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Kelroy's Parlor Games

Poor *Kelroy*. When Rebecca Rush's 1812 novel was brought back into print as part of Oxford University Press's Early American Women Writers series, its future must have seemed at least as bright as the other four novels in the series: Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*, Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *A New England Tale*, and Tabitha Tenney's *Female Quixotism*. The seduction tales—*Charlotte Temple* and *The Coquette*—have claimed solid places in the canon of early American literature. They appear on countless syllabi and are available in numerous editions, including multiple recent critical editions. *A New England Tale* is out in a mass-market paperback edition, and even *Female Quixotism* is available as an ebook. Not *Kelroy*; when I taught the novel recently, I found myself at the Xerox machine, scanning the entire book to make a pdf for my students, thinking of the hours and nickels scholars spent at microfilm machines making novels like *Kelroy* available to their students during the first wave of feminist recovery. Literary historians seem to have decided that *Kelroy* is not worth our time. I disagree.

Among early American novels dominated by seduction plots, *Kelroy* offers readers something radically different: an experiential re-creation of urban life in the early Republic.[1] The novel prefigures literary realism in the way it simultaneously re-creates and critiques the delicate balancing act of trying to gain a foothold in the shifting class of elite Americans. But unlike the thing-heavy brand of literary realism that would follow a century later, *Kelroy*'s realism emphasizes the methods, strategies, behaviors, and performances—in short, the practices—that allowed early Americans to become city people decades before the advent of the industrial city.[2] While *Kelroy* represents the cross-class proximity that characterized early American cities, the novel primarily explores urban practices shared by the Philadelphia elite—or those who aspired to become part of the elite class—at the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Kelroy* animates specific practices of everyday life in the early American city and invites readers to partici-

pate in these activities, creating an experiential version of cosmopolitan culture through which readers uncomfortably learn to play the role of the aspiring elite. Although a range of urban domestic practices and performances animate the novel, *Kelroy* is fundamentally concerned with gender, economics, and financial transactions. Urban manifestations of these broad concerns, including card games, insurance schemes, and the lottery, as well as popular pastimes like visiting and parties, lie at the novel's heart.[3] But *Kelroy* emphasizes what happens inside city homes rather than on city streets, which perhaps explains why its significance as an urban novel has been overlooked.

Because it constructs urban culture not through physical objects but through social practice, *Kelroy's* "citiness" is hard to grasp—is invisible, in fact, without the help of historical work on early American urban practices and performances. In this essay I draw on recent material and cultural histories of early American cities to explore *Kelroy's* recreations of early urban practices, especially gambling, not as hallmarks of a sensational or sentimental plot, but as significant structural elements of a new American urban consciousness. I read *Kelroy* as a city novel, one that that opens early American urban practices to the reader and enacts these practices through narrative, thereby drawing the reader into an identifiably urban consciousness. Like Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* or Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, *Kelroy* asserts Philadelphia's identity as a cosmopolitan city and invites the reader to become part of its culture. In so doing, *Kelroy* offers potent clues to the ways in which early Americans imagined themselves to be city people in the protocities they inhabited.

Like the early American city, the American literary canon features seemingly permanent landmarks in the foreground of a more transitory landscape. And as this background shifts to incorporate newly rediscovered novels, *Kelroy* deserves recognition for its groundbreaking depiction of early urban practices through which women could enter into and shape the speculative urban society that would come to structure the nation.[4] Read this way, *Kelroy* becomes more than an enjoyable, if uneven, literary curiosity. Once we understand the urban practices at its core, *Kelroy* emerges as a remarkably early work of American urban realism with a powerful female protagonist, a text that changes our sense of generic possibility—and women's writing—in the early nineteenth century.

EARLY URBAN GEOGRAPHY AND *KELROY*

Drawing on the novel of manners, the gothic, and the romance, *Kelroy* revolves around the elite Hammond family in Philadelphia at the turn into the nineteenth century. *Kelroy* begins with a reckoning. After her husband dies, leaving her in a precarious financial position, the novel's evil protagonist Mrs. Hammond decides that because her own prospects for remarriage are slim, she must concentrate on raising her daughters to compete in the urban marriage market for wealthy husbands who will in turn support her (as the widowed mother). Elder daughter Lucy promptly marries a British nobleman, while the younger, Emily, becomes engaged to Kelroy, an American speculator and poet whom Mrs. Hammond intensely dislikes. After Kelroy leaves for India to untangle his dead father's business affairs, Emily and her mother move to their country house, where the rest of the novel unfolds. As this brief introduction makes clear, *Kelroy* is concerned with the domestic affairs of the elite class, largely women. Protagonist Mrs. Hammond is a manipulative and self-absorbed woman more interested in money and creature comforts than civic life. Most of the novel's action happens indoors. Almost half of the novel is set in Mrs. Hammond's country house. So what, precisely, makes *Kelroy* an urban novel?

A better question at the start might be: what did urban mean in the early Republic? When *Kelroy* was published in 1812, general consensus (and the official US census) asserted that Philadelphia was a city. Though no longer the nation's capital, and becoming a more distant second in population to New York by the day, Philadelphia remained a cosmopolitan urban center, at least in the minds of many who depicted it in writing and in images. Philadelphia's gridded street plan fostered urban growth and made maps look finished, but in the early nineteenth century many of the city's most prominent urban landmarks were still surrounded by grassy fields. In these mingled spaces, interpersonal contact maintained and enforced a social geography of distinction derived from the cosmopolitan norms of the North Atlantic rim. Even more than physical structures, social practices made Philadelphia a city and helped Philadelphians remain—or become—part of the cosmopolitan world.

Kelroy's geography reflects the paradoxical reality of early American cities—perhaps better imagined as protocities—where a street address was

not enough to convey one's class position, and where urban and rural often blended. Charles Brockden Brown explored Philadelphia's urban dynamics under the stress of the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in *Arthur Mervyn* and *Ormond*, both published in 1799. That same year, William Birch published *Birch's Views of Philadelphia*, featuring twenty-nine detailed engravings of city landmarks. In his introduction, Birch states that while he cannot explain precisely how Philadelphia became a city, his book aims to document a thriving urban space.

> PHILADELPHIA—The ground on which it stands, was less than a century ago, in a state of wild nature; covered with wood, and inhabited by Indians. It has in this short time, been raised, as it were, by magic power, to the eminence of an opulent city, famous for its trade and commerce, crouded in its port, with vessels of its own producing, and visited by others from all parts of the world. (Birch, qtd. in Teitelman n.p.)

Trade and international contact bolster Philadelphia's urban status; the *Views*' depictions of the city's landmark buildings offer people near and far access to the city's visual identity. What Birch cannot explain is the "magic power" that makes Philadelphia "eminen[t]" and "opulent," a power that works through social practice as well as tangible objects.

