratic privilege. Vicesimus Knox's *Personal Nobility* (dedicated to Charles James Fox and dated 24 January 1793) is written in the shadow of the recent "abolition of Nobility" in France, and of America's decision never to create a hereditary nobility in the first place.[68] While Knox does not foresee the abolition of the nobility in England, he warns that without timely precautions, the present class system cannot be preserved: writing in a time "unfavourable to [nobility]," Knox hopes "to render it really venerable, by founding its fancied superiority on real preeminence" (202). Yet the nobility will be hard pressed, he says, to live down the shame of Chesterfield's letters, which "opened the eyes of the people, and taught them to look unhurt, and with a naked eye, at that splendor, which formerly dazzled like the sun": "Lord Chesterfield has let us all behind the scenes: he invites us to see the peer dress for public exhibition" (316–17). Knox uses a theatrical metaphor to turn the aristocracy into a company of bad actors whose cheap tricks, once revealed, can no longer fool an audience. The letters have been so pernicious as to give the English language a new epithet: "Then, my Lord," Knox tells the young nobleman to whom *Personal Nobility* is addressed, "be not a Chesterfieldian. Be assured that an opener and manlier character is more *pleasing* to the *people of England*" (321, original emphasis).

Manliness is indeed at the core of readers' concerns about Chesterfield. Claudia L. Johnson has characterized the decade of the 1790s by its preoccupation with a perceived crisis of gender. This crisis resulted in part from the fact that the culture of sentimentality depended not only on the feminization of men, Johnson suggests, but on "the 'masculinization' of formerly feminine gender traits [like fainting, weeping and blushing]."[69] What is true of fainting and blushing is equally true of the art of pleasing. Even as Knox dismisses Chesterfield's character as secretive and feminine, he asks the young men he addresses to study the art of pleasing. An open and manly character is desirable at least in part because it pleases others, and Knox is more than willing to make the tactical appeal: "Even supposing you to study nothing but *the art of pleasing*, it is the best mode to adopt such a character [i.e., open and manly]" (321, original emphasis). The paradox is that however contemptible Chesterfield's arguments may be, the young nobleman is obliged nonetheless to practice the art of pleasing and to acquire what Knox can only identify as "the real Graces" (354). "To appear kind and gentle and agreeable, be so," he continues, attempting to solve

the classic problem of hypocrisy by making an argument about habituation (355). But how is the young man to appear agreeable without having acquired the "Sundry Little Accomplishments" described by Chesterfield and propagated in the etiquette books published under his name?

The historian Michael Curtin has described the breakdown towards the end of the eighteenth century of the courtesy genre's traditional yet always provisional compromise between manners and morals.[70] Courtesy writers of previous generations had been willing to bracket the problem of hypocrisy, defining dissimulation in a language of sociability and self-control that rendered it relatively innocuous (though still prone to the rhetorical instabilities considered in chapter 1). Readers of Chesterfield, however, found his recommendations of self-interested dissimulation so explicit as to discredit by association a wide range of previously acceptable arguments. The moral and psychological atmosphere at the end of the century, produced in part by evangelical opposition to increasingly cynical and expedient arguments for manners, encourages not self-interest but tact, consideration for others and self-sacrifice, with the result that women subsequently become (in Curtin's phrase) "the main constituency of good manners."[71]

Etiquette often appeals most to those who have been excluded from politeness. The ambivalence and even dislike expressed by late eighteenth-century female moralists like Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft towards the practices of etiquette is shot through by their uncomfortable awareness of the opportunities for women that arise from their new access to the body of material associated with manners. Through manners – even, perhaps, through etiquette – women would be able to reconfigure their relationship to cultural and political authority. It may be, then, that carving is not the only thing to survive the attacks on Chesterfield. Getting rid of the self-interested and obviously masculine components of Chesterfield's prescriptions leaves something that looks very much like the forms of tactful management that the nineteenth century would ask its women to practice, and the following chapter will consider the consequences for women of the arguments about politeness that circulated in Britain during the 1790s.

CHAPTER THREE

Revolutions in female manners

It is virtually a commonplace to observe that the confrontation between Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft over the morality of the French Revolution concerns manners as much as politics or morals. Neither Burke nor Wollstonecraft believes that manners can be considered in isolation, and for both writers, the term "manners" works as shorthand for a larger system of power. In the end, manners reflect moral objectives: just as the construct of female modesty is designed to secure female virtue, so manners more generally secure moral or political ideals. Responding to the revolutionary call for complete sincerity and openness, Burke and other conservative British writers deliberately reclaim certain kinds of insincerity, re-establishing the merits of terms that had come under suspicion in the preceding decades, including modesty, chivalry and politeness. Yet even as the ideal of sincerity falls into disrepute with conservative writers because of its revolutionary associations, some radical writers on manners hold on to and further strengthen the evangelical call for sincerity that can be heard throughout the criticism of Chesterfield's letters. The contours of this debate form the main subject of this chapter, which will compare and contrast arguments about manners and insincerity made by Burke, Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, considering the consequences of each position for subsequent arguments about virtue and politeness, particularly as they affect women.

Where Burke wants to strengthen the security of manners, Wollstonecraft calls for a revolution in manners that will transform relations between men and women by rescuing the latter from the forms of modesty that promote insincerity. In response to Burke's use in the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) of the word "chivalry" to describe the inherited body of manners on which social stability depends, Wollstonecraft identifies a related phenomenon called gallantry as the single most serious threat to morality and asks for "a revolution in female manners" to counter it.[1] Yet while Wollstonecraft objects to the status of modesty as the first and foundational

female virtue, she does not wish women to abandon modesty altogether: far from it. The problem as she sees it is how to separate the kind of modesty that elicits respect from men and women alike (and that is related in turn to self-respect) from its false double, a quality only mistakenly called modesty. False modesty forces women to deceive others as well as themselves, bestowing power on women only within a system of tyranny and dependence. In the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which targets the conduct-book model of female chastity as a "system of dissimulation" that obliges women to sacrifice the substance of morality for the show of it (v.168), Wollstonecraft argues that women have been transformed by the pressures of chivalry, gallantry and modesty into disgusting hypocrites. Gallantry is a word for the system of manners that men use to dominate women from the outside in, and modesty denominates the way that women are disciplined from the inside out, although it may be misleading to emphasize the exteriority of gallantry and the interiority of modesty: the former is an ideology that women also internalize, while the latter can be seen as a system of overt domination.

Wollstonecraft is hardly alone in objecting to Burke's use of the word chivalry. Most contemporary critics (male and female) see in Burke's writing the nostalgic idealization of a corrupt and outdated political system, and many women writers are especially attentive to the negative consequences of his arguments for women. The ethos of chivalry is inherently ambivalent about women: while its defenders take female chastity as the pattern or exemplar for male honor, they are often less willing to admit that politeness is one of the means by which men preserve dominion over women. Wollstonecraft's argument against female insincerity is accordingly extremely effective in countering the openly gendered model of chivalry that Burke endorses in the *Reflections*. By aligning Burke with the system of dissimulation that dominates female education, Wollstonecraft explodes Burke's argument that certain kinds of hypocrisy are a good thing.[2] Wollstonecraft's attack on female modesty as a system of dissimulation is simultaneously an attack on the deceitfulness of those who, like Burke, defend a status quo built on property and propriety, and once Wollstonecraft reveals chivalry's inherent bias against sincerity and against women, she maneuvers herself into a strong position from which to refute Burke's political arguments as well. From the vantage point of our own time, it is probably Wollstonecraft's feminist argument against Burke that sounds most forceful, rather than Thomas Paine's populist political arguments or Godwin's philosophic radicalism (in Godwin's ideal world, such things as women and families would hardly seem to exist).[3]

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* consistently identifies dissimulation as a specifically female problem. Attacking modesty as the embodiment of insincerity, Wollstonecraft aligns femininity with deceptiveness and suggests that as a consequence, women have an obligation to be not less but more truthful than their male counterparts: this is the ultimate "revolution in female manners" for which she calls (v.114, v.265). Her call emerges from a historical moment characterized not just by its perception of a crisis in the manners and situation of women, however, but by what was widely understood to be a crisis of sincerity in the nation at large. The breakdown of honest and open communication between men and women is linked by Wollstonecraft to other failures – of political representation, of individual rights – and Wollstonecraft's call for women to become more sincere is also part of a larger political plan. Godwin is even more explicit than Wollstonecraft about the political evils of insincerity. While Wollstonecraft attacks politeness primarily insofar as it is a tool for the oppression of women, Godwin argues that insincerity is the most stubborn obstacle to social reform and political revolution in the broadest sense.

Godwin's philosophical argument against insincerity in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) may be neither so persuasive nor so practical as Wollstonecraft's gendered and openly polemical attack on politeness. Yet *Political Justice* has the virtue of taking sincerity to its logical extreme, setting up the premise that only a complete lack of reserve between individuals will guarantee freedom in the political sphere. By exploring the rhetorical and cultural contexts in which Godwin's argument for truth-telling is situated, I hope to show how and why the problem of insincerity had come to be perceived by writers of the 1790s as central to questions of power and exclusion. Godwin's arguments for sincerity in *Political Justice* can be read profitably in counterpoint with a body of writing more sympathetic to politeness that is authored by Hume, the Edgeworths and others. Godwin responds quite explicitly to several of these arguments; others are written in the wake of Godwin's own defense of absolute sincerity, with the goal of undermining such a defense and thereby preserving the social and political stability that politeness is supposed to secure.

The impossibility of thinking about politeness without also considering problems posed by relations between the classes is revealed by the fact that servants (both literal and metaphorical) figure in the two most prominent examples of insincerity available to writers on either side of the politeness debate: the letter signed "your most obedient and humble servant"; and the fashionable mode of excluding visitors by asking a servant to say that one is "not at home." The topic of servants offers writers across the political

spectrum a way of managing anxiety or disposing of rhetorical excess at the boundaries where masters and servants interact. In his rejection of "the notorious hypocrisy of 'I am not at home,'" Godwin deliberately foregrounds politeness as a problem not of gender but of class relations.[4] This choice proves problematic, however, as the topic of gender continues to perplex social relations in a manner that Godwin cannot address within the framework of the *Enquiry*, though I will suggest that it is thematized in *Caleb Williams* (1794). Both servitude and politeness are for Godwin antithetical to justice, yet his commitment to sincerity is ultimately undermined by his awareness that the insincerities associated with gender will prove even harder to eradicate than miscommunication between members of different social classes.

Where Wollstonecraft attacks modesty as a system of dissimulation, arguing that politeness oppresses both women and the politically disenfranchised working classes, Godwin attacks all forms of insincerity without quarter, on the grounds that they destroy social integrity. Godwin's arguments are in this sense more extreme than either Burke's or Wollstonecraft's. Wollstonecraft makes partial concessions to decency and therefore to modesty, just as Burke makes partial concessions to sincerity and therefore to individual rights, and these equivocations blur the edges of their confrontation, which is more than simply an all-or-nothing contest in which Burke represents decency and Wollstonecraft sincerity (or Burke order and Wollstonecraft rights). As it turns out, Wollstonecraft's call for a revolution in female manners is heeded, if not in precisely the manner she hopes for. Wollstonecraft and Burke share a commitment to the social value of self-control, a quality that is newly associated with women and that offers a third way in the choice between politeness and sincerity. The evangelical movement of the 1780s had attacked politeness and civility for the sake of promoting sincerity and true feeling; these arguments now swerve, in conjunction with Burke's defense of prejudice, to endorse certain kinds of insincerity in the form of female tact.

While the terms insincerity, dissimulation and deception are less obviously gendered than counterparts like modesty and gallantry, they too are mobilized by writers on both sides of the debate to attack or to defend an aristocratic ethos that is increasingly feminized. Previously the watchwords of arguments against the servant class, words like deception and dissimulation are invoked in the 1790s by moderates as well as by radicals to condemn an aristocratic ethos associated not just with the archetypal diplomat Chesterfield but with diplomacy more generally. Even Wollstonecraft wants to hold on to modesty, however, and less radical writers like Hannah More

and Maria Edgeworth assimilate aspects of Wollstonecraft's critique in order to reinforce female modesty as a security for political as well as domestic virtue. By the end of the decade, qualities like tact or "address," while they continue to be condemned in the public and professional sphere of the diplomatic service, increasingly come to dictate the behavior of women in the prescriptive genres of conduct literature and the didactic novel. As a concept, tact allows writers (especially women writers) to finesse the gap between Wollstonecraft and Burke, retaining those parts of Wollstonecraft's analysis that concern self-control (inherently related to the idea of decency) but infusing them with a Burkean sense of the advantages of prejudice and concealment. Previously a political or diplomatic virtue of limited utility, tact is now feminized and made essential for a functioning society. The word itself allows writers to abandon the vocabulary of chivalry, along with its unattractive implication in despotism and autocratic power, and to redefine tact as a professional, middle-class, predominantly feminine virtue, thus paving the way for hypocrisy to become part of the governing ideology of nineteenth-century Britain. The violence of political developments in revolutionary France accordingly pushes British writers (with some notable exceptions, such as Godwin) towards a new consensus on politeness, and the political failure of radical arguments for sincerity has especially important consequences for women writers, who are left at the end of the decade with the problem of how to turn the new tyranny of tact to women's advantage.

I

Burke establishes the centrality of manners to the revolution debate early in the *Reflections*, where he identifies the chain of events that begins with the storming of Versailles as "the most important of all revolutions, . . . a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions" (175/VIII.131). In turn, the critical test of the political revolution will be its effects on "civil and social manners" (91/VIII.58), a test that Burke predicts France will fail. Burke intends the very idea of a revolution in manners to repel his audience, since the creation of manners should be the work not of months but of centuries. A residue of chivalric manners continues to affect contemporary politics and morals, he says, not just manners in the strictest sense, and the national characters of both Britain and France are in this respect still determined by the legacy of chivalry. In attributing the political character of modern Europe to the influence of chivalry, Burke reformulates an

influential argument of the Scottish Enlightenment.[5] In the vocabularies of David Hume, William Robertson and Adam Ferguson, chivalry describes not just a system of manners but a mode of politics in which power happily masquerades as politeness. Following these writers, Burke argues that chivalric manners are needed to mitigate the force of political violence: as he says in the *Reflections*, chivalry "obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners" (170–71/VIII.127).

Burke's defense of chivalry is motivated in part by his conviction that politeness serves as an essential buffer, not just between the powerless and the powerful but between man and the violence of his own nature. Unlike either the chevaliers of bygone days or the modern advocates of politeness, he says, the revolutionaries want to tear off "the decent drapery of life" and discard "the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination" that "cover the defects of our naked shivering nature" (171/VIII.128). The danger in this, according to Burke, is that politeness offers society its best prophylactic against coercion, and hence its best security against violence. Moreover, the politicians in France abandon politeness only as a prelude to doing much worse. The credo of Burke's *Reflections* is that every nation should have "a system of manners . . . which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish": "To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely."[6]

In the *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796), Burke renews his commitment to manners, invoking in this case not loveliness but the masculine ideal of the English gentleman as the best form of security for the manners he endorses. As opposed to the manners of the true-born Englishman, revolutionary manners are described by Burke as vulgar pedantry: "It is a vile illiberal school, this new French academy of the *sans culottes*. There is nothing in it that is fit for a Gentleman to learn" (IX.163, original emphasis). In the *First Letter on a Regicide Peace*, written the same year, Burke takes his argument about manners to its logical conclusion. The French republic secures its principles – that is, regicide, Jacobinism and atheism – with "a body of systematick manners."[7] Beyond his horror at regicide, Jacobinism and atheism in themselves, Burke is appalled by the sheer fact of a "*correspondent system of manners*" (IX.242, original emphasis). He insists repeatedly that it is the top–down structure of this system, not simply the nature of the principles it is meant to secure, that demonstrates the Jacobins' "determined hostility to the human race":

Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or sooth, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them. Of this the new French Legislators were aware; therefore, with the same method, and under the same authority, they settled a system of manners, the most licentious, prostitute, and abandoned that ever has been known, and at the same time the most coarse, rude, savage, and ferocious. Nothing in the Revolution, no, not to a phrase or a gesture, not to the fashion of a hat or a shoe, was left to accident.[8]

Burke suggests here that the revolutionaries set out deliberately to subvert manners from the ground up. (It may be worth noting that Burke cannot stop at describing Jacobin manners as "licentious, prostitute, and abandoned," for these adjectives might easily be applied to a system like Chesterfield's as well; the next sequence of adjectives – "coarse, rude, savage, and ferocious" – is required to differentiate this system from that other stigmatized body of manners.)

Though Burke seems to share with Chesterfield the conviction that much hangs on the proper use of a carving-knife or a tooth-pick, he also generally favors manners that remain natural-seeming, drawing a stark contrast between those "wise Legislators" who "improv[e] instincts into morals . . . [and graft] the virtues on the stock of the natural affections" and the evil legislators of revolution, whose rule it is "always to graft virtues on vices" (IX.243). Given Burke's emphasis on manners, a favorite rhetorical tactic of the *Reflections* is to transpose the debate on the revolution into the form of an argument about the proper forms of address in conversation. Since incivility and impropriety are not simply a pretext for but part of the actual substance of Burke's charges against the revolution's English supporters, conversational politeness serves him well as a satirical topic. Burke believes that Richard Price – the well-known dissenting minister whose November 1789 sermon celebrating French liberty, published as *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, provoked Burke to write the *Reflections* – and other British radicals have profoundly misconstrued the role of liberty and progress in the constitution of English society if they believe that this society needs to be remodeled from the ground up. Burke bestows ironic praise on Price, both for "condemn[ing] very properly the practice of gross, adulatory addresses to kings" and for suggesting that the king should "'consider himself as more properly the servant than the sovereign of his people.'"[9] Price actively abuses language, Burke says, when he calls the king the servant of the people: "For

a compliment," he observes, "this new form of address does not seem to be very soothing." Burke's antagonism here is directed towards the use of a phrase that amounts to an insult in place of the usual compliment. He goes on to suggest that Price's use of language is not just violent but also politically naïve. Even if the king should style himself "Servant of the People," after all, this would hardly guarantee any humility on the monarch's part: "I have seen very assuming letters, signed, Your most obedient humble servant."[10] The implication here is that Price himself is both disingenuous and "very assuming."

In the *Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, Price had briefly allowed the possibility that civilities to kings "should be pardoned, as only *forms* of civility and expressions of an overflow of good-nature," a possibility he promptly denies on the grounds that adulation and servility tend to corrupt those on the receiving end.[11] Price's contempt for "*forms* of civility" strikes Burke as particularly insidious. Taken in conjunction with his literal-minded insistence on eradicating civility, Price's cheerful introduction of leveling principles suggests to Burke that this political language is not only not as honest as it pretends to be, but also dangerously euphemistic. Burke discerns in Price's manner – his self-styled "good-nature and affection" – far more potential for violence than in the hostile yet conventionally civil subscription to an assuming letter (162/VIII.120). How can Price endorse in good conscience the ideal of perfect sincerity, Burke asks, when his real intention is to present insults in the guise of compliments? Burke accounts for the threat of violence lurking beneath Price's sincere manner by suggesting that "among the revolutions in France, must be reckoned a considerable revolution in their ideas of politeness" (162/VIII.120). If it is true that the English "learn manners at second-hand" from the French, Burke says, he is grateful that they

> have not so far conformed to the new Parisian mode of good-breeding, as to think it quite in the most refined strain of delicate compliment (whether in condolence or congratulation) to say, to the most humiliated creature that crawls upon the earth, that great public benefits are derived from the murder of his servants, the attempted assassination of himself and of his wife, and the mortification, disgrace, and degradation, that he has personally suffered. It is a topic of consolation which our ordinary of Newgate would be too humane to use to a criminal at the foot of the gallows. (162–63/VIII.120–21)

Burke introduces an alliterative cluster of terms – compliment, condolence, congratulation, consolation – whose satirical use here exposes revolutionary "good-breeding" as a brutal and self-serving construction.

Burke criticizes the members of the National Assembly for all their rhetorical practices. He wishes that the members would represent themselves not "as a gang of Maroon slaves, suddenly broke loose from the house of bondage" but instead as "a generous and gallant nation, long misled to your disadvantage by your high and romantic sentiments of fidelity, honour, and loyalty" (123/VIII.87). Adapting the vocabulary of Robertson's account of the "more liberal sentiments, and more generous manners" inspired by chivalry, Burke lets gallantry arrogate the sibling virtues of liberality, generosity and independence, using all these terms to put a favorable gloss on the servitude associated with obedience to a monarch.[12] Yet Burke's redefinition of servility as gallantry is only partly successful. Wollstonecraft would argue very persuasively that gallantry represents a damaging form of psychological servility for men and women alike. Even before the publication of Wollstonecraft's two critiques, Burke's description of Marie Antoinette's fall – as a revolution inconceivable "in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers" – would be dubbed "pure foppery" by Philip Francis, Burke's ally in the impeachment of Warren Hastings.[13] Because Marie Antoinette has a reputation for gallantries of the *wrong* kind, Francis suggests, the intensely sexualized language of Burke's defense will only remind readers of the queen's notorious infidelities. The sexual extravagance of Burke's rhetoric is even more acute in the famous paragraph that follows the lament for Marie Antoinette:

> But the age of chivalry is gone. – That of sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprize is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness. (170/VIII.127)

The language throughout this passage borders on catachresis. Some of the words linked in pairs are oxymoronic, as when the adjective "proud" modifies the noun "submission." By blending the vocabulary of finance ("unbought," "cheap," "enterprize") with that of chivalry, Burke puts into language precisely that relationship between commerce and honor on which the Enlightenment's theorization of politeness rests. Burke's discourse is steeped in the language of sexual reputation, as when he suggests that chivalric "honour" can only be conceived (redundantly, perhaps) in terms

of "chastity." He uses the word chastity impersonally, as though it applies equally to men's and women's sexual purity, although in practice the association with women is much stronger.

Every phrase of this passage provoked attacks and parodies. Thomas Paine, for instance, mocks Burke for the extravagance of his lament that "the Quixote age of chivalric nonsense is gone" and accuses him of tilting at windmills.[14] Burke's claim that under the old regime "vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness" prompts Wollstonecraft to argue in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), one of the earliest published responses to the *Reflections*, that Burke means to "poison the very source of virtue, by smearing a sentimental varnish over vice, to hide its natural deformity."[15] In response to Burke's argument for the social utility of hypocrisy, she objects that in Burke's system, "[s]tealing, whoring, and drunkenness" are treated as "gross vices" in spite of the fact that they do not necessarily "obliterate every moral sentiment," while aristocratic offenses, including "over-reaching, adultery, and coquetry," are taken to be merely venial, "though they reduce virtue to an empty name, and make wisdom consist in saving appearances."

In spite of the contempt for appearances expressed by Paine, Wollstonecraft and others, almost all the attacks on the *Reflections* accept Burke's claim for the importance of manners while simultaneously asserting the right to redefine manners from a revolutionary point of view.[16] Catharine Macaulay, whose republican *History of England* was greatly admired by Wollstonecraft, takes Burke to task for his incivility to Price and the new French representatives, claiming to be "somewhat surprised to find a gentleman of polished manners, who has spent the best part of his life in the company of those who *affect* the nicest conformity to the rules of refined civility, addressing the august representatives of the most *gallant* and *respectable* of the European nations, in terms which I would not use to a set of chimney-sweepers, though acting the most ridiculously out of their sphere."[17] This is a smart reply to Burke's dismissal of Price's so-called compliment as a "topic of consolation which our ordinary of Newgate would be too humane to use to a criminal at the foot of the gallows" (162–63/ VIII.120–21). Macaulay instances Burke's own incivility to Price as a demonstration of the hollowness of "the rules of refined civility," and her attack on Burke's bad manners serves in turn as the springboard for an extended argument against the system Burke calls chivalry. While chivalry may once have been "a proper remedy to the evils arising from *ferocity*, *slavery*, *barbarism*, and *ignorance*," Macaulay says, modern chivalry is nothing but "*methodized sentimental barbarism*" (I.138, original emphasis). Macaulay counters

Burke's sentimental vision of medieval chivalry by invoking the more rational ideal of the civilization of the ancient world, a world whose extreme violence Adam Ferguson believed had become unimaginably foreign to the eighteenth century thanks to the screen of an ideology based on "[t]he maxims of a Christian and a Gentleman, [and] the remains of what men were taught by those maxims in the days of chivalry."[18]

In his own response to Burke's *Reflections*, *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), Sir James Mackintosh offers a more nuanced rejection of chivalry. He admits that the "system of manners" called chivalry "contributed to polish and soften Europe," but emphasizes that the "diffusion of knowledge and extension of commerce" consequent upon chivalry in turn "supplanted it, and gave a new character to manners."[19] Mackintosh is more sympathetic than Macaulay to the Scottish Enlightenment's account of chivalry, departing from Ferguson and Robertson primarily in the greater emphasis he places on the dependence of politeness on commerce. Before commerce redefined politeness, chivalric manners depended entirely on violence: Mackintosh argues that the manners of the middle ages were "compulsory" and that "gallant courtesy" was produced only "by ferocious rudeness." As opposed to chivalry, then, commerce and modern knowledge "present a broader basis for the stability of civilized and beneficent manners."[20]

To emphasize that chivalry is really just a cover for violence, as Mackintosh does, offers one strategy for attacking the system of manners that Burke endorses. Another tactic common to a number of radical writers is to claim that Burke's verbal and emotional extravagance – his show of excessive sentiment – is prompted only by superficial or showy instances of suffering. Paine phrases this charge most memorably when he says in the *Rights of Man* that Burke is "not affected by the reality of distress touching upon his heart, but by the showy resemblance of it striking his imagination" and concludes that Burke "pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird."[21] Wollstonecraft's first *Vindication* also emphasizes this surprising affinity between sentiment and politeness, linking what she identifies as the "cold romantic" quality of Burke's character to "false, or rather artificial, feelings" (v.29). In spite of Burke's emphasis on feeling and sentiment, in other words, the work of his "sentimental jargon" of politeness (according to Wollstonecraft) is to disguise sentiments: Burke's politeness is really just a nasty habit of "smearing a sentimental varnish over vice" (v.30, v.25). The radical argument against "the equivocal idiom of politeness" (v.7) thus turns out to be identical to the radical argument against sentiment: both are symptoms of insincerity.

Like Macaulay, however, Wollstonecraft also wishes to reclaim politeness for the radical side, charging Burke himself with having bad manners. "Even in France, Sir, before the revolution, literary celebrity procured a man the treatment of a gentleman," she begins; "but you are going back for your credentials of politeness to more distant times. – Gothic affability is the mode you think proper to adopt, the condescension of a Baron, not the civility of a liberal man" (v.17). Wollstonecraft's strategy here is to realign chivalry with the Gothic, setting against this an ideal of civility and liberality that means something quite different to her than it does to Burke. She concludes with a savage rhetorical question: "Politeness is, indeed, the only substitute for humanity; or what distinguishes the civilised man from the unlettered savage?" Wollstonecraft implies here that nothing can be an adequate "substitute for humanity"; without humanity, even a "civilized man" like Burke is hardly superior to an "unlettered savage."

Wollstonecraft may be as skeptical about the term humanity as she is about politeness. The young heroine of Wollstonecraft's incomplete novel *The Wrongs of Woman*, published by Godwin after Wollstonecraft's death in the first two volumes of *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), only comprehends later in life the motives for the kindness of an otherwise heartless attorney: "I did not then suspect, that my eloquence was in my complexion, the blush of seventeen, or that, in a world where humanity to women is the characteristic of advancing civilization, the beauty of a young girl was so much more interesting than the distress of an old one" (i.130). Wollstonecraft's ironic deprecation of the claim that "humanity to women is the characteristic of advancing civilization" suggests that she finds the arguments marshaled for that claim both opportunistic and offensive. The problem with identifying Wollstonecraft as primarily an enemy of politeness, however, is that her commitment to sincerity is modified by a series of concessions to modesty, to decency and to politeness. Politeness may be an unacceptable substitute for humanity, in her view, yet humanity cannot survive without politeness.

II

The term gallantry is essential to Wollstonecraft's assault on the constitution of society as it now stands, not just for what it reveals about relations between men and women but for what it reveals about the psychology of political power more generally. While the political implications of gallantry are present to Burke no less than to Wollstonecraft, Burke chooses to use the word as a rallying-cry to the standard of monarchy. Wollstonecraft, on

the other hand, uses it to reject everything about the old regime in France, linking the French conception of gallantry as "sentimental lust" to the more obviously political phenomenon of "the system of duplicity that the whole tenour of their political and civil government taught" (v.66). Just as the perversions of the old regime justify the revolution in France, Wollstonecraft argues, so the domestic perversion called modesty should spark a revolution in the English household. But the relationship between French politics and English marriages is not simply adventitious. The reformation of manners in both contexts should be part of a single revolution, although the main burden of the *Vindication* concerns relations between men and women. As Wollstonecraft puts it, "It is time to effect a revolution in female manners – time to restore to [women] their lost dignity – and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world" (v.114). Women are thus allowed a critical role in the revolution, their particular responsibility being to reform the world from the ground up by changing their own natures. Wollstonecraft's argument for women's liberation is thus intertwined with an argument for political and social liberation more broadly conceived. Her proposal for the reformation of female manners is only the first stage of a universal revolution in manners, a revolution that is necessarily also political.

The *Rights of Woman* develops a highly sophisticated vocabulary for talking about female manners.[22] Wollstonecraft uses the terms gallantry and modesty to isolate two different aspects of the system of oppression that deprives women of independence. The ideas about women's sexual modesty that permeate the education of girls prevent women from achieving the substance rather than simply the appearance of virtue; the system of gallantry that governs relations between men and women destroys any possibility of female independence and of mutual respect between the sexes. Though Wollstonecraft uses these two terms to describe somewhat different cultural symptoms, both are implicated in a single complex of dissimulation. Gallantry corresponds very closely to the code that Burke calls chivalry.[23] Wollstonecraft uses the word "gallantry" over a dozen times during the *Rights of Woman*. She attacks "the cold unmeaning intercourse of gallantry" (v.167), "that impudent dross of gallantry" (v.194) and "the libidinous mockery of gallantry" (v.195); she also associates gallantry with the "sentimental jargon" of novels (v.256) and with "a romantic twist of the mind, which has been very properly termed *sentimental*" (v.255, original emphasis). Gallantry is thus both a literal word for an illicit sexual encounter and a metaphorical name for the way of thinking about sex that obscures its lack of true feeling with the language of sentiment. For Wollstonecraft,

in other words, gallantry is more than just a word for the power that men attribute to the women to whom they are sexually attracted, and to whom they are therefore deferential. It also describes the ostentatious sentimentality so prominent in Burke's writing: gallantry is sexual without being warm, sentimental without being sincere.

Wollstonecraft also posits a link between gallantry and modesty: female modesty resembles gallantry insofar as both things are sentimental, duplicitous and dirty all at once. Wollstonecraft's argument against hypocrisy begins by taking the idea of women's sexual reputation as a synecdoche for the entire philosophy of appearances that she rejects. Wollstonecraft insists that the belief that women's first concern should be sexual reputation is actively "subversive of morality" (v.67). When women care primarily for their reputation for chastity, rather than for chastity itself (let alone for any other virtue), morality comes to mean very little: "morality is very insidiously undermined, in the female world, by the attention being turned to the shew instead of the substance" (v.205). Wollstonecraft is offended by the disparity between a gender-neutral idea of truth that "must be the same" for both men and women and a conception of sexual modesty that asks women to "sacrifice . . . truth and sincerity" and dissimulate in the interest of utility. Almost every eighteenth-century account defines modesty as a matter of utility, accounting for women's sexual modesty by the observation (for instance) that modesty allows men to be sure of their children's paternity.[24] In contrast, Wollstonecraft believes that a virtue founded on utility is nothing more than "a relative idea" (v.120), one that is impossible to defend on principle. She is even more disgusted by the consensus that sexual modesty is one of the arts of seduction; this alone, she says, should be reason enough to abandon it. Her notorious expressions of disgust for the "nasty, or immodest habits" that girls learn from one another in boarding-schools suggest that masturbation is only one of the cultural symptoms of false modesty (v.197).

Another symptom of this cultural disease is the dominance of the genre of the female conduct book. By their very nature, conduct books tell readers how to act, not how to be; as Ruth Bernard Yeazell has suggested, they are inherently hypocritical. Wollstonecraft resolutely opposes the "system of dissimulation" endorsed by conduct books like Gregory's *Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774): "Women are always to *seem* to be this and that – yet virtue might apostrophize them, in the words of Hamlet – Seems! I know not seems! – Have that within that passeth show!"[25] Even more disturbing, this system of hypocrisy is endorsed by many writers to whom Wollstonecraft is otherwise sympathetic. It is not surprising that writers

like John Gregory and James Fordyce – both Scots, the former associated with Hume, Hugh Blair and the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment, the latter a well-known Presbyterian divine at the opposite end of the cultural and political spectrum – should be united in Wollstonecraft's account by their shared misconception of female virtue. But even Rousseau's Sophie reproduces the same cultural logic, the duty of this particular embodiment of male fantasy being (in Wollstonecraft's paraphrase) "to render herself *agreeable* to her master – this being the grand end of her existence" (v.147, original emphasis).

The principles Rousseau recommends for women's education "lead to a system of cunning and lasciviousness" (v.148), Wollstonecraft asserts, not to virtue.[26] Even women who write on female education place reputation above virtue, Wollstonecraft next demonstrates. In Wollstonecraft's satirical paraphrase, writers such as de Staël and de Genlis argue that "[a] person is not to act in this or that way, though convinced they are right in so doing, because some equivocal circumstances may lead the world to *suspect* that they acted from different motives" (v.174n, original emphasis). Wollstonecraft's rather sharp use of the phrase "a person" and the supposedly gender-neutral pronoun "they" expresses her outrage. Her purpose here is not to linger on the problem of "equivocal circumstances," those situations involving misleading appearances in which the novel's protagonists (both male and female) tend to become disastrously enmired. Comic novels like *Tom Jones* and *Evelina* promise that true virtue will triumph over false appearances; Wollstonecraft might well reject a premise that allows so much power to appearances in the first place.

Against an idea of female modesty that sacrifices virtue for appearances, Wollstonecraft invokes the judgment of Adam Smith, with regard to reputation, that the opinion of other men matters only insofar as those men are worthy. (Wollstonecraft assumes that Smith's argument about men applies to women as well.) In certain instances, Smith admits, actions may be misinterpreted and an honest man may unjustly suffer opprobrium. But according to Smith, the doctrine of probability ensures that this accident rarely happens (and Wollstonecraft here quotes Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* at some length): "'A person may be easily misrepresented with regard to a particular action; but it is scarce possible that he should be so with regard to the general tenor of his conduct. An innocent man may be believed to have done wrong: this, however, will rarely happen. On the contrary, the established opinion of the innocence of his manners will often lead us to absolve him where he has really been in the fault, notwithstanding

very strong presumptions.'"[27] Smith believes that the exoneration in this case is more fair than its converse, in which an innocent man is unjustly convicted by a combination of misrepresentation and popular opinion.

Arguing that morality is "undermined by sexual notions of the importance of a good reputation," Wollstonecraft also insists that conventional notions of female modesty embody not virtue but hypocrisy of a peculiarly filthy kind.[28] In this sense, Wollstonecraft reproduces the enterprise of the traditional conduct-book: to define true as opposed to false modesty. Ruth Bernard Yeazell persuasively argues that in its commitment to this task of definition, the *Vindication* "belonged very much to the culture it criticized."[29] The *Vindication* is to some extent a conduct book like its predecessors, albeit one more than commonly sensitive to the presuppositions and limitations of the genre, and the suspicion lingers that Wollstonecraft's new-modeled modesty may retain some of the insincerity she despises in its predecessors. The defensive interjections that punctuate many of her diatribes against dissimulation suggest that some kinds of covering-up – particularly the kinds associated with discipline and self-control – must be retained.