Countless ephemeral and sensory experiences would have told Philadelphians that they were in a city; literary and visual texts still offer potent clues to the ways in which urban dynamics structured cities very different from those we experience today. Consider the stories two Birch engravings tell about urban space in *Kelroy*'s era. Both depict the Bank of the United States, a major Philadelphia landmark. Published in 1798, figure 1 did not appear in Birch's *Views*. Here, Birch emphasizes not just the bank's monumental appearance but also the contrast between the bank's white classicism and the mixed streetscape of which it was a part. The engraving reads as an urban rendition of a Claudian landscape, with houses instead of trees marching along the sides of the image toward the horizon. As we follow Birch's perspective down Third Street, we pass a motley array of buildings made of wood and brick, some impressively solid and others mere sheds, each packed tightly against its (often very different) neighbor. At the end of the street, trees spring up at the vanishing point. While the presence of ladies carrying parasols, smartly dressed gentlemen, and a covered carriage reassure us that we are in urban space, this engraving—and its im-

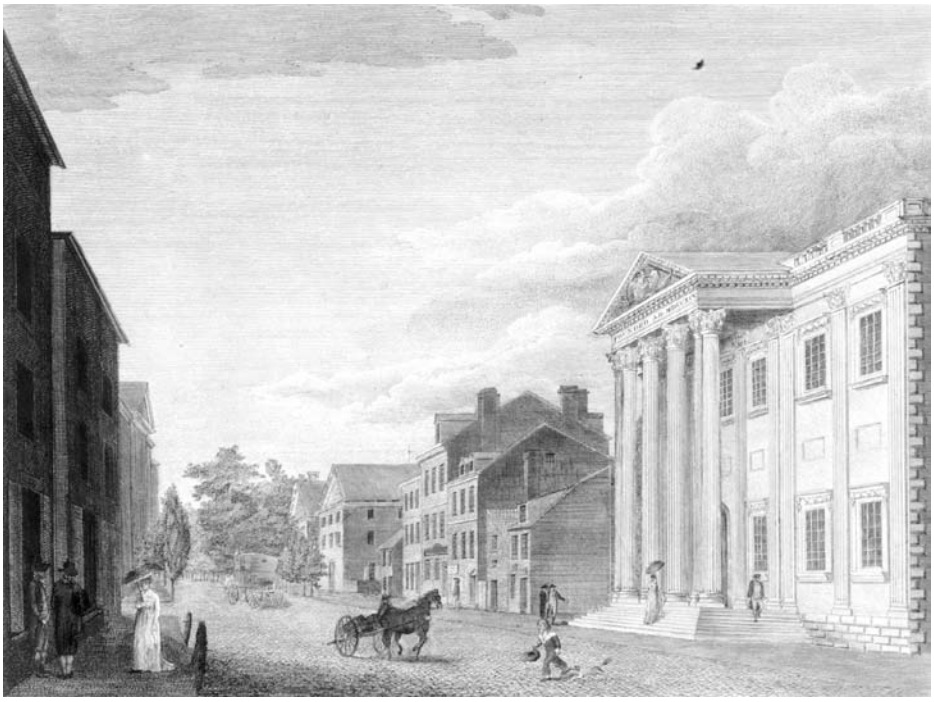

FIGURE 1. *Birch's view of the Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, 1798, emphasizing the recent presence of nature. Image from "The City of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania, North America; as it appeared in the year 1800," by William Russell Birch (DAMS 1174, page 20), "Bank of the United States with a View of Third Street Philadelphia," call number Bd 61 B531.2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*

plicit reference to seventeenth-century landscape painting—implies that the "state of wild nature" Birch assigns to the distant past in his 1799 introduction to the *Views* flourished at the end of the block only the year before.

In contrast, figure 2, which appeared as plate 17 in *Birch's Views*, shifts the viewer's perspective only slightly to assert a more recognizably urban setting for the bank. Gone are the trees and the assorted houses. Buildings jut into the frame at clashing angles, obliterating the horizon and replacing figure 1's vanishing perspective with a more claustrophobic feel.

As Philadelphia's urban landscape comes into focus, a slight shift of Birch's frame transforms a view that evokes older landscape painting into the cramped, crowded, building-centered view that presages the future of

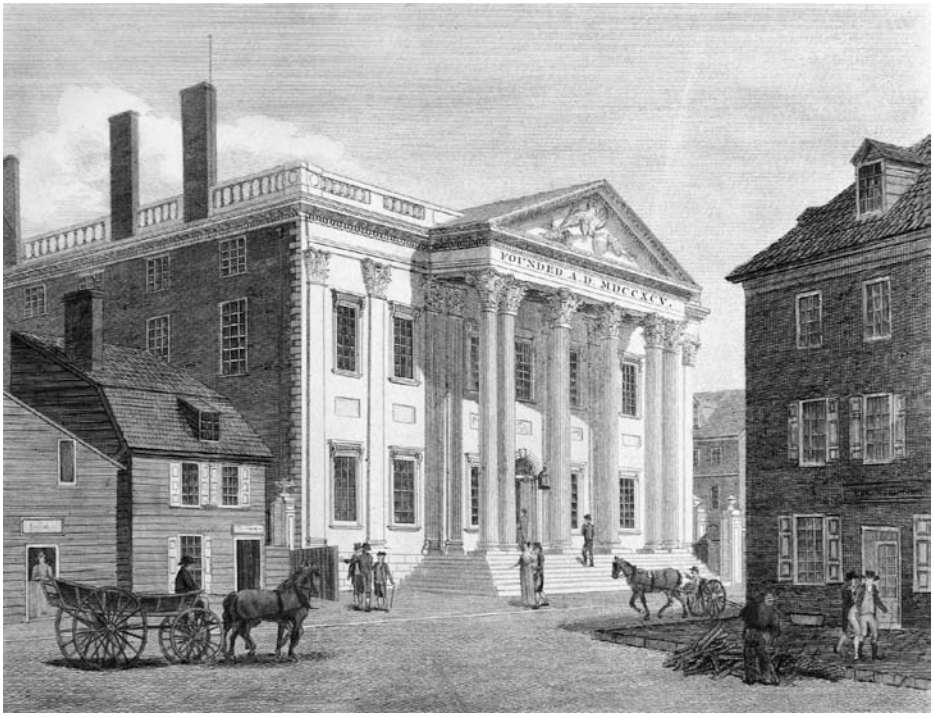

FIGURE 2. *Another Birch view highlighting the urban context of the Bank of the United States in Philadelphia. "First Bank of the United States," by William Russell Birch (DAMS 672), call number Bd 61 B531.2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*

urban images. Appropriately for a volume aimed at solidifying Philadelphia's city status, in this image the bank's facade looms over the fashionable ladies and gentlemen—in the colored plate, bright yellow breeches adorn the man entering the posh brick house—who walk or ride through Philadelphia's streets. Even the wooden building that adjoins the bank looks bigger and more impressive in figure 2; Birch colored it with a bright new paint job. He also emphasized the size and architectural detail on the brick house across the street, rendering it newly imposing. Enlarging the elite brick residence on the corner of Third Street allows it to work in visual partnership with the bank; the elite domestic and financial worlds together dominate the urban landscape. Through its manipulations of perspective and visual spaces, *Birch's Views* exerts its own "magic power" to help raise

Philadelphia "to the eminence of an opulent city." Even today, Birch's engravings remain key tools for teaching viewers to read a space as urban.

The city is a vast sensorium, its onslaught of visual, aural, tactile, and sniffable information reminding us at every turn that we are inhabiting urban space. And when we walk through a city, our knowledge that we exist in urban space must be constantly refreshed through our sensory perceptions. As Dell Upton explains, the same was true for people who entered American urban spaces in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Upton characterizes early urbanity as *intimate*:

> [Urbanity] was concerned with the individual as a member of an immediate community of neighbors and associates more than with an imagined political community. In the ballooning cities of the early nineteenth century, however, the intimacy of face-to-face community was increasingly as imaginary a concept as the all-encompassing political community of the nation. The possibility of distinguishing who one's neighbors appeared to be from who they "really" were diminished. The presentation of self and the assessment of others were increasingly sensory and performative. Thus deportment and visible self-presentation glossed identity. (1–2)

Upton helps us read the fashionable parasols and yellow breeches in figure 2 as easily legible visual signals of status and class position. He also helps us make sense of what is at stake in *Kelroy*: the shifting notions of intimacy and performance that structured personal interactions in urban spaces. The clues that enabled early Philadelphians to understand and navigate particular spaces as distinctly urban were, like ours, at the same time physical and ephemeral—and as any urbanite knows, cities' physical characteristics are often more temporary than their apparent solidity makes them seem. This temporary quality of urban space makes all the more important the urban practices Upton details, such as fashions, speech patterns, and architectural motifs, that reminded early Americans that they were in urban space. Thus the figures of city people in Birch's images link them and remind viewers that to understand their unfixed urban world we must consider the protocity through human experience.

Just as early city dwellers asserted their urbanity through manners and performance, *Kelroy*'s urban realism derives more from recreations of urban rituals than through detailed descriptions of objects. For instance,

when the narrator describes the habits of Mrs. Hammond's good friend Mrs. Cathcart, we see a miniaturized account of how city practices helped to structure early urban consciousness: "Mrs. Cathcart pursued the common routine of life without inquiring into its origin, or suspecting its tendency. She made visits, gave parties, went to the church, and to the theater in regular succession, not because she believed it to be right or wrong, but because she saw others do so" (Rush 8). Rush presents urban life as a series of actions and performances that become routine through repetition. Unlike Mrs. Hammond, whose economic position forces her to plot and scheme her way through the game of urban life, manipulating the dynamics that structure the nascent city in order to extract the most opportunity for her daughters, Mrs. Cathcart has a stable financial position and placid mentality that allow her simply to participate in the culture around her "without inquiring into its origin, or suspecting its tendency." Here, Rush suggests that urban life has both an origin and a tendency. But Mrs. Cathcart's passive approach is characteristically urban; in a space where everyone's lives are on display, we see others doing things and we follow their lead. Through unexamined action and performance, we become urban people.

In the protourban landscape, shared activities were far more personal than they would become during the industrial city's heyday.[5] The hallmark urban activities Mrs. Cathcart enjoys—visits, parties, church, and the theater—are social. Even the church and the theater, which we might think of as the spectator sports of early America, were places that announced personal identity and social status. Prominent parishioners bought named pews in church; everyone in the theater knew which were the cheap seats. In fact, nobody goes to church in *Kelroy*, and the theater gets refracted out into other spaces. Without these hallmark settings, structured social interactions become the mode through which *Kelroy's* readers are initiated into city life.

Kelroy is a product of and reflects an urban culture simultaneously more localized and more cosmopolitan than the nationwide urban culture of the industrial era. At the time *Kelroy* was published, urbanism was far more spottily achieved in Philadelphia than it would be later in the nineteenth century. We might think of the early American city as a group of overlapping small towns connected to form a "cityscape defined by qualities of juxtaposition" (Herman 21).[6] In a cosmopolitan city like Philadelphia those

towns might have consisted of one's immediate neighbors (a mix of classes and races), one's business or church associates (a less mixed community), and one's class associates. For the cosmopolitan elite class, this would have included fellow Philadelphians as well as people from distant places around the North Atlantic rim, all of whom would have recognized one another as cosmopolitans by their clothes, manners, entertainment choices, and possessions. With small populations and only modest infrastructure within and between them, early American cities could not foster the spread of a national urban consciousness. Historian Gunther Barth argues that in the industrial era, Americans became "city people" by sharing urban practices with people they didn't know. In contrast, *Kelroy* tells us that early city people let themselves become known to others by the ways in which they participated in urban life with people they *did* know—at least by the practices and manners they shared. William Birch's list of subscribers for the *Views* (including Philadelphia printer Mathew Carey, Vice President Thomas Jefferson, and the Spanish minister Chevalier d'Yrujo) highlights this simultaneously local and wide-ranging elite urban culture. The *Views* thus helped to build an urban practice of shared reading and looking.

Rituals, performances, and fashion help to make up the social geography of the city; streets, squares, and buildings structure its spatial geography. But the social and spatial form unevenly. Philadelphia would change, but Birch's engravings of urbane city living would remain on the page, replacing the ephemeral city with unchanging images. Eventually, the city would change enough that viewers might not recognize Birch's images—or a novel like *Kelroy*—as urban at all. Paradoxically, then, sources like Birch's *Views* have allowed our sense of early American urban experience to remain static, visual, and focused on exteriors. *Kelroy* allows us to enter early urban spaces differently and to access, through the practice of reading, a nascent American urban consciousness.

Like other novels of this period such as Brown's *Wieland* (1798) and Leonora Sansay's *Laura* (1809), *Kelroy* moves in and out of urban space, with much of the first half of the novel set in Philadelphia and the second half set largely in what the narrator calls "the country"—a wealthy area along the Schuylkill River about six miles (an easy morning's ride for Rush's characters) from "the city." *Kelroy* lacks the landmarked "walking through the city" scenes familiar to us from texts like Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, *Arthur Mervyn*, Brown's *Ormond, Laura*, or even *Charlotte*

Temple. Yet as Birch did, Rush deploys specific, if less familiar, terms to help readers locate themselves in urban space. In passages of third-person narration sprinkled throughout the novel, Rush rhetorically opposes the city as a site of speculation and sociability to the country as a site of retirement and retreat. Mrs. Hammond loves the "warm comforts of the social city," while her faultless daughter Emily's "mind was not of that description which requires the aid of perpetual bustle, and change of scene to assist in the performance of its functions; and she preferred retreating to the quiet shades" of her childhood home in the country (164, 175). Importantly, it's the social Mrs. Hammond, not the retiring Emily, who energizes the text and guides her daughters—and the novel's readers—through the novel's urban practices.[7]

Regardless of which setting surrounds them, Rush's characters spend much of their time indoors. When they do walk outdoors during the novel's city sections, the scenery is not substantially different from what they encounter in the "country." The narrator's rhetorical contrast between city and country, a crucial aid for her audience to better understand urban practices, is equally useful to current readers unused to looking for urban practices in domestic spaces. As historian Bernard Herman points out, urban domestic spaces, such as those found in the elite homes called town houses, offer crucial, and often overlooked, information about the dynamics of early city life: "Town houses, intimate settings for urban life and action, rendered personal and private experience sensible in the larger situation of urban life; town houses exerted presence of place, communicating and enacting the experiences and meanings of the early American city" (5). Urban homes like Mrs. Hammond's thus allowed the kind of urban intimacy, especially among people of similar class settings, that Upton asserts was disappearing on the street. And as *Kelroy* reveals, the emphasis on performance and appearance that characterizes Upton's early city streetscape bleed inexorably into urban domestic spaces as well.

Kelroy's structure echoes Rush's rhetorical contrast by dividing its time roughly in half between its city and country settings. This division first happens in miniature. The novel opens in Philadelphia. Once widowed, Mrs. Hammond and her daughters retreat to the family's country house, where she prepares them to make brilliant marriages. When the girls are ready for their debuts, the family moves back to Philadelphia for the remainder of the novel's first half. A series of dramatic reversals—including

Kelroy's departure for an extended speculative business voyage to India—culminate in a massive windfall that brings a newly wealthy Mrs. Hammond and an affianced Emily back to the country, where the second half of the novel unfolds.

As the novel opens, Rush prepares readers for their own initiation into urban life by having us witness Mrs. Hammond carefully training her daughters for urban success. Mrs. Hammond must marshal her limited resources of time, money, and space if she is to convert her daughters' appeal into marriages that will support her comfortably in her old age: "She discharged all the demands on the estate to the utmost farthing, after which there remained to her the sum of six thousand pounds, besides the house in which she lived; and having rented that entirely to her satisfaction, she purchased a small, but elegant residence in the country" (4). Rush structures the Hammond women's retreat to the countryside around an itemized balance sheet, a ticking clock, and a careful enumeration of Mrs. Hammond's financial situation. These details invite readers to calculate along with Mrs. Hammond exactly how long she must wait in the country before she can present her daughters for marriages with wealthy men. And they emphasize that for Mrs. Hammond, marriage is a speculative venture in which savvy gamblers can enjoy large payoffs.