III

Unlike Wollstonecraft, who wants to redefine manners, Godwin generally rejects them out of hand on the basis of the insincerities with which they are associated. For *Political Justice*, insincerity is not simply one kind of injustice. It is rather the dominant trope for representing injustice of all kinds, so that the institution of government is described most damningly as organized deception and the institution of marriage as "a system of fraud" (III.453). Truth is the best weapon against injustice and coercion alike, since insincerity is no less damaging than inequality: "Sincerity is not less essential than equality to the well being of mankind" (III.338). Godwin's opposition to institutional hypocrisy arises in part from the specific applications of hypocrisy in eighteenth-century Britain, a list which begins with the government's use of oaths to enforce religious and political conformity and goes on to include measures such as "penal statutes, and licensers of the press, and hired ministers of falshood and imposture" (III.274). Oaths are administered and publications censored, Godwin argues, so that the government can prevent truth from annihilating prejudice "by any future penetration or any accidental discovery" (a phrase

that seems to describe something like Caleb Williams's discoveries about Falkland, where truth is indeed unearthed by a combination of penetration and accident and then suppressed by Falkland's subsequent manipulations of the judicial system). Godwin is especially outraged by those who want to prove "the insufficiency of democracy" by "the supposed necessity of deception and prejudice for restraining the turbulence of human passions" (III.271). As a matter of political obligation, Godwin wants to vindicate democracy by refuting the Machiavellian argument for manipulation or dissimulation.

Political Justice's argument for sincerity is uncompromising. Godwin is offended by all conventional insincerities, however innocuous. He objects first to the Scottish jurist Lord Kames's defense of dishonesty in the case of the custom-house oath. It had become commonplace for merchants to swear falsely that no custom was owed, and Kames justifies the false oath on the basis that as "'the oath is only exacted for form's sake, without any faith intended to be given or received, it becomes very little different from saying in the way of civility, "I am, sir, your friend, or your obedient servant."'"[30] Godwin is even more disgusted by the utilitarian moralist William Paley's catalogue of "'falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal'" in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), widely used as a college textbook. Paley's list includes the servant who says that his master is not at home, the prisoner who pleads not guilty, and the advocate who asserts the justice of his client's cause; Paley claims that in each of these cases, "no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed."[31]

Godwin charges that both Paley and Kames are constrained – by virtue of conservatism, conventionality or lack of imagination – to argue that deception should be ethical in certain cases. They write, after all, under a system of government in which oaths had been regularly imposed for more than a century to ensure political and religious conformity among office-holders. Godwin's characteristically inflammatory description of a government that imposes "contradictory and impracticable oaths" on its subjects, however, with the consequence of "perpetually stimulating its members to concealment and perjury," foregrounds the political imperative in a manner that the more measured analyses of Kames and Paley do not (III.20). Godwin despises the argument, advanced earlier by Swift as well as by Kames, that such oaths are conducive to political stability. Just as political oaths force men to lie about their political allegiances, Godwin argues, so "the tendency of a code of religious conformity is to make men hypocrites" (III.325). Most catastrophic of all, he concludes, are oaths administered in a court of justice: "there is no cause of insincerity, prevarication and

falshood more powerful, than the practice of administering oaths in a court of justice," he claims, a practice that "treats veracity in the affairs of common life as a thing unworthy to be regarded" (III.340).

Godwin's visceral dislike for hypocrisy leads him to focus on the damage lying does to a man's own character, an emphasis somewhat different from that of Kant's closely contemporary and no less uncompromising argument against lying.[32] Kant's central example is that of the well-intentioned man who lies to the murderers at his door by telling them that his friend (whom they seek, and whom he believes to be upstairs) is not at home, a lie designed to preserve his friend's life. Yet if the friend should have gone out without the host's knowledge, Kant observes, and if the murderers should subsequently find and kill him in a place where they would not otherwise have searched, the well-intentioned man is liable under civil law for the consequences of his lie. Kant's point is that one should always refrain from lying, not just for prudential reasons but because truth-telling is an absolute obligation. Where Kant is concerned with the idea that "a lie always harms another," however, Godwin argues that the liar first and foremost harms himself. In keeping with this point, Godwin emphasizes the necessity for unreserved communication on personal and political topics alike, to counter the fact that in the unjust world of Britain in the 1790s, "a cold reserve . . . keeps man at a distance from man" (III.120). This reserve results both from external factors (the government's movement to suppress free speech and public meetings) and from internal prohibitions (such as the internalized ethos of chivalry that destroys both Falkland and Caleb Williams).

Domestic symptoms of reserve alarm Godwin as much as or more than political ones. *Political Justice* includes an entire chapter "Of the Cultivation of Truth," as well as an appendix addressing the specific and pressing question "Of the Mode of Excluding Visitors."[33] Godwin's best illustration of the "principle respecting the observation of truth in the common intercourses of life" is "the familiar and trivial case, as it is commonly supposed to be, of a master directing his servant to say he is not at home, as a means of freeing him from the intrusion of impertinent guests" (III.148). The sheer commonness of the occurrence renders it especially pernicious, Godwin argues, and the effects of this insincerity damage visitor, servant and master alike. The visitor can tell that the servant's answer is false and therefore "feels in spite of himself a contempt for the prevarication of the person he visits" (III.149). The argument from the servant's point of view is even stronger, since giving a false answer is personally degrading:

Whatever sophistry we may have to excuse our error, nothing is more certain than that our servants understand the lesson we teach them to be a lie. It is accompanied by all the retinue of falshood. Before it can be gracefully practised, the servant must be no mean proficient in the mysteries of hypocrisy. By the easy impudence with which it is uttered, he best answers the purpose of his master, or in other words the purpose of deceit . . . Before this can be sufficiently done, he must have discarded the ingenuous frankness by means of which the thoughts find easy commerce with the tongue, and the clear and undisguised countenance which ought to be the faithful mirror of the mind. Do you think, when he has learned this degenerate lesson in one instance, that it will produce no unfavourable effects upon his general conduct? (III.149)

This is a new way of thinking about servants, in contrast to a certain lack of sympathy that continues to be evident in the writing of contemporaries like Wollstonecraft and Edgeworth.[34] After emphasizing the importance of frankness in the abstract, however, Godwin makes a tactical appeal to the self-interest of the master, who will surely benefit from his servants' honesty. The clincher for Godwin is that the lie is unnecessary, it being just as easy to say that one is engaged or indisposed as to give "the universally suspected answer, the notorious hypocrisy of 'I am not at home'" (III.149).

Many of Godwin's arguments for sincerity derive from a wariness about conventional language that is built into British radical and dissenting tradition. The movement against ordinary professions of insincerity came about in seventeenth-century England, when members of radical religious sects like the Quakers began to refuse to swear oaths in court or to use honorifics and titles when addressing others.[35] Evangelical reformers had argued more recently that upper-class insincerity corrupted the manners of the lower classes, to whom they set a poor example in honesty as well as in matters like card-playing and Sunday travel.[36] Decades before Godwin's radical defense of truth-telling, Richardson had identified precisely the same case – that of the master who tells his servant to say he is not at home – as especially dangerous. Unlike his morally lax contemporaries (Richardson suggests), Sir Charles Grandison "never . . . suffers his servants to deny him, when he is at home."[37] This statement appears in the context of a discussion not of servants – though the novel treats the proper government of servants in some detail – but of politeness. The paradox of true politeness (rather awkwardly expressed by Richardson) is that Sir Charles is at once "remarkable for his truth, yet is unquestionably polite": "He censures not others for complying with fashions established by custom; but he gives not in to them. He never perverts the meaning of words."[38] Where Sir Charles Grandison is paralyzed (like a donkey poised between two identical bundles

of hay) by the choice between truth and politeness, however, Godwin goes relentlessly for truth.

IV

It should be clear by now that the example of the servant who says his master is not at home is more equivocal than Godwin admits; one might even say that it more naturally serves to *defend* conventional language. Godwin's use of the servant example to testify against linguistic convention is directly contrary to that of Hume, for instance, who concludes his most explicit argument in favor of hypocrisy with a provocative defense of that manner of excluding visitors. Unpublished during Hume's lifetime, this private letter (written in April 1764 to a friend who had asked whether a man should remain in orders against his conscience) opens by rejecting sincerity outright. "It is putting too great a Respect on the Vulgar, and on their Superstitions, to pique one'self [sic] on Sincerity with regard to them," Hume says. "Did ever one make it a point of Honour to speak Truth to Children or Madmen?"[39] By this act of exclusion, Hume suggests that truth is a privilege, not a right, and that truth-telling is often a matter of convenience. Yet insincerity is not just a privilege for the select few but an essential part of ordinary life, and Hume goes on to deplore (perhaps ironically) his own lack of religious observance: he claims to wish that "it were still in my Power to be a Hypocrite in this particular" since "[t]he common Duties of Society usually require it." After suggesting that a clergyman who swears to his religious beliefs "only adds a little more to an innocent Dissimulation or rather Simulation, without which it is impossible to pass thro the World," Hume concludes with a sly rhetorical question: "Am I a Lyar, because I order my Servant to say I am not at home, when I do not desire to see company[?]" Hume defends this formula on the grounds of its conventionality. The phrase is not meant to deceive. Yet by foregrounding the example of the servant who says his master is "not at home," Hume's argument for hypocrisy challenges the contemporary consensus on how to define the word *liar.* The rhetorical question "Am I a Lyar" may expect the answer no, but it also allows for a qualified yes: yes, I am a liar when I tell my servant to say that I am not at home; indeed (as Godwin might add) I am not simply a liar but a hypocrite in the worst sense, since I farm out the dirty work to my social inferior. While Hume would hardly endorse such an argument, it exists unspoken in the space between the lines.

The "innocent Dissimulation" of religious conformity that Hume identifies as one of the "common Duties of Society" is also central to Burke's

Reflections, where established religion is far more extensively defended. Consistent with Hume's emphasis, Burke seems to care less for religious belief as such than for religious observance, since "religion is the basis of civil society."[40] He follows this statement with an extravagant claim: "In England we are so convinced of this, that there is no rust of superstition, with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages, that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety" (186–87/VIII.141). The last word is perhaps the most surprising: if the word "truth" were substituted for "impiety," this could easily be a straightforward satire on religion in the Godwinian manner. In spite of the satirical tone here, however, Burke endorses the social benefits to England of that "rust of superstition." His commitment to religious observance is motivated by a belief that human psychology depends on prejudice, which "renders a man's virtue his habit; and not a series of unconnected acts" (183/VIII.138). Johnson suggests something very similar in the *Rambler* when he says that "even [the hypocrite] might be taught the excellency of virtue, by the necessity of seeming virtuous."[41]

If Burke and Godwin lie at opposite ends of the spectrum on politeness, the Edgeworths' *Practical Education* (1798) falls somewhere in between. The book addresses both cases of insincerity, the servant who says his master is not at home and the insincere subscription to a letter (the latter is also the verbal crux of the argument in Burke's *Reflections* about civility and forms of address in Price's sermon). Like Paley and Kames, the Edgeworths defend certain practices on the grounds that they are not meant to deceive. Other practices, however, they attack. At times, the book sounds as though it might have been written by Godwin, as when it identifies "Honesty is the best policy" as the best maxim in education as in life: "We must not only be exact in speaking truth to our pupils, but to every body else; to acquaintance, to servants, to friends, to enemies."[42] Yet that point is immediately qualified by the authors' refusal "to enter any overstrained protest against the common phrases and forms of politeness":

> No fraud is committed by a gentleman's saying that he is *not at home*, because no deception is intended; the words are silly, but they mean, and are understood to mean, nothing more than that the person in question does not choose to see the visitors who knock at his door. 'I am, Sir, your obedient and humble servant,' at the end of a letter, does not mean that the person who signs the letter is a servant, or humble, or obedient, but it simply expresses that he knows how to conclude his letter according to the usual form of civility. Change this absurd phrase, and welcome; but do not let us, in the spirit of Draco, make no distinction between errors and crimes. (I.193, original emphasis)

The very next move of *Practical Education* is to distinguish the accouterments of convention – that is, ordinary insincerities – from the crimes associated with what the Edgeworths call the "Chesterfieldian system of endeavouring to please by dissimulation," a system that they insist (protesting perhaps a little too much) "is obviously distinguishable by any common capacity from the usual forms of civility" (I.195). Parents must be especially careful that their children do not catch them out in the kinds of insincerity that Chesterfield recommends, the Edgeworths continue, where they "[pretend] to like the company, and to esteem the characters, of those whom they really think disagreeable and contemptible." Yet it is hard to imagine where in practice this line will be drawn.

Godwin's own position on politeness to friends and acquaintances is characteristically extreme. In fact, he believes the lie of being "not at home" to be unnecessary in every possible sense, since "the existence of these troublesome visitors is owing to the hypocrisy of politeness" (III.150). If we told people what we really think of them, in other words, they would no longer visit us so often! In the 1797 essay "Of Politeness," Godwin develops this argument more fully.[43] The second part of the essay opens by imagining a "remark not unfrequently heard from the professed enemies of politeness": "I dislike such a person; why should I be at any pain to conceal it? . . . I feel in myself no vocation to be a hypocrite" (337). Godwin proceeds to examine this statement with scrupulous fairness, admitting that in such cases, sincerity is sometimes simply a cloak for self-gratification. The essay makes more concessions than *Political Justice* to the dictates of self-control: after all, Godwin says, "the greater part of human virtue consists in self-government . . . When I refuse to vent the feeling of bodily anguish in piercing cries, as the first impulse would prompt me to do, I am not therefore a hypocrite" (338).

This does not mean, however, that we should censor our criticism of friends and neighbors in the name of kindness. Godwin balances the claims of benevolence against those of sincerity and finds that the two may be compatible, specifically with regard to the apparently unkind proposition "that I should speak of a man's character, when he is absent, and present, in the same terms" (341). Though benevolence might seem to involve the suppression of truth in certain cases, as Godwin sees it, we live under an obligation actively to criticize our neighbours "in plain terms, without softening or circumlocution," and he suggests that "[g]reat inconveniences arise from the prevailing practice of insincerity in this respect" (342). His target here is the "commonly received rule of civilised life, that conversation is not to be repeated, particularly to the persons who may happen to be the

subject of it" (343). Lifting this rule means taking a step towards justice: greater truthfulness is needed, as ignorance of the thoughts and feelings of others concerning oneself "corrupts the very vitals of human intercourse" (344). When Godwin asserts finally that "politeness, properly considered, is no enemy to admonition," the statement might conjure up nightmares of public denunciation in the style of the Cultural Revolution (346). Yet Godwin sincerely believes that one's responsibility to correct overrides the specious obligations of politeness: "genuine" politeness is "seldom or never at variance with sincerity" (349). For the sake of consistency, his argument against insincerity demonizes conventional politeness as a watered-down version of the hypocrisy associated with Chesterfield, an unmanly and overly pliable concession to the *amour-propre* of others.[44]

An unforeseen consequence of the revolutionary commitment to absolute sincerity (at least in Burke's hostile summary of arguments for sincerity by Godwin and others) is that absolute sincerity can topple paradoxically over the precipice into euphemism. While theorists of sincerity openly attack the code of civility for turning language into a tool of deception, their own rhetorical practice is deceptive in a different way (or so Burke charges), relying on a highly formalized and bureaucratic language to conceal the violence of their political practice. Where radical writers argue that all conventional language is euphemistic and therefore politically dangerous, then, and that Burke defends conventional language in order to enforce a system of dissimulation and domination, Burke presses counter-charges of euphemism against the revolutionary writers themselves. His condemnation of radical and revolutionary perversions of language anticipates many of Orwell's charges against totalitarianism in "Politics and the English Language" (1946). In the *Preface to Brissot's Address to his Constituents* (1794), for instance, Burke observes that when Roland addresses the people "he can no longer be direct": "The whole compass of the language is tried to find synonimes [sic] and circumlocutions for massacre and murder" (VIII.512). Brissot's language shows a similar obscurity, Burke argues, and he accounts for the translator's difficulty with the text by pointing out that "[Brissot's] language requires to be first translated into French, at least into such French as the academy would in former times have tolerated," adding as an afterthought that "the language, like every thing else in his country, has undergone a revolution" (VIII.520–21). The language of the revolution's British sympathizers is also infected with euphemism. Burke claims that British apprehensions about the thing that he insists on denominating by the brutal term "Regicide Peace" are quieted only "by totally putting it out of sight, by substituting for it, through a sort of periphrasis, something of

an ambiguous quality, and describing such a connection [a peace between Britain and France] under the terms of '*the usual relations of peace and amity.*'"[45] This blandness is more truly violent than even the bloodiest account of the war could be; Burke charges that the revolutionaries use insipid, impersonal language to disclaim any responsibility for violence.

Burke's attack on euphemism brings to mind Bataille's observation that "[c]ommon language will not express violence."[46] Bataille argues that de Sade's meticulous blow-by-blow accounts of torture are composed paradoxically in the language not of torturer but of victim: "As a general rule the torturer does not use the language of the violence exerted by him in the name of an established authority; he uses the language of the authority, and that gives him what looks like an excuse, a lofty justification." Yet while the language of Godwin's *Political Justice* certainly tends towards lofty justification, Godwin is no less desirous than Burke of avoiding euphemism. Near the beginning of *Political Justice*, Godwin quotes quite seriously the famous description from *Gulliver's Travels* of the causes of war, citing this deadpan catalog of violence as though it were straight political philosophy rather than satire.[47] Godwin applies the passage as a literal demonstration of the thesis that if violence were always described in factual language, war would simply disappear.

This trick of defamiliarization – an inherently satirical move often associated with Swift, Burke and the generally conservative genre of satire – turns out to be almost as popular with radical writers as with writers defending the status quo. Elizabeth Inchbald uses a similar tactic against the authority of conventional language in her 1796 novel *Nature and Art*, whose hero (a noble savage raised in Africa by his British father) "would call *compliments, lies – Reserve*, he would call *pride – stateliness, affectation –* and for the monosyllable *war*, he constantly substituted the word *massacre*."[48] Inchbald and others thus charge Burke with being saturated in the common forms of language – a language that relies on conventional phrases like "defensive war" to mask rampant national aggression – even as he levels against the radicals a complementary charge that violence permeates their ordinary language.

V

Even so warm a proponent of politeness as Hume admits that gallantry is a way for man to "alleviate" his superiority over woman "by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions."[49] Where male barbarians display this

superiority "by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them," Hume says, "the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry." Wollstonecraft perceives a very similar relationship between gallantry and violence but identifies it as the strongest possible indictment of gallantry. Her contempt for gallantry is intensified by her political opposition to absolute power, since gallantry is at once a symptom of and a prop for political despotism. The authority of the monarch provides both a model and an intellectual justification for male heads of household who want a rhetoric in which to rationalize their own domestic tyranny; gallantry is a word these husbands and fathers use to justify all kinds of abusive behavior, not least their extramarital affairs. As a consequence, relations between men and women are characterized by "a mixture of gallantry and despotism . . . which leads the very men who are the slaves of their mistresses to tyrannize over their sisters, wives, and daughters" (v.93). The excessive authority these men have at home is not undermined but supported by the pretend servility of gallantry, in which men play at subservience with women whose power over them is in reality all too fleeting.

Yet unlike *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft's sentimental novel *The Wrongs of Woman* never quite convinces the reader that the heroine Maria is right to leave her husband – right either morally or prudentially, since her lover treats her so much worse.[50] While the overt argument of Wollstonecraft's novel – the argument she seems to want to make – is that the revolutionary fusion of feeling and reason will liberate women, the novel's underlying message is that gallantry is as likely to taint a supposedly liberated romantic arrangement as a repressive one like marriage. Rationalizing her choice, Maria characterizes the woman who marries one man while in love with another as "sacrilegiously violating the purity of her own feelings": "Truth is the only basis of virtue; and we cannot, without depraving our minds, endeavour to please a lover or husband, but in proportion as he pleases us" (I.145). The consequences of calculating marriage in the mathematical language of proportion, however, seem damaging for female self-respect as well as for relationships themselves.

Though Wollstonecraft's call for a revolution in female manners is radical and ambitious, her choice to define her work in terms of women's rights, as opposed to political rights more generally, stops her deliberately short of a full critique of political insincerity. The limits of her analysis appear even within the second *Vindication*'s central argument about reputation.

Wollstonecraft is eager to replace pernicious ideas about women's sexual reputation with a gender-neutral model borrowed from Adam Smith, where reputation depends only on the opinion of honest men and women. Most readers will be persuaded by the *Vindication* that women's sexual modesty represents a disgusting kind of hypocrisy. Yet Wollstonecraft's forceful challenge to the idea that sexual modesty is more important than common-or-garden varieties of honesty – and her claim that mistaken ideas about women's sexual reputation subvert morality – are partly mitigated by her own commitment to decency or true modesty, words given new definitions in the *Vindication* but borrowed nonetheless from the bad old vocabulary of sentimental virtue.

Another problem the *Vindication* chooses not to address directly concerns the fact that in the 1790s, the reputation of men seemed to have been recently reconstructed along the very same lines as the morally destructive and inherently hypocritical ideas about women's chastity that Wollstonecraft sought to eradicate. Wollstonecraft's rejection of a morality based on women's sexual reputation is both powerful and problematic: powerful, because it constitutes the single most compelling eighteenth-century challenge to the rule of civility; problematic, insofar as the specter of women's chastity continues to haunt not just the *Vindication* but many other radical texts of the 1790s. A great deal of evidence suggests that throughout the decade, radical writers (Godwin among them) saw the tyranny of sexual reputation, far from releasing women from oppression, instead extending its sway over men as well. Wollstonecraft argues that gallantry and modesty corrupt not just the morality of women but morality in general; consequently, the particular responsibility of radical women in a time of political revolution is to effect a revolution in female manners. But if men's manners have been corrupted as well, as Wollstonecraft's analysis implies, the task of reform will be truly Herculean.

Following this clue, radical men's writing of the same period tends not to contradict the fundamentals of Wollstonecraft's analysis but to suggest that an undue degree of attention to appearances has poisoned society far more extensively than even Wollstonecraft suggests. Propelling its characters by a force that closely resembles sexual guilt, Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) attacks the ideologies of chivalry and reputation for their effects not on women but on men. Godwin's novels contain few female characters, and most readers would agree that the concerns of actual women are no more than peripheral to either his fiction or his philosophy. Yet *Caleb Williams* is characterized by a discourse on reputation and guilt so consistently sexualized that it is hard to see how even so effective an attack as Wollstonecraft's

on the ideology of chastity will relieve the oppressive weight of "things as they are." Godwin depicts in the novel the nightmarish transferal of ideas about women's chastity or sexual "spotlessness," first to the relationship between master and servant and subsequently to all relationships between the individual and the other members of the society in which he must live. All the characters in the novel, not just the story's supposed villain, are seduced by the ideology of chivalry. The flawed hero Falkland is "too deeply pervaded with the idle and groundless romances of chivalry," "the fool of honour and fame," tainted with "the poison of chivalry": his excessive love of reputation is at the root of all his subsequent crimes.[51] Falkland's secret guilt is remorselessly investigated by his servant Caleb Williams, whose curiosity about the signs of Falkland's guilt will destroy both his master and himself. Yet Caleb does not set out deliberately to destroy Falkland's reputation and pull down the edifice of chivalry. Godwin suggests instead that Caleb himself is fatally smitten with the same ideas about honor that have destroyed Falkland.

In his 1832 account of the composition of *Caleb Williams*, Godwin emphasizes the novel's likeness to the Bluebeard story. Falkland is Bluebeard, Godwin says, and Caleb Williams "the wife, who in spite of warning persisted in his attempts to discover the forbidden secret; and, when he had succeeded, struggled as fruitlessly to escape the consequences as the wife of Bluebeard in washing the key of the ensanguined chamber" (353). If the likeness of the male title character to the wife in this story were not strange enough, the character of Falkland – who Marilyn Butler has plausibly argued is modeled on Burke – is also strikingly feminine.[52] Knowledge of his own guilt causes Falkland to blush and blanch throughout the novel, and Caleb compulsively reads these physical symptoms in the manner of a jealous husband policing his wife's behavior. After one especially provoking sally of Caleb's, for instance, Falkland shudders and storms out of the room, prompting Caleb to wonder whether these signs are "'the fruit of conscious guilt, or of the disgust that a man of honour conceives at guilt undeservedly imputed?'" (118). By putting both Falkland (for his guilt) and Caleb (for his resemblance to Bluebeard's wife) in the position of women scrutinized by their husbands for symptoms of sexual transgression, Godwin depicts a world entirely governed by the gendered logic of appearances.

The implication of *Caleb Williams* is that nothing can break the tyranny of reputation. A parodic redaction of the conventional debate about virtue and reputation appears late in the novel, after Caleb's innocent new friend Laura hears the rumor that he robbed his great benefactor Falkland. She refuses to hear a word of Caleb's explanation. "True virtue refuses the

drudgery of explanation and apology," she says: "True virtue shines by its own light, and needs no art to set it off" (310). "And can you imagine," Caleb asks desperately, "that the most upright conduct is always superior to the danger of ambiguity?" Laura's answer is uncompromising: "Exactly so. Virtue, sir, consists in actions, and not in words. The good man and the bad are characters precisely opposite, not characters distinguished from each other by imperceptible shades." The reader is surely meant to understand that this criminally naïve rendition of the argument about reputation will always fail to withstand the pressure of things as they are. When Wollstonecraft attacks modesty as an assault on morality, it is the specificity of the problem to women that lets her argue that their situation can and must be changed. Godwin's novel shows that the false logic of sexual reputation governs so many aspects of human society that all political relations have been poisoned by insincerity. Though the goal of *Political Justice* is to show that a revolution in truthfulness will change everything, *Caleb Williams* suggests otherwise: that chivalric manners are here to stay.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, women writers more conservative than Wollstonecraft (though often sharing her nonconformist intellectual heritage) also objected very vocally to the ideology of gallantry. In *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), Hannah More wants to retain only those aspects of gallantry that are most advantageous to women, manipulating the term to leverage as much power as possible for the female sex. This maneuver involves a sophisticated reflection on the meanings of power that in some ways resembles the original conceptual transformation effected by chivalry, of violence into complaisance. Women "know too well how imperiously they give the law to manners, and with how despotic a sway they fix the standard of fashion," More begins.[53] Yet the contrast between women's despotic sway and the trivial objects on which it is exerted is highly unsatisfactory. More asks women to make better use of "that power delegated to them by the courtesy of custom, by the honest gallantry of the heart, by the imperious controul of virtuous affections, by the habits of civilized states, by the usages of polished society": in other words, to exert the power chivalry allows them on more important things than fashion. While More does "not wish to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinstate women in that fantastic empire in which they then sat enthroned in the hearts, or rather in the imaginations of men," then, she wants women to make more thoughtful and more extensive use of "the despotic sway" that chivalry grants (1.19).

In a closely contemporary text, the Quaker writer Priscilla Wakefield regrets that women "have been contented to barter the dignity of reason,

for the imaginary privilege of an empire, of the existence of which they can entertain no reasonable hope beyond the duration of youth and beauty."[54] Wakefield admits that "[t]he word reform, has become the signal of a party" and that "the fear of change may render some averse from the very idea of introducing an alteration in female manners," but insists "that it is not a novelty that is proposed" (74). Wakefield's transformation of Wollstonecraft's "revolution in female manners" into a mere "alteration" is an attempt to make her own suggestions for reform more palatable than Wollstonecraft's. Despite their political differences, however, all three of these writers use the terms empire and gallantry ironically to mark their disapproval of the system of chivalry endorsed by men, a system that grants women privileges that are deemed "imaginary" and "fantastic" not just by Wollstonecraft and Wakefield but by the far more conservative More as well. Though More's political position differs dramatically from that of Wollstonecraft, their arguments for the improvement of women's status thus have more in common than their treatments of chivalry might initially suggest.[55] Both Wollstonecraft and More give women jurisdiction over manners and morals and suggest that they use their influence to raise men's social and political morality to a higher standard.

The arguments put forward by Wollstonecraft and the other radical writers of the 1790s have triumphed over those of Burke to an extent that would have shocked most of their contemporaries. In 1799, Hannah More wrote scornfully of "*the rights of man*," rights that were opposed (in her words) "with more presumption than prudence [by] *the rights of women*."[56] Both sets of rights are dismissed in More's *reductio ad absurdum* of rights-based arguments, in which she contemptuously predicts "that the next stage of that irradiation which our enlighteners are pouring in upon us as [sic] will produce grave descants on the *rights of children*." In a society like our own, which takes the rights of children very seriously, it is difficult to conceive the force of conservative reaction against Godwin and Wollstonecraft in the 1790s. Burke continued to hammer away at revolutionary France and its English supporters right up to his death in 1797; Wollstonecraft outlived Burke by only two months, and whatever reputation she retained among moderates was destroyed by Godwin's publication in 1798 of the *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication*, whose revelations about Wollstonecraft's love affairs and suicide attempts damned her conclusively in the eyes of the public. In this sense, Godwin must bear some of the responsibility for the subsequent polarization of Wollstonecraft and Burke in readers' minds.

In her 1787 conduct manual for girls, Wollstonecraft (like most practical writers on education, regardless of what philosophy of human nature they

endorse) recommends teaching children self-restraint.[57] She follows this advice about self-restraint with a warning for educators that echoes Locke: "Be careful, however, not to make hypocrites; smothered flames will blaze out with more violence for having been kept down."[58] Burke approaches a similar idea from a very different angle. "Men are qualified for civil liberty," he says, "in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites."[59] He goes on to argue "that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters." Yet Wollstonecraft's own desire "not to make hypocrites" is partly qualified in the second *Vindication*, where she formulates a gendered inflection of something very like Burke's argument for self-control, in which women – even or perhaps especially radical women – have a stronger obligation than men "to put moral chains upon their own appetites."

On this particular topic, the women writers of the 1790s are in surprising agreement. Not just the conservative moralist Hannah More but reformers like Wollstonecraft and the Edgeworths are quite explicit about why young women need to learn the lesson of self-restraint, a lesson justified not only on its own merits but also because the world demands it. It is not unexpected to find More emphasizing that young women's education should include the lesson of "[a]n early habitual restraint" and suggesting that girls must be "inured to contradiction," "accustomed to receive but little praise for their vivacity or their wit" and "led to distrust their own judgement" (*Strictures*, I.142). It is less in line with our expectations that More should admit that female self-restraint is not necessarily right in itself, but that it is rather required of girls as "a lesson with which the world will not fail to furnish them; and they will not practise it the worse for having learnt it the sooner" (I.142–43). More's point is far more pragmatic than principled: as she insists, "It is of the last importance to [girls'] happiness in life that they should early acquire a submissive temper and a forbearing spirit." In the more liberal volumes of *Practical Education* (1798), the Edgeworths arrive at a very similar conclusion, arguing that "[i]t is particularly necessary for girls to acquire command of temper in arguing" because their effectiveness as adults "will depend upon the gentleness and good-humour with which they conduct themselves" (I.167). "We by no means wish that women should yield their better judgment to their fathers or husbands," the book continues, in a characteristically self-contradictory move; "but, without using any of that debasing cunning which Rousseau recommends, they may support the cause of reason with all the graces of female gentleness."[60]

Later writers would use the word "tact" to describe the muted abilities that More and Edgeworth endorse for women. Yet the historian Michael

Curtin invokes a Victorian term when he describes eighteenth-century conduct books as promoting among women a "morality of tact."[61] The word tact, borrowed from French into English in the second half of the eighteenth century, is defined by the *OED* as "[r]eady and delicate sense of what is fitting and proper in dealing with others, so as to avoid giving offence, or win good will; skill or judgement in dealing with men or negotiating difficult or delicate situations; the faculty of saying or doing the right thing at the right time." The first illustration cited is from Voltaire in 1769, and the word only seems to enter English usage in the 1790s. Curiously enough, the dictionary's definition says nothing about women, in spite of the very common association between women and tact.[62] For the *OED*, tact remains a courtier's grace (which may say more about the *OED* than about English usage). The association of tact with women is a late nineteenth-century back-formation, an act of misremembering that makes tact always – rather than contingently – female.

In his remarks on "the dialectic of tact," Adorno suggests that the invention of tact in the age of Kant and Goethe (an invention whose precondition is "convention no longer intact yet still present") embodies a "seemingly paradoxical interchange between absolutism and liberality."[63] Liberated from convention, however, "emancipated, purely individual tact becomes mere lying"; Adorno sees it as a superseded privilege that only works so long as "the forms of hierarchical respect and consideration developed by absolutism . . . are still just sufficiently present to make living together within privileged groups bearable." What Adorno does not mention is that tact is assigned at the end of the eighteenth century to women as a group, to be secured by the prescriptions of educational theory, the novel and the etiquette book, as well as by those of their secret partners, ethics and the law.

In the *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1795), Burke uses the word "tact" to describe the function of self-regulation that makes state interference with the natural levels of wages and prices unnecessary. As he says, not laws and magistrates but "interest, habit, and the tacit convention, that arise from a thousand nameless circumstances, produce a *tact* that regulates without difficulty, what laws and magistrates cannot regulate at all" (ix.128, original emphasis). How does a quality associated with diplomacy and economic self-regulation come to be considered women's peculiar property? When Wollstonecraft equates women with courtiers – just as "the easy fallacious behaviour of a courtier . . . [arises from] his situation," so do women "likewise acquire, from a supposed necessity, an equally artificial mode of behaviour" (v.201) – she means the comparison to reflect badly

on both groups. Yet Hannah More and others would soon successfully redefine the work of upper-middle-class women as a vocation including not just tact but also charity work and the education of children.[64] In fact, with the traditional professions thoroughly tainted by patronage and corruption, women would be able to claim a new moral authority in British culture at large, even as they transformed the art of pleasing into a moral vocation. Women were able for these reasons to arrest and reverse the decline in reputation the art of pleasing suffered following the publication of Chesterfield's letters. The counter-intuitive or conjectural arguments for hypocrisy described in my first two chapters, once they had been gendered feminine, were positioned to enter the mainstream of nineteenth-century British discourse. The redefinition of tact would also offer an alternative solution to the question that eighteenth-century political philosophy had failed to answer to its own satisfaction: whether virtue could co-exist with dependence.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hypocrisy and the novel 1: Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded

In a letter of 20 October 1755, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes with disapproval of Richardson's latest heroine that Harriet Byron "follows the Maxim of Clarissa, of declaring all she thinks to all the people she sees, without refflecting [sic] that in this Mortal state of Imperfection Fig leaves are as necessary for our Minds as our Bodies, and tis as indecent to shew all we think as all we have."[1] Montagu's objection to *Sir Charles Grandison* hinges on the question of whether it is wise to promote a rhetoric of transparency when decency in social interactions depends on concealment. Is the openness of Richardson's (usually female) first-person narrators sincere and principled, as Richardson and his supporters assert, or obscene and manipulative, as his detractors charge? Both *Clarissa* (1747–48) and *Grandison* (1753–54) were written in part to refute the accusations of readers who had singled out in Richardson's first novel *Pamela* (1740–41) what they perceived as technical and moral crudities, identifying Pamela herself as a hypocrite, and the *Pamela* controversy of the early 1740s offers eighteenth-century Britain's most fully worked-out debate on the problem of hypocrisy.

Many of Richardson's readers found it impossible to separate their doubts about Pamela's sexual integrity from those about her rhetorical integrity, and I will approach *Pamela* as an experiment in which Richardson explores the rhetorical risks and payoffs of writing an epistolary fiction in which the personal safety of the primary letter-writer depends on her being able to persuade readers within the world of the novel that she is not a hypocrite. In order for Pamela to refute the charge of hypocrisy, Richardson has to allow that charge to be stated in all its possible permutations, most often by Pamela's persecutor Mr. B., but also by his sister, his friends and his other servants. Pamela herself responds to these accusations by admitting the charge of hypocrisy while simultaneously redefining its moral import, and I will argue here that Richardson's novel offers a far more sophisticated examination of hypocrisy than his detractors have admitted. Unlike

Fielding, whose amusing but vicious hypocrites are liable to the harshest punishment, Richardson offers Pamela to the reader as a female hypocrite whose occasional deceptiveness is mitigated, even redeemed by her combination of virtue and vulnerability. Pamela does not accidentally fall short of the ideal of sincerity the novel seems to endorse, in other words; Richardson presents her, I will argue, as deliberately, even cold-bloodedly adopting arguments to justify deceptive practices within the framework of virtue the novel has constructed. I follow the lead here of other critics who have drawn attention to the fact that even the sharpest critiques of *Pamela* are anticipated within the novel itself.[2] While I will also examine *Shamela* and other contemporary parodies and adaptations for what they can tell us about Richardson's methods and motives, my central argument is that the text of *Pamela* itself offers the richest possible evidence of the tension between arguments for transparency in social relations and arguments in favor of dissimulation and its affiliates, a tension whose consequences for Richardson's fiction are both productive and self-defeating.

Hypocrisy and sincerity are not the only qualities that jostle for preeminence in Richardson's novel. *Pamela* contains a surprisingly wide range of conflicted, often directly contradictory arguments about class and gender. Some of the discomfort expressed by Richardson's contemporaries must be prompted by the socially subversive elements in Pamela's story. Many of these readers identify *Pamela* as an inadvertently cautionary tale about the threat posed to upper-class culture by upwardly mobile servants, and are concerned to expose the ludicrous aspects of the novel's egalitarianism. In the editorial framework of *Shamela*, for instance, when Tickletext asks Parson Oliver to give *Pamela* to his "Servant-Maids," Parson Oliver responds with a harsh rebuke:

> The Instruction which it conveys to Servant-Maids, is, I think, very plainly this, To look out for their Masters as sharp as they can. The Consequences of which will be, besides Neglect of their Business, and the using all manner of Means to come at Ornaments of their Persons, that if the Master is not a Fool, they will be debauched by him; and if he is a Fool, they will marry him.[3]

Richardson himself objects strongly to the pseudo-aristocratic masculine culture that invokes anachronistic concepts like the *droit de seigneur* for its own corrupt ends. Yet while it would prove relatively easy to argue (particularly in the context of the mid-century evangelical movement) that no servant girl should have to suffer her master's sexual advances, the argument that marriages between masters and servants could be anything other than socially and psychologically destructive was harder for readers to stomach,

a difficulty that affected even Richardson himself when he came to write the novel's sequel. Discomfort about the novel's vision of class relations is by no means confined to eighteenth-century readers: Pamela's own effusive gratitude following her change in station, and her frequent and often self-abasing expressions of humility, have made many modern readers uneasy as well.

In her struggle to protect her virtue, Pamela is able to enlist allies from several different camps. She is largely supported by B.'s servants, though Mrs. Jewkes and a few others are so closely identified with their master's power as to be invulnerable to an appeal on the basis of class solidarity. She also appeals to upper-class women on the basis of gender solidarity – the premise that all women of whatever social class share a commitment to the defense of modesty and female chastity. Yet such alliances are often fragile or deceptive. As Pamela tries to enlist the neighboring gentry to help her escape, for instance, she gains the sympathy of Lady Darnford (on the grounds of female solidarity against male violence) only to lose it by the judgment of her husband, Sir Simon: "Why, what is all this, my Dear," he tells his wife, "but that the 'Squire our Neighbour has a mind to his Mother's Waiting-maid?"[4] Yet Pamela's gloss on Sir Simon's summing-up is equally scathing: "(So, my dear Father and Mother, it seems that poor Peoples Honesty is to go for nothing)," she comments in an aside to her parents (134). Richardson's modern advocates like to linger on these moments. *Pamela* may be most attractive, on political grounds at least, when Richardson asserts that virtue is the only nobility, that merit should outweigh birth, and that "poor Peoples Honesty" matters as much as rich people's honor. Richardson also wins us over when he exposes the degradation implicit in the male aristocratic definition of honor and argues that a powerful man who makes his servants do his dirty work is even more culpable than the servant who follows orders without questioning his or her own conscience.

But the novel also poses problems for those readers who find attractive Pamela's principled resistance to the abuse of power. Lady Davers suggests that Pamela's resistance is chiefly driven by the desire to hold out for a higher price – "It is only thy little Cunning, that it may look like a Cloak to thy yielding, and get better Terms from him," she says (397) – and surely the magnitude of Pamela's worldly compensation casts into question the disinterestedness of her "virtue." (As Shamela says, "I thought once of making a little Fortune by my Person. I now intend to make a great one by my Vartue" [329–30].) More disturbing, though no character within the

novel takes issue with it, is the language of submission that the previously rebellious Pamela adopts following her engagement and marriage to Mr. B. The fact that Pamela voluntarily marries her would-be rapist makes some of the novel's most sympathetic readers doubt that there is anything truly voluntary about her choice. It would be a mistake to ignore the problems posed by Pamela's change of heart about B., or to downplay the violence of the threat to Pamela in the first volume of *Pamela* I. Novel critics have sometimes been reluctant to hold B. accountable for his bad behavior, as when Margaret Doody writes in mitigation that "[B.'s] *bravura* attempts have a touch of the schoolboy prank which saves them from being really brutal and repellent."[5] Yet if we enter the imaginative world of the novel, we have to take B. seriously, and readers who consider themselves on Pamela's side may have a hard time swallowing the transition between the first and second volumes of *Pamela* I, where B. is miraculously transformed from an adversary to an admired husband whose authority – even at its most brutish – Pamela is reluctant to question.

The question of power is unavoidable, in part because Richardson is so very pointed in his depiction of Pamela's situation. She is at risk not just because of her personal attractions, but because of the ambiguities that arise from her status as a special kind of servant. Her cultivation by B.'s mother has made Pamela physically and psychologically vulnerable in ways that B.'s ordinary housemaids are not. Richardson makes it clear that both Pamela's sexual integrity and her right to speak for herself are threatened by the abuse of power by higher-ups, and perhaps his most interesting contribution to the debate on hypocrisy concerns the ways that differences in power serve as a clog on sincere and open communication, whether it's between members of different social classes or between men and women. Beyond the continuities between the novel and the kinds of writing discussed in the first three chapters of this study (prose satires, essays, letters, advice books, political animadversions and vindications), though, what special features characterize the novel's treatment of virtue and its relationship to hypocrisy?

Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* continues to set the terms for much discussion of the eighteenth-century novel, and his formulation of the relationship between the novel's formal and ethical components provides a useful starting point here. Watt is concerned with the development of what he calls "formal realism" – which "is only a mode of presentation, and . . . is therefore ethically neutral" – and he understands the history of the novel as the struggle of novelists to find ways of conveying a "moral pattern" without

breaching formal realism, a struggle in which point of view, he suggests, would become the most powerful tool.[6] Watt argues that the different narrative methods of Richardson and Fielding "are by no means manifestations of two opposite and irreconcilable kinds of novel, but merely rather clearly contrasted solutions of problems which pervade the whole tradition of the novel and whose apparent divergencies can in fact be harmoniously reconciled" (308). He concludes that Austen's novels (following the innovations of Burney and others) offer the most sophisticated solutions to the problem of whether narrative should offer primarily a representation of the minute details of daily life (Richardson) or an evaluation of that life from a more objective and impersonal point of view (Fielding), and that Austen's fiction furthermore combines "the advantages both of realism of presentation and realism of assessment, of the internal and of the external approaches to character" (310). The novel shares with eighteenth-century philosophical writing a double commitment to ethics and epistemology (approximately aligned with Watt's "assessment" and "presentation"), and Michael McKeon's *Origins of the English Novel* builds on the opposition Watt employs between Richardson and Fielding, providing a dialectical theory of the novel in which the *Pamela–Shamela* controversy of the early 1740s enacts a more general crisis of representation (social and political) on the levels of narrative form and content, a contest in which the two novelists employ "antithetical methods of writing what is nonetheless recognized as the same species of narrative."[7]

I'm not sure that the methods of Richardson and Fielding are really antithetical, and McKeon's characterization of their respective positions as "naive empiricism and extreme skepticism" (266) is doubtless exaggerated; his dialectic, in other words, depends on the assumption that these two authors "are understood to present coherent, autonomous, and alternative methods for doing the same thing" (22). I will emphasize instead the relative incoherence and interdependence of *Pamela* and *Shamela*; Richardson is as interested as Fielding in how we know what we know, and both writers share a commitment to exploring the definitions of virtue and its false double, hypocrisy. The problem of hypocrisy offers the critic an especially useful tool for excavating these narrative debates. This is not just because hypocrisy is the clearest intersection of truth and virtue (to borrow McKeon's terms), the two questions the hypocrite prompts in the observer being "Is he/she for real?" and "Is he/she good?" Richardson and Fielding were also in agreement as to hypocrisy's usefulness as a central topos for defining and contesting narrative and ethical authority. This chapter uses the problem of hypocrisy to organize a broader discussion of what the form of the novel offers

mid-eighteenth-century writers interested in debating how we know what is good and what goodness means in situations complicated by class, gender, deception and dependency.

The chapter will accordingly treat *Pamela* as a "now-you-see-it, now-you-don't" defense of hypocrisy whose companion arguments for transparency are far more equivocal than has been generally recognized. I adopt this admittedly tendentious M.O. in the interest of clarifying some of the novel's more controversial or shocking positions and showing that their presence is not accidental but integral to the design of the novel as a whole. In the process of making arguments about Richardson's narrative modes, critics tend to use a hyper-sexualized language of prosecution, one that is frequently witty and self-aware but can nonetheless be troubling. Watt's often-quoted conclusion that *Pamela* "gratified the reading public with the combined attractions of a sermon and a striptease" characterizes the book rather than the heroine, but his language encourages confusion between the two (*Rise of the Novel*, 179). Richardson's other heroines are hardly immune to this treatment. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's phrase "Fig leaves" draws our attention, as surely she means it to, away from Harriet Byron's head and heart to her genitals. More recently, in his sophisticated discussion of Clarissa's ironic narration, William Warner takes Clarissa's tendency to mediate her presentation of individual scenes by retrospective analysis and evaluation and associates it with the charge of sexual corruption: "Here we come to what is so problematic about Clarissa," he writes. "For though Clarissa dresses herself as innocent, we have seen how her behavior is everywhere linked to the struggle she wages with her adversaries. And this makes us ask: has she remained uncompromised by these struggles? or, is she hiding something unsavory beneath her garments?"[8] While I have tried here to avoid the language of sexual seduction, the terminology of disguise, deception and dissimulation is harder to exclude, as Richardson himself discovered while writing *Pamela*. I hope, however, that readers will extend me the benefit of the doubt and allow my use of the language of deception (however counter-intuitive they may find this request) as being also "ethically neutral," in Watt's suggestive phrase.

I

Near the beginning of the second volume of *Pamela* I, B. has finally obtained the parcel of letters seized from Pamela by the housekeeper, Mrs. Jewkes. Before reading the letters, in which he fears to find evidence that Pamela

is "prepossessed in some other Person's Favour" (229), B. allows Pamela to speak in her own defense. "Well, Sir," says Pamela,

> since you *will*, you *must* read them; and I think I have no Reason to be afraid of being found insincere, or having, in any respect, told you a Falsehood; because, tho' I don't remember all I wrote, yet I know I wrote my Heart; and that is not deceitful. And remember, Sir, another thing, that I always declared I thought myself right to endeavour to make my Escape from this forced and illegal Restraint; and so you must not be angry that I would have done so, if I could. (230)

The two points Pamela makes here will be reiterated by her over the pages that follow, in which B. – having read the letters in his possession – acts as Pamela's prosecutor and judge. At issue is her sincerity, and she addresses in this regard both the rhetoric of the letter – insisting that whether or not she remembers what she wrote, she cannot have been false because she "wrote [her] Heart" – and the ethics of deceit in conditions of persecution – arguing that under the "forced and illegal Restraint" in which she finds herself, she has had every right to attempt an escape requiring stratagems that would seem to be at odds with the sincerity on which she prides herself. In order to vindicate herself, Pamela must show that these two apparently incommensurate arguments are not just compatible but complementary, and the conversational exchanges between Pamela and B. that accompany his reading of the letters allow Richardson to mount a sophisticated defense, in the interdependent vocabularies of sincerity and stratagem, of the forms of deceit practiced by the victim of illegal restraint.

Ian Watt observes that the familiar letter "can be an opportunity for a much fouler and more unreserved expression of the writer's own private feelings than oral converse usually affords," and much of the critical commentary on *Pamela* makes similar assumptions about the true nature of the letter.[9] Yet Tom Keymer has drawn attention to the inadequacy of treating the letters of Richardson's heroines as the unreserved expression of private feeling, or as a merely convenient technique for dramatizing "authentic" personality and experience. Keymer consistently questions "the assumption that Richardson turned to letters simply as a convention for achieving dramatic immediacy," suggesting instead that the letter form (especially in *Clarissa*) gives Richardson a medium for exploring the distortions – rather than the authenticities – of first-person narrative: "The result is very far from an effect of pure transparency," he asserts. "It amounts instead to a uniquely complicated unreliability – even a kind of opacity."[10] Keymer places Richardson in the context of eighteenth-century theories of letter-writing, which oscillate between two poles. The standard view of the

familiar letter, as expressed by Thomas Sprat and others, is that "In a Man's Letters you know, Madam, his soul lies naked," as Johnson wrote jokingly to Mrs. Thrale; "his letters are only the mirrour of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process. Nothing is inverted, nothing distorted, you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives."[11] In a more serious vein, however, Johnson's *Life of Pope* includes a radically different view of the relationship between letter-writing and openness: "Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and certainly what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse."[12] In the passage that follows (not quoted by Keymer), Johnson offers one more thought on the relationship between self-deception and hypocrisy in letter-writing that is highly relevant to any discussion of *Pamela*: "To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself."

In the mock-trial to which B. subjects Pamela after he has read all the "treasonable Papers" of this "great Plotter" (228), the letters provide valid evidence precisely because they were not written for B.'s own perusal. When the letters do finally pass into B.'s hands, after extensive resistance on Pamela's part, they convert B. – in a limited sense at least – to Pamela's persuasion. Reading the letters seals B.'s conviction that he wants to marry Pamela (241), and decides him to send her freely home. The consequence of B.'s decision to let Pamela go, and then to request (by letter) her return once she is free from all constraint, is that she freely consents to come back to him. In other words, his generosity achieves what force could not.[13] (The style of "giving up" rather than simply "giving" is characteristic of Pamela; Carol Kay comments that "Richardson's heroines never gain so much as when they give up their power" and that "[e]xercising her power to sacrifice her interest continues to be Pamela's favored form of self-determination."[14]) On the heels of their engagement, B. makes another request: will Pamela oblige him now by showing him all her more recent letters? Pamela complies, but with a reciprocal request that she may write over one sheet (that containing her "very severe Reflections on the Letter [she] receiv'd by the Gypsey, when [she] apprehended [B.'s] Design of the Sham-marriage"), on the grounds that she had "rely'd upon [B.'s] Word, and not wrote them for [his] Perusal" (277). B. then turns this phrase against Pamela: "What is

that, said he? tho' I cannot consent to it beforehand: For I more desire to see them, because they are your true Sentiments at *the Time*, and because they were *not* written for my Perusal" (277).

B.'s words here suggest that he has finally allowed Pamela's claim to truthfulness: he accepts the validity of her testimony on the grounds that the letters were not written for his eyes, and that their contents express sentiments that are true as a consequence of their production in specific moments of feeling. It's the present-tense *fact* of writing-to-the-moment, minus the shaping of experience that results from the act of organizing a narrative in retrospect, that convinces B. of the letters' truthfulness – truth can only be conceived in the present tense and the first person, and there is a kind of sincerity even in self-deception. Having seen so much of Pamela's writing, B. wants all the rest of it as well, and his request for the letters continues to press the question of Pamela's sincerity. First he asks her to be truthful about the total quantity of her writing: "Why, said he, tell me truly, Have you not continued your Account till now? Don't ask me, Sir, said I. But I insist upon your Answer, reply'd he. Why then, Sir, said I, I will not tell an Untruth; I have. – That's my good Girl! said he. I love Sincerity at my Heart" (231). Does B. deliver the last line straight or with a large dose of irony? Richardson doesn't make it clear one way or the other. B. won't trust Pamela unless she offers him tenders of her sincerity, and she responds in a more equivocal manner than he might wish: there is something coy or euphemistic in her phrase "I will not tell an Untruth," calling to mind Orwell's irritable suggestion that "[o]ne can cure oneself of the *not un-*formation by memorizing this sentence: *A not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field.*"[15] B. makes a great deal out of the fact that Pamela should give up the letters voluntarily, rather than by force, but his language continues to reveal anxiety about Pamela's truthfulness: "But you will greatly oblige me, to shew me, voluntarily, what you have written. I long to see the Particulars of your Plot, and your Disappointment . . . Besides, said he, there is such a pretty Air of Romance, as you relate them, in your Plots, and my Plots, that I shall be better directed in what manner to wind up the Catastrophe of the pretty Novel" (231–32). B. wants Pamela to be a good girl – the embodiment of sincerity – but he suspects (and rightly so) that they share an affinity for "Plots." B. understands Pamela well enough to know that she is an artful creature, not an artless one, in the narratological if not the sexual sense. He rather comically compliments Pamela on her honesty as it has been unfolded in the letters: "Nothing, said he, pleases me better, than that, in all your Arts, Shifts and Stratagems, you have had a great regard to Truth;

and have, in all your little Pieces of Deceit, told very few wilful *Fibs*" (233). But how is a person who practices "Arts, Shifts and Stratagems" to maintain the strict "regard to Truth" that virtue would seem to require? The adjective "wilful" suggests a distinction between forms of deceit that originate with a wayward and desiring self and deceptions that are subconscious, accidental or inadvertent. What is the difference between a willful fib and an innocent one, though, and how can Pamela utter any fibs at all without losing her reputation for truthfulness?

Though the exchange that follows is conducted in a playful register, Pamela continues to hide some of her cards. When B. asks her about the location of her hidden supplies of pen and ink, and then her written papers, saying, "Tell me, Are they in your Pocket?," Pamela's response is as follows: "No, Sir, said I, my heart up at my Mouth. Said he, I know you won't tell a downright *Fib* for the World; but for *Equivocation!* no Jesuit ever went beyond you" (233). How and why does Richardson present Pamela as a mistress of equivocation? Does his choice to do so necessarily invalidate Pamela's authority, either as narrator or as moral exemplar? Or is equivocation compatible (as the novel seems to suggest) with the otherwise expansive sincerity that Pamela embodies? The following discussion will read back (as B. does) through the letters of Pamela's that precede this conversation. The position I take is not anti-Pamela – I have no trouble accepting Richardson's premise that an adolescent serving-girl who finds herself in her master's captivity and threatened with rape should be justified in practicing any kind of deceit whatsoever. Like B., however, I will scrutinize Pamela's descriptions of her own motives – and the language of a series of conversational exchanges about the truthfulness of her writing – in order to reexamine what have traditionally been perceived as the weakest or least defensible aspects of Pamela's self-presentation. Richardson ran many hazards as he constructed this narrative, and those risks center on a cluster of related issues, which I isolate as follows. Is Pamela an equivocator, and if so, what exactly is equivocation and under what circumstances is it justified? Is female modesty a form of deception, as B. and others charge, or an expression of the heart? Who has the authority to define the true meaning of words, Pamela or Mr. B.? Finally, why does Pamela openly admit to caring so much about appearances? Doesn't she thereby risk being identified as the most superficial, socially self-conscious kind of hypocrite?

Eighteenth-century readers skeptical about Pamela's virtue seized on her apparent reluctance to procure her own safety by leaving B.'s house as evidence of a crudely self-interested hypocrisy. The language in which Pamela refers to her own escape attempts is unusually conflicted. She offers the

following comment to B. as he reads the account of her attempts: "Sir, said I, when you consider that my utmost Presumption could not make me hope for the Honour you now seem to design me; that therefore, I had no Prospect before me but Dishonour; and was so hardly us'd into the Bargain, I should have seem'd very little in Earnest in my Professions of Honesty, if I had not endeavour'd to get away" (283). She here neatly sidesteps the issue of whether she wanted to stay or not; indeed, neither Pamela nor Richardson seems to have access to the language for openly articulating Pamela's own desire for B. Instead, she focuses on the ways in which her honesty (or her reputation for honesty – she is concerned here to "*seem* . . . in Earnest" [emphasis added]) depended on it being known that she had tried to escape. An earlier comment in a similar vein is even more explicit about the artificial or constructed nature of Pamela's sincerity: "My Honesty (I am poor and lowly, and am not intitled to call it *Honour*) was in Danger. I saw no Means of securing myself from your avow'd Attempts. You had shew'd you would not stick at little Matters; and what, Sir, could any body have thought of my Sincerity, in preferring that to all other Considerations, if I had not escap'd from these Dangers, if I could have found any way for it?" (217).

I take the language here to be not primarily a propitiatory softening of Pamela's own actions, but rather a relatively self-conscious mobilization of the vocabulary of appearances – what would "any body have thought" of Pamela's sincerity, if she had not attempted to escape? The fact that it is this question rather than the more obvious alternatives ("I was in danger of being raped, and I attempted to escape out of sheer terror," etc.) that she chooses to pose to B. is highly significant. These passages and others offer evidence that Richardson's argument about the moral obligation to be transparent is complicated by a related argument about reputation and appearances, on the one hand (this is the argument Richardson's adversaries isolate when they say that Pamela cares more about what people think of her than about her own safety); and on the other by an awareness that power skews the obligations of the dependent, and can even partly erase the obligation to be sincere. Finally, sincerity itself becomes a social construct on the order of reputation, and one that Pamela invokes strategically to protect herself against B.

II

The conflict between Pamela and B. includes, as I have suggested above, a struggle for the right to define the meaning of words. In part because of

gender and class factors, these two characters continually contest a vocabulary whose terms seem sometimes to be shared, but are actually capable of encompassing diametrically opposed meanings. B. uses the word "honour," for instance, to cloak his desire to dominate; Pamela challenges his meaning by exposing the violence towards women that lies beneath the chivalric-sounding term. B. in turn levels an assault on Pamela's use of the word "virtue" – and a host of associated terms like "innocence" and "artlessness" – in order to wear down her resistance to his sexual advances. Pamela is often explicit about these contests of meaning, as when (after summarizing B.'s interpretation of her own character) she makes the following comment:

> So I had better be thought artful and subtle, than be so, in *his* Sense; and as light as he makes of the Words *Virtue* and *Innocence* in me, he would have made a less angry Construction, had I less deserved that he should do so; for then, may be, my *Crime* would have been my *Virtue* with him; naughty Gentleman as he is! (29)

Pamela seems almost impressed here by the virtuosity of B.'s wordplay. B.'s construction (grammatical, as always) of himself as a "Gentleman," naughty or otherwise, involves much use of the word "Honour," a term also invoked by B.'s minions as they assure Pamela that she can trust her master (123, 136–37). B.'s "Honour" is so degraded a concept – the banner of a failed ideology of chivalry that means little in the modern world of land and credit – that the word simply works (in the mouth of Mrs. Jewkes and others) as a threat, while Pamela herself is a veritable thesaurus as she provides the real synonyms ("Ruin! Shame! Disgrace!" [123]) of this lofty-sounding term.

Pamela never forgets that the fact of her imprisonment – the conditions of restraint in which she is kept – drains any meaning out of B.'s professions of honor. As she is kept a prisoner, she tells B. in one letter,

> do you think, Sir, (pardon your poor Servant's Freedom; my Fears make me bold; do you think, I say) that your general Assurances of Honour to me, can have the Effect upon me, that, were it not for these Things, all your Words ought to have? – O good Sir! I too much apprehend, that *your* Notions of Honour and *mine* are very different from one another: And I have no other Hope but in your continued Absence. If you have any Proposals to make me, that are consistent with your honourable Professions, in my humble Sense of the Word, a few Lines will communicate them to me, and I will return such an Answer as befits me. (138–39)

Pamela's ostentatious language of humility – calling herself "your poor Servant," using the word "humble" in a morally aggressive fashion – has often been read as manipulative self-abasement in the vein of a Uriah Heep, but in the context of a serious argument that poor people's "Honesty" is a

sounder basis for morality than rich men's "Honour," she has every reason, rhetorically speaking, to ring changes on the language of servitude and submission.

Pamela is haunted by what seems to be a general degradation in class relations, a specter that shows itself as soon as Pamela puts on the clothes of her dead mistress. It is not only B. who fails to live up to the obligations of his station in life; in fact, because of the exigencies of a happy ending, Richardson is often concerned – sometimes awkwardly – to establish that B. is a creature of fewer vices than his peers. Here is Pamela's lament:

> Sure the World must be near an End! for all the Gentlemen about are as bad as he almost, as far as I can hear! – And see the Fruits of such bad Examples: There is 'Squire *Martin* in the Grove, has had three Lyings-in, it seems, in his House, in three Months past, one by himself; and one by his Coachman; and one by his Woodman; and yet he has turn'd none of them away. Indeed, how can he, when they but follow his own vile Example. (70)

This sense of the decay of morality (a morality that cannot be understood without reference to gender and class) is characteristic of the first volume of *Pamela* I. In its entirety, Richardson's novel foregrounds a broader argument about the responsibility of the upper classes to set a good example for their social inferiors. The upper classes must set the tone for morality in general: "evil Examples, in Superiors, are doubly pernicious, and doubly culpable, because such Persons are bad *themselves*, and not only do no *Good*, but much *Harm*, to *others*" (378). In the case of Squire Martin, the evil example concerns sexual morality, but *Pamela* is equally concerned with what happens when masters ask servants to do the dirty work of kidnapping, seduction and violence. In the fictitious golden age of master–servant relations, servants should have obeyed every command with implicit and unquestioning loyalty, but the difference in the modern world is that a master will often ask a servant to do something that goes against morality. Mrs. Jewkes offers Pamela the clearest possible statement of the conventional wisdom: "Look-ye, said she, he is my Master, and if he bids me do a Thing that I can do, I think I ought to do it, and let him, who has Power, to command me, look to the Lawfulness of it" (110). Part of the novel's argument is that the Jewkes position is not a defensible ethical view, though *Pamela* as a whole fails to answer the question of whether servants in general can be expected to make responsible moral choices while masters exact draconian penalties for moral independence. Another way of looking at this problem is to say that Richardson doesn't have the nerve to put his own argument to the test: he makes the penalties for principled disobedience initially acute, as in the cases

of Mrs. Jervis, Longman, Parson Williams et al., but reinstates them all in B.'s service as soon as the marriage between Pamela and B. has taken place.

It is possible that B. has been corrupted in part by the unthinking loyalty of his servants, for he is surrounded by people who always leave him to determine the "Lawfulness" of his own actions. But B. also shows himself to be a cunning manipulator of his subordinates' assumptions about authority. When Pamela stays the night with B.'s tenant and his family, an episode greatly expanded in the novel's 1801 edition (the version quoted below), these "very honest civil people" (136 [1801]) do not seem to pose an immediate threat: Pamela's suspicions are calmed when she "[sees] things about a little reputable, and no guile appearing in them, but rather a face of concern for my grief" (135 [1801]). But Mr. B. efficiently makes the farmer his own ally by appealing to his investment in masculine authority: he tells the farmer a (false) tale about an otherwise virtuous maid who wanted to run off and be married to a man not of her father's choosing, and who must therefore be kept under restraint for her own good. The farmer is enraged by the fiction of Pamela's independence: "'it never was a good world since young women would follow their own headstrong wills, and resolve to dispose of themselves without the knowledge and consent of those who were born before them'" (138 [1801]). Clearly B. has crafted exactly the right story for his audience, and Pamela herself is outraged when she reads B.'s letter to the farmer and observes the "deep arts" of her master: "*O the artful wretch! . . . What reason have I for apprehensions from such a false-hearted contriver! . . . how do I hate this vile hypocritical master!*" (139 [1801]). Pamela concludes that "I am sure the man is a tyrant over his wife and daughter" (141 [1801]); and yet the farmer's anger about wayward "young women [who] would follow their own headstrong wills" is not wrong, but only misplaced.

It is Pamela's social status, as well as her gender, that makes it impossible to enlist this respectable family as her supporters: "as I had owned myself to be the servant of the squire, they were of opinion that they ought not to intermeddle between a man of his rank and his servant" (143 [1801]). The fact that they are B.'s dependents short-circuits their ethical judgment, Richardson argues. This is a controversial point. Both within the novel and in the critical commentaries that followed its publication, readers are disturbed by this aspect of Richardson's argument. Was it right for Parson Williams to interfere in his master's business, or was he (as Fielding's Parson Oliver concludes) "a busy Fellow, intermeddling with the private Affairs of his Patron, whom he is very ungratefully forward to expose and condemn on every Occasion" (*Shamela,* 343)? The latter, say the local gentry

of Lincolnshire (as well as many of the novel's readers); and even Richardson, in his emphasis on the mixed motives that drive Williams's attempt to rescue Pamela, leaves this question unresolved. Similarly, Pamela's language in judging the farmer's morality is uncharacteristically exaggerated, perhaps even petulant. She does not herself believe that "young women" should be allowed to marry without parental consent, or even that the farmer is a genuine "tyrant"; rather, she has been forced by her position of dependence and B.'s cunning arts to exaggerate her own position to the point of weakness.

In spite of the subversive nature of Pamela's argument that a subordinate has a responsibility to consider the morality of actions delegated by a master, the total effect of *Pamela* is to reinforce the master's authority. Many of these arguments are hammered out by B. and Lady Davers in the last third of the novel. B. can justify his marriage, in conversation with a sister who objects to its leveling tendencies and charges that B. has thereby attenuated his dignity and authority, by reminding her that marriage only seals masculine authority, and cannot corrupt it (assuming the wife's complete submission of her will to her husband's). It is thus entirely reasonable for B. to marry a woman of lower social status, he says, although the case would be quite different if Lady Davers chose to marry her groom: "a Man ennobles the Woman he takes, be she *who* she will; and adopts her into his own Rank, be it *what* it will: But a Woman, tho' ever so nobly born, debases herself by a mean Marriage, and descends from her own Rank, to his she stoops to" (422). Marriage subordinates a woman to her husband's authority, in other words, and thus it is more disruptive and socially culpable for her to marry down than up.

The second volume of *Pamela* I undermines some of the radical moral arguments of the first volume, and B.'s continued pleasure in his wife will clearly depend on a fuller submission to his authority than she chooses to practice before the marriage – his anger when he believes she has disobeyed his instructions about meeting him at the Darnfords' hints at ominous things to come (a hint confirmed by the darker moments of *Pamela* II, particularly the masquerade episode). Much of Pamela's anxiety in the scenes where Lady Davers detains her results from her anticipation of B.'s anger, and indeed, upon her belated arrival on this occasion she is welcomed by one of the Darnford daughters with the words "you'll be beat, I can tell you; for here has been the 'Squire come these two Hours, and is very angry at you" (399). She has passed from the hands of one bad-tempered tyrannical sibling to another.

III

One of the traditionally frowned-upon tactics by which Pamela protects her threatened virtue is equivocation. This is not a word she would use to describe her own rhetorical practice: like hypocrisy, equivocation is a word one uses to expose an opponent rather than to identify oneself. The *OED* defines equivocation as "[t]he use of words or expressions that are susceptible of a double signification, with a view to mislead; *esp*. the expression of a virtual falsehood in the form of a proposition which (in order to satisfy the speaker's conscience) is verbally true." Perez Zagorin has traced the major role played in early modern Europe by "the practice of dissimulation as it [was] rationalized and justified by theologians, casuists, philosophers, and political theorists," and his excavation of equivocation as a historical phenomenon illuminates aspects of Richardson's novel that often escape scrutiny.[16] Zagorin recounts the story of lying "as a historically and socially determined phenomenon in those communities and societies in which pressures for religious and political conformity have impelled dissident individuals or groups to lie and dissemble in self-protection"; he is interested not in the (doubtless universal) phenomenon of "rulers and governments [who] lie" but in "their subjects and citizens who turn to dissimulation to escape persecution."[17] One of Zagorin's more surprising conclusions, given the shibboleths of seventeenth-century British anti-Catholicism, is that not just Jesuits but also some English Protestant groups defended certain kinds of lying in conditions of constraint.

Many English arguments against equivocation seem to be motivated by crudely anti-Catholic sentiment. An amusing if somewhat horrifying example can be found in the *Letter from a Jesuite* (1679), described by the pamphlet's author as an attack on the "*Jesuites and Romish Seminaries*" whose "very *looks and garbs* as well as their words are *Equivocations*."[18] The pamphlet gives a sample letter of recommendation which when read out loud to the friar sounds like a rave review, but which is also capable of being understood as an outright condemnation: "if you please to turn down just a quarter of the leaf on the outside so as to cover half the Letter and then read what remains open, you will find it still coherent sense but to a quite contrary import from that which before it carried," the author points out for readers in danger of missing the joke (5). The letter is reproduced here as figure 1. The conventions of Jesuit equivocation are exaggerated here to the point of parody, with the consequence of diverting the reader's attention away from political or religious critique to the sheer ingenuity of the literary

(4)

The Letter.

Sir,

MR. G. an Irish Fryar of the order of Saint Benedict *is the bringer unto you of news from me by means of this letter, he is one of the most Discreet, Wise, and least Vitious persons that I ever yet (amongst all I have converst with) knew, and hath earnestly desired me to write to you in his favour, and to give him a Letter for you of* Credence *on his behalf, and my Recommendation, which I have granted to his Merit (I assure you) rather than to his Importunity, for believe me, Sir, he is one that deserves your esteem, and I am sorry you should be wanting in the least to oblige him by being mistaken in not knowing him: I should be exceeding sad if you were so as many others have been, upon that account, who now esteem him, and are of my best friends. Hence Sir, and from no other motive is it that I desire to advertise you That you are obliged more than any to take special notice of him, to afford him all imaginable respect, and to say nothing in his presence that may offend or displease him in any sort; For I may truly say, I love him as I do my self and assure you there cannot be a more convincing argument of an unworthy person in the world than any way to injure him. I know that your self as soon as you cease to be a stranger to his vertue, and have occasion to be acquainted with him, will love him as well as I, and will thank me for this advice. The assurance I have of your Civility hindreth me for to write further of him to you, or to say more upon this subject.*

Paris, Nov. 21. 1678.

Your affectionate Friend,

Johannes Armondus de Hess, &c.

Figure 1. [Johannes Armondus de Hess]. *A Letter from a Jesuite: or, The Mysterie of Equivocation. Being The Copy of a Letter of Recommendation, seeming much in favour of the Bearer, but by different Reading, rendred of quite contrary signification. Lately discovered by the Person who was thereby abused, and now made Publick for General Satisfaction* (London: W. W., 1679). By permission of the British Library. Shelfmark 1480.b.16.(5).

device. In its exaggeration, though, this letter makes the techniques of the equivocator literally visible.

Pamela's equivocation is not so typographically sophisticated, but it is commented upon constantly by B. He first calls Pamela an equivocator following the incident in the summer-house. B. is desperately afraid that the story of his bad behavior will get out and ruin his reputation, and he takes Pamela to task for having disclosed more than she should:

did I not tell you, you should take no Notice of what pass'd, to any Creature? And yet you have made a common Talk of the Matter, not considering either my Reputation or your own. – I made a common Talk of it, Sir, said I! I have nobody to talk to, hardly!

He interrupted me, and said, *Hardly!* you little Equivocator! what do you mean by *hardly*? Let me ask you, Have you not told Mrs. *Jervis* for one? (30)

Like other equivocators, Pamela is a stickler for verbal accuracy – the letter, rather than the spirit, of truth. B. is surely right to seize on her use of the word "hardly," for what else is this but "mental reservation," that practice long associated with casuistry and the Jesuits? As Pamela continues to avoid a straight answer, B. presses her further:

Well said, pretty *Innocent* and *Artless*! as Mrs. *Jervis* calls you, said he; and is it thus you taunt and retort upon me, insolent as you are! But still I will be answered directly to my Question? Why then, Sir, said I, I will not tell a Lye for the World: I did tell Mrs. *Jervis*; for my Heart was almost broke; but I open'd not my Mouth to any other. Very well, Boldface, said he, and Equivocator, again! You did not open your Mouth to any other; but did you not *write* to some other? (30)

No matter how much we sympathize with Pamela's plight, her assertion – "I will not tell a Lye for the World" – is certainly disingenuous. Fortunately for him, B. understands the rules of interrogation perfectly well and there is a playful quality to their exchange here; of course Pamela has written to tell her parents of what passed.[19]

In fact, Pamela and B. share a talent for equivocation (and its detection) as well as for "plotting," as they both like to call it. The benign servants of the Bedfordshire house don't seem to understand Pamela particularly well, their sympathy – and their own relative naïveté – blinding them to the sophistication of her maneuvers. B., on the other hand, asserts from the first that Pamela acts a part, as when Mrs. Jervis defends Pamela against him:

Said she, You see how, by her Fit, she was in Terror; she could not help it; and tho' your Honour intended her no harm; yet the Apprehension was almost Death to her: And I had much ado to bring her to herself again. O the little Hypocrite, said he! she has all the Arts of her Sex; they are born with her; and I told you a-while ago, you did not know her. (35–36)

Once Pamela has been transported to the Lincolnshire house, she is surrounded by people with a more realistic sense of how she operates. When Mrs. Jewkes finds Pamela planting beans, for instance, she is immediately "afraid of some Fetch": "What Fetch? said I; it is hard I can neither stir, nor speak, but I must be suspected – Why, said she, my Master writes me, that I must have all my Eyes about me; for, tho' you are as innocent as a Dove, yet you're as cunning as a Serpent" (138). It's possible that Mrs. Jewkes's "innocent as a Dove" is meant ironically, as an unkind take-off on Pamela's own self-presentation, but another reading would suggest that both parts of Mrs. Jewkes's observation are literally true, and that she – like the novel's most sympathetic readers – is aware of, possibly even attracted to Pamela's peculiar combination of innocence and cunning.