In an urban setting, the Hammond girls' status would be constantly on display—a fine thing if appearances may be maintained; more difficult if shrinking finances are made manifest to the public, especially potential suitors. This contact gave city dwellers ample opportunity to see, hear, and gossip about their neighbors. Mrs. Hammond's move to the country, disguised as a grieving widow's retreat, thus makes sense on two levels: the rent is cheaper and the location separates the Hammonds from the prying eyes of their urban neighbors, allowing them to maintain "the appearances of undiminished affluence" (Rush 4). Yet their rural rental only makes sense in conversation with the urban spaces to which Mrs. Hammond plans a triumphant return.

Along with economics and time, Mrs. Hammond must manipulate space in order to make up for the lousy hand she's been dealt; her efforts show that urban practices may arise as easily in domestic spaces as in public space. Mrs. Hammond's spatial mastery is revealed in her ability to recreate in her country house a miniature urban world in which she can train her daughters in the skills and manners they will need in order to

attract wealthy husbands. After they move from the city, Mrs. Hammond structures her daughters' lives both through the domestic space she creates for them and by manipulating the ways in which the city as idea and social practice enters and structures their retreat. In the "small, but elegant residence," she hires a governess and pays "masters from the city, to attend them at stated times" (Rush 5). Mrs. Cathcart, a family friend who longs for a summer house in the country, frequently visits the Hammonds' country house to escape Philadelphia's heat and brings with her news and gossip about the city. These early scenes are critical to the rhetorical divide Rush is attempting to create between city and country. Only later do we learn how physically close the spaces are to one another. Rush's narration linguistically calms the "spatial tension" between local and cosmopolitan ties that structured American protocities in which "core and periphery existed as mental landscapes as much as physical spaces. The urban spatial imagination easily rendered the short physical distance of one or two blocks into a much greater perceptive distance" (Herman 97). As the narrator describes them here, city and country are paired rhetorically only to emphasize that they are worlds apart.

But at the same time, city and country are intimately connected in *Kelroy*. The city enters the Hammonds' rural retreat not just in the bodies of the urban people who come to teach the Hammond girls but also through Mrs. Hammond herself. She travels back and forth to the city, bringing new ammunition to bolster her campaign: "In winter, Mrs. Hammond had been in the habit of going frequently to town, to observe the fashions, and learn the prevailing topics of the day. . . . She was sometimes accompanied by her children, but she rarely took them with her to any place of public amusement. . . . [O]n these occasions they commonly remained at home with Helen Cathcart" (Rush 9). Mrs. Hammond's effort to conceal her children at the Cathcarts' while she takes in the latest urban news and trends allows her both to filter urban realities for her children and shield them from the public eye until she is ready to present them on the marriage market.

Personal connections and shared cosmopolitan practices were thus the crucial underpinnings of urban culture in the protocities of early-nineteenth-century America. *Kelroy's* plot begins with the idea that isolation from cosmopolitan culture might be not only possible but productive. During the novel's first half, Rush draws a bright line between the city and

country settings. While people move between the two settings, the narrator is careful to distinguish between the two by emphasizing their distance and difference. But in the second half of the novel, when Mrs. Hammond and Emily retreat to the country for good, the distance and distinction that Rush so clearly delineates in the first city-country cycle begin to erode. Most importantly for my reading, the disciplinary sociality that structures Rush's vision of city culture dissipates in the country, and thus it is the country, not the city, that is the site of the novel's great criminal act.

In the novel's city sections, Rush shows us how disciplinary sociality—the interpersonal oversight of proper behaviors whether at the card table, in courtship, or in one's dealings with merchants—is a crucial force in maintaining cosmopolitan culture. In this era, part of an American's sense that he or she was an urban person came from maintaining connections to more established urban practices, especially London's. *Kelroy* depicts and participates in this culture by emphasizing Philadelphia's—and Philadelphians'—connections to cities as far flung as Savannah, London, and Calcutta through trade, luxury goods, the bodies of cosmopolitan people (whether British peers like Walsingham or American speculators like Kelroy), and the letters they send. As Trish Loughran emphasizes, in the early nineteenth century, material objects—and people—traveled more easily from Philadelphia to Europe than back and forth to the American hinterlands.[8] *Circulation* is a critical term here; as people and objects moved around the North Atlantic rim they spread a culture of urban practices that knit unconnected people from distant places together. Herman tells us that what members of this mobile cosmopolitan society did with well-traveled objects like playing cards and tea services was remarkably consistent from London to Boston to Charleston. But the players had to know the rules. "The emphasis on casual display by both hostess and guest relied on a sensibility that reified etiquette and social knowledge," notes Herman (75). Early American urban culture was distinctive from a more European urbanity, then, not so much in its practices but in the ways in which those practices spread—through personal connections rather than through a sort of zeitgeist.

CARD GAMES AND MARITAL GAMBLES

During the Philadelphia sections of the novel, *Kelroy* invites readers into a shared urban consciousness by letting us in on Mrs. Hammond's

gambles. Rush lays Mrs. Hammond's balance sheets open to view and allows us to become guests at the party who can peek at her cards and watch as she plays the hands she is dealt. Initiated into the practices of cosmopolitan society through the novel's action, we become the elite people from elsewhere who can move easily into a new place because the society plays by rules we already understand.

When her daughters are ready to marry, the Hammond family moves back to the city, and a new clock starts ticking. Mrs. Hammond has entered the game.

> While she remained in the country, exclusive of seventeen hundred pounds, which she had paid for her house and grounds there, Mrs. Hammond had expended two thousand more, besides the annual rent of her house in town; so that when she again took possession of it, she had only two thousand, three hundred left; but she calculated that this with a tolerable portion of private economy, would be sufficient to last her for one year; and if, at the expiration of that time her daughters should remain single, (a circumstance which she scarcely permitted herself to suppose possible) the sale of her country place would support her for at least one more. (Rush 11)

But the control that Mrs. Hammond had over her daughters while she isolated them from urban space evaporates as soon as they arrive in the city. The city transforms them—or at least makes evident qualities that have remained illegible in the isolation of their country life: "And at the expiration of four years, when Mrs. Hammond again removed to Philadelphia, and presented them as candidates for universal homage, she perceived with astonishment the striking contrast of their dispositions" (Rush 6). Until this point in the narrative the girls have been described as a unit—and it seems that Mrs. Hammond has seen them as such. As soon as they come out in public, however, they are differentiated as individuals, both to the reader, who is treated to full paragraphs contrasting Emily Hammond, the romantic, sweet-tempered, and ill-fated heroine, with her imperious and self-centered sister, Lucy. The city produces individuality and difference; it forces Mrs. Hammond to realize astonishing facts about the daughters she thought she knew. Yet the girls have been trained too well to rebel openly against Mrs. Hammond's plans for them. The city allows them to individu-

ate, but they can only do so along conventional lines. In the city they must play the roles for which they have been so thoroughly prepared.

"Entertainments" dominate the social world Mrs. Hammond and her daughters enter in Philadelphia, and every entertainment the novel mentions features a card game. Mrs. Hammond is a skilled and enthusiastic player, especially at loo, a popular eighteenth-century game involving multiple hands and multiple deals, where short-term losses matter less than long-term gains. In *Kelroy*, loo echoes the marriage game Mrs. Hammond is playing on her daughters' behalf. Just as Mrs. Hammond keeps her true financial situation hidden from her daughters' potential suitors, when she plays cards she needs to be able to bluff, even at parties that function as semipublic elite urban spaces. The narrator allows *Kelroy's* readers to assess Mrs. Hammond's gambles as she makes them, but woe betide the partygoer who tries to look at her cards over her shoulder: one inquisitive guest perambulating around the room receives "a smart rebuff from Mrs. Hammond, over whose chair he had familiarly leaned to peep into her hand" (Rush 62). The novel's readers occupy a far more privileged position than the overly familiar peeper; by the time this game of loo takes place we have seen the hand Mrs. Hammond was dealt by her husband, witnessed her expert play, and watched her succeed in winning her first significant gamble: arranging her elder daughter Lucy's marriage to the wealthy British aristocrat, Walsingham.

This marital gamble both echoes and magnifies the stakes of the literal gambles Mrs. Hammond makes at the card table—and thus does not fit neatly into the paradigm of gambling "as a seductive obsession, as a practice separate from virtuous trade, and as an economic practice with no possibility of redemption" that Karen Weyler sees at work in novels of this period (217). Walsingham falls deeply in love with Lucy so quickly that Mrs. Hammond hardly needs to manipulate him personally; her social bluffing—including her urban behavior, her town house, her parties, and her daughters' beautiful clothing—suffices to ensure that the marriage takes place. Even when Walsingham belatedly learns that Lucy will bring no money to their union, his own large fortune tempers his surprise that Lucy is far less wealthy than she appears to be. As readers we know far more than Walsingham does about the precarious state of Mrs. Hammond's finances. We know how much she is betting on each hand and

watch her capital decline as she lays out the money it takes to shore up the appearance of cosmopolitan wealth.

Historians agree that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, urban society was a speculative society in which cosmopolitan people recognized each other by sharing elite practices and performances. Card games—a favorite pastime—neatly metonymized the speculative relations that undergirded the early American version of cosmopolitan urbanism by taking large-scale gambling to a personal level. In the novel, as in this era, card games are a hallmark of urban space, part of the "endless round of balls, social calls, tea parties, and card parties" that the Hammond girls experience in Philadelphia (Weyler 223). Weyler argues that while speculation is central to *Kelroy*, "women like Mrs. Hammond are themselves not able to participate in the profit-making aspects of this trade" (223). Except at the card table. Weyler downplays card games' economic power and glosses the novel's urban focus, but Herman's analysis of the material culture of the cosmopolitan city situates urban card tables as crucial sites for the sociality that enabled trade to happen. Herman notes that "[c]ard tables . . . were not just objects of polite discourse—they were an arena for the complex competitive world of trade and social rank in a society where the distance between counting house and dining table was minimal" (70). And unlike the male-dominated spheres of the counting house or even the dining table, seats at the card table were available to women, who otherwise had little access to the world of trade except as consumers. Because "women competed with men as equals," card games regendered the dynamic of speculation (Herman 76).

The second round of Mrs. Hammond's marriage game—preventing daughter Emily's marriage to Kelroy—is different from the first, and not only because the stakes are higher. Though Kelroy appears to share his good friend Walsingham's class status, he lacks Walsingham's inherited wealth and British title. Left in uncertain circumstances after his father's death, Kelroy must travel to India in order to straighten out and profit from the speculative business deal his father was working on when he died. Though Kelroy falls in love with Emily and she returns his affection, the instability of Kelroy's fortune, combined with the intense antipathy Mrs. Hammond feels toward him because of her inability to read from his appearance who he "really" is, removes him from Mrs. Hammond's list of appropriate suitors for her younger daughter.

But the outcome of round two does not depend on Mrs. Hammond's skill against Kelroy. Instead, she again plays against Walsingham, who calls her bluff after learning of Kelroy's interaction with a grocer who is about to sue Mrs. Hammond for the bills she has failed to pay—adding to his hand some inside information about the real state of his new mother-in-law's finances.

> "Mrs. Who?" said Kelroy off his guard with surprise, "surely you do not mean Mrs. *Hammond?*"
>
> "Aye, but I do sir!—I mean Mistress *Haimond*, the great Mistress *Haimond*, who has money enough for every thing but to pay her debts; and if you're a friend of hers, as it's like you may be, you will do both me and her a kindness by advising her to let me have my due as soon as possible."
>
> Words cannot express the astonishment of Kelroy on thus learning that the proud, scornful Mrs. Hammond, who looked upon half the community as fit only to be trampled under her feet, should render herself liable to be sued for a demand of this nature. (Rush 81)

The class proximity of the early city (here signaled by the grocer's dialected accent) allows Kelroy—and the reader—a peek at Mrs. Hammond's cards that reveals that her finances don't square with the elite performance she is giving. Kelroy reports back to Walsingham, and having gained the upper hand Walsingham offers to make a deal with Mrs. Hammond that would involve signing her assets over first to him and then to Kelroy, in the process giving up the financial independence she has been striving to win with each of her gambles. Mrs. Hammond has been outplayed, but she's not willing to let Walsingham win outright. Instead, first she bluffs with a theatrical public display of paying the grocer, and then she folds. Kelroy and Emily become engaged, with no one the wiser about the cards Mrs. Hammond holds—or doesn't.

INSURANCE, THE LOTTERY, AND OTHER COLLECTIVE GAMBLES

Once Emily Hammond is safely engaged, she and Kelroy can pursue their romance in public. The game is over, it would seem. But unbeknownst to her daughter, Mrs. Hammond's financial straits have become

dire, an untenable situation for an inveterate gambler. Midway through the novel, Mrs. Hammond sits alone in her room, thinking about her nearly depleted accounts, "almost wild with perplexity" (Rush 120). Turning over the possibilities in her mind, she considers mortgaging her town house or selling her jewels, but

> after a long, and bitter parley with herself, the extremity of her situation convinced her that unless she voluntarily resigned the appearance of splendor, that of respectability would in a short space be torn from her forever; and to prevent it she made the following wise resolution:—To keep her house unencumbered—to part immediately with her carriage and horses—to announce that she intended residing in future wholly in the country, and to send to auction, as useless to her, the elegant new furniture which she had so lately purchased—and lastly, to dispose not only of all of her own valuable trinkets but Emily's also, which she dreaded as the most difficult part of her task. . . . Yet, reflecting that her own diamonds were very valuable, and would probably with the sale of a few pieces of plate . . . produce sufficient to the discharge of all demands against her, she concluded to let Emily retain hers for the present, and subsist entirely upon the rent of the town house. (120)

Satisfied with her plan, "with a spirit considerably humbled," Mrs. Hammond falls peacefully asleep.

Once again, Rush makes the reader privy to Mrs. Hammond's accounting by allowing us to see what cards she still holds; thus we understand Mrs. Hammond's strategy to maintain her "respectability" even at the cost of some splendor. As the narrator enumerates Mrs. Hammond's plan, the list of her available assets reads like a catalogue of urban elite status markers. Town house: maintain ownership, avoid mortgage, rent to some other elite (or striving) urban person. Carriage and horses: sell. Furniture: auction. Jewelry and silver plate: strategically divest. All of these items have appeared elsewhere in *Kelroy* to help Mrs. Hammond assert her elite identity, because urban "social identity depend[s] on [the] material world for its expression" (Herman 38). But without an urban setting, the objects do nothing to buttress Mrs. Hammond's social position. Her urban peers would all agree, which is why she can frame the entire divestment plan under the guise of leaving the city for the country. Outside of

urban social practice, elite objects change from valuable status markers to salable goods.[9]

Cosmopolitan taste and manners didn't have to be asserted in urban space per se; objects, manners, tastes could and did move into rural places, becoming in the transition more markers of class than assertions of urbanity.[10] But it's significant that objects and practices—a teacup, for instance, the tea it contained, and, quite possibly, the ways in which that tea was prepared, served, and consumed—had their origins in the mercantile cosmopolitanism of European cities. As T. H. Breen comments, "Without question, as Americans acquired these goods, they also acquired knowledge of how polite, tasteful, middle-class people in London as well as Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia were expected to use them" (10).[11] Breen documents the amazing spread of manufactured goods throughout the colonies, noting their appearance even in the most rustic and apparently impoverished colonial farms and homes. But the protocity of 1790s Philadelphia offered an entirely different stage on which these objects could function—less as colonial-era totems of civilization valued for brightening otherwise grim surroundings, but as appropriate facilitators (whether as sets or props) for the performance of urban identity, crucial to the "stagecraft and stage management" that "seem to occur everywhere in social life" (Goffman 15).