In fact, though she does not always admit it even to herself, Pamela feels a deep affinity for B., far more than for her unsuspicious ally Parson Williams, who is hardly a fit adversary for a plotter of B.'s caliber. "[*To be sure this good Man can keep no Secret!*]," Pamela comments as an aside after reading one of Williams's letters (151, original emphasis). Mrs. Jewkes herself describes Williams in a way that makes his inconvenient transparency quite clear:

> Well, said she, he talks of nothing but you; and when I told him, I would fain have persuaded you to come with me, the Man was out of his Wits with his Gratitude to me; and so has laid open all his Heart to me, and told me all that has passed, and was contriving between you two. [Pamela then comments:] This alarm'd me prodigiously; and the rather, as I saw, by two or three Instances, that his honest Heart could keep nothing, believing every one as undesigning as himself. (154)

Williams is entirely taken in by B.'s first stratagem, while Pamela is more wary. Her perceptiveness is due in part to her gender and her low social status, which have obliged her to be far more cautious than Williams. Characters within the novel frequently comment on the disturbing or inappropriate quality of her ability to keep her heart closed and to practice "designs," especially in light of her extreme youth: "Mrs. *Jewkes* held up her Eyes and Hands, and said, Such Art, such Caution, such Cunning for thy Years!" (148).

Her contrivances with Williams have already elicited from Pamela some very characteristic expressions of delight in her own ingenuity. After establishing an agreed-upon place where they can exchange messages, for instance, Pamela comments:

> O what Inventions will Necessity be the Parent of! I hugg'd myself with the Thought; and she coming to us, he said, as if he was continuing the Discourse we were in; No, not extraordinary pleasant. What's that? what's that? said

Mrs. *Jewkes* – Only, said he, the Town, I'm saying, is not very pleasant. No, indeed, said she, 'tis not; 'tis a poor Town, to my thinking. Are there any Gentry in it? said I. And so we chatted on about the Town, to deceive her. But my Deceit intended no Hurt to any body. (122)

Pamela's argument – that her deceit is justified because it "[intends] no Hurt to any body," and is practiced only in order to protect herself from a fate that is for her quite literally worse than death – is many ways persuasive. But the cumulative effect of Pamela's stratagems, and the extremely pointed language in which Pamela herself describes them, should alert the reader to the novel's preoccupation with the ethics of deception. Pamela uses the loaded word "Trick" to describe her own contrivances as well as those of Mrs. Jewkes, for instance, and this constitutes an implicit admission as well as a canny preempting of possible charges ("I Have just now told you a Trick of mine; now I'll tell you a Trick of this wicked Woman's" [132]). Again, after Pamela calls Mrs. Jewkes a Jezebel, she regrets her rudeness, since it has only enraged Mrs. Jewkes and made her more threatening: "Well, thinks I, I must put on the Dissembler a little, I see," Pamela narrates (127). To cover her trembling after having retrieved a letter hidden beneath the sunflower, Pamela explains away her fright with an entirely imaginary excuse (one which critics have scrutinized for its very evident sexual connotations):

You seem frighted, Madam, said she: Why, said I, with a lucky Thought, (alas! your poor Daughter will make an Intriguer by-and-by; but I hope an innocent one!) I stoopt to smell at the Sun-flower, and a great nasty Worm run into the Ground, that startled me; for I don't love Worms. Said she, Sun-flowers don't smell. So I find, said I. (128)

An intriguer, but an innocent one: Pamela neutralizes the sting of the word "Intriguer" – defined by the *OED* not just in the strictly political sense ("one who carries on a tortuous or underhand plot; a secret schemer or manœuvrer, esp. in politics," with illustrations from Pepys, Steele and Burke) but in a sexual sense as well ("one who carries on an intrigue or liaison," with examples from Addison and Sheridan) – by introducing the adjective "innocent."

B. certainly thinks that Pamela is an able politician, an "*artful Creature*" who "is enough to corrupt a Nation by her seeming Innocence and Simplicity" and who "may have got a Party, perhaps, among my Servants with you, as she has here" (162, original emphasis; and see also 68). This is one of the sentiments expressed in the letter from B. to Mrs. Jewkes that is mistakenly addressed to Pamela. When Mrs. Jewkes (alerted by having herself

received the letter meant for Pamela) reproaches Pamela for having read a letter written to someone other than herself, it is on the grounds that Pamela "ought, in Manners, to have read no further" (163). The housekeeper's invocation of manners is patently unreasonable, an attempt to play on the guilt of the dependent, whose own anxieties about or aspirations for upward mobility may prompt her to collude in her own oppression by adopting an ideology that will rarely be to her own advantage. Manners are the prerogative of the powerful, whereas the powerless are licensed (Richardson argues) to do what they must to protect themselves. Pamela's defenses of her own plotting consistently focus on the justification provided by the position of absolute vulnerability in which she finds herself: "Alas! for me, what a Fate is mine, to be thus thought artful and forward, and ingrateful! when all I intended, was to preserve my Innocence; and when all the poor little Shifts, which his superior wicked Wit and Cunning have render'd ineffectual, were forced upon me in my own necessary Defence!" (165).

IV

Pamela's "poor little Shifts" have elicited a wide range of responses from readers. B. is the character within the novel who most often articulates the hostile interpretation, as when he observes that "[a]s for *Pamela*, she has a lucky Knack at falling into Fits, when she pleases" (65), or says, in response to Pamela's imminent faint, that "[s]he is Mistress of Arts, I'll assure you; and will mimick a Fit, ten to one, in a Minute" (183). Readers who find Pamela's own language lacking in self-awareness are able to find a great deal of evidence there that Pamela is (so to speak) "actively" hypocritical, as when she says that she "trick'd [herself] up" in her humble new outfit (55). Why "trick'd," these readers ask, unless that it conjures up the world of a Shamela? Pamela's self-transformation into a simple country girl provokes B. to new heights of lust, and this scene has been a favorite target for readers who see Pamela as a smooth operator who raises her own price by manipulating B.'s sexual appetites. Tassie Gwilliam offers a more subtle description, however, of the undercurrents of Richardson's attitudes towards hypocrisy: "The novel asserts Pamela's lack of hypocrisy all along, even while showing the heroine engaged in equivocal transformations of self. But *Pamela* also ritually expels hypocrisy, only to represent its irrepressible return. In fact, Richardson seizes the return of hypocrisy as an opportunity to reorient Pamela's disguise so that it can be shown to serve masculine authority and patriarchal power as well as to demonstrate the ambiguous reformation of that power and authority."[20]

Though Pamela's language of self-praise often borders on the ludicrous, the excessive love of praise is more or less compatible with virtue: *Pamela* would be a much duller book if its central character were perfect from head to toe. Equally, the fact that Pamela does not fully understand her own feelings for B. is psychologically plausible and need not automatically discredit her, though many readers believe it does. As one early reader observed, Pamela's initial excuse for not leaving B.'s house as soon as danger threatens – that she has to finish embroidering a flowered waistcoat for B. – is distinctly flimsy: "Pamela va donc partir, c'est une affaire terminée, elle le mande à ses parens; mais qui la retient? Une veste à broder. L'invention est ingénieuse; une fille qu'on veut séduire, qui en est persuadée, qui sent la nécessité de fuir un péril qu'elle redoute, se résout tranquillement à rester exposée; & quel important motif la détermine? Une veste à broder."[21] As discussed above, Pamela is well aware that she must seem to have tried hard to escape, however mixed her feelings about B.

The passages in which Pamela betrays her secret feelings for B. – feelings so secret, that is, that she hardly knows them herself – are often adduced as evidence of Pamela's hypocrisy, though this would seem to say more about readers' discomfort with anything less than full disclosure from a female first-person narrator.[22] Pamela's response to having learned that B. has narrowly escaped drowning while crossing a stream during a hunt displays a characteristic oscillation between fondness and outrage:

> What is the Matter, with all his ill Usage of me, that I cannot hate him? To be sure, I am not like other People! I am sure he has done enough to make me hate him; but yet when I heard his Danger, which was very great, I could not in my Heart forbear rejoicing for his Safety; tho' his Death would have ended my Afflictions. Ungenerous Master! if you knew this, you surely would not be so much my Persecutor! (179)

And again, perhaps even more crudely: "I look'd after him, out of the Window, and he was charmingly dress'd: To be sure, he is a handsome fine Gentleman! – What pity his Heart is not as good as his Appearance! Why can't I hate him? – But don't be uneasy, if you should see this [addressing her parents directly]; for it is impossible I should love him; for his Vices all *ugly him over*, as I may say" (196).

Another moment at which Pamela makes herself vulnerable to hostile interpretation is her contemplating suicide, and though B. himself is deeply moved by this part of Pamela's account, it has struck many readers as verging on the ludicrous. Certainly there is something histrionic in Pamela's description:

And then thought I, (and Oh! that Thought was surely of the Devil's Instigation; for it was very soothing and powerful with me) these wicked Wretches, who now have no Remorse, no Pity on me, will then be mov'd to lament their Misdoings; and when they see the dead Corpse of the unhappy *Pamela* dragg'd out to these slopy Banks, and lying breathless at their Feet, they will find that Remorse to wring their obdurate Hearts, which now has no Place there! – And my Master, my angry Master, will then forget his Resentments, and say, O this is the unhappy *Pamela!* that I have so causelesly [sic] persecuted and destroy'd! Now do I see she preferr'd her Honesty to her Life, will he say, and is no Hypocrite, nor Deceiver; but really was the innocent Creature she pretended to be! (172)

Here we might invoke eighteenth-century writers' commitment to the idea that one can care about appearances without being a hypocrite in the pejorative sense: that it's worth reclaiming for morality aspects of what some would call hypocrisy. Pamela would rather die than be thought a hypocrite (a word whose valence for Richardson is not surprisingly negative), but her sometimes histrionic concern for appearances disturbs readers precisely because of the underlying ambivalence expressed here about private versus public virtue. Is it even worth being virtuous – Pamela seems to ask herself – if nobody knows about it? Pamela's psychological makeup means that she is wedded to the idea of public vindication, her "Honesty" writ large, but that very need for vindication also casts her virtue into question.

The problem of hypocrisy is that despite the temptation to set it up as an all-or-nothing affair, individual people can only be reduced to out-and-out hypocrites if we perform a number of dubious interpretive moves. On a representational level, we have to flatten out their characters, ignoring the fact that hypocrisy is marked along a continuum and that real people have mixed motives, rather than motives that are necessarily falsified, whether deliberately or otherwise.[23] On an ideological level, furthermore, we have to elide the problem of opacity: specifically, the disparities that make it difficult to "read" someone else's character, particularly across a gender or class divide, though opacity may characterize all social relations. When the servant John Arnold confesses to Pamela that he has been showing her letters to B. all along, she offers an explicit discussion of hypocrisy in which all these different issues come together – power, praise and the extent to which we can ever know other people:

My dear Father and Mother, when you come to this Place, I make no doubt your Hair will stand an [sic] End, as mine does! – O the Deceitfulness of the Heart of Man! – This *John*, that I took to be the honestest of Men; that you took for the same; that was always praising you to me, and me to you, and for nothing so much

as for our honest Hearts; this very Fellow was all the while a vile Hypocrite, and a perfidious Wretch, and helping to carry on my Ruin! (120)

But her uncompromising stand here cannot be long maintained, and Pamela's next comment displays a far more nuanced understanding of hypocrisy, however conventionally she phrases it: "I can only sit down with this sad Reflection, That Power and Riches never want Tools to promote their vilest Ends, and that there is nothing so hard to be known as the Heart of Man!" (120). There is a great difference between the hyperbole of "O the Deceitfulness of the Heart of Man!" (a sentiment that encapsulates the passionately prim morality that Fielding and others find so disagreeable in Richardson's heroine) and the sadder, more Johnsonian reflection "that there is nothing so hard to be known as the Heart of Man." Most of all, Pamela's judgment is conditioned by her thoughts about relations between those who have power and wealth and those who do not; she never forgets the ways that the former may corrupt the latter, whose circumstances to some extent extenuate them. John can never be as culpable as his master.

Richardson's epistolary fictions balance deception and dependency with a great deal of sensitivity to the ways that individuals really interact in groups and to what language may reveal about those interactions. I will turn now to some contemporary parodies of Richardson, by Fielding and others, that adopt a rhetoric of unmasking that is often considerably less subtle than Richardson's use of competing but overlapping vocabularies to explore the ethics of equivocation. These parodies use the form of the letter to expose truth, not to produce the kind of layered or polylogic argument about sincerity the letter affords Richardson. I don't insist that *Pamela* is "better" than *Shamela*, simply that in the context of my broader discussion, Richardson's ambivalence offers us more than Fielding's unremitting hostility towards hypocrisy. Because of this emphasis, I will spend relatively little time discussing *Shamela* itself, considering it rather in the context of some other parodies and of Fielding's own prose arguments (written around the same time as *Shamela*) about hypocrisy and politeness. I will return finally to the arguments about hypocrisy Richardson presents after he has successfully married Pamela to Mr. B., both in the last part of *Pamela* I and in its sequel, *Pamela* II, read much less often than its predecessor.

V

The title page of *Shamela* identifies it as a book "[i]n which, the many notorious Falshoods and Misreprsentations [sic] of a Book called

Pamela, Are exposed and refuted; and all the matchless ARTS of that young Politician, set in a true and just Light." Fielding's highly successful satirical strategy involves the relentless exposure of *Pamela*'s rhetoric, of the falsehoods and misrepresentations integral, or so he suggests, to Richardson's impersonation of Pamela a.k.a. Shamela. His parody is not just driven by disgust at Richardson's moral and aesthetic offences, however; the second part of the subtitle shows that Fielding also uses *Shamela* as a sally in his ongoing battle against the group of hypocrites he prefers to call "Politicians." As Shamela says, "I am sure I know nothing about *Pollitricks*, more than Parson *Williams* tells me, who says that the Court-side are in the right on't, and that every Christian ought to be on the same with the Bishops" (340). Elsewhere, in *Jonathan Wild* (1743), Fielding offers a more ample definition of "pollitricks" (a telling corruption of "politics"). Jonathan has just had one of his own associates hanged:

> WITH such infinite Address, did this truly GREAT MAN know to play with the Passions of Men, and to set them at Variance with each other, and to work his own Purposes out of those Jealousies and Apprehensions, which he was wonderfully ready at creating, by Means of those great Arts, which the Vulgar call Treachery, Dissembling, Promising, Lying, Falshood, *&c.* but which are by GREAT MEN summed up in the collective Name of Policy, or Politicks, or rather *Pollitricks*.[24]

Fielding is skeptical about the very possibility of an ethical politics, and his doubts extend to the word politeness as well. A similar process of linguistic corruption affects that word in *Shamela*: as Shamela's mother writes to Mrs. Jervis, "I Received the Favour of your Letter, and I find you have not forgot your usual Poluteness, which you learned when you was in keeping with a Lord" (321). The word has been literally polluted by the class and gender relations that Fielding discerns in Richardson's novel; any version of politeness to which Shamela's mother can lay claim is corrupted (though not, unfortunately, beyond all recognition).

Shamela's mother seems to believe that politeness can be passed from lord to whore like a venereal disease. Part of Fielding's disdain for *Pamela* is prompted by that novel's ambivalence about contact between lords and servants: sometimes Pamela shows too little respect for the gentry, Fielding might have said, while at other times she shows an ostentatious obsequiousness that is even more distasteful to a writer with aristocratic leanings. In his prose writings, Fielding returns often and explicitly to questions about good manners and good breeding. His "Essay on Conversation" disclaims any attempt to emulate the conduct book: "It would be tedious and perhaps impossible," Fielding writes, "to specify every Instance, or to lay down exact Rules for our Conduct in every minute Particular."[25] He will, however,

cover the essentials, and with a kind of hauteur that B. or Lovelace might envy. Fielding's opening premise is that "all meer Ceremonies exist in *Form* only, and have in them no Substance at all: but being imposed by the Laws of Custom, become essential to Good Breeding":

these Ceremonies, poor as they are, are of more Consequence than they at first appear, and, in Reality, constitute the only external Difference between Man and Man. Thus, His Grace, Right Honourable, My Lord, Right Reverend, Reverend, Honourable, Sir, Esquire, Mr. *&c.* have, in a Philosophical Sense, no Meaning, yet are, perhaps, politically essential, and must be preserved by Good Breeding. (127)

Fielding's wary adoption of the argument that the apparatus of social distinction – philosophically meaningless, politically essential – must be protected is reminiscent of Chesterfield's frequent assertion that ceremonies, "in themselves very silly things," are also "the outworks of manners and decency, which would be too often broken in upon, if it were not for that defence, which keeps the enemy at a proper distance,"[26] a position worlds away from Pamela's statement "That VIRTUE *is the only nobility*" (83 [1801]).

Fielding is an especially acute reader of Richardson's prose style, and he draws attention to the fact that a narrator who describes her own actions in minute detail inadvertently invites the reader to notice the gaps between motive and action. Richardson's Pamela uses ambiguous language to describe her own actions – tricking herself up, and so on – without exploring the consequences of that ambiguity, but Fielding's *Shamela* is far more pejorative about the potential gap. The following passage is written at Richardson's expense on a number of different counts. Fielding's apt parody of Pamela's style foregrounds the language of pretense:

O what News, since I writ my last! the young Squire hath been here, and as sure as a Gun he hath taken a Fancy to me; *Pamela*, says he, (for so I am called here) you was a great Favourite of your late Mistress's; yes, an't please your Honour, says I; and I believe you deserved it, says he; thank your Honour for your good Opinion, says I; and then he took me by the Hand, and I pretended to be shy: Laud, says I, Sir, I hope you don't intend to be rude; no, says he, my Dear, and then he kissed me, 'till he took away my Breath – and I pretended to be Angry, and to get away, and then he kissed me again, and breathed very short, and looked very silly; and by Ill-Luck Mrs. *Jervis* came in, and had like to have spoiled Sport. – *How troublesome is such Interruption!* (315)

Pamela's breathless writing-to-the-moment is transformed by Fielding into a slapdash yet deadpan account in which B. makes a complete fool of himself; Shamela's use of contractions and the proverb "as sure as a Gun,"

in addition to making a phallic joke, shows up Pamela's essential lack of gentility (and that of her author).[27] Shamela's ostentatious submissiveness; her brazen use of the verb "pretended"; her silly euphemistic use of the word "rude"; her explicitness about the sexual; even the moralizing sentiment at the end of the letter (italicized, of course): all mimic Pamela's own style. Fielding's parody works in part, as many satires do, by speeding up the pace of Richardson's narration: "and so we sat down and talked about my Vartue till Dinner-time," Shamela says, "and then I was sent for to wait on my Master. I took care to be often caught looking at him, and then I always turn'd away my Eyes and pretended to be ashamed" (328).

Opinions have differed as to the precision and artistry of Richardson's style, but Fielding's parody revises the conversational exchanges between Pamela and B. into a condensed, degraded pastiche that exposes the truly sordid nature of Richardson's dialogue. Where Pamela's misrepresentations were inadvertent, even endearing, then, Shamela's are manipulative and abusive, but always similar enough to the representations of Richardson's original that readers of *Shamela* who return to *Pamela* often feel themselves to be reading a different – and a far less innocent – novel.[28] Fielding was not alone in his desire to expose the crudities of Richardson's narrative, though even Richardson's worst enemies had to admit that his novels changed the terms on which fiction was to be produced and consumed. Terry Eagleton describes the extent of this transformation, in which *Pamela* becomes a cultural phenomenon as much as a literary text:

> The literary text is not merely to be read: it is to be dramatized, displayed, wielded as cultural totem, ransacked for moral propaganda or swooned over as love story, preached from the pulpit and quoted in the salons. Pamela, Clarissa and Grandison are public property subject to strategic uses, lynchpins of an entire ideological formation. Around the fictions they inhabit, an enormous body of writing begins to proliferate: letters to and from the author, savage spoofs and denunciatory pamphlets, bawdy rhymes and poetic encomiums, imitations and translations.[29]

The goal of Richardson's attackers is to expose Pamela as wholly designing, but by erasing the ambiguities and equivocations that are integral to Richardson's way of proceeding, the parodies (with the possible exception of *Shamela*) are far less complex than Richardson's original.

What do the parodies, taken as a group, tell us about Richardson's use of a first-person narrator to explore the interplay between sincerity and hypocrisy? Eliza Haywood systematically turns the multiple possibilities of *Pamela* into a single-minded exposé of female hypocrisy. Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (whose title-page identifies the work as "a necessary Caution

to all Young Gentlemen") is a lively and entertaining fiction that describes what happens when a mother brings up her daughter to be a Machiavellian manipulator.[30] Syrena Tricksy, like Shamela, prompts the use of a language of artifice (in this case, given in the third rather than the first person) to describe her behavior: she performs certain actions "with a modest Blush, downcast Eyes, and all the Tokens of an Innocent Surprize (which she before had practised in her Glass)" (110 [III.114]). Rather than successfully executing the triumphant deceptions she aspires to, however, Haywood's Syrena comes to a bad end. Dexterous as she is, Syrena is repeatedly exposed by unlucky accidents that often seem to involve someone catching sight of a private letter; Syrena and her mother carry on a riskily honest correspondence in which they lay bare all their stratagems. In fact, it is not the tendency to deceive but the tendency to be open that ultimately brings down this mother–daughter pair; their punishment is brought about by their epistolary indiscretion.[31] Syrena's skilled hypocrisy, moreover, is also undermined by honest lust: "had she been less leud, her Hypocrisy, in all Probability, had obtain'd its end, at least, in this last Pursuit it had done so: But it is generally the Fate of such Wretches, who, while they go about ensnaring and deceiving all they can, to be themselves ensnar'd and deceiv'd, either by others, or their own headstrong and ungovern'd Appetites" (231 [III.235]). Thus Haywood's moral invokes a failure of self-command, not its being taken to an excessive degree, and Syrena falls because of ungoverned rather than overly managed appetites.

As a rule, the theatrical adaptations of *Pamela* are less concerned than the prose satires to expose or undermine the premises of Richardson's novel (though the dramatic burlesque *Mock-Pamela*, evidently influenced by *Shamela* and discussed briefly below, may be an exception); rather, they cash in on the strengths of the original by attempting to make its narrative strategies accessible to a dramatic audience. According to Richardson's biographers, Giffard's immensely popular theatrical adaptation was performed seventeen times in November and December 1741; the print edition of the play was pirated several times as well.[32] *Pamela: A Comedy* offers some interesting evidence about the cultural configurations surrounding the reception of Richardson's novel. Giffard added farcical material to entertain the audience, but perhaps the most striking choice was his decision to cast a husband-and-wife team in the parts of Mrs. Jewkes and Mrs. Jervis: Elizabeth Yates played the part of the good housekeeper Mrs. Jervis, while Richard Yates played the wicked Mrs. Jewkes in drag.[33] Giffard's adaptation shows a general tendency to simplify the dynamics of the relationships Richardson depicts, a tendency shared by most of the dramatic

adaptations: Carlo Goldoni's Italian version, for instance, which was also performed and published in English translation, avoids the problem of allowing a servant girl to be part of a natural aristocracy by making Pamela the daughter of a Jacobite lord who has gone underground after having his estates sequestered.[34] Giffard's Pamela could never be charged with hypocrisy; only B. (here named Belvile) and his henchmen are ever accused of being hypocrites. When the housekeeper asks Pamela to stay in the house because the wind blows so hard outside, for instance, Pamela comments, "Dissembling Courtesy!," and the act ends with a brief moralizing soliloquy by Mr. Williams:

> *Hypocrisy's the eldest born of Vice,*
> *Subtly obedient in its close Disguise,*
> *To guard its impious Parent from Surprise;*
> *Whose hideous Form, if naked to the View,*
> *Wou'd fright rash Vot'ries from its silken Clue.*
> (35 [VI.41])

As this passage suggests, Giffard's treatment of hypocrisy is flat in tone and conventional, even old-fashioned, in its insights. Belvile tells Pamela, for instance, that "your Sex's little Arts, which you presume upon, and call 'em by the specious Name of Virtue, are all too thinly cover'd to deceive me longer; the Mask is off, and now you stand confess'd, like Sin abandon'd by Hypocrisy" (48 [VI.54]). The terms of their discussion hark back to the allegorical language of seventeenth-century morality rather than the more flexible moral discourses of mid-eighteenth-century psychological and sociological writing. Pamela's answer to Belvile on this occasion is very far from being saucy: "I'm sorry, Sir, a just Contempt of Infamy is construed into Art and mean Hypocrisy" (48 [VI.56]).

Perhaps more entertaining to the modern reader is the anonymous *A Dramatic Burlesque of two Acts, call'd Mock-Pamela*, which benefits (unlike Giffard's version) from Fielding's prose burlesque.[35] The play opens with the character of Blossom kissing her copy of *Pamela*: "but for thy blessed instruction," she tells the book, "I had been undone before this time – quite ruined by all my chastity" (3 [VI.229]). Instead, she tells the audience, she means to use the book to catch Squire Gudgeon as a husband. Like Syrena Tricksy, however, Blossom is a careless and indiscreet letter-writer: as Blossom remarks aside, when one of her letters is read at the worst possible time, "This is the curse of writing letters, all mischievous discoveries come from letters" (16 [VI.242]). Vis-à-vis Pamela's unconscious desire for her master, *Mock-Pamela* offers a manipulative refinement that makes good use of the theatrical convention of the soliloquy. Blossom pretends to think

that nobody can hear the private thoughts she expresses in soliloquy, though in fact she has staged the scene so that Squire Gudgeon (hidden in her closet) will overhear every word of her carefully crafted "confession":

I hope I han't forgot my soliloguy [sic] (*Aside*. what a labyrinth of perplexities am I involv'd in! this inhumane master o' mine, to persecute my innocence with such unwearied cruelty, and yet I can't bring my self to hate my torturer neither – dear gentleman, love him I must tho' I die for it. O what a charming person he has! (*Sq. G. Gud so I have*) O what a lively wit and solid understanding! (*Gud – why that's very true*) O what a good husband he'll make some great lady or other! O how those great ladies use good husbands! O how fond should I be of him if he was mine! (*Gud poor soul I doubt doubt [*sic*] but she would*) O how impossible a thing is that! O I'll not part with my chastity for a diadem. O what dire resolution will this conflict drive me to! O horror! O distraction! O my virtue! (24–25 [VI.250–51])

Blossom's cadence here has the verbal energy of Shamela's own shorthand, though the language lacks Fielding's precision. Rather like Syrena Tricksy, Blossom is finally exposed by a letter to her aunt Mrs. Branch, a tirewoman at the playhouse in Goodman's Fields. Gudgeon comes upon the letter and reads it aloud to himself:

Dear aunt, millions of thanks for your present of that divine book Pamela– *I took the cue, follow'd her example, and it has done by the stars. the* Gudgeon*'s fairly hook'd and let me alone to hold him fast. – Pretend to drown my self! – marry me within this week – come down as soon as 'tis over, that all the family may live together – rare chuckle – slobbering booby – precious gull! –* (um, that's me) *the old dowager is hoodwink'd* (that's you mother) *but I shall open her eyes, when I ask her blessing*. (31 [VI.257])

Blossom's hypocrisy, unlike that of Richardson's Pamela (or of Fielding's Shamela, for that matter), must be exposed and expelled rather than integrated into the world of the family and the novel.

VI

At first it seems unlikely that the novelist would identify with the hypocrite of the story. A hypocrite is by definition two-sided, and it is theoretically possible to identify with the appearance *or* the reality of such a person, with the picture of virtue or the activity of self-aggrandizement. The objection to identifying with both at once is the moral objection to falsity or insincerity. Do away with that objection, however, as in unconscious or conscious play, and it becomes possible to be attracted to hypocrisy on its own grounds, for the powers of concealment and manipulation that two-sidedness confers.

Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens*[36]

Because of the inherently polemical framework of the confrontation with Richardson's *Pamela*, *Shamela* offers Fielding an excellent platform for working out a concise counter-statement (one that would be developed further in *Joseph Andrews*) of his own theory about fiction in its relationship to ethics. Fielding does not just target the damaging social tendencies of *Pamela*'s plot, however, as in Parson Oliver's apt summing-up of its lesson ("All Chambermaids are strictly enjoyned to look out after their Masters; they are taught to use little Arts to that purpose: And lastly, are countenanced in Impertinence to their Superiours, and in betraying the Secrets of Families" [343]). He also creates a rogue's gallery of his contemporaries in which Richardson ultimately looks less villainous than the methodistical self-promoters of the current literary scene: George Whitefield, Colley Cibber, Conyers Middleton and others of that ilk.[37]

One of Fielding's most explicit arguments against hypocrisy can be found in "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," written (like Haywood's *Anti-Pamela*) to arm "the innocent and undesigning . . . against Imposition."[38] The essay begins by positing an original sin, a natural deceitfulness whose presence in "Children and Savages" is often "nourished and improved by Education, in which we are taught rather to conceal Vices, than to cultivate Virtues; when it hath sucked in the Instruction of Politicians, and is instituted in the *Art of thriving*, it will be no Wonder that it should grow to that monstrous Height to which we sometimes see it arrive," Fielding concludes (154). The art of thriving involves conning others into sacrificing their own interest in pursuit of an illusory goal of self-advancement: in an age that values enterprise, "it becomes necessary to impose upon [the individual], to persuade him, that his own Good is designed, and that he will be a Gainer by coming into those Schemes, which are, in Reality, calculated for his Destruction. And this, if I mistake not, is the very Essence of that excellent Art, called *The Art of Politics*" (155). The consequence of this deceitfulness is that "the whole World becomes a vast Masquerade, where the greatest Part appear disguised under false Vizors and Habits" (155), and the essay's central concern is this: how is the average participant in ordinary social life to identify the hypocrite, portrayed here as posing a fundamental threat to civil society? Fielding's choice of the metaphor of the masquerade (curiously echoed in the masquerade scene of Richardson's sequel to *Pamela*) shows how prevalent hypocrisy has become, and how difficult to escape.

Like many of the arguments considered in earlier chapters, Fielding's essay is ambivalent and self-contradictory when it comes to hypocrisy.[39] Hypocrisy doesn't pose much of a threat after all, he says first, as an accurate

observer should always be able to discover the hypocrite's disguise: "if closely attended to, [the masquerader] very rarely escapes the Discovery of an accurate Observer; for Nature, which unwillingly submits to the Imposture, is ever endeavouring to peep forth and shew herself" (155). Accordingly, Fielding says, he will go ahead and set out "those Diagnostics which Nature . . . gives us of the Diseases of the Mind" (156). But a problem rapidly emerges – often things look like their opposites: "The Truth is, we almost universally mistake the Symptoms which Nature kindly holds forth to us" (156). Have no fear, however, the essay then warns the reader: "the Passions of Men do commonly imprint sufficient Marks on the Countenance; and it is owing chiefly to want of Skill in the Observer, that Physiognomy is of so little Use and Credit in the World" (157). Yet as many of the rules that prevail are false, will this essay's own set of rules for detecting hypocrisy prove any better? "But as these Rules are, I believe, none of them without some Exceptions," Fielding admits; "as they are of no Use but to an Observer of much Penetration: Lastly, as a more subtle Hypocrisy will sometimes escape undiscovered from the highest Discernment," it may be difficult to standardize judgments of character (162).

Fielding argues at some length that a smile often indicates malice, not good humor, and many of his other examples are just as counter-intuitive. He anticipates objections at this stage from his readers:

> But I am aware, that I shall be reminded of an Assertion which I set out with in the Beginning of this Essay, *viz. That Nature gives us as sure Symptoms of the Diseases of the Mind as she doth of those of the Body*. To which what I have now advanced may seem a Contradiction. The Truth is, Nature doth really imprint sufficient Marks in the Countenance, to inform an accurate and discerning Eye: but as such is the Property of few, the Generality of Mankind mistake the Affectation for the Reality: for as Affectation always over-acts her Part, it fares with her as with a Farcical Actor on the Stage, whose monstrous over-done Grimaces are sure to catch the Applause of an insensible Audience; while the truest and finest Strokes of Nature, represented by a judicious and just Actor, pass unobserved and disregarded. (161–62)

Fielding's writing here shows all the classic signs of defensiveness: the anticipation of an objection on the part of his audience; the admission of contradiction, with the qualification that it is merely superficial; the use of phrases like "[t]he Truth is" and intensifiers like "really" that tend in practice to draw attention to the instability of the position they are supplied to consolidate.

Fielding's use of the analogy of good and bad acting is especially interesting, albeit somewhat conventional (the etymology of the word hypocrisy automatically invokes an actor putting on a mask). He returns to this

image in the famous scene in *Tom Jones* (1749) where Partridge – the most "insensible" audience member one can imagine – is more impressed with the histrionic affectation of the second-rate actor who plays Claudius than with David Garrick's naturalistic rendition of Hamlet. When Mrs. Miller expresses her surprise that Partridge should differ from the rest of the town, who "'are all agreed, that *Hamlet* is acted by the best Player who ever was on the Stage,'" Partridge responds with contempt:

He the best Player! . . . why I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a Ghost, I should have looked in the very same Manner, and done just as he did . . . I know you are only joking with me; but, indeed, Madam, though I was never at a Play in *London*, yet I have seen acting before in the Country; and the King for my Money; he speaks all his Words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. – Any Body may see he is an Actor.[40]

It is unlikely that real-world hypocrites will over-act as conspicuously as the metaphor suggests, and certainly literary hypocrites like Fielding's Blifil and Sheridan's Joseph Surface take in some perceptive observers as well as many insensible ones. But the more fundamental problem results from the alignment of acting with nature: when Fielding compares affectation with reality by using an analogy contrasting bad acting with "the truest and finest Strokes of Nature, represented by a judicious and just Actor," isn't nature discredited by its association with representation? As the epigraph to this section suggests, moreover, hypocrisy and other related forms of double-dealing are bread-and-butter for the working novelist, and the outright condemnation of hypocrisy is in many ways at odds with the acts of impersonation involved in writing fiction.

"An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men" urges the reader to be suspicious even (perhaps especially) of saints: ninety-nine times out of a hundred, sanctity is false, Fielding says, and "it is better that one real Saint should suffer a little unjust Suspicion, than that Ninety Nine Villains should impose on the World, and be enabled to perpetrate their Villainies under this Mask" (167). (A very different conclusion, it must be said, from Swift's provocative suggestion in the *Project for the Advancement of Religion* that "if One in Twenty should be brought over to true Piety by this, or the like Methods, and the other Nineteen be only Hypocrites, the Advantage would still be great."[41]) After quoting scripture against sanctimonious hypocrisy, Fielding draws this conclusion:

Nothing can, in Fact, be more foreign to the Nature of Virtue, than Ostentation. It is truly said of Virtue, that could Men behold her naked, they would be all in Love with her. Here it is implied, that this is a Sight very rare or difficult to come

at; and indeed there is always a modest Backwardness in true Virtue to expose her naked Beauty. She is conscious of her innate Worth, and little desirous of exposing it to the publick View. It is the Harlot Vice who constantly endeavours to set off the Charms she counterfeits, in order to attract Men's Applause, and to work her sinister Ends by gaining their Admiration and their Confidence. (173–74)

But Fielding's feminine allegorical Virtue prompts all the same questions as Richardson's Pamela: isn't that "modest Backwardness . . . to expose her naked Beauty" a familiar weapon in the arsenal of seduction? And what if Vice decides to attract men by adopting a simulacrum of Virtue's modest backwardness?

In his discussion of the smile and its relationship to malice, Fielding has already made a rather coy disclaimer about the scope of his discussion: "I do by no means hint at the various Laughs, Titters, Tehes, *&c.* of the Fair Sex," he writes, "with whom indeed this Essay hath not any thing to do; the Knowledge of the Characters of Women being foreign to my intended Purpose; as it is in Fact a Science, to which I make not the least Pretension" (161). As in Pope's "Essay on the Characters of Women" (1735), the fair sex are presented here as something approximating a different species, and Fielding's essay focuses exclusively on male hypocrisy: "and sure no honest undesigning Man can ever be too much on his Guard against the Hypocrite, or too industrious to expose and expel him out of Society" (178).

In contrast to Fielding's wished-for explusion of hypocrisy, Richardson finds a place for hypocrisy in the marital household, though that settlement is accompanied by a great deal of anxiety about how to maintain the distinction between hypocrisy and self-command. Neither spouse applies the word hypocrite directly to him or herself except as a joke, but it crops up surprisingly frequently in the passages on self-control and cheerfulness that punctuate the last part of *Pamela* I and much of *Pamela* II. This is B.'s advice to his new wife:

Let no thwarting Accident, no cross Fortune, (for we must not expect to be exempt from such, happy as we now are in each other!) deprive this sweet Face of this its principal Grace: And when any thing unpleasing happens, in a quarter of an Hour, at farthest, begin to mistrust yourself, and apply to your Glass; and if you see a Gloom arising, or arisen, banish it instantly, smooth your dear Countenance, resume your former Composure; and then, my Dearest, whose Heart must always be seen in her Face, and cannot be a Hypocrite, will find this means to smooth her Passions also. (370)

B. here creates a tendentious opposition between self-control and hypocrisy; while the latter is contemptible, however, what is the former (at least as he describes it here) but a kind of physiological hypocrisy? It is surely a fine

line between the countenance-smoothing B. recommends and outright hypocrisy, and B.'s use of the word seems to be prompted by an anxiety about the difficulty of maintaining this subtle distinction.[42]

The portrait of Pamela and B.'s marriage as it is developed in Richardson's sequel offers more disturbing evidence, not so much about the proximity of hypocrisy to self-control as about the potentially abusive uses of an ideal of female self-command by a repressive husband. Pamela displays in the sequel an even more bizarre mixture of humility and self-aggrandizement than she has expressed in the novel's first part. (Terry Castle memorably calls the Pamela of the sequel – often concerned to police boundaries between social classes – "either hypocritical or psychotically alienated from her own past."[43]) Thinking about the factors that could so easily have stopped B. from marrying her, Pamela outlines the dynamic of her relationship to B.: his character is marked by "[a] Pride, that every one, reflecting upon the Disparity of Birth and Condition between us, would have dignify'd with the Name of *Decency*; a Pride that was become such an essential Part of the dear Gentleman's Character, in this Instance of a Wife, that altho' he knew he could not keep it up, if he made *me* happy, yet it was no small Motive in his chusing me, in one respect, because he expected from me more Humility, more Submission, than he thought he had Reason to flatter himself would be paid him, by a Lady equally born and educated" (III.72). More humility, more submission: yet despite this indoctrination, Pamela retains some of the assertiveness of her earlier self, as when she describes the conversation of B.'s fellow rakes at dinner as "too polite by half for me" (they talk about nothing but "[t]he Quantity of Wine each Man could *carry off*, that was the Phrase; Dogs, Horses, Hunting, Racing, Cock-fighting, and all accompanied with Swearing, and Cursing, and that in good Humour, and out of Wantonness (the least excusable and most profligate Sort of Swearing and Cursing of all)" [III.382–83]). Here, her ironic use of the phrase "too polite" asserts a rigorous, non-class-based morality against the decadence (and the goofiness) of male upper-class "politeness."

But B. barely allows Pamela to express her feelings, responding to even a hint of negative emotion or resentment on her part with outright anger. With regard to their disagreement about whether or not Pamela will breast-feed their first child herself, for instance, Pamela finally yields to B.'s preference, at her parents' suggestion that it is indeed appropriate for her to respect her husband's judgment on such a matter. Yet her face clearly shows some reservations as she makes this important concession, prompting B. to ask the following question: "But do you yield it up chearfully, my Dear?" (IV.48). She is unable to deny that she continues to have scruples, and he

is quite angry with her for her lack of "voluntary" agreement. (Indeed, this episode is part of a more general trend in which B. worries that the birth of their child will alienate Pamela's affections from himself.)

Pamela seems well aware of the strong emotions roiling beneath her own cheerful expression: "I am naturally of a spiteful, saucy Temper; and, with all my appearing Meekness and Humility, can resent, and sting too, when I think myself provoked," she writes (IV.68). Her great temperamental vice is jealousy, she tells several of her correspondents, and the most serious trial to date of her married life follows the episode of the masquerade. In spite of her distaste for such affairs, Pamela is forced to attend the masquerade; she goes as a Quaker, Mr. B. as a Spanish Don, but he picks up there with "a bold Nun" who turns out to be the seductive Countess Dowager (IV.115). B.'s flirtation with the "bold Nun" makes him increasingly distant: "Mr. B. cannot be unpolite," Pamela writes to Lady Davers; "but he is cold, and a little cross, and short in his Speeches to me. I try to hide my Grief from every body, and from him most" (IV.163). Her real emotional distress, however, is expressed in the following passage:

> The poor unhappy Lady, God forgive her! is to be pity'd: She loves him, and having strong Passions, and being unus'd to be controul'd, is lost to a Sense of Honour and Justice; poor, poor Lady! – O these wicked Masquerades! From them springs all my Unhappiness! My *Spaniard* was too amiable, and met with a Lady who was no Nun, but in Habit. Every one was taken with him in that Habit, so suited to the natural Dignity of his Person! – O these wicked, wicked Masquerades!
>
> I am all Patience in Appearance, all Uneasiness in Reality. I did not think I could, especially in *this* Point, this most *affecting* Point, be such an Hypocrite. It has cost me – Your Ladyship knows not what it has cost me! to be able to assume that Character! Yet my Eyes are swell'd with crying, and look red, altho' I am always breatheing [sic] on my Hand, and patting them with that, and my warm Breath, to hide the Distress that will, from my over-charged Heart, appear in them. (IV.163)

The signs of Pamela's grief are obviously written all over her face; her claim to be a hypocrite here is singularly disingenuous, and her description of her red, swollen eyes and the efforts she makes to conceal them would no doubt prompt in, say, Fielding a strong conviction that her behavior has become more histrionic and calculating than ever. Indeed, Pamela's uneasiness is visible enough that it drives B. into the arms of the countess, as he will later admit. As he says during his subsequent account to Pamela, in mitigation of how he came into the habit of intimacy with another woman, "you (without Cause, as I thought) gave me great Disgusts by your unwonted Reception of me: Ever in Tears and Grief; the Countess ever chearful and lively: And apprehending, that your Temper was intirely changing; I believ'd I had

no bad Excuse to make myself easy and chearful abroad, since my Home became more irksome to me, than ever I believ'd it could be" (IV.248).

Pamela seems to have lost here some of the sauciness about insincerity that initially made her attractive to B. When B., before the clearing-up of their misunderstanding, tells Pamela that he will bring the lady in question to visit her, she is all acquiescence (or is it barely veiled hostility?): "Whenever you please, Sir, – was all I car'd to say farther; for I saw he was upon the Catch, and look'd stedfastly upon me whenever I mov'd my Lips; and I am not a finish'd Hypocrite; and he can read the Lines of one's Face, and the Motions of one's Heart, I think" (IV.170). The logic here is quite confusing. She's not a hypocrite, and her emotional turbulence does come across, thereby making B. ever more likely to seek out the company of the Countess. On the other hand, it is only Pamela's visible distress that pushes husband and wife to the point where they clear up the misunderstanding and achieve an even more euphoric state of conjugal happiness than before. If she had been a finished hypocrite (or even just someone who had successfully internalized the advice about self-control her husband offers in the first volume), perhaps Pamela's dysphoric fantasy of a Griselda-like rejection and divorce would have been realized. In fact, Pamela is rewarded for her failure to remain cheerful as per B.'s instructions, and the catastrophe is averted only because Pamela is not *enough* of a hypocrite.

Once the full story emerges, the reader learns that B.'s flirtation with the Countess came about in the first place, not simply due to the transgressive space of the masquerade, but because B. himself dabbled in hypocrisy: not the kind of hypocrisy associated with self-control that is conjured up by Pamela's language, but a perverted repetition of the verbal equivocation at which Pamela herself is so practiced. This is the conversation B. reports having had with the nun at the masquerade (a conversation that chronologically precedes the comments quoted above, though it is reported only afterwards). The nun asks him, "Is the Lady here, whose Shackles thou wearest?":

Do I look like a Man shackled, my fairest Nun?
N – No! not much like such an one. But I fancy thy Wife is either a *Widow* [Miss Darnford's disguise], or a *Quaker* [Pamela's]?
Neither, reply'd I, taking, by Equivocation, her Question literally.
And art thou not a marry'd Wretch? Answer me quickly! – We are observ'd.
No – said I.
Swear to me, thou art not. –
By St. *Ignatius* then: For, my Dear, I was no *Wretch*, you know.
Enough! said she – and slid away. (IV.227)

The Countess is less sensitive than Pamela to the practice of equivocation; she takes B. at his word, in spite of the obvious clue he gives her when he swears by the name of the founder of the Jesuit order. His confession, a request for forgiveness from his wife, implicitly invokes Pamela's own equivocations in the novel's first volume, and his story accordingly constitutes an appeal to her on the basis of their shared talents, no matter how bad the end to which he has applied them in this particular case.

In her book on eighteenth-century ideologies of gender, Ellen Pollak points to the irony of the fact that the coquette and the prude should have both been widely criticized for managing appearances, while wives were actively encouraged to do exactly the same thing. "As long as a woman subjected herself to social, legal, and economic dependence on a man by becoming his wife (as long, in effect, as she became the subject of her own objectification)," Pollak writes, "conniving attempts on her part to gain advantage within the limits of that dependency were condoned. Dissimulation on the part of women was not only permissible when it remained interior to a masculine desire, but it was often necessary to sustain the desired relationships of power."[44] While Pollak's language might sound polemical, one can hardly overstate the case that over the course of the eighteenth century, the most popular and persuasive arguments in favor of dissimulation, including forms of politeness that might be alternately labeled "address," "tact" or "self-command," would increasingly come to apply primarily, indeed almost exclusively to women. Older arguments about the use of role-playing to generate real feeling had been far more likely to refer to men, and to aristocratic men at that (think of Castiglione's *sprezzatura*). The two parts of *Pamela* make it clear that by mid-century, women had come to be seen to bear the chief burden of self-restraint, though the dominance of an ethos of self-command produced an accompanying uneasiness that reveals itself in Pamela and B.'s compulsive invocations of hypocrisy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hypocrisy and the novel II: a modest question about Mansfield Park

It is often asserted that *Mansfield Park* (1814) attacks theatricality and condemns insincerity, and the novel's goal is described by one critic as "[to establish], in the person of Fanny Price, a virtuous and immutable transparency."[1] The question asked here rests on a very different assumption about *Mansfield Park*: what if the novel represents Austen's most fully elaborated argument for hypocrisy? Ruth Bernard Yeazell has suggested that female modesty is necessarily hypocritical, its nature always to be at once a security for virtue and a technique of seduction.[2] I hope to show that Fanny Price is hypocritical not just in this but in other important ways as well, and that her hypocrisy is central to the goals of *Mansfield Park*. In the modest figure of Fanny Price, I will argue, Austen defends those forms of insincerity that are produced by dependence.

As a heroine supposed to embody the moral argument of *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price has elicited little affection from readers and critics. Lionel Trilling sets the tone with his well-known pronouncement: "Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*."[3] Accounts of what makes Fanny Price unlikable differ, but it may have something to do with her inferiority. Avrom Fleishman attributes to Fanny the "moral aggressiveness" that is the submissive person's only way to express hostility towards those on whom she depends; Kingsley Amis describes Fanny as "a monster of complacency and pride . . . under a cloak of cringing self-abasement"; Claudia L. Johnson identifies Fanny as Mansfield Park's "most obsequious and most disastrously indoctrinated inmate."[4] Fanny Price's values render her abject because they are precisely the values by which she is oppressed. Even worse, Fanny's submissiveness seems to earn her a substantial material reward at the end of the novel. The novel traditionally rewards its heroines with good marriages, yet shouldn't virtue be its own reward?

By raising such questions, *Mansfield Park* takes on a series of eighteenth-century arguments about the relationship between merit and

compensation, between politeness and hypocrisy, and indeed about the nature of virtue itself. Austen's novel offers striking evidence of the turn taken by the conversation about manners at the end of the long eighteenth century, and my discussion here (in conjunction with the previous chapter's treatment of Richardson) represents the beginning of an inquiry into what happens when the commitment to politeness that characterizes eighteenth-century moral and political writing from Shaftesbury to Burke is taken up as a central concern by the novel. Both manners and politeness exist in dangerously close proximity to the less attractive quality called hypocrisy. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the term hypocrisy consequently takes on a double burden. Individuals are encouraged to practice "good" hypocrisy, forms of dissimulation (often identified as manners or politeness) motivated by the obligation to maintain social intelligibility and serving to lubricate the machinery of political and domestic life, while rejecting "bad" hypocrisy, forms of deception in which self-interest or political and religious factionalism predominate.

One of the eighteenth century's most surprising and memorable insights is that even the most self-interested forms of hypocrisy can become socially useful when they are considered, not from the point of view of the individual hypocrite, but in terms of their contribution to political, economic and domestic life. Though Adam Smith in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) explicitly and at some length rejects the social psychology of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1714–23), Mandeville's insight that private vices may constitute public benefits haunts *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).[5] Crucial to the distinction between "bad" and "good" forms of hypocrisy, then, are both the ends to which hypocrisy is directed and the perspective from which we look at it. Forms of deception that seem unforgivable when they are considered from the viewpoint of the victim of an individual hypocrite bent on self-advancement may be sanctioned by the need to build consensus or community, just as self-interest looks not just acceptable but absolutely necessary from the vantage point of an impartial spectator like the sociological observer of Smith's economic writings.

Later eighteenth-century writing offered a special word for the deformations and corruptions, both individual and social, associated with hypocrisy: patronage. Patronage necessarily creates dependence, and it was by the degradation of relationships between individuals that eighteenth-century political writers supposed patronage would produce corruption. Two abuses that particularly troubled eighteenth-century Britain were parliamentary patronage and the professionalization of the army, since these threatened directly the basis of republican virtue, but patronage also encroached on

the universities, the navy and the church.[6] This brief account of patronage conjures up a problem that would seem exclusively to have afflicted men in public life, but by the turn of the nineteenth century, certain writers had begun to act on the insight that the overtly political corruption associated with patronage found a close analogue in the deformations of female virtue that had made of modesty something uncomfortably close to institutionalized hypocrisy. Maria Edgeworth's polemical novel *Patronage* (1814) highlights the likeness between young men whose professional advancement results from family connections rather than merit and young women whose showy accomplishments are designed to maximize their success on the marriage market: the novel's virtuous father figure complains with outrage that it is his "doom to hear of nothing but patronage, whichever way I turn. – What! patronage for my daughters, as well as for my sons!"[7]

Published the same year as *Patronage*, to which it bears an uncanny superficial resemblance, *Mansfield Park* is also (though not always so explicitly) preoccupied with the problem of patronage. Where Edgeworth wants to eliminate patronage entirely, however, Austen is curious to know how people (especially women) find ways of living with it. *Mansfield Park* introduces gender as the new category indispensable for obtaining a place for virtue within the system of patronage. In this sense, *Mansfield Park* presents an alternative to Wollstonecraft's conclusion in the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that women should strip away the false modesty that renders them deceitful. Austen draws from similar evidence a very different conclusion. If modesty renders women subordinate, insincere and even deceptive, asks *Mansfield Park*, how can those qualities be turned to advantage without compromising virtue? Can the novel reclaim modesty, reticence and female tact as qualities that benefit both women as a group and society as a whole? What kind of compromise can Fanny Price effect between virtue and servility?

Introducing specific arguments about reputation, virtue and its rewards, the morality of female accomplishments and the true nature of female modesty, Austen produces in *Mansfield Park* (though few critics have recognized it) a new hypothesis: that in certain circumstances, some kinds of hypocrisy are not only necessary but eminently forgivable; and that the chores of dependency – especially women's dependency – deserve generous compensation. My argument that Fanny Price remains enigmatic to everyone, including the critics, challenges previous assumptions about both the character of Fanny and *Mansfield Park* as a novel. Can Fanny really be so opaque, so dissembling, so hypocritical as I suggest? One goal of the pages

that follow is to show why the particular kind of hypocrisy Austen promotes is often misunderstood, like Fanny Price herself, even by the most perceptive readers. Following a short treatment of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) as Austen's first full-scale attempt to define the relationship between virtue and politeness, I will suggest that *Mansfield Park* represents a more sophisticated working-out of the same problem – one so sophisticated, in fact, that the novel runs the risk of being misinterpreted by critics unwilling to accept the pragmatic but still shocking premise that dissembling is forgivable when it is required by dependency. After considering *Emma* (1816) as Austen's most direct refiguring of the questions about power and politeness left unresolved at the end of *Mansfield Park*, the chapter concludes by turning to several other early nineteenth-century arguments about gender and concealment.

Fanny is dependent upon Mansfield in every sense of the word, and like all those who benefit from patronage, she is in no position to criticize it. The last sentence of *Mansfield Park*, describing Fanny's final triumph as she moves into the parsonage at Mansfield, comments that the house has become "as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as every thing else, within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park, had long been."[8] Readers of the novel are well aware that nothing at Mansfield Park is perfect; that Fanny has deluded herself about Mansfield's virtue; and that she consistently lets the house's other inhabitants walk all over her, so to speak. Yet perhaps Edmund and the parsonage offer sufficient compensation after all for the indignities that have been visited upon this poor relation. Claudia Johnson has argued that Austen's goal in *Mansfield Park* is "to turn conservative myth sour," a goal achieved by the novel's ironic demonstration "that the failures of conservative ideology fall, not exclusively, but still most heavily, on the only member of the household to believe in and act by it fully to the very end."[9] Johnson's emphasis on the costs submissiveness exacts from women, however, does not entirely account for the novel's outcome. Fanny may be punished for her own endorsement of conservative ideology, but she is also rewarded for it; moreover, her investment in Mansfield's ideology exacts a price from Mansfield as well.

Whatever price Fanny pays for her self-delusion, Mansfield finally pays a greater. Fanny's refusal of Henry Crawford's proposal is directly implicated in Crawford's seduction of Maria Bertram (for which Fanny is blamed by both Mary Crawford and Mrs. Norris, untrustworthy as these two characters may be); similarly, Fanny's marriage to Edmund Bertram represents exactly the outcome with regard to the family property that Sir Thomas Bertram most feared at the novel's outset. Nina Auerbach has approvingly

compared Fanny to a vampire or a predator, and it is possible that Fanny's submissiveness conceals a desire to take over the Bertram household.[10] In this sense, Austen characterizes Fanny Price as an underclass aggressor, a Uriah Heep *avant la lettre*, but one whose triumph is made possible – and rendered subsequently acceptable – by her sex. Fanny's victory is furthered, not thwarted, by the novel's ending, in a way that differs radically from the treatment of Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* (1849–50). The system of patronage is thus seen to exact unexpected costs from the patron and to offer surprising rewards to the dependent, especially when dependency is figured in the person of a young woman whose modesty effectively conceals her thoughts and stratagems.

I

Fanny Price's dependent position forces into prominence questions about power and subjection, though those terms belong to a vocabulary unavailable to the inhabitants of Mansfield Park.[11] Fanny plays her cards close to her chest as a matter of self-protection, but her reticence is in turn an essential instrument for seizing power. Paradoxically, Fanny's thoughts fail the test of transparency precisely because her physiological transparency makes a habit of self-revelation. Fanny is the possessor, not of a poker face that gives nothing away, but of a physiognomy whose modest blushes, faints and tears are so frequent that they effectively mask moments of particular vulnerability (as when a conveniently timed blush erases Sir Thomas Bertram's correct suspicion that Fanny's refusal of Henry Crawford might result from a secret passion for Edmund). Perhaps the strangest feature of Fanny Price's history is the disparity between her unwillingness to act strategically in the short term and the long-term success of her marriage project. Yet while the end of *Mansfield Park* rewards Fanny Price with the prize of marriage to Edmund Bertram, readers are left with a lingering feeling that virtue should be more properly its own reward. "It does not reconcile us to the virtue of Fanny Price that it is rewarded by more than itself," Trilling says. "The shade of Pamela hovers over her career."[12]

Modesty often produces in observers the suspicion that it is more tactical than it lets on. The lower-class heroine who marries up always opens herself to the charge of being a sexual entrepreneur, the great precedent here being Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740–41). Does Pamela deserve her reward, or does she simply earn it? As Ruth Yeazell points out, the teleological reduction of Pamela to Shamela is inevitable: it is impossible not to liken Pamela to a hardheaded businesswoman holding out for

a higher price.[13] In revealing counterpoint to *Mansfield Park*, *Sense and Sensibility* is Austen's first extended working-out of the problem (central to the development of domestic fiction) of how a virtuous heroine should be rewarded by marriage. The novel sets up the character of Lucy Steele as a foil to Elinor Dashwood, insisting on Lucy's exaggerated or parodic likeness to the eighteenth-century novel's ostentatiously virtuous heroines. Lucy's shameless flattery of a series of patrons earns her a just reward: marriage to one of the Ferrars brothers (and to the richer one at that). The last chapter of *Sense and Sensibility* emphasizes Lucy Steele's resemblance to Pamela – that is, to Pamela in her incarnation as Shamela.[14] The prosperity which crowns Lucy's duplicity, says the narrator, "may be held forth as a most encouraging instance of what an earnest, an unceasing attention to self-interest, however its progress may be apparently obstructed, will do in securing every advantage of fortune, with no other sacrifice than that of time and conscience."[15]

Elinor Dashwood's reward is more modest: marriage to the less wealthy Ferrars brother. Yet Elinor is acutely aware that in matters of prudence and dissimulation, she may have more in common with the odious Lucy Steele than with her own beloved sister Marianne. Beyond the fact that they have both been engaged to the same man, Elinor also shares with Lucy a talent for hypocrisy. *Sense and Sensibility* repeatedly emphasizes Elinor's accomplishments as a social hypocrite. All her interactions with the Middleton and Palmer families (for whom she feels a mixture of gratitude and contempt) are hypocritical, although this behavior is usually given the name of civility or politeness. The Dashwood sisters work by a division of labor when it comes to politeness: because "it was impossible for [Marianne] to say what she did not feel, however trivial the occasion; . . . upon Elinor therefore the whole task of telling lies when politeness required it, always fell" (122). On another occasion, we read that "Elinor took immediate possession of the post of civility which she had assigned herself" (160); as a "task" or a "post," politeness evidently constitutes itself as something like a vocation, though the sisters also "[pay] their tribute of politeness" to those who exact it (175).

Sense and Sensibility polarizes the two Dashwood sisters according to their respective attitudes towards self-command. We learn by the end of the first chapter that Elinor Dashwood "had an excellent heart; – her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn, and which one of her sisters [Marianne] had resolved never to be taught" (6). Unlike the narrator, whose descriptions of Elinor's temperament allow for the coexistence of

strong feelings and self-government, Marianne Dashwood finds her older sister's self-control indistinguishable from lack of feeling. When Elinor scolds Marianne for having gotten to know Willoughby too quickly, for instance, Marianne offers this sarcastic summing-up of Elinor's judgment: "I have been too much at my ease, too happy, too frank. I have erred against every common-place notion of decorum; I have been open and sincere where I ought to have been reserved, spiritless, dull, and deceitful" (48). The last is a term often associated with female modesty by its opponents, and Marianne is unwilling or unable to hear on its merits Elinor's plea for "the propriety of some self-command": "Marianne abhorred all concealment where no real disgrace could attend unreserve; and to aim at the restraint of sentiments which were not in themselves illaudable, appeared to her not merely an unnecessary effort, but a disgraceful subjection of reason to common-place and mistaken notions" (53).

The outcome of Marianne's attachment to Willoughby will show her to have been wrong: she pays almost with her life for the free and open expression of her feelings in the first part of the novel. Elinor's position on concealment is also more subtle than her sister allows it to be. When Elinor comments, for instance, that we too often accept the judgments of others without question, Marianne teases her by saying, "But I thought it was right, Elinor, to be guided wholly by the opinion of other people. I thought our judgments were given us merely to be subservient to those of our neighbours. This has always been your doctrine, I am sure" (93–94). "No, Marianne, never," Elinor responds. "My doctrine has never aimed at the subjection of the understanding. All I have ever attempted to influence has been the behaviour." (Edward has the last word on this topic, and it is a wry one: "You have not been able then to bring your sister over to your plan of general civility," he observes to Elinor.) Marianne and Edward find Elinor's attachment to a "plan of general civility" amusing but slightly preposterous, while the novel's narrator is more scathing about Marianne's over-indulgence of feeling than about Elinor's program of repression or self-censorship.

Where Marianne languishes in her own emotions, Elinor consistently conceals them, though not from herself. Despondent after Edward's departure, Elinor is determined to hide her feelings from the rest of the family, though Marianne fails to appreciate the merits of this show of self-control:

> Elinor sat down to her drawing-table as soon as he was out of the house, busily employed herself the whole day, neither sought nor avoided the mention of his name, appeared to interest herself almost as much as ever in the general concerns

of the family, and if, by this conduct, she did not lessen her own grief, it was at least prevented from unnecessary increase, and her mother and sisters were spared much solicitude on her account.

Such behaviour as this, so exactly the reverse of her own, appeared no more meritorious to Marianne, than her own had seemed faulty to her. The business of self-command she settled very easily; – with strong affections it was impossible, with calm ones it could have no merit. (104)

While Marianne would never accuse her sister of insincerity approaching the level of Lucy Steele's, moreover, the novel deliberately sets up parallels (as I hinted above) between Elinor and Lucy. Lucy's social hypocrisies are carefully distinguished from those of Elinor by differences in character and education:

Elinor saw, and pitied [Lucy] for, the neglect of abilities which education might have rendered so respectable; but she saw, with less tenderness of feeling, the thorough want of delicacy, of rectitude, and integrity of mind, which her attentions, her assiduities, her flatteries at the Park betrayed; and she could have no lasting satisfaction in the company of a person who joined insincerity with ignorance; whose want of instruction prevented their meeting in conversation on terms of equality, and whose conduct towards others, made every shew of attention and deference towards herself perfectly valueless. (127)

The word associated with Lucy Steele's behavior, then, is not politeness but "insincerity" (and see also p. 150). Yet while Elinor's own practice of politeness is less self-promoting than Lucy's, she consistently betrays a preference – not a moral preference, perhaps, but certainly a practical preference – for the polite but cold over the warm but vulgar (215, 304). (Lucy is cold and vulgar, with only the patina of politeness.)

Elinor's commitment to self-command is ultimately vindicated in a scene in which she is allowed to express the strong feelings that she has really been experiencing all along. Marianne is initially horrified by Elinor's calm description of her resignation about Lucy Steele's claiming Edward. "[I]f the loss of what is most valued is so easily to be made up by something else," Marianne says to Elinor, "your resolution, your self-command, are, perhaps, a little less to be wondered at. – They are brought more within my comprehension" (263). "I understand you. – You do not suppose that I have ever felt much," Elinor responds, and proceeds to deliver a passionate speech itemizing her desperate worries and the sufferings inflicted on her by Edward and Lucy Steele:

The composure of mind with which I have brought myself at present to consider the matter, the consolation that I have been willing to admit, have been the effect of constant and painful exertion; – they did not spring up of themselves; – they

did not occur to relieve my spirits at first – No, Marianne. – *Then*, if I had not been bound to silence, perhaps nothing could have kept me entirely – not even what I owed to my dearest friends – from openly shewing that I was *very* unhappy. (264)

The aggression Elinor shows here towards Marianne, which manages to induce a great deal of guilt in her usually impervious sister, is all the more powerful for having been suppressed throughout most of the novel.

The two sisters are finally shown to be more similar than different, in spite of their markedly divergent valuations of self-command. Both Elinor and Marianne pay the price for having feelings, though that price is exacted from each sister in different coin. As Claudia Johnson writes, "Elinor's behavior has turned out to differ from Marianne's only in degree and not in kind. She has neither smothered her dreams nor even, with all her heroic efforts at screening and concealment, really masked her attachment."[16] *Sense and Sensibility* is more programmatic in its oppositions than many of Austen's novels, having a great deal in common with those contemporary fictions (including Inchbald's *A Simple Story* [1791], Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* [1800] and Opie's *Adeline Mowbray* [1805]) that set out highly schematic arguments to compare and contrast different versions of female education. Its conclusions are perhaps more surprising than any of these, however, in that self-command turns out to make very little difference when it comes to self-punishment: Elinor and Marianne alike suffer the consequences of emotional attachment to men who abuse their confidence. The moral this novel offers about civility and concealment seems to emphasize the most pragmatic aspects of ethics. Elinor Dashwood adopts a plan of general civility in order to advance her own interests, but the plan is continuous with her own personal practices of concealment, designed to protect herself, her mother and her sister from the painful consequences of passionate feeling. Elinor suppresses her feelings and misleads observers from a desire to protect or to limit damage, rather than (like Lucy Steele) to assault by stealth.

II

Unlike Maria Edgeworth, who is committed to an ideal of perfect sincerity, Austen seems to accept as legitimate the idea that tact results from a desire not to hurt someone or to protect the other from one's own sense of superiority. For Edgeworth, tact is moral weakness, while for Austen it is a moral obligation of some complexity.[17] Fanny Price does not have the luxury,

however, of adopting Elinor Dashwood's plan of civility.[18] *Mansfield Park* redistributes the psychological traits of the female characters of Austen's earlier novels in surprising new combinations, a practice that has consistently challenged readers' expectations. If Mary Crawford gets the charm and liveliness of Elizabeth Bennet (and is apparently punished for possessing these qualities), Fanny Price, at least in respect of her social class, has as much in common with Lucy Steele as with the reticent heroine of *Sense and Sensibility*. Because Fanny is in a position of dependence more like Lucy Steele's than Elinor Dashwood's, she cannot safely practice the art of pleasing. Civility can be the custom only of those whose social status is high enough to preclude their seeming to become parasites upon the wealthy.

The analogy I have drawn between Fanny Price and Lucy Steele is a deliberately provocative one, and I do not mean to suggest that they are alike in every particular. One important difference between Fanny Price and Lucy Steele is that although Fanny in the end gets what she wants, she does not especially want to be liked. Fanny's combination of reticence and dependence makes her seriously – perhaps rightly – unpopular. Inhibited by her fear of looking like a Pamela or a Lucy Steele (whose knack for flattering her benefactors thoroughly disgusts Elinor Dashwood, in spite of the latter's own willingness to tell lies when politeness requires it), Fanny Price has an interest in concealing her thoughts and motives. Thus silenced, she becomes peculiarly vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy. Any show of feeling on Fanny's part, for her benefactor or for the authority he represents, opens her to the accusation that she simply hopes to ingratiate herself with her main source of financial support. Fanny has the body of a sentimental heroine, after all, and her tears, blushes and so on are often misread as hypocritical, physical symptoms that are only apparently involuntary but actually under the control of an individual who manipulates them for her own advantage. When Fanny cries after her uncle's departure to Antigua, for instance, "her cousins, on seeing her with red eyes, set her down as a hypocrite."[19] The full effect of the passage, however, is to show the unfairness of the accusation: Fanny's tears are the natural sequel to a wounding remark made by Sir Thomas himself before he leaves. The narrative reserves irony for the Bertram sisters, who "were much to be pitied on the occasion [of their father's departure]; not for their sorrow, but for their want of it" (32). While none of the female children of Mansfield Park feels much sorrow at Sir Thomas's departure, then, the narrative treats Fanny more sympathetically: "Fanny's relief, and her consciousness of it, were quite equal to her cousins', but a more tender nature suggested that her feelings were ungrateful, and she really grieved because she could not grieve" (33).

Fanny's grief at the fact she cannot grieve is a paradox characteristic of the discourse of sensibility, but the novel represents this grief as being nonetheless sincere. While Fanny is opaque to her cousins, she is transparent to the reader. As readers, we know why she cries, and we accept the validity of the novel's account of her psychology; in turn, we acquit Fanny of self-interested hypocrisy. The narration of *Mansfield Park* has all the authority of the technically accomplished third-person voice, aligned here very closely with Fanny's consciousness. It may in fact be as a consequence of this technique that so many of the novel's readers have found Fanny complacent, conceited or proud: we are given a level of access to Fanny's inner thoughts that we usually have only to our own minds, and such precise accountings are rarely attractive (even – perhaps especially – regarding our own motives).

Fanny Price remains in a very difficult position. If her show of grief at Sir Thomas's departure opens her unfairly to the charge of attempting to ingratiate herself, her fearful anticipation of such charges in turn inhibits her behavior to a degree that disturbs most critics, especially those attentive to feminist concerns. One aspect of Fanny's inhibition can be found in the difficulty she has speaking. She is far readier to blush or to cry than to say a word. Following her uncle's return from the West Indies, Edmund tells Fanny outright that she should talk more often in the family circle. Fanny's response shows how acutely aware she is of what it will look like if she puts herself forward:

> "But I do talk to him more than I used. I am sure I do. Did not you hear me ask him about the slave trade last night?"
>
> "I did – and was in hopes the question would be followed up by others. It would have pleased your uncle to be inquired of farther."
>
> "And I longed to do it – but there was such a dead silence! And while my cousins were sitting by without speaking a word, or seeming at all interested in the subject, I did not like – I thought it would appear as if I wanted to set myself off at their expense, by shewing a curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel." (198)

Fanny's first impulse here is to describe her restraint in terms of native delicacy ("I did not like – "), but this statement is at once deflected into even less assertive language (the impersonal, somewhat conjectural construction "I thought it would appear"). Because Fanny cannot act on her very natural desire to please Sir Thomas without looking like a hypocrite, she refrains from acting at all. The cost of Fanny's concern for appearances in this case is silence and passivity, and her self-scrutiny and self-control endear her neither to Mansfield's inhabitants nor – it would seem – to the novel's readers.

What is clear is that while her self-scrutiny (mostly) prevents her seeming a hypocrite to herself, and while the novel's free indirect style, by giving us access to Fanny's scruples, (mostly) prevents her seeming hypocritical to us, she nonetheless pays a high price for this protection.

The reference to the slave trade in the passage quoted above ensures that this conversational exchange has remained a crux for readings of *Mansfield Park*.[20] Several critics have tried on this basis, perhaps naïvely, to enlist Austen for the cause of abolition, as when one recent critic suggests that in her question to Sir Thomas, Fanny "bravely makes her own abolitionist sympathies clear."[21] It is highly unlikely that Fanny's question to Sir Thomas – a question that Edmund Bertram hoped "would be followed up by others," after all, and that Fanny herself "longed" to pursue – could have been motivated primarily by hostility to his slave-owning. Yet much remains at stake in the question-and-answer exchange between Fanny Price and Sir Thomas Bertram. Contemporary conduct manuals expose a detailed anthropology of question-asking, an elaborate code which governs the behavior of young women in company and whose components suggest the rules that may govern Fanny Price's conversation in this important instance.[22]

More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) offers extensive prescriptions for how women should behave in conversation, prescriptions that imply a great deal about relations between the sexes. First of all, conversation is a mode that should allow men and women to practice the art of pleasing. Pleasing the other sex in turn entails an effort to seem rational on the part of women as well as men (at least in an ideal world): "The sexes will naturally desire to appear to each other, such as each believes the other will best like; their conversation will act reciprocally; and each sex will appear more or less rational as they perceive it will more or less recommend them to the other."[23] Yet men do not necessarily want women to seem rational, and More's advice to women who wish to recommend themselves to men is not to talk, but to remain silent. She describes female modesty as a kind of speaking silence: rather than issuing remarks or sallies, More advises, women should avoid talking too much, as listening is the most essential conversational virtue. More is quite specific about what this very physical kind of silence looks like:

> an inviolable and marked attention may shew, that a woman is pleased with a subject, and an illuminated countenance may prove that she understands it, almost as unequivocally as language itself could do; and this, *with a modest question*, is in many cases as large a share of the conversation as is decorous for feminine delicacy to take. (II.65, emphasis added)

More's passage is quite carefully constructed. She hedges her claim with qualifiers ("almost as unequivocally," "in many cases"), allowing space only for "a modest question" whose nature she does not specify.[24]

More's conduct-book-in-the-guise-of-a-novel, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), offers more detailed information about just what questions a virtuous woman is allowed to ask: "such questions, as strangers may be likely to gain, at least not to lose, credit by answering."[25] It would seem that the "modest question" of More's *Strictures* corresponds quite closely to the question Fanny asks Sir Thomas – a question so modest, we may note, that we are not given enough information to reconstruct it. More is especially scathing in *Cœlebs* about a woman who does not "[suit] her interrogations to the kind of knowledge [strangers] may be supposed likely to possess." Inattention on this count can lead to embarrassing consequences, More says: "From want of this discernment, I have known ladies ask a gentleman just arrived from the East Indies, questions about America." Without endorsing More's strictures, Austen restricts Fanny Price's actions by a comparable set of guidelines: we imagine that Fanny's question about the slave trade must allow Sir Thomas "to gain, at least not to lose, credit," and she has clearly "suit[ed] her interrogations" to the knowledge actually possessed by Sir Thomas.