The urban practices in which Mrs. Hammond engages correspond nicely to theories of social practice articulated by Erving Goffman. Goffman analyzes social interactions through a dramaturgical lens, using "the term 'performance' to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (22). In social interactions, Goffman asserts, actor and audience employ a variety of tacitly agreed-upon practices, including tact, to allow the individual to play the role—in this case, of a wealthy widow—she claims to fill. These "practices comprise the techniques employed to safeguard the impression fostered by an individual during his presence before others" (14).[12] In the Philadelphia section of *Kelroy*, as in many novels, readers are in the privileged position of seeing the many performances Mrs. Hammond stages; as a mamma she dotes, as a card sharp she gambles, and as a consumer she duns. We thus gain ample evidence that "when the individual presents him-

self before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of his society, more so, in fact, than does his behavior as a whole" (Goffman 35). Importantly, our view of Mrs. Hammond's "behavior as a whole" disappears when she and Emily move out of the city, implying that the city offers a stage on which different sides of a complex character like Mrs. Hammond will eventually be displayed.

Mrs. Hammond best exemplifies Goffman's dramaturgical theory of practice when she outfits her daughters for their debut and furnishes her home as a showcase—a stage set, in Goffman's terms—for their class position, or more accurately, the class position Mrs. Hammond wants to perform. As Goffman notes, "perhaps the most important piece of sign-equipment associated with social class consists of the status symbols through which material wealth is expressed" (36).[13] Ironically, an important part of Mrs. Hammond's performance of cosmopolitan wealth is acting as if these objects are not special luxuries but merely the everyday items that should surround a woman of her wealth and position. Inhabiting the world these objects help create means acting as if she can take them for granted—which may help explain why Rush refuses to fetishize Mrs. Hammond's things through excessive description. At the same time, Rush's narration allows us to travel behind the scenes to see the tensions that strain Mrs. Hammond's capacity for improvising wealth. Her Bourdieuvian sense that aesthetic practices are class based and largely immobile underscores the difficulty she has letting go of her elite performance even as her money disappears.

But when her money *is* gone, Mrs. Hammond's house opens to us; for the first time, Rush describes the objects Mrs. Hammond has used to practice an elite urban lifestyle. By the time Mrs. Hammond performs this last reckoning, readers have spent more than half of the novel in the urban setting these goods populate and mark as elite. We have lived the elite life along with the Hammonds, attended entertainments, sat in on card parties, and come down for breakfast. Possessions have been props for social practice, but Rush's narrator has not described the objects in any detail. In contrast, at the close of Mrs. Hammond's urban gambling career Rush presents an inventory that resembles the lists of property that probate courts would assemble after a person's death.[14]

Moments after Mrs. Hammond drops off to sleep, the Hammonds' house is opened to the novel's readers, its characters, and the urban public

in a dramatically different way. A fire breaks out in the kitchen, destroying the house and almost everything within it.

> [I]t was too late to attempt saving any thing of value; and except a carpet which chanced to be rolled up, a small trunk containing papers, and a few chairs, not a single article of either plate, furniture or wearing apparel had been rescued from the merciless element; and before ten o'clock, of those splendid apartments where so lately taste had shone, and beauty triumphed, nothing remained but melancholy black walls and smoking ruins. (Rush 123)

Mrs. Hammond's elite goods—the plate, furniture and clothing—along with her plans to redeem them, go up in smoke. The items that are left, a rug, some chairs, and a box with personal papers, are exactly the items that crossed class lines in this period.[15] The fire levels the house and Mrs. Hammond's class pretensions at once.

Participating in the urban world of Philadelphia brought with it the understanding that urban homes form a connected community. After the fire, the "melancholy" blackened ruins stand in the street, interior and exterior poignantly visible to all who pass by. With her elite domestic space reduced to a "smoking ruin," Mrs. Hammond's luck as a gambler appears to have run out—she seems a tailor-made example for an antigambling tract such as Mason Locke Weems's *God's Revenge against Gambling*, which details "numerous lurid examples . . . of the violence and tragedy that result from gambling" (Weyler 217) and doubts that there exists even "one single gambler, who *has liv'd and died rich*" (Weems 34, emphasis in original). But Mrs. Hammond's disappearing townhouse hides redemption in its ashes.

In the wake of the fire's destruction, Rush introduces two new kinds of urban gambling—insurance and the lottery. Insurance is a gamble you only win when you lose; alas for Mrs. Hammond, "the policy of insurance on her house and furniture had expired only one week before it was destroyed, and governed by some strange fatality, she had neglected to renew it, and was thus left a very beggar, without hope or consolation" or clothes, for that matter (124). Insurance here serves as another sign that we are in urban space—and specifically signals the collective, interpersonal nature of the American protocity. Inspired by the insurance schemes that had developed in London after the great fire of 1666, Benjamin Franklin introduced the first mutual fire insurance company in America, the Phila-

delphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire in 1752.[16]

Because it was concerned at least as much with preventing fires as with fighting them, Franklinian fire insurance exerted a form of urban discipline that resonates with neighborly dynamics in *Kelroy*. The logic of fire insurance relied on city dwellers' shared sense that because their individual fates were connected to their neighbors', it behooved them to watch over one another—and to invest in mutual oversight. Insurance agents performed inspections in order to decide whom to insure, required safety measures such as attic trap doors, and in the case of the Contributionship, offered insured homeowners plaques to affix to their homes' exteriors like badges proclaiming their status. If houses were insured, they were elite; wooden structures were not eligible for fire insurance. Mrs. Hammond's lapsed policy hints that she had bought in, quite literally, to a vision of urban space in which people are fundamentally connected—where no one wants a neighbor's house to go up in flames if only because his or her own home and livelihood might be at risk. That she neglects to renew, and thus withdraws herself from that community, is only due, the narrator emphasizes, "to a strange fatality," yet the risk of withdrawing from the safety net of her urban community is clear. In separating herself from her peers she risks losing everything.

Yet in withdrawing from the community of the insured, Mrs. Hammond protects her secrets from her peers' oversight. One important secret is contained in a box that survives the fire—lottery tickets that Mrs. Hammond has been playing on the sly.

> She purchased them, not *a year ago*, as she now pretended, but the preceding week, when half wild with perturbation, it occurred to her to try her fate once more in a lottery; for although she had latterly been a repeated, and unsuccessful adventurer in this frequent resource of desperate extravagance, it was possible the scale might still turn in her favor. Resolved to give it a trial, she borrowed money from Mrs Cathcart, on pretence of wanting it for some other purpose; and secretly sending her mulatto girl to purchase two tickets, with strict orders not to mention it, under pain of severe correction. (Rush 129)

In the moral universe of the sentimental novel or a tract like *God's Revenge against Gambling*, the fire's destruction would aptly punish Mrs. Ham-

mond for her acquisitive, manipulative ways. But in *Kelroy*, Mrs. Hammond wins the lottery.

Mrs. Hammond is not simply comfortable with risk; her many gambling ventures indicate that her life is structured around a predilection for risk taking that becomes hidden from the audience's view when Mrs. Hammond leaves the city. As Eric Wertheimer has shown, an ease with the mentality of risk is a hallmark of modernity that also structured early city life. Of course, risk taking is practiced not only in urban space; as Breen and other historians demonstrate, Americans of all stations and regions participated eagerly in the world of goods, speculation, and possibility for gain inherent in the young nation's volatile economy.[17] Though cities did use lotteries as fund-raisers for urban amenities, the lottery was not urban per se in the early Republic (Ezell 111).[18] Nevertheless, some of Mrs. Hammond's particular gambles, such as playing card games, displaying her daughters for marriage, and letting her insurance policy lapse can only take place in the protocity, which provides the settings, like entertainments and balls, and the structures, like insurance contributionships, that enable Mrs. Hammond to take specific risks. The lottery is an interesting exception.

Representing a range of classes and races, city lottery players formed a very different urban collective than that represented by Franklin's elite Contributionship, a collective that much more accurately reflected the mixed landscape of the early American city. In buying their tickets, lottery players, many of whom would have been barred from making larger investments by virtue of their race, gender, or financial means, imagined that a small individual investment might yield a fabulously large return. Such returns were possible because by the 1790s, increasingly extensive improvement required a national market for lotteries: "No longer was a single locality viewed as the market for tickets, but the wealth of a whole state and its neighbors was tapped" (Ezell 82). Unlike Mrs. Hammond's other risks, the lottery ties her to a network of gamblers of class, race, and regional backgrounds far different from her own.

Rather than allying herself with the lottery's broad clientele, Mrs. Hammond has her mulatto servant buy the tickets for her. She tries to hide both the fact that she has purchased the ticket and that the lottery is the source of her windfall: "'For really,' continued she, 'people might fancy it wore a strange appearance for *me* to seem so very solicitous about the fate of one

poor, solitary lottery ticket'" (Rush 129). Revealing that she has engaged in an almost democratic form of gambling would so deeply undermine her performance of elite cosmopolitanism that she opts for an extended hiatus in the country rather than be outed as a class-crossing lottery player.

The lottery ticket has been Mrs. Hammond's ace in the hole, and her win marks a turning point in the novel. Financially, this reversal brings Mrs. Hammond back from the brink of ruin. Though she tries to keep secret how close she was to disaster, her extreme physical reactions to her win, which include a fainting spell, a bloody nose, and facial injuries that require her to spend a week in bed, expose the violence of the release she feels from impending poverty: "[T]he blood gushed from her nose in torrents. . . . After streaming profusely for some time, it at last stopped of itself, but not until her clothes were almost covered with it; and she lay on the sopha apparently a most awful spectacle" (Rush 127). The gruesome, graphic description of Mrs. Hammond's injuries signals that this plot twist is more closely allied with the abrupt changes in fortune in later realist novels than the coincidences that structure novels of manners. It also allows us to see the latent irony in the following passage:

> Freed at once from all her difficulties, she felt as if in paradise; and having received her money, paid off her mortgage, satisfied all her creditors, and provided herself with everything necessary to comfort and elegance, she retired with her daughter into the country, where she tasted in all its luxury the sweets of that tranquility of mind to which she had long been a stranger, and taught by her past distresses the value of economy, no longer indulged herself in endless company, and expensive entertainments, but contented herself with the occasional society of a few of her most intimate associates, and behaved in every respect like a rational woman. (136–37)

She even puts down her playing cards and takes up chess.

The experience is transformative; Mrs. Hammond has effectively died and been reborn. Rush's language in this passage emphasizes once again the distinction the narrative has drawn between city and country life. In the city, Mrs. Hammond owes money, mortgages her property, and runs up bills with creditors, all in the name of "comfort and elegance." In the country she experiences tranquillity, economy, and intimacy. In short, she becomes "rational." Strangely, winning the lottery seems to have trans-

formed Mrs. Hammond into a female version of the Jeffersonian ideal. Except, that is, for the little word "behaved."

The lottery plot twist leads the novel's characters back to the countryside. And though the narrator tells us that this move will nurture Mrs. Hammond's virtue, the countryside is where she pursues her most evil deed—in secret. She may behave rationally in the eyes of those around her, including the novel's readers, but this behavior screens her nefarious extracurricular activities. If we miss the irony of this passage's differentiation between country virtue and urban dissolution, we risk reading the novel as a second-rate sentimental tale instead of a novel that foreshadows urban realism.

Importantly, in *Kelroy's* second half the "country" is far more open to the city than it is in the first few pages of the novel, when Mrs. Hammond secludes her daughters in the country before their urban debut. In the novel's second half we learn that Mrs. Hammond's country place is only six miles from Philadelphia. Friends from the city frequently drop by. For Rush's characters, a deceptive sense of safety associated with the country obscures whatever dangers it might hold. We see this in Emily's refusal to travel to Europe's fashionable watering holes that were repositories for urban sociality after Kelroy leaves for India. She retires to the country to protect herself at home, little imagining that her country home houses the greatest threat to her happiness—her mother.

Indeed, in *Kelroy* the country is a site of relations far more dangerous than anything we see in the city. After she receives letters from Kelroy calling off their engagement, a resigned Emily marries Dunlevy. At the wedding, Mrs. Hammond suffers a deadly stroke. As she organizes her mother's papers after the funeral, Emily stumbles upon a box containing love letters from Kelroy that she never received—and copies, in her mother's handwriting, of the forged rejection letters she believed Kelroy had sent. In the face of irrefutable evidence that her mother masterminded a campaign of forgery aimed at removing Kelroy from Emily's life, Emily collapses. "Lying senseless on the floor," Emily finally resembles the heroines of the seduction novels with which *Kelroy* has been classed. After Mrs. Hammond's death, the novel reverts from realistic re-creations of protourban practice to swooning and tears. The events that follow, including Emily and Kelroy's premature deaths and Helen Cathcart's recuperative marriage to the widowed Dunlevy, fit the generic conventions of sentiment. But the novel's

climactic chapter, presented as a revelatory flashback, ruptures this turn, further undermining the novel's allegiance to sentiment.

With Mrs. Hammond dead and Emily's death neatly foreshadowed, the narration turns the clock back to describe "one of the most diabolical schemes that envy ever planned, or malignity executed" and to specify that this scheme was hatched as direct revenge for Walsingham's victory back in round 2 (Rush 186). Described as a "hazard" that only succeeds "by chance," Mrs. Hammond's evil plot is thus doubly linked to the card games that structured urban space. The forgery scheme and the destruction it causes read as Mrs. Hammond's last, deadly gamble, a game from which the rules and oversight that bind cosmopolitan society are fatally absent. Breaking away from the expectation of gracious losing that urban sociality demands, Mrs. Hammond refuses to let the old score die and nurses her rage at Kelroy to a dangerous pitch. When her friend Mr. Marney offers to forge letters from Kelroy to Emily breaking off their engagement, Mrs. Hammond readily agrees, even correcting Marney's spelling before the final copies are "sent" to Emily from Kelroy's ship. Initially, Mrs. Hammond bets that distance, ensured by the business voyage to India Kelroy must take to untangle his business affairs, will terminate the engagement. When it seems that she will be on the losing end of that gamble, Mrs. Hammond cheats using the forged letters, and no random partygoer is present to ensure that she plays by the rules. Unlike the novel's card games, insurance scheme, and lottery, the forgery scheme becomes deadly because it operates in secret, outside the boundaries of disciplinary sociality.