Fanny's observation of conduct-book decorum, however, cannot prevent this brief passage from reverberating throughout Austen criticism. Some questions are intended to shore up the authority of the person being questioned; other questions are designed to criticize or to undermine. Fanny's question about the slave trade, however she means it, has a disruptive effect, as her own reluctance to follow up on the question may imply. Theodor Adorno has described tact as a form of hostility in which the tactful question "becomes inquisitive or injurious," tactful silence is indistinguishable from "empty indifference" and "individuals begin, not without reason, to react antagonistically to tact."[26] His characteristically pessimistic discussion implies that individuals are right to protect themselves against the hostilities of politeness. Adorno's insight is especially relevant to *Mansfield Park* because it shows that Fanny Price may behave politely to her patron not only due to a masochistic or self-destructive impulse, as Claudia Johnson suspects, but also out of a discreetly aggressive one. Simultaneously advantageous and damaging to others and to themselves, tact gives women with one hand what it takes away with the other. Fanny may not be allowed the forms of civility practiced by Elinor Dashwood, but she has a right to other kinds of self-concealment, habits that may be no less empowering than they are restrictive.

III

Perhaps the best evidence of Fanny Price's hypocrisy is that despite everyone's low opinion of her, she successfully conceals from Mansfield's other inhabitants all of her most important thoughts and motives. The "despite" of the previous sentence is also, of course, a "because" – Fanny is able to deceive in part because she is beneath notice. Like many hypocrites, Fanny Price conceals her thoughts and plays a role; unlike most of her colleagues in hypocrisy, however, she also gets what she wants. The fact that Fanny is unreadable to the novel's other characters can be attributed to her status as a poor relation, almost an unpaid servant. Fanny shares with other hypocrites the trait of hating inconsistency itself less than she hates the appearance of inconsistency: she believes that appearances matter.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that every character in *Mansfield Park* thinks more about how his or her actions will appear to everyone else than about whether those actions are advisable in the first place. Neither Edmund Bertram nor Fanny Price, the two characters most often identified as repositories of the novel's morality, is exempt from this rule. One show of inconsistency that draws a great deal of attention within the novel is Edmund Bertram's decision to act in *Lovers' Vows*. Edmund is well aware of how bad his change of heart about acting will look. He arrives at Fanny Price's attic armed with a battery of justifications and ready to disguise self-interest (his desire to play opposite Mary Crawford) as a matter of the public good. Edmund's account of why he has changed his mind sounds distinctly self-serving. "It is not at all what I like," he tells Fanny. "No man can like being driven into the *appearance* of such inconsistency. After being known to oppose the scheme from the beginning, there is absurdity in the face of my joining them *now*, when they are exceeding their first plan in every respect; but I can think of no other alternative. Can you, Fanny?" (154, original emphasis). While Edmund wishes to emphasize the fact that his change of heart has only "the *appearance* of . . . inconsistency," the novel's italics suggest that he protests too much, betraying his own incoherence with every word. His claim to be able to think of "no other alternative" is also self-serving: Fanny herself believes that Edmund has enough authority to stop the play from being put on at all, but that he has deliberately chosen not to exert it. Finally, Edmund's last question here to Fanny – "I can think of no other alternative. Can you, Fanny?" – not just expects but actively presses her to answer no.

In her response to Edmund, Fanny avoids all the obvious arguments. She does not invoke an absolute standard of morality, by which all acting

would be deemed immoral (although many readers seem to imagine that this is what she does); nor does she openly charge Edmund with insincerity and self-deception. Moreover, she chooses not to remind him that he has the authority to call the whole thing off. In fact, the thing she seems to care about most is how Edmund's decision will look to Mansfield's other inhabitants. Asked to endorse her cousin's wish to save Mary Crawford from intimacy with a stranger, Fanny responds thus: "I am sorry for Miss Crawford; but I am more sorry to see you drawn in to do what you had resolved against, and what you are known to think will be disagreeable to my uncle. It will be such a triumph to the others!" (155). Fanny's language here is unexpected. Her "sorry" – "more sorry" construction, even as it allows for two competing claims, also forces the question of appearances into prominence. She is certainly sorry that Edmund has reversed his earlier position and shown himself inconsistent ("Edmund so inconsistent," she will muse afterwards: "Was he not deceiving himself? Was he not wrong?" [156]). More forcefully, however, her choice of words suggests that Edmund should refrain from acting *not* primarily because acting will be disagreeable to Sir Thomas, though that is certainly also the case, but rather because Edmund is "*known to think* [it] will be disagreeable" to him (emphasis added). In other words, the disparity between Edmund's decision to act and his own prior stand against acting will hurt his reputation more than anything he actually does on stage.

Does Fanny care about appearances solely because she is afraid of alienating her benefactor? No, the novel insists, although circumstances often suggest otherwise. While Fanny's caution may be characteristic of the charity case, the narrative also seems to endorse such fears. Fanny is right to remind Edmund to think about how his decision will look, for Tom and Maria Bertram are quick to triumph:

> Such a victory over Edmund's discretion had been beyond their hopes, and was most delightful. There was no longer any thing to disturb them in their darling project, and they congratulated each other in private on the jealous weakness to which they attributed the change, with all the glee of feelings gratified in every way. Edmund might still look grave, and say he did not like the scheme in general, and must disapprove the play in particular; their point was gained; he was to act, and he was driven to it by the force of selfish inclinations only. Edmund had descended from that moral elevation which he had maintained before, and they were both as much the better as the happier for the descent. (158)

Edmund's usual "moral elevation" is exposed here as a mask for the more common motive of self-interest; in fact, Edmund's motives are most transparent to his siblings when he acts on a self-interested basis.

When Trilling calls Jane Austen and Robespierre "cousins-german through their commitment to the 'honest soul' and its appropriate sincerity," he drastically exaggerates the likeness between the kinds of scrutiny to which motives are subjected in revolutionary France and at Mansfield Park.[27] One problem with Trilling's assertion is that in *Mansfield Park*, the communal commitment to sincerity – to the public unmasking of private motives – is by no means expressed through the character of Fanny Price. If the novel's moral argument is indeed aligned with Fanny Price, that argument would seem to fall on the side of concealment. It is rather the Bertram and Crawford siblings who are compelled to unmask virtue as self-interest, searching out inconsistencies between public and private motives. Tom and Maria Bertram operate in a world very much like that described by A. O. Hirschman in *The Passions and the Interests*: in a world governed by interest, the motive of interest ensures both constancy and predictability, so that the actions of an individual in pursuit of his own interest, whatever his moral character may be, become "transparent and predictable almost as though he were a wholly virtuous person."[28] While *Mansfield Park* would seem to endorse the claim that Edmund at his most self-interested and self-deceptive is highly transparent to his family members, however, the novel also suggests something quite different: that in spite of the presumed correlation between virtue and transparency, a truly virtuous young woman like Fanny Price is rendered by her modesty not transparent but rather opaque to those around her.

Fanny's virtue thus seems to be, if not contingent upon, then, at the very least, intertwined with her practice of concealment. Austen uses free indirect style to achieve the paradox of a character whose modesty renders her unreadable to those around her (and sometimes even to herself), at the same time as the narrative makes her transparent to the reader.[29] The "chameleon-like" style of *Mansfield Park* accordingly allows Austen to deflect the accusation that modesty and sincerity are at odds with one another, an old charge leveled with renewed force by Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication*.[30] By extension, the novel suggests that while sincerity cannot survive in conditions of dependency, there is no reason it should need to: that the dependent must turn to account the advantages of concealment, since they will surely be asked to pay the corresponding penalties. Fanny's inscrutability is responsible not just for readers' lack of sympathy, then, but for her very success within the novel's marriage-plot, in which her ability to conceal her thoughts turns out to be a highly effective stratagem. Fanny's successful practice of concealment makes her behavior unpredictable to others, as opposed to the transparent predictability of the

more conventionally self-interested person; the carapace of subservience and self-abasement that hides Fanny's desire to marry Edmund Bertram deceives even Mary Crawford and Sir Thomas Bertram, both of whom are usually extremely perceptive when their own interests are at stake.

In his critique of contemporary moral theory, Alasdair MacIntyre attributes the inability of the social sciences to make accurate predictions about human behavior to a fundamental failure in the Enlightenment attitude toward predictability. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre points out that while the models of game theory are frequently applied to human interactions, game theory rests on the assumption that knowledge of other players' motives is in theory fully attainable, especially by an outside observer like the political scientist himself. MacIntyre suspects that this assumption is wrong on several different counts, and that social scientists accordingly fail not just to predict the future but even to achieve the more straightforward goal of explaining the past. Not only is it "a major interest of each actor to maximize the imperfection of the information of certain other actors at the same time as he improves his own," MacIntyre observes, but since "the conditions of success include the ability to deceive successfully . . . it is the defeated whom we are more likely to understand and it is those who are going to be defeated whose behavior we are more likely to be able to predict."[31]

MacIntyre's insight yields some surprising results in Fanny Price's case. Fanny successfully deceives almost everyone within the novel: specifically, with regard to her feelings for Edmund, but also more generally, with regard to her merits, strength of character and so on. Just as Fanny is a cipher to most of the novel's other characters, so she continues to pose a problem for critics who find themselves unable to fathom her morality. A factor not mentioned by MacIntyre is gender, which turns out to be crucial to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century accounts of the conditions of deception, in part because of the correlation between gender and inequality. Fanny is inscrutable because she is unequal – to the task of deception as well as to her cousins – which means among other things that the behavior of her superiors will always be more legible to her than hers to them. She is also enigmatic because, as a woman, she has been taught to be so.

John Stuart Mill would articulate this point more explicitly at mid-century, pointing out with regard to the general lack of honest communication between husbands and wives "that the position of looking up to another is extremely unpropitious to complete sincerity and openness with him" and "that thorough knowledge of one another hardly ever exists, but

between persons who, besides being intimates, are equals."[32] Mill's point is that men and women should be equals, and he is certainly in favor of complete openness. Yet when one is unlucky enough to be less equal, one is also less bound by the obligation to be sincere, and insincerity is one of the most powerful weapons in the arsenal of the inferior. Every traditional defense of female modesty assumes something like this, though to articulate it in so many words (as Mill does) is also to subvert modesty's ideological dominance. Where Mill – like Wollstonecraft – attacks female deceitfulness as a symptom of gender inequality, using the lack of sincerity between men and women to make a case for women's liberation, Austen is willing to argue for the necessity of adapting to or working around problematic aspects of the present system: modesty, patronage, dependence, paternalism and so on. While retaining the critical insight that relations of inequality between women and men (or between poor cousins and wealthy ones) are hardly conducive to perfect honesty, Austen is more concerned with the tactical management of inequality than with its wholesale rejection. She observes in *Mansfield Park* that the dependent use paternalism as leverage to get what they can – an insight implicit in Wollstonecraft's argument about women and dependence – and she also suggests that such a use is at the very least forgivable – a conclusion antithetical to those of Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication*.

Mansfield Park does not finally equate virtue with remuneration. On the contrary, Fanny Price refuses the reward of marriage to Henry Crawford, although circumstances might have bestowed it upon her. "Would he have persevered, and uprightly, Fanny must have been his reward – and a reward very voluntarily bestowed – within a reasonable period from Edmund's marrying Mary" (467): in this sentence, of course, Crawford is not Fanny's reward, she is *his*, and by this displacement of the language of compensation, Austen finally rescues Fanny from the charge of being a Pamela. Yet despite Fanny's resistance to the cruder forms of materialism (a resistance that the narrator suggests would understandably have evaporated had Fanny stayed much longer in her parents' miserable house at Portsmouth [369, 413]), the name Fanny Price directly engages eighteenth-century arguments about sexuality, marriage and the price of virtue. If her first name evokes Cleland's Fanny Hill, her second invokes an ongoing debate about virtue, its rewards and costs. Johnson's *Dictionary* provides the essential gloss. Out of four senses for the word "price," the two middle definitions emphasize value and cost respectively, while the last sense is perhaps the most significant. Defined in the first edition as "[r]eward; thing purchased at any rate,"

the word's fourth-edition definition is modified to read "[r]eward; thing purchased by merit."[33] The definition is illustrated in both editions with the same passage by Pope, which makes a witty play on the meanings of "reward," "merit" and "deserves": "Sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed; / What then? is the reward of virtue bread? / That, vice may merit; 'tis the *price* of toil; / The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil." The quotation puts pressure on exactly the point in which Austen is also interested. Austen leaves unanswered the question of whether Fanny's reward is procured "at any rate" or "by merit," but in either case, tact exacts a high price. In the end, Fanny Price still has much in common with Lucy Steele. She also resembles the character of Jane Fairfax, however, whose deceitfulness is mitigated by her social position but who remains under suspicion at the conclusion of *Emma*, the novel where Austen most obviously revisits *Mansfield Park*'s equivocal conclusions about virtue and concealment.

Emma calls Mr. Knightley "the worst judge in the world . . . of the difficulties of dependence," in part because he does "not know what it is to have tempers to manage."[34] Her comment comes in the context of a discussion of Frank Churchill (whose fortune, like that of Edward Ferrars, depends on the good-will of an ill-tempered old woman) and his failure to visit his father at Highbury, but the real "difficulties of dependence" are experienced disproportionately by women. If Emma is indeed a better judge than Mr. Knightley of those difficulties – a debatable point – it can only be because of her gender. The constricted circumstances in which she lives (the impossibility of taking a walk by herself, the fact of never having seen the sea, the obligation for good-tempered attendance upon her fretful father) may have taught her something about the narrowness that characterizes the lives of Mrs. and Miss Bates and their ward Jane Fairfax, and the irritation these characters provoke in Emma is most likely prompted by her barely conscious anxiety about the lack of status experienced by single women without Emma's own material advantages.

As a young woman designated for life as a governess, Jane Fairfax is the character in the novel who most clearly suffers the difficulties of dependence. Whether as a cause or an effect of her inferior status, Jane Fairfax is distinctly hard to read. Emma does not like Jane, and is full of chagrin on hearing of her impending stay in Highbury:

> Emma was sorry; – to have to pay civilities to a person she did not like through three long months! – to be always doing more than she wished, and less than she ought! Why she did not like Jane Fairfax might be a difficult question to

> answer; Mr. Knightley had once told her it was because she saw in her the really accomplished young woman, which she wanted to be thought herself; and though the accusation had been eagerly refuted at the time, there were moments of self-examination in which her conscience could not quite acquit her. But "she could never get acquainted with her: she did not know how it was, but there was such coldness and reserve – such apparent indifference whether she was pleased or not." (166–67)

Emma's language, given here in a third-person shorthand that represents something close to reported speech, is unreasonably hyperbolic. She invokes terms like coldness and reserve to explain her dislike for Jane, though her own hotheaded language casts some doubt on the objectivity of her opinion. Emma's thoughts on Jane Fairfax, as they are represented in the novel's third-person limited voice, are passionate, partial and prejudiced: "[Jane] was, besides, which was the worst of all, so cold, so cautious! There was no getting at her real opinion. Wrapt up in a cloak of politeness, she seemed determined to hazard nothing. She was disgustingly, was suspiciously reserved" (169).

More generous than Emma towards Jane Fairfax, Knightley admits the charge of reserve but suggests that it is mitigated by her circumstances: when Emma comments on Jane's reserve, he responds, "I always told you she was – a little; but you will soon overcome all that part of her reserve which ought to be overcome, all that has its foundation in diffidence. What arises from discretion must be honoured" (171). Despite the attractiveness of his tolerance, Mr. Knightley is probably wrong to identify Jane's reserve as honorable and discreet, and Emma right to condemn it, though this is not confirmed till late in the novel. After a conversation in which Frank Churchill amuses himself at Emma's expense – in response to Emma's statement vis-à-vis Jane that "I never could attach myself to any one so completely reserved," Frank responds, "It is a most repulsive quality, indeed. Oftentimes very convenient, no doubt, but never pleasing. There is safety in reserve, but no attraction. One cannot love a reserved person" – Emma asserts the following: "Intimacy between Miss Fairfax and me is quite out of the question. I have no reason to think ill of her – not the least – except that such extreme and perpetual cautiousness of word and manner, such a dread of giving a distinct idea about any body, is apt to suggest suspicions of there being something to conceal" (203).

Emma is absolutely correct. Jane Fairfax is "a riddle, quite a riddle" (285), and like the other riddles in the book – the verses and anagrams that Emma and others find so engaging – she prompts enthusiastic but often

misguided acts of interpretation. Emma imagines a romance between Jane and Mr. Dixon, while Mrs. Elton sees in Jane's reserve a happy confirmation of her own social superiority: "She is very timid and silent. One can see that she feels the want of encouragement. I like her the better for it. I must confess it is a recommendation to me. I am a great advocate for timidity – and I am sure one does not often meet with it. – But in those who are at all inferior, it is extremely prepossessing" (283). In this comment, Mrs. Elton shows off only her own exceptionally bad manners, and when Emma wonders how Jane Fairfax can stand the company of the vicar's wife, Mr. Knightley's explanation casts some light on the novel's exploration of civility and politeness:

> Mrs. Elton does not talk *to* Miss Fairfax as she speaks *of* her. We all know the difference between the pronouns he or she and thou, the plainest-spoken amongst us; we all feel the influence of a something beyond common civility in our personal intercourse with each other – a something more early implanted. We cannot give any body the disagreeable hints that we may have been very full of the hour before. (286)

Whether or not he is right about Mrs. Elton, who seems capable of any form of rudeness, Mr. Knightley's insight that "a something beyond common civility" affects us in conversation, particularly where there is a gap in status between the two speakers, is relevant to all of Austen's fiction.[35] To those who say that politeness is hypocrisy (an understandable concern in environments that include female characters like *Sense and Sensibility*'s Lucy Steele or *Persuasion*'s Mrs. Clay and male characters like *Pride and Prejudice*'s Wickham, *Emma*'s Frank Churchill or *Persuasion*'s William Elliot), the rebuttal must be that politeness exists in part to protect the less powerful from their social superiors. Emma's notorious incivility towards Miss Bates, who deserves the greatest respect in part because of the precariousness of her social position, is the offense for which she feels both the most painfully punished and the most sincerely remorseful, and the moral prosperity of individuals and communities seems to depend on the continued existence of an ideal of civility: an ideal enforced in this case (as in others) by Mr. Knightley, who says to Emma afterwards, "How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation?" (374).

Despite the commitment to civility implied in both his name and his actions, Mr. Knightley has many reservations about the "manœuvring and finessing" associated with manners and politeness (146). Indeed, the argument developed over the course of the novel is that civility does *not*

depend on concealment, and that dependency on its own cannot mitigate deceptiveness. Knightley is especially hard on Frank Churchill, but he does not except Jane Fairfax from a want of openness:

> Jane Fairfax is a very charming young woman – but not even Jane Fairfax is perfect. She has a fault. She has not the open temper which a man would wish for in a wife . . . Jane Fairfax has feeling, I do not accuse her of want of feeling. Her sensibilities, I suspect, are strong – and her temper excellent in its power of forbearance, patience, self-controul; but it wants openness. She is reserved, more reserved, I think, than she used to be – And I love an open temper. (288–89)

He is the only one to suspect a prior attachment between Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill, whose general wish to please – his seemingly "open manners" [320], though they turn out to be anything but – makes him paradoxically less pleasing than Knightley himself. When the engagement is revealed, Emma adds to Knightley's earlier condemnation of Frank's behavior as "[d]isingenuousness and double-dealing" (348) the following verdict: "Much, much beyond impropriety! [she says to Mrs. Weston] – It has sunk him, I cannot say how it has sunk him in my opinion. So unlike what a man should be! – None of that upright integrity, that strict adherence to truth and principle, that disdain of trick and littleness, which a man should display in every transaction of his life" (397). Frank has earlier claimed to be incapable of producing "a civil falsehood"; Emma says at that stage that "I am persuaded that you can be as insincere as your neighbours, when it is necessary" (234), but she has understated her case. Frank's disingenuousness takes him well beyond the sanctioned forms of social insincerity.

Yet if *Emma* presents a clear argument that men should be open, the imperatives affecting women are more ambiguous. Jane Fairfax's "cloak of politeness" is an attractive one, and it is not clear in the world of *Emma* how women are ever to be wholly sincere. Jane Fairfax's allusion to the "governess-trade" (300–01) calls to mind the similar moment in *Mansfield Park* where Austen connects the situation of a dependent young Englishwoman with that of slaves in the West Indies, and it is clear that in her relations with Emma, even so honest and open a dependent as the former Miss Taylor (now Mrs. Weston) has been unwilling or unable to provide the kind of bracing criticism dispensed by Mr. Knightley. As he reads Frank's confessional letter, he comments repeatedly on the contaminating effects of secrecy: "Fancying you to have fathomed his secret. Natural enough! – his own mind full of intrigue, that he should suspect it in others. – Mystery; Finesse – how they pervert the understanding! My Emma, does not every

thing serve to prove more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?" (446). While Emma agrees with everything he says, however, she also blushes: she has yet to tell Mr. Knightley anything about Harriet's crush on him or about the other effects of her own recent meddling. This omission directly affects her reception of the announcement of Harriet's engagement to Robert Martin: "High in the rank of her most serious and heartfelt felicities, was the reflection that all necessity of concealment from Mr. Knightley would soon be over. The disguise, equivocation, mystery, so hateful to her to practise, might soon be over. She could now look forward to giving him that full and perfect confidence which her disposition was most ready to welcome as a duty" (475). Yet many readers have found the tone here to be slightly ironic, and predicted that the marriage of Emma and Mr. Knightley will not be characterized by "full and perfect confidence" but rather by some backsliding into mysteries and intrigues comparable to the ones the novel has chronicled. No more than Jane Fairfax can Emma afford to be fully truthful and sincere; Austen's choice to focus the narration on Emma rather than Jane, however, makes Jane's deceptions far harder to forgive than the misleading impressions mistakenly propagated by Fanny Price, who withholds her thoughts and feelings from the other characters in the novel but whose inner workings are laid bare to the reader on almost every page.

The late twentieth-century self-help book expresses a hypocrisy very similar to that of the late eighteenth-century conduct manual when it asks women to conceal their emotions and practice sexual restraint in order to achieve the goal of marriage. It is natural to object, as Wollstonecraft does, to the manipulative nature of such policies. But Austen does not object to modesty on this count. The triumph and simultaneous tyranny of tact that *Mansfield Park* imagines is in this sense a reversal for the cause of female emancipation. Given the increasing democratization of politics and society over the course of the nineteenth century, a possible counter-argument might run, why should women continue to labor in tact's stranglehold? Yet even as *Mansfield Park* reinscribes the advantages of an older way of getting by, Austen also presents modesty as a strategy with several benefits newly accruing to it. Following the controversy of the 1790s over political and domestic manners, female opacity is now better understood; moreover, the novel offers a sophisticated vocabulary in which to talk about it. Tact has become a form of power that people are willing to acknowledge, giving it a new legitimacy. Finally, by putting Fanny into a position only a little better than that of a servant, Austen links opacity to class as well as gender, a connection which allows her to explore the complex relations between

hypocrisy and economic disadvantage. *Mansfield Park* suggests not only that patronage is compatible with virtue but that virtue must often be a matter of negotiating dependence. Fanny's particular type of hypocrisy thus offers one answer to the question that preoccupied eighteenth-century political writers: whether virtue could survive without corruption in conditions of economic or social subjection.[36] In the character of Fanny Price, Austen presents the perquisites as well as the penalties of female disadvantage.

CODA

Politeness and its costs

> One of the most common mistakes in asking for support is the use of *could* and *can* in place of *would* and *will*. "*Could* you empty the trash?" is merely a question gathering information. "*Would* you empty the trash?" is a request.
>
> Women often use "could you?" indirectly to imply "would you?" As I mentioned before, indirect requests are a turnoff . . .
>
> On Mars it would be an insult to ask a man "*Can* you empty the trash?" Of course he can empty the trash! The question is not *can* he empty the trash but *will* he empty the trash. After he has been insulted, he may say no just because you have irritated him.
>
> John Gray, Ph.D., *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* (1992)

> It doesn't matter if you're not a beauty queen, that you never finished college, or that you don't keep up with current events. You still think you're enough! You have more confidence than women with MBAs or money in the bank. You don't grovel. You're not desperate or anxious. You don't date men who don't want you. You trust in the abundance and goodness of the universe: if not him, someone better, you say. You don't settle. You don't chase anyone. You don't use sex to make men love you. You believe in love and marriage. You're not cynical. You don't go to pieces when a relationship doesn't work out. Instead, you get a manicure and go out on another date or to a singles dance. You're an optimist. You brush away a tear so that it doesn't smudge your makeup and you move on! Of course, that is not how you really *feel*. This is how you *pretend* you feel until it feels real. *You act as if!*
>
> Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, *The Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right* (1995)

In a 2001 *New York Times* editorial entitled "Hypocrisy Has Its Virtues," Alan Ehrenhalt offers an argument in favor of hypocrisy that sounds very like a modern updating of Swift or Burke. Many of the eighteenth-century

writers whose work has been discussed in previous chapters are convinced that the open profession of vice, whether or not it is accompanied by a rhetoric of sincerity after the fashion of Rousseau, is far more dangerous for society than even the most glaring discrepancies between what people say in public and what they do in private. Ehrenhalt shares this view. "We need to be careful, or we will drive our best hypocrites out of public life," he begins. "I'm not joking. As fond as we are of denouncing all forms of hypocrisy, all forms are not morally equivalent. A good hypocrite believes in the values he professes but is simply too weak to live up to them. He transgresses. He is sorry. He may transgress over and over again, but he will be sorry every time. A bad hypocrite pays lip service to a set of principles but doesn't believe a word of what he's saying."[1] Ehrenhalt's example of a good hypocrite is William Gladstone, whose interest in prostitutes "went far beyond preaching to them" but who also "used to come home from his excursions [into nineteenth-century London's red-light districts] and whip himself as punishment for the lie that he was living"; his bad hypocrite is Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose attempts in the 1950s to expose the supposedly subversive activities of various high-profile Americans prompt Ehrenhalt to describe him as "the kind of hypocrite we really need to worry about," though he admits that it is hard in any given case to know which kind of hypocrisy confronts us. The article emphasizes the dangers associated with "a tell-all approach to hypocrisy," arguing that the popularity of the practice of unmasking tends to discredit even real virtues, with the consequence that "it becomes difficult to transmit those virtues to one's children."

Though his only literary reference is to La Rochefoucault's well-known definition of hypocrisy as the tribute vice pays to virtue, Ehrenhalt's argument brings to mind not just Swift and Burke but also Samuel Johnson's comment in the *Rambler*: "Nothing is more unjust, however common, than to charge with hypocrisy him that expresses zeal for those virtues, which he neglects to practise; since he may be sincerely convinced of the advantages of conquering his passions, without having yet obtained the victory."[2] What accounts for the similarities between these arguments? Do contemporary defenses of hypocrisy owe anything to the eighteenth-century arguments I have considered? It is beyond the scope of this brief afterword to offer an exhaustive treatment of the discourse on civility in late twentieth-century America, but putting aside the question of influence and simply concentrating on the resemblance, what might the results of my excavation of the political and cultural assumptions that drive eighteenth-century defenses of hypocrisy reveal about their modern analogues?

Clues to Ehrenhalt's own political affiliations are given by the subtitle of his book, *The Lost City: Discovering the Forgotten Virtues of Community in the Chicago of the 1950s*, published by Basic Books in 1995, and by the fact that his name can be found in the Speakers Encyclopedia of the innocuously named Intercollegiate Studies Institute, whose lecture program also features Dinesh D'Souza, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Hilton Kramer, Harvey Mansfield, Wendy Shalit and Abigail Thernstrom. It should not be surprising that explicit defenses of hypocrisy still tend to be affiliated with the conservative end of the political spectrum. Yet given abundant eighteenth-century precedents for this kind of argument, why should conservative writers so often turn (as Ehrenhalt implicitly does, with his mention of Gladstone) to the nineteenth century rather than the eighteenth when it comes time to name their sponsors? Consider, for instance, Gertrude Himmelfarb's defense, in *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (1994), not of "the deliberate living of a lie" but of the "kind of hypocrisy that was more in keeping with Victorian values."[3] Himmelfarb's reintroduction of the language of virtues is part of a broader initiative, led by William Bennett and others, to reinfuse American life with qualities such as "community" and "respect" that are produced by nostalgia and a kind of nondenominational Protestant religious feeling that is presumably more compatible with the secular but heavily moralized writing of a George Eliot or a Matthew Arnold than with any of the best-known eighteenth-century moralists. The great exception to this general preference for nineteenth- over eighteenth-century role models is Burke. Though Himmelfarb concentrates on a nineteenth-century morality that seems to have become inaccessible to our own culture, she also quotes Burke on manners and identifies him prominently as "the great mentor of the Victorians."[4] Burke's name works here both as a shorthand for a well-established conservative position on politics and society and as a way of covering up the names of the other eighteenth-century writers whose discussions of similar topics would seem to inform the work of Himmelfarb and others. Why this covering up?

Carol Kay comments on the extent to which Burke and other conservative writers of the 1790s managed to create a deep rift between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In the wake of the French Revolution, the foundational "before-and-after" event for a great deal of Anglo-American writing, intermediaries like Burke, Wordsworth and Coleridge (Kay says) are able to make the eighteenth century their own and to become the main conduits for access to the pre-revolutionary past, including the writings of, say, Swift, Richardson, Hume, and others.[5] This is a brilliant and a powerful

act of obfuscation on Burke's part, but one that has had unfortunate consequences. Why is it so crucial to show eighteenth-century precedents for the features of what we tend think of a distinctively modern and American cultural landscape? The most obvious answer is that Hume, for instance, in his resolute secularism, is far more resistant than Burke to co-optation in the name of virtues, values or anything else. (Burke too, of course, must be read very selectively before he can be made to stand for such things.) The eighteenth century is widely considered, by those who think about it at all, to be squalid and sexual, slippery in its religious and political affiliations, modern in all the most threatening ways. Yet the list of eighteenth-century works that have had a powerful impact on modern America goes far beyond John Locke's *Second Treatise*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, and this is particularly true in the case of politeness. Given the recent reclamation of politeness and civility as central terms for debating questions about political and civic community, and thus about social policy and even legal precedent, it seems especially important to uncover their prehistory.

There is no reason why manners should be exclusively associated with social and cultural conservatism; the left-leaning Judith Martin, better known as Miss Manners, remains perhaps the most vocal and persuasive opponent of what she likes to call the "Jean-Jacques Rousseau School of Etiquette."[6] Yet most writers of a liberal stamp are suspicious (and rightly so, I think) of the ends which the commitment to civility can conceal. In the wake of what Benjamin DeMott describes as a "miniboom" on civility in American political discourse of the mid-1990s, Randall Kennedy has pointed out the substantial risks associated with the bipartisan endorsement of civility, in which centrist liberals such as Stephen L. Carter, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Deborah Tannen publicly explored the advantages of ways of thinking about morality that are more often associated with the polemical arguments of conservative writers on the virtues such as Bennett, Himmelfarb, Kramer, Lynne Cheney and others.[7] While Kennedy concentrates on describing the political beliefs that are likely to prompt an endorsement of civility, he also mentions what he calls "the snare of nostalgia," and Stephen Carter's contribution to the ongoing public conversation, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (1998), has more than its share of nostalgia.[8] The book constitutes an elegy to the lost values of the local communities of the 1950s, with a subsidiary lament for the lost golden age of nineteenth-century railway travel (though as this is conjured up through the medium of etiquette books with titles like *Politeness on Railroads*, Carter would seem to be making the very common mistake

of taking the prescriptive rules of the genre for description rather than idealization – there is no need to instruct readers that "'whispering, loud talking, immoderate laughing, and singing should not be indulged by any passenger'" if everyone is always quiet and well-mannered).[9] Despite his commitment to the liberal values enshrined in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Carter also adopts the rhetoric of crisis that so often characterizes right-of-center social commentary, combined with a nostalgia for the 1950s that he shares with other, more conservative writers like Himmelfarb, Robert Putnam and James Q. Wilson.[10]

Randall Kennedy is not alone in pointing out the political implications of the rhetorics of crisis and nostalgia. A collection of essays entitled *Civility*, published in 2000 as the twenty-first annual volume in the Boston University Studies in Philosophy and Religion series, offers a number of interesting responses to Carter's argument, many focusing on the problems associated with couching religious arguments in the language of politics.[11] Carter defines civility as "the sum of the many sacrifices we are called to make for the sake of living together" and lobbies for the rediscovery of a "sacrificial ethic," one that centers on the values of self-control and self-discipline (Christian-inflected though not dogmatically so).[12] He also identifies the crisis he addresses as being the result of the degeneration of manners from morality to pragmatics, and the goal of his book is "to re-entangle etiquette and ethics," though this is problematic in light of the inherently pragmatic nature of both ethics and etiquette.[13] Given the cultural history of the sacrificial ethic over the last two hundred years, I find it curious that only one essay in the Boston University collection should deal centrally with questions about gender and civility, Carrie Doehring's "Civility in the Family," which offers an extended reading of Mike Leigh's film *Secrets and Lies*, released in 1996.[14] In response to Stephen Carter's elevation of civility as an ethos of sacrifice (one that he never associates specifically with women as a group, I might add, though individual women such as Sara Kestenbaum, the neighbor who welcomed Stephen Carter's family – "black strangers" – to an all-white neighborhood in Washington, DC in the summer of 1966, often serve as concrete instances of the values Carter endorses [60–63]), Doehring writes, "I argue that giving, such as accommodating the needs of others, has to be balanced with taking and making our own needs plain."[15]

No matter how obvious this sounds, it cannot be said too often. It seems clear that the consequences of the eighteenth-century arguments about ethics and etiquette treated here have been very different for men and for women, not just in nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture but up to

the present day as well. This is not an essentialist argument: a great many individual women have escaped the more self-destructive side-effects of the obligation to be both highly self-disciplined and constantly thoughtful for others, obligations that a large number of men have also taken to heart. But women as a group (and perhaps people of color as well, though this topic is also neglected in the pro-civility writing) have been disproportionately enlisted in the cause of a sacrificial ethic for which they often pay a high price, including the kinds of mental and physical suffering that Jane Austen explores in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*. Why, then, is gender almost entirely absent from a discourse on civility that seems to owe so much to the elevation of politeness by the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment (at least as filtered through Burke), an ideal to whose theorization gender was always central? Why don't Carter and others stop to think about what their model of civility, at least partially informed by the self-sacrificing model of tact invented at the end of the eighteenth century, has to learn from the dark history of modesty?

Nowhere in *Civility* does Carter address the fact that men and women start from different places, as it were, when it comes to self-sacrifice; nor does he acknowledge that the ecumenically Judeo-Christian, distinctly middle-class ethic of sacrifice he describes is the product of a complex set of historical circumstances and debates to which his allusions to several idealized moments in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American history cannot possibly do justice. As might be expected, Carter's rhetoric shows the symptoms of this repression of history, such as the following rich nugget of language, which uses analogy and alliteration to yoke together two quite different vocabularies: "For democracy without civility is like dieting without discipline: we may call ourselves careful eaters, but we know in our souls that we are gluttons" (24). Carter's terms are at odds with one another: what do the secular, self-help-inflected phrases "careful eaters" and "dieting" have to do with the theological language of "souls" and "gluttons"? Moreover, how can someone as smart as Carter write such a sentence without working through its implications? For dieting as a cultural if not a medical practice has been adopted overwhelmingly by women, and the phrase "careful eaters" in many respects sums up the values of self-denial and self-control that so many women have successfully internalized, often at great psychological cost (seen here, too, in the guilty ritual self-castigation implicit in Carter's simile).