Thus the move to the country that sounds like a sentimental happy ending instead marks its grimmest reversal. Neither distance from the city nor the absence of urban friends distinguish "country" from "city"; instead, it is the absence of the anonymous oversight provided by acquaintances, servants, tradespeople, the crowd—urban sociality considered most broadly—that makes the country a dangerous place. This dynamic becomes part of the novel's structure, for, unlike Mrs. Hammond's earlier gambles, the forgery scheme is not narrated to the reader until Mrs. Hammond is dead. After Mrs. Hammond becomes "rational," we lose access to her machinations, which happen outside the narrative—and outside the expectations of polite society into which readers have been initiated in the novel's first half. Along with the other characters, readers learn the depth of Mrs. Hammond's betrayal only near the novel's conclusion. Beyond

the city's disciplinary sociality, beyond the scope of her daughters or their suitors, and most significantly, beyond the bounds of the reader's knowledge, Mrs. Hammond's secret game turns deadly.

In the city, our knowledge of *Kelroy*'s characters' actions is vast. Sometimes, in the urban setting we are privy to clandestine encounters about which other characters remain ignorant. In the city chapters of *Kelroy*, these semiprivate encounters, such as Emily's with Kelroy or Mrs. Hammond's with her creditors, are always overseen and overheard by other characters and by the reader. The Hammonds' final move to the country draws a veil over Mrs. Hammond's nefarious activities. Like that of the other characters, readers' knowledge of her plot is limited. That the scheme is kept secret from *Kelroy*'s readers—that we are bluffed along with Emily—is potent evidence that Rush has successfully incorporated the reader into the novel's urban world.

THE CITY IS WHAT WE DO

By making speculation domestic—bringing it into the drawing room, as it were—*Kelroy* teaches its readers how to participate in and help to shape urban society. In a protourban place like Philadelphia, "city" and "country" gained their spatial identities through ritual, rhetoric, and performance, ephemeral events that have only recently come back into view as distinctively urban practices.

Kelroy enacts and aims to produce a cosmopolitan consciousness in its readers, both as a product that would be read and shared with others and in the way the novel invites its readers to participate in elite urban culture. There is tension here, of course. Rush was writing at a time when the cosmopolitan urban culture into which she initiates her readers could be seen as a culture of dissipation, immorality, and an unseemly focus on wealth. *Kelroy* puts these negative aspects of urban culture on display but is hardly a rousing call for egalitarian social relations. As we have seen, *Kelroy*'s truly nefarious action happens in the second half of the novel, when the characters have moved from their Philadelphia town house to the Jeffersonian countryside. And while the novel's readers are beckoned to join the game during the urban portions of the novel, we are shut out when the characters retreat to the country, where a newly "rational" Mrs. Hammond can pursue her evil gambles in secret, beyond the gaze of the urban social

world—or of her readers. This final, secret gamble, which *Kelroy*'s readers discover along with Emily (and which ends in disaster for all concerned), shows how Rush contrasts the destructive possibilities of isolation with an urban consciousness in which an individual's bad actions can be policed, reshaped, and reformed through social contact. As we read, Rush makes her audience part of the urban consciousness she constructs. If we imagine *Kelroy* being read and shared, we see how the novel might replicate this process on a wider scale, and thus play a role in shaping urban consciousness beyond an individual's reading experience.

Once upon a time, *Kelroy* the physical book was a small part of urban material culture. It was bought and sold in the marketplace of the early American city, was shared, traded, read, and reread. And then it disappeared and went out of print as the urban culture it was part of faded away. It resurfaced as part of a feminist project of recovery—but wasn't legible enough to remain in print. Just as cities appear to be built of solid structures, literary canons can seem to be inevitable. But architecture crumbles; fashion fades. As *Kelroy* thematizes urbanity, its publication history—into print and out of print, back into print and out again—replicates the cyclical ephemerality of the urban consciousness the novel brings to life. *Kelroy* offers readers a unique way to imagine themselves back in the urban world of the early Republic, and in this way enables the ephemeral city to reappear. With the appearance (or reappearance) in print of other novels exploring cosmopolitan consciousness, like Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond* and Catherine Sedgwick's *Clarence*, and the emergence of new material and cultural histories of the early American city, perhaps *Kelroy's* time has come again. Until then, there's always the scanner.

NOTES

I am deeply grateful to Sari Edelstein, Sarah Luria, and Laura Saltz, as well as my anonymous readers for *Early American Literature* for their thoughtful, incisive, and encouraging comments on this essay as it developed.

1. See Davidson 215 and Tennenhouse 45.
2. See Brown, introduction. Regarding genre, see Derounian.
3. See Weyler.
4. On recent trends in scholarship on early American women's writing, see Gaul.
5. Historians including Barth have linked the shared practice of city culture—via activities like newspaper reading, spectator sports, and vaudeville amuse-

ments—to the development of a nationally distributed urban culture in the industrial era; *Kelroy* illustrates a parallel phenomenon in Philadelphia decades before the industrial city would emerge.

6. See also Herman 266.
7. Nelson connects *Kelroy* to later realism by comparing Mrs. Hammond to Undine Spragg, the powerful but unsympathetic protagonist of Edith Wharton's 1913 novel *The Custom of the Country* (xvi). I see her as closer in kinship to Lily Bart's manipulative mother in Wharton's *The House of Mirth*.
8. "In the end, American staples were far more likely to circulate in a predictable way thousands of miles *east* of Philadelphia (across the Atlantic in England's urban centers and then beyond with other foreign trading partners) than to circulate just hundreds of miles south or west of Philadelphia—in those areas that were the most isolated and the most dependent on land transportation" (Loughran 20).
9. See Bourdieu.
10. This shift is evident in an episode late in *Kelroy* when a group of young cosmopolitans including Emily Hammond visit the Gurnets, a rich but unrefined family who have just purchased a country house near Mrs. Hammond's. In a longer version of this essay, I discuss Rush's relentless spoof of the Gurnets' attempts to participate in urban culture, which includes an ear-splitting singing performance by a Gurnet daughter and ends with Mr. Gurnet, in fine but ill-fitting clothes, pitched into the mud as signaling the limits of cosmopolitan taste and manners in an American society that allows for economic and class mobility. See Crane, introduction, for another perspective on this episode.
11. Breen is interested less in the urban aspects of this cosmopolitanism than in the ways in which American consumerism—or, more specifically, Americans' rejection—of European goods helped to propel the American Revolution in the decades before Rush wrote *Kelroy*.
12. Goffman's theory of "practice' has had wide scholarly impact; see Taylor and Keane for a sense of this range.
13. In appropriating elite props and costumes to stage a deceptive performance of urban wealth, Mrs. Hammond echoes de Certeau's claim in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that through local strategies modern subjects may not only reproduce but also resist cultural scripts.
14. See Herman, chapter 7, for an expert use of probate records, tax inventories, and wills to reconstruct everyday material practices in early American cities.
15. Herman, chapter 6.
16. The Conributionship was a sort of reverse gambling, in which members would pool money that would pay for losses any of them sustained due to fire. If there were no fires after seven years, members would get their premiums back. The Conributionship and other early insurance groups refused to insure wooden houses because they were considered to be fire hazards ("Philadelphia Contributionship").

17. See Clark and Rothenberg.
18. A cosmopolitan European import, the lottery began in America as a method for individuals in a cash-poor society to sell valuable property for more than any one buyer could offer. Houses, acreage, jewelry, and other valuable merchandise were sold in this manner. Ezell notes, "The Philadelphia *American Weekly Mercury* for February 23, 1720, carried a notice of a raffle with 350 tickets at twenty shillings each, with a 'new brick house, corner of Third and Arch streets' as a prize" (14). In Pennsylvania, lotteries could be licensed by the governor for "cases he considered worthy" including "schools, bridges, roads, churches" and what would become the University of Pennsylvania (21, 22).

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