Even as the thriving discourse on civility pushes gender off to the side, then, the thriving discourse of self-help makes gender central, and my thesis is that these two phenomena are connected by a single cultural logic whose

origins lie in the eighteenth century's romance with politeness. In 1800, it was possible to see more clearly than it is now the interrelatedness of Burke's discussion of manners in the *Letters on a Regicide Peace* and, say, Hannah More's prescriptions for female manners in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*. The writers of the 1790s were highly attentive to the interdependence of manners and politics, and to the more absurd excesses of the rhetoric of crisis that – then as now – characterized much writing on manners. In Austen's *Catharine* (drafted in 1792–93), a character called Mrs. Percival chastises her niece for a minor breach of propriety with the words "I plainly see that every thing is going to sixes and sevens and all order will soon be at an end throughout the Kingdom," and her niece responds with the following:

> "Not however Ma'am the sooner, I hope, from any conduct of mine, said Catharine in a tone of great humility, for upon my honour I have done nothing this evening that can contribute to overthrow the establishment of the kingdom."
>
> "You are Mistaken, Child replied she; the welfare of every Nation depends upon the virtue of it's individuals, and any one who offends in so gross a manner against decorum & propriety is certainly hastening it's ruin."[16]

Like the white descendants of Thomas Jefferson who recently voted to exclude the descendants of his slave Sally Hemings from membership in the Monticello Association, civility's followers cover up the pieces of their intellectual genealogy that would reveal their presence on the same family tree that includes etiquette and self-help.[17] But those less respectable collateral offshoots of eighteenth-century writing on manners reveal some things more clearly than the discourse on civility. No doubt Stephen Carter would be horrified if he were asked to appear on a panel alongside John Gray, Ph.D. and the authors of *The Rules*, but my proposition is that they have a great deal to say to each other, and in the spirit of reintroducing long-lost relatives, I turn now to the two epigraphs given at the start of this conclusion. The language in which both are written is at first glance almost wholly discontinuous with the rhetoric of civility, but a closer look shows a number of local similarities, both to the eighteenth-century arguments discussed in earlier chapters and to modern arguments about manners, adding up to a marked family resemblance that in turn tells us something important about the relationship between gender and politeness.

The advice for women who want husbands that is given in the notorious bestseller *The Rules* is relentlessly pragmatic. The world of *The Rules* in many respects resembles that of Chesterfield's letters. The book puts forward a practical thesis about the payoffs of delayed gratification and self-restraint

in the form of "simple working set of behaviors and reactions": concealing one's feelings and withholding sex with the goal of receiving a marriage proposal.[18] The authors do not envision a readership eager to embrace the discipline of self-denial: following an admission that "you must experience some delayed gratification in the first few months of the relationship to achieve this marital bliss," they ask their reluctant imagined reader this rhetorical question: "But has wearing your heart on your sleeve ever gotten you anywhere?"[19] The epigraph given above displays a number of interesting features, not least a dependence on the trick of negative description that suggests a certain amount of wishful thinking: there is no need to tell a perfectly self-controlled single woman "You're not desperate or anxious" or "You don't use sex to make men love you." Perhaps more interesting, however, is the authors' invocation of an admittedly debased version of the argument about habituation on which so many defenses of hypocrisy rest. Following their idealized portrait of the emotional life of a "*Rules* girl," the authors backtrack: "Of course, that is not how you really *feel.* This is how you *pretend* you feel until it feels real. *You act as if!*" Obviously this isn't what Carter means by sacrifice, and his own commitment to self-denial and delayed gratification does not have the self-interested twist that makes *The Rules* such an outrageous book. The pragmatism of Fein and Schneider's language, and its relentless orientation towards a single goal, suggest a patently self-interested brand of self-control whose extension into other social arenas would be quite sinister, though a similar valorization of self-interest can be seen in the pages of Bennett, Wilson and others, who frequently evoke language and topoi borrowed from the (to my mind) ideologically suspect discipline known as evolutionary psychology to encourage rampant competition and to justify various kinds of inequity based on class, gender and race.

The authors of *The Rules* articulate many of our culture's most disturbing assumptions about women, assumptions that late eighteenth-century writers such as Wollstonecraft and Edgeworth were also concerned to refute: that women are more manipulative and cynical than men, that they are deeply hypocritical, indeed that all women's relationships with men are colored by levels of self-interest and opportunism that are matched only by those of the men who hope to trade guarantees of financial support for the promise of sex. Self-control, for Fein and Schneider, is something that you fake until it becomes real, though you're welcome to stop pretending once the ring's on the finger. Their warning that "wearing your heart on your sleeve" never "[gets] you anywhere" sums up their sense of the relationship between tactical deception and self-interest.

While *Men Are From Mars* displays pretensions to a social-scientific authority that the authors of *The Rules* would never dream of claiming (not least because it might put off potential suitors), Gray's book shares with Fein and Schneider's a form of rhetorical address that seems to be geared towards a largely female audience. Like Hume, Gray sees himself as an ambassador from the learned to the conversible world. Written with what seems to be the goal of explaining male psychology to a female constituency, *Men Are From Mars* (in part because of the practical focus of the self-help genre) is also designed to help readers get what they want: generally, better communication rather than material goods. I have chosen this particular passage because it shows very clearly the extent to which politeness has come to be identified as a tool that women use to manipulate men, a self-defeating strategy that manages to offend precisely the men it is supposed to conciliate. In keeping with the governing Mars–Venus conceit, Gray suggests that men and women speak two different languages. (The tone of his writing is often highly disingenuous.) Women not only don't understand the difference between "*c* words" and "*w* words," Gray argues, but they mistakenly think that the former are "more polite."[20] This passage shares with *The Rules* a conviction that women practice an insidious kind of politeness: the difference is only one of orientation (Fein and Schneider approve, Gray condemns). In both cases, women are aligned with a kind of politeness that is only very superficially related to self-control or to the unwillingness to impose one's desires on the other. *Rules* girls conceal their own desires in the short term in order to satisfy them in the medium term, with what seems to be very little consideration for the men involved, and Fein and Schneider are unwilling or unable to clear up their own confusion over what it means to be at once self-protective and self-interested. The "as if" pretending by which their readers will hypocritically approximate the affect of women genuinely unconcerned with their success on the marriage market (these are the women, the book argues, whose success with men is effortless) feeds into the paranoid vision of women's manipulative politeness implicit in Gray's attack on women's use of *c*-words.

As maddening as books like this may be, they supply the missing pieces of the jigsaw left incomplete by the writings of Carter and others on civility. Writing in the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes distinguishes two different senses of the word manners: "By MANNERS, I mean not here, Decency of behaviour; as how one man should salute another, or how a man should wash his mouth, or pick his teeth before company, and such other points of the *Small Moralls*; But those qualities of mankind, that concern their living together in Peace, and Unity."[21] His tone here is that

of one simply concerned to clarify the sense of an important word in the midst of discussion; the language does not insist on the difference between small and large morals, but rather foregrounds continuities between manners and morals. If seventeenth-century writers emphasized continuities between manners and morals, however, the tendency since then has increasingly been to polarize the two terms. Sympathetic as I am to Carter's wistful desire to re-entangle ethics and etiquette, I believe that it remains important to think historically: to scrutinize the rhetoric of the present day and discern its eighteenth-century forebears, to refuse to accept the softened and sentimentalized version of the eighteenth century that the nineteenth century made for us, to expose the hollow pieties of much modern writing on manners and to open up new possibilities (and perhaps reclaim old ones) for the reconciliation of virtue and politeness.

The title of this coda finally refers not to the public costs of hypocrisy, but to its private ones. Though the word hypocrisy in current use most often alludes to a culpable discrepancy between public professions and private actions, I have deliberately chosen to examine not this kind of hypocrisy but a different one, in which the term becomes a provocative synonym for politeness or the other constitutive elements of sociability: decorum, reticence, self-control. In the end, though, it is impossible to remain ethically neutral in our orientation towards such arguments. To adopt the Freudian terminology I have largely avoided throughout, is hypocrisy the product of repression (a neurotic symptom) or of sublimation (the channeling of drives into constructive ends)? My own temperamental and intellectual preference is for the second, but the rhetorical excesses that accompany so many defenses of hypocrisy (and the darker, more painful aspects of novels such as *Pamela* and *Mansfield Park*) suggest that we had better not say too often or too loudly that hypocrisy is a good thing.

Notes

INTRODUCTION: THE REVOLUTION IN MANNERS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PROSE

1. Important discussions of hypocrisy include Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963; reprint, London: Penguin, 1990), 97–98; Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 1.36–40; Judith N. Shklar, "Let Us Not Be Hypocritical," in *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge and London: Belknap, 1984), 45–86; Stanley Cavell, "A Cover Letter to Molière's *Misanthrope*," in *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), 97–105; and Ruth W. Grant, *Hypocrisy and Integrity: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Ethics of Politics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
2. On the relationship between signs and character in eighteenth-century criticism, see Douglas Lane Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 98–109; on character more generally, see Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1–20.
3. Acute discussions of hypocrisy in literary contexts can be found in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 361; Lionel Trilling, "The Sentiment of Being and the Sentiments of Art," in *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 53–80; and Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), 16–42.
4. A work such as Gitta Sereny's biography of Albert Speer experiments with both of these defenses; *Albert Speer: His Battle With Truth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995). Obviously, many readers are unsympathetic to such arguments.
5. Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 3–14. On language and polite culture in eighteenth-century writing, see Carey McIntosh, *The Evolution of English Prose, 1700–1800: Style, Politeness, and Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1998), esp. 195–220; for a less historical discussion of similar topics, see Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and for another perspective on politeness and deference, see Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo, New York and San Francisco: Kodarsha International Ltd., 1973).

6. On the movement of eighteenth-century political thought "out of the law-centered paradigm and into the paradigm of virtue and corruption," see J. G. A. Pocock, "Virtues, rights, and manners," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 48; on the relationship between commerce and politeness more generally, see Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975), esp. 436, 456; and for a more detailed account of the importance of reputation or "credit-worthiness" in an economy characterized by excessive indebtedness, see John Brewer, "Commercialization and Politics," in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, eds. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (London: Europa, 1982), 214.
7. G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. 351–95.
8. See especially Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, "The literature of conduct, the conduct of literature, and the politics of desire: an introduction," in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, eds. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 1–24. A less partisan account of the conduct book and its relation with the novel can be found in Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
9. See for instance Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 5, 75. Many recent works on conduct literature respond to Foucault's suggestive account of the translation of "a general waning of political activity into an ethics of withdrawal," in *The Care of the Self*, vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (1986; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1988), 94–95. For a more precise account of this historical moment, see Linda Colley's analysis of women's "calculated deployment" of the rhetoric of separate spheres during the 1790s to legitimize "[their] occasional intervention in politics on the grounds of their superior morality," in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 263, 279.
10. Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 14.
11. See especially Carol Kay, "Canon, Ideology, and Gender: Mary Wollstonecraft's Critique of Adam Smith," *New Political Science* 15 (1986): 63–76; and Claudia L. Johnson's account of sentimentality as "politics made intimate," in *Equivocal*

Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1–19.

12. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*, in *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, ed. Cecil Price, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 1.384.
13. La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, ed. Jacques Truchet (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1967), no. 218, my translation.
14. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, eds. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, 3 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 1.113–14.
15. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (1890; reprint, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1907), 1.120. See also James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 62–92; and Joseph R. Roach's account of the extent to which doctrines of second nature shaped the theories of Stanislavski, Meyerhold and Lee Strasberg, in *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (1985; reprint, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 198–99, 213–16. Max Beerbohm's story "The Happy Hypocrite" (1897) offers a fictional working out of similar arguments; see Beerbohm, *Selected Prose*, ed. David Cecil (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 21–51. I am indebted to Vanessa Ryan for this reference.
16. James, *Principles of Psychology*, 11.463, original emphasis.
17. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, eds. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), no. 248, original emphasis.
18. See Sir Francis Bacon, esp. "Of Truth" and "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," in *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); and Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), esp. ch. 18 ("How rulers should keep their promises"). On Bacon and Machiavelli, see also Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 73–76.
19. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History From a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (1784), in *On History*, trans. Lewis White Beck et al. (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 21.
20. Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (1978; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1989), xix.
21. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959; reprint, Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1973), xi. On the relationship between the substantive codes of law, morality and ethics and the "ceremonial" code called etiquette, see also Goffman, "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (1967; reprint, New York: Pantheon, 1982), 47–95; 55.

22. Jonathan Swift, *A Project for the Advancement of Religion* (1709), in *Prose Works*, eds. Herbert Davis et al., 16 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74), II.56.
23. On the link between ethics and etiquette, see especially J. L. Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," in *Philosophical Papers*, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 175–204.
24. Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936; reprint, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 17, original emphasis.
25. The most influential account of Western European manners remains Norbert Elias, *The History of Manners* (1939), in *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (1978; reprint, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). On the etiquette book, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave: A Historical Study of American Etiquette Books* (New York: Macmillan, 1946); Michael Curtin, "A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (Sept. 1985): 395–423; Judith Martin, *Common Courtesy: In Which Miss Manners Solves the Problem that Baffled Mr. Jefferson* (New York: Atheneum, 1985); Andrew St George, *The Descent of Manners: Etiquette, Rules and the Victorians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 3–11; Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); and Janny Scott, "New Respectability for Manners," *New York Times*, 28 February 1998.
26. *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791), in *The French Revolution, 1790–1794*, ed. L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), vol. 8 of *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. Paul Langford, 9+ vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981–), 332. Burke's link between citizenship and the control of appetites is not necessarily inconsistent with Freud's counter-intuitive or deliberately paradoxical argument "that what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery," which also implies that the chains of guilt are an uncomfortable but unavoidable fact of individual and social psychology; see *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), in vol. 21 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961), 86. The word translated in Freud's title as "civilization" is *Kultur*, not *Zivilisation*.
27. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (1869), in *On Liberty, with The Subjection of Women and Chapters on Socialism*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 183.
28. See William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), ed. Mark Philp with Austin Gee, vol. 3 of *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, ed. Mark Philp, 7 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1993), esp. 150; and James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (1791), ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), IV.221, original emphasis.
29. Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), ix, 69–82; and see also Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

30. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), 281; and see also Jeremy Bentham, *"Swear not at all:" Containing an Exposure of the Needlessness and Mischievousness, as well as Antichristianity of the Ceremony of an Oath* (London: R. Hunter, 1817).
31. On seventeenth-century equivocation, see Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990). For a useful summary of the debate on occasional conformity in its literary context, see Paula Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 84–105 and 554–57 (the phrase "occasional Hypocrisy" can be found at 555n.7).
32. [Henry Home, Lord Kames], *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly Concerning the Culture of the Heart* (Edinburgh: John Bell and John Murray, 1781), 365.
33. Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 6.
34. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 466, original emphasis.
35. Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (1859), intro. Asa Briggs (London: John Murray, 1958), 379, original emphasis.
36. John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1990), 3.
37. Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 72. On democracy and civility, see also Martin, *Common Courtesy*; Mark Kingwell, *A Civil Tongue: Justice, Dialogue, and the Politics of Pluralism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 206; Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 233–43; and Adam B. Seligman, "Between Public and Private: Towards a Sociology of Civil Society," in *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 79–111.
38. On the advantage to individuals of remaining opaque or unpredictable, see especially Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theory*, 2nd edn. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 97–98, 104.
39. Hazlitt for instance claims both that people "in a higher or middle rank of life know little or nothing of the characters of those below them" and that women "are 'bitter bad judges' of the characters of men; and men are not much better of theirs." His implication is that while opacity in both cases leads to infinite mutual abuse, masters are especially vulnerable to the deceptiveness of servants (as are men to that of women); "Of the Knowledge of Character" (1821), in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (1931; reprint, New York: AMS, 1967), VIII.307, 310.
40. Mill, *Subjection of Women*, 141.

1 HYPOCRISY AND THE SERVANT PROBLEM

1. Swift's prose is quoted in the edition of Herbert Davis et al., *Prose Works*, 16 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74); on hypocrisy, see esp. II.56–57. Subsequent references are given parenthetically in the text.
2. All citations are from Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn., 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1773), original emphasis. Relevant citations in the first edition are substantially similar; see Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755).
3. Bruce Robbins, *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction From Below* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), x.
4. For a useful recent discussion of the debates surrounding Swift's *Project*, see Judson B. Curry, "Arguing about the Project: Approaches to Swift's *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* and *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 20:1 (1996): 67–79; important earlier articles include Leland D. Peterson, "Swift's *Project*: A Religious and Political Satire," *PMLA* 82 (1967): 54–63; Phillip Harth, "Swift's *Project*: Tract or Travesty?," *PMLA* 84 (1969): 336–43; Jan R. Van Meter, "On Peterson on Swift," *PMLA* 86 (1971): 1017–25; and John Kay, "The Hypocrisy of Jonathan Swift: Swift's *Project* Reconsidered," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 44 (Spring 1975): 213–23.
5. Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967–83), II.276. For an eighteenth-century view corresponding to that of Ehrenpreis, see Lord Orrery, *Remarks on the Life and Writing of Dr. Jonathan Swift*, 3rd edn. (London: A. Millar, 1752), 62–65. On the close relation between Swift's satirical projectors and the voice of the *Project*, see Claude Rawson, "The Character of Swift's Satire," in *Order from Confusion Sprung* (1985; reprint, Atlantic Highlands, NJ and London: Humanities Press International, 1992), 32.
6. Letter of April 1709 from the Earl of Berkeley to Swift, *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, vol. I (1680–1713), ed. Harold Williams (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 139; *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), I.47–48.
7. Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), III.13.
8. Thomas Sheridan, *The Life of the Reverend Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London: C. Bathurst et al., 1784), 61; and see Swift, *Works*, VIII.122.
9. David Nokes, *Jonathan Swift: A Hypocrite Reversed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 97; but for an interesting refutation of this argument, see Shelley Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60.
10. J. G. A. Pocock, "Virtues, rights, and manners," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 37–50.
11. [Henry St John, Lord Bolingbroke], *The Idea of a Patriot King: With Respect to the Constitution of Great Britain* (London: T. C., n.d.), 63. This is the clandestine edition printed by Pope without Bolingbroke's permission; for

the authorized version, see *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism: On the Idea of a Patriot King: and On the State of Parties, at the Accession of King George the First* (London: A. Millar, 1749). On the passion of self-interest, see also Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), esp. 27, 43.

12. For Swift's strong support for the Test Acts, see *Works*, XII.243.
13. Jill Campbell has drawn my attention to the relevance of New Testament precedents for this kind of accounting; see for instance Matthew 18: 12–13. Mandeville may also have Swift's passage in mind when he writes in *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (London, 1732) that "ever since the Notion of Honour has been receiv'd among Christians, there have always been, in the same Number of People, Twenty Men of real Honour to one of real Virtue" (pp. 43–44).
14. Johnson's citation for "hypocrite" runs as follows: "The making religion necessary to interest might increase hypocrisy; but if one in twenty should be brought to true piety, and nineteen be only *hypocrites*, the advantage would still be great." On Johnson's practice of altering quotations to suit his purpose, see Allen Reddick, *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary, 1747–1773* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.
15. For a representative contemporary attack on the behavior of servants in livery, see Daniel Defoe, *The Great Law of Subordination consider'd* (London: S. Harding et al., 1724), especially the section on footmen (191–209). Defoe's arguments are by no means original, and a minor pamphlet literature abusing servants had begun to appear in the years prior to the publication of the *Project*. By the 1720s, however, for reasons explored below, the volume of polemical arguments about servants would dramatically increase.
16. Johnson's citations in the *Dictionary* for the word "livery" display an interesting pattern of ambiguity. The Literature Online English Poetry Database also confirms a strong connection between livery and hypocrisy; see in particular Samuel Speed, "On Hypocrisie," lines 1–7, *Prison-Pietie* (London: J. C., 1677). For the expression "virtue's livery," see Sir Philip Sidney, "Come Dorus, come, let songs thy sorowes signifie," line 137, in *Complete Works*, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912–26); John Oldham, "Imitation of Juvenal, Satire 13," lines 163–65, in *The Poems of John Oldham*, ed. Harold F. Brooks with Raman Selden (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987); and Matthew Green, *The Spleen* (London: A. Dodd, 1737), line 701. For Shakespeare's use of the word livery (seven instances of "liveries," twenty-eight of "livery"), see Marvin Spevack, *The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1973), 729.
17. On the anxiety of eighteenth-century proponents of servitude to retain a positive valence for livery against the drift of contemporary usage, see J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 74.
18. Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952), 27; "Willy-nilly, the Negro has to wear the livery that the white man has sewed

for him," *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967), 34.

19. *Works*, XIII.48. On Swift's use of the form of the proverb, see Pat Rogers, "Swift and the Reanimation of Cliché," in *The Character of Swift's Satire*, ed. Claude Rawson (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1983), 203–26; and on working-class use of the proverb as a form of verbal resistance, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 461–62. Chesterfield identifies the use of proverbs and sayings as "proofs of having kept bad and low company," in *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, 6 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932), II.461. And for other uses of the proverb "Service is no Inheritance," see James Townley, *High Life Below Stairs* (Dublin: T. Wilkinson, 1759), 7; and William Hazlitt, "Of the Knowledge of Character," in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (1931; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1967), VIII.309.
20. Hecht shows that servants in livery offered a useful "symbol of wealth" for the *nouveau riche* as well as for the aristocracy; *Domestic Servant Class*, 2, 53.
21. [Robert Dodsley], *Servitude: a Poem* (London: T. Worrall [1729]), 20. I generally give short rather than full titles for eighteenth-century works; the full title can always be found in the bibliography. On Defoe's involvement with this publication, see Ralph Straus, *Robert Dodsley: Poet, Publisher and Playwright* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910), 20–21.
22. Letter of 28 August 1731, cited in *Works*, XIII.vii.
23. Letter of 4 December 1739, cited in *Works*, XIII.viii.
24. See for instance Maria Edgeworth, *Patronage*, 4 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1814), I.26.
25. R. L. Edgeworth [and Maria Edgeworth], *Essays on Professional Education* (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 421n.
26. Henry and John Fielding set up a Registry Office to regulate the relationship between servants and employers; much of their anxiety arose from the question of the "character" given a servant by his master, and vice versa. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Robbins, *The Servant's Hand*, 35–36, 109.
27. See Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, 158–68.
28. Cited in ibid., 162.
29. On the sexual threat, see also Swift, *Works*, XIII.59. Swift's language anticipates Burke's well-known attack on Rousseau's seduction plot in the *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791), in *The French Revolution (1790–1794)*, ed. L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), vol. VIII of *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. Paul Langford, 9+ vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981–), 317. Rousseau's revolutionary followers, Burke says, "propagate principles by which every servant may think it, if not his duty, at least his privilege, to betray his master" (VIII.319).
30. See Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, 85–86 on footmen's friendly societies or trade unions.

31. *The Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington*, 2 vols. (Dublin: printed for the author, 1748), I.45.
32. Swift, "Certificate to a Discarded Servant" (1739), *Works*, XIII.166.
33. See especially Ehrenpreis, *Swift*, III.322–26.
34. For one link between household and national abuses, see *Works*, III.81–82; and for an analogy between the prime minister and an insolent footman, contributing to an argument that the king has a right to choose his own "servants," see *Works*, V.116.
35. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), eds. John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 127. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text; all emphasis is original.
36. [Blewitt], *An Enquiry whether a general Practice of Virtue tends to the Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or Disadvantage of a People?* (London: R. Wilkin, 1725), 205.
37. "Some Thoughts on Free-Thinking," in *Works*, IV.49.
38. Bernard Mandeville, "A Search into the Nature of Society," in *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, ed. F. B. Kaye, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), I.349. The first volume also includes *An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools* (first printed in the 1723 edition of the *Fable*) and other short prose works; subsequent references are given in the text.
39. *Some Thoughts*, 103; and see also 107–08 ("Children should be used to submit their Desires, and go without their Longings, even *from their very Cradles*") and 166 (on "the Art of stifling [children's] Desires as soon as they rise up in them . . . For giving vent, gives Life and Strength to our Appetites").
40. *Fable*, I.72; and for a similar point, see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn., rev. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 598.
41. See M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 3–5.
42. Ibid., 13, 73 (quoting *An Account of the Charity Schools lately erected* [1708]). The nature of this discipline is clarified by a list of the texts used in reading lessons, which included the Anglican catechism, the Book of Common Prayer and the Psalms of David, followed by the New and Old Testaments; graduating students were often presented with "some plain useful treatise" such as *The Whole Duty of Man* (79). For a discussion of the absurdity of the idea that charity schools might train poor children to be servants, see [John Trenchard], *Cato's Letters*, 3rd edn., 4 vols. (London: W. Wilkins et al., 1733), IV.241–42.
43. Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, 115–23.
44. Cited by Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 74–75. For a summary of Isaac Watts's arguments for the charity-schools, see Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961): "in his answer to the familiar argument against the schools, that if the poor were educated there would be fewer servants and labourers to do the necessary

work in the country," Robbins points out, Watts suggests "that there could be worse evils than a servant shortage" (250).

45. *A general Practice of Virtue*, 195. Blewitt is not alone in finding something difficult to respond to in Mandeville's writing; Francis Hutcheson and William Law were equally struck by the "unanswerable" nature of the *Fable*'s argument. See Francis Hutcheson, *Thoughts on Laughter and Observations on "The Fable of the Bees"* (1758; reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes, 1989), 101, 57; and William Law, *Remarks upon a Late Book entituled, The Fable of the Bees* (London: William and John Innys, 1726), 97.
46. *A general Practice of Virtue*, 205, original emphasis.
47. *Works*, I.309. In the *Project*, Swift calls the religious societies "factious Clubs, . . . a Trade to enrich little knavish Informers of the meanest Rank, such as common Constables, and broken Shop-keepers" (II.57). Swift's satirical figurehead Isaac Bickerstaff also declares himself for the societies; on Mandeville's debt to Bickerstaff, see M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), esp. 36–44; and on Swift's animosity to faction more generally, see Pat Rogers, "Swift and Bolingbroke on Faction," *Journal of British Studies* 9 (1970): 71–101.
48. The book had its origins in a series of letters (begun in 1684) to Locke's friend Edward Clarke on how to educate his children (*Thoughts*, 5); first published in 1693, the book had appeared in five editions by 1705, and was reprinted frequently throughout the eighteenth century.
49. Locke, *Thoughts*, 113; and see also Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit" (1699, 1714), in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), I.iii.3 (p. 187).
50. For further discussion of this point, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The 'Love of Praise' as the Indispensable Substitute for 'Reason and Virtue' in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Theories of Human Nature," in *Reflections on Human Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 153–94.
51. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded . . . The Third and Fourth Volumes* (London: S. Richardson, 1742), letter L (IV.303–15) Subsequent references to *Pamela* II are to this edition and are given in the text; all emphasis is original. On Pamela's status, see also Scarlett Bowen, "'A Sawce-box and Boldface Indeed': Refiguring the Female Servant in the Pamela-Antipamela Debate," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 28 (1999): 257–85.
52. On Richardson's dislike for the morality of Bolingbroke, Swift and Hume, see T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 555–56; and *The Richardson–Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to Clarissa*, ed. William C. Slattery (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 83.
53. Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1798), I.123. On the problem of servants in eighteenth-century pedagogy from Locke to Edgeworth, see also the excellent essay by

Mitzi Myers, "'Servants as They are Now Educated': Women Writers and Georgian Pedagogy," *Essays in Literature* 16 (1989): 51–59.

54. Maria Edgeworth, *Harrington*, vol. IX of *Tales and Novels*, 10 vols. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1893). See Locke, *Some Thoughts*, 196, for a close analogue.
55. *Practical Education*, I.196. The second edition modifies this argument, allowing children to be in the presence of servants so long as their mother is also present; see Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2nd edn., 3 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1801), "Advertisement" (xiii) and I.188–93. The Edgeworths also offer here the qualification that they refer to "servants as they are now educated": "Their vices and their ignorance arise from the same causes, the want of education. They are not a separate cast [sic] in society doomed to ignorance, or degraded by inherent vice" (I.191). For another partial retraction, see Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Esq.*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hunter, 1820), II.397.
56. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787), in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, eds. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler with Emma Rees-Mogg, 7 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 1989), IV.38–39. Many conduct books for women include a section on the management of servants; see for instance [George Savile, 1st Marquis of Halifax], *The Lady's New-years Gift: Or, Advice to a Daughter* (London: Randal Taylor, 1688), 82–85.
57. Thomas Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta: A Comedy in Chapters*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1876), ch. X, I.116.

2 GALLANTRY, ADULTERY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITENESS

1. All citations are from Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn., 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1773). The text of the first edition is substantially the same; see Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755). In both editions, the last sense of "gallantry" is illustrated by an abbreviated quotation from Swift's *Project*: "It looks like a sort of compounding between virtue and vice, as if a woman were allowed to be vicious, provided she be not a profligate; as if there were a certain point where *gallantry* ends, and infamy begins."
2. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, eds. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), I.266.
3. Letter of 17 September 1739 to Francis Hutcheson, in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), I.34; *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, 6 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932), II.367–68 (and see also the reference to Cicero at IV.1381). Subsequent references to Chesterfield's letters are to this

edition, unless otherwise identified, and are given parenthetically in the text. Horace Walpole titles his parody of Chesterfield's letters "The New Whole Duty of Woman, In a Series of Letters from a Mother to a Daughter"; see *The Works of Horatio Walpole*, 5 vols. (London: G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798), IV.355–60.

4. Courtney Melmoth [Samuel Jackson Pratt], *An Apology for the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq. With a parallel between him and the late Lord Chesterfield* (London: Fielding and Walker, 1777), xii, 112–13. An anonymous revision of the pamphlet published ten years later attempts to vindicate "the Christian cause and character" from the *Apology*'s attack; see *Curious Particulars and Genuine Anecdotes respecting the late Lord Chesterfield and David Hume, Esq.* (London: G. Kearsley, 1788). Chesterfield's bibliographer finds strong internal evidence that Pratt is responsible for *Curious Particulars* as well as for the *Apology*; Sidney M. Gulick, *A Chesterfield Bibliography to 1800*, 2nd edn. (Charlottesville, VA: Bibliographic Society of America, 1979), 202–03.
5. [George Horne], *A Letter to Adam Smith LL.D. on the Life, Death, and Philosophy of his friend David Hume Esq.*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1777), 45–46. For other attacks that use the trope of adultery, see the citations in Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 327, 367.
6. *New Letters of David Hume*, eds. Raymond Klibansky and Ernest C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 43.
7. *An Apology for Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope* (London: T. Evans and T. Cadell, 1775), 23–24, original emphasis.
8. Mark Kingwell suggests that the best defense of the social and ethical significance of civility is found not in philosophical writing but in the etiquette manual, in *A Civil Tongue: Justice, Dialogue, and the Politics of Pluralism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 213–18.
9. *Principles of Politeness and of Knowing the World*, ed. John Trusler (York: John Bell, 1775). A total of fifty editions of this work were offered to the public between 1775 and 1800, including thirty-one unauthorized editions, twenty of which had American imprints; see Gulick, *Chesterfield*, 16–21.
10. On Chesterfield's popularity in English subscription libraries, see Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and their Users* (London: The Library Association, 1969), 31, 32; but for a correction of the misperception that library subscribers were predominantly female, see also 223–28. On the readership of etiquette manuals in the nineteenth century, see also John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1990), 53–54.
11. Hume's essays are cited from *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 128. Subsequent references are given in the text; all emphasis is original. "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" first appeared in the second volume of Hume's *Essays, Moral and Political* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid, 1742).
12. *Essays*, 626; and see also "Of Refinement in the Arts," *Essays*, 272.

13. It was published only in the first edition of the second volume of *Essays, Moral and Political* (1742). Another essay explicitly addressed to female readers, "Of the Study of History," was withdrawn after the edition of 1760.
14. Carol Kay, "Canon, Ideology, and Gender: Mary Wollstonecraft's Critique of Adam Smith," *New Political Science* 15 (1986): 69. On the conjectural female audience for Hume's essays, see also Jerome Christensen, *Practicing Enlightenment: Hume and the Formation of a Literary Career* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 18; and Adam Potkay, *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 5.
15. John Gregory, *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with Those of the Animal World* (1765; reprint, London: J. Dodsley, 1785), xviii. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.
16. *The Progress of Gallantry* (London: J. Dodsley, 1774), 19. Subsequent references are given in the text.
17. *Letters on Love, Marriage, and Adultery* (London: J. Ridgway, 1789), 37. Subsequent references are given in the text.
18. The description is Lord Charlemont's, cited by Colin Franklin, *Lord Chesterfield: His Character and* Characters (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), 28.
19. Christopher Mayo, "Marketing Manners: The Editorial Manufacture of Chesterfield in *Letters to His Son*," unpublished paper delivered at the DeBartolo Conference on Eighteenth-Century Studies, 19–21 February 2003.
20. A full account of the publication of the letters and the nature of the agreement between Dodsley and Eugenia Stanhope can be found in Franklin, *Lord Chesterfield*, 31–38. For a select bibliography, see *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, ed. David Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), xxiii–vi; and for a more general bibliography of eighteenth-century courtesy books, see Virgil B. Heltzel, *A Check List of Courtesy Books in the Newberry Library* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1942). The checklist ends at 1775, Heltzel writes, because the publication of Chesterfield's letters in 1774 "marks the passing of a long tradition of courtesy as the preceding generations had known it" (vii).
21. Thomas Hunter, *Reflections Critical and Moral on the Letters of the late Earl of Chesterfield* (London: T. Cadell, 1776), 92, 249, original emphasis.
22. William Crawford, *Remarks on the Late Earl of Chesterfield's Letters to his Son* (London: Cadel and Sewell, 1776), vii.
23. "Advertisement," *Letters Written by the Late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to His Son* (1774), ed. Eugenia Stanhope, 6th edn., 4 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1775), 1.xi.
24. *Apology for Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope*, 19, original emphasis.
25. The inclusion of religion posed so many problems for eighteenth-century educational writers that many, like Chesterfield, simply chose to omit it, consigning all responsibility for religious education to the professionals (professional clergymen, that is; religion seemed to be excluded from the province of the professional educator). The Edgeworths were criticized on similar grounds after they published the first edition of *Practical Education*, and in the "Advertisement" to

the second edition, they acknowledge their omission of religion without remedying it: "The Authors continue to preserve the silence upon this Subject, which they before thought prudent; but they disavow in explicit terms the design of laying down a system of Education, founded upon Morality, exclusive of Religion." See Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2nd edn., 3 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1801), I.xiv.

26. "Postscript," *Letters*, ed. Eugenia Stanhope, xiv, xv. This postscript appeared first in the fourth edition of 1774; see Gulick, *Chesterfield*, 38.
27. Chesterfield, *Letters*, IV.1350–51; and for another discussion of the maxim and Bacon's distinction between simulation and dissimulation, see IV.1483–85.
28. Swift, *Prose Works*, eds. Herbert Davis et al., 16 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74), II.56–57.
29. Sir Francis Bacon, "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," in *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 20–22; 22.
30. Chesterfield, *Letters*, III.1009; and see also IV.1484.
31. On skepticism and adultery, see Stanley Cavell, "Othello and the Stake of the Other," in *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 125–42; and on Hume and gender, see especially Annette C. Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's* Treatise (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1991); and Baier, *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994).
32. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn., rev. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 152. Subsequent references are given in the text.
33. On eighteenth-century theories of probability, see the chapter on "Probability and Signs: Reasoning from Effect to Cause," in Douglas Lane Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 35–74.
34. *Treatise*, 153, original emphasis. See also Hume's use of adultery as an example in his counter-intuitive argument about moral distinctions and the act of judgment (461–63).
35. Kay, "Canon, Ideology, and Gender," 72.
36. The management of circumstantial evidence is described by Alexander Welsh as a dominant narrative mode in the second half of the eighteenth century; see *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
37. Hume, *Treatise*, 570–73; and see also Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 20–23.
38. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, in *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd edn., rev. P. H. Nidditch (1975; reprint, Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 239.

39. See Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1799), I.11. Mary Wollstonecraft devotes an entire chapter of the second *Vindication* to refuting such arguments, claiming that morality is "undermined by sexual notions of the importance of a good reputation"; see *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, eds. Marilyn Butler and Janet Todd with Emma Rees-Mogg, 7 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 1989).
40. Walpole, "The New Whole Duty of Woman," *Works*, IV.356; and see also *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Thomas Gray, Richard West and Thomas Ashton*, eds. W. S. Lewis, George L. Lam and Charles H. Bennett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), vol. XIII of *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis, 49 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937–1983), 49. On the etiquette of adultery in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conduct books, see especially Michel Lacrois, "L'honnêteté," in *De la politesse: Essai sur la littérature du savoir-vivre* (Paris: Commentaire/Julliard, 1990), 297–308.
41. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 203–04.
42. *Lord Chesterfield's Witticisms* (London: R. Snagg, [1774]), 134–36, original emphasis.
43. See especially [William Woty], *The Graces: A Poetical Epistle. From a Gentleman to his Son* (London: W. Flexney, 1774), 12; and *The Fine Gentleman's Etiquette; Or, Lord Chesterfield's Advice to his Son, versified* (London: T. Davies, 1776), 17–23.
44. *Free and Impartial Remarks upon the Letters Written by the late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son Philip Stanhope, Esq* (London: J. Bew, 1774), iii.
45. *Apology for Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope*, 6–7.
46. On metaphors of veils and nakedness, see Claude Rawson, "Revolution in the Moral Wardrobe: Mutations of an Image from Dryden to Burke," in *Satire and Sentiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 133–98.
47. Courtney Melmoth [Samuel Jackson Pratt], *The Pupil of Pleasure: or, the New System Illustrated*, 2 vols. (London: G. Robinson and J. Bew, 1776), I.vii. Subsequent references are given in the text; all emphasis is original.
48. Ibid., I.x. Several other writers had a similar idea: see especially [Clara Reeve], *The Two Mentors*, 2 vols. (London: Charles Dilly, 1783), I.3; and [Royall Tyler], *The Contrast* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1790), 5, 34–38.
49. Hunter, *Reflections Critical and Moral*, 96–97.
50. "*Lord* Chesterfield's *Creed*," *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1775): 131.
51. *Fine Gentleman's Etiquette*, 23, original emphasis.
52. *Chesterfield Travestie; or, School for Modern Manners* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1808), 10.
53. See especially Norbert Elias, *The History of Manners* (1939), in *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (1978; reprint, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 95–99; Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early*

Modern England (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 92; Claude Zaidman, "Manières de table," in *La Politesse: Vertu des apparences*, ed. Régine Dhoquois (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1991), 181–96; and the section on table manners in *Dictionnaire raisonné de la politesse et du savoir-vivre*, ed. Alain Montandon (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995), 655–88. Relevant primary sources include Erasmus, *De civilitate morum puerilium* ("On Good Manners for Boys"), trans. Brian McGregor, in *Literary and Educational Writings 3*, ed. J. K. Sowards (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), vol. xxv of *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. J. K. Sowards, 86 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–), 283; Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility* (London: R. Chiswell, 1685), 122–45; and *The Genteel House-keepers Pastime: Or, the Mode of Carving at the Table* (London: J. Moxon, 1693), 1–2.

54. Swift, *Prose Works*, iv.215–16; and see the discussion of manners and pedantry in C. J. Rawson, "Gentlemen and Dancing-Masters," in *Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 3–34.
55. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 68–74.
56. Andrew St George, *The Descent of Manners: Etiquette, Rules and the Victorians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 9. On the professionalization of virtue, see also Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790–1827* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 5. Professionalization is the antithesis of mid-eighteenth-century politeness; on the anti-professionalism of Hume's style in the *Treatise*, see especially John J. Richetti, *Philosophical Writing: Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 186–87; and John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 11–12.
57. For one 1558 manual newly translated for a British audience, see Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo* (London: J. Dodsley, 1774).
58. John Trusler, "Introduction," *Principles of Politeness and of Knowing the World. By the late Lord Chesterfield. Methodised and digested under distinct Heads, with additions, By the Rev. Dr. John Trusler: Containing Every Instruction necessary to complete the* GENTLEMAN *and* MAN OF FASHION; *to teach him a Knowledge of Life, and make him well received in all Companies.* TO WHICH IS NOW FIRST ANNEXED *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters: By the late Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh. The whole admirably calculated for the* IMPROVEMENT *of* YOUTH, *yet not beneath the attention of any* (Portsmouth, NH: Melcher and Osborne, 1786). I give the full title here because it provides evidence for my argument; for the full titles of the other eighteenth-century works cited in this chapter, which I have mostly shortened for convenience, see the bibliography.
59. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, v.168, original emphasis.
60. Trusler, *Principles of Politeness*, "Advertisement," original emphasis.
61. [John Trusler], *The Honours of the Table, or, Rules for Behaviour During Meals, with the Whole Art of Carving, Illustrated by a variety of cuts. Together with*

Directions for Going to Market, and for the choice of provisions. To which is added A Number of Hints, or concise Lessons for the Improvement of Youth, on all Occasions in Life (Dublin: W. Sleater, 1791). For a comparatively aristocratic and male-oriented work, see [Grimod de la Reynière], *Manuel des Amphitryons* (Paris: Capelle et Renaud, 1808).

62. *The American Chesterfield, or Way to Wealth, Honour, and Distinction; Being Selections from the Letters of Lord Chesterfield to his Son; and Extracts from other eminent authors, on the subject of politeness: With Alterations and Additions, suited to the Youth of the United States. By a Member of the Philadelphia Bar* (1827; reprint, Philadelphia: John Grigg, 1828). On American ambivalence towards Chesterfield, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave: A Historical Study of American Etiquette Books* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 12.
63. *American Chesterfield*, 252, emphasis added where the text departs from Chesterfield's original.
64. Chesterfield, *Letters*, v.1847. For other uses of the same metaphor, see v.2002 and vi.2677.
65. *Dear Boy: Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son*, ed. Catherine Cookson (London: Bantam, 1989), 13. Twentieth-century references to Chesterfield abound; for two interesting examples, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1927; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1989), 92; and André Aciman, *Out of Egypt: A Memoir* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994), 315.
66. The most likely derivation is from the name of a furniture-making town in the Midlands; see Charles Boyce, *Dictionary of Furniture* (New York: Roundtable, 1985). The *OED* offers no etymology at all for this sense, while vaguely attributing the meaning "a kind of overcoat" to "the name of an Earl of Chesterfield in 19th c."
67. William Boyd, *Armadillo* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1998), 99.
68. [Vicesimus Knox], *Personal Nobility* (London: Charles Dilly, 1793), xvii. Subsequent references are given in the text.
69. Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3, 14.
70. Michael Curtin, "A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (Sept. 1985): 395–423.
71. Ibid., 407.

3 REVOLUTIONS IN FEMALE MANNERS

1. *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, eds. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler with Emma Rees-Mogg, 7 vols. (London: Chatto and Windus; New York: New York University Press, 1989), v.114. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.
2. Burke's own defense of hypocrisy in the abstract depends on the counterweight of a sustained attack on revolutionary hypocrisies; like all defenders of hypocrisy, Burke only wants to keep certain types. For specific attacks on

revolutionary hypocrisy, see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (1968; reprint, London: Penguin, 1986), 155, 204–05, 247; the same passages can also be found in *The French Revolution, 1790–1794*, ed. L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), vol. VIII of *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. Paul Langford, 9+ vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981–), 119, 154, 189. Subsequent references to the *Reflections* are given parenthetically in the text, with page numbers for both O'Brien's widely available text and the Clarendon edition; Burke's other works are cited solely in the Clarendon edition.

3. Influential feminist discussions of Wollstonecraft include Mary Jacobus, "The Difference of View," in *Reading Women: Essays in Feminist Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 27–40; Cora Kaplan, "Wild Nights: Pleasure/Sexuality/Feminism," in *Sea Changes: Culture and Feminism* (London: Verso, 1986), 31–56; Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), esp. 48–81; and Carol Kay, "Canon, Ideology, and Gender: Mary Wollstonecraft's Critique of Adam Smith," *New Political Science* 15 (1986): 63–77.
4. William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, ed. Mark Philp with Austin Gee, in *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, 7 vols., ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), III.149. All citations are from Philp's edition of *Political Justice*, whose text follows the 1793 version; subsequent references are given parenthetically in the text, by volume and page number. Where relevant, I note variants from the 1796 edition, published as volume four in the same series.
5. See especially William Robertson, *A View of the Progress of Society in Europe*, in *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*, 3 vols. (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell; Edinburgh: J. Balfour, 1769), I.67–69; Adam Ferguson, *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute; London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1799), V.418–19; and J. G. A. Pocock, Introduction to *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, by Edmund Burke (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), xxxii.
6. *Reflections*, 172/VIII.129. On the gendering of Burke's sublime, see especially Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Ethos of Individualism* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 126–31.
7. Burke, *First Letter on a Regicide Peace* (1796), in *I. The Revolutionary War, 1794–1797; II. Ireland*, ed. R. B. McDowell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), vol. IX of *Writings and Speeches*, 240.
8. Ibid., IX.242. These passages from Burke are central to Gertrude Himmelfarb's case about the degradation of Victorian virtues into contemporary "values"; see *The De-Moralization of Society* (1994; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1996), 51–52. See also the adaptation of Burke's passage in Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (1859), intro. Asa Briggs (London: John Murray, 1958), 367.

9. *Reflections*, 114/VIII.79. For the discussion of servility and forms of address to which Burke responds, see Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (London: T. Cadell, 1789), 21–26.
10. This is a common complaint about many eighteenth-century correspondents. One letter-writer especially prone to combining self-abasement with hostility is James Boswell. William Godwin was also known for writing letters that are "hectoring and obsequious at the same time"; see William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: the Biography of a Family* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 21.
11. Price, *Discourse*, 23, original emphasis. Wollstonecraft makes the same point more persuasively with regard to women.
12. See Robertson, *Progress of Society*, I.69.
13. *Reflections*, 169/VIII.126; Philip Francis to Edmund Burke, letter of 19 February 1790, *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, vol. VI, eds. Alfred Cobban and Robert A. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), in *Correspondence*, eds. Thomas W. Copeland et al., 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958–78), VI.86. For Burke's response, see VI.90.
14. *The Rights of Man, Part I* (1791), in Thomas Paine, *Political Writings*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 63.
15. Wollstonecraft, *Works*, V.25. David Bromwich suggests that Burke means by the words about vice and grossness "to defend hypocrisy as a practice consistent with the socialized understanding of shame"; see Bromwich, "Wollstonecraft as a Critic of Burke," in *Liberal Modernism and Democratic Individuality: George Kateb and the Practices of Politics*, eds. Austin Sarat and Dana R. Villa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 181.
16. On the response to Burke's *Reflections*, see Marilyn Butler, Introduction to *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1–17; Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790–1827* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 15–29; and Claudia L. Johnson, "The Age of Chivalry and the Crisis of Gender," Introduction to *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1–19.
17. [Catherine (sic) Macaulay], *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, on the Revolution in France* (1790), in *Political Writings of the 1790s*, ed. Gregory Claeys, 8 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1995), I.131, original emphasis. Subsequent references are given in the text.
18. Ferguson, *Progress and Termination*, V.418.
19. James Mackintosh, *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), in *Political Writings of the 1790s*, ed. G. Claeys, 8 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1995), I.329–30.
20. On this argument, see especially J. G. A. Pocock, "The political economy of Burke's analysis of the French Revolution," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 193–212; and Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 1–7.

21. Paine, *Rights of Man*, 64.
22. Relevant discussions of Wollstonecraft include G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 351–95; Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 107–39; Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 190–95; Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory*, 104–25; Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, 23–69; and Bromwich, "Wollstonecraft as a Critic of Burke," 175–91. For a summary of recent critical approaches, see Andrew McCann, *Cultural Politics in the 1790s: Literature, Radicalism and the Public Sphere* (New York and London: St. Martin's and Macmillan, 1999), 150–51.
23. The tropes of chivalry and Gothic manners continue to figure in Wollstonecraft's writings on the French Revolution; see in particular *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (1794), *Works*, VI.6–7, 23–24, 29–30, 235. For a more sympathetic reference to gallantry (in the sense of adultery), however, see Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796), *Works*, VI.325.
24. On the utility of modesty, see David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn., rev. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 570–73; and the discussion of Hume's account in Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 20–23. Hume's more subversive comments on female chastity are discussed in chapter 2.
25. *Rights of Woman*, V.168, original emphasis. Mary Hays essentially plagiarizes Wollstonecraft on this subject, down to using the identical quotation from *Hamlet*; see especially *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women*, intro. Gina Luria (London: J. Johnson and J. Bell, 1798; reprint, New York and London: Garland, 1974), 67, 121; and *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796), ed. Sally Cline (London and New York: Pandora, 1987), 79, 83.
26. For Rousseau's account of Sophie's education, see *Emile, or On Education* (1762), trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), book 5, esp. 357–406. Burke had attacked Rousseau on surprisingly similar grounds in his *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (VIII.317).
27. *Rights of Woman*, in *Works*, V.204; and see Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty, 1984), 167; and Kay, "Canon, Ideology, and Gender," 63–77.
28. Wendy Shalit's controversial book on modesty disagrees vehemently with Wollstonecraft's arguments in the *Vindication*; see *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 111. Yet Shalit also gleefully invokes the fact that even Mary Wollstonecraft "was opposed to sexual modesty precisely because she thought it was too dirty" in order to convince her own readers that modesty is sexier than immodesty (191).

29. Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty*, 62.
30. Cited in *Political Justice*, III.17n. For the full context of this argument, see [Henry Home, Lord Kames], *Loose Hints upon Education, Chiefly Concerning the Culture of the Heart* (Edinburgh: John Bell and John Murray, 1781), 360–66. Kames's larger argument is that while governments should be "tender in imposing oaths," political oaths "have been useful in making men better subjects" and may therefore be considered a good thing (365). For another important discussion of the same topic, see Jeremy Bentham, *"Swear not at all"* (London: R. Hunter, 1817); and see also *Vivian* (1812), in Maria Edgeworth, *Tales and Novels*, 10 vols. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1893), V.288.
31. Godwin, *Political Justice*, III.17–18n; and see William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, 5th edn., 2 vols. (London: J. Davis, 1788), I.184–86. Part of Paley's intention here is to excuse or justify the behavior of Jacobites who swear loyalty oaths to a monarch and subsequently betray him; after examining what is encompassed by an oath of allegiance, Paley concludes that resistance to the king is allowed in certain cases (I.206).
32. Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie From Benevolent Motives" (1797), in *The Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 346–50. See also the discussion of "offences by falsehood" in Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (London: T. Payne, 1789), 218–21. I am indebted for several of these references to Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (1979; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1989).
33. This section of *Political Justice* underwent extensive revision for the 1796 edition, where the appendix I discuss here was rewritten and given the new title "Illustrations of sincerity"; see Godwin, *Political and Philosophical Writings*, IV.161–80. For a later discussion of lying and conventional language that treats both set forms in religious oaths imposed by law and "the reply that one is 'not at home,'" see Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th edn. (1907; reprint, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 314–15.
34. See Mitzi Myers, "'Servants as They are Now Educated': Women Writers and Georgian Pedagogy," *Essays in Literature* 16 (1989): 51–59.
35. See Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), 198–99, 281.
36. See for instance Hannah More, *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society* (London: T. Cadell, 1788). Wollstonecraft is also committed to the importance of setting a good example for the servants, particularly with regard to religion: "Above all, we owe [servants] a good example. The ceremonials of religion, on their account, should be attended to" (*Thoughts on the Education of Daughters,* in *Works*, IV.38).
37. Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754), ed. Jocelyn Harris, 7 vols. in 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), vol. IV, letter XXVI (II.388).

38. Austen's satire "Jack and Alice" (1787–90) targets this habit of Grandison's: one character is found "at home as was in general the Case, for she was not fond of going out, & like the great Sir Charles Grandison scorned to deny herself when at Home, as she looked on that fashionable method of shutting out disagreable [sic] Visitors, as little less than downright Bigamy." See *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. B. C. Southam (1954; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 15. (Chapman mistakenly cites *Grandison*, vol. iv, letter iii; the correct reference is as above.)
39. *New Letters of David Hume*, eds. Raymond Klibansky and Ernest C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 83.
40. Burke, *Reflections*, 186/viii.141; and see also Maurizio Viroli, "Machiavelli and the Republican Idea of Politics," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 157.
41. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, eds. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, 3 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), i.113.
42. Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1798), i.193. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text. Referring to the phrase "honesty is the best policy," Kingsley Amis observes that "what has become a bland near-platitude was once a disrespectful paradox meaning very nearly that honesty is the best trickery, and certainly that fair dealing will get you further than any clever stratagem"; Amis, *The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 157.
43. William Godwin, "Of Politeness," in *The Enquirer* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 326–50. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.
44. Edgeworth's novel *Manœuvring* makes a very similar argument, although her fiction tends to portray Chesterfieldian manipulators as quintessentially not just feminine but female; see Maria Edgeworth, *Manœuvring*, in *Tales and Novels*, esp. v.98, v.130.
45. Burke, *First Letter on a Regicide Peace*, in *Writings and Speeches*, ix.277, original emphasis. Burke may have in mind Thucydides' account of similarly corrupt and self-serving linguistic phenomena in a time of civil war; see *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (London: Penguin, 1972), 242. For a brief but suggestive discussion of "totalitarian euphemism," see David Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory: Wordsworth's Poetry of the 1790s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 84.
46. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism* (1957), trans. Mary Dalwood (1962; reprint, London and New York: Marion Boyars, 1987), 186–87; and see also Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: George Braziller, 1971), 16–17.
47. Godwin, *Political Justice*, iii.7; and see Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, vol. xi of *Prose Works*, eds. Herbert Davis et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), 246.

48. Elizabeth Inchbald, *Nature and Art*, 2 vols. (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1796), I.81, original emphasis.
49. "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" (1742), in *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 133. In contrast to Hume, Burke is relatively sparing in his positive use of the noun gallantry; he is more likely to talk of "a nation of gallant men" or "[a] gallant nation."
50. On Wollstonecraft's complex positions on marriage, see especially Anne K. Mellor, "Righting the Wrongs of Woman: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria*," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 19 (1996): 413–24. For Godwin's attack on marriage as "a system of fraud" ("Marriage is law, and the worst of all laws"), see *Political Justice*, III.453.
51. William Godwin, *Things As They Are; or The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, ed. Maurice Hindle (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 101, 106, 336. Godwin's own attitude to chivalry is curiously ambivalent. See especially the discussion of "the mixed and equivocal accomplishments of chivalry," in *Political Justice*, III.253; and the nostalgia of *St Leon*, ed. Pamela Clemit, vol. IV of *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, ed. Mark Philp, 8 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1992), 361.
52. Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 69.
53. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1799), I.4–5. Subsequent references are given in the text.
54. Priscilla Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex; with Suggestions for its Improvement* (London: J. Johnson et al., 1798), 7. Subsequent references are given in the text. On readers' responses to Wollstonecraft more generally, see Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism*, 136–37, 238 n. 11.
55. In his satire on revolutionary feminism, Richard Polwhele describes More "as a character, in all points, diametrically opposite to Miss Wollstonecraft," but recent criticism suggests otherwise; [Richard Polwhele], *The Unsex'd Females* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1798), 35n. The best discussion of similarities between More and Wollstonecraft remains Mitzi Myers, "Reform or Ruin: 'A Revolution in Female Manners,'" *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 11 (1982): 199–216; but see also Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 274–75; Lucinda Cole, "(Anti)Feminist Sympathies: The Politics of Relationship in Smith, Wollstonecraft, and More," *ELH* 58 (1991): 107–40; and Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, 27–29.
56. More, *Strictures*, I.135, original emphasis. For another parodic use of the phrase "rights of —," see Thomas Taylor, *Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* (London: Edward Jeffery et al., 1792); and for a serious use, see Thomas Spence, *The Rights of Infants and Strictures on Paine's Agrarian Justice* (London: printed for the author, 1797).

57. *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* is in every sense a conventional conduct manual. Even in the *Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft insists that women must constantly restrain themselves, restricting their consumption of food, sleep, luxuries and so on; on Wollstonecraft and self-restraint, see Ewa Badowska, "The Anorexic Body of Liberal Feminism: Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 17 (Fall 1998): 283–303.
58. *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, in *Works*, IV.24. Several better-known analogues to this thought can be found in Blake's "Proverbs of Hell": "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence"; "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1988), 35, 38.
59. *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, in *Writings and Speeches*, VIII.332.
60. The Edgeworths' concern about "debasing cunning" suggests that the anxiety about dissimulation described in chapter 2 is focused in educational manuals on a specifically female constituency. Even More feels that women are more prone to certain types of dissimulation: "unluckily," she admits, "women, from their natural desire to please, . . . are more in danger of being led into dissimulation than men" (*Strictures*, II.131). It should be clear, however, she continues, that as frankness and truth "are inexpressibly charming" and "peculiarly commendable" in women, they can learn to please without having "recourse to anything but what is fair, and just, and honorable" (II.132).
61. Michael Curtin, "A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (Sept. 1985): 395–423; 420.
62. The link between tact and the feminine is readily confirmed by the evidence of the Literature Online English Poetry Database, which offers many variations on the phrases "woman's tact," "feminine tact" and "female tact" – all dated between 1855 and 1912. Johnson's *Dictionary* includes neither "tact" nor "diplomacy"; see Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn., 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1773). And on Johnson's deliberate exclusion of the word "civilization" from the fourth edition of the *Dictionary*, see James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), II.155.
63. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (1974; reprint, New York and London: Verso, 1996), 35–37.
64. On More's redefinition of charity as a female vocation, see Myers, "Reform or Ruin," 208–09; and Cole, "(Anti)Feminist Sympathies," 118–20.

4 HYPOCRISY AND THE NOVEL I: *PAMELA, OR VIRTUE REWARDED*

1. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965–67), III.97.

2. See, for instance, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 16, 498; and Tom Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa *and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31.
3. Henry Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Mr. Abraham Adams, and An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*, ed. Douglas Brooks-Davies, rev. and intro. Thomas Keymer (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 311, 313. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.
4. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, eds. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 134. All citations, unless otherwise identified, are from this edition, based on the first-edition text of 1740–41. Subsequent references are given in the text. When I quote the 1801 edition of the novel, I follow the text given in *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Peter Sabor and intro. Margaret A. Doody (1980; reprint, London: Penguin, 1985). And when I quote Richardson's own sequel to Pamela, identified here as *Pamela* II (but often described elsewhere as vols. III and IV of *Pamela*, as *Pamela* I includes 2 vols.), it is the first edition, *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded . . . The Third and Fourth Volumes* (London: S. Richardson, 1742).
5. Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 47.
6. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 122. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.
7. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 266. Subsequent references are given in the text.
8. William Beatty Warner, *Reading* Clarissa: *The Struggles of Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 26. On the sexual politics of Warner's treatment of *Clarissa*, see Terry Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 192–93; and for a more general survey of Richardson criticism, see Siobhán Kilfeather, "The rise of Richardson criticism," in *Samuel Richardson, Tercentenary Essays*, eds. Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 251–66.
9. See Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, 182; and Doody, *A Natural Passion*, 23.
10. Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa, xvi, xvii.
11. Letter of 27 October 1777, cited in ibid., 1.
12. Samuel Johnson, "Life of Pope," in *Lives of the Poets*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), III.207–08, cited by Keymer, ibid. For Richardson as a theorist of epistolarity, see *The Richardson–Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to Clarissa*, ed. William C. Slattery (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 27.
13. *Pamela*, 251–52. On the importance of liberty, freedom and "choice" for eighteenth-century educationalists, see Richard A. Barney, *Plots of*

Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 12.

14. Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 151.
15. George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (1946), in *A Collection of Essays* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1953), 156–71; 169.
16. Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 2. For the controversial discussion of "writing between the lines" that stands behind Zagorin's account (pp. 9–11), see Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952; reprint, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1973), 22–37; and see also Annabel Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).
17. Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, v.
18. [Johannes Armondus de Hess], *A Letter from a Jesuite: or, The Mysterie of Equivocation* (London: W. W., 1679), 2. Subsequent references are given in the text.
19. Jane Austen's early writings offer evidence that the use of the term "equivocation" in this kind of context had become highly conventional; see Letter 21 of *Lady Susan*, in *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. B. C. Southam (1954; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 279.
20. Tassie Gwilliam, *Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 34.
21. *Lettre sur Pamela* (Londres [Paris]: n.p., 1742), 16–17, reproduced in facsimile in *The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's* Pamela, *1740–1750*, eds. Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, 6 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), II.220–21. Subsequent references to works reprinted in this invaluable six-volume collection will include full bibliographic information for the original source, followed by the modern volume and page reference in square brackets.
22. Readers are often as uncomfortable, however, with precisely the full disclosure they claim to want. A classic locus for this particular dynamic is Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*: readers simultaneously objected to Lucy Snowe's "open acknowledgment of 'a double love'" *and* to "her seemingly willful evasions of her implied contract with the reader – most notably by withholding for several chapters the revelation that she has recognized in the adult Dr. John of Villette her childhood companion Graham Bretton"; for an interesting discussion of this point, see Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 169, 174.
23. Though the drift of my discussion is different, I am indebted here to the discussion of interiority in Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels,*

Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

24. Henry Fielding, *Jonathan Wild* (1743), in *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.; Volume Three*, intro. Bertrand A. Goldgar, ed. Hugh Amory (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), II.5.
25. Henry Fielding, "An Essay on Conversation," in vol. I of *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.*, ed. Henry Knight Miller, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 119–52; 127. The *Miscellanies* were published in three volumes in April 1743, with *Jonathan Wild* as the third volume; the two essays discussed here were probably written in 1740–41, and are thus closely contemporary with *Shamela*.
26. *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, 6 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932), V.1847; and see also V.2002, VI.2677.
27. On Richardson's use of proverbs, see Carey McIntosh, *The Evolution of English Prose, 1700–1800: Style, Politeness, and Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 207–09.
28. In an interesting essay about teaching *Pamela* in a composition course at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan, Florian Stuber describes the "extraordinary revulsion" experienced by his students (and possibly by himself as well) towards *Shamela*, which they felt compromised the virtue of Richardson's original; see "Teaching *Pamela*," in *Samuel Richardson, Tercentenary Essays*, 8–22; 21.
29. Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 5.
30. Eliza Haywood, *Anti-Pamela: or, Feign'd Innocence Detected* (London: J. Huggonson, 1741), reprinted in vol. III of *The Pamela Controversy*. Subsequent references will be given in the text, with the original page number followed by the modern volume and page number in square brackets. For another relevant discussion of hypocrisy, see Eliza Haywood, *Selections from* The Female Spectator, ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), IV.61. *The Female Spectator* was published between 1744–46.
31. See, for instance, the letter at p. 135 (III.139 in the Keymer-Sabor edition); and for a summary, p. 262 (III.266).
32. [Henry Giffard], *Pamela. A Comedy* (London: J. Robinson, 1742), reprinted in vol. VI of *The Pamela Controversy*. On Giffard's production of *Pamela*, see also T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 133; and the table of *Pamela*-related dates in their edition of the novel.
33. Sabor, Introduction, *The Pamela Controversy*, VI.x.
34. Carlo Goldoni, *Pamela commedia di Carlo Goldoni/Pamela a Comedy by Charles Goldoni* (London: J. Nourse, 1756), in vol. VI of *The Pamela Controversy*.
35. *A Dramatic Burlesque of two Acts, call'd Mock-Pamela* (Dublin: Edward Bate, 1750), reprinted in ibid.
36. Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 25.

37. *Shamela*, 324. On Shamela's relation to Cibber, Middleton and Whitefield, see Martin C. Battestin with Ruthe R. Battestin, *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 303; and Keymer, *Richardson's* Clarissa, 26–29.
38. "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," in vol. I of *Miscellanies*, 153–78; 153. Subsequent references are given in the text; all emphasis is original.
39. On Fielding's inconsistency with regard to hypocrisy, see the interesting chapter on *Amelia* in Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 177–252. Castle also offers an important discussion of *Pamela* II; see esp. pp. 130–39.
40. Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones* (1749), intro. Martin C. Battestin, ed. Fredson Bowers (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), XVI.5.
41. Jonathan Swift, *Prose Works*, eds. Herbert Davis et al., 16 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–74), II.56–57.
42. For related discussions of body language and physiology, see also Ruth Perry, "Clarissa's Daughters; or, the History of Innocence Betrayed. How Women Writers Rewrote Richardson," in *Clarissa and Her Readers: New Essays for the* Clarissa *Project*, eds. Carol Houlihan Flynn and Edward Copeland (New York: AMS, 1999), 119–41, esp. 127; and Juliet McMaster, "Reading the Body in *Clarissa*," in *Clarissa and Her Readers*, 189–210. On the relationship between acting and feeling more generally, see Joseph R. Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), esp. 58–92. With regard to Richardson's male characters and their very general propensity for acting, Mark Kinkead-Weekes distinguishes between the sinister role-player Lovelace, motivated by the urge to dominate, and Sir Charles Grandison, also a role-player but one whose goal is to practice the art of moral idealism: in the case of the latter at least, "'Acting' is seen as raising oneself to play a better part; right behaviour is seen as more important than sincerity; and deliberate role-playing can generate the proper feeling, in time"; see Kinkead-Weekes, *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist*, 493.
43. Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 148.
44. Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 68.

5 HYPOCRISY AND THE NOVEL II: A MODEST QUESTION ABOUT *MANSFIELD PARK*

1. For the anti-theatricality argument, see especially Lionel Trilling, "The Sentiment of Being and the Sentiments of Art," in *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 68; the quotation is from Nicola J. Watson, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790–1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 90. For a subtle argument that emphasizes *Mansfield Park*'s ambivalence towards theatricality, see Joseph Litvak, *Caught in the Act: Theatricality in the Nineteenth-Century*

English Novel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 17–20; and see also David Marshall, "True Acting and the Language of Real Feeling," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 3 (Fall 1989): 90.

2. Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 46–47; and see also Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 21.
3. Lionel Trilling, *The Opposing Self* (New York: Viking, 1955), 212.
4. Avrom Fleishman, *A Reading of* Mansfield Park: *An Essay in Critical Synthesis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 45; Kingsley Amis, "What Became of Jane Austen?," in *What Became of Jane Austen? and Other Questions* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 16; Claudia L. Johnson, "Gender, Theory, and Jane Austen Culture," in *Mansfield Park*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), 105.
5. See especially Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty, 1983), IV.ii.4, esp. 308–13. For an interesting discussion of Richardson and what Gordon calls "Mandevillian (mis)reading," see Scott Paul Gordon, "Disinterested Selves: *Clarissa* and the Tactics of Sentiment," *ELH* 64:2 (1997): 473–502.
6. See especially J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975), 426.
7. Maria Edgeworth, *Patronage*, 4 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1814), ch. XIV, 1.378. Edgeworth's female inflection of the word patronage (specifically, in the phrase "patronage of fashion") is unusual enough to make it into the *OED*, the sole illustration that pertains to women in a long sequence of masculine examples.
8. *Mansfield Park*, vol. III of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3rd edn., 5 vols. (1934; reprint, London: Oxford University Press, 1988), 473. Subsequent references are given in the text.
9. Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1988), 116.
10. Nina Auerbach, "Jane Austen's Dangerous Charm: Feeling as One Ought About Fanny Price," in *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 28.
11. Though I would suggest that the eighteenth-century vocabulary of modesty, virtue and hypocrisy offers a more precise instrument for excavating the history of what she calls "the psychic life of power," the terms power and subjection are borrowed from the work of Judith Butler, whose account of subject-formation emphasizes the paradox that "to persist as oneself" it is required "[t]o desire the conditions of one's own subordination"; see Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 9.
12. Trilling, *The Opposing Self*, 212.
13. Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty*, 86.

14. Both Pamela and Lucy Steele condemn themselves by revealing too much, especially in their letters; on Lucy Steele as epistolary heroine, see Watson, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel*, 90.
15. *Sense and Sensibility*, vol. 1 of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 376. Subsequent references are given parenthetically in the text.
16. Johnson, *Jane Austen*, 63.
17. See especially Edgeworth's attack on "address" (a fashionable kind of dishonesty modeled on diplomatic tact) in the tale *Manœuvring* (1809); *Tales and Novels*, 10 vols. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1893), v.98, v.130. In one episode of *Sense and Sensibility*, the narrator provides this pointed summing-up of Elinor Dashwood's social manner: "thus by a little of that address, which Marianne could never condescend to practise, [Elinor] gained her own end, and pleased Lady Middleton at the same time" (145).
18. On civility as an anti-Jacobin theme, see also Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 188.
19. *Mansfield Park*, 33. The *OED* quotes this passage to illustrate the primary definition of "hypocrite."
20. The conversation was initiated by the important discussion of *Mansfield Park* in Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 84–97, and taken up in a wide range of contexts: see especially Susan Fraiman, "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Summer 1995): 805–21, reprinted in *Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees*, ed. Deidre Lynch (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 206–23; Brian Southam, "The silence of the Bertrams: Slavery and the chronology of *Mansfield Park*," *TLS* (17 Feb. 1995): 13–14; Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 162–64, 174–83; and Ruth Perry, "Jane Austen and British Imperialism," in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in the Enlightenment*, eds. Laura J. Rosenthal and Mita Choudhury (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002), 231–54. For a more general treatment of the relationship between women's writing and the discourse on the abolition of slavery, see Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 3–35.
21. Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life* (New York: Viking, 1997), 232; Tomalin summarizes here the argument of Brian Southam. While there is little textual evidence to support such a reading, Austen does allude favorably to Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), whose *History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade* was published in 1808; see the letter of 24 January 1813 to Cassandra Austen, in *Jane Austen's Letters*, 3rd edn., ed. Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 198, 409n. On Austen and Clarkson more generally, see Isobel Grundy, "Jane Austen and Literary Traditions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, eds. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 189–210; and Moira Ferguson,

Colonialism and Gender Relations from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid: East Caribbean Connections (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 70–71.

22. Hannah More gives a description of how a woman should listen to a man read aloud that corresponds closely to Fanny Price's behavior as she listens to Henry Crawford read Shakespeare (*Mansfield Park*, 337); see More, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), I.323–25. For a more general discussion of the etiquette of conversation in the nineteenth century, see Andrew St George, *The Descent of Manners: Etiquette, Rules and the Victorians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 54–83.
23. Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1799), II.42. Subsequent references are given in the text.
24. An even cruder version of More's argument can be found in Dr. Gregory's conduct manual, which directs young women to be "rather silent in company" with the unhelpful comment that "People of sense and discernment will never mistake such silence for dulness. One may take a share in conversation without uttering a syllable. The expression in the countenance shews it, and this never escapes an observing eye." See John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, 6th edn. (Dublin: Thomas Ewing and Caleb Jenkin, 1774), 17.
25. More, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*, I.174.
26. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1996), 37.
27. Trilling, "The Sentiment of Being," 68. On Jacobin sincerity and the search for hypocrisy, see also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963; reprint, London: Penguin, 1990), 97–98.
28. Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 43, 48, 50.
29. The choice of a mode of narration had certain political implications, especially in the 1790s but also in the decades that followed. Gary Kelly describes the conventional association of the first-person voice with the Jacobin novel and the third-person voice with the anti-Jacobin novel, then shows how Austen's free indirect discourse offers a flexible hybrid of the two modes; see "Jane Austen and the English Novel of the 1790s," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670–1815*, eds. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1986), 296.
30. The phrase "chameleon-like" is that of Mary Lascelles, cited by Fleishman, *Reading of Mansfield Park*, 11.
31. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theory*, 2nd edn. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 97–98. The defense of deception as tactical is also central to evolutionary psychology's account of human behavior; see especially the chapter on "Deception and Self-Deception" in Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 263–86.

32. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (written in 1861, published in 1869), in *On Liberty, with The Subjection of Women and Chapters on Socialism*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 141–42.
33. See Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755); and *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn., 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1773).
34. *Emma*, vol. IV of *The Novels of Jane Austen*, 146. Subsequent references are given in the text.
35. For a discussion of this point, see D. W. Harding, "Civil Falsehood in *Emma*," in *Regulated Hatred and Other Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. Monica Lawlor (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone, 1998), 173; and see also Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 165.
36. On the movement of eighteenth-century political thought into a "paradigm of virtue and corruption," see J. G. A. Pocock, "Virtues, rights, and manners," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 47–48.

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1. Alan Ehrenhalt, "Hypocrisy Has Its Virtues," *The New York Times*, 6 Feb. 2001.
2. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, eds. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, 3 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 1.76.
3. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (1994; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1996), 22–23.
4. Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society*, 51.
5. Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 267.
6. Judith Martin, *Common Courtesy: In Which Miss Manners Solves the Problem that Baffled Mr. Jefferson* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 11.
7. Benjamin DeMott, "Seduced by Civility: Political Manners and the Crisis of Democratic Values," *The Nation* (9 Dec. 1996): 11–19 (the quotation is from p. 12); Randall Kennedy, "The Case Against Civility," *The American Prospect* 9:41 (Nov.–Dec. 1998).
8. Stephen L. Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).
9. Ibid., 4.
10. Though Carter himself is careful to avoid such conclusions, many of these writers are particularly nostalgic for a vision of community that depends on most women not working outside of the household; see for instance the very revealing language of Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6:1 (January 1995): 65–78; and the book-length expansion of his argument in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

11. See especially Alan Wolfe, "Are We Losing Our Virtue? The Case of Civility," in *Civility*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 126–41; and also Wolfe, *One Nation, After All: What Middle-Class Americans Really Think about God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other* (New York: Viking, 1998).
12. Carter, *Civility*, 11, 12. Self-control is also central to the analysis of James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense* (New York: Free Press, 1993).
13. Carter, *Civility*, 12.
14. Carrie Doehring, "Civility in the Family," in *Civility*, ed. Rouner, 168–84.
15. Ibid., 181.
16. Jane Austen, *Catharine*, in *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. B. C. Southam (1954; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 232–33.
17. Matthew Rarey, "Jefferson progeny club votes out Hemings' kin," *The Washington Times*, 6 May 2002.
18. Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, *The Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right* (1995; reprint, New York: Warner, 1996), 2; the epigraph is from p. 23.
19. Fein and Schneider, *The Rules*, 10.
20. John Gray, Ph.D., *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 251–52.
21. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 69.

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